

An Organizational Assessment of Department A of University XYZ

Thesis

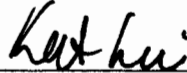
by

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ABSTRACT

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Organizational wellness is consistent with systems thinking in that it can be applied to any organization. The most successful organizations have a competitive advantage by using their human resources to the highest capacities. The purpose of this study was to assess the wellness of Department A of University XYZ. Department A of University of XYZ was assessed using an assessment tool. Results suggest that Department A already possesses strengths embedded in their current culture. Their strengths can be used to move Department A to a higher functioning organization. Eleven custodians were interviewed out of a possible 18, for a response rate of 61%. The data collected was analyzed using an assessment tool studying three pivotal areas; culture, process communication, and professional growth. All are interdependent with each other to form

a systems thinking organization. Additional research should be focused on the Residence Life office of University XYZ. Department A and the Residence Life office should be more interdependent to achieve shared goals.

### Acknowledgments

A research study is a large process that relies on a group of contributors. I would not have dreamed that I would be able to achieve this goal without the help of close friends. First I would like to thank my advisor, and coach Kat. All through this program Kat was there to assist me and sometimes just push me. Secondly I would like to thank Kari Dahl. Kari inspired me with the idea of organizational development and making the employees of an organization the most important asset. Thirdly I would like to thank the members of Department A. I have been with them for many years and I always feel welcome. I am happy to leave a gift so they may enjoy their remaining years in Department A. I also would like to thank my friends whom I made during my time back at school. They made returning to school an honor and privilege. I am greatly thankful to have met you all and looking towards the future together. Lastly I would like to show the most gratitude to my family. They have stood by me since I made the decision to return to school. I am greatly appreciative to my parents in giving me the sense of hard work and motivation to follow through. Without my family supporting me I don't think I could have achieved this.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

Department A is a department of University XYZ. The University has been established since 1908. Its primary goal of the university in 1908 was to:

Provide facilities in the way of buildings, equipment, and teachers, through which young people of both sexes may secure such instruction and training in industrial and related lines of educational effort as will enable them to become efficient industrial, social, and economic units within their environment (University of Wisconsin – Stout, 2005, para 8).

The first residence halls were built during the 1930's and 1940's. According to Duncanson (personal communication, April 14, 2005), there was also a collection of houses that were used in the housing of students. The house mothers of the earliest residence halls were the first organized Residence Life office. They were in charge of enforcing curfews and other residence hall rules. Most of the residence halls that stand today were finished in 1950's and 1960's.

The first organized custodial department was named Auxiliary Services according to Duncanson (personal communication, April 14, 2005). Auxiliary Services was managed by two people, one of which still works in Department A on a part time basis (Duncanson, personal communication, April 14, 2005). The University enrolls about 8,000 students. There are 2,396 residents currently in the residence halls (Uetz, personal communication, April 14, 2005). Department A manages the custodial staff of residence halls on campus.

The major operations of the department are the custodial efforts in buildings. The custodians are in charge of cleaning and maintaining their buildings. They clean

everything from the bathrooms, hallways, and common areas as well as remove snow in the wintertime. They care for the buildings so that students have a well kept living environment that adds to their learning experience. Many custodians have worked within the department for many years because of the close relationship they build with their students. They become close to the residents and assist them to enjoy their stay in the residence halls. The custodian becomes close to a “parent” figure to the residents of the hall.

Department A’s mission statement is “Committed to providing affordable, clean, well-maintained, comfortable living environments and enhancing the education of students through opportunities for personal growth, social development, and diversity awareness.” This mission statement is on a plaque that hangs in each front lobby of each residence hall. Department A shares responsibilities with the Residence Life office and together they believe in the mission statement. The Residence Life office manages each building’s staff, such as Residence Advisors and front desk staff. Residence life also assigns housing arrangements for incoming students. Each student is closely matched with a roommate that shares the same interests. Together Department A and Residence Life are committed to enhancing the learning environment for each student.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Department A has been in service since the beginning of the university. The culture represents “the way things are done here” (Dahl, 2004b). The custodians feel they can continue to do the same because that is the way things always have been done. This reluctance to change could stem from a perception that upper management does not seek of custodians’ opinions on achieving objectives. Most changes come from the Residence



Life office and custodians are not consulted. The perception of the custodians is that they can not effectively voice their opinion on solutions of problems. This is why the custodians are reluctant to change.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of the study is to assess the current culture, process communication, and professional growth in Department A. The researcher has been employed in the department for five years and has been motivated to assist the department to move in a positive direction. The researcher feels that the department members have done things the same way for many years because of the lack of positive experiences. The custodians feel that they should be a great resource to the department. But through the years the custodians have become a cost that needs to be reduced and not developed. This assessment will give the members of the custodial staff the opportunity to discuss their frustrations with out the fear of reprimand. The researcher has experienced organizational wellness through other assessments and feels that Department A can benefit from the assessment. The purpose of the study is to break the current rules of the culture and assist the members of Department A to become a better resource to the university.

Many reasons exist in order to assess the culture with in an organization.

“Organization leaders manage their operations and finances; they must manage their cultures as well” (Clemente, 2003, p.140, as cited in Price, 2003). “Corporate culture is one of those amorphous business concepts that leaders too often neglect because of its sheer intangibility. Yet culture – an effective culture – is arguably the most valuable intangible asset a company can own” (Clemente, 2003, as cited in Price). In addition,

“studies have repeatedly found that high performing organizations are aware of, and leverage the strengths of their corporate cultures” (Palmer, 1999, p. 1, as cited in Price).

