COMMUNICATIVE LEADERSHIP DURING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: A CASE STUDY OF A NEW UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT'S CHANGE-INITIATIVE TEAM

by

Emily Alice Sacks

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
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Doctor of Philosophy

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This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the candidate's dissertation advisors, Dr. Robert Shockley and Dr. John Pisapia, Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology, and has been approved by the members of her supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the College of Education and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

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As the economy continues to struggle in its recovery from the recent recession, higher education institutions have been hard-hit, affecting stakeholders at all levels, including boards of trustees, students, faculty, and the surrounding communities. In the middle of the turmoil and period of change are the presidents, needing to answer to board members as well as other institutional stakeholders, while still maintaining a balance of organizational consistency and change. Nearly all organizational change literature incorporates interpersonal communication as an integral component in effective change efforts; therefore, the constantly changing higher education landscape necessitates presidents who are skilled in communicative leadership, of which interpersonal skills are a cornerstone. Although all presidents need these skill sets, this study examines only a newly appointed president and one of his change-initiative teams to capture the dynamic environment surrounding new administration.

Studies have been conducted to review managers' or leaders' change communication, but most have been quantitative as opposed to qualitative, and they are typically conducted from the subordinates' perspective. Also, despite the urgency of organizational change within higher education as institutions face increased competition and student consumerism and decreased government funding, no studies, to the researcher's knowledge, have discovered how newly appointed presidents' communicative leadership affects change in higher education institutions. Hence, this qualitative case study evaluates which communicative leadership techniques facilitate organizational change processes, as well as gauges what, if any, discrepancies lie between the president and team members' perceived and actual techniques. The findings of this study have the potential to help higher education presidents more effectively implement organizational change, which has become critical to institutions' survival.

Through qualitative data collection and analysis, this case study found the presence of communicative leadership techniques practiced by the president and his change-initiative team during change initiatives. Further, social entrepreneurship surfaced as an emergent finding; when coupled with communicative practices, it enhanced the success of change initiatives.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to failure, without which I would not be where I am. Failure, you are the reason I push myself to achieve greater things. You remind me to remain humble yet determined and not to become discouraged with life's inevitable setbacks. You have instilled in me an ability to be resilient and to have Plan B tucked in my pocket in case. I learn and grow from you, failure, and have become a stronger person from the times you've been in my life. Thank you.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Roughly 70% of change initiatives in organizations fail, regardless of the industry (Keller & Price, 2011). This staggering statistic is even more critical for state university systems, which have the difficulty of running effectively during the ongoing financial crisis, while still battling increased student consumerism, dwindling educational standards and budgets, and ever-changing organizational structures. In this uncertain environment, many university presidents have shorter terms than those of the past. College and university presidents had much shorter average tenures in 2011 than in 2005, reducing from 8.5 to 7 years (American Council on Education, 2012). The upheaval left behind after a president's brief tenure may be followed by rapid overhauls involving new positions and university-wide adjustments.

This case study explores which communicative leadership techniques, if any, used by a new university president and his cabinet facilitate organizational change processes. This study also gauges what, if any, discrepancies lie between the president and cabinet members' perceived and actual techniques, a necessary evaluation to determine the relationship between the participants' espoused theories of action and theories-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1974) with regard to communicative leadership techniques.

Problem

Miscommunication and lack of communication are often the greatest barriers for leaders, and when the prior president exits, the incoming president is charged to effectively lead and often reorganize the institution. During this organizational change, any one interpersonal communication breakdown could be critical. According to Gilley, Gilley, and McMillan (2009), “disappointing or unfavorable results due to unfulfilled or inaccurate promises and predictions undermine leadership credibility and lead to employee perceptions of injustice, misrepresentation, and violations of trust” (p. 80). Despite the urgency of organizational change within higher education, no studies, to the researcher’s knowledge, have discovered how newly appointed presidents’ communicative leadership affects change in higher education institutions. Additionally, the researcher found no studies that examine the interrelationships and communication present within a university’s cabinet. This case study builds from current research linking interpersonal communication to leadership success, as well as research stressing the importance of communicative leadership during organizational change, and examines these connections through the roles of a public university’s new president and his cabinet.

Study Purpose

Through qualitative analysis of a public university’s new president and his cabinet, this study explores the communicative leadership techniques that facilitate organizational change processes. The study also determines what, if any, discrepancies exist between the president’s and cabinet members’ perceived and actual techniques in an effort to determine if double-loop learning is being practiced (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

Research Questions

In order to discover answers that relate to the study’s purpose, the following questions were used to frame the study:

- What are the new president’s and cabinet members’ espoused theories of action regarding communicative leadership techniques during change?

- What are the new president’s and cabinet members’ theories-in-use regarding communicative leadership techniques during change?
- How do the new president’s and cabinet members’ espoused theories of action and theories-in-use regarding communicative leadership techniques align?
- How have the new president’s and cabinet members’ communicative leadership techniques influenced change?

Study Significance

This study contributes to the fields of communicative leadership, organizational change communication, and educational leadership communication. Currently, most studies conducted on change communication are quantitative, with a resulting lack of rich data (Maxwell, 2013, p. 126) to describe the communication acts within the change setting (Gilley et al., 2009; de Vries, Bakker-Pieper, & Oostenveld, 2010; Men, 2014). In addition, the typical focus of communicative leadership or interpersonal communication studies, whether during organizational change or not, is either the leader’s actions and own perceptions or the perceptions of the leader’s subordinates (Gilley et al., 2009; de Vries et al., 2010; Men, 2014), so this study adds a new dimension by capturing both the leader’s and subordinates’ views. By doing so, the president’s and cabinet members’ espoused theories of action are compared with their theories-in-use, and the existence of double-loop learning is evaluated (Argyris & Schön, 1974). Also, specific to this study is the gap in existing literature examining the relationship between communicative and change leadership in higher education.

The issues presented are relevant to both current and aspiring academic leaders because they need to make sure they are using interpersonal communication techniques (a cornerstone of communicative leadership) as facilitators rather than unintentional barriers. The issues are also important for stakeholders in the university setting because an interpersonal communication breakdown may lead to larger issues within the institution, especially during organizational change. According to Gilley et al. (2009), "leading change requires the use of a diverse set of communication techniques to deliver appropriate messages, solicit feedback, create readiness for change along with a sense of urgency, and motivate recipients to act" (p. 79). Leaders at all hierarchical levels must also be aware of how their communicative leadership and interpersonal communication techniques are perceived by others because in some instances a discrepancy may exist, which could affect organizational change.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this case study focuses on two specific areas: change leadership and communicative leadership with an emphasis on interpersonal communication.

Change leadership. The new president under consideration is leading multiple levels of organizational change, so looking at the data through a change leadership lens is advantageous. Using Kezar's (2014, p. xii) definition, change comprises "those intentional acts where a particular leader drives or implements a new direction."

Regarding leadership's involvement in organizational change, McClellan (2011) believes that simply communicating the change information is not enough:

> Change is a discursive struggle to engender alternative meanings, guiding organizational realities in different ways. Organizational change is no longer directly related to how successfully managers communicate information, but to a

> practice of enabling creative conversations among organizational participants. In this way, change is transformed from the strategic practice of persuasion into a collaborative practice of conversation aimed at generating new ways to organize. (p. 472)

In essence, facilitators of change must challenge the perceptions and stereotypes within the organization, a key component of which is creating a shared mindset through communication.

McClellan (2011) views "communication as a local, power-laden, political process that creates, maintains, and, potentially, changes understandings of organizational reality" (p. 466). More specifically, the physical exchanges regarding change are, ironically, what inhibit change events. McClellan (2011) states that failures of change initiatives arise from too much talk about the change; talking about change "suppresses the conflicts necessary to enable alternative understandings of organizational reality. Change fails not because of a lack of communication about change, but because the ways change is talked about do not provide opportunities for new meanings to emerge" (p. 471). Essentially, individuals fall into predictable patterns when communicating, even about change, and so no new change topics are addressed. McClellan (2011) further elaborates that "enabling change requires an ability to upset institutionalized organizational realities by denaturalizing existing meanings and developing new possibilities for organizational life" (p. 471).

John Kotter's change theory complements McClellan's links between communication and change implementation: "Without credible communication, and a lot of it, employees' hearts and minds are never captured" (Kotter, 1996, p. 9). The importance of leaders' consistency between action and words cannot be overemphasized: "Nothing undermines change more than behavior by important individuals that is inconsistent with the verbal communication. And yet this happens all the time" (Kotter, 1996, p. 10). A leader's role as the chief communicator within a change situation is further emphasized in the literature: "Although leaders do not and cannot completely control all events, they [can] nevertheless influence how events are seen and understood [by paying] close attention to how their language influences the interpretive frameworks of those around them" (Deetz, Tracy, & Simpson, 2000, p. 72).

Kotter's eight-step model was created for "fundamental changes in how the business is conducted in order to help cope with a new, more challenging market environment" (1995, p. 59). According to Kotter (1988), effective leaders create "an agenda for change" that includes "a vision that takes into account the legitimate long-term interests of the parties involved" and "a strategy for achieving that vision that takes into account all the relevant organizational and environmental forces" (p. 20). He also states that organizational change can occur only when leaders understand that they must also change their own behaviors (Kotter, 1996).

Leaders are not the only players in change, though. Fullan (1982) asserts that change models need to be observed in light of implications for stakeholders who either oppose or promote change, and that all members in the change are viewed as change agents. Often, though, conflict may arise between stakeholders when trying to enact change, which may create "short-term problems and challenges" (Kotter, 1985, p. 33). However, when conflict is effectively managed, "the result will be more original thinking, more creative solutions to business problems, and more innovative products and services” (Kotter, 1985, p. 33). These outcomes of viewing conflict as a constructive and necessary process may also lead to an organization that is “more competitive, responsive, and adaptive” (Kotter, 1985, p. 33). Although conflict can be construed as a negative aspect of organizational communication, Kotter embraces it as one of its more productive features, and a necessity in enacting change. “Implementation of change,” according to Lewis (2007), is an underrepresented and fast-growing element within communication theory; it “is both necessary and appropriate and thus provides an opportunity to heed the many calls for theory building” (p. 178).

Communicative leadership. Communicative leadership emphasizes the two-way nature of communication and the importance of reciprocal interactions. For any leader, effective communicative leadership is a necessary tool for building relationships and encouraging loyalty. According to Johansson, Miller, & Hamrin (2014), “a communicative leader is one who engages employees in dialogue, actively shares and seeks feedback, practices participative decision making, and is perceived as open and involved” (p. 155). It is through this iterative process that individuals are motivated (Gilley et al., 2009, p. 88). The guiding principles for communicative leadership are to coach and guide employees, facilitate framing and sensemaking, provide resources and create expectations, collaborate in problem-solving and feedback, and remain approachable (Johansson et al., 2014, pp. 154-155), continually fostering relationships.

One method for leaders to build relationships is through bonding, which includes sharing “stories of why change is needed” (Pisapia, 2009, p. 151). Higgs and Rowland (2011) agree, stating that leaders have the obligation of “creating the case for change” (p. 311). More specifically, “communicators who work successfully as contextual leaders very actively change people’s minds to the extent that they change reality” (Hamrefors, 2010, p. 148).

The act of administration and its necessary decision-making are seen as critical processes in John Dorsey’s Communication Model for Administration (1957): “A decision occurs upon the receipt of some kind of communication, it consists of a complicated process of combining communications from various sources, and it results in the transmission of further communication” (Dorsey, 1957, p. 309). He views communication not as one particular event, independent of all other communication events, but as a chain of related events, each link influenced by the prior one. Regarding influence, Dorsey (1957) sees the communication event as necessary to producing further dialogue, expanding that “because perceived communications generate further communications, ‘power’ consists of the extent to which a given communication influences the generation and flow of later communications” (p. 310).

Despite Dorsey’s view of communication as a tool of power, and the common belief that communication is essential to leadership, leaders may often forget to use it effectively when in the midst of chaos because organizations use communication on a day-to-day basis, “but in many cases it can be problematic to uphold because the management can easily forget the special importance it has during a change situation, as a result of the financial, technical, and operational demands of the change process” (Christensen, 2014, p. 382). Especially during those critical times, though, by neglecting dialogue or ineffectively communicating, leaders risk harming the valuable relationships they may have forged (Pisapia, 2009, p. 138).

Throughout the communication process, a basic communication model is present with each exchange and represents how a message may be misconstrued between the sender and receiver depending upon the receiver’s perception of the sender or the information being transmitted and vice versa (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). Adler and Towne (1978) expand upon this model to define the barriers to communication as physical or psychological “noise.” The physical “noise” refers to environmental distractions, whereas the psychological “noise” refers to barriers such as personality; biases; prior experiences; and perception of the sender, receiver, or the information being transmitted (Adler & Towne, 1978). Osland, Kolb, Rubin, and Turner (2007) further elaborate on communication barriers, explaining that the more these barriers interfere with the process, the wider the gap becomes between what the sender intends to communicate and what is actually communicated; the authors name this gap the “arc of distortion.” With regard to leadership communication, “Failure can occur if organization members misperceive environmental information or draw the wrong conclusions, even if the environmental information is correct” (Beck, Brüderl, & Woywode, 2008, p. 417).

Other barriers to the communication process exist as well. Argyris (1953) mentions secrecy between leadership and subordinates as a barrier that “leads to a weakened organization. It prevents upward communication of the important human problems that are creating difficulties” (p. 63). In addition, Rogers and Roethlisberger (1952) add that our innate need to judge creates the most dramatic barrier to interpersonal communication. To prevent judgment from taking over in a communication exchange, an individual should “listen with understanding” and “see the expressed idea and attitude from the other person’s point of view, to sense how it feels to him, to achieve his frame of reference in regard to the thing he is talking about" (Rogers & Roethlisberger, 1952, p. 47). Pisapia (2009) also emphasizes the importance of listening for strategic leaders, stating that they "should be much more listeners and information seekers than givers" (p. 136).

Methodology

The methodology used was a qualitative case study. First, Eastside University's new president was selected from a state university system because of his active role in initiating change at the institution. The American Council on Education defines a new president as one who has been in office for zero to three years (2012). Therefore, for the sake of this study, "new" includes a president who has been in office for six months to three years; the extra six months of tenure have been added so the president will have had some experience in the role and environment. Second, a team or committee tasked to make a significant change within the institution was identified to participate, which was the president's cabinet.

To better understand which communicative leadership techniques the new president and the cabinet saw as facilitators of organizational change, as well as to determine their perceptions of their own communicative leadership techniques, two interviews were conducted with all cabinet members but two (two members were only interviewed before the meetings since one was only present in the last meeting and another was not present at any meetings). The first set of interviews was conducted at the beginning of the study, and the second set of interviews was conducted after observations had begun.

The researcher observed weekly meetings attended by the president and the cabinet members to determine how the participants' perceptions of facilitating communicative leadership techniques during organizational change align with those actually used during organizational change. In addition, document review and journaling were used to clarify and confirm data obtained during observations and interviews.

Once data were collected, the researcher used process coding (Saldaña, 2013, p. 96) based on literature relating to leaders' communicative leadership and interpersonal communication, change leadership techniques, and perception of communication. After which, pattern coding (Saldaña, 2013, p. 209) was used to help determine narrower themes in the data.

Chapter Summary

This study aims to uncover the communicative leadership techniques a new university president and his cabinet members use to facilitate organizational change, which is significant not only because communicative leadership is critical to successful change efforts, but also because today's higher education environment is rife with change. In addition, with a lack of research on higher education administrators' perceptions of their own change leadership techniques versus those they practice, this study is of great value to the fields of higher education and communication. By determining the discrepancy, if any, between a president's and cabinet members' perceptions of their own communicative leadership and change leadership techniques and those they practice, future administrators will have literature to reference in order to enhance their own communicative leadership techniques.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter addresses the existing literature relevant to this case study of communicative leadership during a change initiative implemented by a new public university president. Building on the conceptual framework, this chapter will further describe the stages and elements associated with successful change as the study examines a change initiative already in progress. In addition, to guide the interview questions and meeting observations, as well as the subsequent data coding, change leadership and communicative leadership are more thoroughly defined regarding specific techniques and desired outcomes.

Change Leadership

The higher education landscape has undergone dramatic changes, spurred by financial crises, evolving educational standards and programs, and a need to answer to growing student consumerism. According to Orridge (2009), “successful organizations continually transform themselves as they respond to, or anticipate, the changing environment. When planning for change the leader needs to consider…short-term risk…, resistance…, power…, [and] how much commitment is needed” (p. 20). Deetz et al. (2000) also cite adaptation as a characteristic of more successful organizations (p. 205). Both Orridge’s and Deetz et al.’s findings fully support the research of John P. Kotter. The key focus of Kotter’s (1996) work is the eight-stage process for creating change, which includes producing a sense of urgency, forming a guiding coalition, building vision and strategy, communicating the vision, empowering employees, creating short-term wins, consolidating gains and producing change, and finally adapting the organization's culture to the change (p. 21). Using Kezar's (2014) definition, change comprises "those intentional acts where a particular leader drives or implements a new direction" (p. xii).

Kotter emphasizes that an individual creating and guiding a change effort must have both managerial and leadership qualities. Although leadership is essential to any organization's success—creating the join-in attitude and convincing subordinates to strive for that common vision—management talents must not be forgotten. According to Kotter (1996), "systematically targeting objectives and budgeting for them, creating action plans to achieve those objectives, organizing for implementation, and then controlling the process to keep it on track—this is the essence of management" (p. 128).

However, simply managing change does not take into account that the change process often does not have a specific or predictable route. Higgs and Rowland (2011) assert "change approaches that tended to be programmatic and rooted in a viewpoint that saw change initiatives as linear, sequential, and, consequently, predictable tended to fail in most contexts" (p. 310). These qualities of change necessitate a greater focus on change leadership as opposed to just resorting to change management and "organizations should get stuck *at the edge of chaos* since most observers believe that is where creativity and innovation occur" (Pisapia, 2009, p. 71). Change leadership, as opposed to change management, allows for this sort of reflection and discovery.

An important aspect of successful change is organizational ambidexterity (OA), which O'Reilly and Tushman (2004) define as "the ability of an organization to simultaneously pursue both explorative (discontinuous) and exploitative (incremental) innovation" (as cited in Junni, Sarala, Taras, & Tarba, 2013, p. 299). After finding mixed results from prior studies on the relationships between OA and performance, Junni et al. (2013), decided to conduct a meta-analysis to better determine whether, in fact, any consistent relationships could be found. In a thorough search for existing OA studies, the researchers found 135 samples from 69 studies. Then using Hunter and Schmidt's (2004) meta-analysis method, they "estimated the effect sizes—that is, the strength of the relationships between the variables of interest—on the basis of correlation coefficients" (Aguinis, Dalton, Bosco, Pierce, & Dalton, 2011; Grook et al., 2013, as cited in Junni et al., 2013, p. 302).

The study shows that combined OA (including both exploration and exploitation) is positively and significantly related to performance ($\rho = 0.38$), and that both exploration and exploitation have positive and significant effects on performance ($\rho = 0.26$ each) (Junni et al., 2013, pp. 303-305). The researchers find that the two elements that had been moderating the results of prior studies on relationships between OA and performance are context and methodology (Junni et al., 2013, p. 299). The type of industry affects the level of importance of OA to performance, and it "is particularly important for performance in nonmanufacturing industries and at higher levels of analysis" (Junni et al., 2013, p. 299). Service-oriented and technical fields have shown a higher effect of OA on performance, indicating that:

> In dynamic markets, firms need to continuously be on the lookout for new opportunities (exploration), in addition to exploiting existing resources, because the duration of an existing competitive advantage is very uncertain (Bingham & Eisenhardt, 2008; Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997). This suggests an increased and

> constant need for OA in dynamic environments. (as cited in Junni et al., 2013, p. 308)

Since the higher education sector falls within the service realm, and has certainly been experiencing dynamic conditions, its institutions' leaders should consider well-rounded OA, including actions to both explore new options and exploit resources that are already in place.

Perception & resistance. Change is a complicated process that often directly involves and affects several people. As such, considerable literature agrees that the change process must be considered from multiple viewpoints. "…Change agents and participants have different interpretations and mental models of a given change process in which they all participate" (Van de Ven, Polley, Garud, & Venkataraman, 1999, as cited in Van de Ven & Sun, 2011, p. 67), which will affect how they accept change and participate in the process. According to Hamrefors (2010), "a basic competence of a communicator is to understand how people function cognitively in their perceptions and perspective-making" (p. 143).

The Kubler-Ross Transition Curve describes seven phases an individual goes through during a time of transition; these phases include immobilization, minimization, incompetence, acceptance, testing, search for meaning, and finally internalization (Orridge, 2009, pp. 5-7). With organizational change, leaders need to be cognizant that not only will members of the organization be going through these phases, but also that each will move through at his or her own rate. In addition, senior leadership has most likely been working on the change initiatives before including other organizational members, so they may be steps ahead of everyone else in their acceptance of change (Orridge, 2009, pp. 7-8).

The varied timing of one's position on the Kubler-Ross Transition Curve for leaders and subordinates may also explain why leaders appear optimistic when introducing change. Deetz et al. (2000) state that "most leaders enter change efforts motivated and even excited. The change is fresh and new for them" (p. 40). The leaders have had time to plan and adjust to the upcoming change, so excitement would only be natural since they have most likely internalized the change. However, "many employees have a different experiential history. Often, they have been reorganized and developed to death. They have been through every change effort imaginable. They are understandably cynical" (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 40). So not only have employees not had time to process the impending change, they are also relying on past experiences to frame the outcomes of the approaching change.

Additionally, one's role during change initiatives can lend the self-perception of that change being either intentional or imposed, which can also create resistance. Orridge (2009) emphasizes the difference between "intentional" and "imposed" change depending upon what one's role is in the change process (p. 22). Leaders create the change initiatives and view the change process as "gradual," "problem solving," and "anticipated," whereas those who are tasked to actually implement the initiatives will view the very same change process as "sudden," "dramatic," "creating problems," and "unexpected" (Orridge, 2009, p. 22). Kim and Mauborgne (2005) concur, adding that when leaders propose change, they are asking members of the institution "to step out of their comfort zones and change how they have worked in the past" (p. 171).

The natural and most common reaction to imposed change is to resist. Deetz et al. (2000) describe the resulting resistance as "unintentional. Old habits and automatic responses are hard to recognize and change" (p. 40). This view is also supported by Orridge (2009), who finds that resistance in an effort to "maintain the status quo" results in specific "resisting behaviours," including nullification, defamation, and expulsion (p. 28). Nullification, the least severe of these behaviors, occurs when the change agent's views are dismissed, such as when a new leader is told that he does not understand how the institution works because of his newness (Orridge, 2009, p. 29). Moving toward more blatant behavior, a leader can be isolated from organizational activity by being excluded from communication channels such as emails, announcements, and meetings (Orridge, 2009, p. 29). The most drastic resisting behavior is expulsion, which also serves as a warning to others who may be thinking about creating change (Orridge, 2009, p. 30).

Facing similar challenges as higher education institutions in the United States, a university in the United Kingdom was the setting for Pisapia, Townsend, & Razzaq's (2015) study, which analyzed the differing effects of vertical and horizontal leadership techniques during change initiatives.

In an effort to better enact the strategic goal of interdisciplinary research, the university's leadership, led by a new principal, proposed an institutional reorganization; this proposal was greeted unfavorably by the university's faculty (Pisapia et al., 2015, pp. 1-2). As Pisapia et al. (2015) documented, "the university collapsed its then seven faculties and more than 50 individual departments into four colleges containing 19 Schools, establishing six research institutes that would cut across colleges to enable a university-wide focus on critical areas necessitating interdisciplinary research" (p. 2).

Inadvertently, this reorganization proposal not only eliminated departments, which were a major source of identity for faculty, but also created another layer of management (Pisapia et al., 2015, p. 2). In addition, the reorganization also reallocated funds so that some existing faculty research lost funding to overarching projects (Pisapia et al., 2015, p. 2).

Data were collected from staff, managers, and archival data using "an inductive, mixed method, single case study methodology to gain insight into the nature of strategic change because of its demonstrated empirical richness, explanatory power, and internal consistency (Van de Ven, 1992)" (Pisapia et al., 2015, p. 4). The 18-question survey used was given to 992 "research active academic staff members," 127 of which were completed; 25 interviews were conducted with "heads of colleges, heads of schools, research coordinators, research team leaders, and team members," and archival documents were reviewed (Pisapia et al., 2015, p. 2). Data collected from the research were coded first by respondent type and then by themes relating to the research questions (Pisapia et al., 2015, p. 5).

The researchers found that commitment decreased when leaders used vertical techniques such as force, and that horizontal techniques such as networking increased individuals' energy. Universities were also found to have specific hindrances that are not present in other environments; "competing interests, different objectives, absent norms of reciprocity, and different career goals made the alignment process difficult" (Pisapia et al., 2015, p. 1). Therefore, for the sake of this case study, the presence of vertical or horizontal leadership techniques may be of value to note since their existence tends to play a role in perception and resistance.

Because leaders do not always consider others' perceptions of the process, they "rarely anticipate the extent of the resistance to planned changes" (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 39). Also, Deetz et al. (2000) add that leaders likely have less to lose from their own plans since "they are protected in it. Employees, on the other hand, are often surprised, do not understand the reasoning, did not participate in the choice, and see themselves as having much to lose" (p. 39).

Despite their perceived protection in the change process, leaders can make efforts to ease the transition for those who may not necessarily feel that same level of protection. Kotter's (1996) change process attempts to answer these organizational concerns: "in a way, the primary purpose of the first six phases of the transformation process is to build up sufficient momentum to blast through the dysfunctional granite walls found in so many organizations" (p. 130).

Motivation & participation. Implementing change takes more than just a leader, so the importance of stakeholders must be considered throughout the process (Fullan, 1982). Subordinates must be motivated to embrace the change and participate in it. According to Amabile (1996), "the most important motivation is intrinsic motivation, which means that they are motivated by the content of their activities" (as cited in Hamrefors, 2010, p. 143). Aligning with this concept, Kotter (1996) argues that the first two steps to empowering others are to "communicate a sensible vision" and "make structures compatible with the vision" (p. 115). A good vision simplifies by "clarifying the general direction for change," "motivates people to take action in the right direction, even if the initial steps are personally painful," and "helps coordinate the actions of different people" (Kotter, 1996, pp. 68-69). And although a sound vision may be demanding and come with specific short-term disadvantages, its ultimate goal is to create positive outcomes for all stakeholders (Kotter, 1996, p. 73).

Parallel with Kotter's (1996) emphasis on the value of vision, Senge (2006) also believes a shared "genuine" vision, as opposed to just a "vision statement," is important for the success of an organization (p. 9). Whereas Kotter uses vision as an integral piece to change initiatives, though, Senge uses it as a necessity for fostering learning. Senge (2006) explains that with a shared vision, "people excel and learn, not because they are told to, but because they want to" (p. 9). Not only does it create motivation for those asked to participate, but "when people truly share a vision they are connected, bound together by a common aspiration," and the shared vision also "provides the focus and energy for learning" (Senge, 2006, p. 192).

The vision is what enables people to harness creative tension between it and the current reality, a key component of personal mastery. According to Senge (2006), "vision paints a picture of what we want to create. Systems thinking reveals how we have created what we currently have" (p. 214). Senge attributes this relationship to why visions often fail. Organizations now rely heavily on creating and implementing visions, but they have not looked at the organization through the lens of systems thinking, which leads members of the organization to have a fuzzy view of their current reality, in turn preventing them from fully using creative tension while moving toward the vision.

Creating and enacting a successful vision involves the entire organization, using effective communication to ensure collective join-in. As an example, Kohles, Bligh, and Carsten (2013) conducted a study of a large grocery chain to evaluate knowledge and perceptions of company vision. Over 6,000 employees, including managers and subordinates, received the study survey through the company's mail, and the researchers received a 24.3% response rate (n = 1481) (Kohles et al., 2013, pp. 473-474). The survey measured for "two-way vision communication, vision knowledge, innovation characteristics of the vision, vision integration, organizational commitment, and leadership with vision" (Kohles et al., 2013, pp. 474-475).

The results of the study "suggest that leadership with vision and two-way leader-follower vision communication are best conceptualized as distinct constructs" (Kohles et al., 2013, p. 476). In other words, by creating a vision, leadership will be more likely to have strong vision knowledge among employees, but if two-way vision communication is not present, the likelihood of employees integrating that vision will decrease. The researcher's findings "offer further support for vision communication as a distinct and important antecedent of the vision integration process, and as an important predictor of employees' organizational commitment" (Kohles et al., 2013, p. 477). Further, the research emphasizes that a new vision should be seen as a suggested "innovation," warranting acceptance or refusal by employees (Kohles et al., 2013, p. 466). Although this sort of participatory view appears solid on paper, the logistics of such an approach must also be considered. Maintaining two-way communication between leaders and subordinates can help give the process structure, while still providing an arena to discuss the vision's appropriateness regarding individuals' job descriptions (Kohles et al., 2013, pp. 478-479). The researchers elaborate that "only at this point, when followers perceive the vision as compatible with their jobs, do they take the next step and integrate the vision as a guide for their work" (Kohles et al., 2013, p. 479).

Techniques used to help create genuine participation in change efforts include motivation and communication. Gilley et al. (2009) explore leaders' effectiveness in implementing organizational change given subordinates' perceptions, and what "leader behaviors" are most critical for successful change (pp. 75-76). They gave the 44-question (36 content and eight demographic) survey to 552 business masters and PhD students (working in a variety of industries) at three universities; 513 surveys were completed (Gilley et al., 2009, p. 84).

One of the highest and most significant associations with implementing change, according to the study, is "motivating employees and providing effective communications" (Gilley et al., 2009, p. 88). The researchers' study "suggests the importance of particular behaviors and reveals that a considerable percentage of variance in leader change effectiveness is predicted by talent in motivating others, followed closely by the ability to communicate effectively" (Gilley et al., 2009, p. 88). Results from the survey also showed that on a 5-point scale, from "never" to "always," respondents ranked "managerial effectiveness in implementing change" as "never" or "rarely" 37.6%, and "usually" or "always" 17.8% (Gilley et al., 2009, p. 85), which is in stark contrast to CEOs' positive self-reported change effectiveness (IBM, 2006, as cited in Gilley et al., 2009, p. 83). The study's results showing motivation's association with effective change initiatives are especially important because they are from the employees' perspectives, as opposed to the leaders'. In addition, the discrepancy between the change effectiveness reported by employees as opposed to CEOs is telling in that CEOs may assume they are appropriately motivating their employees to participate in change, when in fact they are not.

The work of Kotter (1996) and Deetz et al. (2000) afford valuable insights concerning the relationship between crisis and motivation. In “the absence of a major and visible crisis” (Kotter, 1996, p. 40), people are often unmotivated to change. However, in some instances an approaching crisis does exist, but those involved choose not to see it, especially given “human nature, with its capacity for denial, especially if people are already busy or stressed” (Kotter, 1996, p. 40). Unless the crisis becomes major and visible, individuals will often not act unless they need to, not wanting to upset their complacency. “Usually, people only feel the need for a change when there is clear and undeniable evidence that organizational survival and people’s chances for success are at stake” (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 39). Unfortunately, damage from the crisis has likely already been done at that point and energies are focused on repairing as opposed to creating positive change.

Another dilemma occurs when a need for a particular change is apparent and agreed upon, but the way in which the change is introduced and approached may come into question, as was evidenced in Pisapia et al.’s (2015) previously mentioned study (p. 6). The top management team “saw strategic change as a source of order between the university and change forces in its environment whereas academics and staff saw it as a source of disorder which is the normal result of hierarchical level decision-making” (Pisapia et al., 2015, pp. 6-7). For change to occur, individuals must be willing to embrace and participate in the process; “from the academic staff’s perspective, if they are interested and committed they will engage willingly. If not, incentives must be applied rather than withdrawn” (Pisapia et al., 2015, p. 7). In the case study, the change of departments to clusters negatively affected the faculty by eliminating their support staff (Pisapia et al., 2015, p. 7).

Regardless of whether a change is motivated by crisis, Kotter expresses the importance of creating an effective “guiding coalition,” which has the characteristics of “position power, expertise, credibility, and leadership” (Kotter, 1996, p. 57). A successful guiding coalition helps encourage collaboration, dialogue, participation, and ultimately aids in anchoring the change in the organizational culture. “When the new practices made in transformation effort are not compatible with the relevant cultures, they will always be subject to regression” (Kotter, 1996, p. 148).

Parallel with Kotter (1996) and Pisapia’s (2009) work, Senge (2006) writes that productive conflict is a necessary component for decision-making in a team setting, adding that “one of the most reliable indicators of a team that is continually learning is the visible conflict of ideas. In great teams conflict becomes productive” (p. 232). Dialogue and discussion both foster healthy conflict (dialogue more indirectly than discussion), which in turn strengthens the team dynamic. Less cohesive teams, though, handle conflict differently, either hiding the existing conflict or becoming paralyzed from stubbornness about differing ideas, creating a negative and often counterproductive environment. According to Senge (2006):

> In the ‘smooth surface’ teams, members believe that they must suppress their conflicting views in order to maintain the team…. The polarized team is one in which managers ‘speak out,’ but conflicting views are deeply entrenched. Everyone knows where everyone else stands, and there is little movement. (p. 232)

Especially important to the team learning process is Argyris’s (1985) concept of “defensive routines,” or “habitual ways of interacting that protect us and others from threat or embarrassment, but which also prevent us from learning” by inhibiting double-loop learning (Senge, 2006, p. 220). In a case study of managers, Argyris (1991) found that successful individuals not only practiced single-loop learning, but were also embarrassed about analyzing their own learning patterns for fear they did not meet the expectations of their positions or pay. As a result, they often become defensive and blame other individuals or situations for their own shortcomings, further showing single-loop learning tendencies (Argyris, 1991, p. 5), and since they do not step back to examine their behavior pattern, the loop continues, which Argyris calls a “closed loop” (Argyris, 1991). The defensive routines practiced by successful individuals were what prevented them from learning.

If team members are aware of the concept of defensive routines and make an effort to identify when they surface during team activities, defensive routines can be used to enhance team performance. Senge (2006) states that “it is not the absence of defensiveness that characterizes learning teams but the way defensiveness is faced” (p. 240). They can be an “ally toward building a learning team by providing a signal for when learning is not occurring. Most of us know when we are being defensive, even if we cannot fully identify the source or pattern of our defensiveness” (Senge, 2006, p. 239). More specifically, other team members who see defensiveness surface in others may take it as a cue that something is not right in the team dynamic, or that an issue has not been properly dealt with. Senge (2006) further elaborates that “often, the stronger the defensiveness, the more important the issue around which people are defending or protecting their views. If these views can be brought out productively, they may provide windows onto each other's thinking" (p. 239). In essence, the team members are aware and have the learning capacity of each other and the team as a whole in mind, which can trump any one person's defensiveness.

Short-term wins. Encouraging constituents through major change initiatives can often be challenging, given that results may not be apparent immediately. Kotter (1996) uses the term "short-term wins" to describe the small changes that compose larger changes, as well as continue to motivate individuals during the longer and more-tedious process of organizational change. The three characteristics of a short-term win are "it's visible, it's unambiguous, and it's clearly related to the change effort" (Kotter, 1996, pp. 121-122).

More importantly, a short-term win should "provide evidence that sacrifices are worth it" (Kotter, 1996, p. 123). Short-term wins should "reward change agents with a pat on the back, help fine-tune vision and strategies, undermine cynics and self-serving resisters, keep bosses on board, and build momentum" (Kotter, 1996, p. 123). In other words, short-term wins should maintain motivation and participation of those involved in the change initiative.

