

Collaboration in Urban Markets: Efficient Strategy or Delaying Tactic?

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Abstract

Collaboration is frequently proposed as a way to increase access to higher education in urban areas. Policy makers sometimes use the absence of voluntary collaboration to force partnerships or avoid investments that address critical needs. The authors make the case that collaborations in higher education are difficult to achieve. They argue that in spite of attempts to build collaborative structures, the natural path of organizational development ultimately leads to stronger individual institutions.

The last quarter of the 20th century was the period of expanding access and infrastructure development in public higher education. Unlike previous decades of investment, these years were not focused on serving a homogenous population such as the veterans of World War II, or on building mega-campus complexes. By the 1980s, the core of our large university systems was in place. The recent decades were characterized by a growing sector of new institutions committed to increasing participation in postsecondary education by attracting new student populations and serving them with quality and convenience.

Inner city areas were increasingly served by locally-oriented institutions. New campuses were developed in medium-sized cities and fringe suburbs. Rural areas gained access through extended learning centers and telecommunications outreach. Just as the community college system was built to put 2-year and technical education within the reach of almost everyone, so have recent initiatives of universities expanded the delivery of degree programs to diverse and expanding populations demanding access.

A significant number of these new initiatives included the development of new branch campuses and outreach centers. While there are occasional expressions of concern from traditional campuses that these new sites siphon resources away from the "main" or flagship campus, these authors are not aware of any empirical analysis concluding that the higher education pie has been reallocated at the expense of mature institutions. Instead, this growth phenomenon has challenged state legislators, governors, higher education boards and trustees to provide sufficient financial support for new ventures that respond to growing demand and shifting state economic objectives.

In the State of Washington, this movement resulted in the creation of five new "branch" campuses (two by the University of Washington, three by Washington State University), the co-location of some postsecondary facilities, at least one new inter-institutional facility, and numerous new outreach or extension centers. The cost of these new enterprises is hundreds of millions of dollars for facilities alone. Ongoing costs for faculty, staff and operations add even more dollars to higher education budgets.

Faced with the rising costs of state government and taxpayer resistance to tax burdens, state legislators are increasingly asking questions about the accountability and effectiveness of new educational initiatives. One issue that inevitably emerges is legislative pressure on institutions meant to force them to collaborate “in order to reduce costs.” Usually, this discussion proceeds with little understanding of institutional roles or missions, the costs associated with collaboration, or the impact on faculty, students and administration. Instead, the pressure for collaboration tends to be based on a stereotypical belief that the academy has monolithic purposes and cultures, and the assumption of considerable excess capacity created by inefficiency and duplication. From this point of view, Business 303 is thought to be the same regardless of the institution. This article looks at issues of inter-institutional collaboration, asking questions of appropriateness, cost, impact, and suggesting some of the probable outcomes and the necessary conditions for success. Drawing on organizational theories, a case is made for the natural and inevitable development of strong individual campuses, and suggesting that collaboration can be constructed as an intermediate step in organizational maturation.

Toward a Theory of Collaboration

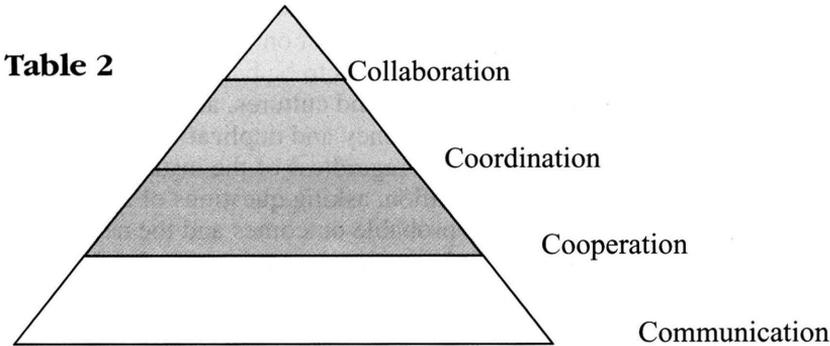
Is collaboration even the right construct for the kind of interaction policy makers imagine? While these public leaders often espouse the notion of collaboration as a universally good idea, the term is often mis-used. Dickerson (1993) offered a useful theoretical conception of relationships, of which collaboration is one level. He places collaboration on a continuum, rather than seeing it as a discrete process. With some adaptation, Dickerson’s continuum is given in Table 1.