According to Palmer (1999, as cited in Price 2003), organizational culture is not a simple statement developed by senior management and placed on a wall. These are only ideals. In order to work towards improving culture, an organization must find out “who” it is. A well-designed assessment will enable a company to determine the gap between its current culture and the culture it needs to succeed (Palmer, 1999, p. 1 as cited in Price). “There is increasing evidence of a link between organizational culture (How work gets done) and its business (what actually gets done)” (Kraut, 1996, p. 70 as cited in Price). Marc & Farbrother said “culture can either be an asset or a liability to an organization” (Marc & Farbrother, 2003, p. 15, as cited in Price).

A highly effective organization is a means to developing a self-renewing, continuously improving organization (Dahl, 2004a). It focuses on developing a healthy culture, effective communication and decision making processes, and professional growth. These three elements are developed simultaneously, since each one affects the other two. The goal of the wellness assessment is to move Department A from a culture that is reluctant to change to a continuously improving organization that uses effective communication, decision making processes, and professional growth strategies. This was studied by Glasser, Lazotte, Glickman, Demming, Sergiovanni, Dolan and others as described by Dahl.

#### *Assumptions of the Study*

The researcher is assuming that each custodian is literate and has a high school diploma. The custodians are mainly semi-skilled with an annual income from \$20,000 to

\$30,000 per year. The researcher also assumes that the participation of the study maybe affected by identity of the researcher. The researcher feels that very few or zero people will volunteer for the study because they do not know who is holding the study. The researcher assumes when the employees find out who is doing the study there will be a larger amount of participants. The custodians do enjoy their work and take pride in doing their jobs.

### *Definition of Terms*

*Culture.* “The way things are done around here” (Dahl, 2004b).

*The Residence Life Office.* Is a department at University XYZ that manages buildings staff, such as Residence Advisors and front desk staff and assigns housing arrangements for incoming students.

*Resident Advisor.* Is a person who facilitates individuals and community development on their assigned floor and residence hall (Housing and Residence Life office).

*Organizational Wellness.* A philosophy and an accompanying approach to organizational and staff development (Dahl, 2004).

*Process communication.* Communication between entities in an organization

*Professional growth.* Any learning or growing opportunities that develops employees

#### *Limitations of the Study*

The study included only full-time, non-student employees of the department. The department has 18 full-time employees. Although student employees are part of Department A they are not included in the study because of the high turnover rate. The full-time employees will all have an opportunity to participate but it is not mandatory. Also, the study is limited to the employees of the organization during the spring of 2005.

Since the employees have not been surveyed in the past, the researcher will ask questions about the culture of the department. The researcher has spoken to (Kari) Dahl about the use of the assessment tool with semi-skilled labor and professionals. Dahl would be the subject matter expert in use of the organizational assessment tool. She has done many assessments and she has found no distinction between the semi-skilled workers and professionals. The understanding of the terminology and questions asked during the assessment was never a problem between both groups (Dahl, personal communication, April 14, 2005).

The researcher has been employed within the department for the past five years, which is beneficial to the study. There has been a positive relationship built between the custodians and the researcher. Trust will be gained and the custodians may be comfortable when interviewed. "Organizations where people distrust each other, doubt other's motives, and pursue independent agendas will not be effective" (Fairholm, 1994, p. 45). The number of the subjects participating may be affected positively by the identity of the researcher.

### *Methodology*

The researcher will use an organizational assessment tool. This tool consists of a set of formulated questions that assesses strengths and areas for improvement. When problem areas are identified, decisions can be made to correct and evaluate changes. Along with assessing strengths, the assessment will research the climate of the organization to identify employees' perceptions of the department. An organizational development model will study three component areas: culture, process/communication, and professional growth. Intervention recommendations are made for each component area. Strengths and areas for improvement were only included if supported by more than three individuals. The analysis of the interviews and observations provide the basis for establishing the organization's placement on a three phase matrix which illustrates where the organizational falls in terms of the characteristics attributed to high performance organizations.

The next chapter will review literature that will define culture, climate, organization wellness assessment, the reasons for the assessment, and process of change. The additional three chapters will explain methodologies of the study and discuss the results of the interviews and some recommendations to assist in interventions.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

A highly effective organization is a means to developing a self-renewing, continuously improving organization. It focuses on developing a healthy culture, effective communication and decision making processes, and professional growth. These three elements are developed simultaneously, since each one affects the other two (Dahl, 2004). The goal of the wellness assessment is to move Department A from a culture that is reluctant to change to a continuously improving organization that uses effective communication, decision making processes, and professional growth strategies. The review of literature will define culture, organization wellness, and process of change.

### *Culture*

The definition of culture has been defined in very many different ways. A simplified definition of culture is “the ways things are done here” (Dahl, 2004b). Shein (1992, as cited in Price, 2003) defines organizational culture as

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel, in relation to those problems. (p. 12)

Shein also states that these assumptions “come to be taken for granted” because they solve the groups problems “repeatedly and reliably” (p. 6). Additionally, because these assumptions function unconsciously and instinctively, culture is often a challenging concept for organizational members to not only understand but to measure and change (Kraut, 1992, as cited in Price, 2003).

Studies have been done by Price and Shein analyzing culture. Culture can be analyzed at several different levels according to Shein (1992, as cited in Price, 2003). These levels include artifacts, espoused values and basic underlying assumptions. Artifacts are defined as “visible organizational structures and processes” (p. 17). Examples of artifacts include newsletters, signs, dress codes, and banners. Another level of culture state by Shein is espoused values which are audible and spoken and include goals, mission statements, sayings, philosophies, and strategies. The third level described by Shein is basic underlying assumptions which are “unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings”. This includes assumptions that are not directly observable, consequently hard to analyze and change.