In contrast to Kotter's concept of short-term wins, Weick (1984) defines a "small win" as a "concrete, complete, implemented outcome of moderate importance (p. 43). By itself, one small win may seem unimportant. A series of wins at small but significant tasks, however, reveals a pattern that may attract allies, deter opponents, and lower resistance to subsequent proposals." As opposed to a leader focusing on one larger change initiative, and highlighting the smaller accomplishments building up to it in order to keep momentum, Weick (1984) argues that the small wins should not be tailored to fit a larger change goal, but rather should bring to focus the next small problem that warrants another change. Weick (1984) suggests "that the activities we participate in as we go about solving everyday problems may more radically change an organization than grandiose and revolutionary projects" (as cited in Stohl, 1995, p. 166). A major benefit of small wins, according to Weick (1984), is that they allow leaders to adapt their strategy and focus of energy to meet a rapidly changing environment.

Communicative Leadership

This case study was designed to describe the communicative leadership techniques and interpersonal communication exchanges involved with a new university president's change initiatives. Decker and Decker (2015, p. 32) note recent changes in society that are necessitating a change in how leaders communicate, which warrants further research into the area. A considerable amount of literature has been published on how leaders communicate and the importance of the process, yet "there is much we still do not know about the communicative aspects of leadership" (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014, p. 22). Given the importance of communication to leadership, a theory such as communicative leadership has been questioned as redundant because leading necessitates communication. Despite this perceived redundancy, though, "connotations evoked by the concept seem to signify that leaders who are 'communicative' are not just communicating, which all leaders and members do continuously, but that they are 'good communicators'" (Johansson et al., 2014, p. 148).

Placing the communicative trait on a proficiency scale also implies that it can be learned and practiced (Johansson et al., 2014, p. 148), which is part of the significance of this case study; with an objective and descriptive picture of communicative leadership in practice, other leaders may find it easier to hone in on their own communicative nature. “Yukl (2006) found that leadership at different levels in an organization directly or indirectly determines organizational culture, climate, and communications” (as cited in Men, 2014, p. 265). So as others at an institution see the leader’s communicative mindset, they may be more likely to adopt the same.

A communicative leader is specifically defined as “one who engages employees in dialogue, actively shares and seeks feedback, practices participative decision making, and is perceived as open and involved” (Johansson et al., 2014, p. 155). According to the literature, these collaborative techniques aim at accomplishing one of the following: “initiating structure; facilitating work; relational dynamics; and representing the unit” (Druskat & Wheeler, 2003; Morgeson et al., 2010, as cited in Johansson et al., 2014, p. 150). When placed in the context of change and specifically a new president, these actions become even more crucial, so this case study will seek to describe their interplay.

Communicative leadership focuses on effective communication and relationship-building to meet organizational goals. Johansson et al. (2014, pp. 154-155) give a more detailed account of a communicative leader’s guiding principles:

- “coach and enable employees to be self-managing
- provide structures that facilitate the work
- set clear expectations
- are approachable, respectful, and express concern for employees
- actively engage in problem solving, follow up on feedback, and advocate for the unit

- convey direction and assist others in achieving their goals
- actively engage in framing of messages and events
- enable and support sense-making”

All of these principles rely heavily on a leader’s ability to shape dialogue with subordinates, and a university president’s role is no exception. According to Hamrefors (2010), “communicators are often active in the development of specific words and concepts aimed at inspiring progress and development. In many organisations, however, the effect is not so positive. Instead the use of words may have a conservative effect” (p. 145). Leaders must carefully choose what they say in day-to-day conversation, which may be in contrast to more formal communications drafted by public relations and communications staff.

To discover whether leadership style (task- or relationship-oriented) and communication competence (effectiveness and appropriateness) are predictors of employee outcomes (job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment, Mikkelson, York, and Arritola (2015) surveyed employees (n = 276) from multiple backgrounds and industries.

The information elicited from participants was regarding their own perceptions of their direct supervisors (Mikkelson et al., 2015, p. 336) and “participation in the study consisted of a brief questionnaire (110 questions) designed to assess communication and leadership in the supervisor-employee relationship” (Mikkelson et al., 2015, p. 343). Using Northouse’s (2013) 20-item Leadership Style Questionnaire, participants evaluated their supervisors’ leadership styles on a task-relationship-oriented dimension (Mikkelson et al., 2015, p. 343). To measure communication competence, “participants were asked to respond to the degree their supervisor engaged in behaviors relating to being appropriate and effective in communicating with them" using Canary and Spitzberg's (1987) instrument (Mikkelson et al., 2015, p. 343). Employee outcomes were measured using the Abridged Job in General Scale (Russell et al., 2004) for job satisfaction; Richmond's (1990) five semantic differential items for motivation; and Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulain's (1974) measurement for organizational commitment (Mikkelson et al., 2015, p. 344).

In line with the researchers' predictions, "effective and appropriate communication were both positively related to satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment. Regression analysis determined that effective communication and relations-oriented leadership were the best predictors of satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment" (Mikkelson et al., 2015, p. 336).

The findings of Mikkelson et al.'s (2015) study are relevant to this case study because communicative leadership theory relies heavily on the notion that leadership is a combination of building relationships and communicating effectively, ultimately resulting in collaborative decision making. In addition, the study's findings stress that an inseparable link exists between not only just leadership outcomes and communication, but leadership outcomes and effective communication, which parallels with the findings of communicative leadership theorists Johansson et al. (2014, p. 148).

Trust. A key outcome of communicative leadership is that it can generate trust between the leader and the led. According to Högström et al. (1999, p. 8), "in the business context, the distance between corporate management and employees needs to be bridged by leaders' 'close-up communication' and communicative relating behavior in order to create trust and understanding, otherwise messages from the head office will go unheard" (as cited in Johansson et al., 2014, p. 149). Regarding this case study, trust should be evaluated closely; the site institution, Eastside University, recently had a broad shift in upper administration, including the president, so building a foundation of trust is necessary to increase participation both internally and externally. Kotter (1996) states that "when trust is present, you will usually be able to create teamwork. When it is missing, you won't" (p. 61).

Using communication to create trust has become even more important in the last decade or so, both in corporate and higher education realms, as leadership has lost its natural association with trust. "This trust gap is one of the new and unyielding realities of communicating in the twenty-first century, and it's dramatically shifting the way we think about and respond to traditional sources of power" (Decker & Decker, 2015, p. 32). Leaders are in a position to work for and earn the trust of their followers, and often are greeted with cynicism and uncertainty now associated with leadership titles (Decker & Decker, 2015, p. 36).

A study conducted by Edelman Trust Barometer (2014) found certain CEO actions are more likely to build trust than others. The actions most associated with trust are "communicating clearly and transparently, telling the truth regardless of how complex or unpopular it is, engaging with employees regularly, and being visible during challenging times" (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2014, as cited in Decker & Decker, 2015, p. 39). The trust actions reported in this 2014 study are parallel with the guiding principles of communicative leadership, and will help guide this case study.

Influence, sensemaking, & ownership. Once a communicative leader has built a sense of trust, he or she can create common goals and a shared reality to increase join-in (Högström et al., 1999, p. 8, as cited in Johansson et al., 2014, p. 149). Hamrefors (2010) agrees and adds that "communicators who work successfully as contextual leaders very actively change people's minds to the extent that they change reality" (p. 148). This part of the process is especially relevant for this case study in that the president is new and is creating relationships while simultaneously working to positively change the institution because "the communication competence, quality, styles, and channels of a leader can influence the attitude and behavior of employees" (Men, 2014, p. 266).

An issue with this approach, however, is that influencing or changing mindsets may be seen as an ethical violation if the end goals are not positive for those involved (Hamrefors, 2010, p. 148). Therefore, leaders need to be astute when being persuasive, and should focus on creating mutually beneficial outcomes. According to Eriksen (2001), "the term *communicative leadership* designates that leaders are able to generate agreement and that they act on the basis of a consensus which has been legitimately achieved" (p. 22). Creating this sort of consensus requires a leader to be aware of personal networks within the institution, as well as how its individuals may be persuaded. Eriksen (2001) elaborates, stating "this attitude implies that individuals are able to distinguish between the person and his/her point of view, between person and role, and between relevant and irrelevant aspects of the problem" (p. 29).

Following the creation of shared meaning and common goals, a communicative leader will strive to create ownership and "when organizational members participate, they are able to take ownership of the processes and activities that help them play a role in fulfilling the vision" (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 97). Kotter (1996) argues that in order for individuals to progress toward a common goal, they must all desire that same goal and "only when all the members of a guiding coalition deeply want to achieve the same objective does real teamwork become feasible" (Kotter, 1996, p. 65). The ownership can move beyond individual ownership, though; as a successful communicative leader, the president would link it to the entire institution to further build a team mentality and a sense of purpose. Deetz et al. (2000) give a similar viewpoint that:

> When members of an organization feel a commitment to the goals of the organization, they feel as though by helping the organization succeed, they are able to not only be a part of a successful enterprise but also help accomplish something important. (p. 97)

Although from a non-academic sector, the following study shows the importance of communication and consistent sensemaking among all stakeholders. Weber, Thomas, and Stephens (2015) study the communicative and sensemaking results of a proposed modification to the Maritime Transportation Security Act in 2006. This proposed modification, referred to by the authors as "the live fire event," (Weber et al., 2015), was a simple proposition to change existing temporary U.S. Coast Guard live-fire training zones into permanent ones; however, during the request and media-coverage time periods, several stakeholders assumed these were new zones, and then began to even question the temporary training zones that had already existed for eight months (p. 75). "A detailed, emergent account of a failed initiative was derived from public comments in the *Federal Register*, transcripts from public meetings, newspaper articles, and semistructured interviews with key internal informants" (Weber et al., 2015, p. 68).

After data were coded to find common themes and attitudes, the researchers conducted a first-order analysis “to construct the detailed story that developed over the 6 months” (Weber et al., 2015, p. 73), and “examine a divergent sensemaking process” (p. 68). Then, a second-order analysis helped “identify four critical triggers that led to a communication breakdown: (a) unidirectional and parsimonious communication, (b) multifaceted understandings of organizational identities, (c) misaligned cues, and (d) an emergence of interorganizational sensemaking” (Weber et al., 2015, p. 68).

The study shows the critical nature of strategy and anticipation in the sensemaking process. The researchers share that “from a strategic communication perspective, our findings demonstrate the importance of taking a broad perspective of the legitimate participants in a sensemaking process, as well as reconciling sensemaking trajectories to avoid contradictions between perspectives” (Weber et al., 2015, p. 68). Although this particular study involves many external stakeholders, its validity with regard to potential contradictory sensemaking among participants is not lost on the scale of this case study’s narrower focus. As such, particular attention should be paid to the identified triggers that contribute to communication breaking down and the resulting inconsistencies with sensemaking, especially one-way communication.

Interpersonal communication. At the foundation of communicative leadership are interpersonal communication exchanges. Shannon and Weaver (1949) first define interpersonal communication as the process of transmitting, receiving, decoding, and responding to information. This basic communication model mentions perception and its possible role as a barrier to communication. Adler and Towne (1978) further define the barriers to communication as physical or psychological “noise,” which means an exchange may be hindered by loud noises in a room or by the thoughts, perceptions, or preconceptions a participant may have. The more barriers interfere with the process, the wider the gap becomes between what the sender intended to communicate and what was actually communicated; this discrepancy is called the “arc of distortion” (Osland et al., 2007).

In a 2014 study, Men measured the relationships “between transformational leadership, the use of communication channels, symmetrical communication, and employee satisfaction” (p. 264). The quantitative study used online surveys given to employees at various companies and in varied positions (n = 400) to increase generalizability (Men, 2014, p. 271). The findings of the study confirmed that transformational leaders prefer to use communication media that enhance two-way communication, such as face-to-face and phone conversations (Men, 2014, p. 276). Men (2014) also found that “transformational leadership, the use of face-to-face communication channels by leaders, and the symmetrical communication system of the organization were all significant positive predictors of employee satisfaction” (p. 276). Employees respond more positively to “a communication system that is open, two-way, and responsive, addresses employee opinions and concerns, and boosts mutual understanding, collaboration, and dialogue” (Men, 2014, p. 279). This predictive relationship is essential to any relationship-oriented leadership style, improving employee morale and subsequent employee outcomes, and communicative leadership is no exception.

Especially relevant to interpersonal communication, Senge (2006, p. 8) describes the learning organization discipline of “mental models,” which “are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action." What must be taken into consideration when explaining mental models is that individuals and organizations typically do not recognize the ones they have in place, and how they affect their actions (Senge, 2006, p. 8). After a CEO saw a recording of himself speaking, he was taken aback. Decker and Decker (2015) describe this phenomenon with the term "disparity," which is when we realize "that the way we *think* we come across to others is completely different than the way we *actually* come across to others. One of the most common problems top executives have is that no one dares give them honest feedback" (p. 25). Senge (2006) asserts that the underlying factor that creates a rift between perceived and actual actions is one's mental model.

He claims "reflection" will create awareness of the mental models, why they have developed, and how they impact our actions, and that "inquiry skills…in face-to-face interactions with others, especially in dealing with complex and conflictual issues," can do so as well (Senge, 2006, p. 175).

A foundational theory for Senge's (2006) concept of mental models is double-loop learning, which is the ability to recognize discrepancies between "espoused theories" and "theories-in-use" to better align them (Argyris & Schön, 1974). Simply having a gap between one's espoused theory and theory-in-use is not necessarily a negative trait, stresses Senge, but is made negative by not acknowledging the gap's existence and not being honest about it with people (Senge, 2006, p. 177). According to Senge (2006), without "commitment to the espoused theory, then the gap does not represent a tension between reality and my vision but between reality and a view I advance (perhaps because of how it will make me look to others)" (p. 177).

To analyze how CEOs address learning, García-Morales, Verdú-Jover, and Lloréns (2009) collected data from 239 Spanish companies using a questionnaire with separate scales to measure personal mastery, shared vision, environment, strategic proactivity, single- and double-loop learning, organizational innovation, and organizational performance (pp. 575-577). A confirmatory factor analysis was used to test each scale for unidimensionality, validity, and reliability (García-Morales et al., 2009, pp. 575-578). The study also looked for effects of learning level (single- or double-loop) on company "innovation and performance" (García-Morales et al., 2009, p. 567). 900 questionnaires were given out, and the researchers received a 45% response rate (n = 408) (García-Morales et al., 2009, p. 575). "A series of x 2, t-tests, Harman's one-factor tests, correlations, and regression analyses were used" in the final analysis (García-Morales et al., 2009, p. 567).

Interestingly, the researchers found that double-loop learning is positively and significantly affected by "personal mastery, shared vision, ambiguous environment and strategic proactivity," whereas single-loop learning is positively and significantly affected by "personal mastery and stable environment," which supports Senge's (2006) view that single-loop learning is appropriate for more stable environments, but more dynamic environments require double-loop learning. García-Morales et al. (2009) state that "double-loop learning is also shown to be more appropriate for tackling the current turbulence and constant change in the environment" (p. 584). Another important finding from García-Morales et al.'s (2009) study is that learning organizations tend to have shared visions in the true sense of the term. According to García-Morales et al. (2009), "when people truly share a vision, they bond in a common aspiration" (p. 583), which inevitably lends to strategy and team learning.

As illustrated in the prior example, individuals and organizations often have differences between their espoused theories of action and theories-in-use, and may or may not be aware of them. As a result, they respond the same in like situations, and fail to truly grow and learn. Despite individuals and organizations appearing to be accomplished in these scenarios, "rarely does it lead to organizational learning. Behaviorally, individuals engage in strategies of control and self-protection and discourage genuine inquiry" (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 206). This "single-loop learning is typical in organizations. It entails achieving higher competence levels in the skills and responses that already exist in the organization. Most training aims at this" (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 206). One of the critical side effects of an individual who continues to use single-loop learning and not align his or her espoused theories of action and theories-in-use is that any associated groups tend to pick up the same debilitating traits, which can in turn inhibit "the development of group dynamics that facilitate the construction of theories-in-use; it also makes learning difficult because the individuals find themselves locked in not only by their own behavior but also by the group dynamics that these behaviors produce" (Argyris & Schön, 1974, p. 38). The single-loop process can have a direct negative effect on administrators' ability to communicate and to train others to communicate. Helping others develop their communication skills "is usually a very demanding task as managers often believe themselves to be better communicators than they actually are. Hence, teaching people the ‘noble art of communication’ often meets resistance” (Hamrefors, 2010, p. 148).

Double-loop learning, however, occurs when the difference is recognized, and efforts are taken to make theories-in-use align more closely to espoused theories of action. It “entails the development of different types of skills and responses” through behaviors that “encourage inquiry, minimize unilateral control, and aim at breaking standard routines” (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 206).

Dialogue. The term face-to-face communication seems to be synonymous with interpersonal communication; however, simply by speaking with another person, one is not necessarily engaging in dialogue. Therefore, distinction must be made between conversing and actual dialogue. According to Deetz et al. (2000), “even face-to-face communication is often more a simultaneous monologue among several people than a dialogue” (p. 108). Add to this interaction a power differential, such as one present when a president speaks with a subordinate, and each may be merely speaking at the other; the one with more power may be giving directions, while the other may be explaining a situation within the organization. Further emphasizing the importance of skill, Deetz et al. (2000) assert that “even when there is a genuine effort to understand the other and considerable trust and openness, without appropriate skills, dialogue cannot happen” (p. 108). These skills, according to Deetz et al. (2000), are using concrete language, being able to listen and clarify, and taking responsibility for one’s actions and words.

Dialogue tends to be the most effective form of communication as the information being transmitted becomes more complicated. The literature explains that, rather than with electronic media or large group meetings, dialogue is more appropriate in these situations “because it facilitates immediate feedback, the use of natural language and multiple cues, and personal focus” (Daft & Lengel, 1984, 1986, as cited in Men, 2014, p. 269). As with communicative leadership, these traits emphasize the need for environments that foster relationships and feedback. Seemingly cyclical in nature, a constructive and nurturing organization fosters productive dialogue, and that dialogue in turn creates more positive relationships within the organization. “Cameron and McCollum (1993) noted that the two-way nature of interpersonal communication channels, such as team meetings, group problem-solving sessions, and supervisor briefings, enhances management-employee relationships better than publications” (as cited in Men, 2014, pp. 269-270). Further evidence supports this relationship between open dialogue and productivity: “High-performing teams explicitly discuss reasons for decisions reached” (Behfar, Peterson, Mannix, & Trochim, 2008, as cited in Van de Ven & Sun, 2011, p. 63).

Although discussion is just as beneficial to a team as dialogue, given the circumstances, Senge (2006) distinguished between the two and shares the appropriate use of each technique: “Both dialogue and discussion can lead to new courses of action; but actions are often the focus of discussion, whereas new actions emerge as a byproduct of dialogue” (Senge, 2006, p. 230).

Discussion, as defined by Senge (2006, p. 220), is most closely related to a debate, in which each participant shares opinions or ideas, those ideas may be constructively challenged by others, and then the person must defend the shared opinions and ideas in light of the opponents’ counterargument, which can lead to “a search for the best view to support decisions that must be made at this time” (Senge, 2006, p. 220). The predicted outcome of discussion is a decision or some course of action; it is more immediate. Senge (2006) clarifies, though, that “dialogue and discussion are potentially complementary, but most teams lack the ability to distinguish between the two and move consciously between them” (p. 220).

In contrast with discussion, dialogue, as defined by Senge (2006), is a process in which team members practice listening actively to others’ viewpoints and ideas, withholding their own judgements and perceptions. Dialogue is more of a forum for sharing and thinking to help create new ideas in which “people become observers of their own thinking” (Senge, 2006, p. 224). As such, necessary to dialogue are the abilities to “suspend assumptions,” see other participants as “colleagues,” and have an identified “facilitator” who can keep the “context” (Senge, 2006, p. 226). Suspending assumptions does not mean ignoring one’s assumptions, but rather recognizing that they exist and setting them aside during the dialogue. Also helpful in the process is “thinking of one another as colleagues…because thought is participative” (Senge, 2006, p. 228) and will facilitate the ability to withhold judgements.

Transparency, ambiguity, & concrete language. The level of transparency and the type of language used have an effect on a communication exchange, and must also be considered in this case study’s analysis. Argyris (1953, p. 5) noted that one of the most common and most valued leadership traits is the leader’s ability to interact with his immediate subordinates. According to Argyris (1953), “the leader, by the very nature of his position, is placed in control of receiving and transmitting the communications that emanate from above” (p. 22). Once he or she has received a communication, the leader shares it with immediate subordinates before passing it on to other employees.

Another important aspect Argyris (1953) observed is that the leader chooses to immediately share important information with his or her subordinates unless there is a specific reason not to do so, whether the information is sensitive or may not be fully decided upon (p. 22). Hamrefors (2010) also mentions transparency in his work: “The fundamental problem for handling relationships in the environment is that the demand for transparency requires a sophisticated mix of openness and secrecy, with timing usually being the most important factor” (p. 146). A leader must choose whether the information, environment, and audience warrant openness or ambiguity. However, according to Stohl (1995), strategic ambiguity can be a positive interpersonal communication tactic. “Strategically ambiguous messages facilitate change and creativity insofar as the messages provide flexibility for response” (Stohl, 1995, p. 60).

Whether or not a leader sends a message with strategic ambiguity, the receiver’s perception will determine whether the information is ambiguous. “Blatant ambiguity” in a message occurs when the receiver cannot make sense of the information in the message, or cannot choose which of multiple meanings is intended, whereas “subtle ambiguity” may occur after the receiver analyzes possible intentions of the sender, the sender’s chosen delivery method, or environment or relationships surrounding the exchange (Stohl, 1995, p. 57).

According to the literature, if a leader decides that a communication exchange warrants transparency, language should be as explicit as possible, avoiding abstract language. Deetz et al. (2000) have coined this transparency as “correctness.” “Correctness refers to expressions that avoid abstractions by providing meaningful details. An expression is abstract whenever it provides a generalized conclusion or evaluation without providing the descriptive information from which such a conclusion or evaluation was reached” (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 109). The transparency comes in the form of rich and descriptive details to show the information rather than just telling the information. Deetz et al. (2000) assert that “concrete expressions help clarify the content of the interaction, provide more and more useful information, reduce emotional intensity, align interpretations, and increase change options” (p. 109). Using abstract language as opposed to concrete language may bring about issues such as “making problems appear larger and more difficult to solve,” giving the message recipients “little information on which to base their own evaluations and responses,” and creating “responses to the words themselves rather than to what the speaker has actually experienced” (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 109).

Analogy, metaphor, storytelling, & humor. Not to be confused with the use of abstract language in place of concrete language, analogy, metaphor, storytelling, and humor all play key roles in interpersonal communication exchanges and communicative leadership. These more emotional techniques are especially important to this case study, in which a president has recently taken office and will most likely need to forge new relationships with individuals at the institution. As such, the use of analogy, metaphor, storytelling, and humor were observed and analyzed in this study.

Quite possibly the simplest method to anchor information in listeners’ reality is to use an analogy. “Analogies use familiar examples to explain ideas and concepts that are less easily understood. They are concrete and matter of fact. Analogies help people get it” (Decker & Decker, 2015, p. 129). Using analogies, speakers can help listeners “sort ideas and information into categories so that we can better understand reality" (Decker & Decker, 2015, p. 129).

By contrast, but no less useful, metaphors accomplish the same goals, yet with a figurative rather than literal association. "Managers can think of metaphors as figurative analogies that draw comparisons between two dissimilar things," which gives them an opportunity to "compare unfamiliar situations to those people understand and can identify with" (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 78). Metaphors hold special significance during times of change since they can help a leader explain his or her vision through figurative speech when other forms of speech may not necessarily help listeners understand and they "are often used to present new ideas and insights in a way not always available within the processes of analytic reasoning and discourse" (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 78).

Aligning with the literature on communicative leadership, interpersonal communication literature views storytelling as a critical tool for building trust and creating meaning. According to Deetz et al. (2000), "stories are a powerful tool for reinforcing organizational assumptions and teaching these assumptions to organizational newcomers" (p. 79). They allow listeners to imagine and visualize what the speaker is describing, frame by frame, which creates an overall vision of the speaker's message. Further supporting the power of storytelling, Decker and Decker (2015) state that "stories are visual. As we tell them, the listener's imagination recreates our narrative as a series of images" (p. 119). The visual nature of storytelling can help a leader shape others' perception of the organization; "they can strategically use stories to 'put a face' on their corporate goals and vision. Many times, after people forget organizational rules, regulations, and articulated goals, they nevertheless remember the story or anecdote that illustrated the point” (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 79).

Some speakers incorporate humor into their stories, which can add another layer of connection for the audience (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 79). Decker & Decker (2015) argue, though, that “when humor misfires, it destroys the communication experience, breaks down the emotional connection, embarrasses the speaker, and leaves the audience feeling uncomfortable” (p. 127). Therefore, during this case study, particular note was taken of speakers’ use of humor and whether caution is taken with its use.

Following is a qualitative study showing how a manager’s humor could either enhance or detract from the group dynamic, given the particular approach. Using audio and video recordings of an IT department’s meetings, Holmes, Schnurr, and Marra (2007) analyzed the effects on department culture of leadership and dialogue behaviors of two directors who held their positions at different times within the same company (p. 433). Although both leaders stress the importance of teamwork, they communicate this importance differently to their departments. The researchers used the discourse of 12 department meetings to perform a micro-level analysis of each leader’s (given the pseudonyms Tricia and Kenneth) meeting management skills and use of humor (Holmes et al., 2007, p. 433). Additionally, they conducted participant observations, document review, and interviews of the leaders and select team members (Holmes et al., 2007, p. 437). According to the researchers, “the analysis provides detailed evidence of the ways in which a change in leadership style can create the conditions for a change in the culture of a community of practice” (Holmes et al., 2007, p. 433).

Through both meeting management and use of humor, the researchers found that a clear picture of Tricia and Kenneth’s leadership styles surfaced. Tricia employs encouragement and participation throughout the discussion process, and participants introduce ideas as they come (Holmes et al., 2007, p. 443). Her approach to humor is similar as well, letting participants incorporate and subsequently end it as the conversation develops (Holmes et al., 2007, p. 446). The researchers assert that “by employing a range of discursive strategies in order to empower her staff, she constantly enacts and reinforces the importance of teamwork, that is, cooperation and consultation” (Holmes et al., 2007, p. 447). Kenneth takes a more structured approach with meeting management and the development of humor. Regarding meeting management, Kenneth prompts for answers and directs the route of information development, dedicating little time to open discussions (Holmes et al., 2007, p. 443). He also decides when to add humor, how it will develop, and when the use of humor should end (Holmes et al., 2007, p. 446). “Kenneth takes a more proactive, more highly structured, and more authoritative approach” (Holmes et al., 2007, p. 447).

Listening & clarification. A subtler, yet no less important, element of an interpersonal exchange involves the receiver’s ability to listen and appropriately clarify. First, the receiver must have a sense of “immediacy,” which Deetz et al. (2000) describe as “the sense of being present, focusing on paying attention, listening, and perceiving the emotional content of messages” (p. 108). In this case study, emphasis is placed on the receivers’ effort to listen and respond to information given by the senders. Since so much emphasis has been placed on the reciprocal nature of communication in leadership studies, it also must be mentioned that “a successful leader understands that most people have a fairly high need to be really heard and taken seriously” (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 108).

To truly listen, the literature agrees that not only do listeners need to be cognizant of “ostensive messages,” the literal content, they also need to know what they assume about the sender’s intentions and their own interpretations of the message (Stohl & Redding, 1987, as cited in Stohl, 1995, p. 50; Deetz et al., 2000). To better understand one’s own underlying perception and interpretation, Deetz et al. (2000) suggest “acknowledgement,” which is “the process of making explicit your understanding of the other person’s message prior to responding to it” (p. 110). Communicative leadership theory aligns, emphasizing the value of constructive dialogue and feedback to remain open and productive within the organization (Johansson et al., 2014; Hamrefors, 2010; Eriksen, 2001). According to Deetz et al. (2000), “acknowledgement increases the possibility of greater understanding, eases distinction between misunderstandings and genuine disagreements, and increases feelings of immediacy and trust. Each participant is affirmed as valued and meanings are clarified” (p. 110).

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed relevant literature for the case study. This comprehensive collection of scholarly research focused first on the core concepts of change initiatives, as well as which elements that typically contribute to successful change initiatives. The chapter concluded with a review of the literature on communicative leadership and interpersonal communication.

III. METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives the rationale for using qualitative case study design, as well as an in-depth description of key elements of the study's research design, including the setting, units of analysis, sampling methods and procedures, data collection, data analysis, the role of the researcher, and limitations and contingencies. "Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2013, p. 44).

The purpose of this case study is to discover communicative leadership's relationship with organizational change processes at a university. The study also determines what, if any, discrepancies exist between the president's and cabinet members' perceived and actual techniques. As such, the following research questions have been formulated:

- What are the new president's and cabinet members' espoused theories of action regarding communicative leadership techniques during change?
- What are the new president's and cabinet members' theories-in-use regarding communicative leadership techniques during change?
- How do the new president's and cabinet members' espoused theories of action and theories-in-use regarding communicative leadership techniques align?
- How have the new president's and cabinet members' communicative leadership techniques influenced change?

The method chosen to answer this study's research questions is a qualitative case study. "Qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes" (Creswell, 2013, p. 44).

Research Approach

The chosen approach for this research is a case study. "A case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (Yin, 2014, p. 2). More specifically, this case study's exploratory nature asks what can be learned about communicative leadership during change initiatives in universities by describing a "critical case" (Yin, 2014, p. 51). With this method, the researcher was able to focus on one new president and his cabinet in one institution during a specific change initiative, which provides a thick, rich description of the case, and "illuminate[s] the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Merriam, 2009, p. 44).

Setting

The setting for this study is Eastside University, a four-year public research university in a state university system. Eastside is a selective high-research-activity institution with approximately 30,000 students. Also, a high percentage of Eastside's student body is composed of underrepresented students and it is designated as a Minority-Serving Institution. The most critical feature of this "bounded system" (Creswell, 2013, p. 73) is that it has, over the last five years, experienced leadership transitions and resulting change initiatives in order to improve the institution's performance and resulting tuition revenue and state funding. At the time of this study, Eastside University had a new president who had been implementing dramatic change initiatives throughout the institution for over a year.

Participants

The participants for this study are the president of Eastside University and his cabinet, which collectively represent a “critical case” (Yin, 2014, p. 51) and aided the researcher in analyzing and describing the potential relationships between communicative leadership and change in the university setting.

Paying particular attention to each participant in this case study was necessary because each lent to the overall communicative features of the cabinet. In addition, to fully grasp the mental models of the organization, each members’ perceptions were considered (Senge, 2006).

To gain access to the participants, the researcher contacted the president directly, and explained the nature of the study and the extent to which she would need to access him and the cabinet members. Another technique used to both gain access and create rapport was to stress the constructive, rather than critical, nature of the study. This study did not aim to point out flaws or failures of the president and his interpersonal communication, but rather it examines communicative leadership in an effort to describe its relationship with the change-initiative process.

Sampling Methods

Given the nature of this case study’s research questions, no sampling was necessary to select the president. According to the American Council on Education (2012), a new president has been in office for zero to three years. Therefore, for the sake of this study, “new” includes a president who has been in office for six months to three years; the extra six months of tenure have been added so that the president had some experience in the role and environment. Of the five new presidents within the selected state university system, the president who best fit this study had entered a turbulent environment in need of immediate changes and was an active participant in change initiatives. Upon the new president’s acceptance to participate in this case study, the researcher asked for suggestions of specific change initiative teams that were active in the institution, and that involve the president’s participation, identifying “cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich” (Creswell, 2013, p. 158). The president suggested the researcher focus on his cabinet given his close involvement with the members.

Data Collection

Data for this case study was collected in the following ways: first, Eastside University’s new president was interviewed twice—once before and once after the meeting observations had begun—to answer the research questions pertaining to his communicative leadership practices; second, all but two cabinet members were interviewed twice—once before and once after the meeting observations—to answer the research questions pertaining to their communicative leadership practices (one cabinet member was not present at the first observed meeting and the other was not present for any observed meeting, so they were each only interviewed during the first round); third, weekly cabinet meetings were observed to more fully answer the research questions and help align perspectives given from all participants; fourth, a document review was conducted of the meeting documents (including agendas) to confirm or clarify items discussed in the meetings; and fifth, the researcher journaled after interviews and observations, and after transcribing and coding in order to think through themes that were developing during the study. The data collection process is further outlined below.

Interviews. For the interviews, a semistructured approach was chosen to embrace new ideas that may surface during the process, while remaining focused on the research questions and the overall purpose of the study. “Specific information is desired from all the respondents, in which case there is a more structured section to the interview. But the largest part of the interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored” (Merriam, 2009, p. 91).

All cabinet members, including Eastside University’s new president, were interviewed twice, once before observations began and once during or after, and were asked for permission to answer any follow-up question that arose during the course of the case study. (Two cabinet members were not interviewed for follow-up since one was only present during the final meeting observation and the other was not present during any observations.) Nine participants were interviewed, lending 16 total interviews. The interview protocol for the first set of interviews (See Appendix D) comprises open-ended questions intended to elicit information falling into one of four categories: “hypothetical (descriptive), devil’s advocate (opinion and feeling), ideal (information and opinion), and interpretive (clarification, information, opinion, and feeling)” (Strauss, Schatzman, Bucher, & Sabshin, 1981, as cited in Merriam, 2009, pp. 97-98). Prompting for information in these categories helped create a more well-rounded description of the communicative leadership techniques of focus in this study.

Two separate protocols were created for the first set of interviews (See Appendix D), one for the new president and another for the other cabinet members, since the new president was the individual who implemented the change initiative and thus holds a higher leadership role in the process. The researcher created a modified protocol (See Appendix D) for each participant for the final interview after the initial interviews took place and after at least one cabinet meeting had been observed. The purpose of doing so was to enrich and cross-check information attained from the observations and the first interviews.

To build rapport with the participants of the study, the researcher made an effort to remain visible yet unobtrusive throughout the length of the research. To ensure anonymity, all participants were assigned pseudonyms. Also, the study examines reciprocal relationships and both sides of the communication model to create "a composite picture rather than an individual picture" (Creswell, 2013, p. 174), which creates an added layer of anonymity for the participants. The participants were also given full disclosure regarding their participation and the study's purpose (Creswell, 2013, p. 174).

All interviews were audio recorded to best ensure data collection was complete and accurate. In addition, the researcher took notes during the interview sessions to record her "…reactions to something the informant says, to signal the informant of the importance of what is being said, or to pace the interview" (Merriam, 2009, p. 109). As soon as possible after an interview was completed, the tape-recorded data was transcribed verbatim to not only best preserve the data, but to facilitate the researcher's familiarity and understanding of the data (Merriam, 2009, p. 110).

Observations. The meeting observations helped the researcher evaluate the accuracy of data presented in the first round of interviews and gave a first-hand account of interactions within the cabinet. According to Yin (2014), “observations of an organizational unit add new dimensions for understanding either the context or the phenomenon being studied” (p. 114). While observing the cabinet meetings, particular note was taken of setting, participants, activities, interactions, conversation, nonverbal behavior, and the researcher’s own behavior (Merriam, 2009, pp. 120-121). Taking the role of “observer as participant” (Gold, 1958, as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 124), the researcher sat in the meetings and her research role was known by the meeting participants, but her role as a participant was secondary to her research role.

