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Shifting Directions: Conceiving, Implementing, and Navigating the Inherent Complexities of Student Recruitment Customer/ Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) Systems within Higher Education

Colin Couchman
ccouchm@uwo.ca

Abstract

A Constituent (often and typically referenced as Customer) Relationship Management (CRM) system is utilized within organizations whose focus is on customer development and service. A CRM is both an organizational approach involving significant human and system processes, as well as a technological intervention. Typically, CRMs have been implemented within commercial enterprises, specifically those operations with direct contact with customers or consumers, possibly as end–users of products, or even middle–sales operators such as wholesalers and governmental agencies. Over the past number of decades, higher education institutions in Canada have developed strategic and tactical plans to more fully respond to the changing conditions of the prospective student marketplace, both domestically as well as internationally. Student engagement–focused CRM systems are strategic in orientation meant to positively affect student application and subsequent program enrolment. This document describes a change intervention at a large, research–intensive Canadian university and articulates the various factors that would influence the conception, development, communication, and implementation of a coordinated student recruitment CRM platform. Through the lenses of an Adaptive Leadership model and the Path-Goal Leadership Theory and framed by paradigms based on Lewin's (1951) Stage Theory of Change and systems modeling, this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) will trace my own leadership influence upon this initiative and will seek to move from theory to practice the strategies and tactics required for implementation.

Keywords: Constituent/Customer Relationship Management, CRM, Higher Education, Student, Engagement, Conversion, Recruitment, Organizational Change, Technology

Executive Summary

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in Canada are facing a number of challenges related to program development, adequate funding and resourcing, and student enrolment. Taken a step further, competition among higher education institutions in Canada has increased, involving aspects of funding, internal resourcing, operational costs, and, indeed, the need for enriched student enrolment. This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) and problem of practice document indicates the issues inherent in implementing a Customer/Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) system to improve the student engagement processes currently in place, with an emphasis on developing a competitive advantage in the program enrolment landscape. This plan implicates relevant and interrelated strains associated to the implementation of a CRM strategies and how they relate to the operational practices, governing policies, and overall vision of a Canadian HEI. Specifically, this OIP situates my own leadership capabilities and position as influences for success.

Structured as an Organizational Improvement Plan, this project is lensed through Bolman and Deal's (2013) Structural, Human Resources, and Political frames, with particular emphasis placed on examining the tensions between the academic governance environment and encroaching administrative direction towards commercial disposition within the institution. Lewin's (1951) Stage Theory Model is examined to gain a perspective into the influence of change within the organization, amongst both its people as well as its systems and processes. This OIP is further inflected by casting the organization into a systems perspective, articulating the interconnectedness of each of its parts. This document also examines the organizational pitfalls awaiting such a change initiative and elaborates upon the tensions inherent to an academic environment and the rapidly changing course towards commercializing amongst HEIs

in general. Finally, this document specifies a recommendation for action and the required steps to mediate resistance and potential gaps in communication and articulates monitoring and evaluation tools meant to inform ongoing efficacy measurement and need for further change. Through tools such as the Adaptive Leadership model and Path-Goal Leadership Theory, I am able to position my approach to this project through formal mechanisms that help to clarify this OIP's vision, remove potential obstacles, and privilege iterative leader-follower feedback processes and issue-resolution.

This OIP postulates several possible solutions to the use of CRMs for Student Recruitment but designates one as potential fit within the higher education space, given the various attendant factors. A hybrid approach, combining the strengths of both the overall institutional apparatus and the local unit defining and enacting a set of student recruitment tactics and an overall strategy. The strength of the organization lies in data organization and the various systems of record (SORs) it maintains and controls, while the local unit defines and legitimizes processes and procedure, while giving expression to its discrete requirements. An overall institutional approach would be weakened as it ventured deeper into the world of disparate requirements and a local solution at the unit level would find a lack of adequate reporting constructs if a limited, unaffiliated apparatus were to be put in place.

Anchored by strong executive and leadership sponsorship and the demonstrated needs for change through analysis and communication, this OIP would seek to provide the necessary tools for the organization to examine new methods of attracting, converting, and retaining students in a higher education landscape where competition and pressure to perform are set on escalating trajectories.

Acknowledgments

When I decided over a decade ago to leave the private sector for a role in public sector higher education, it was with the intention of taking up the lifelong learning challenges and opportunities afforded through my new place of employment. I enrolled immediately in coursework and have not stopped since walking through the door. My intent is to continue this journey, finding academic interests where I can find them…or they find me.