Table 1

Communication	Cooperation	Coordination	Collaboration
Open exchange of ideas; institutional objectives are paramount	Agencies agree to work together on limited common agenda	Agencies are linked; mid-level/program agenda are actively pursued	Staff and budget are linked for attainment of joint agency agenda

From a practitioner’s standpoint, the relationship between these elements suggests a hierarchical relationship (Table 2). Conditions associated with less formal agency relationships must exist before formal linkages at a more advanced level can be successful. Each level is a precondition to the next. Clearly, there must be inter-agency communication prior to staff cooperation; cooperation among agencies develops in order that programs can be coordinated; and so forth. Viewed in this way, it is clear

that an externally forced collaboration is not likely to enjoy success in the absence of pre-existing lower-level conditions.



What criteria might help evaluate the probable success or benefits of collaboration? Some common criteria might include:

- Efficiency – Will collaboration allow programs to be delivered less expensively or an expanded program mix developed with fewer resources?
- Effectiveness – Will programs be delivered at the same, or at an enhanced level of quality? Can programs come on-line more quickly?
- Equity/Access/Social Justice – Will institutions serve the community and its diverse populations in the same ways or more strongly through a collaborative approach?
- Social Capital – Will collaboration have a positive impact on individuals and community capacity? Is there potential for an active and enhanced relationship with the community through collaboration?

Other factors that might be assessed in an analysis of collaboration are the geographic locations, political allies, student characteristics, institutional history and priorities, and missions of each potential partner.

Principles of Good Partnership

True collaborations might also be described as partnerships and could be evaluated in terms of how well they fulfill principles of good partnerships. This perspective is especially relevant in urban settings where institutions often partner with community organizations to meet regional needs, even when there are no formal partnerships within the higher education community itself.

One set of guiding principles evolved from a Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) national conference. The CCPH principles are:

- Partners have agreed upon mission, values, goals, and measurable outcomes for the partnership.
- The relationship between partners is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment.

- The partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets, but also addresses areas that need improvement.
- The partnership balances power among partners and enables resources among partners to be shared.
- There is clear, open and accessible communication between partners, making it an ongoing priority to listen to each need, develop a common language, and validate/clarify the meaning of terms.
- Roles, norms, and processes for the partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners.
- There is feedback to, among, and from all stakeholders in the partnership, with the goal of continuously improving the partnerships and its outcomes.
- Partners share the credit for the partnership's accomplishments.

And, the authors reporting these principles identified a basic truth: Partnerships take time to develop and evolve over time (Seifer and Maurana 2000).

A successful partnership would be one that met both the criteria and principles given above, and would thus align with the final stage of collaboration given in Table 2. For example, building on strengths and assets, addressing areas needing improvement, and enabling resources to be shared among partners might be reasonably described as improving efficiency and effectiveness. Clearly, these partnership principles also parallel the stages prerequisite to develop full collaboration in Dickerson's model. For the rest of this article, where the term collaboration is used, it is also meant to reflect partnership relationships functioning under these principles. Now, we will present three cases of external pressure for collaboration and reflect on how Dickerson's theory and the CCPH partnership principles help interpret events and lessons learned.

Three Northwest Cases

Experiences from three Northwest cities, each without the historic presence of a fully-developed research university (but each with a large student base coveted by the state's major research universities) are instructive from both an economic development and social capital perspective. Portland, Boise, and Spokane civic leaders believed they suffered economically because they lacked their own research university-in-residence. Various versions of collaboration were offered as solutions, with mixed results. What follows is a necessary oversimplification of history with which some will not agree, but the cases are offered to inform from experience, not to provoke.

Portland, Oregon Even though Portland State University, a doctoral-granting comprehensive university, had long been resident in Portland, it did not have either the status or comprehensive engineering programs of the University of Oregon and Oregon State University. During the 1980s and 1990s, numerous political attempts were made to forcibly merge, relocate, or consolidate part or all of PSU into either UO or OSU. After two decades of such maneuvers, PSU now seems to be a stronger institution, with larger enrollments than the other two research universities. PSU won the political battle and avoided forced collaboration, but did the people of Portland benefit? Proposed collaborations were prevented, and thus there was no apparent change in the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery that can be credited to collaboration or partnership efforts. OSU and UO remain in the same relative positions, PSU is stronger, and overall state system capacity has increased. There is no real change in social capital

attributable to any collaboration, but there are apparently positive impacts on the community, if increased PSU enrollments and services are considered evidence of improvements. In this case, the younger, urban institution emerged the victor as measured by increased legislative support and enrollment growth.