As with the interviews, the observed meetings were audio record while notes were taken. The notes focused on the data not attainable through audio, including the setting and participants, but more importantly the nonverbal actions and interactions observed. The researcher also took notes regarding specific participants in conversations to help identify the individuals speaking on the audio recording, which aided in transcribing.

In addition to the descriptive data collection indicated above, the researcher also recorded reflective notes regarding the descriptive data. To facilitate this process both during and after the observation, a table was used similar to the one suggested by Creswell (2013, pp. 168-171), which better delineated between actual observations and the researcher’s personal reflections.

The site institution was given a pseudonym (Eastside University), as were all participants, to ensure anonymity. Participants’ names and pseudonyms were listed in a Word file, which was saved only on a password-protected laptop. After each session was recorded, the recorder used stayed in the researcher’s possession and she immediately transferred the files to a password-protected laptop, erasing them from the recorder. All transcriptions, observation notes, field notes, memos, and email correspondences were saved on the password-protected laptop, which was either with the researcher or in a locked file cabinet in her office at all times during the study.

Document Review. A document review of meeting agendas, as well as other documentation distributed during the cabinet meetings provided an opportunity for the researcher to confirm or clarify items discussed in the meetings. “For case study research, the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources” (Yin, 2014, p. 107), including interviews and observations. In addition, document review provided data free from bias or intrusion. “The presence of documents does not intrude upon or alter the setting in ways that the presence of the investigator often does” (Merriam, 2009, p. 139).

Journaling. Journaling after interviews, observations, and transcribing gave the researcher opportunity to reflect upon the data provided, remark on evolving patterns and categories, and further prepare for upcoming data collection events. In addition, journaling after coding facilitated the development of themes that were emerging during the study and clarified how they relate to the existing theory.

Data Analysis

Throughout the length of the study, the researcher compiled the data collected from interview transcripts and notes, observation transcripts and notes, document review, and journaling. To best analyze the qualitative data collected, the researcher used MAXQDA software to carefully code according to categories that responded to the research questions, and that were “exhaustive, mutually exclusive, sensitive, and congruent” (Merriam, 2009, pp. 185-186).

Once interview and observation data were collected, process coding (Saldaña, 2013, p. 96) was performed, using MAXQDA software, based on literature relating to communicative leadership and change leadership. A first-cycle coding technique, “Process Coding is appropriate for virtually all qualitative studies, but particularly for those that search for ‘ongoing action/interaction/emotion taken in response to situations, or problems, often with the purpose of reaching a goal or handling a problem’” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, pp. 96-97, as cited in Saldaña, 2013, p. 96).

After completing the process coding, the researcher looked more closely at the data and its codes to create themes. “Theming may allow you to draw out a code’s truncated essence by elaborating on its meanings” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 205). A second-cycle method known as pattern coding (Saldaña, 2013, p. 209) helped determine narrower themes in the data. “Pattern Codes not only organize the corpus but attempt to attribute meaning to that organization” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 209). As the data went through pattern coding, existing codes from the first cycle were reduced into overarching themes that helped answer the research questions and uncover emerging themes.

Role of the Researcher & Trustworthiness

The researcher is a white female doctoral candidate at a public research university in the Southeast region of the United States. She has worked as a faculty member in a public research university since 2009, but has had limited contact with upper administrators, namely an interim president, two college deans, and a vice president for entrepreneurial relations and initiatives. The researcher is not directly supervised by any upper administrators, nor has she conducted prior studies with any of the participants. Although the role of the researcher will remain “observer as participant” (Gold, 1958, as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 124), the researcher knows some participants through indirect ties. However, these indirect associations were not close enough to create undue bias during data collection and analysis.

Regarding credibility, Maxwell (2013) categorizes typical validity threats of qualitative research into two groups: “researcher bias” and “reactivity” (pp. 124-125). “Researcher bias” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 124) is present when the researcher intentionally selects the data that fit or the data that blatantly do not fit with his or her literature review or research goals. The most effective way to minimize potential effect from bias is for the researcher to be transparent about existing biases (Maxwell, 2013, p. 124). “Reactivity” (Maxwell, 2013) is the influence the researcher has on the study site or participants (p. 124). Rather than trying to prevent this influence, though, Maxwell (2013) suggests including it in the study, recognizing its relationship with the data (p. 125). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) suggest “reflexivity” as a tool for mitigating researcher bias and reactivity. Throughout the research process, the researcher examined her preconceptions and biases given her experience within higher education, which helped her be more open and honest with the data collection and analysis.

Additionally, Eastside University’s new president may have been more apprehensive to share information because of the institution’s dynamic environment. For this same reason, cabinet members may also have been resistant to participate or may not have wanted to speak candidly about themselves, their fellow cabinet members, or their president. The researcher’s trustworthiness was critical in securing participants as well as making the participants comfortable to share sensitive information, which is why, of the 173,275 words of interview and observation transcripts sent to participants for member checking, only one four-word sentence was redacted.

Limitations

Argyris (1960) points out a limitation to using interviews to ascertain individuals' behavioral traits, which quite possibly led him to continue into research of espoused theories of action versus theories-in-use. Upper-level managers tend to be incongruent in their perception of behavior and actual behavior when interviewed. Argyris suggests observation of managers to better capture their true behavior (p. 40), which was accomplished during the cabinet meetings.

To enhance validity of the study, the researcher incorporated two elements into its design: triangulation and member checking. Of Denzin's (1978) four suggestions for triangulation, this study includes three: two methods of data collection, multiple data sources, and several theories through which the data will be analyzed. "This strategy reduces the risk of chance associations and of systematic biases due to a specific method, and allows a better assessment of the generality of the explanations that one develops" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 128). Along with the study's triangulation, the researcher also performed member checking throughout the course of data collection and analysis as a method for reducing opportunity to misinterpret respondents' responses, and "…identifying your biases and misunderstandings of what you observed" (Maxwell, 2013, pp. 126-127). Interview participants were given opportunities to evaluate the transcripts from their interviews, and observation participants were able to review the meeting transcripts as well. Once the data were analyzed, participants were given the opportunity to review the findings.

Closely tied to validity is “internal generalizability,” which Maxwell (2013, p. 137) explains as the ability of the conclusions drawn from recorded case data to represent the events, people, situations, et cetera that were not recorded in the study. In addition, “qualitative case studies are limited, too, by the sensitivity and integrity of the investigator” (Merriam, 2009, p. 52). Not only could the researcher’s levels of sensitivity and integrity alter the outcomes of the study, but they could also sway individuals’ willingness to participate or to be straightforward in their participation. Since the researcher assumed the role of “observer as participant,” (Gold, 1958, as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 124), the information given depended upon the willingness of the participants to be honest and forthright in her presence and knowing her researcher role. Triangulation (Merriam, 2009, p. 215) was incorporated into this study to help mitigate these effects; data were collected from the president’s interviews, the cabinet members’ interviews, and meeting observations.

This study’s triangulation is also present in the types of data collection: interviews (of two perspectives), observations, document review, and journaling. “It has been the experience of many field researchers that at first their presence may elicit more polite, formal, or guarded behavior, but that this cannot be sustained; the social setting returns to its normal functioning” (Merriam, 2009, p. 127). Although respondents may not have been fully honest in their replies during interviews, data collected from observations, document review, and journaling helped fill in the information gaps.

A final limitation of this study is that it is not necessarily generalizable; however, qualitative case studies are often not generalizable since they attempt to describe or classify the actions or beliefs of a set of individuals in a specific environment. Rather, this study is transferable in that it leaves “the extent to which a study’s findings apply to other situations or to the people in those situations. The person who reads the study decides whether the findings can apply to his or her particular situation” (Merriam, 2009, p. 226). To ensure this study is transferable to its greatest extent, the researcher attempted to “…provide enough detailed description of the study’s context to enable readers to compare the ‘fit’ with their situations” (Merriam, 2009, p. 226).

Delimitations

Delimiting the study to one four-year public institution lends a more thorough and focused analysis of one site. Additionally, delimiting the study to only one new president (taking office within the past six months to three years) and his cabinet highlights the communicative leadership traits present during the change-initiative processes in which they participate.

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the qualitative case study, which evaluates communicative leadership’s relationship with organizational change processes at a university. First, the chapter described the rationale for using a qualitative case study. Second, it defined elements of the research design, including the research approach, setting, participants, sampling methods, data collection, data analysis, role of the researcher, limitations, and delimitations.

IV. FINDINGS

The findings of this study include data from 267 pages (138,638 words) of interview transcripts, 74 pages (34,637 words) of observation transcripts, and 39 pages (9800 words) of field journals. Through analysis, 55 codes were assigned to 2,071 data segments. This chapter organizes the findings with an initial overview of the higher education landscape and Eastside University, as described by the participants. The overview is followed by the findings as they relate to each of the study's four research questions:

- What are the new president's and cabinet members' espoused theories of action regarding communicative leadership techniques during change?
- What are the new president's and cabinet members' theories-in-use regarding communicative leadership techniques during change?
- How do the new president's and cabinet members' espoused theories of action and theories-in-use regarding communicative leadership techniques align?
- How have the new president's and cabinet members' communicative leadership techniques influenced change?

Last, the chapter concludes with perceived barriers and areas for improvement related to the purpose of the study and specifically at the site institution.

The Higher Education Landscape

In describing higher education, the cabinet members see positivity in collaboration and vision, yet fault the environment for its notorious silos and lack of ownership among administrators, contrasting the dynamics to those of corporate organizations. After mentioning the lack of urgency often characteristic with a more academic model, Edward shares that “in some areas it needs to stay that way, but in other areas it can be operated more like a business probably, and I don’t necessarily mean from a revenue standpoint. More from a thinking standpoint. Strategy’s a better word.” He adds, speaking in context of the changes specifically at Eastside, “speed of communication has increased greatly, which has taken some getting used to for the people actually doing it.” Additionally, flow of information to and among higher education constituents is a common theme for the participants. Robert explains that “this is not like another organization. This is not top-down. This is very much bottom-up and you have to know how to…you have to understand that mindset.” Similarly, Greta adds:

> My career has been in higher ed. so I don’t know that I could speak effectively to corporate. But I do feel—at least in speaking with some of my colleagues that aren’t in higher ed.—we are much more team participative in terms of making changes. We are very different in that faculty are very different from staff, are very different from our students, from our donors. So there are a number of stakeholders internally that think differently, have a different part of the puzzle of the institution. So I would say it’s different in that way, compared to corporate, where I think the decisions are more at a board level and then communicated down.

Further elaborating on higher education relationships, Robert says, “The corporations differ in that they have to answer to shareholders, the people on the outside. We have to answer to our clients, who are not really customers. They’re clients and they’re inside. So it’s a different thing.” The students are not only referred to as “clients,” but also as a “product” in the sense that their success is how an institution is measured. Isaac notes this terminology:

> We’ve all got the same goal [laughs]. It’s to make this a better place. To move the university up, to move it forward. To build a university that does the very best things for its students. At the end of the day, the measure, our outcome measure, is our students. That’s our product. I kind of take umbrage when the president talks about changing the product mix, but that’s life [laughs]. “Go change the product mix,” “Oh, you mean the students?” “I’m sorry, go change the students.”

Margaret lends a different yet related perspective on “product,” stating that it is not the student, but the knowledge:

> We have as a university a goal and that’s to impart knowledge; that’s what we do. We are there to help people learn how to make decisions, how to research answers, how to critically think about not just their own particular area of expertise but the world and all that stuff, and that’s what we do, that’s our product if you want to put it in a private sector for a frame of reference. We all have to make sure we do the very best that we can to produce that end product to the very best of our ability and it takes a lot of people to do that right, a lot of people.

Alex sees a benefit and a drawback from having so many people working toward the common goal:

> I believe that’s one of higher ed.’s strong points is to have vision. You have to have a shared vision, an inspired vision, something that you will put out there that people can buy into and see themselves within that vision. And I believe higher

> ed. does a great job in putting visions out there. The challenge for higher ed. is sometimes there are multiple visions. So in higher ed., we don't lack vision. Believe that. But sometimes we lack a collective vision.
>
> Student affairs, we don't want to step on the toes of academic affairs but I say to academic affairs that in order for student affairs to support you, we have to know what you're doing. We've gotta be at the table to hear those conversations so we can say, hey, this is how student affairs can support.

This silo effect that occurs between university divisions also, according to Margaret, understandably occurs between faculty and administrators, given their differing roles:

> When you have faculty whose main goal in life is to study a thing, every which way but loose, and they focus on that and the problem's never really resolved because the hypothesis is you're trying to prove something but nothing's ever concrete so they continue to study, study, study. Their entire career is studying that topic. It's never resolved so we live in an environment where faculty are…they never resolve their questions and that's when in faculty meetings, you know this, it's the same thing. It's like, "What did we just decide to do?" We have more to find out. Margaret has to go find this and it's just this constant…. It's not that people don't want to make a decision. It's just that they are told to question everything. In that environment where everybody that you work with questions everything that you do, you darn well better have all of your ducks in a row and that takes time to do that and we also have, then, the expectation that we don't have to make a decision because we're still finding the answers.

> It’s a conflict between the faculty structure of the quest for knowledge versus administration. That’s why there will always be that divide, because the faculty never feel that there’s ever really an answer and they never felt like their voices are heard. On the flip side of that, we have to make decisions and it’s not always the right one or the best one, but it’s, at the moment, the best we have. They don’t understand you can’t just keep asking questions about the same thing over and over and over again. You need some decisiveness and that’s expected outside of the walls of higher education but inside the walls, the faculty are pretty…. That’s what they’re trained to do, be in constant quest of knowledge.

Whether between two divisions or between faculty and administrators, the makeup of a higher education institution seems by its very nature to perpetuate these factions because leaders are necessary at most levels. Alex explains:

> For the most part, unintentional, higher ed. is an ivory tower and when you’re on a university campus in higher ed.—keep in mind many of the people in our environment are leaders in their own right—the issue we run into is how do you…. It’s one thing to lead followers; it’s another thing to lead leaders. So that’s where the challenge comes in is we’re trying to lead leaders and by that I mean everybody has their own plot of land and if your change encroaches on their plot of land, you’re gonna get feedback [laughs].

In addition to the silos present in the higher education landscape, another theme that participants mention is a lack of ownership that often occurs among administrators. This apparent lack of ownership is described in relation to risk aversion:

> People don’t want to take ownership because ownership leads to problem-solving, problem-solving leads to decision-making, decision-making leads to accountability. And when I hear all those words together, the 4-letter word in higher education that people do not like is risk. People don’t want to take risks. (Alex)

Although participants mention that a dislike for taking risks is characteristic of higher education, Margaret contrasts the lack of ownership and risk-taking at Eastside with an institution at which she had previously worked, showing that it may not be as common as thought:

> Prior to my arrival, people were very used to permission-based decisions, you know, “Can I do this?” instead of forgiveness. I like sometimes to go the forgiveness route. I don’t necessarily think we need to have permission for everything that we do, but the philosophy here, the culture here, was very much “We’ve never done that before. We can’t do that. They’re going to get upset here.” And I would bristle at that because it was so unfamiliar to me. I was able to be very independent where I came from but in that independence came a huge responsibility to the constituencies. Here, when I first came, there really wasn’t any responsibility to constituencies because everybody was used to asking permission to walk across the street so that responsibility was that one-up person.

Interestingly, Alex elaborates that people in higher education do not want to take risks, differentiating between levels of risk-taking for administrators and faculty. He shares that a stark variance exists between the two and gives his logic as to why this occurs:

> I think it’s about job security. I think that’s what it ultimately is for administrators. That, you know, faculty 9 times out of 10 are tenured and so they’re given, for the most part, a safe haven and they have academic freedom. Administrators tend to be cautious because if we take risks and they don’t work, it may cost us our job. Thomas, again, is the first person I’ve run into in a long time that just takes risks. Just do it and see where we end up.

To conclude, data collected from this case study show the higher education landscape as an environment that fosters collaboration and vision, yet silos often exist between units as well as between faculty and administrators. A lack of urgency and risk-taking tends to be an issue within higher education possibly because of the varying stakeholders the administrators must answer to. Vision is a strong characteristic in higher education but at times, smaller visions clash and do not funnel into the greater institutional vision.

Eastside University & a Need for Change

In describing Eastside University, participants share the benefits and drawbacks of its newness and express a need for change given the higher education environment and the institution’s past events.

Eastside University is relatively new in the state system, and as such, it lacks resources and prestige held by more-established institutions. Harold states:

> It’s a lack of resources. That is the double-edged sword. It’s not just the external resources. It’s also the internal resource, the ability to sometimes recruit the best people for what you’re trying to do. We’ve had some, particularly under Thomas, we’ve had some remarkable scores in some of the folks that we’ve brought in.

> We've also had people that we knew we were right at the finals for. We lost them to an NYU, to University of Miami. They're able to put resources out there and a name out there that we're just not able to get. That's the double edge on that one.

Another drawback the institution faces because of its young age is its underrepresentation on the Board of Governors. Harold says, "We have half the legislature comprising Traditional University grads. A third of them are Popular University grads. We have a grand total of zero alumni in the legislature." Therefore, decisions made at the state level could possibly not have Eastside's best interests in mind. On the other hand, though, he adds that Eastside's newness has its benefits in that the institution is still developing, which makes change easier to enact:

> Obviously, there is some comfort in just doing things as they've always been done, but to effect the change, it is definitely…. You have more autonomy and discretion to effect it in a way that you think is the best way to do it if you are starting from scratch or if you are dealing with something that does not have a great deal of institution here.

In addition to Eastside's age affecting administrators' ability to enact change, participants also mention institutional culture as well as individuals who had held administrative positions. Participants illustrate a contrast between the culture under the prior administration and now:

> But we'd always done it that way and my predecessor ruled the roost and she was dictatorial, I think. I mean that is what I was told. And that's not how I operate. I want to bring people to the table; let's make a decision how we want to do this. Buy-in was very important to me when I came here and I think people responded

> well to that. It’s easy for me to effect change because, first of all, I asked them for feedback and had them as part of the process. I didn’t tell anybody what we were doing and I mean the business managers out in the colleges, I mean that kind of thing. I mean that fanning out the projects. I viewed our staff as the ones that were going to carry out what they needed to have done, instead of having a vision of what I want to do and just telling people what we were doing. That was very easy for me to make changes at that time because people were not used to being asked a question. They were like thrilled to even be part of the process. (Margaret)

Greta offers a similar perspective, stating that certain personalities lent to a “this-was-the-way-we’ve-always-done-it sort of mentality. I guess me being part of the operations of the university, but never really feeling a part of a greater piece, so they were sort of running their own little fiefdoms, and that had to change.” Also in agreement that a lack of similar direction was an issue at Eastside, negatively affecting the institutional culture, Charles explains:

> When I got here in summer of 2012, we were underperforming, low morale, and just in a broken place as an athletic department. So for us to get change going, number one, the first thing you notice was we didn’t have…. I could pull ten people in a room and you can ask them why we’re here; I’d get ten different answers. Where Eastside athletics went astray before I got here, it got too focused on budget, as opposed to getting focused on student success. So for us here, it’s just understanding to improve morale, to get us to change sooner than later, we had to define what our value system is, and it had to become shared. We had to have a common purpose. We had to change culture.

Isaac agrees that morale was low in past years and the institution was in dire need of change:

> It's a more comfortable place, absolutely, of course it's a more comfortable place. The problem with it is it wasn't comfortable and we couldn't stay there. As much as we want to hold on to what we know, we can't. We can't do that. I knew, "Okay we're going to make changes," and fortunately we had a president coming that felt exactly the same. He came from a place where he'd done this to some extent.

Thomas explains his goals for the first 100 days as president, which parallel with some of the institutional and culture issues others in the cabinet address regarding the previous climate. At Thomas's direction, a major part of the first 100 days included a focus on teams and participation:

> Just something to try to get people re-engaged. That was a big part of the first 100 days. I had to, also during that 100 days, really formulate an assessment of who was going to help run this university, who in that room were the players that I felt could be a successful part of the team. Some things I knew were terribly missing. We didn't have anybody in that room who understood media and the multiple ways that people are now getting media. So, Edward was hired to do that. We didn't have…actually, everybody in that room—everybody but three people—are not the people who were in permanent positions…. But I did use a lot of internal people to fill those roles. I put Isaac in as provost without a search, which is unprecedented; nobody ever does that. But I checked with all the deans, I checked with the faculty senate; everybody said you couldn't find a better provost. I said,

> "I don't want to find a better provost. I think this guy's really got it. I just wanted to be sure that the campus recognizes I'm thinking about doing a search that doesn't include a search. I'm just going to pick it."

After many changes to the cabinet, Thomas says, "I feel good about who's in the room now." And although the majority of the cabinet had been reassembled after Thomas's arrival (some members selected internally, others from external sources), the question still had to be raised of whether a divide existed between the two members Thomas brought with him and the rest of the cabinet members. Harold's response regarding the possible existence of a divide also reflects the majority of the cabinet members' responses:

> No, because both of them were brought in for areas that were not under the singular control of anyone else so no one got displaced as a result of those two coming in. Did the prior environment also possibly contribute to the fact that it was a welcome addition? Yes. When you say "environment," the specific—in the case of vice president for communications—there had been a specific decision made previously that communications was going to be placed under institutional advancement. Like every other—not every other—like many other decisions, that was not something that was ever discussed at the cabinet level. It was just made and then once it was made, the shortcomings of that decision were never allowed to be discussed. I know I personally said, "Hallelujah," for bringing in a vice president for communications and welcomed with absolute open arms the person that Thomas did bring. The fact that these areas were both kind of open areas was

> not so much a reflection of the culture previously; it was a reflection of specific decisions that were made previously.

With his cabinet in place and a focus on engagement, Thomas makes his change agenda clear. All participants responded with similar answers when asked what they define as Thomas's major change initiative. Margaret shares:

> Reputation. That, I think, encapsulates all that he is talking about with "bold and daring" and "admissions standards" and "research push." All of those are about reputation. He came from an institution that had a high reputation and he's trying to do all that he can in all of the different areas to get us to a place where we enjoy that same respect and that same significance in the eyes of people that are going to be coming in here and their families. All of the things that we're doing really are…. I think that is what he is focused on is building that reputation.

Greta offers a similar perspective: "It's about building a better university. I think that's certainly something he's very proud of and that's important to him." Also in agreement, Isaac added, "The overarching goal is to raise the university and move it to the next level." Thomas himself concurs that reputation is paramount to his change agenda and that standards need to be positively adjusted:

> Our destiny will be determined by what we do in the next five years. Are we going to be in the middle or are we going to get in that group, the next three, and is Professional University going to be ahead of us or are we going to be ahead of them. But I told everybody I don't want to get any bigger. I want us to stay small enough that we can become great. And that's one reason we've raised the admission standards.

As Thomas indicates, the change is not only with reputation and standards, but also the rate of change. All participants agree that the speed at which change happens under Thomas is a vast change in and of itself. Greta explains:

> I think, just generally, a change in his philosophy, in terms of pushing all of us to just be number one. This is the fastest-improving university in the country. So that's just, I think, a change from, probably, a much more laid-back, a little bit maybe complacent, attitude I think of previous administrators and previous leaders in the president's role to someone that really wants to see us excel, but at a very different, at a much higher level.

Despite all the change and need for change at Eastside, though, cabinet members who were selected internally add that the institution had always been heading in the right direction:

> And this is a sign actually, I think, of the health of an institution, how quickly we recover from those bumps. I think that recovery was because on the whole it's a good institution, going in the right direction, and this was just a blip on the radar. Not a stop marker, because overall, it's going on. So I think that's where we are. I think that's Eastside. (Isaac)

In summary, participants describe Eastside University as both experiencing drawbacks and benefiting from its newness, emphasizing a need for change. Also mentioned are how the higher education environment and Eastside's recent past events necessitate a shift in culture and rate of change at the institution.

Espoused Theories of Action

To address the first three research questions (evaluated in this section and the two subsequent sections), participants were interviewed and observed with consideration of themes central to this case study's purpose: leadership, communication, and change. Among other narrower themes addressed, the three that are most often mentioned by participants in relation to their perceived and actual behaviors are teams and collaboration (in 17.52% of coded data segments), trust and ownership (in 6.91% of coded data segments), and conflict (in 3.43% of coded data segments). This section will provide responses describing perceived actions related to leadership, communication, and change, followed by those about teams and collaboration, trust and ownership, and conflict.

Leadership. Given that this study's focus is leadership, the participants were asked many questions that either directly or indirectly relate to leadership, including how they perceive their own leadership styles. Table 1 shows a brief description of each participant's perceived leadership style given during the interviews.

Table 1

Espoused Leadership Styles

Participant	Leadership Description
Alex	Situational
Charles	A choice or action, serving, leading others to new results
Edward	A fine line between letting people do and telling people
Greta	Team and participation
Harold	Collaborative
Isaac	Consensus building
Margaret	Accountability, leading by example, hard work, integrity, decisiveness
Robert	Distributive
Thomas	Aggressive and hopefully inclusive

Interestingly, no cabinet members described their leadership style the same way. However, all the leadership descriptions given involve human relationships. Alex offers detail of his situational leadership style: “I have a preferred leadership style but in reality it’s situational. It all depends on the person, the environment and the situation that I’m in that will cause me to rise to various leadership opportunity.” He gauges how he leads based on not only the environment and situation, but more importantly the person or people with whom he is interacting.

Charles, although not self-defined as a situational leader, puts the focus on his subordinates and their differing needs:

> There’s three main tenants in my leadership philosophy. Number one, leadership is a choice. It’s an action. Number two, leadership is asking yourself daily, what

> can I do to serve the group? And number three, similar to what you had talked about before, leadership is the art of deliberately leading others to a result that would not have happened otherwise.

He adds, however, that a leader understanding him or herself is just as important as understanding those who work with the leader: “If you don’t understand yourself, if you don’t understand your strengths, your weaknesses, how you affect people, the shadow you cast, you’re never going to be an effective leader.” Further, he describes this awareness as it specifically relates to himself and elaborates that self-awareness, to him, also includes understanding others:

> I know exactly what it means when I send someone a text late at night, early in the morning. I know exactly what happens if I’m not in the right frame of mind. I know exactly when I’m short with people, how that’s interpreted. I know that I consistently have to bring energy to work because I’m viewed as a source of energy here. So all that goes into the self-awareness piece, but the ability to communicate effectively is also understanding your teammates and understanding their needs. So that’s also part of self-awareness in my opinion.

With a lesser focus on self-awareness, Edward explains his leadership style simply: “I would say that I walk a fine line between letting people do what they think is the right way to do it and me telling them what is the right way to do it [laughs].” Although his statement comes across boldly, he further clarifies that he hires employees because they are good at their jobs and he trusts them to do so, stepping in to direct or redirect when necessary.

Greta’s leadership style emphasizes the interrelationship between herself and those who work for her: “I'm very much focused on more of a flat-structure, team-environment, participative style. I like to be involved in things but not as a micromanager, but just as more of a team member.” She continues, adding her reason for staying involved in the process:

> I think that folks that work with me or work for me, they look to you for that lead. So it is important. And they model that. What I hope people would perceive is you need to be firm but fair. And I think that what’s critical.

Appropriately using plural pronouns and addressing his division as a whole when asked about his own leadership style, Harold asserts that his style is collaborative:

> We recognize that our role is to support those who are doing the primary mission of the university and therefore, we have to be collaborative in the services that we provide and I have to be collaborative in the leadership that I offer.

Isaac offered a similar perspective of his own leadership style, emphasizing the collaborative process of consensus building:

> I think my philosophy is…truly build consensus to…first put the very best people that you can in the positions that you believe to be important and who are going to impact our team. And then you build consensus, there's no question. I think the very best decisions—the decisions that have the greatest longevity in the outcome—are those that are probably built on consensus.

With leading by example as the cornerstone of her leadership style, Margaret elaborates: “What comes to mind are integrity, honor, dedication, hard-working, fair. Direct, I’m direct. I probably shouldn’t be quite so. I think that comes with time though; I think you get a little more free with that as time goes on." However, she feels her direct approach also aids in her ability to garner trust from her division and others who work with her:

> There's a trust there. I think that they support my common-sense approach…. There's nothing that I do to get myself out there or our units out there to try and seek adoration and/or approval. We do what's right for the students and faculty. I can't just play favorites. I can't hide money. I mean, people might think that I do; I don't really care. There's always going to be a suspicion. I can't be a barrier because, well, I'm not the one to set the agenda so everybody has to know and trust me and know I am going to do what is best and I think that they do. Maybe not, but I think that they do. (Margaret)

Margaret explains that her direct approach not only enhances others' trust in her but also helps her make decisions:

> We are working leaders here. We are not just standing up in front of a crowd and everybody just doing as we ask. We actually get into the nitty-gritty here at Eastside and we don't put our feet up on our desk. We don't read the newspaper unless it's relevant to what we do. We have a team of people who work hard so in the course of that day, that's what you do. You make decisions, you do all those things, and that's a big part of the day, but from a strategic standpoint the communication is the most important part.

Similar to other cabinet members' self-described leadership styles, Robert illustrates that he encourages ownership by allowing others to do their jobs, while still participating in dialogue and consensus. He describes his leadership style as such:

> Distributive. So I set a general course for where I think we ought to be and then I, we all understand what our roles are in the organization. I think it's important to let people who report to you feel like they own a piece of the puzzle and they can create in that space. I may not always agree with how they get a job done but the main thing is that they can get the job done and that they have the resources necessary. And so I'm willing to support and not to subvert people's authority and so when I go to one of my direct reports, I say well this is what we need to do and this how we need to get there. My usual follow-up is, "What do you think?" "How do you want to do that?" And then I think it's important to give up ownership and let them be responsible for that because they feel pride in their job and they can create in that space and they also have to be accountable for achieving that goal.

Robert adds that his leadership style also includes a self-awareness component; however, it differs from the one mentioned by Charles. Whereas the self-awareness mentioned by Charles relates to an understanding of strengths, weaknesses, and effect on others, Robert discusses self-awareness in the context of institutional culture:

> This is all part of knowing who you are and how you fit in an organization's culture. My techniques are my techniques. I brought them here and I felt they intersected very well with the needs of this university. Of course, you pivot and you adapt to a changing environment, but the way I'm acting and conducting myself and interacting with faculty are how I normally interact with people.

Like the majority of his cabinet, Thomas offers inclusion, involvement, and ownership in his leadership style description; and similar to Margaret's self-proclaimed decisive and direct nature, Thomas adds a sense of immediacy in his response regarding his own style:

> I would say it's aggressive and hopefully inclusive. I mean Isaac and I spent just how much time putting that strategic plan together, but we went to all departments in the university, all the academic departments, every one of the campuses and really tried to listen. And then we put it up on the web and let people react to it. If they had major concerns—not, "I don't like this word. I don't like that word."—then we had somebody who is not us to judge those. When we talk about be bold, let's be bold, let's don't be passive, let's be very bold about this, let's get serious about it. When the strategic plan came out, it was like any plan anywhere; there're people who are going to find flaws with it, but it's our work button. And it can change over time, but I hold myself very accountable for the success of that plan, and I expect the board to hold me accountable for it, and I hold our VPs accountable, and I expect they hold their people accountable for it.

In summation, participants self-describe their leadership styles in varying manners but all include a people-centric approach and a focus on relationships. Alex states that his leadership style depends on the person with whom he's dealing, and Charles similarly finds that he tailors his approach based on the needs of the individual. Whereas Edward chooses to step back when possible and allow his subordinates to do their jobs, Greta, Harold, and Isaac stress their collaborative and participatory approaches. Although Edward's self-described style differs from Greta, Harold, and Isaac, each agrees that they differentiate between being involved in the process and micromanaging. Similar to Edward, Robert first emphasizes giving his subordinates freedom to accomplish their own tasks and then stresses participating in dialogue and consensus. Margaret’s approach incorporates trust and communication as leadership traits to help make decisions.

Communication. The participants were asked questions regarding their own communication styles and answers include techniques such as being honest, engaging in dialogue, listening, sharing appropriate amounts of information, and using strategy. All participants put strong emphasis on interpersonal communication’s role in leadership. However, one participant notes the difficulty in pinpointing his own level of ability: “In leadership, absolutely. I think it’s very critical to being a successful leader, to be able to communicate. So I hope I do it well, but I don’t know how to measure it” (Isaac). He further elaborates:

> I think communication is paramount. And I don’t know if I’m a great communicator. I find it strange if I am. That may seem strange to say. That was one of the skill sets that people recognized. “Well, you can talk to people. You communicate well with people.” “Do I? How, or why?” I don’t know why. I was a pretty shy kid. I don’t know at what point I came out of my shell, if I did. Just one of those things. I can’t…oh, yeah, I went to communication school [laughter]. Don’t know (Isaac).

Thomas, on the other hand, easily offers what he sees as a major strength with his communication style:

> I think with honesty. To try to cover it up and hide it under some crafty words is not appropriate. Just shoot straight what you’re thinking. Take the hits and feedback that come. Be willing to adapt based on what you hear, but not necessarily acquiesce unless it’s very unreasonable. I can assure anybody that we

> did not go from next-to-last place to first place in two years by sugarcoating words.

Offering a similar perspective, Alex invites feedback and adaptability in his communication approach: “I invite dialogue. I invite people to disagree. I think some of my staff—I’m not sure all but some of them—will say one of my most known statements is, ‘While I don’t agree, I trust you professionally,’ so….” A similar emphasis on dialogue is widely shared by the cabinet members. Robert, for instance, says, “Nothing beats one-on-ones.” He specifies that he sees the benefit of a town-hall format “almost in a pyramid way—where the president does town halls, the dean, the vice presidents, the chairs. You just have to have a conversation and you’ve got to let people talk” (Robert).

In Isaac’s explanation of effective communication, he differentiates between the two-way communication to which Robert refers and simply communicating at an audience, emphasizing the end results of two-way communication:

> I enjoy teaching. It’s one thing I really, truly miss. And I think I used to get pretty good teaching evaluations, but communicating’s a bit different to that. Communication means communicating with people. And I think I can communicate ideas. We can talk about ideas, but truly communicating with people, just trusting people, sharing with people, and that’s I think how you build consensus that we’re all moving in the same direction. If we’ve got a different view, that’s an issue. Okay, we discuss it. And I don’t think I’m ever my way or the highway. I always listen to other people. I think it’s important. I’m swayed by other people’s arguments, you know, if they’re good options. [laughter] So

> communication’s paramount. If you can’t communicate, there’s not much you can do.

Greta lends the same differentiation as Isaac and notes that the participative nature of two-way communication helps others feel as though they are part of the process:

> Meeting with my folks weekly. And having conversations. I don’t just spend two to three hours each Tuesday talking at them. And talking about just decisions that are made, but also getting their input. What do you think the challenges are? How can we best implement this? Folks need to feel a part of the process.

One of the most common types of communication used within organizations is also, Greta states, the worst way to help individuals feel engaged or involved in the process: “Email has just got to go; we all just need to get out from behind our computers. No one likes to just get an email that ‘we’ve decided this, and you need to….’ It’s just not a conversation.” Also essential to two-way communication, the participants stress effective listening and note how its absence could greatly hinder the listener’s impression of the speaker:

> I actually believe listening is critical, because what it tells somebody is, “I’m prepared to listen to what you have to say.” If you don’t listen to somebody then it’s, “Well, I don’t really care about your ideas. My ideas are interesting; mine are the best. I know mine are the best so why am I bothering to listen?” I don’t believe that. I don’t believe I’ve got all the answers, so listening’s important.
>
> Listening is a great part of communications. (Isaac)

Charles concurs, implying that listening is one of the most important components of an effective two-way exchange: “If you’re not a good listener, you’re never going to create any type of relationship, so I think the listening piece is probably the bigger piece in the communication, more than anything else." He continues, using himself as an example: "If I ask you a question, I better be willing to listen to the answer and have dialogue off that answer as opposed to just ramming my agenda down your throat" (Charles).