Truthfully, I am inspired by those that I come into contact with in my institution, from students to faculty to staff—I am impressed daily by the hard work and attention paid to supporting the mission of the university and in the passion shared by all in supporting the teachers and the learners through their respective journeys. In many ways, the inspiration I draw from my co–workers has led me to where I am. I am fortunate to work in an organization that values continued education and professional development. In particular, I am grateful to my dean and "boss" Dr. Vicki Schwean, who has been unbelievably supportive these past number of years, in both my educational pursuits as well as in my role at the university.

To my doctoral cohort—I cannot say enough about you and how we have all been there for each other over the past number of years, courses, and during the writing of our final artefacts. It has been challenging, inspiring, and, above all, fun. We really lucked out in being together on this ride. To our instructors, I am deeply thankful for each and every piece of feedback, critique, and encouragement throughout the process. And a special "shout out" to Dr. Scott Lowrey, a fearless and philosophical adviser.

I am mindful of my parents, Ken and Pat, lifelong and passionate educational leaders and educators, who impressed upon me early in life the importance of learning, argument, and of the position education holds in our society, our province, our country, and the world.

I cannot adequately express with enough gratitude my feelings towards my partner, Dr. Elan Paulson, who has in so many ways inspired me to undertake this journey and to commit myself to the work therein—so, I say, simply, thank you.

Finally, I dedicate the work that this document represents to my sons—Connor, Ethan, and Liam—in the hope that they continue to find inspiration through learning in all its forms.

Glossary

B2C	Business to Customer
CRM	Customer / Constituent / Client Relationship Management
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
ETL	Extract–Transform–Load
HEI(s)	Higher Education Institution(s)
HR	Human Resources
IS / IT	Information Systems / Information Technology
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MaSU	Anonymized Maple Syrup University (not Michigan State University (MSU))
OIP	Organizational Improvement Plan
PMO	Project Management Office
PoP	Problem of Practice
PVP	President, Provost, Vice Presidents
ROI	Return on Investment
SEM	Strategic Enrolment Management
SIS	Student Information System
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMA	Strategic Mandate Agreement
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SMS	Simple Message System
SoR	System of Record
TCO	Total Cost of Ownership

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He knows changes aren't permanent,

But *change* is…

Tom Sawyer, Rush (1981)

... there is no more delicate matter to take

in hand, nor more dangerous to conduct,

nor more doubtful in its success, than to set

up as a leader in the introduction of

changes. For he who innovates will have for

his enemies all those who are well off under

the existing order of things, and only

lukewarm supporters in those who might be

better off under the new.

The Prince, Machiavelli (1469-1527)

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Problem

Organizational Context

Industry Context.

Customer/Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) processes have been adopted by industries worldwide to make more efficient, explicit, and productive the connections between the consumer and the commercial organization. Defining relationship management approaches or how they are enacted within individual organizations can prove problematic as system and human processes vary within each environment, but there are general principles which might be shared amongst them. Parvatiyar and Sheth (2001) usefully define CRM as a comprehensive organizational strategy and implementation of processes related to acquiring, retaining, and partnering with customers to create superior value for both the organization and the customer. In the larger context, CRM strategies involve the integration of marketing, sales, customer service, and supply–chain functions of organizations to develop strong processes amongst the core business functions of a particular organizational environment (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2001). Nitzan and Libai (2011) posit that CRM implementations are amongst the most important components of a customer-focused organization due to the effect these processes have on customer retention and loyalty.

CRM implementations have largely been the providence of private sector commercial organizations, with strong focus on sales metrics, revenue achievement, and processes which ensure consumer satisfaction while maximizing profit opportunities. In recent years, criticisms have been leveled against publicly-funded higher education institutions (HEIs) that they are becoming too much like their corporate cousins in terms of explicit business foci and pressure to produce revenue. Indeed, HEIs are in the business of developing programs and attracting consumers to these platforms through student application and subsequent enrolment. Publicly funded HEIs in Canada have largely and traditionally relied upon reputation, program fairs, word–of–mouth, and the coveted offer of admission as means to secure a sustainable customer model. However, changing demographics, hyper foci on employment as the outcome of postsecondary education, and overall competition amongst HEIs in Canada have given rise over the past number of decades to new business models within these organizations, including the processes required to attract and retain students (Chafee, 1998; Christenson & Evring, 2011; Collini, 2012; Côté & Allahar, 2011). Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) processes within these institutions will be required over the forthcoming years to ensure viability and sustainability of programs. A CRM implementation is both a strategy as well as a set of tactics in service of this overall strategic imperative. Given the pressures facing HEIs and the benefits that a potential CRM implementation could provide, the provision of such a market-driven approach to attract and maintain student affiliation is upon us.