Daniel Denison (1990, as cited in Price, 2003) defines organizational culture as “underlying beliefs, values, and assumptions held by members of the organization, and the practices and behaviors that exemplify and reinforce them.” Denison conducted studies identifying the impact of organizational culture on performance. Four organizational culture traits that impact performance were identified: involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. The traits identified are used in the Denison Organizational Culture Survey developed by Daniel Denison and William S. Neale (2003, as cited in Dahl, personal communication, April 14, 2005). The survey connects the identified traits to organizational culture to bottom line performance measures. Profitability, quality, innovation, market share, sales growth, and employee satisfaction are just a few examples.

Fjortoft and Smart (1994) found the importance of culture type and mission agreement enhanced organizational effectiveness at four year colleges and universities.

The researchers found that when members of the organization agreed upon standards or expectations was a major factor in determining the culture of the organization. The study stressed the importance of having a mission statement for what the type of organizational culture is being promoted, and how culture is a crucial part of every organization. The results of the study indicated that organizational culture has an effect on both the communication processes and professional growth with in organizations.

Dhillon (2001) studied the challenges and strategies for improving the quality of information and communication in a university setting and also examined how organization culture can be a challenge for communication effectively.

Services and products may be the nuts and bolts of business, institutions, and local governments, but culture is their driving engine. Culture influences the everyday living, engagement, and enthusiasm of staff. It influences not only the direct outputs and efficiencies of an organization, but also the health and flexibility of employees. Understanding culture and seeking to find out more about culture will allow leaders to increase intellectual behavior, and attitudes that each employee “owns” and can choose to share with the organization (Marc & Farbrother, 2003, p. 14, as cited in Price, 2003).

### *Organizational Wellness*

According to Neff (1968) “work situations constitute a special sub area of culture in itself; the subculture of work has its own rather special customs and traditions. The culture assigns roles to people in special ways, develops unique kinds of private languages and even has its own mystique. One becomes a participating member of the



work subculture by a process of enculturation, and this process may be as difficult for some person outside the culture” (p. 127).

Neff (1968) wrote that many occupations demand that participants use special vocabularies and styles of speech. For example there is a difference between a train engineer’s language and that of learned professionals. Languages can be unintelligible to the outsider. Neff also discussed the variances of dress in different occupations. A person who works as the train engineer would be wearing a high-crowned cap and the professional would be in a suit and tie. “Both speech and dress are identifying signs of the members of the subculture of work, in the same sense that these characteristics are used to unite the members of any in-group against ‘the others’” (Neff, 1968, p. 128). The researcher has discussed this because in the study, the custodians of Department A have a subculture that has both speech and dress that are different than the members of the Residence Life office. The custodians of Department A have voiced negative stories against the members of the Residence Life office. The custodians say often “the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing!” This identifies a concern in the organizational wellness of Department A.

According to Dahl (2004), organizational wellness is a highly effective means to develop self renewing, continuously improving schools and school districts. It focuses on developing a healthy culture, effective processes, and professional growth. These three elements are developing simultaneously, since each one affects the other two. It draws on over 30 years of research and experience in organization and staff development in schools and other public and private organizations. Organizational wellness produces long term improvements, develops the capacity of staff and community, and provides a

comprehensive assessment identifying the strengths on which to build and specific things the organization needs to work on first.

Organizational wellness purports several beliefs about organizations (Dahl, 2004). First, organizations are made up of people and systems embedded in a culture. People, not the organization, do the work of the organization. High performance is the result of organizational conditions which support the success of individuals and groups and people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to do the work. Organizational conditions which support success are developed by creating the culture and by effective communication and decision making process in the systems of the organization. The culture is the lens through which the people interpret every aspect of their work and every aspect of the communication and decision making processes used in the organization.

### *Change*

Department A has been through changes in the past. Most of the changes were just handed down and had to be dealt with. The decision makers did not consult Department A even about the new residence hall. The main decision makers did not have a positive relationship with the decision makers of Department A. This is a breakdown in culture and process communication. "All the organizational changes in the world do not present improved performance, unless an organization's culture and people are fully prepared and aligned to support that change. Culture is what distinguishes truly high performing organizations from others" (Juechter et al., 1998. p. 64).

When dealing with changes an assessment needs to take place. The more voices in a discussion can lead to the best decision. Concerns can be heard and a collective decision can be made. Not every person in the discussion may agree to the decision but

they will understand the thinking process. There has been research done about assessments in a university setting. "Assessment in Practice" by Banta, Lund, Black, and Oblander (1996) describes research regarding assessments on college campuses such as the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK). Banta (1985) notes "perhaps the greatest strengths of the assessment program at UTK lies in the extent to which it has involved virtually every major unit of the university and personnel at every level, ranging from students to the chancellor" (p. 36). Also, according to Ewell (1988) with assessments with 22 public and private institutions, the participation and involvement were important lessons learned. In addition, the results of 15 studies that were held over four years shown that faculty participation and administrative support were important indicators of successful assessment (California State University, 1992). "Many studies have concluded that participation and involvement have been a crucial factor as it increases the likelihood of achieving the desired results" (Banta, Lund, Black, & Oblander, p. 36).

Change always occurs. Most people are resistant to change. "Change is an exciting, vital process and keeps organizations from becoming outdated" (Flanning, 2001, p. 85). Desire to change is what makes change happen.