Another hindrance to the communication process, according to Harold, is caused not only by a lack of listening but also poor listening and human error. "So if you're relying mostly on verbal communication, people can mishear. They can misremember, whether intentionally or unintentionally. For my communication style, the risk of being misinterpreted or misunderstood because of the verbal is the greatest potential impediment" (Harold).

Additionally, Robert points out that even if a leader truly listens to a subordinate and engages in two-way communication, the leader may still have to make a decision that differs from the subordinate's. The effective listening, though, can still play an important role in that particular discussion:

> Sometimes you just have to sit back and listen and let people have their say. At the end of the day, if somebody disagrees with you, really they just want to be heard. And if you make a decision in the other direction, they're like, "All right, that's fine. I had my say." So I think it's important to let people have their say. (Robert)

As well as listening playing an important role in the participants' communication styles, so does information sharing. Margaret emphasizes the value of having enough information shared with her to move toward goals:

> When I present information, when I present ideas, when I ask for that coming back from people who report to me, I don't want just the problem. I want to know what their possible solutions are and I want to know all of those pieces of it, so when I go and communicate it back to either my peers, the president, the Board, or whomever, I want to have all of that done so people understand fully what it is I am trying to accomplish and why I am trying to accomplish it. You have to understand the goal so that you know what path you need to take to get to that goal. If you just tell them what the goal is they can go all over the place and spend a lot of time and effort doing things that are not consistent with where you want to go in a timely way.

A lack of information sharing can not only be an issue when an individual fails to share all the pieces leading to the end goal, but also when an individual fails to effectively share his or her expectations of a situation:

> You can't expect something to be done as well as it can be done if you haven't communicated the intent from the start. And you can't really complain about anything if you chose not to communicate something; if you were unhappy with it and you just let it slide, you can't complain about it afterwards. You get to the point where you have to either speak up or just stay quiet. So I think voicing expectations early is important. That doesn't mean that you can't step in and say, "You know what, we might need to reset this a little bit, because what we started off doing maybe isn't quite working out." You don't just go and see how it ends up; you need to adjust as you go along. I try not…I prefer not to step in on something but I mean I will if someone asks me to. (Edward)

Although Margaret and Edward share the value of giving enough information, as did other participants, Edward later qualifies his statement, expressing that a leader giving too much information can be just as detrimental to the communication process:

> Sometimes—not wishing to sound like I'm contradicting myself—but less communication can be beneficial. So in other words, I could get too involved. Then I move off that line to the other side where I'm kind of dictating what it should look like. And there are the people saying, "You know well they do that for a living," and not exactly who am I to tell them what to do but I don't need to employ them to do that if I'm just going to tell them what to do. And I feel the same way when it is coming down from above you know. Don't hire me just to do what you think I should do. You hire me to tell you what we should do.

Gauging the situation and the audience lends to a strategic approach to communication, which many participants mention. "It's my job as a leader to go to whatever level they need to get at—whether it's a higher level, middle level, lower level—I will adjust my strategy to get to what we need to get to," states Charles. In agreement, Margaret adds, "Communication is more strategic. In the course of a day, communication of why I do things the way that I do is usually pretty centric to an individual or maybe a couple of people." Her strategic approach to communication also extends beyond an audience of one or a couple people. She gives the example of a new ruling that changes minimum salary requirements, affecting the university dramatically. In her attempt to strategically communicate this information to the Eastside community, Margaret states:

> I have asked for a way to minimize the impact on people so they don't feel that burn so much when it comes to benefits and all that kind of stuff. It's not just, "This is what we are going to do." It's really a process and a package of how it's going to be done. It kind of mirrors the strategic plan of 2015 to 2025. Same kind of deal. You know, you've got what it is you want to achieve in a certain amount of time and how are you going to get there and what are the priorities? It's less about being very specific. It's much more about making sure people are informed and then they can understand and then process how that relates to them.

A large portion of Thomas's job as president is communicating with multiple constituents, both internally and externally, and he explains that being strategic in his communication approach is key. For instance, to be most efficient, he sends the board an update on his activities every couple or few weeks:

> You know, I'm the only employee they hired in the whole university. So what am I doing? And it gives all of them the same message from my perspective about what I'm spending my time on. So if they have question marks or wonder why we're spending so much time on this, then they can bring that up with me. (Thomas)

Thomas shares that he communicates with the internal and external communities by attending events as often as possible. He mentions his ability to better engage in dialogue at these events:

> I go to happy hour, or honors and awards ceremonies, or end-of-semester student affairs retreats just so that they're frequently hearing what I'm thinking, what the university's looking like from my perspective, and for me to really hear from

> people what is it they don't understand, or they can't figure out why we did that. Sometimes it's so foolish, it's just simply they heard the wrong word in a sentence somewhere, you know? (Thomas)

To communicate with his cabinet regularly, Thomas takes a more direct and consistent interpersonal approach, holding meetings once a week with the entire cabinet and opting out of individual standing meetings (except for meetings with Isaac, who oversees the largest unit in Eastside). He chooses not to have standing meetings for the following reasons:

> It greatly confuses my schedule and ability to do all the other things I need to do. And then we're frequently having to spend lots of time rescheduling someone. They get a little bit upset because they may have worked their whole schedule around this one hour they've got with me a month. And then the governor says, "I'm running a summit and I need you to speak." Well, I've got to go. I also don't like regularly scheduled meetings because if there's not enough to cover, they will fill up the time. So my preference would be schedule a meeting with me any time you need me, but let's not make it a scheduled meeting. (Thomas)

Rather, Thomas prefers his cabinet members stop by his office when they need to talk; or if he is between appointments, he will ask them to walk and talk with him. He takes this approach to communicating so they "can get it done. Otherwise, they might be saying, 'Well, I've got a meeting with Thomas on Friday. I need to know something today, but I'll wait until Friday.' So I think for immediate things, that's much better" (Thomas).

In conclusion, information-sharing and whether to share more or less, given circumstances and audience, is a common communication theme participants offer. Alex mentions that the team members' differing abilities to share information within the group could possibly be a byproduct of the unit in which each works and the expectations and dynamic of those units. He uses student affairs as a reference, noting that the unit is notorious for sharing information simply by virtue of its inclusive mission.

Change. The concept of communication is present in many of the participants' responses about change implementation. Margaret, for instance, stresses the importance of including people and the effect that has on creating join-in: "You just have to keep people connected so that they—I don't want to say buy-in because it sounds like you're convincing them—but they understand and appreciate it, and they see the benefit of it, and that takes time."

Robert offers a similar perspective, noting that listening and conversation are essential to the success of change initiatives:

> I listen to suggestions. I engage people in conversations. I set a vision out there and I talk about experiences and how this could work. If people have different ideas, I listen. And if they're better, I tell them it's a better idea and we try it. I don't wrap my own ego around my idea. It's "this is a plan, this is my experience, this is how it should work," but the plan and the execution of it and the final product is not me. You have to pull those two things apart. If somebody gets upset or they have a different idea or view of the world, then we can listen and we can try something different. But you've got to come in and establish credibility, people have to trust you, and then you have to be flexible and nimble. And if something's not working, you've got to know when to stop and try

> something different. You also have to give credit to the people who executed the project.

More specifically, Edward states that communicating the “why” of the change is most important, and that resistance to an idea often comes from not understanding the reasons for the change:

> I’ve experienced people many times who don’t like something but can’t tell you why they don’t like it, and/or can’t tell you what they do want. So I think it’s fine to be able to want to do something a certain way, but I would expect someone to be able to say why. Again, I have the same philosophy. If I say that we’re going to start doing something a certain way, I should be able to say why. I think then it helps people to see why the change might be necessary, even though they may not completely agree with it, at least initially, but then at least they can see or understand the thought process behind it.

Thomas lends another perspective to the “why.” As opposed to viewing the “why” as something asked prior to an impending change, he sees it as an opportunity to ask, “why not?” In his explanation, he gives examples for why change has not been enacted when it clearly should have been, alluding to poor graduation rates:

> Somebody might say, “Well, you have to realize our students are different.” Our students may be different. I can use that argument at every single university: “Our students are different.” Princeton students are different. Clemson students are different. Wofford students are different. College of Charleston students are different. It’s not an excuse. We’re not looking for excuses; we’re looking for a solution to the problem. Our students may be different. Why are we not getting

> them out on time? What have we learned when we've talked to them to find out what they need to get out on time? Well, they don't have enough money. Okay, let's find them jobs. Why aren't we doing a better job finding them jobs? Why don't we have internships lined up for them? Why don't we use internships on our own campus instead of hiring so many staff people to do jobs that students could do? We've got one of the best accounting programs in the country, not a single student has graduated since 2007 in the Accounting Scholars programs that did not have a job before they ever graduated. Why have they not been working in financial offices on this campus? Why did they have to go off-campus? Why does it take them six years, seven years when it…? The reason, frequently, is you got to work at Starbucks, they'll say, "Your job is from 4:00 to 8:00." "Well, I need to take a class at 5:00." "Well, then you need to go to find a different job." If they were on this campus, and they say, "I've got to take a class at 4:00 o'clock," we'll say, "Fine, work till 6:00. We don't care." You can adjust around our schedule, but companies frequently can't. And then the students are bound to what they have to do for work. (Thomas)

Thomas then clarifies that he typically is not the one who resolves the problems that require change. Instead, he brings up the problems and asks questions so that others can figure out solutions:

> Most of the problems get solved by other people, not by me. I mean, I just point out the problem. And then most of the people will solve them and frequently people will point out problems to me, and I just ask the question, "Then why can't

> we solve this? How do we fix this? Where are we going to find the money for that?" "I don't know." "Let's find it." (Thomas)

In addition to communication, another common theme mentioned frequently in relation to change implementation is rate of change. Specifically addressing the change that had occurred over the prior two years, Isaac explains his unease with initiating change at an institutional level, especially when decisions are made too quickly. The context centers around raising university admissions standards:

> You've got to start things before they're going to go wrong, and all the forethought that went into this, and there was a lot. It took us two years, because I wasn't about to rush this. This is something I inherited when I came into the job. A lot of thought went into it, a lot of feedback. But we are where we are with it, and I don't think it makes everybody happy, but we've got to start. (Isaac)

Margaret, though, adds that urgency can be perceived differently depending upon the individual's personality and experience:

> Some people have an endless need for data before they make a decision. There are some who don't use data much at all and they hip-shoot. I'm not saying in our group; I'm just saying in general. Then they act and think later. And there are people that overthink and don't act at all. There are people that hopefully have a balance between the two, where they gather information and understand what the issues might be and look further down the road on the ramifications of the decisions, A, B or C, and then they choose the best route based on their experience. I think experience has a lot do with your effectiveness as a leader. I

> think that everybody has a different style and we all compliment that because we all know what to expect from each other.

In contrast to Isaac's apprehension to moving quickly toward change, Thomas's approach to change implementation is with an overarching sense of immediacy. In context of enhancing Eastside's research component, Thomas explains:

> But if we're going to do that, we need to get started now. You can't wait and say, "Five years from now let's get started on building the research enterprise." That means by the end of five years, we'll be at 60 million. Well, in the end of five years, I want us to be at 100 million. So that's kind of set the numerical target. And then what's the strategy to hit that target? And what are the incentives that one puts in place that causes behavior to change throughout the organization? And sense that behavior.

In closing, participants most often mention either communication or urgency in relation to change initiatives. Regarding communication during change, the participants espouse that creating join-in, listening, explaining the "why", and resolving problems are some of their most common techniques. The participants view urgency differently, some appreciating a fast rate of change while others are made apprehensive by moving too quickly.

Teams & collaboration. Among the themes mentioned by participants are teams and collaboration. Greta mentions teamwork and leader participation, but with a qualification regarding the level of leader participation: "I'm very much focused on more of a flat structure, team environment participative style. I like to be involved in things but not as a micro-manager, but just as more of a team member." Harold elaborates that his unit’s “role is to support those who are doing the primary mission of the university and therefore, we have to be collaborative in the services that we provide and I have to be collaborative in the leadership that I offer.” Isaac also mentions collaboration in the context of roles: “The way I like to run the office here, we’re a team and we’re all involved in everything. Everybody has their own responsibilities, primary responsibility if you will, but we pretty much discuss everything as a team up here.” Charles, however, provides a different focus for teamwork—a shared value system. “My job is to get the most out of people. My job is to get us to share a value system, or actually to make sure we’re all together with a shared value system so the communication piece is critical” (Charles).

Margaret asserts that although each cabinet member has his or her own responsibilities and handles matters differently, the cabinet is collectively responsible for the outcomes of each member’s actions:

> If I think a police matter was handled a certain way and I would have done this differently, it doesn’t matter what I think because I’m not the one that has to live with the consequences. As a team we do, but then we bring the people who are experts in that area to the forefront and we have that conversation. (Margaret)

In the context of the leadership team, Isaac emphasizes the value of consensus:

> I would say that the team works pretty closely at the executive level. I mean, true consensus and I think it’s “everybody believes this is the best decision for the university.” At least I’m trying to do that. I’m not sure if I’m successful; that’s for others to determine and to tell me when I’m no longer provost [laughter].

To summarize, teams and collaboration are themes often mentioned by the participants, although they are in agreement that each must also work independently while keeping the team's common goals in mind.

Trust. Of the most common themes mentioned by participants, trust runs a common thread throughout the responses. When describing her leadership style, Margaret explains trust's role: "You know, it has been what I do. I think people trust me. I think they know I am direct and honest and fair." Thomas clarifies his opinion of how leaders build trust: "Well, you never mislead people intentionally. You never knowingly lie. You say what is so. You tell the truth without blame and judgement." The majority of participants address times in which trust had been violated, whether by fellow leaders or by subordinates. Robert affords his reaction in instances of violated trust, noting the difficulty of trust particularly in the higher education setting:

> There have been instances where I reached out to people to trust them and then I was disappointed in what happened next. That tends to make me pull back. Not like in a bad way, but you just want to be careful. The hardest part about trust in university is knowledge is power. When you share information with people and you want it to be confidential, you have to realize it's not likely to be confidential. So I think you have to sometimes be circumspect in what you share in terms of things that can be controversial.

Given the unique leadership dynamic within a university as opposed to a corporate setting, transparency and trust lead into conversations about accountability. Thomas, who asserts he believes strongly in accountability, emphasizes its importance in context of executing the strategic plan:

> When we talk about be bold, let's be bold, let's don't be passive. Let's be very bold about this. Let's get serious about it. When the strategic plan came out, it was like any plan anywhere, there are people who are going to find flaws with it, but it's our work button. And it can change over time, but I hold myself very accountable for the success of that plan, and I expect the board to hold me accountable for it, and I hold our VPs accountable, and I expect they hold their people accountable for it.

Harold characterizes Thomas in the same manner, attributing him with the trait of accountability, also suggesting that the environment in which he was hired fostered this trait:

> The performance metrics that have had a transformational impact on the State University System; it's all about accountability…mostly about accountability. And I think that Thomas really…he endeared himself to the Board of Governors when he came in because he immediately embraced the accountability. And I think he was lucky in one respect, that the accountability metrics, the performance-funding metrics went into place his first year. He would tell you he wasn't lucky because he inherited a system where we placed next to last in that first year. But I think he was psychologically lucky in that he had no prior investment.

More prevalent in the higher education setting, accountability also tends to come with a fear of making mistakes. Most participants comment on this phenomenon. Robert supports that the fear exists and identifies how he handles it as a leader:

> I think you have to understand that mistakes are made; I think you have to empower people to make decisions. One of the first things I did when I got here is I noticed that there were a lot of people afraid to make a decision and I think that there was a culture of if you make the wrong decision, you’re fired. And from my point of view, I came in and I told everybody “make a decision.” If you’re wrong, all’s forgiven. But for god’s sake, make a decision. And if there’s nobody around to validate it, go with your gut and what you know we’re trying to accomplish and just make a decision. And then if there’s something that’s difficult to live with, we’ll figure out how to live with it. But I don’t want people sitting around feeling like, “I’m not empowered and I can’t make a decision until the person north of me comes back into town,” unless you have a reason for wanting to wait and discuss it. But for the most part things happen quickly and you want to be able to work quickly and that comes back to the old, you know, being customer-service oriented.

Harold offers a similar perspective regarding ownership in the higher education setting, and expands with an explanation of why he believes it is different from corporate settings:

> Ownership is fundamental to teamwork, and ownership can be a real challenge. I think particularly in a public sector. I was just thinking about this the other night. I was observing something about some start-ups and some of the ways that they were incentivizing behaviors with employees. There is so much that can be done with an ownership stake that we just can’t do, obviously. With that ownership stake, you invest so much more of your employees’ everything—their time, their

> effort, their creativity, their thought—without necessarily having to expend dollars. We can’t do that, so the sense of ownership has to be created emotionally not legally. Nobody is going to give you a share of Eastside. I think that that requires some different leadership skills. It can be done, but it must be done intentionally. It must be nurtured. It must be rewarded. It must be acknowledged. It must be maintained. It can’t simply be, “Okay, great. I think we’re all good now,” and then it’s forgotten. I think Thomas gets that quite a bit. He actually talked about it when he interviewed here for the job and he talked about the importance of maintaining regular communication with his reports.

In speaking of her own leadership methods, Margaret understands the apprehension surrounding ownership but still chooses to maintain it. To safeguard herself, she relies on information:

> I need to have information all the time on why I’m doing something so that if I’m ever asked I’ve got it right there for you. This is why I did this. It may not be comfortable. It may not be what is right but you understand why I came to this conclusion. I own everything that I do. I never take ownership of something that I have not done. There are a lot of leaders that do sometimes. I never pass it off. I never point a finger.

Robert clearly distinguishes between leaders owning problems and owning successes, identifying that each requires a different approach:

> I’m accountable, but we’re successful. I own the problem, but I’m not particularly interested in owning the gold trophy. I think that you have to share that success with the university…. And then among your peers, they know what you did and

> that's enough, but don't worry about the press and all that. Let the university own the success.

After evaluating the data, participants espouse that both communication (telling the truth) and professional (doing one's job well) trust exist within the cabinet. Also mentioned is accountability for actions and its relationship with risk-taking; participants state that both are less frequent in higher education administration than in corporate settings possibly because of career risk.

Conflict. Despite the collaboration and teamwork mentioned by participants, they also refer to conflict within the group. Although, members tend to have varying viewpoints on the positivity and productivity surrounding conflict. Isaac discusses the constructive nature of conflict and its ability to build consensus:

> That's not to say there are never problems. There are. Always. And we work them through. We have to work them through. And in my own unit here, sure. We talk about problems. We try to solve problems. We get consensus. I'm a great believer in getting a consensus view on things, but at the end of the day sometimes someone has to make the decision, and the decision gets made and then we move forward.

Margaret, however, depicts another perception of conflict, arguing that it is uncomfortable and can imply weakness in a leader's strategy:

> I don't embrace it. That's crazy. I mean maybe people think that that's a great thing: "I love conflict." I think they're BS-ing you, because when it comes to being a leader you have to stand up and make decisions that are not popular and you have to do it in a way that notes confidence, experience, compassion, and you

> think you have all those things when you're leader. Conflict suggests that maybe there's a chink in that armor and it's uncomfortable.

Alex reinforces Margaret's view, adding that the higher education environment contributes to the uncomfortable nature of conflict but differentiating between conflict among administrators and conflict among faculty:

> Many of us flee conflict when to me the higher ed. environment is supposed to invoke conflict. It's supposed to be an environment of civil debate and dialogue and where we don't all agree at certain points. But for me personally, in higher ed., conflict comes with attitude that if you and I have a conflict, instead of us working through it, we stop talking to each other or we stop engaging with each other because we have a conflict. And that's typically on the administrative staff side. Faculty. I've been in faculty meetings where they've gone at it and then afterwards, they're like, come on, let's get something to eat.

Regarding espoused conflict within the cabinet, data show that conflict exists within the cabinet but participants have varying viewpoints about its overall positivity and productivity. Whereas some see conflict's ability to build consensus, others note the vulnerability it can put on a leader. Additionally, conflict is described as manifesting differently with administrators than faculty, with faculty members seeming much more comfortable in conflict.

Espoused theories of action: A summary. Among frequent themes espoused by participants as their leadership, communicative, and change actions are the following: teams and collaboration, trust and ownership, and conflict.

Theories-In-Use & Their Alignment with Espoused Theories of Action

This section is shaped by the second and third research questions:

- What are the new president's and cabinet members' theories-in-use regarding communicative leadership techniques during change?
- How do the new president's and cabinet members' espoused theories of action and theories-in-use regarding communicative leadership techniques align?

To address the second research question, this section uses the lens of theories-in-use to first provide responses related to leadership, communication, and change, followed by responses about teams and collaboration, trust and ownership, and conflict. The third research question refers to the possible alignment of the participants' espoused theories and theories-in-use, therefore this section also affords data describing this relationship framed by leadership, communication, and change, as well as teams and collaboration, trust and ownership, and conflict.

Leadership. As this case study centers on leadership, the researcher asks participants about their espoused leadership styles and then observes their leadership theories-in-use. In sharing her own leadership style, Greta provides a story of how she attempts to maintain a connection with her staff:

> I think that I described it in a sense that—and certainly you can't involve everyone—but I think that if you've involved in the leadership of the various areas or various colleges—or in my case it's units—involved in those things that we are going to change, those decisions that are made, the communication will happen naturally. It'll just happen because they feel part of it versus that dictatorial style where units are told, "So this is what we're doing." That just

> doesn’t work. Again, I think if they feel part of it, the communication will just happen naturally. I go to staff meetings, I go to command staff meetings in the police department. Yesterday we hired a new officer who is…we had the ceremony to give her her badge. So I go to that, and every time I go to any of these I try to weave in something else about what we’re doing so that they feel a part of it. You’re a piece to a puzzle.

Edward also exemplifies his style, noting that he interacts with his employees the same way he prefers to be treated by his superiors. As previously mentioned, Edward chooses not to dictate how tasks should be completed but rather opts to be a part of the process. “I’m not here just to be given a set of tasks and go off and do them. My role in my mind is to be part of the thought process of why we should or shouldn’t do it that way” (Edward). Further elaborating, Edward details his relationship with his employees as well as his relationship with the president:

> They’re not afraid to say to me, “We tried that, and it just didn’t work.” My reaction is, “Okay then,” because it’s the same thing. That’s going down, if you like. But to me, it works the same way going up. What’s the point of me being here if you’re not going to listen to what I say, or you’re just going to tell me how to go and handle that. Because that’s not your background, so why am I here then? You can get someone for a lot cheaper if you just want to tell them what to do.

Thomas agrees with Edward’s evaluation of his relationship with the cabinet, adding that he does not know everything but needs to know enough to understand why decisions are made:

> I view our vice presidents as not only responsible people for an area but people who know most everything that's going on. You can't know everything. I don't know everything that's going on. You know enough about what's going on and why a decision was made that when someone raises the question, you go, "No. That's really not quite right. Here's what happened." That, I think, is important. For people to come and have a pulse of what issues….

Although Thomas is described as giving his cabinet room to exercise their own expertise, he is also portrayed as a direct and clear leader regarding his expectations: "Well number one, there's clear direction from the top. I've been here for two years in terms of Thomas and almost nine years with the university but you never have to second-guess where Thomas stands. He's very clear, very direct" (Alex). Margaret supports Alex's claims, adding that the direction Thomas provides is his vision:

> Vision is in this case, Thomas. Thomas's vision is XYZ and by golly, we all better be on board to make sure it happens. I mean you do believe it and it needs to be aspirational and inspirational. Those are the two words that I would actually use to describe Thomas's vision. Is it always coherent and cogent? No, but he's willing to risk a lot to get there, and so because he's willing to risk that, we are too.

In addition to providing vision for the cabinet and the institution, Thomas is also self-described as having little patience:

> I'm not a patient person. I'm not a patient person by nature. I'm also not patient because if we have aspirations, we don't need to explain away the reasons we can't do it. That's where I get impatient when we start explaining away the

> reasons it won’t work instead of using a more creative approach, which is, “How could we do that? What could we do that would be different?” Not, “This is the way it is. This is the way it is. This is the way it is.” It doesn’t have to be that way.

Described as “a make-it-happen type of person” (Alex), most cabinet members recognize the impatience in their leader Thomas, noting that, as uncomfortable as it may be for them, it is a beneficial trait and has created significant progress at Eastside:

> That impatience again. It serves him well. It was one of the first—I don’t know if we talked about this last time—conversations I had with him about, he doesn’t want to wait five years to do something; let’s do it now. He’s only got a certain amount of time here—we all have—and it takes time, academia takes time to do things. We move at glacial speed. We’re not a business where next year’s stock prices depend on the earnings that we’re about to publish. Although the analogy, we’re kind of getting there with these metrics. That’s tension throughout the state. I think when we first talked about the admissions, raising the admissions, I was very nervous. In the end, we did it. We went there. (Isaac)

Margaret indicates that effective leadership includes the ability to move forward by encouraging employees to leave their “comfort zones:” “To be a good leader, you have to provide, I don’t want to say ‘pushing,’ but you have to get people out of their comfort zone and I think that Thomas obviously does that and that’s okay” (Margaret). Harold is more direct in describing Thomas’s drive, specifically labelling it “pushing.” “The one thing that’s constant is Thomas will keep pushing, whether we’re one or whether we’re two or whether we’re four or whether we’re eleven. We’re going to be pushing and pushing hard" (Harold). The cabinet members also see Thomas's impatience or pushing as part of his enthusiasm and mention the balance between trying to slow processes down and dampening his energy. "I think that when I look at the President, he's a very fast-paced person. It's not to disparage him. He's not a patient person, and I think he would agree, and I'm certainly not a patient person" (Greta). Isaac notes this dynamic from the beginning of Thomas's appointment at Eastside:

> I know he knows it. One of the first conversations I had with him he said, "Isaac, if I go too far, you've got to pull me back." I said, "All right, Thomas. I will. Don't worry." But I don't want to kill his enthusiasm [laughter].

Of all the participants, data were only present to confirm or disconfirm alignment between Thomas's theory-in-use and espoused theory of action regarding leadership. (This lack of data likely occurred within the leadership lens because the researcher neither observed nor interviewed subordinates within each of Eastside's units.) Thomas self-describes his leadership style as "aggressive and hopefully inclusive," which is corroborated by the other participants' descriptions of his leadership style as well as what was observed in the meetings. Alex, for instance, describes Thomas as "a make-it-happen type of person." Adding an example from Thomas's brief history at Eastside, Isaac states, "I think when we first talked about the admissions, raising the admissions, I was very nervous. In the end, we did it. We went there." Both Thomas and the other cabinet members use the strategic planning process as an example of Thomas's inclusive style, explaining how he used his first 100 days to meet with every department in the institution and listen.

Communication. The participants share ample information regarding their ability to communicate with one another, exploring their own relationships with the cabinet as well as other roles.

Alex prefers to share with the group all information he has, especially when someone else may have a stake in the matter:

> So, student affairs, we tell everything. I'm hoping I'm one of those communicators, because if I know it, I'm going to communicate it. I also call team members if I want to put something on the agenda that I believe may scurry into their area or tread their area. Like today, I talked about emergency numbers for students' contacts and I know sometimes the police deal with that as well. So I called up Greta a couple of days ago and said, "Hey this is what I'm talking about, I want to put it on the agenda," and she supported me this morning with that.

Alex adds, though, that not all the cabinet members are as ready to share information:

> But there are some cabinet members who not intentionally but they just say what they have to say and that's it. So I guess they do communicate [laughter]. Do you remember EF Hutton? EF Hutton: when people talk, EF Hutton listens or whatever. There are people around the table that when they talk, people listen because they don't share as often.

When asked why he thinks these differences in communication style exist around the table, Alex identifies both personality differences as well as leadership role differences: "It could be both. The communication could be outside the meetings. Some VPs don't communicate outside of meetings as much as others. So, I do not believe that's intentional. I just believe it's the dynamics of wherever your expertise lies."

Despite the differences in communication styles, cabinet members agree that communication has been effective and that they are each respectful of the others' words. "In the sense of my perception, nobody has failed to articulate what they need to articulate, for themselves and for their area, because of some limitation in their communication skill or because of some limitation in the opportunity to communicate" (Harold). What was observed in both meetings confirms this openness in communication. The participants ask for clarity a number of times, give feedback, ask for feedback, and thank each other for their work on respective issues. When asked about the normalcy of these sorts of interactions, Margaret further elaborates: "I have to be respectful and we have to understand what everyone's roles are and be mindful of that but I've never been in a situation where I couldn't express myself." Harold agrees, expanding on the topic: "I've never observed one vice president verbally squash another vice president's attempt to express, again, since Thomas has been here. I'm not seeing that." Still, though, Margaret explains that the cabinet members "ask questions at the right time. They're not, again, blindly loyal to me or what I want to do."

During both observed meetings, the content and respective speakers generally follow the agenda. For each agenda item, the president hands it off to the respective cabinet member and lets them share the information. Other cabinet members interject to ask questions, seek clarification, or add information. After all the agenda items are completed, each member is given time to share whatever he or she needs to share with the group, whether it is a major issue, an ongoing project, or a small bit of information. Edward attributes this scene to the cabinet's group-oriented communication preference: "Interestingly, I would say most of the time our communication is verbal. It's usually as a group. It’s rarely done with one or two people as an aside. It’s usually done as a group, and it’s usually done pretty openly.” In the second meeting observation, this collaborative communication continues to be apparent. The meeting begins with a debrief of responses to a very recent natural disaster. The cabinet members speak repeatedly about how the VPs all worked together and coordinated their efforts effectively.

Although the general tendency of the group is to speak collaboratively, the researcher notices a touch of tension, which is quickly diffused with humor. When discussing the student admittance percentages, the president and Harold start to joke that the percentage of out-of-state students should be higher and higher, offering knowingly absurd numbers. The provost then responds, “I think I’m going to be on the road for the rest of the year,” to which everyone laughs.

In addition to discussing the group dynamic as a whole, participants also mention the communication capabilities of specific individuals in the cabinet. Alex refers to his close working relationship with Isaac and addresses the communication supporting it. “The fact that student affairs is engaged with conversation about enrollment and admission standards. I’m actually in those meetings that are outside of cabinet. I’m on the enrollment management oversight committee, so that’s exciting for student affairs to do that.” When asked to elaborate, he says:

> I love it. I love it. And Isaac values it too. It’s almost to the point that I feel like I have a dual report even though I don’t on paper. I spend more time with Isaac than I do with the president, which makes sense. (Alex)

Thomas validates Isaac’s communication ability, offering that it is not only present within the cabinet, but it also radiates down the hierarchy:

> It is the communication that occurs from me to the provost to the deans to the faculty, which is a chance for significant misunderstanding of things, but if it's consistent and somewhat in writing, then I think it—Isaac is an exceptional provost. He's a very good communicator. He meets frequently with his deans.

Isaac's communicative ability is partially attributed to his ability to step back and think before he speaks, then to engage in conversation before he makes decisions:

> I think the most cautionary one of the group, sometimes, is Isaac. He's the pause person for a moment; let's talk through. And that could be because his constituency is much greater. For me, for the most part, I'm serving students. But to have oversight, or facilitate, the brain of the university, our faculty, I think he has to be like he is. (Alex)

Another individual mentioned for his strong communicative ability is Harold, who, as Alex details, is an effective listener and ably simplifies what others are trying to say:

> Harold is able to take our thoughts and put them into meaningful paragraphs and dialogue. Sometimes I see him as the summary person. When we talk in conversation, he'll say, "All right, so what I'm hearing is...," and then he'll put it so eloquently, and I'm like, "Yeah" [laughter]. Harold is a phenomenal listener. He will listen, bring clarity and understanding, and then repeat it back. And sometimes I'm like, "I'm not sure if I said that, but that's what I meant to say, so, yeah, I said that."

When Harold is asked about how Alex perceives his communication style, he reflects that his perspective is derived from a certain sense of detachment from the more central missions of Eastside:

> I will always try not to be the first person to speak. We need to hear, with admissions, first from the provost; and then, when the conversation is talking about what it's going to be doing on the finances, we need to hear from the CFO; and then, when it's talking about the housing, we need to hear from student affairs. By the time every one of those three or four other people have spoken, then maybe it's useful, sometimes, to offer a little bit of a historical perspective or, if not, maybe it's just easy enough to try to tie things back together because my role is institutionally a little bit different because I don't have an area that has the same type of skin in the game as those do. I do have a little bit of a detachment and, thus, can help maybe summarize something from a distance that others can't. I think it's just a function of the luck of having been there longer combined with the difference in my office's mission from everybody else's.

The participants also share their insight regarding Thomas's role in and interaction with the cabinet members. Alex addresses the conflict that can arise from having individuals who tend to make decisions at different rates:

> There are VPs around that table who are decision-makers on a dime and there are others who are processors. Thomas is a decision maker on a dime, while others may say, "Alright. I'm processing this. Can we talk about it next week?" So I will say that sometimes that adds a conflict to our cabinet because you have people who are processors and people who want things done yesterday.

Margaret agrees with Alex’s assessment of the president’s dynamic within the cabinet; however, she reinforces that the reciprocal feedback-giving and pushing are present and necessary in the room:

> I think we all feel quite free to push back if we need to because I would expect that any president—or any of us—that if I’m not on the right track or others feel that I’m really going to put us in a different position than we should be in or whatever, I tell them to help me get to that point in my thinking because I’m not the end all and be all and I don’t think Thomas views himself as the end all and be all. He needs to have that feedback and that push when we see that we’re going to potentially take us down a path that may not be beneficial in some form or fashion.

Adding further perspective, Isaac mentions the academic environment’s role in fostering healthy debate and a diluted top-down structure:

> We talk about it. It’s academia. That’s exactly how it is. Clearly, we have a president. It’s not all top down. Thomas listens. Listening is golden; I think I’ve mentioned that before. You have to listen to be a great leader. Maybe that’s more important than speaking. Depends on your point of view, I guess. He listens. We all talk.

Possibly one of the most notable listening events during Thomas’s tenure happened during his first 100 days in an effort to understand the institution and its faculty and staff:

> When they created the strategic plan when Thomas got here and he said, “I’m going to meet with every unit on campus,” he did. I think he went to 63 or 64

> meetings, if I’m not mistaken, with all the departments and all the units. And that was one-on-one. Actually, not one-on-one; it was a president and a provost but it wasn’t mass communication. It was dialogue and it was true dialogue. I think that absolutely impacted the perception of the leadership in addition to…and I know for a fact it also impacted the self-perception of leadership. He came out of it—and the provost who had been here for 20 plus years will tell you—he came out of that exercise knowing more about their institution than Isaac had ever learned in two decades here and that Thomas ever imagined he could learn in that period of time. (Harold)

Thomas enhances what Harold says, lending his personal perspective on how and why he strategized his listening journey at Eastside to re-create join-in from both the internal and external communities:

> Most of my first 100 days were really figuring out who is here, what do we have, what’s broken and what do I need to do to address it. Instead of just hearing things and passing on them, people almost get astonished when you do something about it. Because if there have been years of surfacing something and nothing has been done, I think people are just surprised that anybody does anything should they ask. So I spent the first 100 days doing a huge amount of listening. I spent a lot of the time on campuses and actually off campus, too, because I really needed the community to re-embrace us. We were not embraced very well at that time, and so I felt like if I went to enough of these…. I went to every chamber meeting imaginable; I went to every drop-in at somebody’s house, every time I could get a

> whole bunch of new people to really talk about where we’re going versus where we’ve been.