Boise, Idaho A decade ago, the University of Idaho embarked on an expansion strategy in Boise, the state capital, 400 miles south of UI's home in Moscow. This was at the invitation of an evolving technology industry. Off-site engineering programs were begun in the capital city. An equally aggressive Boise State University (founded in 1932 as Boise Junior College and designated BSU in 1974) opposed the UI strategy and instead sought to develop an engineering school of its own. Ultimately, the State Board of Education supported BSU. Boise is seen as a high-tech hot spot, anchored by BSU and Micron Technology, Inc. BSU is growing rapidly, with a second campus to begin construction soon. The outcome is an absence of any interinstitutional collaboration, and thus no efficiency or effectiveness impacts attributable to collaboration. BSU emerged stronger from the experience, as evidenced by its rapid expansion and support of powerful legislators. UI turned its expansion interests toward Coeur d'Alene/Post Falls, another area of growth in the state and one located closer to the main UI campus. There, UI is beginning to expand its offerings of baccalaureate completion and graduate programs, and to develop a research park. Boise benefited from the presence of a locally-based higher education acting responsively to industry needs, and overall state system capacity increased. As in Portland, the outcome reflects no real change in social capital attributable to collaboration, but definite economic benefits for the community attributable to the presence of a stronger institution. Again, the newer, urban institution emerged the victor, as measured by legislative support and enrollment growth. The institutions involved did not change their missions or the types of students they serve.

Spokane, Washington Spokane was poorly served by Washington State University, 7 miles to the south, and the city was also not satisfied with the program quality offered by the closer, comprehensive Eastern Washington University, only 17 miles to the west. EWU created an urban center in Spokane and WSU opened a branch campus. Both were guided by a community-based coordinating board that attempted to impose a collaboration strategy. This ultimately resulted in gridlock and was seen by industry and economic leaders as non-responsive to their needs. Imposed collaboration did not lead to improvements in efficiency or effectiveness. EWU suffered serious enrollment declines on its main campus and was compelled to refocus its mission, after which it began to recover, but not in Spokane. The WSU branch in Spokane grew steadily, but remains small, constrained by state policies from competing with EWU in program offerings. In 1998, WSU was given the responsibility to build a campus to serve as the center for higher education in Spokane, with some EWU programs to be sited there as well. Social capital can be said to have improved as a result of WSU's research mission and its impact on the city because of research and grants related to community and economic development, but these are not attributable to collaboration. The urban university idea has not yet taken hold at WSU, although it can be said that Spokane now benefits from legislative support for an increased higher education presence and that enrollments are growing. EWU succeeds by following its fundamental mission as a regional comprehensive university focused on undergraduate education. WSU succeeds by focusing on its research and graduate education mission in the context of Spokane. WSU as a whole, however, has to consider its commitment to the impact of the urban context on the branch campus' mission if it is to expand sufficiently to meet

the region's needs. EWU and WSU are roughly of equal age, although EWU, like many regional comprehensives, was originally a normal school and WSU has always been a research land-grant university. WSU Spokane, as a young branch campus, represents the "new" institution in this scenario with a mission that builds and expands on that of its parent campus in order to meet urban needs.

Applying Collaboration Theory and Principles to the Cases

These three cases suggest two interesting observations. First, forced (or attempts to force) collaboration was part of the policy strategy in each of these cases, without consideration of whether the prerequisite levels of Dickerson's model of communication, cooperation, and coordination existed. Second, there were winners and losers. Urban areas and institutions tended to be winners, as did newer institutions with a more flexible approach to their role and mission. However, the brass ring of a major population center is too tempting for the research flagship institutions to surrender easily. What seems clear, especially in the Spokane case, is that forced collaboration as a way of avoiding competition or conflict only served to reduce the overall flow of educational and economic resources to the region (nor alter the outcome seen in each case which was the dominance of the more local, more urban-oriented university).