Organizational change cannot be implemented in any meaningful manner without the involved parties' own willingness to address change in their environment and within their processes, and within the context of CRM initiatives this claim is particularly true (Kezar, 2001; Vakola, 2013). A CRM implementation relies heavily upon a technological platform, but moreover it is anchored in the individual *crm* practices lying within the organization, from the academic componentry to management structures to the frontline customer–focused resources which inform the initial touchpoints a potential student might experience (Almotairi, 2009; Hrnjic, 2016; Vakola, 2013). For clarity purposes, a lowercase *crm* refers to the processes that are embedded behind, around, and within internal and external organizational structures and resources irrespective of any technological platforms that are part of the solution. The uppercase

CRM would refer to the technologies of a consolidated and concerted approach. HEIs are already employing customer-focused service delivery models throughout the student experience. Indeed, it is the strong and clear articulation of these extent processes which ultimately inform the backbone of a successful CRM implementation (Croteau & Li, 2003). These concepts and practices which are more explicitly emplaced within commercial organizations are already present within the HEI mindset (Lechtchinskaia, Friedrich, & Breitner, 2012), but there still remains much fertile ground to develop in terms of deepening prospective student and institutional affiliations.

It is important to highlight the issues inherent in making HEIs more business–like. From the outset, defining students as ‘customers’ or ‘consumers’ is often construed as problematic, despite the fact that this transactional sensibility has already taken root within parents and students alike (Côté & Allahar, 2011). By employing the terminology and processes typically associated with CRM within an institutional setting, a reinforcement of this transactional paradigm could occur (Fallis, 2013; Hrnjic, 2016). Outsiders might perceive HEIs as homogenous and all working from the same playbook, but it is interesting that although these institutions have all largely embraced a “plurality of stakeholders and outcomes, there is no standardized view of how universities should be optimally governed or managed.” (Marceau, 2014, p.1). Marceau (2014) goes a step further and suggests that universities exist of a complex arrangement of administrative divisions “reminiscent of corporate hierarchies” (p.2) and quite separately there are the academic functions which operate in quite different fashion. Where these components intersect is reflected in the provincial Strategic Mandate Agreements (Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, 2017) where specific strengths of

Ontario universities are articulated, thereby further emboldening a competitive landscape, and also in how pressure to develop revenue-positive programs to counteract reduction in funding.

Institutional Context.

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is centered on how a CRM strategy could and should be conceived at a large, research–intensive university within Canada where no such system exists. As previously stated, a CRM strategy is complex and typically involves or incorporates a specific technological platform (or set of applications), but more importantly requires the organization to reconceive its operational and engagement practices and priorities. This project will develop the ways in which a CRM will be used to inform institutional direction, measure adherence, and ensure positive contribution towards organizational goals.

Situated within a large highly–ranked, research–intensive university in Canada, this OIP examines the extant processes operating within disparate siloes at an organization known as Maple Syrup University (MaSU) located within a mid–sized, land–locked city and the ways in which a CRM implementation would unfold therein. MaSU is comprised of more than 10 large academic faculties, various domestic and international program and outreach ventures, a strong research funding and output portfolio, a reputation of teaching and learning excellence, and a focused mandate to serve its students (MaSU, 2017). The student base of MaSU is in excess of 30,000 in any given academic cycle and the university has been in existence for over 100 years. A typical Canadian university organizational structure exists at MaSU, consisting of a bicameral governance system which includes a Board of Governors and a Senate, as well as an executive leadership structure consisting of a President, Provost, Vice–President/Vice–Provost (PVP) distribution, and a decanal apparatus extending to the various academic disciplines represented by the faculties and schools. At the decanal level, decision–making and overall direction of academic programs and their operational concerns are largely autonomous, with escalated approvals and governance apparatus leveraged at a university level where appropriate (MaSU, 2017). The specific contours of decision–making, autonomy, and governance in such a complex environment are complicated but it is useful to consider that there are pressures present at the academic unit level to produce and institute programs where enrolment would be of a strong nature, in part to contribute financially to the overall sustainability of the university environment.