To summarize the data regarding communication, as observed in the cabinet meetings, discussions tend to be open and collaborative, with interjections, feedback, and sharing of unit-specific knowledge. All participants agree that this type of participative and productive conversation is standard in the meetings. Edward adds that the collaboration extends into the group’s chosen communication medium, noting that the majority of their communication happens as a group as opposed to one or two members having a side conversation, which contributes to the openness and collaboration.

Not only is mention made of the communication capabilities within the cabinet but also regarding Isaac and Harold within their respective units. Thomas and Alex both assert they have experienced first-hand Isaac’s ability to communicate collaboratively and openly within his unit, similarly to what is seen in the cabinet meetings. Alex describes Isaac as the “pause person,” wanting time to think before speaking further on a topic. Whereas Alex depicts Harold as a strong listener who has a gift for simplifying what others try to say. Harold validates this description of his communication style, and attributes it to his specific circumstance: “I think it’s just a function of the luck of having been there longer combined with the difference in my office’s mission from everybody else’s.”

When characterizing Thomas’s communication style, feedback-giving, pushing, and listening are emphasized by the participants. Feedback-giving and pushing are both seen as reciprocal processes with Thomas; he freely gives and receives feedback, often pushes his cabinet members to stretch their goals, but also can be pushed back if someone on the team foresees a decision taking Eastside in an undesirable direction.

Change. Through the perspectives of the cabinet members, this section characterizes the change in atmosphere and vision Thomas brought with him to Eastside. Isaac describes Thomas specifically as “a changer”:

> No question, Thomas is a changer. He’s come in here and changed; he’s upped the ante. I think he’s changed the perspective, he’s changed the expectations, and they are his expectations. But I think it is also the collective expectation that we’re better, we can be better, and we will get better, and we’ll all do that.

Greta also speaks of Thomas’s ability to inspire change and gives an example of how that inspiration has trickled down into seemingly trivial areas to great effect:

> It just takes a little extra time to explain how whatever changes we’re making obviously will benefit them in the long run. An example was grounds. This was not a unit that really worked very hard, and the campus aesthetics showed that. They work very hard now, but it was a lot of just explaining to them, making them feel that what they were doing was very significant. I said, “This is our window dressing. This is the front door. When a parent comes on campus and they see this, how we take care of our grounds and our outside means a lot to draw a conclusion on how we manage the rest of our business.” So it made them feel like, “Well yeah, I’m going to work harder.” It’s making a difference.

With the profound expectations Thomas brought to Eastside, he also created a fear for potential failures. However, as the president’s far-fetched goals are realized and come to fruition, the Eastside community becomes less skeptical:

> I absolutely know that when some of the expectations were talked about, the president saying, “We want to be number one on the performance metrics,” the folks that had been here quite a while said, “Well, okay. We all want to be number one, but is that a realistic expectation?” So I think it’s really seeing if those expectations matched with what we felt we could do. And in the beginning, there probably was doubt in some folks but then it sort of came together obviously. (Greta)

Many participants recognize Thomas’s personality and vision as contributing factors for the successful change initiatives. “He came in with new ideas, fresh ideas and change. I think clearly the personality contributes to everything, his personality” (Isaac). Greta attributes Eastside’s new sense of shared vision to Thomas’s own vision:

> Oh my gosh, well without it [laughter], that’s what goes to the change. We need to have vision. It needs to be realistic. It needs to be stretched, but realistic. And it needs to correlate back to the vision the president has for the university. And I think as the university—I’ve been here for quite some time, 25 years—I think that we’ve often lacked that. I would say this is the first time in my tenure here that we have a clear vision, a clear direction, and everyone knows what that is.

Teams & collaboration. Participants of this case study state the vision and direction are only possible with effective teams and collaboration. They share their experiences within the cabinet, noting that each brings his or her own skills to the room and they must rely on each other to enact change. “There’s a spirit of collaboration. I can call up any VP right now and say help and they’ll come. They’ll help. They’ll do what they can” (Alex). In agreement, Margaret considers the cabinet her “sounding board”:

> They’re the ones that I need to get their perspective and they’re all over the board. They’re students, they’re faculty, they’re facilities, they’re research, communication, the president’s agenda. They are all people who have a perspective on this organization that I don’t have. And so when I say something, they say, “Well, have you thought about this and have you thought about that?” And so it’s really a team effort. It sounds so hokey but it’s true. It has to be that way. You have to have people there who understand what your agenda and objectives are and that they’re going to benefit some way from this—that data are going to be better, that numbers are going to be more current. They help me make these decisions by just passing through my objectives.

Edward also views the cabinet members as communicative and collaborative, productively interjecting expertise when a need arises:

> So generally speaking, this is a group and it’s verbal, I would say. For me, it works effectively. So everybody’s hearing it at the same time, and there’s usually lots of different points of view that need to be considered and they come from the individual areas, because I can’t speak for the legal issues; that needs the lawyer in the room to speak about that. So, I think it’s pretty effective. Everybody who’s currently around the table is for the most part, very good at that. The leadership team is a team, I think. I think it’s closer now, because of recent changes. I think it’s in pretty good shape, actually.

Supporting Margaret and Edward’s perspectives, as each conversation went on during the first meeting observation, cabinet members interrupt each other with input or questions and no one seems bothered by it; the exchanges seem more like brainstorming sessions than rude interjections. For instance, while Margaret talks on her point, some cabinet members chime in with information from their perspectives and areas. Once she finishes, she thanks them for providing "direction because it will be helpful," after which Thomas tells her, "Good work on this and getting the problem resolved."

Edward further describes the environment of the meetings:

> Many of the issues we discussed, they involved different areas, so it tends to evolve that way through the course of the meeting. They are generally about three hours long, and generally cover quite a bit of ground. It's a bit of the Olympic rings, so there is overlap in pretty much everything in someone else's area or in some way, to some extent.

Thomas, who intentionally designed the cabinet meetings as they are, provides his logic for doing so, citing transparency and efficiency:

> They're designed to, first of all, inform if there's something to be informed about. Also, to ask why did this happen or how did this happen. I don't care which person speaks. It's not directed at anybody. It's intended to get a dialogue from a lot of different viewpoints about how something happened or something we need to get done, and what do we need to do to move that forward or something I've heard that has not gotten done. If it's an individual thing, I go to the individual. I'm not going to call them out in a room like that.

Behavior similar to that shown in the first meeting is also exhibited in the second meeting observation. The cabinet members cut each other off and finish each other's sentences as the conversation goes on, but in a non-threatening manner. At one point, the provost makes a statement and the president cuts him off to tell him the statement is not true; the provost agrees, clarifies, and moves on with the conversation. Later, the provost openly and adamantly criticizes a PowerPoint that had been made for a board presentation, asking who has to present it and who created it. Others agree that the PowerPoint needs a lot of work. Robert, who created it and would be presenting it, is not in attendance, so the provost agrees to contact him with the feedback. He then compliments Alex on his portion of the slides.

Isaac attributes the cabinet's communicative and collaborative ability to Thomas, who moved away from a fully hierarchical structure and flattened it to an extent:

> I know that I wouldn't sit there and think, "I just finished so and so's sentence." I think we're all thinking along the same lines. As a group, I think what Thomas has achieved with this group—and I think we talked about this last time—he flattened the leadership…. Previously, we had more of a hierarchy core leadership. Senior vice president, senior dadadadada. Thomas came in and flattened all of that, and certainly moved units around a little bit. I think that has promoted that we, first of all, need to be talking to one another to see what's going on, because what any one of us does is going to impact the other units in some way. Certainly what Robert wants to do in research is going to impact academic affairs. What Alex wants to do in student affairs will impact academic affairs through the students. I think we've got to know one another very well. Maybe we've got to know how we all think or try to think. That may lead into this, "I know where you're going with this argument. Let's just get there." I feel, to me, that speaks to a comfortableness; does that make sense? With each other. I don't think any one of us feels we're competing with anyone else. This idea of

> flattening the structure seems to be working from that point of view. I think I'll reserve judgement whether I like it or not. I feel there's that comfortableness, that's the best way. We talk as a leadership group.

Further supporting the claim for a lack of competitiveness within the cabinet, Edward illustrates the general difficulty of working on a team at the cabinet level and discusses why he believes this team has been successful:

> I think generally speaking, the leadership team works well together. That's difficult, actually. That's hard to make work. Not that we need to work hard at it; it's just easy for something to try and break that. When you take academic affairs, the provost's area, that's an enormous area with a lot of fickle personalities in the ranks. So he has a lot of burden on his shoulders that may conflate directly with something that I might want to do, just as an example. So you certainly have to…. He, as much as anybody, is trying to keep all the people happy, all the time. That's for sure. What I don't experience, I'm pleased to say, is a competitiveness. I think in that environment, that's not good. I don't experience that. I don't experience the making someone look bad so you look better, or don't look as bad, type situation. I don't experience that at all. And it probably doesn't exist because the people in those seats are good at what they do.

Also reinforcing the cabinet's communicative and collaborative nature, Edward contrasts it with other leadership teams in which he has participated:

> I've been involved where it's more or less one person saying, "This is how we're going to do it," and people write it down and go away and are expected to implement whatever that is. It's less of a discussion, less of an advising

> environment where you’re relying on…I think the president, he certainly has his own mind, his own ideas, but he’s not a lawyer, right? So he’s going to rely on general counsel for input on a particular issue, as an example. In my experience, in that room, no one is afraid to speak from their area of expertise if they think something is a bad idea, because you kind of have a responsibility to say something. Even if the outcome is still the same, you need to weigh in on it and say, “Well, maybe we shouldn’t do that because of this reason.” But there are other reasons why it’s still a good idea, so they go, “Okay, we’ll live with that then. Because in the end, it’s worth it, I think. You may get some negative publicity on this, but at least you got rid of them. Well then, let’s roll with it because it would be worth it, I think.”

When asked if the meetings observed for this study are consistent with the majority of these cabinet meetings, Greta did not hesitate with an answer: “Very consistent. Absolutely. It’s very interesting because I think when we met initially, I really talked about the importance and the relevance of that team, and what you observed is how we are.”

Additionally emphasizing the cabinet’s dynamic, Harold attributes its success to the presence of trust in each other:

> There’s one president but he relies on a group of six or seven or eight or how many vice presidents and he encourages us to be a team. He talks about it quite a bit and I think we are. We absolutely are. But you can’t work in a team effectively if you can’t trust what somebody across the table is saying or doing. It just doesn’t work.

Harold shares an example of the cabinet's dynamic and trust in each other positively affecting a decision-making conversation:

> [Laughter] I'm chuckling because I just walked out of a meeting, as you know, with the president and he was meeting with me and one other vice president, and the vice president and I had met before meeting with the president. We were talking about this thing that we were talking about with him. As the vice president and I were finishing up with our conversation, we said, "The first option is A," and it wasn't like we were given three choices. There was a universe of things that were being requested and we said, "Well, option A is the first thing that occurred to both of us," but there was a potential problem with option A, which occurred to both of us and, therefore, we said, "So probably this other option," which I'll call "B." Again, it's not like you chose A, B or C. It was an open-ended question that we immediately both recognized A was what we would recommend but A has this issue and if not A, then we were both recommending B out of the universe of possibilities. We told the president this request had come in and before we even said what our conversation had been, he said, "Well, I would say give them A," and we chuckled and we said, "Well, we said that too but there is this limitation on A." He said, "Well, then give them B." The vice president and I started dying laughing and he said, "I take it you guys discussed this?" We said, "Exactly on this, in that exact order we discussed it" A, problem, B. It's a recognition of the fact that we do very much, as you say, finish each other's sentences.

This intuitive dynamic is not only present in decision-making but also in information sharing with university constituents. Harold affords another example, which depicts him speaking for the president at an event:

> We do this welcome lunch for the new board members and the president speaks and he gave his overview and then it's question and answer time and we get to know you. While the president was speaking, everybody else was eating and then he finally gets to sit down and have his lunch while trying to answer some questions. First question comes up and the president had taken a bite, thinking that the person asking the question would be speaking longer, kind of like I'm doing right now, but in fact the question was very short. I don't remember what it was but it was a very succinct question so the president was about halfway through his bite as the person stopped the question. There was a half-second awkward pause. He had a full mouth and I just said, "President's indisposed for a minute. I'll take that." It was a question; it wasn't a legal question. It wasn't even a foundation question. It was about the direction of the university, which had been the whole point of this conversation. I knew the exact answer to it because it was something we had discussed at the cabinet meetings repeatedly so I explained, in some detail, exactly how the president and the university were perceiving that issue and what the plan was to address it and what the relevant steps were. I deliberately spread out the answer a little bit, A, to be comprehensive for the question but, B, to let the president take a few extra bites. Actually have some lunch. He managed to get through four bites before I finished and then when I was done, I turned to him, noticing at one point where he was in between bites, I said,

> “I think that covers it, sir, but what did I forget?” He laughed and he said, “You just said everything, my thoughts precisely.” He’s told that story since and I’ve told that story because that’s an example of how he likes the fact that his vice presidents can literally speak the words that would be coming out of his mouth on certain issues because we’ve talked about it so many times before and we’ve done it in a way that we’re not sitting there listening to him. It is most, as you observed, most of the answers, and that one perfect example…the reason why the vice presidents can articulate, in some detail, not just the answer but the reasoning behind it and the planning that’s following it is because it is a collaborative process and we all have some ownership of it. We’ve all worked on it together.

Thomas agrees that Harold’s instinctive ability to speak for him is typical and is also true of the other cabinet members. “They can go give my talks, literally, and I hope they do. Because frequently, I don’t have to be at something” (Thomas).

In summary, the participants reinforce that enacting positive change is only possible with effective teams and collaboration. In this collaboration, each member relies on the skills and expertise of the others to ensure successful decision-making. The meeting observations clearly show the co-reliance present in active dialogue and feedback-sharing. Thomas states he specifically designed the cabinet meetings as he did to encourage the dialogue, as well as to create an environment that fosters transparency and efficiency. Isaac recognizes that the meeting dynamic is possible because Thomas partially flattened the leadership hierarchy when he came to Eastside. The flatter structure coupled with a mutual respect for each other’s skills and areas of expertise has produced a resulting lack of competition among the cabinet members, which in turn promotes trust within the team and successful collaboration.

Trust. The participants agree and mention many times the existing team dynamic is largely due to the trust present. In the context of trust, participants mention either a cabinet member who is no longer in the cabinet or employees who have worked for them and were let go for violating trust. Isaac connects trust to who is and who is no longer in the cabinet:

> I don’t know how we’d conduct our business if we didn’t all feel that we could trust the others, one, to do what they need to do, and two, to keep it confidential when we need to keep it confidential. Certainly the president trusts everybody, I think, and I do too to that extent. I think there have been breaches of trust in the past with different people who are no longer at that table. Maybe that’s why they’re not at the table.

Thomas elaborates, maintaining that violating trust can mean losing the privilege of participating in the cabinet:

> I think everybody knows nobody is sacred. Anybody that can’t get the job done, I’ll try to find out why. If your spouse is seriously ill, you lost somebody in the family, that’s understandable. Those are things that you recognize. If you just are BSing people and there’s growing evidence that we’re not getting accuracy so that we can protect the university and do our jobs and if you’re making other people look like they’re responsible for things, it’s just intolerable. It’s intolerable. You lost the privilege of being a part of the team. You violated trust that we put in.

In addition to trust, accountability is crucial to the leadership team's success. Edward interprets this relationship as being able to rely on each member's expertise:

> I don't see the point of having the people around the table if you're not going to rely on their individual expertise. I mean ultimately, he can say yes or no. But what's the point of having them in the room if you're not going to rely on what they have, or listen to what they have to say and why? I think there is a difference between flat-out saying you're disagreeing or saying you're wrong, as opposed to advising, basically, on why you might not want to do that.

To that point, Thomas shares a story of when he and Edward knew Alex held himself accountable for a possibly volatile event on campus:

> So, during the Missouri issues where the tension was high, I felt like Alex had the ability to manage that. Students wanted to protest and they wanted to protest and march, and I said, "I think it's their right to do so." I do think it's important that they realize that we put diversity as a platform for this university. So, if they're marching against Eastside, I'd like to know what it's about. If they're marching in support of what's happening in Missouri, then I understand that; I understand that they're concerned. But, I said, "Alex, I think be part of their solution to their concern." I said, "I'll be happy to meet with them too if they have concerns." So, I literally was walking out the door and they were over there in the free speech area doing chanting and all that kind of stuff, and I texted Alex and I said, "Do you think you need me?" And he said, "No; they're doing exactly what they need to do." Edward and I just turned around and walked right back in the building because there's nothing of new value I was going to add. He had it all under

> control. He said, “Let it out folks; let it out what’s frustrating.” And they were yelling and screaming, and I thought, “God, it seems a little unruly. Do you need me?” And he said, “Nah, they’re getting it out. They’re getting their frustration or anger out.” So, kind of knowing sometimes in conflict who is the person who is the best to resolve it. The president cannot get in every conflict; there are so many.

The president holds his cabinet members accountable in their respective positions, but he has also held himself accountable from day one to improve Eastside. Harold confirms Thomas’s stance on accountability and his ability to follow through with it:

> But for the most part, he took the accountability concept and said, “This is an opportunity to give me data, to give me information that I can then utilize to do something with.” And he’s bought in 100% and the results have been extraordinary for us in that regard. And the governors recognize that. And I think they recognize not just the results but they recognize that the results are themselves a result of Thomas’s embrace of accountability. And that’s the thing that makes them happy.

In summation of data relating to trust, the following points are highlighted: Referring to past cabinet members, Thomas explains that violated trust leads to losing the privilege to participate in the team. Other participants agree, also mentioning prior teams that had a lack of trust or employees that were let go for violating trust. Further, Edward presents another layer of trust that must be present in a functioning team: accountability. Each cabinet member must be able to rely on the others to advise the group in their respective areas of expertise.

Conflict. A necessary yet not always desired element in decision-making, conflict is certainly present between the cabinet members. Alex differentiates the conflict-related habits of student affairs professionals with those of various cabinet members:

> I think what higher ed. does is we do like this: This is an idea that's a bad idea and so we're like oh, okay, keep hoping and then we put it on the side and we hope that it'll go away, and it's still sitting there. But I found that student affairs professionals sometimes practice conflict avoidance. I haven't seen that at the cabinet level. In fact, I've seen—at least my interaction with people—the opposite, that there are certain VPs around the table who are very direct and you never have to second guess where they stand or what they're thinking and that's fantastic. And you have other VPs who don't say as much, but I'm not sure they're not saying as much because of conflict avoidance or just they're dealing with it in a different way than what you want them to anticipate.

In alignment with Alex's description of conflict in the cabinet, the meeting observations depict open yet productive conflict. Disagreements occur here and there, but the members who disagree appear to be forthright with their opinions or facts and they talk it out until a resolution is made.

Isaac also agrees that healthy conflict exists in the cabinet: "That's not to say it's comfortable all the time. You haven't been in meetings where…. It doesn't get testy, but it's clearly…. We're not all in agreement on this or we don't all think this way. That's good, that's healthy." Elaborating with her personal treatment of conflict, Greta also agrees that the cabinet's conflict is positive:

> We do have it. How does it play out? I think that we're getting to a better point where we will just discuss it. I'm not shy, so if I have an issue, I have no problem talking about it and bringing it up. Knowing that we can work through the issue, and at the end of the day, we are a team. It's not always going to be Kumbaya. And I think, again, that goes back to trust. If you've read *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team,* it goes back to that. If you feel that you can speak your mind respectfully, work through it, and at the end of the day, you've trusted that you can do that, I think then that helps. And that trust comes over time, and I think we're there.

The cabinet members highlight Thomas's role in creating an environment that fosters this constructive conflict:

> I think Thomas has done an extraordinary job of creating a climate, especially with the leadership team, of candidness where you can have tough dialogue. He's shown he's willing to make changes on his team if he has to make adjustments. I'm also one who does not believe there's a perfect leader or perfect CEO, so I don't have these grandiose expectations of perfection. (Charles)

Thomas concurs that he values difficult discussions and conflict and that he attempts to encourage an atmosphere where the cabinet members feels comfortable exercising these tools:

> I don't want to quell intense discussion. We don't need to sit there and sugarcoat things we should be saying. So that the hope is that if people get into a little bit of a headbutt, "No, I didn't do that. You never provided this." We're not going to say that that didn't happen. We're not going to sugarcoat it. It's got to be, "Did you provide it or not?" It's easy. Yes or no? "Well, I thought we did." "Well, then

> okay. Now, why didn't it happen?" If you bury things and you just don't discuss them, that becomes the baggage of the room. I guess that's the reason for the way I started off. We go person by person. We start off with a more overall discussion and then person by person. They bring in an issue or something that they felt the rest of the members needed to know about. Hopefully, after three hours, every single week, you have the pulse of what's the most current information.

As expected, the study shows that conflict is present in the cabinet, as confirmed by interviews and observations. Isaac, Alex, Greta, Charles, and Thomas concur that the conflict within the group is typically healthy and productive. However, Isaac and Greta recognize that the atmosphere surrounding the group's conflict is not always comfortable. Thomas, though, maintains that the uncomfortable nature of conflict is a result of discussing difficult issues, the alternative to which is letting them fester and become even more difficult.

Theories-in-use & their espoused theories of action: A summary. Among frequent themes noted by the researcher regarding research question three are teams and collaboration, trust, and conflict.

Communicative Leadership's Influence on Change: Emergent Findings

In answering the fourth research question, the researcher first focuses on themes related to communicative leadership's influence on change during the current cabinet members' tenure, followed by areas for future improvement. The data relating to the current cabinet members' tenure are organized by the following emergent findings: transition; decision-making; new direction; inspiring progress and motivating; urgency;

close-up communication; teams, participation, and collaboration; trust; sensemaking; storytelling; humor; and barriers.

Transition. When examining change processes, noting how those involved are affected by the transition into and through the change is critical. As Thomas's changes are dramatic and rapid at Eastside, many at the university initially experienced anxiety and skepticism:

> And I'm sure there were some people who thought he was joking. "He's not really going to do that." And then it's like, "Oh, no. Yeah, we really are going to do it." So it probably caused a few sleepless nights for a few people. (Edward)

Thomas also recognizes the skepticism Eastside experienced once he shared his proposed changes, adding his response to them and their reactions:

> It was pretty tense between me and everybody. Because they're trying to like me because I'm the new guy. I'm trying to also say, "Yeah, I'm pretty adamant about this. I came here to make a great university and not a good one." Part of that is getting students who are really ready and prepared to go to college. I understand objections. I'm expecting that you take what we are expecting and not treat it as, "Oh, I can't believe you did this. We're never going to be able to do it." You got to go with, "This is what he wants to do and we've got to figure this out." Well, then all of a sudden, they get creative instead of, "Oh, it was crazy." You get the creative side of, "How could we do that? Why is that happening?" Get the problem solved. So far, we've hit all the goals. It's been stressful but we hit all the goals.

Further elaborating, Thomas describes a transition scenario that affects not only those individuals already working on campus, but also students who have been denied entry into Eastside:

> If people don’t want to hear it, my truth and somebody else’s truth can be quite different. My belief is that by bringing better students to the university we will build a better university. There are some valid concerns out there that you are eliminating some kids that deserve an opportunity for an education. My counterpoint to that is I can only take 30,000 people. There are many places that students can go to school. If we open the floodgates, we can go to 50,000 and we will be a terrible university. Or we can close the gates and say 30,000 people, knowing today for the next three years in high school, they will have to prepare and work their tail off to think they’re going to get into Eastside just like they have to think that way if they’re going to get into Traditional. But our university will get progressively worse if we continue to perform as we have historically performed because we will not have money to do anything. Raises, hiring new people, we’ll just watch the degradation of the university as it drifts on, or we say, “I’m sorry folks, new rules, there are still ways you can come to Eastside. Go over to Local College for two years, prove yourself and you can transfer to Eastside, but you can’t come in the front door. You should have worked harder in high school.” “Well, I had all of these problems.” “Go fix them. That’s what they are here for. Go over there, transfer, we will be waiting on you. Show me a 3.0 grade point average, you really worked hard, come on in.”

Alex adds that part of the source of anxiety stems from resources: “So I think for the most part, the change is going well but of course that means shifting resources, both financial and human resources. There is excitement in the air but there is also anxiety.” The anxiety, according to Edward, also originates from the administration’s shift to a more business-centric approach to improving Eastside:

> Yeah, and just a bit of a learning curve of…because again, I wasn’t here beforehand, so it’s difficult to make a comparison. I think there was a learning curve there and an element of surprise when there was a realization with certain people—probably at different times, not all at the same time—but of this is the new normal. This is the way we really are going to do it now. But not the first school to take such an approach by any means. More of a business-like approach, increasing standards to improve quality, that sort of thing. That’s not really anything new in or outside higher education. But certainly, the school had been the same for a number of years, and a lot of the people had been here for many years. So, it probably came as a bit of surprise when they realized it was really going to happen.

Edward continues, attributing the apprehension toward a business approach to the higher education environment; he also clarifies that the business focus is not about making more money but about being more efficient and productive in meeting the state’s metrics:

> I think there’s also just the public higher education aspect to it, of it not being really done in that environment. We’re not in it to make money, type of thing. And really, that’s still not the game now. It’s just that we are held to certain metrics by the state now. So, in order to be nearer the top as opposed to nearer the

> bottom, some things had to be done to make that possible, and improving the quality was a large piece of that.

Although Eastside's cabinet implemented change quickly, many individuals at the institution were slower to adapt to the change, including Isaac:

> Well, ultimately you need to build the consensus to make the change, but there's a step before that: What is the change that's necessary? What change do you want to effect and why? So clearly, with a new president, new leadership, he wanted to change the university. That's a big ship to turn around, okay? But Thomas has done that, and I think we've done that. I think he imparted that to his team. I've imparted that to our team. We need change. We need a change. Everybody talks about, "Oh, got to change the culture here. If we can't change the culture, we're going nowhere." Boy, that's not an easy thing to do. That is not an easy thing to do. But we need to do it. And I think we're doing it. And I think we're doing it through what I would call baby steps. I mean, to turn a ship, as you know, to turn a big ship takes miles. You can't just turn it on a dime. And I think with change you need to be strategic in how you go about it, in what you want to do and realize it's going to take time. Some people are pretty impatient. The president's pretty impatient [laughter], you know, right?

In contrast, though, Edward mentions that although other people at the institution may have been slow to adapt to the culture change, the cabinet members were not; they were initially surprised, if anything:

> It was a culture change, so some people took a little bit longer to catch on, but probably not on the vice president level, really. I think there was probably a little

> bit of surprise of, “Hey, I’m not joking here. No, I really want to do that.” I think some of the thinking was probably a little bit more traditional and conservative, and that immediately changed to being prepared to take more risks, if you like. By risks, I don’t mean irresponsible. I mean, increasing the entry requirements. GPA was a risk.

The remaining individuals at Eastside who still did not seem to be embracing the changes did eventually begin to exhibit join-in. Edward speculates that when the remaining skeptics saw the results coming to fruition regarding Eastside’s state rankings, they began to support the change:

> I think it picked up speed after initial…. It slowly started to ramp up, and then, at some point, probably about—in context of the real world—probably around the time, probably about just over a year ago, when the performance funding metrics were released, and Eastside went from the penalty box to halfway. That was a milestone for sure. I think that was probably the point for the people who were uncertain about where we were going, or whether this was going to work. It was probably the point where they thought, “Well, maybe it is going to work.” I think there were people who were in from the start, which got us to that point. Then you got the buy-in from maybe not everybody else, but certainly the ones who were on the fence.

In summation, the case study’s findings show the rate at which members of Eastside’s community experienced anxiety and skepticism about the transition and then moved toward acceptance varied given how close they were to the president in the hierarchy. In other words, those who were most involved in the planning and implementation from the earlier stages reached acceptance sooner than those who may have felt detached from the initial planning. Alex also suggests that a shift in financial and human resources during the transition may have caused anxiety. Amplifying the skepticism, administration also shifted to a more business-centric approach to generate improvements by being more efficient and productive (Edward).

Decision-making. In higher education institutions, decision-making and the resulting change can move slowly, halted by deliberation, debate, and consideration of all stakeholders that seem to be naturally occurring in an academic environment. The participants agree with this norm's existence but do not embrace it or practice it within Eastside. Although the cabinet collaborates and discusses during their meetings, Margaret underscores the importance of following through with the decision-making process:

> When you leave a meeting with an agenda, you've made decisions to move forward, table, reassess, look at things differently, talk to somebody else to make sure that you're getting as much information as you can to make an informed decision. There should be clear problem solving and results at the end of the day or at the end of enough conversations.

During the second meeting observation, a discussion starts about graduate student funding and the president hands it back to the VPs who had been working on it, telling them to continue the discussion, get graduate student feedback, and make a decision within a week to 10 days. Alex recognizes that this follow-through regarding decision-making is the norm: "For the most part, whenever we leave, there are decisions. We know when we walk out of that room the direction we're taking. So that feels good."

Isaac addresses an issue that typically arises in higher education institutions during the decision-making process—the debate carrying on with no resolution because the involved stakeholders refuse to come to a consensus. He contends that when these situations arise, someone inevitably will have to make the final decision:

> So I obviously like to have everybody on board with moving and rowing in the same direction, so we get the best possible outcome. Does that always happen? Well, of course not. There's always one pair of oars that's going to row against us. And the question is how do you manage that? Do you ignore it? Well, you can. Just have the overwhelming mass just roll right over it, or you say, "Okay, what are the issues? Why is there this dissension and can we resolve that?" If we can't, well then at the end of the day so far we'll have to accept that, make a decision and move on. But I like to think, anyway, that we have shared governance at the university or we're moving towards it, always moving towards it. I think decisions and consensus building are very, very important. But at the end of the day there has to be somebody making these decisions who stick to their hard decisions, and you can't get consensus, and you've got a 50/50 split, you are the majority vote, so you do it. So I would think since we're talking about change and about our new leadership from the top, I would say that's something I believe from my experience a sight that's changed at the university. I think we're more into consensus building and shared governance. (Isaac)

To conclude, participants note the difference in rate of decision-making typically seen between corporate and higher education environments. Decision-making tends to be slower in academia; however, the participants claim not to follow the norm and instead move forward with decisions at a faster rate than would be expected. Despite the rate of decision-making, though, the study finds that consensus is still a critical part of the process.

New direction. The concept of a new direction is illustrated by every cabinet member using a metaphorical ship to represent Eastside University. However, members give conflicting depictions of where the ship is heading and what its conditions have been, indicating that members of the cabinet may or may not see the institution moving in a new direction. Harold elaborates on his depiction of the ship Eastside changing direction:

> I think we're charting a different course at a greater velocity. I do think that Thomas has a vision for the University as a national university that is a sharper inflection from our prior trajectory than the other presidents that I've served with. I think everybody would always say, "Yes, we'd like to be known, have a greater national footprint and presence and so forth." That's always been there, but I think that Thomas has a greater inflection from where our prior trajectory has been not just in terms of "Wouldn't it be nice to be national and here's something that maybe we can be known for nationally," but rather an entire expectation of bringing the entire institution to a level of national promise and doing it in a much more strategic way than we have done previously.

Edward supports Harold's metaphor, providing more detail:

> Well I think cultural change, especially in an organization this big—basically we're like a $750 million corporation at the end of the day that turns round like an oil tanker, right? I think we're probably two years into that now, and I'd say it's

> pretty much turned around and it’s starting to go in the other direction. It’s very much slowing it down before it turns around, and then picking up speed again. For an organization of this size, with so many people involved and different types of people—faculty have different concerns and needs, and staff who are different to students—you’ve got a lot of people to try and please all the time, and that culture shift is certainly very slow to turn around.

The participants who depict the metaphorical Eastside ship travelling in the same direction have some variation in what has changed regarding its travels. Alex contends that the ship will simply look different when it reaches its destination:

> We’re not going in a different direction; we’re being transformed where we are and that’s the piece I really like about it. We’re not turning the ship around, you know; we’re headed for the same direction. We’re just going to look different by the time we reach port.

Alex continues, elaborating on his image of Eastside and clarifying what the ship metaphor means to him:

> We’re still admitting students, we’re still graduating. Our destination or our goal has not changed. The way we get to that destination, to me, has changed. Speed up. You paint the sides, you get some new crew members over here, you keep these crew members over there, and by the time the ship gets to its destination, it looks different in how it gets there.

Also emphasizing the rate at which Eastside is travelling, Margaret envisions Thomas as providing the headwind to keep it moving quickly:

> I think we were probably headed in a direction not dissimilar to where we are now but the headwind wasn't there. There wasn't that strong force to make it happen and I think that that's where we are now. I don't think we were going down a bad path. I'm not sure that we were going down a real directed path but Thomas has provided that headwind to get us there faster and more decisively. When you are coasting, nobody's really working really hard…. I don't want to say that we don't work hard but we were not as much a team as we need to be, I think. I wasn't part of that but we all have a role to play now and make it happen.

Augmenting the ship metaphor, Greta shares that the movement is in the same direction still but the institution has a compass to guide it, whereas it had not in the past:

> I think we have a compass now. I think we were absolutely headed in the same direction. We always talked about wanting to improve standards. So I think at the end of the day, these are not new concepts, but it's about having a compass, knowing how to get there versus just meandering around [laughter].

Isaac maintains the same opinion as Alex, Margaret, and Greta, confirming that the institution has been moving on the same path since he first started working there:

> The ship Eastside, I think it's been going in the same direction ever since I've been here. It's why I came here. Building a better university, building research programs, building better teaching, new programs. I think we've been doing that ever since I've been here, and I'd probably argue from the day it opened, we've been on an upward trajectory.

Reinforcing that Eastside is still headed in the same direction, Thomas credits the opposite impression (that it is headed in a new direction) to a change in perception:

> I feel like, you know, we changed the perception of Eastside. It's not completed by any means but I have people frequently say, "I can't believe what's happened here." And I try to point out to them there really hasn't been that much that has happened that wasn't here. Most of the people that were doing what they're doing now were doing what they were doing for the last five years. What has changed is the perception of the University because we're also not doing the things that are detrimental anymore and we're stopping things that we shouldn't have been doing.

According to the data, whether Eastside is moving in a new direction is debated among cabinet members. Whereas some participants see the institution now heading toward a different goal, others see it moving in the same direction but with a difference in the rate, image, or guidance related to that direction. Thomas clarifies in his explanation of Eastside's change, noting that the direction has not changed but the perception of the institution has, placing an emphasis on the positive activities and attempting to prevent situations that may be perceived negatively.

Inspiring progress & motivating. The president and his cabinet have a tool for inspiring progress and motivating, which is the aforementioned change of perception. Robert explains how Thomas and Edward are creating this change of perception with marketing methods:

> So using marketing techniques to promote all the good things that are happening here. I think that creates a buzz and people feel good about it so then when you come back and say, "Okay, here's the next thing," people are like, "Oh, great. I

> want to be a part of that. They did good stuff before and they're going to do good stuff again."

Additionally, Edward emphasizes that explaining the "why" behind the changes enhances join-in and participation in the process:

> I think it's important to explain why we're doing it in communicating the concept, or the idea, or the initiative, or whatever it is that they need to be working on. I think it's important they know why they're doing it, and that it's some part of the…it's a cog in the machine, if you like. Yeah, give it some relevance so people understand that it does fit into the bigger vision.