People in organizations predictably fall into a bell curve. You have 20-25% of people in your organization who are early adapters and change agents. They are visionaries, forward thinkers and influencers. Then about 50% of you organization's people will change with some training, good rationale and encouragement. Then you have about 20-25% who are the nay sayers, stuck in the mud, negative and unhappy people. They'll try to bring everyone down to their level. (Flanning, 2001, p. 4)

According to Hathaway (2000, Pg. 4) to create the desire to change, one must first create awareness of the need to change. Most people will not change their viewpoint, habits, or behaviors unless they are motivated to do so. Some strategies to develop awareness noted by Hathaway (2000) are to

1. Develop a proactive organization newsletter that discusses issues relevant to its future.
2. Initiate management dialogue sessions with other managers, supervisors, and employees.
3. Conduct training sessions that deal with the need to change.
4. Ask people (perhaps in small group format) "What would happen if we don't change?"
5. Encourage senior managers to "wander" frequently throughout the organization asking appropriate questions regarding the need to change. (p. 4)

"Once a new or changed plan has been delivered, it is up to the leaders to implement the decisions. If not managed correctly, the results could mean unhappy employees, profit loss, poor performance and poor levels of customer service" ("Effective Ways to Manage Change in Your Organization," 2002, p.185-193, as cited in Price, 2003).

Change is very difficult to do. There are many different ideas about how to manage change. According to Dahl (2004b), change has a formula:  $D+V+P>C$

D= Dissatisfaction

V= Vision (possibilities)

P= Process to go through the get there

C= Cost of Change

This formula breaks the change process into to parts of an equation. The dissatisfaction of the change is added to the possibilities and the process to go through the change. The actual cost of change is less than the sum of the costs of all three variables.

Identifying the need to change a culture is not a very difficult idea. The most difficult idea is the actual change. According to Milakovich (1995), breakthrough in cultural patterns is broken down into seven steps:

1. Planning, including participation by advocates, those affected, and third parties
2. Eliminating technical and cultural baggage not needed for change
3. Working with recognized leadership of corporate culture
4. Treating everyone with dignity
5. Reducing the impact of changes by weaving them into an existing pattern of behavior or acceptable other change
6. Using empathy by putting yourself in the other person's place
7. Making use of a wide variety of methods to deal with resistance to change (p. 220-242)

Every step in this model builds off the previous. In step one, the planning of a change must be discussed with an equal mix of people in the organization (Milakovich, 1995). In Department A management must include leading custodial staff. Together a consensus will be formed and the change will start at the top with every level included on the decision process. With everybody on the same level of the decision the culture can begin to change.

With the seven steps in the breakthrough of cultural patterns, the second most important is step number four “treating everybody with dignity”. It is a simple idea but in business today it is usually first idea forgotten. “Treating everybody with dignity” should be a constant in any culture. According to Bob Cervenka, founder of Phillips Plastics, the key to a great culture “is to treat everyone with mutual respect. Everyone deserves to be wanted” (Phillips Plastics, 2002, p. 2). Phillips Plastics is a \$246 million-a-year company with 2,100 employees. Cervenka believes in “treating everybody with dignity” and has set up an entire people process culture in Phillips Plastics. The production floors and office spaces are only divided by a pane of glass. Cervenka believes that “people deserve a good place to work” and “a commitment to enhance and advance the competitive advantage of people working together effectively” (p.2).

The review of literature has identified many studies that have found that culture, organizational wellness, and the process of change have a positive significance in an organization. These studies have identified that employees are a resource that needs to be developed. Chapter three will identify the methodologies of the organizational assessment and the assessment tool will be defined. Chapter four will discuss the findings from the assessment. Chapter five will discuss interventions and continuations of the study.

### Chapter III: Methodology

Department A has been maintaining the residence halls of University XYZ since their construction in the 1950's. The culture has been engraved that change is not needed and represents "the way things are done here" (Dahl, 2004b). They feel they can continue to do the same because that is the way things always have been done. The reluctance of change could stem from a perception that upper management does not include the custodians' opinions on achieving objectives. Most changes come from the Residence Life office and custodians are not consulted. The perception is that the custodians can not effectively voice their opinion on solutions of problems. This is why the custodians are reluctant of change.

An organizational assessment allowed the custodial staff the ability to voice concerns. Assessments are important to identify perceptions and attitudes of the members of the department. Management can use the outcomes to evaluate strengths and make corrective changes to areas that need improvement.

#### *Subject Selection and Description*

The study included only full-time, non-student employees of the department. The department has 18 full-time employees. Although student employees are part of Department A they are not included in the study because of the high turnover rate. The full-time employees will all have an opportunity to participate but it is not mandatory. Also the study is limited to the employees of the organization during the spring of 2005. Volunteers will be able to partake in the study during work time. According to Dahl (2004a), this study is a long-term systematic growth in businesses, educational, and the service industries. Organizational wellness develops healthy mental and physical systems

in business so that the people in the organization have an increased capacity to solve problems, communicate better, make better decisions, learn, and contribute as committed enthusiastic staff working together for a common purpose.

### *Instrumentation*

The organizational assessment tool that was used in the study was developed by experts in organizational development field. It has been studied by Glasser, Lazotte, Glickman, Demming, Sergiovanni, Dolan, and others. The process began with interviews of primary stakeholders. Data was gathered through the use of a survey with formulated set of questions (see Appendix A). The formulated set of questions was developed by Cooperridge and Whitney. The questions ask for employees' perceptions or opinions about their department. The questions are separated into three pivotal areas: organization's culture, processes (communication and decision making) and professional growth practices. Dahl (2004a), has defined three distinct phases of an organization's development towards wellness. These three phases placed across the three key elements form the Organizational Wellness Matrix (see Appendix B). There are five axioms that guide the development of leadership for organizational wellness:

- 1) Organizational wellness is developed by progressing toward Phase III in all three elements simultaneously; since each one effects the other two, developing on element too far ahead or behind the others results in frustration and barriers to improvement.
- 2) An organization can not skip phases and go directly to phase III; the chaos and struggles to get out of phase I and through phase II are essential to defining and establishing phase III.



3) Each organization has its own unique profile on the organizational matrix at any given time; the first job of leaders is to recognize the organizational wellness profile of the organization.