This raises the possibility that there is a natural path of organizational development in which collaboration may play a role. Could it be that collaboration alters the pace of individual institutional development, but has little impact on the ultimate outcome of who dominates the educational resources and services for the region? We will expand on this hypothesis in additional examples.

Evaluating the three Northwest cases in terms of the CCPH partnership principles suggests that forcing collaboration does not result in true partnerships. Forced collaborations fail the first element of the partnership test immediately: universities directed to collaborate by policy makers were not given the opportunity to agree upon mission, values, goals, or measurable outcomes. In most cases, they in fact had very different missions that affected their ability to agree upon a shared mission required for collaboration. A forced collaboration similarly will not engender mutual trust, respect, genuineness, or commitment. The group process outlined later in this article describes the building of such trust and the extensive time that process requires.

Policy makers will generally believe that collaborations will inevitably enhance strengths and assets and enable resources to be shared among partners. In the case of the campus being built by WSU in Spokane, this appears to be shaping up as the outcome given the space planned for some EWU programs. Collaborations shaped by external mandates may or may not produce desirable outcomes. This may depend in part on the objectives held by policy makers more than the interests of the institutions themselves. If an externally-designed partnership is expected to address areas that need improvement, it is all too easy for the collaboration to be seen as a rescue mission designed to shore up the weaker partners, leading to imbalances of power. The power in a collaboration is also shaped by the balance between the visionary interests of regional leaders regarding program offerings, and the interests of the institutions in providing programs that profitably serve the actual available pool of prospective students.

Ideally, partnerships allowed to develop naturally over time would be based upon clear communication and development of shared processes. Forced collaboration creates the “partnership” up front and challenges faculty and administration to back into the underlying terms, roles, processes, relationships — everything shown to make the collaboration effective. Thus, new mandated collaborations are often announced with great fanfare without the essential tools for functioning; this leads to public disappointment, skepticism, and breakdown of the collaboration development process.

Three additional cases may illustrate the possibility of a natural path of collaboration development and organizational maturation. In each of these cases, there was an element of collaboration that ultimately proved essential to building a strong, new branch campus.

Three Cases at Washington State University

In 1989, WSU was instructed by the State Legislature to develop branch campuses in three underserved areas. In each of these communities, participation in education at the upper division and graduate levels lagged behind the state average. Local advocacy for a solution had been growing for many years, resulting in various previous piecemeal strategies that failed. All three branch campuses were created to meet the demand for degree access in their regions. The development of each involved some aspects of cooperation, collaboration and partnership.

Spokane In the mid-1980s an aggressive Eastern Washington University and relatively passive Washington State University were forced into a collaboration known as the Joint Center for Higher Education (JCHE) as a way to manage their competitive interests in the underserved and growing Spokane metropolitan area. The purpose of the JCHE was to “coordinate” program offerings to avoid duplication. In 1989, WSU was authorized to open a branch campus in Spokane, but its mission was constrained by the JCHE to protect EWU, which was seen as vulnerable. After several years of ineffectiveness, statutory authority was provided to JCHE to approve new program initiatives and to plan and build a multi-institutional campus. The resulting forced structure served only to empower each institution with a veto on the plan, thus actually exacerbating the struggle for dominance and slowing the development of new programs and facilities in the community. In 1998, the state legislature concluded that single campus control, vested in WSU, was the preferred alternative. WSU Spokane subsequently increased its rate of enrollment and program growth, and of campus construction. Voluntary agreements with EWU keep them involved. WSU and EWU have complementary programs in the health sciences that will move into a shared facility in Fall 2001, as an example. Recent legislative appropriations have targeted the region for biotechnology development, thanks to WSU’s strengths in health sciences research.

Tri-Cities Unlike Spokane, Tri-Cities’ postsecondary infrastructure had a long history of being consortium-based. Beginning shortly after World War II as the General Electric School of Nuclear Engineering, an organization evolved inclusive of research universities in two states and regional institutions serving the engineering and technology education needs of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation. By the mid-1980s, the Joint Center for Graduate Studies had evolved into the Tri-Cities University Center. Con-

cluding that the ownership of a single university was necessary to accelerate further degree development, the community lobbied to place WSU in charge of the center. In 1989, WSU Tri-Cities was authorized.