Faculty entities at MaSU function within an organizational system that leverages centralized functions such as a Registrar's Office, Human Resources, an International office, and an administrative function which focuses on how faculty–specific graduate and post–graduate offerings are detailed, regulated, and certified (MaSU, 2017). In addition, there are both centralized and distributed offices for the research, information technology, and other administrative functions. Each of these areas interact with each other to inform the operating theatre of MaSU. Significantly, MaSU is comprised of numerous individual units and departments where leadership, management, and operational resources can be entrenched in somewhat reserved and conservative views of why and how higher education should be developed, enacted, and managed. These tensions extend along lines of division where academic is on one side and administration is on the other. However, there are sympathetic sentiments on both sides of those lines for the other, so further complexity is involved in the model.

The term *customer* is immediately set up as contentious as it casts the student and the institution within a commercial dialogue, privileging a transactional and exchange–based relationship (Côté & Allahar, 2011; Fallis, 2013). As stated earlier, competitive pressures are forcing HEIs to develop SEM plans which include *crm* processes or actual *CRM* systems potential solutions to these developing circumstances (Daradoumis, Faulin, Juan, Martínez, Rodríguez, & Xhafa, 2010). At present, there are prevailing perspectives that significant process delays and ownership gaps exist between decision–making entities, problems that are largely centered on the system rather than on specific individuals. Through marketing and recruitment activities, admissions processes, and academic decision–making on prospective student application files, multiple individuals within the organization are in contact with student records along the chain of what would be called conversion. As a point of clarity, the conversion chain is defined as the process through which a prospective student becomes aware of, interacts with, applies to, and is offered admission within an HEI. The conversion component is achieved when a qualified student who is offered admission indicates that they will be enrolling within the offered program. These disparate processes have caused delays in communicating to the student, producing confusion in terms of who to contact, and a lack of clarity from a reporting standpoint. Finding discrete data to inform this claim is difficult, partially due to the disparate nature of units involved. However, an internal report generated from surveying and interviewing prospective students who accepted or declined their offer at a specific faculty revealed that institutional contact delays and the fact that MaSU was not their first choice informed the decision–making of those who opted to enrol elsewhere (MaSU, 2017b). Conversely, those who opted to enrol with MaSU cited strong outreach from the institution as a key component of their process. What this unstructured research brings into relief is a potential issue related to consistency. Research suggests that closing the gaps in process and communication will result in an increase in student satisfaction as prospects move through the application and admissions procedures. Further, this interaction will factor towards positive outcome in terms of institutional selection and will make more efficient the underpinning structures that deal with these files (Houston, 2008; Tapp, Hicks, & Stone, 2004).

McGuire (2016) positions admissions and recruitment as the two core reasons why a higher education institution would use a CRM (according to a survey of 360+ US–based organizations) (see Figure 1):

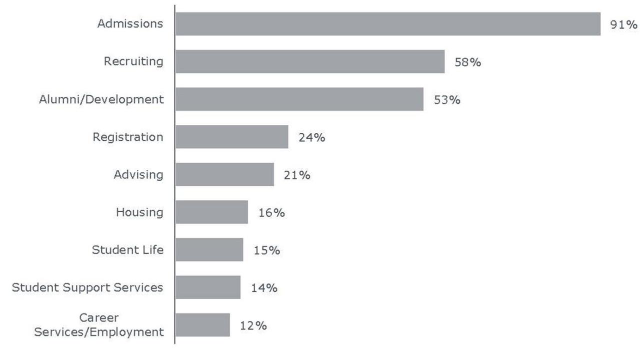

Figure 1. CRM Priorities in Higher Education (McGuire, 2016).

The academic strengths of these programs are managed through other mechanisms of the academy (Collini, 2012), such as through academic governance, but the management of how these programs are marketed, advertised, and recruited for, fall to emerging or extent administrative functions. Contentiously, these same administrative functions should be, but are largely not, considered key stakeholders in determining whether academic programs have market viability in the first place. This OIP will not address decision-making made along that particular axis, but as the market-driven economy encroaches upon HEIs in general, it is an area of great interest. CRM strategies are lensed through a technology medium, but it is within the human and systems processes that the actual change is realized. Externally, innovations within the technology space, shifts in the job market, and governmental incentive programs are impacting how programs are brought to market within HEIs. Conversely and traditionally, universities have aligned with the values of academic freedom and the provision of education to all manner of students, and academic rigour is always in the foreground (Fallis, 2013). In certain ways, the commercialization of HEIs and the maintaining of traditional program governance are in conflict with each other and these two elements are being mediated through an ever–changing competitive landscape of increased consumer expectations which have influence over the types of programs and supports students and their parents are willing to procure (Collini, 2012, Côté & Allahar, 2011; Fallis, 2013; Keith, 1998).