4) Different types of leadership are needed in each phase; the second job of leaders is to be able to use the form of leadership appropriate to the phase of wellness.

5) Reaching phase III does not insure remaining there; appropriate maintenance of the phase III culture, processes, and professional growth is needed to avoid reverting to phases I or II. (p. 3)

Each phase has distinct traits. The researcher analyzes the perceptions collected from the interviews. To have a significant affect the on the matrix, perceptions have to be repeated by three or more employees. When three employees share the same perception, this is what they believe is true. The researcher matched up the perceptions from the interviews and the characteristics of each phase in the organizational wellness matrix (Appendix B).

#### *Data Collection Procedures*

An organizational wellness assessment consisted of meetings and interviews of members of an organization followed by analysis of the data and recommendations based on the information learned through the interview process. A tool of organizational wellness assessment was used that looks at three component areas: culture, process/communication and professional growth. Strengths and areas for improvement in each area will be identified and intervention recommendations are made for each component area. Strengths and areas of improvement will only be included if supported

by more than three individuals. The analysis of the interviews and observations provide that basis for establishing the organization's placements on a three phase matrix which illustrates where the organization falls in terms of the characteristics attributed to high performance organizations.

### *Data Analysis*

The analysis of the interviews and observations provide the basis for establishing the organization's placement on a three phase matrix which illustrates where the organization falls in terms of the characteristics attributed to high performance organizations (Appendix B). For instance, a Phase One organization may display characteristics like hidden conflict (culture), administration exercises authority over staff (processes/communication), or poor uses of resources (professional growth). An organization that is in Phase Two will display characteristics like identify losses caused by change (culture), staff begins to demand input and influences on concerns (processes/communication), and management and staff develop new skills and capabilities (professional growth). An organization that is in Phase Three will display characteristics like tough questions addressed (culture), empowered people, inclusive systems (process/communication), and people's skills honored/used/shared (professional growth). An organization can excel in a one phase like culture and be in a lower phase in process communication and professional growth. Along with ranking the organization in the matrix, an assessment provides insight as to how the organization may create a plan to improve and use practices in the Phase Three.

### *Limitations*

The researcher is employed within the department. The researcher being employed in Department A will be beneficial to the study. Trust has been gained and the custodians were comfortable when interviewed. The number of the subjects participating was affected by the identity of the researcher. Many questions were asked about personal opinions with culture, process communication, and professional growth. The researcher had trust built with the subjects but the subjects may not want to answer the questions. If there lack of opinions the assessment will have a poor view of the organization. If there is an abundance of opinions the researcher will have controlled the interview and moved on to the next question if needed. Appendix A is the list of formulated questions. Most interviews only consists a few of these questions. The researcher has asked probing questions about perceptions voiced.

### *Summary*

Chapter three has addressed the subject selection and description, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, and limitations. The assessment tool has been used in many organizations. All organizations that have participated with this assessment have seen improvements organizational culture, processes/communication and professional growth.

## Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of the study was to assess the current culture, process communication, and professional growth in Department A. The researcher has been employed in the department for five years and has been motivated to assist the department to move in positive direction. The researcher feels that the department members have done things the same way for many years because of the lack of positive experiences. The custodians feel that they should be a great resource to the department. But through the years the custodians have become a cost that needs to be reduced and not developed. The researcher feels that the assessment will give the members of the custodians the opportunity to discuss their frustrations with out the fear of reprimand. The researcher has experienced organizational wellness and feels that Department A can be benefited by the assessment. The purpose of the study is to break the current rules of the culture and assist the members of Department A to become a better resource to the university.

Many concerns have been voiced during the interviews. A perception must be repeated by three or more volunteers to be true. The listed perceptions have been voiced more than three times.

### *Culture*

Culture has been defined “the way things happen here” by Dahl (2004b). According the Phase Matrix (Appendix B) Department A matches with a Phase One culture. The researcher has found that there is an Us vs. Them attitude in the department. The custodians would like to give their input for changes but management does not ask for it. The custodians said that they feel they can voice their concerns and opinions to the

supervisor but she can not do anything. They report that the supervisor is open to the ideas but decisions were made by management above the supervisor. The researcher has found through perceptions shared in interviews that there is a sense of isolation in the department. The custodians are very proud of their clean facilities. They have gotten some recognition from the residence advisors, hall directors and sometimes from the residents. The custodians' perceptions were that the supervisor has no idea what is going on in their halls or how clean their buildings really are. The custodians were very open to recognition. They would feel more appreciated if the supervisor would go to the halls and see the high quality of work.

The researcher has found there is little innovation through the perceptions shared in the interviews. The custodian's perceptions were that change happens very slowly and when the change does happen it drops in their lap. The custodians stated that if they were a part of the decision making they could speed up changes that need to be made. Also, they could add crucial input or concerns about the change. Finally, the custodians would be more agreeable to the change. The researcher has found there is a sense of "hidden agendas" from the custodians. The custodians believe since that Residence Life does not ask for input from the custodians there is a sense of mistrust. The custodians told negative stories about changes in the past and criticize the decision makers. The researcher has also found that information flow is not open. The custodians can speak to resident advisors, hall directors, and their supervisor. If the problem or conflict is not solved by the supervisor and it needs attention by Residence Life then nothing ever happens. The supervisor has tried to remedy situations to the best of her ability but sometimes Residence Life changes what she has done.

### *Process Communication*

The second pivotal area of the Organizational Wellness Matrix (Appendix B) is process communication. Process communication is how information is passed through the organization. The researcher has determined from the perceptions collected in the interviews of the custodians that Department A is in Phase One (Appendix B).