Vancouver A largely blue-collar suburban area north of Portland, Oregon, Vancouver is among the most rapidly growing areas in Washington. Jurisdictional rigidities deprived local residents of affordable educational opportunities in nearby Portland. The nearest public Washington institution was a new public liberal arts institution, The Evergreen State College (TESC) in Olympia, 100 miles to the north. The community invited WSU, TESC and others to form the Southwest Washington Center for Higher Education. Several years of slow development and cautious interinstitutional meetings among institutions with very different missions led the community to request that the Legislature assign responsibility to a single institution. WSU Vancouver was formed in 1989 and subsequent enrollment, facility and program growth has been rapid.

These three WSU stories reveal the involvement of communities, institutions, and state government in externally-designed collaborations. In each case, those collaborations were ultimately found to be too slow, inefficient, or not sufficiently accountable. Community and state interests began to be met more effectively and efficiently when a single institution could plan and deliver programs with a high level of accountability to their communities and states.

This evidence suggests a natural progression toward a single lead institution approach in creating new branch campuses to serve unmet community needs. Consumers want timely programs of good quality and value. State governments want efficiency of delivery and avoidance of duplication. Involuntary collaboration may contribute to the development process, but is not likely to be the ultimate form of a community's higher education resources. Though involuntary collaborations rarely succeed in and of themselves, the process may contribute to the development of a single institution strategy.

Consider the following partial list of all the issues that must be addressed in a collaboration among higher education institutions in order to deliver shared programs, and consider how efficient it is to spend time and money overcoming these barriers simply to deliver programs in a collaborative rather than single-campus mode. The pressure to move toward a single lead institution becomes clear. Any of these issues can paralyze a forced collaboration for months or years.

- Academic calendars (semesters v. terms, different start dates, break dates, different class schedule formats)
- Tuition rates and fees
- Admissions standards and processes
- Advising
- Registration processes and deadlines
- Course syllabi, textbooks, requirements, methods of evaluation
- Graduation/completion requirements
- Internal approval processes (catalogs, senates, graduate faculties, administrations, boards of regents)
- External approval processes (legislature, oversight boards)
- Materials and publications for recruiting, advertising and associated issues of logo management, budget approval, creative control, institutional identity

The Special Case of Mission Complementarity

The exception to the apparent natural path to a single lead institutional model may be the case where no single institution is adequately prepared to serve as the lead and when there are insufficient resources. In these cases, limited collaboration among institutions with complementary resources may occur. In such cases, a clear understanding of participants' individual roles and mission is prerequisite.

Three scenarios of success are possible. First is a relationship among clearly dissimilar institutions where not only are role and mission different, but there are clear points at which responsibility is passed from one to another. Examples include articulation relationships between community colleges and four-year universities. In this case, programs can be designed to facilitate the passage of students from one institution to another.

Second, limited joint ventures can be developed in specialized areas. Subject-specific consortia have enjoyed success because they focus on special or unique areas of professional education that require collaboration, e.g., nursing and engineering. While these are important projects to many institutions, they seldom become important or central to the mission of either participating institution and can easily and comfortably be offered through collaboration without raising concerns of territory or control. Firewalls can be erected, protecting other programs from the partner institutions or influences of the collaboration.

Finally, a few examples exist where there is clear mission complementarity and few concerns about comparable quality or power. Indiana University and Purdue University share programs and a large campus complex in Indianapolis, resulting in the hybrid institution of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Here, two research universities have been able to work together, each delivering whole programs based on historical program strengths of the main campuses (e.g., medicine at IU or engineering at Purdue) and the collaboration is facilitated by these clear academic and budgetary boundaries. Another, less extensive case is between the University of Idaho and Washington State University. Only eight miles apart, these institutions routinely cross-list 700 courses per semester. This can be accomplished because of program similarities and the faculty of the two land-grants perceive themselves as equals.

While this paper has not addressed the special case of full institutional mergers, at least one concept deserves mention. Our analysis of the centrality of role and mission, while certainly important in partial or limited collaborations described above, becomes more paramount in a merger scenario. Mergers can be viewed as the extreme outcome on a continuum of necessity (see Table 3) corresponding to the health of the organization.