In the second meeting observation, Edward's desire to explain the "why" to people involved with and affected by a particular change is apparent. In the context of a discussion about a recent natural disaster, the president compliments Edward for "communicating about everything. Everybody may not necessarily get it in the moment they want it, but I think we kept things moving and kept people informed."

According to the study, Thomas is focusing heavily on marketing to help foster the positive image of Eastside, thus explaining the "why" behind the change, enhancing join-in, and ultimately inspiring progress.

Urgency. As mentioned by Alex, Harold, and Margaret previously, rate of change has been one of the most dramatic changes at Eastside University in and of itself:

> I think that that goes more broadly to probably from the president down—also probably across the vice-presidents in general who are here, is that sense of urgency—that's one of the cultural changes that I've noticed the most. The biggest change has probably been the cultural change, but within that, the cultural

> change of more urgency in what we do in certain areas, has been an eye opener to a few people, and I probably have an advantage over everybody, that I kind of came with that, as opposed to being someone here who is now trying to break that old traditional academic model of just moving along at the same pace all the time, and it being more of a business in certain areas, and less academia, but without losing that part of it. It's very tricky actually. (Edward)

When asked if the sense of urgency had been one of Thomas's change initiatives, Edward explains that it was not, but that it is simply part of his personality:

> I can't say it was a mandate, but I think the President came with it as part of his DNA. So it just came with him. It wasn't a sit-down and say, "Okay, let's get serious about our urgency." It was just part of who he is. And I guess it's part of who I am too, because I agree with it completely, and I think it's effective, and I think it's been effective here.

Validating Edward's impression of Thomas's sense of urgency and its origin, Thomas highlights the internal drive that encourages him to push himself as well as everyone else at Eastside:

> It's about a passion. Not for ambition, the word, but an ambition for something great for the University. A fire and it burns inside you to do something that does break the norm. It does take people out of the comfort zone. I keep telling people, "I want us to move so fast that by the time anybody ever figures this out, we don't do that anymore." Because we say, "Well, it's a university. You can't do but so much." Yes, you can, actually. If you don't ever try, you can't.

The most prevalent discussion in the interviews as well as the meeting observations focuses on raising the admissions standards. Thomas's urgent nature is no exception with this discussion or its resulting change either. Isaac tends to feel the brunt of the urgency surrounding admissions standards and shares his role in it:

> I guess part of my role—I didn't say earlier—around here is interpreting what Thomas wants [laughter], and getting it to happen. But we've done that but it takes time. I think when you look at change initiatives, you've got to understand why you want to make a change, and hopefully it's a very positive outcome. I mean, in the simplest things, okay we're going to change the admissions criteria to the university that we've done dramatically just in two years.

Given their conflicting views on rate of change, Thomas and Isaac debate over the admissions standards often. Isaac offers a dialogue exchanged between the two of them:

> And we argued about it, and the first one we did, the first year, I thought, "Okay, we can do this." This last year, really, I said, "No, Thomas. We cannot do this," he says, "We can." "No, we can't," I said, "I absolutely agree with you. We'll raise it every year but let's start here, and then we can raise it. In three years we'll get to where you want to be," and we went back and forth. "Nope, nope, we got to do it." "Okay, you're the president." That change does initiate a whole lot of change, all right? I've heard anecdotally from faculty, "Wow, we're getting better students." I'm not sure how we're going to measure this yet but anecdotally I'm hearing, "Wow, we're getting better students." We're seeing it in the class.

Thomas illustrates the same scenario but from his perspective, lending more detail to the urgency debate:

> I was like the one person that was insisting on 3.6 and there's a lot of good arguments. I was listening to the arguments too. But I said, "Look, I can take five years to do this or two. Let's do it in two. Let's get it over with. We can go from 3.3 to 3.4 to 3.5 to 3.6. But let's go ahead and do it in two." "Well, what if don't get enough students?" I said, "Well, that's a high possibility. When you get to 3.6, you're competing with some of the great universities." So I personally called over 1,000 students around the country and here in the state who had above a 4.0. It looks like we're going to end up okay. I don't know that we're going to hit the number we had last year, but it wasn't my goal to hit the number we hit last year. It was my goal to avoid a budget problem by not having enough students.

In summary, importance is stressed regarding the urgency that has been created by Thomas and the cabinet. Interestingly, the participants note that not only is urgency present in adapting the culture of Eastside but part of the culture shift and ultimate change is in creating that same urgency. All agree that this dynamic is attributed to Thomas's personality and innate passion to see the institution succeed. The pressure to change quickly is not without its conflict, though, as some participants have had to push back against requests to move forward at a rapid rate.

Close-up communication. The two most frequently mentioned events that can be classified as close-up communication are the weekly cabinet meetings and the meetings with each department during Thomas's first 100 days. Regarding the cabinet meetings, Greta characterizes the communication exchanges that occur as "very helpful":

> I think that the fact that we get together weekly really helps so that we have a place, a room where we can speak freely. That freely could be the good, the bad,

> and the ugly. And we really do talk through and work through issues. With anything, if you let things—whether I have an issue with financial affairs, or athletics, or whatever—if we're not able to get into a room and speak through those things, it just festers. So I think that's been really—that consistent getting together, having meetings, having conversations—has been very helpful. And the president really being available to discuss things from all different…down into the weeds, to the high-level conversations. And in those team environments, you have to have trust. You have to know that you can say what you need to without any kind of repercussions, and I think we all feel that way.

The meetings requested by Thomas and Isaac during Thomas's first 100 days were designed to gather information prior to developing the strategic plan. Thomas and Isaac personally met with each department in Eastside and listened. Margaret asserts that these meetings created a bond and appreciation between administration and faculty:

> When the president and the provost went around to every single department to involve faculty and understand where they were coming from so that they could then, I don't want to say tailor, but change an institution from the ground up on how to think about the future of the institution. What happened there was when that connectivity happened between us—the president, the provost, and the faculty group in each department, like 60 visits—I wouldn't say there is trust. Who knows if there's trust there? But there certainly is an appreciation because they were listened to and heard. The president and the provost came away from that thinking, "Wow, we didn't know we had such wonderful things going on here" because there is a lot. This is a big place. This is like a little city. You end

> up with, I think, a respect when you include people in those processes and they're big.

Greta agrees, stating that "what he did, and Isaac along with him, was critical. It's something he said he was going to do when he interviewed, and he did do that." Thomas finds great value in those meetings as well, crediting them with easing some of the transitional pain for those already at Eastside as he was newly hired. "Me doing the department visits may have mitigated some of that. I think if I had just come and started telling everybody the way it's going to be…. I spent at last six months trying to listen more than push" (Thomas). Edward also depicts the value gained from arranging those initial meetings:

> I think that when the provost and the president visited every single department in the university, throughout that Fall semester, it was kind of a master stroke, really. They came to you and listened to what you had to say about your ideas going forward. And then taking what they heard and using that to write the strategic plan, created a certain amount of buy-in across the university. The plan was a result of that. The emphasis areas came out of what people thought the emphasis areas should be. So that became the blueprint, or the template, or however you want to put it, to go forward. Now everything we do—certainly everything we do in my area, and same with everybody else too—is designed to implement the strategic plan. Part of the plan is the brand, and that's very much what I do. Increasing the brand awareness is very much part of the strategic plan.

Greta, also in support of how the strategic plan development was orchestrated, provides a contrastive example to illustrate how other businesses and institutions often treat the strategic planning process:

> Strategic plans generally end up becoming documents that sit on shelves that every few years someone looks at and says, “Oh, we didn’t do that.” It’s been that. So I think that it’s the focus on the plan. Every single day when we come to work, it’s about the plan. And it’s about communicating to our folks. For example, now my division is going through a strategic planning exercise. I brought someone in to work with each of the units to see. They need to feel that what they do does bubble up to a greater plan and a greater process.

The two instances of close-up communication referenced by the participants are the weekly cabinet meetings and the meetings initiated by Thomas with each Eastside department during his first 100 days. Both the cabinet meetings and department meetings, according to the study, allowed for participation and collaboration among the cabinet members and university community respectively. Also, as Greta explains, Thomas promised in his interview for the president position that he would conduct the department meetings to learn about Eastside. These meetings helped ease the transition process for many of the institution’s constituents as they created an atmosphere of participation and collaboration.

Teams, participation, & collaboration. Participants share that cross-unit teams are not typically the norm within higher education institutions. “That’s a word we don’t use very often in higher ed. because we have put ourselves in boxes” (Alex). Each unit tends to be a silo, with not much collaboration across those lines:

> Very rarely do you hear people talking about being a part of a team. So, I believe the president…. That's one of the challenges people are having, I think, with the leadership now is he believes that we should be working across these areas and we should be teams. There are more teams that are evolving up out of his presidency that people are struggling with because for them, they're like "Well they don't report to me so why are they on that team and they don't report to them." So for us in higher ed., we always go back to who reports to whom instead of this team concept and working together. (Alex)

As Alex states, Thomas is fostering teamwork and collaboration throughout Eastside. Most notably, the cabinet members share the sentiment that their collaborative dynamic is beneficial. Greta shares a description of the cabinet's weekly meetings, recognizing their participatory characteristic:

> Very productive. I would say more of almost like a working group than I think what some—even companies—have when they have board meetings. This isn't about somebody sitting at the head of the table and talking and us taking notes, and providing a comment, or a nod of the head on occasion. They're very different.

Alex compares this group's dynamic to others in which he has participated: "I've had a vice presidency before at another university, but even then, this is the first team I've really been a part of where people are more open to wielding their expertise and their opinions to make you succeed." Robert affords his own negative experience with prior leadership groups:

> The minute things break down on the leadership team, you get divisions, lack of accountability; people aren't communicating. It's very bad. So I think here you've got a leadership team that is very tight-knit, and we understand how to work with each other.

Offering a similar perspective, Greta says, "I think we have a good support system here. When you want to implement change, and you don't really have folks that are there supporting the decisions that you're making, it makes it very challenging and often difficult to implement."

Although each cabinet member has his or her full agenda and schedule, Margaret asserts that they must still support each other for the common goal:

> Not one person can drop that job and not do it the right way. All that really focuses on that one goal of building that reputation and we all have important things to do. We don't want to not work together to get there. You have to. You can't rely on one person to chart your course. You have to chart your own and you have to do it with a bunch of people around you to be successful. That's the team thing.

This collaborative spirit is present in the second observed meeting. The group speaks about upcoming meetings with external constituents and spends a lot of time discussing the strategies of what information to share, how they would organize it, and who would present it. Some disagreements in strategy result in back-and-forth and members siding with other members but no one seems to take any of it personally. Greta emphasizes the support present among the cabinet members and notes the effect that dynamic has on Eastside: "We definitely have a good support group. The president certainly is very supportive. That’s critical. When the university community sees the changes are for a positive outcome, they embrace that. It’s really the team that makes that much easier.”

Whereas this study shows an atmosphere of collaboration within the cabinet, participants distinguish that it is often not the norm within higher education. Alex, for instance, describes a university’s units as silos and states that people can become uncomfortable when they have to work in teams across units. He asserts that Thomas is not only attempting to break down the barriers between units but that he has created what Greta calls a “working group” within the cabinet. Participants concur that the environment within the cabinet encourages each to provide their contrasting experiences in a collective effort to work toward common goals.

Trust. Noted as the cornerstone of teamwork and collaboration, the participants speak of the trust within Eastside as well as the trust present within the cabinet. Robert notes how the Eastside community has reacted to the change and Thomas’s role:

> The faculty have embraced change. They understand something wasn’t working, and so they were on board. The president has articulated a strategic plan and a vision that people have embraced. And the president’s pulled together a leadership team where everybody understands what their roles are, and there’s a lot of trust in the organization.

Alex also indicates that the trust level is high within the cabinet:

> Yeah, so, I would say professionally, I trust everyone around the table. Because they open their expertise and so I have to…. I trust that what they’re communicating to me or the advice that they’re giving me related to their area, and its impact on student affairs. Honest, until proven otherwise. And no one

> around that table I've run into yet has lied or done anything to give me a sense of misdirection or misguidance. So that's where I am right now.

Also relying to an extent on the cabinet members' expertise as a gauge for professional trust, Edward offers, "If they tell me something, I believe them because they are experienced and qualified without question." Expanding on the defining characteristics of trust, Harold considers the mix of personalities:

> Fortunately, the personalities are such in the room—and the overall group dynamic is such in the room—that it in no way, shape, or form impairs the group's ability to make a decision and it doesn't then impede the ability of vice presidents to work collaboratively together once they walk out of the room and come back in the room the next week and the next week.

Admittedly, Thomas posits that although the cabinet members have their own specific unit agendas, not one member is hesitant to react and address other collective burdens:

> I think we probably rely on people to leave that room and go take action. Sometimes, what's lost in that is nobody understands what exact workload a person is having at this moment in time. I'll use this week for an example. Two weeks ago, I knew we had to make a change in the football coach. I knew we had to move really fast. There's no "We're too busy right now. We have to wait until after Christmas." It's not even a question mark. Everything changes right now. I spoke about it at the cabinet meeting. I had to sweep my schedule. I had to personally be involved in the search. I am not going to hope we get a good coach. I am going to make sure they know the president of university wants them. They all picked up the pieces for me. I just said, "You guys have got to take good care

> of everything else. I'm probably not going to be dependable. I have no idea which moment in time I will be gone. As soon as I have to go, I've got to go." I told my wife the same thing. "Just don't count on anything this week." It worked. It was an insane week. I could still keep up with them by phone. "Were you able to get this done? Have you talked to so and so?" Back here, nothing bad happened. Everything flowed as if I never was needed, which is humbling. That's the way you want it to work.

Among themes mentioned in the study regarding trust, the participants emphasize its presence within Eastside and more specifically within the cabinet. They also emphasize trust's critical role in developing constructive teamwork and collaboration. A distinction is made, though, between trust in communication (telling the truth) and professionalism (ability to do one's job). Despite this semantic differentiation, the participants agree that both are present within the cabinet and contribute to its effective collaboration.

Sensemaking. The two major sensemaking events the participants mention are the framing of the strategic plan and attending commencement. Margaret focuses on the "pillars" represented in Eastside's strategic plan as creating a visual representation for all stakeholders:

> I really do think that the pillars are huge. It's so easy now to see what we're about and I'm not saying that the rest of the platforms and goals and objectives and all that aren't important. All of that helps funnel up to what it is that we want to become but, really, if you ask anybody what the pillars are, they know what they are. They really know what they are and it's kind of cool that they all know and

> they know where to find them. We're acting on it, that's the part that's good. We're not just saying this is what; we're actually committing resources and time and effort to making those things happen.

The other prominent sensemaking event discussed in the interviews is commencement, which is described as the culmination of the work of all the units:

> My favorite days of the year. Nobody really cares how many walk the stage. But I shook the hand and personally spoke to 3,194 kids. Well, not that many—2,582 because some didn't walk. But also to be able to say at Eastside, usually—very different from most universities—five out of every six kids stays here and walks the stage to pick up their diploma personally as opposed to take it in the mail. Some places that would be less than 40%. Here, it's 80% that walk the stage to pick it up and go through a whole day of anticipation and bring all these family members. So, it's really cool. (Thomas)

Greta enforces the power of commencement for the cabinet's work, positing that everything they do culminates in that one day:

> You know what, not to sound hokey, but we do however many, 15 graduation and commencement ceremonies a year, and at each one, a cabinet member sits on the stage. It's really, to me, the one day, or the one time that I sit there and it sort of comes together. I say these are the widgets we produce. Everything else that we do, it's for that. I urge folks, "You really need to go to one a semester," because that's…. Talk about making sense of everything else; that's what we do. And when you see that, it's like a moment of pride knowing that everything we have

> done goes to help, that that's what we do. And I think sometimes the non-academic areas, you forget sometimes. At the end of the day, that's what we do.

According to the study, the two most defining instances of sensemaking are commencement and the strategic plan. Greta and Thomas both mentioned commencement as the culmination of everyone's work and the ultimate goals of the university. The strategic plan—or more specifically its pillars as per Margaret's description—helps create a visual representation of Eastside's goals and objectives.

Storytelling. Although storytelling is not often mentioned specifically in the interviews, its importance continues to surface and participants continually give their answers in story form. One specific aspect of storytelling that shows to be specifically important is Eastside's history:

> What I've seen is the president's appreciation of the history. History, people say, "History repeats itself." But history only repeats itself when people don't talk about the history and you tend to get caught up in the same things you did before if you didn't know what those things were. So there are people at the table in the cabinet who were here during those turbulent times, who are still change agents and are great partners and they remember. And there are times when we talk in the cabinet meetings about given topics and the expertise of some of those people, because of historical perspective, helps guide us in a different direction. And the President is good about listening to that. When he brings up an idea, and someone says, "Whoa. We did that three years ago this way. And this is what the fall-out was." So what I do like is we never communicate to the President that he can't do

> something. What we communicate is that historical perspective and give him options or recommend options to him. To me that's important. (Alex)

Alex identifies Harold as one of the cabinet members who was most likely to share Eastside's historical perspective and Harold, in hearing of this label, concurs:

> I have been in that room longer than anybody else so that sometimes gives me an opportunity to offer some insight on some history just simply by dumb luck of having sat there longer than anybody else. When that's useful, I try to offer that but I keep at the top of my mind—and I tell every one of the attorneys that work in this office to keep at the top of their mind—that we, the attorneys, are here to support the true mission of the institution.

Giving a more specific scenario of a time he has had to inject Eastside's history into the conversation, Harold notes the differences in leadership practices of presidents he has worked for:

> I've seen that with all of the presidents because sometimes, presidents can make a decision when he or she has two or three people in the room and then just relies on them to move forward with it. But that then, he or she may forget to communicate to the other five vice presidents or what have you. That happens. I've seen that happen.

Greta uses storytelling to offer a more immediate example, describing the individuals presently on the campus to signify the importance of join-in and collaboration:

> I'm hearing somebody mowing the lawn. I know their names. When I see them, they give me a hug. To me, everyone is important. It doesn't matter what their title is. And I'm not sure…I can't speak for everyone, but I know that I make a

> habit and a point of getting to know everyone that works for me. It's important. And for them to feel that what they do is just as critical as what anyone else does regardless of the title.

In addition to the internal use of storytelling to enhance join-in at Eastside, Thomas affords examples of its role in external communications. As the face of the institution, Thomas employs storytelling to gain the interest of external constituents and he speaks specifically of storytelling as a tool many times throughout the interview process:

> So that becomes my job too—and my wife is really good at this too so she accompanies me on a lot of these things—I'm the networker that makes Eastside relevant to the people I meet based on what they're interested in. They love stories and those kinds of things and we can share stories. But really what makes it meaningful is when they get so engaged they feel like they're helping the university be better, and they're getting something out of it too.

Thomas also recounts an instance in story form where he achieved join-in from an external individual seeking to help his daughter enter an appropriate educational program:

> I was here on the weekend one time and this guy was standing with his daughter at the front door of this building. It's raining like crazy. I came up and I said, "Are you needing to get somewhere?" He said, "We're trying to get to the nursing building. Is that the nursing building?" And I said, "Yeah." He said, "Well, this is my daughter." I said, "Hi," all that. He said, "She's trying to get into nursing here and I just wanted to kind of see the building and see the campus." And I said,

> "Well, have you got a tour set up or anything?" He said, "Nah, I didn't know anything about it, I just stopped in." I said, "Here, take my umbrella because it's not going to let up anytime soon. I'm going to call somebody and get the police to open the building so you can take a look around." That guy wrote me a letter and he said, "That was the kindest thing anybody has ever done. My daughter is coming to school here. The building was absolutely stunning and here's your umbrella back."

Further speaking about this interaction in the context of Eastside, Thomas accentuates that it is not and should not be out of character for anyone on the campus to extend simple courtesy to a visitor:

> You know, that's not me being anything special; that's just what is now happening culturally around here where people look around and if they're looking around, they're probably lost. We have a lot of those, we have a lot of lifelong learners that visit our campus and these are older people and sometimes they just get confused. Instead of blowing the horn at them to get out of the way, how about asking them if you could help.

Although not specifically mentioned as a technique during the interviews, a majority of the participants use storytelling to describe leadership and change tactics. In the study, Eastside's history plays a major role in Thomas's attempt to create join-in for change. Additionally, Thomas accounts stories he has used to create internal as well as external join-in.

Humor. Many of the cabinet members seem to have humorous and sarcastic tendencies in the interviews and meeting observations. As all but one participant had been interviewed prior to the first meeting observation (one participant was interviewed shortly after the first observation), the researcher delves into the humor seen during the meeting observations during the second round of interviews. When asked about humor used in the meetings, Greta responds, “Although we obviously are serious about these topics—whether it’s campus safety or whatever the case—you have to use humor. These things can get a little, as you know, tense. But those topics are where it comes into play.” Edward confirms Greta’s interpretation of humor’s use:

> Sometimes you can just, by accident, have one thing after another that’s, shall we say, in the negative pile. For me, personally, there’s only so much of that you can really take one after the other before you need some kind of comic relief to just bring it back down to earth a little bit. It’s like, no one’s going to die here. It’s just the numbers are down. But at the same time, there are serious aspects to it, obviously. But sometimes, you do need to lighten up a little bit.

The need for humor in a possibly tense situation arises during the first meeting observation. A joke is made of a clarity issue when the others do not understand what the person means. It immediately addresses the need for clarity and subsequently lightens the mood as the person has to rephrase himself. The same humor is employed when another member is unable to remember a constituent’s name.

As the researcher enters the environment after the cabinet’s relationship had generally been established, she raises the question as to whether humor is typical in times of tension and disagreement. Alex answers regarding the admissions standards debate:

> I think at that point, you came in on the tail end of a couple of months for discussion. So we have all come to this final point, and I think at that point, the

> humor was really more of, for me, it was more of a, "All right you all, let's breathe, because if he doesn't like this, we've got to quickly turn this around." So I think the humor was more of a stress reliever. Yeah, I think for us and trying to show the president that there was some collective buy-in. And I think he saw that.

Harold agrees, stating that the cabinet had to intensely analyze the proposed admissions change before being comfortable with humor:

> Everybody's got a lot of skin in the game on that issue and everybody is intimately aware of the fact that we have looked squarely in the eye of the potential downsides and we've looked repeatedly in the eye at the potential downsides and yet, at the same time, have also spent countless hours focusing on ways to achieve the upside benefits of these changes. We're so familiar with it that humor is a natural consequence of that. Nobody feels hesitant to tell a joke in there because nobody has ever felt hesitant to give his or her two cents in terms of what this is going to mean for themselves and for the university as a whole. It helps, too, the fact that Thomas himself has a really sharp sense of humor and it helps, too, that he has an ability to be self-deprecating in that sense of humor. When the guy at the head of the table cracks a joke, everybody else feels okay about cracking a joke. When the guy at the head of the table cracks a joke at his own expense, then everybody else can feel a little more comfortable about joking about an initiative that's his initiative. Thomas is the first guy to crack a joke at how hard he has pushed Isaac and he can do it because, for a whole lot of reasons but not least of which is because everybody in that room knows that Thomas has never once shut Isaac up. He has never once overruled him. He's never once

> failed to hear Isaac's concerns. Thus, Isaac has never once failed to understand all of the potential ways to address those things. It's a very healthy relationship.

Supporting Harold's view of Thomas's keen sense of humor and its use during debate, the first meeting observation shows that sense of humor was prevalent, especially between Isaac and Thomas when topics got tense. In the first instance, Isaac gets a bit sarcastic about one particular issue he is asked to step in and handle, calling it "a baby he didn't want to inherit." Thomas responds, "Hand that child off." The other participants laugh at the exchange. Immediately after, though, Thomas tells Isaac he did a good job with the issue and shares with the cabinet members the details of his success: "Held his own, very strongly, about it." During that same meeting, when Isaac mentions the admissions standard, Thomas (who clearly had requested the standards be raised) looks down at his papers and says, "Who asked for this?" poking fun at himself and his demand for increase. Everyone at the table laughs.

Continuing to probe the seemingly most tense change initiative, admissions standards, the researcher asks other participants about the relationship between it and humor. Greta further identifies humor's role:

> I think the humor comes into play when we talk about certain topics. Admissions standards are one, some of our stretch goals are another. Because from the very beginning, when the President arrived, he stated what he thought the expectation should be as it related to our metrics, as it related to standards of admission, and those were thought to be stretch goals that probably weren't very attainable. But now that we've attained them—when Isaac will say, "Whatever, I think we should have a 23 ACT," the President's like, "24." So there are topics that humor does

> come into play, but it’s because that was the dynamic that started in the beginning again.

The back-and-forth insinuated by Greta, Isaac, and Thomas is also present in the meeting observations. During the first meeting observation, Thomas is not ready to decide on one of the admission decisions, so he tells Isaac he wants to sleep on it, to which Isaac responds with a smile, “No, you’ve got to give me this one!” And the group all laughs. Thomas, after being reminded he was about to go on vacation, says he will try to decide before he leaves, and everyone laughs again. In that same meeting, when Margaret sides with Isaac and tries to tell Thomas they have accomplished what they need to, Thomas says to her, “I think there was a conspiracy,” and the group all laughs.

Reaching out to the two individuals who were the subjects of this humor exchange, the researcher finds that Isaac and Thomas confirm the relationship. Isaac confirms that he tries to use humor to relieve tension:

> I’d like to think I’m a person who doesn’t take myself too seriously all the time. You inject some humor. Because we have, I’ve already told him, “Thomas, we’re not going to be able to do this.” “Okay.” He keeps on it. It is maybe just a way of diffusing the situation, to talk about it.

Thomas also sees the humor as a tension-diffuser, reducing individuals’ natural tendency to pick sides before listening to others’ standpoints:

> I guess, overall, I think it’s positive. I think if you get too intense, you form a positionality that may not be the one you’d go with. You feel like you’ve got to defend something because you brought it up. A little bit of humor, sometimes, causes you to say, “You’re right. I just have an opinion. I don’t know much about

> that." I think it takes away the "I've got to win. We're having an argument. I've got to win. I want you to see my position and you're not seeing it. I'm going to keep pushing it." Even though a little bit of humor thrown in there and might cause everybody to chuckle a minute, I think it breaks the cycle.

Upon the first meeting observation, humor presents itself as a prominent piece in the conversation. As the participants describe it, humor often plays the role of a stress-reliever during tense situations. However, Alex and Harold afforded that with those particularly tense situations, humor was not immediately present; at the time the researcher entered the cabinet meetings, the difficult issues on the agenda had been discussed for several months before the members were comfortable using humor to diffuse the situation.

Barriers. Among discussion of what has worked and is working also arise those communication styles and techniques that do not. Alex describes how individuals' own intent can prevent change and how leaders can present information to create join-in:

> What's in it for me. I think one of the biggest communication barriers is communicating the win-win. If something is being implemented, what's the impact on all of the areas that will be touched by it. I think that's a barrier because when a president says something, the first thing that people are going to say is, "How is that going to impact me? How does that impact my area?" So I think one of the barriers to communication is we really don't talk about the impact at the end of the day.

Thomas uses the identical phrase, "What's in it for me?" when he addresses barriers:

> What happens, of course, when you get a plan, the first thing they do is, "What's in it for me?" Whatever is in it for that individual, they notice if anything was done about it or not. What I clearly said to everybody repeatedly is, "There is no way to fund this plan all at once. This is a 10-year plan. We're going to have to be strategic in the things that we think allow us to fix problems that we know exist at the university or build reputation for the university."

In addition to the honest barrier of asking "What's in it for me?" Robert and Margaret expand that self-interest can be a detriment to change initiatives and the overall functionality of a group. Robert shares:

> Where things break down is if you have people who are weak links in the team and they run around behind the team or if they're more interested in their own self-promotion. Then the team has to band together and call out the problem. And that's not always an easy thing to do.

Margaret offers a similar perspective:

> Self-serving, emotional, compassionate. There are a bunch of traits that a team member can demonstrate that can do a lot of harm. Even as you talk to that team member—this is a long time ago—about the impact of how they are carrying themselves, and the need to touch base and communicate with others in developing processes and communicating. If they don't do that, you get, as an individual, frustrated. You get angry. How can they not understand how important it is to work as a team? How can they not figure it out that this is going to be a downfall eventually for you, them, the team, and the organization?

Areas for future improvement. In interest of this case study, finding ways in which high-level leaders could improve their skills is key, especially within higher education. Despite the participants' overall satisfaction with the leadership and communication dynamics currently in place, each had suggestions on how to further improve effectiveness during change. Alex offered making a greater focus on intra-unit collaboration:

> As VPs, we communicate more holistically and the challenge for me is I would like to have more operational meetings outside of our cabinet. Our cabinet is really about the president and his agenda and what's going on at the macro level but when I get back to my division, there's more of a micro level and that's where I think the VPs can do a better job in communicating about our micro issues that you don't want to bring here but you want to bring here. So we talked one time about—and it hasn't happened yet—maybe having the VPs have biweekly meetings where we're talking about operational things that we can make better.

Although involving Eastside's internal stakeholders in the strategic plan's development (holding meetings with each department) seems to have its benefits and is unique to any organization, whether academic or corporate, some feel the method could have drawbacks. Harold affords this differing standpoint, if the leadership did not continue communication after the initial meetings:

> One way that this leaves open is you can then have the, hopefully, the continuation of dialogue. Not necessarily you're going to do another sixty-three tours, but you clearly established a precedent of opportunities for engagement so that if you didn't do follow-up engagement, you hopefully hearken back to that

> good will that was established, as opposed to if you do it as prior plans where you go into a room with the vice presidents and maybe a consultant and a dean or two and you come up with something and then you say to Eastside, “Okay, here it is,” and everybody says, “Yeah right, whatever.” There is, at that point, no process, no sense that there has actually been engagement. Thus, if you then try to reach out, you’re very much not likely to have an engaged response but, in this case, I would hope that you would.

Isaac recognizes Harold’s concern, adding that the initial meetings may have created a false sense of hope and expectation:

> I think we did something that was completely novel and really never happened here when Thomas and I visited all the departments. That was tremendous; that was so well received. The faculty didn’t believe it. We would spend, or he would spend, that much time—he dragged me along—to do that. What I think that did—and I have reflected on this and I don’t know how you would do it otherwise—but it set up a lot of expectations. I don’t know if it is a barrier, Emily. But I’m not sure that it’s widely perceived out there and this is what concerns me. I think we have to do something about it this year. That those expectations have been fulfilled; I’m not sure everybody is on board.

Challenging these criticisms of speaking to all the departments before creating the strategic plan, however, Edward reinforces the alternative in creating an institutionally accepted plan:

> So if you’re going to do that and not speak—speak to some departments and not others, or not speak to any—that’s going to be a bigger criticism than the criticism

> you're getting now. You're going to get criticized no matter what. I think it's an unrealistic expectation to think that everything's going to get done all the time.
>
> But I would see it as a concern if the same people were getting a lot all the time.

Adding to Edward's claim, Greta maintains that consulting with all departments prior to constructing the strategic plan is unique for Eastside:

> This has never been done at the university. Strategic plans were created in rooms like that and barely communicated to anyone at the university. So I see no downside to what Thomas did. It may create challenges; it may create us having to say no right now to some things. And it happens in my area, things that I've requested funding for and the answer is, "We just don't have the money." And I understand that. It doesn't mean that people aren't listening.

Margaret also contends that the development of the strategic plan through collaboration has been productive:

> That exercise was not developed to do everything that everybody wants us to do. That's crazy. That can never happen. That exercise was for faculty, in particular, to get to know the president; the president, very much in particular, to get to know what the faculty issues are; and to build relationships and connections. It was not to answer everyone's needs and it was not to make promises of any type. It was really, then, to take all those pieces, put them together, and decide what it is that we really need to build on in terms of our strengths. All of these things come to make a successful wheel and so it's kind of like concentric circles, in a way. That was a very successful way to go about learning each other in a very intense time and it felt good. People like to feel good in their job.

Margaret also mentions that with success comes failure and that the cabinet needs to be prepared when that time comes. “You get used to being successful and you don’t learn how to fail. We’ve been successful and we all need to realize that failure will come. I don’t know in what form but when it does, we need to adjust” (Margaret). She specifically emphasizes how this phenomenon could affect Eastside, given the recent successes resulting from Thomas’s change initiatives:

> You can’t always be successful and when you are, it isn’t always going to be that way. It’s an interesting thing for us because we were very successful very quickly and we surprised ourselves a lot. It’s a risk that you take when you set those aspirations so high because now there’s a perception that we have to sustain it. I’m not saying that we don’t have to do that. We should. We try but there’s some things that are totally out of our control.

Identifying another concern, Isaac indicates that, although Eastside has experienced success as a result of Thomas’s change initiatives, looking toward the future is critical:

> Anticipation. How are we going to deal with this? What do we put in place now to not worry three years from now that this is going to be an issue. Planning. So change initiatives are great. Planning is paramount [laughter]. And we’re thinking about that kind of stuff now. But, you know, clearly, you’re going to make…. We want this change. Why do we want to change? Where do we want this change to go? So what is the outcome? What might be some of the unintended outcomes of that change? How can we…. It’s one thing to say, “Think out of the box.” What does this mean?

Isaac clarifies, stating that leadership must give changes time to take shape within the institution: “You make changes and then you’ve got to solidify. I think if you keep trying to change things, you don’t get that opportunity to make sure the change you’ve made becomes successful and you need to have success.”

Chapter Summary

This chapter delineated the findings of the study in relation to the research questions. First, it provided an overview of the participants’ descriptions of the higher education landscape and Eastside University, framing a need for change. Next, findings were presented as they relate to participants’ espoused theories of action (research question one) as well as the participants’ theories-in-use and their alignment with espoused theories of action (research questions two and three), each organized by the following themes: leadership, communication, change, teams and collaboration, trust, and conflict. Afterward, emergent findings related to communicative leadership’s influence on change (research question four) were examined, including: transition; decision-making; new direction; inspiring progress and motivating; urgency; close-up communication; teams, participation, and collaboration; trust; sensemaking; storytelling; humor; barriers; and areas for improvement.

V. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes a review of the study's problem, purpose, and methodology; a summary of the findings; a discussion of the conclusions; recommendations for practitioners and future research; and a review of the study's limitations.

Restatement of the Problem

Regardless of the industry, about 70% of organizational change initiatives fail (Keller & Price, 2011), which can be even higher in a state university given increased student consumerism, dwindling educational standards and budgets, and fluctuating organizational structures. As a byproduct, university presidents often have shorter terms than those of the past. The average tenure of a college or university president was much shorter in 2011 than 2005, decreasing from 8.5 to 7 years (American Council on Education, 2012). To make the situation more serious, the upheaval left behind after a president's brief tenure may be followed by rapid overhauls involving new positions and university-wide adjustments.

Miscommunication and lack of communication are often the greatest barriers for leaders. When the prior president exits, the incoming president is often hired to reorganize the institution; during this organizational change, interpersonal communication quality may be the difference between success and failure. "Disappointing or unfavorable results due to unfulfilled or inaccurate promises and predictions undermine leadership credibility and lead to employee perceptions of injustice, misrepresentation, and violations of trust" (Gilley et al., 2009, p. 80). Despite the urgency of organizational change within higher education, no studies, to the researcher’s knowledge, have discovered how newly appointed presidents’ communicative leadership affects change in higher education institutions. This case study draws from current research linking interpersonal communication to leadership success, as well as research stressing the importance of communicative leadership during organizational change, and examines these connections through the roles of a public university’s new president and his cabinet.