The researcher has found from the shared perceptions of the custodians; the custodians are not asked for input. The perceptions were that since they work the closest with the residents they should be consulted. They want to voice their opinions but there is no outlet for the custodians to do so. The custodians said that they feel they can speak with their supervisor but she can do little if it involves Residence Life. The perception of the custodians is if things get to the Residence Life office than nothing ever happens.

A perception that has been shared more than three times is that no one rocks the boat. Custodians are reluctant to bring up change because they fear the sense of reprimand. The perception is a lack of trust and this leads to lack of participation. The custodians fear if they say something that upsets the supervisor or other departments then there will be back lash to the custodians. The supervisor is open but makes little changes.

Another perception shared amongst the custodians was that administration exercises authority over staff. The custodians' perceptions were that the supervisor is open to hear concerns. If the concerns have to go past the supervisor to Residence Life than nothing from the custodians is taken into consideration. Even with the new residence hall being built no one from Department A has been consulted about custodial requirements such as locations of storage, janitor closets, and even floor drains. Department A was totally left out of the information collection stages.

Many custodians share the perception of that there is no process to use to become better. A shared perception by three custodians stated that e-mail is would be more beneficial but there is a lack of training. It was just another change dropped into the custodians' laps. About half of the custodians do not utilize e-mail because the lack of training. The custodians are separated. There are custodians on the north end of campus and the others are on the south end of campus near the main office of Department A. The custodians of the north campus are utilizing e-mail because of the distance between them and the main office. There are custodians on the south end of campus that do not utilize e-mail because of lack of training. These custodians just resort back to phone or face to face conversations or inter campus mail. The custodians on the south end of campus would feel better using e-mail if trained. Then they could share ideas with co-workers on both ends of the campus more frequently.

### *Professional Growth*

The third area of the Organizational Wellness Matrix is professional growth, which is the sense of learning and growth opportunities. The researcher has matched the perceptions of the custodians collected in the surveys with the characteristics of the matrix. Department A matches with the Phase One Professional Growth (Appendix B)

The researcher found that the custodians perceive raising issues or having conflict as dangerous. The custodians stated that they if they have a conflict with one another things are discussed and settle fairly easily. However, if the conflict has to go above the supervisor than nothing ever happens. The conflict never gets settled or even addressed.

The researcher has found that Department A is totally directed by others. Residence Life makes the decisions and the custodians have to deal with the changes.

The custodians perceive that changes are just thrown at them. The researcher also has found that there was a poor use of resources since the Residence Life office could ask for input from the custodians. The custodians would like to share their information but there is no outlet to do so. The custodians would utilize an outlet to voice their concerns if there was an outlet available.

The researcher found that there is some formal training in Department A. Standard Operating Procedure Manuals were just put together and distributed in the fall of 2004. The custodians' perception was that there is need for more training in using e-mail since they believe there is no outlet to share ideas. They can speak to one another but it is rare they see one another. The custodians could use e-mail when more training is available or if the department had meetings to share ideas.

The last characteristic that Department A matches in professional growth is there no continuous learning occurring. The custodians are open to learning, the supervisor is open to learning, but there are learning programs available. The custodians' perception was that if they leave their building to attend a program then the work accumulates. The custodians do not like to leave their building because there is no one there to replace them. The supervisor has to force the custodians to attend opportunities but the time in which the opportunity is held is always a problem. The custodians have the most time to attend learning opportunities when classes are not in session like in the summer or spring break. The custodian's perception was that they would rather stay in their building and miss an opportunity to learn because then they can remain caught up with their work load.



In chapter two Dhillon (2001) studied the challenges and strategies for improving the quality of information and communication in a university setting and also examined how organization culture can be a challenge for communication effectiveness. This study is directly related to Department A. The culture and communication process between Department A and the Residence Life office needs be examined and repaired.

*Summary*

The researcher has placed Department A in Phase One organization in all three pivotal areas: organizational culture, process communication, and professional growth (Appendix B). From the custodians' shared perceptions that there is a major problem with the culture and process communication between Department A and the Residence Life office. Chapter five will list the strengths and areas of improvement and also give some ideas to remedy the problems that were discussed in chapter four.

## Chapter V: Discussion

The study so far has examined Department A of University XYZ. Chapter one has given a little history about the department. There are currently 2,396 residents who live in the residence halls. The custodians are in charge of cleaning and maintaining their building. In doing so, they become very close with the residents. In chapter two there was many studies done that define culture, the change process and organizational wellness. The assessment studies the current culture, process communication and professional growth in Department A. The assessment provides the custodians of Department A to voice their opinions about concerns without the threat of reprimand. Chapter four discussed the findings from the assessment. Department A is a Phase I for all three areas. Most organizations when first assessed match the characteristics in Phase I. The benefit is that Department A is knowledgeable about where they stand. Chapter five will discuss building off current strengths in order to move the department into a Phase II organization. Interventions and recommendations will assist the areas of improvement to become strength.

### *Strengths*

Department A matches the characteristics of a culture that is a Phase One organization. There is a sense of Us vs. Them, negative stories are told, there is little innovation, and the custodians feel isolated. Even being at the bottom of the matrix there are strengths that can be built off of. The number one thing that every custodian mentioned was the enjoyment they have with the residents. In every interview there was a strong sense of connection between each custodian and their residents. Most custodians said the residents give them the most stress through messes, but each custodian quickly

moves on. Each custodian said that the residents of the buildings give the most recognition about the custodians work. This would include the hall director, resident advisors and residents. Most custodians get door decorations with thank you letters. The custodians feel they are part of the community of the building. Every custodian enjoys working with the residents.