Table 3

Organization Viability

Full Viability

Survival at Risk

The closer an organization is to the survival/risk end of the continuum, the less likely that critical success factors relevant to collaboration or merger will be carefully examined. Given our argument regarding the stages of relationship building that form the essential underpinning of collaboration, we suggest merger cases require the most careful and critical examination of role and mission issues.

Co-location Cases as an Exception

As state legislators seek greater efficiencies, real or imagined, the special case of the “co-located” campus will become increasingly common. While some academic purists may reel at the notion, the sharing of common physical facilities can be an important, if not unifying, variable in promoting collaboration. There are examples confirming that when faculty and student service staff from different institutions share space, they are less likely to be turf protective as when they operate in isolation.

For example, in Bothell, Washington, a new campus of the University of Washington and Cascadia Community College (itself a newly authorized institution) has been opened. In Spokane, the graduate program in speech and hearing science from WSU and EWU has been joined into a single Program in Communication Disorders that will share space in a new building soon. In Yakima, WSU’s nursing program operates a building on the Yakima Valley Community College campus in order to serve central and southern Washington students.

Each of these limited collaborations has resulted in short-term efficiencies in their start-up phase as the result of shared facilities. The question remains whether the natural pressures of institutional control will promote a retreat to a more traditionally independent program operation, or whether sharing space will continue to support collaboration.

Shared facilities and shared campuses are likely to be more prevalent in the future as more educational institutions seek to make their programs accessible and convenient to place-bound populations and to use alternative delivery strategies. Shared space provides an opportunity for colleges and universities to work side-by-side with relatively low levels of program risk. Joint facilities ventures are highly visible, providing the public an important symbol of an effort to work together at a stage of partnership much lower on the continuum than that of full collaboration.

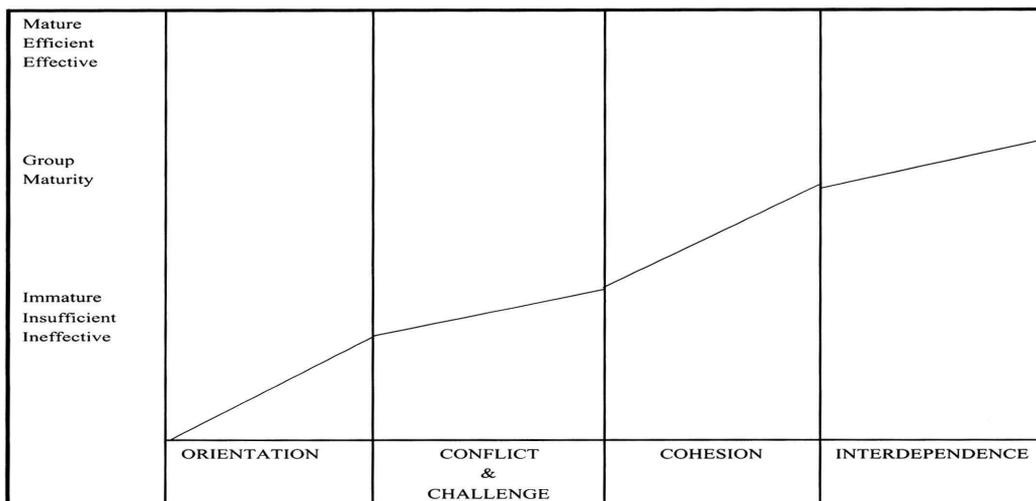
Organizational Development Path Analysis

Excepting the relatively limited program-level collaboration or facilities co-location models, our question is whether collaboration is part of an inevitable organizational development process, i.e., must organizations in the early stages of development go through a period of sorting and grappling with others prior to deciding on a more stable and lasting organizational role, mission, and path. If so, can we make more effective use of this stage of collaboration? Conversely, can or do skilled policy makers manipulate this early stage of development in order to prevent or delay the inevitable development of a single lead institutional model? For example, are some of the new educational collaborations in Stockton, California; Bend, Oregon; Coeur d’Alene, Idaho; or Everett, Washington new models of collaboration or are they simply at an early stage of an organizational development path that will ultimately produce a single institutional model?

In their theory of group development, Richard and Patricia Schmuck (1975) describe the process of group maturation. The natural process of organizational growth and development can be seen to proceed through a similar series of stages (Table 4). Not all organizations complete the cycle, and the slope of the curve and speed of movement will vary according to the forces of market, policy environment, history, and institutional capacity and constraints.