Review of the Purpose of the Study

Through qualitative analysis of a public university’s new president and the cabinet, this study attempts to discover the communicative leadership techniques that facilitate organizational change processes. The study determines what, if any, discrepancies exist between the president’s and cabinet members’ perceived and actual techniques in an effort to determine if double-loop learning is being practiced (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

Review of the Methodology

This study is a qualitative case study. First, Eastside University’s new president was selected from a state university system because of his active role in initiating change at the institution. The American Council on Education defines a new president as one who has been in office for zero to three years (2012). Therefore, for the sake of this study, “new” includes a president who has been in office for six months to three years; the extra six months of tenure were added so that the president had some experience in the role and environment. Second, a team or committee tasked to make a significant change within the institution, the cabinet, was identified to participate.

To better understand which communicative leadership techniques the new president and the cabinet members saw as facilitators of organizational change, as well as to determine their perceptions of their own communicative leadership techniques, two interviews were conducted with the new president and two interviews were conducted with all but two cabinet members. (One member did not attend any of the observed meetings and the other only attended one; each was only interviewed once.) The first set of interviews was conducted at the beginning of the study and the second set was conducted after completion of at least one observation.

Observations of regularly scheduled meetings attended by the president and the team members were conducted to determine how the new president and cabinet members' perceptions of facilitating communicative leadership techniques during organizational change align with the communicative leadership techniques actually used during organizational change. In addition, document review and journaling were used to clarify and confirm data obtained during observations and interviews.

Once data were collected, the researcher used Process Coding (Saldaña, 2013, p. 96) based on literature relating to leaders' communicative leadership and interpersonal communication, change leadership techniques, and perception of communication. After which, Pattern Coding (Saldaña, 2013, p. 209) was used to help determine narrower themes in the data.

Summary of the Findings

In chapter 4, the researcher presented the findings in depth. Here, the findings are summarized in relation to the research questions:

- What are the new president's and cabinet members' espoused theories of action regarding communicative leadership techniques during change?
- What are the new president's and cabinet members' theories-in-use regarding communicative leadership techniques during change?
- How do the new president's and cabinet members' espoused theories of action and theories-in-use regarding communicative leadership techniques align?
- How have the new president's and cabinet members' communicative leadership techniques influenced change?

Theories-in-use & their alignment with espoused theories of action. This section includes a summary of findings pertaining to the first three research questions. The following themes are addressed: leadership and communication, change, teams and collaboration, trust, and conflict.

Leadership & communication. Participants espouse their leadership styles in varying manners but all include a people-centric approach and a focus on relationships. Alex states that his leadership style depends on the person with whom he's dealing, and Charles similarly finds that he tailors his approach based on the needs of the individual. Whereas Edward chooses to step back when possible and allow his subordinates to do their jobs, Greta, Harold, and Isaac stress their collaborative and participatory approaches. Although Edward's self-described style differs from Greta, Harold, and Isaac, each agrees that they differentiate between being involved in the process and micromanaging. Similar to Edward, Robert first emphasizes giving his subordinates freedom to accomplish their own tasks and then stresses participating in dialogue and consensus. Margaret’s approach incorporates trust and communication as leadership traits to help make decisions.

Of all the participants, data were only present to confirm or disconfirm alignment between Thomas’s theory-in-use and espoused theory of action regarding self-described leadership style. Therefore, double-loop learning could only be identified for leadership specifically in Thomas. (This lack of data likely occurred within the leadership lens because the researcher neither observed nor interviewed subordinates within each of Eastside’s units, whereas communicative traits were observable and alignment could be gauged with other participants.) Thomas self-describes his leadership style as “aggressive and hopefully inclusive,” which is corroborated by the other participants’ descriptions of his leadership style as well as what was observed in the meetings. Alex, for instance, describes Thomas as “a make-it-happen type of person.” Adding an example from Thomas’s brief history at Eastside, Isaac states, “I think when we first talked about the admissions, raising the admissions, I was very nervous. In the end, we did it. We went there.” Both Thomas and the other cabinet members use the strategic planning process as an example of Thomas’s inclusive style, explaining how he used his first 100 days to meet with every department in the institution and listen.

Information-sharing and whether to share more or less, given circumstances and audience, is a common communication theme participants offer. Alex mentions that the team members’ differing abilities to share information within the group could possibly be a byproduct of the unit in which each works and the expectations and dynamic of those units. He uses student affairs as a reference, noting that the unit is notorious for sharing information simply by virtue of its inclusive mission.

As observed in the cabinet meetings, discussions tend to be open and collaborative, with interjections, feedback, and sharing of unit-specific knowledge. All participants agree that this type of participative and productive dialogue is standard in the meetings. Edward adds that the collaboration extends into the group's chosen communication medium, noting that the majority of their communication happens as a group as opposed to one or two members having a side conversation, which contributes to the openness and collaboration.

Not only is mention made of the communication capabilities within the cabinet but also regarding Isaac and Harold within their respective units. Thomas and Alex both assert they have experienced first-hand Isaac's ability to communicate collaboratively and openly within his unit, similarly to what is seen in the cabinet meetings. Alex describes Isaac as the "pause person," wanting time to think before speaking further on a topic, whereas Alex depicts Harold as a strong listener who has a gift for simplifying what others try to say. Harold validates this description of his communication style and attributes it to his specific circumstance: "I think it's just a function of the luck of having been there longer combined with the difference in my office's mission from everybody else's."

When characterizing Thomas's communication style, feedback-giving, pushing, and listening are emphasized by the participants. Feedback-giving and pushing are both seen as reciprocal processes with Thomas; he freely gives and receives feedback, often pushes his cabinet members to stretch their goals, but also can be pushed back if someone on the team foresees a decision taking Eastside in an undesirable direction.

Change. According to Isaac and Greta, Thomas is the driving force behind the recent changes at Eastside, which is appropriate since he was hired by the Board of Trustees to enhance the institution's performance. Isaac defines Thomas as "a changer" and Greta speaks of his vision trickling down to inspire change on every level. She attributes Eastside's newfound shared vision to Thomas's own "clear," "stretched," and "realistic" vision.

Given the far-fetched vision Thomas brought with him to Eastside, some participants noted that many members of the university community were initially fearful or nervous about reaching expectations. Once short-term wins were realized, though, join-in seemed to increase.

Teams & collaboration. The participants reinforce that enacting positive change is possible only with effective teams and collaboration. In this collaboration, each member relies on the skills and expertise of the others to ensure successful decision-making. The meeting observations clearly show the co-reliance present in active dialogue and feedback-sharing. Thomas states he specifically designed the cabinet meetings as he did to encourage the dialogue, as well as to create an environment that fosters transparency and efficiency. Isaac recognizes that the meeting dynamic is possible because Thomas partially flattened the leadership hierarchy when he came to Eastside. The flatter structure coupled with a mutual respect for each other's skills and areas of expertise has produced a resulting lack of competition among the cabinet members, which in turn promotes trust within the team and successful collaboration.

Trust. Referring to past cabinet members, Thomas explains that violated trust leads to losing the privilege to participate in the team. Other participants agree, also mentioning prior teams that had a lack of trust or employees that were let go for violating trust. Further, Edward presents another layer of trust that must be present in a functioning team: accountability. Each cabinet member must be able to rely on the others to advise the group in their respective areas of expertise.

Conflict. As expected, the study shows that conflict is present in the cabinet, as confirmed by interviews and observations. Isaac, Alex, Greta, Charles, and Thomas concur that the conflict within the group is typically healthy and productive. However, Isaac and Greta recognize that the atmosphere surrounding the group’s conflict is not always comfortable. Thomas, though, maintains that the uncomfortable nature of conflict is a result of discussing difficult issues, the alternative to which is letting them fester and become even more difficult.

Communicative leadership’s influence on change. This section includes a summary of findings related to the fourth and final research question. The following themes are addressed: transition and decision-making; new direction; inspiring progress and urgency; close-up communication; teams, participation, and collaboration; and sensemaking, storytelling, and humor.

Transition & decision-making. According to the findings, the rate at which members of Eastside’s community experienced anxiety and skepticism about the transition and then moved toward acceptance varied given how close they were to the president in the hierarchy. In other words, those who were most involved in the planning and implementation from the earlier stages reached acceptance sooner than those who may have felt detached from the initial planning. Alex also suggests that a shift in financial and human resources during the transition may have caused anxiety. Amplifying the skepticism, administration also shifted to a more business-centric approach to generate improvements by being more efficient and productive (Edward).

Noted by the participants is the difference in rate of decision-making typically seen between corporate and higher education environments. Decision-making tends to be slower in academia; however, the participants claim not to follow the norm and instead move forward with decisions at a faster rate than would be expected. Despite the rate of decision-making, though, the study finds that consensus is still a critical part of the process.

New direction. Whether Eastside is moving in a new direction is debated among cabinet members. Whereas some participants see the institution now heading toward a different goal, others see it moving in the same direction but with a difference in the rate, image, or guidance related to that direction. Thomas leans toward the latter view but notes that although the direction has not changed, the perception of the institution has, and places an emphasis on the positive activities, attempting to prevent situations that may be perceived negatively.

Inspiring progress & urgency. According to the study, Thomas is focusing heavily on marketing to help foster the positive image of Eastside, thus explaining the “why” behind the change, enhancing join-in, and ultimately inspiring progress. Also important is the urgency that has been created by Thomas and the cabinet. Interestingly, the participants note that not only is urgency present in adapting the culture of Eastside but part of the culture shift and ultimate change is in creating that same urgency. All agree that this dynamic is attributed to Thomas’s personality and innate passion to see the institution succeed. The pressure to change quickly is not without its conflict, though, as some participants have had to push back against requests to move forward at a rapid rate.

Close-up communication. The two instances of close-up communication referenced by the participants are the weekly cabinet meetings and the meetings initiated by Thomas with each Eastside department during his first 100 days. Both the cabinet meetings and department meetings, according to the study, allowed for participation and collaboration among the cabinet members and university community respectively. Also, as Greta explains, Thomas promised in his interview for presidency that he would conduct the department meetings to learn about Eastside. These meetings helped ease the transition process for many of the institution's constituents as they created an atmosphere of participation and collaboration.

Teams, participation, & collaboration. Whereas this study shows an atmosphere of collaboration within the cabinet, participants distinguish that it is often not the norm within higher education. Alex, for instance, describes a university's units as silos and states that people can become uncomfortable when they have to work in teams across units. He asserts that Thomas is not only attempting to break down the barriers between units but that he has created what Greta calls a "working group" within the cabinet. Participants concur that the environment within the cabinet encourages each to provide their contrasting experiences in a collective effort to work toward common institutional goals.

Trust. Among themes mentioned in the study regarding trust, the participants emphasize its presence within Eastside and more specifically within the cabinet. They also emphasize trust's critical role in developing constructive teamwork and collaboration. A distinction is made, though, between trust in communication (telling the truth) and professionalism (ability to do one's job). Despite this semantic differentiation, the participants agree that both are present within the cabinet and contribute to its effective collaboration.

Sensemaking, storytelling, & humor. According to the study, the two most defining instances of sensemaking are commencement and the strategic plan. Greta and Thomas both mention commencement as the culmination of everyone's work and the ultimate goals of the university. The strategic plan—or more specifically its pillars as per Margaret's description—helps create a visual representation of Eastside's goals and objectives.

Although not specifically mentioned as a technique during the interviews, many of the participants use storytelling to describe leadership and change tactics. In the study, Eastside's history plays a major role in Thomas's attempt to create join-in for change. Additionally, Thomas references stories he has used to create internal as well as external join-in.

During the first meeting observation, humor plays a prominent role in the conversation. As the participants describe it, humor often acts as a stress-reliever during tense situations. However, Alex and Harold comment that with those particularly tense situations, humor was not immediately present; at the time the researcher entered the cabinet meetings, the difficult issues on the agenda had been discussed for several months before the members were comfortable using humor to diffuse the situation.

Discussion

This section offers a discussion of the findings gleaned from the case study's data considering extant literature, organized to answer the research questions and best address the study's purpose. The following are areas of discussion: communicative leadership theories-in-use and alignment with espoused theories of action, the change process, communicative leadership during the change process, and social entrepreneurship's role.

Communicative leadership theories-in-use & alignment with espoused theories of action. Given the changing face of leadership, leaders must work to earn the trust and respect of their subordinates, whereas leaders of the past tended to inherit those traits simply by virtue of their titles (Decker & Decker, 2015). Therefore, in this study, the researcher focuses on how the cabinet members extend themselves to gain trust and respect. It was found that participants self-describe their leadership styles in varying manners but all include a people-centric approach and a focus on relationships, which are critical to successful leadership. The participants' leadership descriptions include terms such as: situational, collaborative, participatory, involved, inclusive, aggressive, dialogue-centered, consensus-building, and decision-generating. These descriptors align with the definition of a communicative leader as "one who engages employees in dialogue, actively shares and seeks feedback, practices participative decision making, and is perceived as open and involved" (Johansson et al., 2014, p. 155). Of all the participants, data were only present to confirm or disconfirm alignment between Thomas's theory-in-use and espoused theory of action regarding leadership style. (This lack of data likely occurred within the leadership lens because the researcher neither observed nor interviewed subordinates within each of Eastside's units.)

Communicative leadership has been criticized as redundant, though, because leadership is innately communicative. However, researchers in the field claim that a difference exists between effectiveness of leaders' communication, warranting the communicative distinction (Johansson et al., 2014, p. 148). In effect, all leaders communicate but communicative leaders do it well.

Further confirming the value of effective communication, Mikkelson et al. (2015) conducted a study of 276 employees from varying fields to discover whether leadership style and communication competence are predictors of employee outcomes. In line with the researchers' predictions, "effective and appropriate communication were both positively related to satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment. Regression analysis determined that effective communication and relations-oriented leadership were the best predictors of satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment" (Mikkelson et al., 2015, p. 336).

Connecting with the findings of Mikkelson et al.'s (2015) research, this case study also shows that the participants rely heavily on the notion that leadership is a combination of building relationships and communicating effectively to create collaborative decision making, emphasizing the inextricable tie between leadership outcomes and effective communication. As observed in the cabinet meetings, discussions tend to be open and collaborative, with interjections, feedback, and sharing of unit-specific knowledge. All participants agree that this type of participative and productive dialogue is standard in the meetings. Edward adds that the collaboration extends into the group's chosen communication medium, noting that the majority of their communication happens as a group as opposed to one or two members having a side conversation, which contributes to the openness and collaboration.

Not only is mention made of the communication capabilities within the cabinet but also regarding Isaac and Harold within their respective units. Thomas and Alex both assert they have experienced first-hand Isaac’s ability to communicate collaboratively and openly within his unit, similarly to what is seen in the cabinet meetings. Alex describes Isaac as the “pause person,” wanting time to think before speaking further on a topic. Whereas Alex depicts Harold as a strong listener who has a gift for simplifying what others try to say. Harold validates this description of his communication style and attributes it to his specific circumstance: “I think it’s just a function of the luck of having been there longer combined with the difference in my office’s mission from everybody else’s.” To truly listen, the literature agrees that not only do listeners need to be cognizant of “ostensive messages,” the literal content, they also need to know what they assume about the sender’s intentions and their own interpretations of the message (Stohl & Redding, 1987, as cited in Stohl, 1995, p. 50; Deetz et al., 2000). To better understand one’s own underlying perception and interpretation, Deetz et al. (2000, p. 110) suggest “acknowledgement,” which is “the process of making explicit your understanding of the other person’s message prior to responding to it” (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 110), as Thomas and Harold are described as doing in communication situations. Communicative leadership theory aligns, emphasizing the value of constructive dialogue and feedback to remain open and productive within the organization (Johansson et al., 2014; Hamrefors, 2010; Eriksen, 2001).

Underscoring the use of two-way communication in the cabinet, when characterizing Thomas's communication style, feedback-giving, pushing, and listening are emphasized by the participants, which are features linked with employee satisfaction. In Men's 2014 quantitative study of leadership, communication, and employee morale, employees in multiple positions (n=400) are surveyed. The study finds that employees respond more positively to "a communication system that is open, two-way, and responsive, addresses employee opinions and concerns, and boosts mutual understanding, collaboration, and dialogue" (Men, 2014, p. 279).

This predictive relationship is essential to any relationship-oriented leadership style, improving employee morale and subsequent employee outcomes, and communicative leadership is no exception. Feedback-giving and pushing are both seen as reciprocal processes with Thomas; he freely gives and receives feedback, often pushes his cabinet members to stretch their goals, but also can be pushed back if someone on the team foresees a decision taking Eastside in an undesirable direction. Following this emphasis on the reciprocal nature of communication in leadership studies, "a successful leader understands that most people have a fairly high need to be really heard and taken seriously" (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 108).

Also linking to the appropriateness of communication mentioned by Men (2014), information-sharing and whether to share more or less, given circumstances and audience, is a common theme participants offer in this case study. Regarding ambiguity in transparency, Argyris (1953, p. 22) observes that the leader chooses to immediately share important information with his subordinates unless there is a specific reason not to do so, whether the information is sensitive or may not be fully decided upon. "The fundamental problem for handling relationships in the environment is that the demand for transparency requires a sophisticated mix of openness and secrecy, with timing usually being the most important factor" (Hamrefors, 2010, p. 146). A leader must choose whether the information, environment, and audience warrant openness or ambiguity. However, according to Stohl (1995), strategic ambiguity can be a positive interpersonal communication tactic. "Strategically ambiguous messages facilitate change and creativity insofar as the messages provide flexibility for response" (Stohl, 1995, p. 60).

The change process. In conducting this study, the researcher uses Kezar's (2014, p. xii) definition of change, which includes "those intentional acts where a particular leader drives or implements a new direction." However, some scholars argue that the university setting warrants a different focus than the leader during change initiatives. For instance, David Leslie (1996) suggests that changes within an academic institution happen through faculty and students (as cited in Tierney, 2008). Further, Tierney (2008) adds that change "does not happen because a committee or a president asserts a new idea" (p. 110). Given this differing view on higher education change, the president and cabinet members' effort to involve Eastside's community was highlighted. This section uses extant literature to better define the change process reported by participants and observed by the researcher; it is broken into three subsections: the vision, the people, and the process.

The vision. According to Isaac and Greta, Thomas is the driving force behind the recent changes at Eastside, which is expected given that the Board of Trustees hired him to enhance the institution's performance. Most notable is Thomas's clear vision, which helps others in the institution envision and enact the change. As the foundation for an organization’s success, the vision must be shared and genuine as opposed to only a vision statement (Kotter, 1996; Senge, 2006). Isaac defines Thomas as “a changer” and Greta speaks of his vision trickling down to inspire change on every level.

Greta attributes Eastside’s newfound shared vision to Thomas’s own “clear,” “stretched,” and “realistic” vision. Not only does a strong vision create motivation for those asked to participate, but “when people truly share a vision they are connected, bound together by a common aspiration” (Senge, 2006, p. 192). The vision is what enables people to harness creative tension between current reality and envisioned reality, a key component to personal mastery. “Vision paints a picture of what we want to create. Systems thinking reveals how we have created what we currently have” (Senge, 2006, p. 214). Senge attributes this relationship to why visions often fail. Organizations now rely heavily on creating and implementing visions, but they have not looked at the organization through the lens of systems thinking, which leads members of the organization to have a fuzzy view of their current reality and how they can reach the envisioned reality, in turn preventing them from taking advantage of creative tension while moving toward the vision.

The people. Given the highly optimistic vision Thomas brought with him to Eastside, some participants note that the university community was initially fearful or nervous about reaching expectations. Change is a complicated process that often directly involves and affects several people. As such, considerable literature agrees that the change process must be evaluated from multiple viewpoints. “…Change agents and participants have different interpretations and mental models of a given change process in which they all participate” (Van de Ven, Polley, Garud, & Venkataraman, 1999, as cited in Van de Ven & Sun, 2011, p. 67), which clearly affects how Eastside's varying stakeholders accept change and participate in the process.

According to the findings, the rate at which members of Eastside's community experienced anxiety and skepticism about the transition and then moved toward acceptance varied given how close they were to the president in the hierarchy, which can be explained using the Kubler-Ross Transition Curve. The Kubler-Ross Transition Curve describes seven phases an individual goes through during a time of transition: immobilization, minimization, incompetence, acceptance, testing, search for meaning, and finally internalization (Orridge, 2009, pp. 5-7). With organizational change, leaders need to be cognizant that not only will members of the organization be going through these phases, but also that each will move through at his or her own rate. In addition, senior leadership has most likely been working on the change initiatives before including other organizational members, so they may be steps ahead of everyone else in their acceptance of change (Orridge, 2009, pp. 7-8). In other words, those who were most involved in the planning and implementation from the earlier stages reached acceptance sooner than those who may have felt detached from the initial planning.

The varied timing of one's position on the Kubler-Ross Transition Curve for leaders and subordinates may also explain why leaders appear optimistic when introducing change. "Most leaders enter change efforts motivated and even excited. The change is fresh and new for them" (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 40). The leaders have had time to plan and adjust to the upcoming change, so excitement would only be natural since they have most likely internalized the change. "But many employees have a different experiential history. Often, they have been reorganized and developed to death. They have been through every change effort imaginable. They are understandably cynical" (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 40). So not only have employees not had time to process the impending change, they are also relying on past experiences to frame the outcomes of the approaching change. Once short-term wins were realized in the case of Eastside, though, join-in seemed to increase.

The process. According to the study, Thomas is focusing heavily on marketing to help foster the positive image of Eastside, thus explaining the "why" behind the change, further enhancing join-in. Implementing change takes more than just a leader, so the importance of stakeholders must be considered throughout the process (Fullan, 1982). Subordinates must be motivated to embrace the change and participate in it. "The most important motivation is intrinsic motivation (Amabile, 1996), which means that they are motivated by the content of their activities" (as cited in Hamrefors, 2010, p. 143).

Once a communicative leader has built a sense of trust, he or she can create common goals and a shared reality to increase join-in (Högström et al., 1999, p. 8, as cited in Johansson et al., 2014, p. 149). "Communicators who work successfully as contextual leaders very actively change people's minds to the extent that they change reality" (Hamrefors, 2010, p. 148). This part of the process is especially relevant for the case study in that the president is new and is creating relationships while simultaneously working to positively change the institution.

Following the creation of shared meaning and common goals, a communicative leader will strive to create ownership. Consistent with this process, Thomas and the cabinet members' strategy of explaining the "why" to build join-in ultimately inspires progress through increased ownership. "When organizational members participate, they are able to take ownership of the processes and activities that help them play a role in fulfilling the vision" (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 97). Kotter (1996, p. 65) argues that in order for individuals to progress toward a common goal, they must all desire that same goal. "Only when all the members of a guiding coalition deeply want to achieve the same objective does real teamwork become feasible" (Kotter, 1996, p. 65).

The ownership can move beyond individual ownership, though; as a successful communicative leader, the president links it to the entire institution to further build a team mentality and a sense of purpose. Thomas's initial efforts to do so were apparent in his first 100 days, in which he personally met with every department in Eastside. According to Deetz et al. (2000):

> When members of an organization feel a commitment to the goals of the organization, they feel as though by helping the organization succeed, they are able to not only be a part of a successful enterprise but also help accomplish something important. (p. 97)

Also important is the urgency Thomas and other cabinet members have created. Noted by the participants is the difference in rate of decision-making typically seen between corporate and higher education environments. Decision-making tends to be slower in academia; however, the participants claim not to follow the norm and instead move forward with decisions at a faster rate than would be expected. A crucial element to Senge's (2006) account of the laws of systems thinking is that "faster is slower" (p. 62). Acting too quickly and trying to keep a pace that is unnatural to a system may backfire and cause issues; it may even cause the system to slow down in response to the upset. Thus, as expected, Thomas's pressure to change Eastside quickly is not without its conflict, as some participants have had to push back against requests to move forward at a rapid rate.

Interestingly, the participants note that not only is urgency present in adapting the culture of Eastside but part of the culture shift and ultimate change is in creating that same urgency. All agree that this dynamic is attributed to Thomas's personality and innate passion to see the institution succeed. The work of Kotter (1996) and Deetz et al. (2000) afford valuable insights concerning the relationship between crisis and motivation. According to Kotter (1996), "Visible crises can be enormously helpful in catching people's attention and pushing up urgency levels" (p. 45). Individuals will often not act unless they have a need to do so, not wanting to upset their complacency.

Additionally, in some instances, an approaching crisis does exist, but those involved choose not to see it, especially given "human nature, with its capacity for denial, especially if people are already busy or stressed" (Kotter, 1996, p. 40). As was the case at Eastside upon Thomas's arrival, crises in both public relations and performance metrics warranted his urgent push for change. Both situations provided Eastside's stakeholders with "clear and undeniable evidence that organizational survival and people's chances for success are at stake" (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 39), which he used to enhance motivation. Despite the rate of decision-making, though, the study finds that consensus is still a critical part of the process, embracing the scholarly tradition of shared governance.

Communicative leadership during the change process. Tying together the two prior sections, this section explores, in the context of recent literature, communicative leadership techniques used by the participants and the effects on the change process. The structure of this section is as follows: the plan, the people, and the process.

The plan. In Kezar and Eckel's (2002) qualitative study, data collected from six higher-education institutions over four years create a framework for the transformational change process. Of the findings, sensemaking presented as a major strategy, providing a method for individuals to reshape their perceptions to better align with the changes present at the institutions (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). In this case study, the two most defining instances of sensemaking are commencement and the strategic plan. Greta and Thomas both mention commencement as the culmination of everyone's work and the ultimate goals of the university. The strategic plan—or more specifically its pillars according to Margaret's description—helps create a visual representation of Eastside's goals and objectives.

An effective method for grounding information in listeners' reality is by using a metaphor to create a figurative association. "Managers can think of metaphors as figurative analogies that draw comparisons between two dissimilar things," which gives them an opportunity to "compare unfamiliar situations to those people understand and can identify with" (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 78). Metaphors hold special significance during times of change since they can help a leader explain his or her vision through figurative speech when other forms of speech may not necessarily help listeners understand.

Although the participants did not specifically mention the use or benefits of communicating with metaphor, one particular metaphor—Eastside as a ship—appeared repeatedly in the first round of interviews, which prompted the researcher to ask all participants to elaborate about it during the second round of interviews. Whether the ship Eastside is moving in a new direction is debated among cabinet members. Whereas some participants see the metaphorical ship now heading toward a different goal, others see it moving in the same direction but with a difference in the rate, image, or guidance related to that direction. In line with Deetz et al.'s (2000) notion that metaphors can be used to shape the perception of existing information, Thomas notes that the direction has not changed but the perception of the institution has, placing an emphasis on the positive activities and attempting to prevent situations that may be perceived negatively.

Whereas this study shows an atmosphere of collaboration within the cabinet, participants distinguish that it is often not the norm within higher education. Alex, for instance, describes a university's units as silos and states that people can become uncomfortable when they have to work in teams across units. Alex asserts that Thomas is not only attempting to break down the barriers between units but that he has created what Greta calls a "working group" within the cabinet (discussed further in the next section). The participants reinforce that enacting positive change is only possible with effective teams and collaboration. In this collaboration, each member relies on the skills and expertise of the others to ensure successful decision-making. The meeting observations clearly show the co-reliance present in active dialogue and feedback-sharing. Thomas states he specifically designed the cabinet meetings as he did to encourage the dialogue, as well as to create an environment that fosters transparency and efficiency. Isaac recognizes that the meeting dynamic is possible because Thomas partially flattened the leadership hierarchy when he came to Eastside.

Facing similar challenges as higher education institutions in the United States, a university in the United Kingdom was the setting for Pisapia et al.'s (2015) quantitative study, which analyzes the differing effects of vertical and horizontal leadership techniques during change initiatives. After the university's leadership, headed by a new principal, proposed and implemented institutional reorganization, the faculty saw adverse effects almost immediately. Inadvertently, this reorganization proposal not only reallocated research funds and eliminated departments, which were a major source of identity for faculty, but it also created another layer of management (Pisapia et al., 2015, p. 2).

In the midst of these negative outcomes, the researchers found that commitment decreased when leaders used vertical techniques such as force, and that horizontal techniques such as networking increased individuals' energy; universities were also found to have specific hindrances that are not present in other environments (Pisapia et al., 2015, p. 1). "For example, competing interests, different objectives, absent norms of reciprocity, and different career goals made the alignment process difficult" (Pisapia et al., 2015, p. 1).

As such, for this case study, Thomas's flattened leadership is notable since participants report it plays a role in perception, join-in, and collaboration. The flatter structure provided by Thomas coupled with a mutual respect within the cabinet for each other's skills and areas of expertise has produced a resulting lack of competition among the cabinet members, which in turn promotes trust within the team and successful collaboration.

In addition to the flattened structure at Eastside, participants emphasize the presence of trust within the cabinet, citing its critical role in developing constructive teamwork and collaboration. Using communication to create trust has become even more important in the last decade or so, both in corporate and higher education realms, as leadership has lost its natural association with trust. "This trust gap is one of the new and unyielding realities of communicating in the twenty-first century, and it's dramatically shifting the way we think about and respond to traditional sources of power" (Decker & Decker, 2015, p. 32). Leaders are in a position to work for and earn the trust of their followers, and often are greeted with cynicism and uncertainty now associated with leadership titles (Decker & Decker, 2015, p. 36).

A study conducted by Edelman Trust Barometer (2014) found certain CEO actions are more likely to build trust than others. The actions most associated with trust are "communicating clearly and transparently, telling the truth regardless of how complex or unpopular it is, engaging with employees regularly, and being visible during challenging times" (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2014, as cited in Decker & Decker, 2015, p. 39). The trust actions reported in this 2014 study are parallel with the guiding principles of communicative leadership, as well as the findings from this case study. Participants make the distinction between trust in communication (telling the truth) and professionalism (ability to do one's job even under difficult circumstances), both of which are presented in the Edelman Trust Barometer (2014) study. Despite this semantic differentiation, the participants agree that both are present within the cabinet and contribute to its effective collaboration.

The people. During change initiatives, Kotter expresses the importance of creating an effective "guiding coalition," which has the characteristics of "position power, expertise, credibility, and leadership" (Kotter, 1996, p. 57). Alex asserts that Thomas is not only attempting to break down the barriers between units but that he has created what Greta calls a "working group" within the cabinet, similar to Kotter's "guiding coalition." Participants concur that the environment within the cabinet encourages each to provide their contrasting experiences in a collective effort to work toward common goals. A successful guiding coalition helps encourage collaboration, dialogue, and participation; and it ultimately aids in anchoring the change in the organizational culture.

Referring to past cabinet members, Thomas explains that violated trust leads to losing the privilege to participate in the team. Other participants agree, also mentioning prior teams in which they participated that had a lack of trust or employees that were let go for violating trust. Prior to Thomas's arrival, Eastside had had a broad shift in upper administration, including the president, so building a foundation of trust is necessary to increase participation internally. "When trust is present, you will usually be able to create teamwork. When it is missing, you won't" (Kotter, 1996, p. 61).

Interestingly, the participants who reference prior colleagues who had violated trust mention that these individuals typically had not done their jobs well and attempted to cover it up. One of Senge's (2006) organizational learning disabilities is "the myth of the management team" (p. 24). Especially in teams, individuals do not want to admit their own failures or issues, and they claim to act in a way that fully supports the team and its goals. As a result, most people will cover up those failures to keep from being chastised or punished and to continue to be rewarded for good behavior. Edward asserts that a unique layer of trust must be present to maintain a functioning team: accountability. Each cabinet member must be able to rely on the others to advise the group in their respective areas of expertise. When team members create the habit of continually covering up the instances of failed professional duties, the result is "skilled incompetence—teams full of people who are incredibly proficient at keeping themselves from learning" (Senge, 2006,

p. 25). Eastside’s cabinet members, however, seem to have no tolerance for this sort of professional behavior, given that individuals who cover up failures reportedly are no longer on the team.

The process. Once Eastside’s cabinet was relatively established, the participants state that Thomas practiced close-up communication with his stakeholders to better understand the institution. The two instances of close-up communication referenced by the participants are the weekly cabinet meetings and the meetings initiated by Thomas with each Eastside department during his first 100 days.

Both the cabinet meetings and department meetings, according to the study, allowed for participation and collaboration among the cabinet members and university community respectively. Along with several other goals in these meetings, Thomas asserts he was looking for existing opportunities as well as new opportunities to better the institution. This mindset connects with the proposed need for organizational ambidexterity (OA) in dynamic environments. An important aspect of successful change is OA, which O’Reilly and Tushman (2004) define as “the ability of an organization to simultaneously pursue both explorative (discontinuous) and exploitative (incremental) innovation” (as cited in Junni et al., 2013, p. 299). After finding mixed results from prior studies on the relationships between OA and performance, Junni et al. (2013), decided to conduct a meta-analysis to determine the existence of any consistent relationships.

The study shows that OA (including both exploration and exploitation) is positively and significantly related to performance ($\rho = 0.38$), and that both exploration and exploitation have positive and significant effects on performance ($\rho = 0.26$ each) (Junni et al., 2013, pp. 303-305). Service-oriented and technical fields have shown a higher effect of OA on performance, given their dynamic environments and limited budgets (Junni et al., 2013). Since the higher education sector falls within the service realm and has certainly been experiencing dynamic conditions, Thomas's entrepreneurial actions of both exploring new options and exploiting resources that are already in place can positively affect Eastside.

As Greta explains, Thomas promised in his interview for presidency that he would conduct the department meetings to learn about Eastside prior to enacting major changes. These meetings helped ease the transition process for many of the institution's constituents as they created an atmosphere of participation and collaboration. A key outcome of communicative leadership is that it can generate trust between the leader and the led. "In the business context, the distance between corporate management and employees needs to be bridged by leaders' 'close-up communication' and communicative relating behavior in order to create trust and understanding, otherwise messages from the head office will go unheard" (Högström et al., 1999, p. 8, as cited in Johansson et al., 2014, p. 149).

The term "face-to-face communication" seems to be synonymous with close-up communication; however, simply by speaking with another person, one is not necessarily engaging in the close-up communication associated with dialogue. Therefore, distinction must be made between conversation and dialogue. "Even face-to-face communication is often more a simultaneous monologue among several people than a dialogue" (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 108). Add to this interaction a power differential, such as when a president speaks with a subordinate, and each may be merely speaking at the other; the one with more power may be giving directions, while the other may be explaining a situation within the organization. “Even when there is a genuine effort to understand the other and considerable trust and openness, without appropriate skills, dialogue cannot happen” (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 108). These skills, according to Deetz et al. (2000), are using concrete language, being able to listen and clarify, and taking responsibility for one’s actions and words, which all are present within the observed cabinet meetings. Additionally, the participants report the presence of true dialogue in their typical interactions.

Dialogue tends to be the most effective form of communication as the information being transmitted becomes more complicated. The literature explains that, rather than with electronic media or large group meetings, dialogue is more appropriate in these situations “because it facilitates immediate feedback, the use of natural language and multiple cues, and personal focus” (Daft & Lengel, 1984, 1986, as cited in Men, 2014, p. 269). As with communicative leadership, these traits emphasize the need for environments that foster relationships and feedback. Seemingly cyclical in nature, a constructive and nurturing organization fosters productive dialogue, and that dialogue in turn creates more positive relationships within the organization.

Another communicative leadership technique employed by the participants is storytelling. Although not specifically mentioned as a technique during the interviews, a majority of the participants use storytelling to describe efforts to create join-in. Aligning with the literature on communicative leadership, interpersonal communication literature views storytelling as a critical tool for building trust and creating meaning. “Stories are a powerful tool for reinforcing organizational assumptions and teaching these assumptions to organizational newcomers” (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 79). In this case study, Eastside’s history plays a major role in Thomas’s attempt to create join-in for change. Additionally, Thomas recalls stories he has used to create internal as well as external join-in. These stories allow listeners to imagine and visualize what the speaker is describing, frame by frame, which creates an overall vision of the speaker’s message. The visual nature of storytelling can help a leader shape others’ perception of the organization; “they can strategically use stories to ‘put a face’ on their corporate goals and vision. Many times, after people forget organizational rules, regulations, and articulated goals, they nevertheless remember the story or anecdote that illustrated the point” (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 79).