The second strength that Department A can build off is the camaraderie the custodians have with one another. Every custodian interviewed said they would miss their co-workers the most if they did not work there any longer. There is a sense of real friendship amongst the custodians. The custodians said if there was an outlet to share great ideas with one another they would utilize it. Most custodians share ideas when they get together for pot lucks or other meetings. Pot lucks are lunches that are planned so everybody can get together and celebrate Christmas, retirements, and starting of a new school year. Every person brings a dish to pass and just enjoys visiting with their co-workers. These events only happen once or twice a year. Department A and the Residence Life office members attend each event. The researcher has partaken in many pot lucks and has noticed that there is a separation between Department A and the Residence Life office. If work is discussed it usually involves members their own department. Custodians only talk to other custodians about concerns or share ideas. Members of each department are friendly towards each other but there is not any idea share or concerns voiced. Other than pot lucks it is difficult because some custodians are on the south end of the campus and other others are on the north end of campus. In most cases they do not get to share ideas often because of the distance. All the custodians enjoy working together in the summers and on other breaks in the school year. Every

custodian would utilize an outlet to share ideas with one another and upper management. E-mail could be used for this purpose like in a weekly or monthly newsletter or idea boards. Some custodians require training in using their e-mail accounts. The researcher has noticed the custodians of the north campus are all proficient in e-mail. They utilize this technology because of the distance to the main office of Department A. The custodians in south campus just walk to the office and relay information in a face to face with the supervisor. The custodians use the path of least resistance, instead of having troubles with e-mail. If training would be available in a one on one setting most custodians would be able to utilize e-mail. Then with every custodian using e-mail they could easily put a newsletter together. The newsletter would simply inform the custodians what is going on in the department. It would also ask for input from the custodians on concerns. Then the custodians can contact each other when it is the best time for each of them and converse.

The third strength of Department A is the sense of pride each custodian interviewed takes in his or her job. They have a great sense of pride in how clean their facilities and buildings are. Each custodian knows that the supervisor expects a high quality of work and they do more than what is asked of them. Pride is a great strength and it can be built on. A culture that flows with pride can move a Phase One organization into a Phase Two. With the correct outlet to voice concerns the proud custodians could move into a Phase Two (Appendix B). A few examples of a Phase II culture is that people overreact to decisions, there is a sense of anxiety, sadness, disorientation, and depression. Paradigms begin to change, and new norms, concepts, and mind sets are formed by individual and groups.

The department could move from an organization that has little innovation, an Us VS - Them attitude and information flow that is not open into a Phase II culture. A Phase II culture can be created by strength of the pride the custodians have about their work. The custodians could identify losses caused by changes from upper management. Paradigms begin to change. In order to become a Phase Three organization it must go through Phase Two - it can not skip phases. This is consistent of the five axioms in chapter three; An organization can not skip phases and go directly to phase III; the chaos and struggles to get out of phase I and through phase II are essential to defining and establishing phase III. If an organization tries to jump from Phase I to Phase III the changes usually come so drastically and the culture reverses back to the ways things were.

An area to improve on in the culture is recognition. The custodians like to feel appreciated and liked to be recognized. They commented that they get most recognition from the residents of their halls but really nothing from the supervisor. The custodians would like the supervisor to notice the quality of work they produce and take pride in. The supervisor could hand out certificates of appreciation or have an employee of the month. The supervisor is limited because of the state employees union and can not hand out raises or other material items. The supervisor is very open to flextime. If a custodian needs an hour or two off during the day, the supervisor will let the custodian come in early or stay late to make up their time. Then the custodian will not have to use his/her vacation time.

Process communication is how information is sent from one entity to another. Department A is in a Phase One process communication organization (Appendix B).

The Residence Life office exercises authority over staff, the custodians are not asked for input, and no one rocks the boat or causes problems. The researcher found that the custodians are not asked for input. The custodians' feel since they work the closest with the residents the custodians should be consulted. The custodians want to voice their opinions but there is no outlet. E-mail is a potential solution. Some custodians need more training on e-mail. After training they would utilize it more. E-mail can be a great tool to help communicate ideas and concerns. The supervisor can start a newsletter, idea board, or even hold a monthly meeting discussing concerns or problems. The custodians said in the interviews if there was an outlet to voice their concerns or ideas they would utilize it. The Residence Life office would have to be invited to the meetings and open to hear ideas. Also when ideas are shared on concerns there should be a process so that the custodians can follow what is happening. So if their idea is turned down the custodian can understand why and understand how the decision has been made. This could be done through e-mail, in a newsletter, or even at the next meeting. The meetings would have to be held early in the morning so the custodians who want to partake can since the custodians can leave their building easier in the morning than later in the day.

With these processes Department A can move from an organization that has administration exercising authority over its staff, people who do not question decisions, and people who are not asked for input (Phase One characteristics) to a Phase II organization. Phase II characteristics are; a staff begins to demand input, influence ideas, and questions are asked like "What are we trying to accomplish? What are we doing?" With a just a few changes in the communication process the organization can move into Phase II (Appendix B).

Professional growth is any learning or growing opportunities that develop employees. Most of the custodians that were interviewed stressed that they want to learn. Their perception is that the supervisor is open to learning events. The problem is the custodians do not like to leave their building to attend because they feel when they return to their building they have more work to catch up on. Most of the training opportunities are during the middle of the day and during the school year, when the custodians are the busiest. It would be difficult to change every event to match the times the custodians can leave their building. The supervisor is more than open for the custodians to attend. There must be a process for someone to replace the custodian when the custodian is absent. The process must secure the quality of work that is expected is the same as the custodians requirements. Some custodians' perceptions are that the quality of work with replacements is lower than the permanent custodian. Some training or expectations must be communicated to the replacement staff. The use of the standard operating procedures manuals are a must if the quality of work is lower than the regular custodians do then the custodians will not partake in learning events. A second solution would be holding learning events during the summer or winter breaks. At the university most organized programs are catered around the academic year. Most events are scheduled between September and May. There is a large majority of employees across the campus that would partake in events if they were held outside the academic calendar. There must be some consideration of all twelve month employees.