Table 4

Stages of Group Development



Each stage is characterized by a set of conditions describing organizational capacity and behavior. Looking back at the challenges of building collaboration and its apparent effects on organizational development, we hypothesize that the community and state policy influences on the early development of new branch campuses, through the forcing of collaboration, closely parallel the impact of market forces confronting other types of groups and organizations. The four stages of development are commonly experienced in groups that are organized for a specific activity and can be used to illustrate the intersection of stages of organizational development and the impact of collaborations on maturity. In Stage I, Orientation, institutional relationships are characterized by the understanding of basic tasks and posturing for control over communication processes.

In Stage II, Conflict and Collaborative Change, there is often conflict with the dimensions of personal relationships and task functions. The variety of organizational concerns that emerge in this stage reflect the interpersonal struggle over control, leadership, power, and authority. Negotiations focus on political territory.

In Stage III, Cohesion, personal relations becomes more coherent and tasks are enhanced by the flow of useful data and experience. Participants begin sharing ideas,

feelings, giving and soliciting feedback, exploring actions and sharing information related to certain tasks.

Stage IV, Interdependence, is not often achieved by groups. Interdependence is marked by the development of the ability for members to work singly, in sub-groups, or as a total unit. Members become highly task-oriented and person-oriented. The activities are marked by both collaboration and functional coherence. Tasks are well-defined and there is high commitment to common activity and support for experimentation to solve problems.

The development of new branch campuses is similar. Internal group formation precedes institutional capacity for cooperation. Consequently, formal and informal needs assessments that explore collaborative ideas cannot begin until Stage III. Then, political support can be generated and state resources developed. Multiple institutions are involved in analyzing markets and exploring partnerships. Attempts to derail collaboration are more likely to occur prior to Stage III, while a new program or campus is still sorting through basic challenges. At that stage, issues of need, institutional clarity and program prerogative confront the realities of limited financial resources and are subsumed by these limitations. These needs are added into a large policy crock-pot and expected to simmer for a very long time. In other words, as long as these new campus program and resource issues remain in the crock-pot of policies and budgets, they cannot take the shape of more mature institutions. Newer campuses are also likely to face external challenges and skepticism by policy makers; challenges not usually made to traditional institutions, e.g., “Won’t a general studies program suffice? Can’t your program be delivered more cheaply through technology rather than facilities?”

Well-intentioned state policy analysts raise some of these questions as a natural part of the budget approval process. In some cases, these challenges to new campuses are raised in an attempt to delay or even kill a project that might ultimately compete with an older institution for resources or reputation. Now enters what we see as the advantage that urban institutions seem to exert over their rural, traditional counterparts: not only do urban institutions have the larger demographic base to enhance the case for a new program, but they also tend to have greater experience and clout in the appropriation process. This leads us to conclude that collaboration equates to Stage III behavior of organizations, and in urban areas, the inevitable result is the emergence from the crock-pot of a single strong institution, without the interdependence of Stage IV.

Conclusion

There is a social Darwinism force at play in higher education. Just as institutional expansion takes community colleges into the baccalaureate level, and four-year institutions become doctoral-granting institutions, so does mission creep extend the regional reach of institutions through new branch campuses. In areas where collaboration shapes the policy arena, the strongest institution will most often determine the playing field. However, the institution providing the greatest value to the community will enjoy public support.

We believe it is difficult for institutions and communities to deviate from this natural organizational development path. The trend line can be altered only with extraordinary influence from either an external resource or an assertive state system. In Boise, Micron was able to accelerate the development and expansion of BSU at the short-term

expense of the University of Idaho. In this case the natural path of development was altered because of a significant investment of resources.

Consider that just as new start-ups in the automotive industry kept the industry current in the early 1900s, and the plethora of dot.com enterprises have influenced the competitive future of software giants, so do new campuses keep our traditional institutions from becoming too lethargic or locked into “the way we’ve always done things.” The collaborative crock-pot can be a healthy part of the process of development, renewal and modernization, so long as policy makers do not manipulate the process to delay or obstruct the natural path of development with attendant inefficiencies and reduced service to certain populations and communities.

Suggested Readings

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