



**WINONA**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

## Leading Institutional Change

...that endures even in tough economic times

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STATE UNIVERSITY

### FIRST: Be Clear about your Assumptions.

Example from Brown Task Force on Undergraduate Education Report, September 2008

- A curriculum should be more about context than content and about the basic conditions that foster learning rather than the specific subjects learned.
- The most important social, political, scientific and moral challenges of any era have always demanded the ability to navigate multiple points of view and the application of the tools of many disciplines.
- The curriculum has always reflected the changing landscape of American culture and the challenges of nation-building but often lags behind.

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### The bridge from assumptions to the budget

- **Our investments** should be more about context than content and focus on the basic conditions that foster learning rather than the specific subjects learned.
- The most important social, political, scientific and moral challenges of any era have always demanded the ability to navigate multiple points of view and the application of the tools of many disciplines as we undertake **change and invest in our institution**.
- **Our investments** have always reflected the changing landscape of American culture and the challenges of nation-building but **our thinking** often lags behind.

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**The point being that...**

...we should approach the challenges of enduring through tough times in the same way that we approach our scholarly work and our approach to the curriculum because ...

- A curriculum is a response to the needs of our society. At its best, it offers a map to the future.
- A budget must be an instrument of policy and reflect what we value and what we seek to accomplish.
- A community that supports Liberal Education and America's Promise is **engaged**, **collaborative** and built on principles of **democratic** life.

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**Speeding Up Deep Organizational Change**  
adapted from Rogers 1995

The **innovation-diffusion process** is the pattern through which an individual or a group of people move

- From first knowledge of an innovation or idea
- To forming an attitude about that innovation
- To deciding whether to adopt it or reject it
- To implementing the new idea and perhaps adapting it to their particular situation or challenges
- To confirming their decision and building it into their repertoire of practices and habits.

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**What influences the rate of adoption of ideas and strategies in good times or bad?**  
(adapted from Rogers 1995)

- **Relative advantage:** Is this way better?
- **Compatibility:** Is this consistent with the values, experiences and needs of people who will use it?
- **Complexity:** Is this easy to understand?
- **Scalability:** Can you start small and grow?
- **Observability:** Are the result visible and compelling?
- **Adaptability:** Can this way be adjusted to different settings, disciplines/perspectives and situations?

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**Deep Organizational Change is Uneven**

The institutional response to change can be confusing. Some of the stages can be co-mingled or may occur at different rates throughout an organization, affected by multiple mini-cultures and environments characterized by different decision-making conventions, time frames and sense of urgency, priorities, and constituencies.

- ✓ Academic Disciplines
- ✓ Academic and administrative cultures and values

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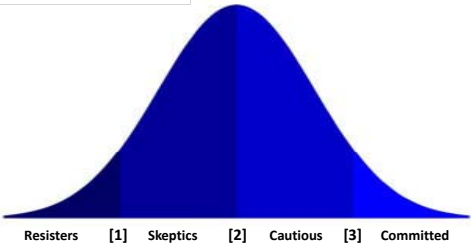
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**Barriers to Change**



Resisters [1] Skeptics [2] Cautious [3] Committed

- [1] Risk Management
- [2] Culture of Evidence Barrier
- [3] Disciplinary Barrier and Definitions of Scholarship

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**Diffusion of Change Across Academic Units:  
A Bell-Shaped Curve of Barriers**

- The Committed: Support and reward them.
- The Cautious: Provide infrastructure, leadership behavior and incentives that make it safe to experiment.
- The Skeptics: Offer visible and compelling evidence.
- The Resisters: Do not let them dominate the scene.

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**Leading change in difficult times: Lessons from Portland State University**

- Leadership Transition: Welcome to Portland!
- Sudden steep reduction in state appropriation due to a ballot Measure 5.
- Change in institutional identity and purpose---how to reduce the budget without cutting off the elements needed for the future
- Outdated institutional mission and purpose did not offer guidance
- Required planning and development of a budget simultaneously.

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**Key insight:**  
**Think of cutting a budget as a form of participatory action research and apply a theory of change. Shift from cutting to investing.**

- Build a compelling case.
- Create clarity of purpose.
- Work at a significant scale and **in a scholarly mode.**
- Develop a conducive campus environment.
- Create the capacity to continue the process over time and to learn from the experience.

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**Getting started: a participatory model of change to create a compelling sense of purpose**

- Who names the problems/asks the questions?
- Who identifies and evaluates the options?
- Who shares resources to advance the agenda?
- Who cares about the choices made?
- Who bears the risk and who enjoys the benefits?
- Who interprets the results and defines success?

Adapted from David Mathews (2006)  
*Reclaiming Public Education by Reclaiming our Democracy*

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**Compare/Contrast**

- Both WSU and PSU are members of state systems whose governance and mandates affect the options available to us.
- Both WSU and PSU had a healthy enrollment picture. PSU lived within an “enrollment corridor.” WSU is entirely financed according to enrollment (only 2% of our budget is not tied closely to enrollment: tuition, allocation of state appropriation, auxiliary services).
- Engagement is now a way of life and a significant resource to help us through difficult times.

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**Things to keep in mind if you are leading change in challenging times.**

- ✓ Understand your institutional history and the lessons it offers about how your campus has responded to external threats or change initiatives in the past.
- ✓ Avoid decision traps. Take time to frame the questions, assess your situation, use the tools of scholarship and learn from your experiences.
- ✓ Remember that you are part of a community of learners. Approach your task as a scholarly act.

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**Things to keep in mind if you are leading change in challenging times.**

- ✓ Be clear about your educational philosophy and goals and link your response to that agenda. Do not approach change as an administrative act or as a budget cutting exercise.
- ✓ Take time to learn about the process of change itself. Hold yourself to high standards of proof and conduct.
- ✓ Listen to how people talk about what is happening and be ready to respond to rumors and confusion. Be open, be clear, communicate frequently.

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**For more information**  
Winona State University, Winona, MN 55987  
Study our budget and planning materials on:  
✓ **President's Page**  
<http://www.winona.edu/president/10590.htm>  
✓ **Budget 101 site**  
<http://www.winona.edu/adminaffairs/10544.htm>  
✓ **WSU Goes Green**  
<http://www.winona.edu/green/index.asp>  
✓ **WSU Portrait**  
<http://www.winona.edu/portrait/default.asp>  
You can also contact me at [jramaley@winona.edu](mailto:jramaley@winona.edu)

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