As expected, the study shows that conflict is present in the cabinet, confirmed by interviews and observations. Isaac, Alex, Greta, Charles, and Thomas concur that the conflict within the group is typically healthy and productive. Similar to Kotter (1996) and Pisapia’s (2009) work, Senge (2006) writes that productive conflict is a necessary component for decision-making in a team setting. “One of the most reliable indicators of a team that is continually learning is the visible conflict of ideas. In great teams conflict becomes productive” (Senge, 2006, p. 232). Dialogue and discussion both foster healthy conflict (dialogue more indirectly than discussion), which in turn strengthens the team dynamic. Less cohesive teams, though, handle conflict differently, either hiding the existing conflict or becoming paralyzed from stubbornness about differing ideas, creating a negative and often counterproductive environment (Senge, 2006).

Isaac and Greta recognize that the atmosphere surrounding the group’s conflict is not always comfortable. However, an equally important reason to encourage conflict, and possibly the uncomfortable conflict mentioned by participants, is that the change process often does not have a specific or predictable route. “Change approaches that tended to be programmatic and rooted in a viewpoint that saw change initiatives as linear, sequential, and, consequently, predictable tended to fail in most contexts” (Higgs & Rowland, 2011, p. 310). These qualities of change necessitate a greater focus on change leadership as opposed to just resorting to change management. “Organizations should get stuck *at the edge of chaos* since most observers believe that is where creativity and innovation occur” (Pisapia, 2009, p. 71). Thomas maintains that the uncomfortable nature of conflict is a result of discussing difficult issues, the alternative to which is letting them fester and become even more difficult.

The final communicative leadership technique in this discussion is humor. Upon the first meeting observation, humor plays a prominent role in the conversation. Some speakers incorporate humor into their stories, which can add another layer of connection for the audience (Deetz et al., 2000, p. 79). Also, as the participants describe in their interviews, humor often plays the role of a stress-reliever during tense situations.

However, Decker & Decker (2015, p. 127) argue “when humor misfires, it destroys the communication experience, breaks down the emotional connection, embarrasses the speaker, and leaves the audience feeling uncomfortable.” Given the necessity for caution and tact with humor, and its role as a stress-reliever within the cabinet, the researcher asked participants in the second round of interviews whether that variety of humor had been present at the cabinet’s inception. Alex and Harold afforded that with those particularly tense situations, humor was not immediately present; at the time the researcher entered the cabinet meetings, the difficult issues on the agenda had been discussed for several months before the members were comfortable using humor to diffuse the situation.

Social entrepreneurship's role. A difficult paradox exists within higher education: the relationship between academic capitalism and an institution's ability to effectively provide education and services to its students. Without enacting certain business practices at a university, the faculty, staff, and administration would cease to have resources available with which they could provide to students and the community. Therefore, the majority of the participants agree some modification of a business-centric approach is needed in higher education.

Amplifying skepticism, Eastside's administration shifted to a more business-centric approach to generate improvements by being more efficient and productive. Edward addresses the cultural change within Eastside as "more of a business in certain areas, and less academia, but without losing that part of it. It's very tricky actually." Upon deeper analysis of the business mindset often addressed and practiced within the cabinet, the researcher found the presence of social entrepreneurship. Given the multiple parameters and descriptors associated with social entrepreneurship, the researcher narrowed the definition after surveying the literature. According to Light (2005), "a social entrepreneur is an individual, group, network, organization, or alliance of organizations that seek large-scale change through pattern-breaking ideas about how governments, nonprofits, and businesses can address significant social processes" (as cited in Bielefeld, 2009, pp. 71-72).

Thomas sees Eastside as a $760 million a year company, acknowledging how that view could upset some within academia. He further calls Eastside a big city, adding "we try to take care of our residents in the city." His clarification from company to city emphasizes his social entrepreneurial rather than simply entrepreneurial mindset. Edward supports this social and academic distinction: "In some areas, it needs to stay that way [academic], but in other areas in can be operated more like a business probably, and I don't necessarily mean from a revenue standpoint. I mean from a thinking standpoint."

The innovation and creativity associated with social entrepreneurship also characterizes the OA described and observed in this case study. "If researchers and practitioners together can discover how nonprofits can promote and harness innovation and creativity, and bring these more effectively to bear on social problems, then nonprofits, their constituencies, and society will benefit greatly" (Bielefeld, 2009, p. 84). When organizations are in changing, dynamic situations, leaders must look for new and existing opportunities, as Thomas purports to do at Eastside; and the creativity and innovation associated with social entrepreneurship is closely tied to those discoveries of opportunity.

Conclusions

This qualitative case study was designed to evaluate the use of communicative leadership techniques during organizational change within a state university. The relationship between espoused theories of use and theories-in-action for participants' communicative leadership practices was also explored. A considerable amount of literature has been published on how leaders communicate and the importance of the process, yet "there is much we still do not know about the communicative aspects of leadership" (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014, p. 22). The team evaluated in this study tends to show considerable alignment between espoused and practiced communicative leadership techniques; however, the researcher also takes into consideration that respondents may have modified answers to preserve their leadership status (Argyris, 1960). Incorporating two rounds of interviews as well as meeting observations helped mitigate this effect to an extent. The findings also show a significant link between the use of communicative leadership traits and accomplishing change initiatives. An emergent finding includes the use of social entrepreneurship during the change process, complementing communicative leadership.

Alignment of espoused and actual communicative leadership traits. The cabinet provides varying self-described leadership traits but all offer communicative properties, which are further evidenced by other members' validation as well as the meeting observations. The participants' leadership descriptions include situational, collaborative, participatory, involved, inclusive, aggressive, dialogue-centered, consensus-building, and decision-generating. As exhibited by both the self-described and observed communicative traits, the participants tend to be not just communicators but good communicators by definition. Also supporting the presence of communicative leadership within the cabinet is the reciprocal communication process, including two-way communication, the dissemination and reception of feedback, and active listening. Additionally, the participants stress information sharing but also note that context may dictate whether information sharing is necessarily appropriate.

The change process. According to participants' responses, the change process is composed of three major areas: vision, people, and process. Having a clear vision (not simply a vision statement) that is simultaneously stretched and realistic is critical to making the change process possible. The vision must also carry down to all levels of the institution, and as it does, the cabinet members must be aware of and account for others' viewpoints and perceptions, which eases others' transition to accept the changes. Additionally, to create join-in, trust, motivation, and ownership, participants explain the "why" behind impending changes, stressing common goals and shared meaning. A major strategy for creating join-in is the dialogue present in Thomas and Isaac's meetings with all Eastside departments during Thomas's first 100 days on the job. The meetings helped build consensus and understanding throughout the institution but may also have conveyed a false sense of expectation. The final element present in the change process is urgency, both through Eastside's prior crises as well as in establishing urgency as part of the institutional culture. Notably, urgency is typically not the cultural norm within higher education and is reserved for corporate settings.

Communicative leadership during the change process. In analyzing the communicative leadership techniques used during change, three overarching factors play a role: the plan, people, and process. The president and cabinet members present two sensemaking factors in developing the plan for change: the strategic plan creates visualization and direction, while commencement underscores the culmination of the institution's mission and the collective efforts put forth by varying stakeholders. Similarly, metaphor exists in discussion of Eastside's changes and helps clarify varying perceptions of whether the actual mission has changed or the mission is the same but is being carried out at a different rate and with more guidance. Storytelling also plays a role in the change process as a method for sharing Eastside's history and ultimately creating join-in.

A concern of participants is the silo effect present in higher education, separating such units as student and academic affairs. However, Thomas's efforts to flatten Eastside's hierarchical structure to an extent have helped alleviate this compartmentalization and result in enhanced join-in and collaboration as well as less inter-unit competition. Further, the restructuring along with communicative actions (e.g., clear and transparent information, truthfulness, engagement, and visibility) have strengthened both communicative and professional trust within the cabinet. The effect is a "guiding coalition," in which participants freely share their contrasting experiences and opinions to reach a common goal (Kotter, 1996). The participants offer the weekly cabinet meetings and the departmental meetings during Thomas's first 100 days as examples of close-up communication efforts during the change process. Although conflict is apparent within the cabinet, and is sometimes uncomfortable, it is necessary in Eastside's dynamic environment; it represents the "edge of chaos" and fosters creativity and problem solving (Pisapia, 2009). To alleviate the stress of situations in which conflict is present, the cabinet uses humor, although timing was considered in its use so it was only present once the tense issues had been discussed several times.

Social entrepreneurship. Unexpectedly, a social entrepreneurship theme presented itself during data collection and analysis. Many participants stress the importance of having business mindsets as academic leaders, while still respecting and supporting academic practices and outcomes. Among the social entrepreneurship characteristics noted in analysis are innovation, creativity, OA, risk-taking, and accountability.

Recommendations for Practitioners

Given the findings of this case study, higher education administrators facing change should focus heavily on the planning stages, involving constituents, and anticipating the varying perceptions that may be present within the institution. As such, the “why” and the benefits need to be communicated and short-term wins emphasized to enhance join-in.

Once changes have begun, thought needs to go into further steps necessary to sustain and solidify them before making new ones, while simultaneously preparing for potential failure in the face of success. Ensuring the strategic plan does not sit on a shelf and instead is actively reviewed may be a strategy for accomplishing these goals. In practice, actively reviewing the strategic plan should lead to follow-through dialogue, ensuring reasonably equitable support of departments, intra-unit collaboration, and respect for and understanding of academic process while maintaining an industry-appropriate business mindset.

University Boards of Trustees who are seeking institutional change should consider interviewing and selecting social-entrepreneurial presidents who have strong and clear visions; desire to create strong, operable, and incremental strategic plans; have track records of inclusion, creating join-in, accountability, and urgency; and see the value in institutional history. In a more-established and stable institution, however, a dynamic and entrepreneurial president would likely not be a good fit.

Implications for Future Research

As this case study focuses on a single institution, data on communicative leadership’s effects on change initiatives in universities could be strengthened further by conducting a multi-site study. Also, conducting a study using both qualitative and quantitative methods could enhance the data attained. Further, conducting a longitudinal study would enable researchers to evaluate communicative leadership's evolution during the change process.

During this case study's data collection, the researcher concluded that a study of similar design could be conducted to evaluate the communicative relationship between the Board of Trustees and the president or between each vice president and his or her specific unit. Doing so could unearth the various layers of communicative leadership traits in the hierarchy and evaluate the relationships as they move up or down the institutional ladder. Additionally, conducting a study of faculty and staff perceptions of communicative leadership and change initiatives could add a fuller dimension to this area of study.

A final area of further research is examining university presidents through the social entrepreneur lens to create a more complete picture of entrepreneurial tendencies during change processes.

Limitations & Strengths

Eastside University's new president may have been apprehensive to honestly share information because of the institution's dynamic environment. For this same reason, team members might also be resistant to participate or may not have wanted to speak candidly about themselves, their fellow team members, or their president. The researcher's trustworthiness was critical in securing participants as well as making the participants comfortable to share sensitive information, which is why, of the 173,275 words of interview and observation transcripts sent to participants for member checking, only one four-word sentence was redacted.

Furthermore, this case study of Eastside's current cabinet tends to lend an unrealistically positive portrayal of their communicative nature, which may lead readers to question the integrity of the data. However, because the researcher is experienced in practicing and teaching business communications, she is aware of finely nuanced details such as verbal and nonverbal cues that suggest a speaker is being truthful or dishonest. Her analysis of the participants' behaviors during the interviews and observations support that they were generally being genuine with their responses and not withholding information.

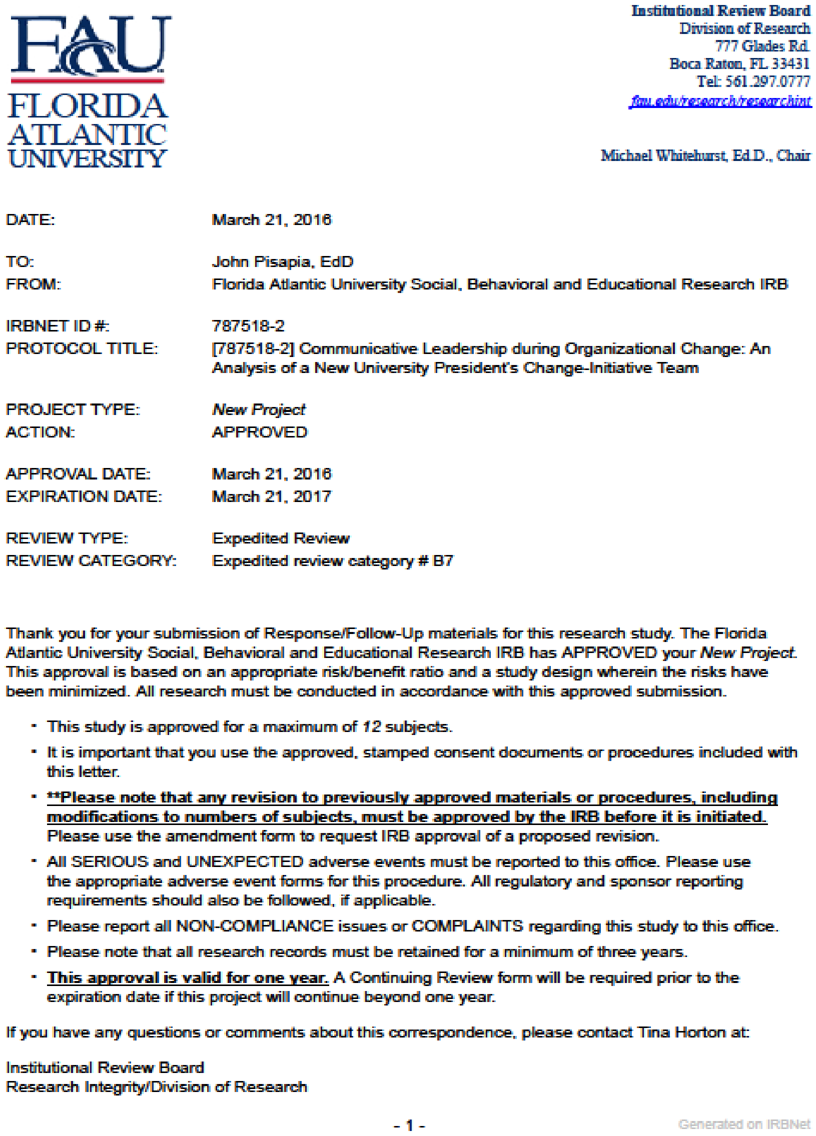
Argyris (1960) points out a limitation to using interviews to ascertain individuals' behavioral traits, which quite possibly led him to continue into research of espoused theories of action versus theories-in-use. Upper-level managers tend to be incongruent in their perception of behavior and actual behavior when interviewed. Argyris suggests observation of managers to better capture their true behavior (p. 40), which was accomplished during the team meetings.

Another limitation with testing theories of action is that they tend to be self-fulfilling. If a researcher assumes he or she already knows the predicted behavior of a group, he or she will test toward that desired behavior, often unknowingly, which creates a "self-sealing" theory (Argyris & Schön, 1974, p. 26).

Additionally, the researcher needed to remain aware of her personal bias and perceptions given her position as a business communications instructor, as well as her status of doctoral candidate in higher education leadership. The researcher had also experienced dramatic administrative overhauls in her places of work, both in academic and non-academic settings, which had shaped her perception of organizational change initiatives. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) suggest “reflexivity” as a tool for mitigating researcher bias and reactivity. Throughout the research process, the researcher examined her preconceptions and biases given her experience within higher education, which helped her be more open and honest with the data collection and analysis.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letters



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Michael Whitehurst, Ed.D., Chair

DATE:	March 21, 2016
TO:	John Pisapia, EdD
FROM:	Florida Atlantic University Social, Behavioral and Educational Research IRB
IRBNET ID #:	787518-2
PROTOCOL TITLE:	[787518-2] Communicative Leadership during Organizational Change: An Analysis of a New University President's Change-Initiative Team
PROJECT TYPE:	*New Project*
ACTION:	APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE:	March 21, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE:	March 21, 2017
REVIEW TYPE:	Expedited Review
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Expedited review category # B7

Thank you for your submission of Response/Follow-Up materials for this research study. The Florida Atlantic University Social, Behavioral and Educational Research IRB has APPROVED your *New Project*. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

- This study is approved for a maximum of *12* subjects.
- It is important that you use the approved, stamped consent documents or procedures included with this letter.
- ****Please note that any revision to previously approved materials or procedures, including modifications to numbers of subjects, must be approved by the IRB before it is initiated.** Please use the amendment form to request IRB approval of a proposed revision.
- All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All regulatory and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed, if applicable.
- Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.
- Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.
- **This approval is valid for one year.** A Continuing Review form will be required prior to the expiration date if this project will continue beyond one year.

If you have any questions or comments about this correspondence, please contact Tina Horton at:

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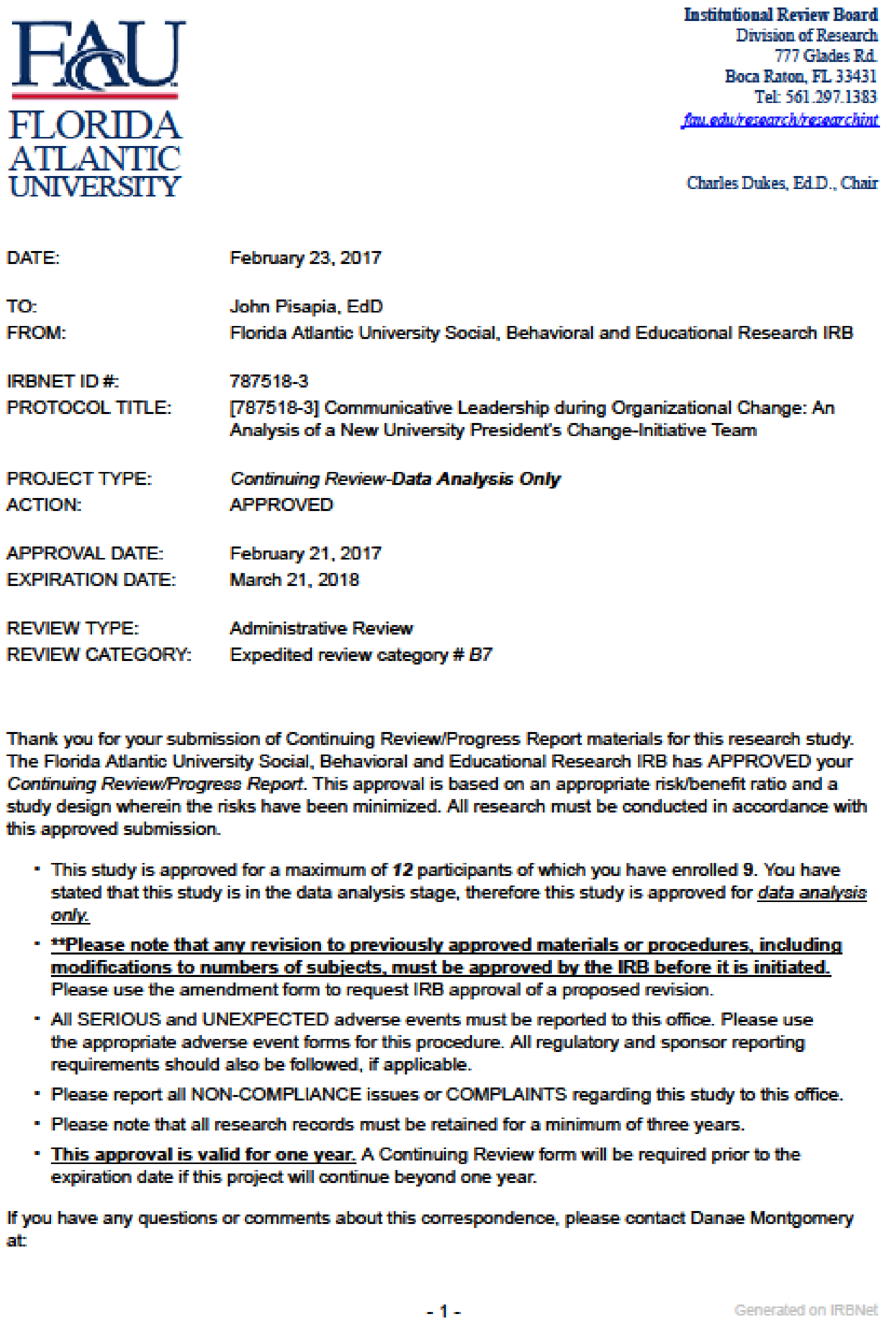

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Charles Dukes, Ed.D., Chair

DATE: February 23, 2017

TO: John Pisapia, EdD
FROM: Florida Atlantic University Social, Behavioral and Educational Research IRB

IRBNET ID #: 787518-3
PROTOCOL TITLE: [787518-3] Communicative Leadership during Organizational Change: An Analysis of a New University President's Change-Initiative Team

PROJECT TYPE: ***Continuing Review-Data Analysis Only***
ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: February 21, 2017
EXPIRATION DATE: March 21, 2018

REVIEW TYPE: Administrative Review
REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # *B7*

Thank you for your submission of Continuing Review/Progress Report materials for this research study. The Florida Atlantic University Social, Behavioral and Educational Research IRB has APPROVED your *Continuing Review/Progress Report*. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

- This study is approved for a maximum of ***12*** participants of which you have enrolled **9**. You have stated that this study is in the data analysis stage, therefore this study is approved for *data analysis only.*
- ****Please note that any revision to previously approved materials or procedures, including modifications to numbers of subjects, must be approved by the IRB before it is initiated.** Please use the amendment form to request IRB approval of a proposed revision.
- All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All regulatory and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed, if applicable.
- Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.
- Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.
- **This approval is valid for one year.** A Continuing Review form will be required prior to the expiration date if this project will continue beyond one year.

If you have any questions or comments about this correspondence, please contact Danae Montgomery at:

Appendix B: Recruitment Email

Request for a Meeting to Discuss Dissertation Study Participation

Good Morning,

I am a PhD candidate in FAU’s College of Education studying Communicative Leadership during Organizational Change: An analysis of a new university president’s change-initiative team. Thomas and I have spoken about the study and he is excited to be a part of it; the study has also recently been approved by IRB (see attachment). Today I am requesting your participation (as well as the participation of the other Eastside cabinet members).

The research will take place at Eastside during approximately April through August 2016. Participants will be interviewed twice (once in April or May and again in June, July, or August) for approximately one hour each. I will also observe four to eight cabinet meetings, chosen at the Team’s discretion. The number and length of meetings will also be determined by the Team.

I would like to have an opportunity to meet with you to further discuss the research purposes and your participation. I have attached the IRB-approved consent form and research protocol form. Please let me know when you will be available to meet to discuss the study further and answer any questions you may have. Thank you for considering participation in this study and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Emily Sacks

Appendix C: IRB-Approved Adult Consent Form

ADULT CONSENT FORM

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1) Title of Research Study: Communicative Leadership during Organizational Change: An Analysis of a New University President's Change-Initiative Team

2) Investigator(s): Dr. John Pisapia, principal investigator, and Emily Alice Sacks, student investigator

3) Purpose: This study's purpose is to discover the Communicative Leadership techniques that facilitate organizational change processes.

4) Procedures: The research will take place at Eastside University over the course of approximately four months (March 2016 – June 2016). You will be asked to participate in two interviews at dates, times, and locations that are convenient to you. Interviews are designed to run between 45 and 90 minutes based on your availability. You may also elect to complete the interview asynchronously by answering the interview questions via email. The first interview would take place in March or April 2016, and the second in April, May, or June 2016. Interviews may be audiotaped. You will also be asked to participate in 4 – 8 change-initiative team meeting observations, which will each run the duration of the meeting. The number and length of meetings will be determined by the change-initiative team. Meeting observations may be audiotaped. Participants may discontinue participation at any time during the study.

5) Risks: Risks include the institution, participants, or subject matter being identified. Also, the researcher will ask about workplace relationships and communication interactions, which could leave the participants vulnerable with regard to those relationships and interactions. Documents discussed or reviewed during the study may be sensitive in nature and a risk exists that their content may be identified. To protect confidentiality, all participants will be de-identified and member checking will be used. Also, the study will examine reciprocal relationships to create an added layer of anonymity for the participants. In addition, the university will be generally referred to as a four-year state university, and no mention will be made of its location.

6) Benefits: We do not know if you will receive any direct benefits by taking part in this study. However, this research will contribute to a greater understanding of the fields of communicative leadership, organizational change communication, and educational leadership communication.

7) Data Collection & Storage: Any information collected about you will be kept confidential and secure and only the people working with the study will see your data, unless required by law. The student investigator's personal iPad or a paper notepad will be used to compose all field notes and journal entries. If a paper notepad is used, the notes will then be recorded using the student investigator's personal iPad and the paper notes will be shredded. The student investigator's iPad is password-protected and, unless in her possession, will remain in a locked file cabinet in her Florida Atlantic University office (FL 347) or in a locked file cabinet in her home (2970 Cadiz Road, Boca Raton, FL).

Observations and interviews will be audio-recorded using an RCA Digital Voice Recorder. Immediately after audio files have been recorded, they will be transferred to the student investigator's iPad and deleted from the RCA Digital Voice Recorder. Observation and interview data will be transcribed by the researcher using the student investigator's iPad, and all transcriptions will be saved on the student investigator's iPad.

All data will be destroyed 5 years after the study has been completed. We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not let anyone know your name/identity unless you give us permission.

8) Contact Information: If you have questions about the study, you should call or email the principal investigator(s), Emily Sacks at (786) 326-7182 or Dr. John Pisapia at (561) 297-3556. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, contact the Florida Atlantic University Division of Research at (561) 297-0777 or send an email to fau.research@fau.edu.

9) Consent Statement:
*I have read or had read to me the preceding information describing this study. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I am 18 years of age or older and freely consent to participate. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I have received a copy of this consent form.

I agree ____ I do not agree ___ to be observed.   I agree ____ I do not agree ___ to be audiotaped.

I agree ____ I do not agree ___ to be interviewed.

Signature of Participant:_____________________________________ Date: ________________________

Printed Name of Participant: First Name _____________________ Last Name______________________

Signature of Investigator: ____________________________________ Date: ________________________

FAU
Institutional
Review Board

787518-2	
Approved On:	March 21, 2016
Expires On:	March 21, 2017

Appendix D: Interview Protocols and Questions

President Interview 1

How do you describe your leadership philosophy?

How do you think leaders best implement change initiatives?

What was your leadership role at your prior institution?

What sort of change were you hired to create, and what have been the outcomes so far?

Did you find that you had to adapt your leadership strategies during change? If so, how?

Now that you're here at Eastside, what have you been tasked to change? How's it been going?

What have you found in the Eastside setting that has helped you implement change?

What have you found in this setting that has been a barrier to change?

What communication techniques do you use to help encourage others to join in on your change efforts?

Do you think your techniques differ from other leaders' in similar positions? If so, How?

What do you think are the ideal ways to communicate with individuals who you want to join in on your change efforts? Which of these do you feel you do best? Any you'd like to improve upon? How so?

What are some of the communication barriers you think exist when trying to gain support and action during change initiatives? Why is that?

I'm going to mention a few words associated with leadership and change, and I'd like you to share any thoughts or professional experiences that come to mind:

Perception
Resistance
Motivation
Participation
Trust
Influence
Sensemaking
Ownership
Dialogue
Transparency
Ambiguity
Analogy
Metaphor
Storytelling
Humor
Listening
Defensiveness

President Interview 2

During the first interview, we discussed your strategies and experiences with regard to leadership, change, and communication, and I'd like to follow up on a few points you mentioned to clarify and expand, especially in light of the meetings that I have observed. If at any time you do not feel comfortable answering a question, you may pass. You may also rescind your consent and remove yourself, and any data collected about you and your work, from the analysis and reporting.

For the purpose of this study, I define change as intentional acts where a leader drives or implements a new direction. Also, communication refers to interpersonal communication with individuals or groups as opposed to communication related to media from the university to various stakeholders.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin? (If yes, investigator will answer questions of participant). (If no) Okay, let's get started.

Communication

It's been noted by the group that consensus building and shared governance are more of a focus now than with the prior administration. Prior president – didn't have the skillset. She didn't listen. "That's a flaw in a leader." I noticed a lot of collaborative dialogue during the meeting I attended, where the team members were finishing each other's thoughts and expanding on each other's ideas. Do you find that this is a regular occurrence in the meetings? Does this differ from any other groups you've been a part of?

Someone else in the group says that the leadership team works well together but that it's difficult to make work. Elaborate on this a bit. Poor communicators – gone "We've dismissed several people from the university that were in roles where it just wasn't a good match. I feel good about who's in the room now."

When the topics got a little tense, like during the discussion of admission standards, I saw humor pop up a lot. Do you see this as a positive or a negative strategy? How so?

A few members of the cabinet have noted that some members of the team are better communicators than others. Do you agree? How so and what are some of the outcomes of this dynamic? Trickle into decision-making and conflict-resolution?

With regard to communicating, it seems to be the group consensus that some VPs are very direct and others are very analytical. A good balance but some conflict. Do you agree? Can you give me an example of when this dynamic has created conflict?

Change

Ship metaphor – 2 years and heading in other direction now. One of your colleagues said it's not really turning the ship around—headed in same direction but we'll look different when we get there. What do you think about this alternative metaphor?

What would you say is your favorite or most important change initiative here?

What have you found in the Eastside setting that has helped you implement change?

As change moves through the system, how do you modify your communication strategies?

Do you currently find any barriers between the existing administration and those brought in by you? Have you personally experienced any resistance or barriers when you first joined Eastside? Do you always sit next to Edward? (Isaac sitting next to Alex)

Edward mentioned speed of communication and sense of urgency as major change initiatives. He said he had an advantage because he came with it—business mentality, business strategy. Did that initially create some conflict between the newcomers and the existing administration 2 years ago? *(Mention risk-taking being less in HE than in corporate because of job security)*

In our last interview, you said your leadership style is "aggressive and hopefully inclusive." One cabinet member noted the open conversation between him and you from the beginning, stating that when you propose huge changes, he expresses his concern openly with you. And regarding your push to move quickly, you've said to him, "If I go too far, you've got to pull me back."

People at Eastside were slow to adapt and then took off as the university improved. Someone else in the team is made anxious by the enthusiasm and acceptance because we may have difficulty sustaining it now. Do you think this is a valid concern? How so? *"Stretched but realistic vision." "We never agreed that everything would be activated at once, but we have to systemically move through it, and work on, I think, what are some of the most important things."*

You and many cabinet members saw meetings with all departments before developing the strategic plan as highly positive, but one in particular sees a huge drawback. What do you think? Did those meetings get people's expectations too high?

Trust is "Paramount. People never forget violated trust." A cabinet member said it would be interesting to ask, "Who do you trust around this table?" So I'm asking you, do you trust everyone around the table? How so?

Closing

Thank you for your time today. Your insights are invaluable to this study. I will be in contact with you again in a few weeks to share the transcription and offer you an opportunity to check my recording of information that you shared, share more information, and/or redact any information that you wish.

Thank you once again. Have a good day.

Participants Interview 1

What is your leadership philosophy?

How do you think leaders best implement change initiatives?

What are some of the change initiatives you’ve been involved with? How did they go or how are they going?

Would you have considered yourself a change agent at any point during the last two years? Why or why not?

What have you found in the Eastside setting that has helped you implement change?

What have you found in this setting that has been a barrier to change?

What has leadership done to encourage and advance the change initiatives you’ve worked on?

Has leadership done anything to discourage or create barriers to these change initiatives? How?

How has leadership used communication to help facilitate these change initiatives?

Have any communication barriers from leadership gotten in the way of change initiatives progressing? How so?

In an ideal situation, describe how leadership could best communicate in order to facilitate change initiatives, keeping in mind the experiences you’ve mentioned.

What communication techniques do you use to help encourage others to join in on change efforts?

Do you think your techniques differ from others’ in similar positions? If so, how?

What do you think are the ideal ways to communicate with individuals who you want to join in on your change efforts? Which of these do you feel you do best? Any you’d like to improve upon? How so?

What are some of the communication barriers you think exist when trying to gain support and action during change initiatives? Why is that?

I’m going to mention a few words associated with leadership and change, and I’d like you to share any thoughts or professional experiences that come to mind:

Perception, Resistance, Motivation, Participation, Trust, Influence, Sensemaking, Ownership, Dialogue, Transparency, Ambiguity, Analogy, Metaphor, Storytelling, Humor, Listening, Defensiveness

Participants Interview 2

During the first interview, we discussed your strategies and experiences with regard to leadership, change, and communication, and I'd like to follow up on a few points you mentioned to clarify and expand, especially in light of the meeting that I have observed.

If at any time you do not feel comfortable answering a question, you may pass. You may also rescind your consent and remove yourself, and any data collected about you and your work, from the analysis and reporting.

Reminder: For the purpose of this study, I define change as intentional acts where a leader drives or implements a new direction. Also, communication refers to interpersonal communication with individuals or groups as opposed to communication related to media from the university to various stakeholders.

Also, would you like to choose a pseudonym for yourself or would you like me to pick one?

Do you have any questions for me before we begin? (If yes, investigator will answer questions of participant). (If no) Okay, let's get started.

Communication

I noticed a lot of collaborative dialogue during the meeting I attended, where the team members were finishing each other's thoughts and expanding on each other's ideas. Do you find that this is a regular occurrence in the meetings? Does this differ from any other groups you've been a part of?

When the topics got a little tense, like during the discussion of admission standards, I saw humor pop up a lot. Do you see this as a positive or a negative strategy? How so?

A few members of the cabinet have noted that some members of the team are better communicators than others. Do you agree? How so and what are some of the outcomes of this dynamic? Trickle into decision-making and conflict-resolution?

With regard to communicating, it seems to be the group consensus that some VPs are very direct and others are very analytical. A good balance but some conflict. Do you agree? Can you give me an example of when this dynamic has created conflict?

Change

What do you think is Thomas's favorite or most important change initiative? Do you have a role in this change? How so?

Ship metaphor – 2 years and heading in other direction now. One of your colleagues said it's not really turning the ship around—headed in same direction but we'll look different when we get there. What do you think about this alternative metaphor?

Any barriers between old-school administration and Thomas's people?

Laid-back and complacent to pushing to excel at a new level. Thomas's seemingly unrealistic expectations at first.
People at Eastside were slow to adapt and then took off as the university improved.
Someone else in the team is made anxious by the enthusiasm and acceptance because we may have difficulty sustaining it now. Do you think this is a valid concern? How so?
"Stretched but realistic vision."

"Strategic Plans generally end up becoming documents that sit on shelves." It's about the plan and about communicating it to the division so they feel like a part of the greater plan. Many cabinet members saw the president and provost's meetings with all departments before developing the strategic plan as highly positive, but one in particular sees a huge drawback. What do you think? Did those meetings get people's expectations too high?

One of your colleagues said it would be interesting to ask, "Who do you trust around this table?" So I'm asking you, do you trust everyone around the table? How so?

Closing

Thank you for your time today. Your insights are invaluable to this study. I will be in contact with you again in a few weeks to share the transcription and offer you an opportunity to check my recording of information that you shared, share more information, and/or redact any information that you wish.

Thank you once again. Have a good day.

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