The old ways of doing things must be questioned. The supervisor commented that there are records in each custodian's file on how many learning events are attended each year. This is also recorded for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration

(OSHA) training events. Every person in the Department A has mandatory training covering the OSHA standards. Both of these are planning of professional development and how it relates to individual growth as well as organizational growth occurs. The researcher feels that if there is a replacement that has the same expectations of quality of work then the custodians will feel open to attending the learning opportunities.

### *Recommendations*

To continue on with the study, the Residence Life office should be assessed. This will put into perspective how the members of that office feel. The Residence Life office needs to analyze this study to identify current concerns in Department A. With the second study to involve the Residence Life office the organization can be more effective. Culture, process communication, and professional growth are the three pivotal areas that every great organization needs.

### *Summary*

Department A is a Phase I organization. Most organizations are a Phase I and do well. The researcher has found studies that great organizations develop their human resources. The most expensive assets an organization has its' people. Department A has much strength that it can build off to move into a Phase II organization. Pride is a basic intrinsic value that everybody should have. Members of Department A are flowing with pride on what they have accomplished. With a few small changes in culture and communication between Department A and the Residence Life office the whole organization will operate more effectively.



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## Appendix A: Survey Instrument

### Interview Questions

1. Thank subject for consenting to be interviewed.
2. Ask if the subject knows why the researcher is here and how the information will be used?
3. Reassure subjects privacy.
4. Ask if researcher can take notes.

Culture	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	<p>What do you look forward to each day when you come to work?</p> <p>What are you most proud of about this department?</p> <p>How are things celebrated around here?</p> <p>How do you have fun at work?</p> <p>What causes stress?</p> <p>Describe a real crisis...</p>	<p>Give Examples</p> <p>How do people know?</p> <p>Why?</p>	<p>What does that mean to you?</p> <p>Why do you believe that happens?</p> <p>If you could change anything, what would it be?</p>
Decision Making Process/communication	<p>How do you share great ideas here?</p> <p>How do you resolve conflict? Who do you go to?</p> <p>How are decisions made?</p> <p>How are crises handled?</p> <p>How do you find out what is happening?</p> <p>How does change happen?</p>	<p>What might this look like?</p> <p>How would you feel if things were handled differently?</p> <p>What would you want to see continued? Why?</p> <p>What changes would you like to see happen?</p> <p>Why?</p>	<p>Would you or have you ever given up on something? Why?</p> <p>What would you miss if you didn't work here any longer?</p> <p>How willing are you to strive for how you would like to see things be different?</p>

Professional Growth	How do people learn or grow in the organization?	What are evidences of people growing here?	What is a metaphor for your job? Example: This department is an egg carton... Explain
	Who helps you?	Is everyone treated the same in regards to learning opportunities?	How important is it for people to learn share their learning in your organization?
	What opportunities exist for you?	How important are learning opportunities to you? Why?	
	If there was something you really wanted to learn, how do you go about doing it?	Why?	
	When you do learn, grow, or get better at doing something who notices?		
Is there anything else that you would like to tell the researcher?			

Thank subject for their time and cooperation.

Assure subjects privacy again.

## Appendix B: Organizational Matrix

<b>Organizational Culture</b> (Set of norms, way things are done)	disagreements hidden	identify losses caused by change	tough questions addressed
	not a safe place	people overreact	openness to change
	information flow not open	emotions include: anger, bargaining	all members are caring, passionate, trusting
	hidden agendas	anxiety, sadness, disorientation, and depression	shared core values and covenants
	power struggles	chaos	people speak from the heart and all are heard
	Us VS. Them	people are "for" or "against" changes	truly collaborative atmosphere
	negative stories are told	paradigms begin to change	sense of comfort and safety
	a lot of isolation	new norms, concepts, and mind sets are formed by individuals and groups	high value for sacrificing the wants of individuals for the good of the whole group
	little innovation		
	accountability		

<b>Professional Growth</b>	dangerous to raise issues, have conflict	management and staff develop new skills and capabilities	initiated by staff
	totally directed by others	old ways of doing things are questioned	needs-based
	just sit-n-get or pull-out	planning of professional development and how it relates to individual growth as well as organizational growth occurs	fits into real world
	not able to be used in real world		people's skills honored/used/shared
	poor use of resources		tremendous use of resources
	sees learners as empty vessels to be filled		clear understanding of many ways to learn
	no formal training system in place		continually constructing better ways
	no continuous learning occurring		many paths of learning allowed to reach common goals

<b>Process Decision Making &amp; Communication</b>	administration exercises authority over staff	staff begins to demand input and influences on	vision/goals/mission/site plan -working together
	autocratic	policy and practices	empowered people, inclusive systems
	no processes other can use to get better	Questions like: "What are we trying to do accomplish? What are we doing?" emerge	systems in place which gather everyone's input
	indecisiveness	outside or inside pressures begin to challenge	reasons for decisions come from the group
	people are not sure what is expected of them	the status quo	administration creates conditions for staff success
	people agree to one thing but do something else	people want someone else to step in and solve the problem	people are secure in understanding what is expected of them
	people don't question decisions		open-ended problem solving
	people are not asked for input		leadership changes and is shared
	no one rocks the boat-causes problems		mutual commitments
	conflicts are avoided		people take actions
	there are power groups and political maneuvering		people take risks
			reward reflect volunteerism and initiative
			high value of diversity-many ways to accomplish the same goal
			people from win-win solutions to conflict
		tough questions are valued	