There are conflicts of ideological and philosophical origin within academe that need to be resolved, or at least mitigated, as these divisions are deep and held close to the hearts of academics and administrators alike (Carlson & Filner, 2017; Fallis, 2013; Keith, 1998). The introduction, or sustaining, of developed and concerted business models within the context of HEIs seems to be at the root of this division between the academic space and the administrative. A business model depicts the content, structure, and governance of products and transactions designed to create value through the positioning of business opportunities (Houston, 2008). The competitive landscape that now exists amongst HEIs in Canada requires individual universities to think in these new business terms—value proposition, distribution and channels, revenue, and, for the purposes of this OIP, students as customers. This tension exists due to the perceived recency of business focus amongst these institutions and the possible backgrounding of academic primacy along the way. This document cannot explore the notion of this division too deeply, but for the purposes of this OIP it is important to note that there are potential change resistors lying in wait due to these ideological concerns, an aspect which would not largely come into play within a corporate environment.

While CRM strategies have largely been implemented within private industry, there have been significant issues in terms of galvanizing the overall organization around revised processes (Tapp et al., 2004) and it is through this recognition that institutional adoption of CRM at MaSU might be troubled. Chafee (1998) argues that universities are far less responsive to the escalating public and governmental demands placed upon them. In many instances the programs offered and the service orientation of the academic environment are not conducive to the increasing competitive nature of higher education (Chafee, 1998; Keith, 1998). The emerging data and analytics capabilities afforded through CRM processes offer new opportunities to refine and redevelop programs and offerings by universities in ways not realized in prior era. Luan (2002) describes data analytics and data mining within higher education as, arguably, two of the more important downstream opportunities of a CRM implementation. The integration of an analytics and process-based system with a strong academic governance orientation would produce an empowered and forward-thinking organization, informed by both data and expertise and underpinned by strong processes.

Leadership Position Statement

As a Director within MaSU, I am in a position to solicit and manage this change within a specific component of the university, while simultaneously affecting change at the macro level. The technical and business-oriented leadership embedded within my role at MaSU allows for a specific type of champion within the organization, especially where a technological project is concerned. Further, it is my belief that roles such as mine, as Director of a function which includes student recruitment and marketing, are required to lead the charge on this type of change. A top-down approach is likely to fail as forcing consensus is highly problematic. The necessary experience in leading this type of function will be key in delivering any changes related to student recruitment. Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) posit that the use of an Adaptive Leadership framework is the “practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive” while wrestling with the “normative questions of value, purpose, and process.” (p. 14) and in this sense marrying technical expertise with the values and capabilities that form up behind my strong business engagement is an enabler for success. In fact, Heifetz et al. (2009) go on to state that the most common cause of failure in leadership is "produced by treating adaptive challenges as if they were technical problems…technical problems may be very complex and critically important, [but] they have known solutions" (p.19) and this sentiment is particularly true with CRM implementations—the organizational business and human processes are prioritized over the technical.

A Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) implementation within a higher education environment will need to factor in multiple forms of resource management and be tolerant of multiple leaders and varying leadership styles which, at times, may be seen to be in competition with each other (Fallis, 2013). This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) leverages the Adaptive Leadership Framework and the Path-Goal Leadership Theory as primary structures, but I find that in Bryk (2015) and his six core principles associated with organizational improvement processes a compelling overarching leadership and change framework (see Figure 2). The principles found within this model function individually but are also highly reliant upon each, providing a reflexive, iterative approach. As a model, this approach provides a frame that I would be able to work through, providing a necessary overarching structure to the CRM implementation project. Bryk (2015) advises organizations to be focused on the problem at hand, to allow for variations in the plan, and to see the whole field as they examine organizational issues. Focusing on the problem at hand mitigates extraneous information and distraction that might fall outside of the actual intervention needed to address the present circumstance. Within the CRM initiative manifold, this reflective, systems–oriented, and iterative process is both key to the topic and good indicator of success for the project.

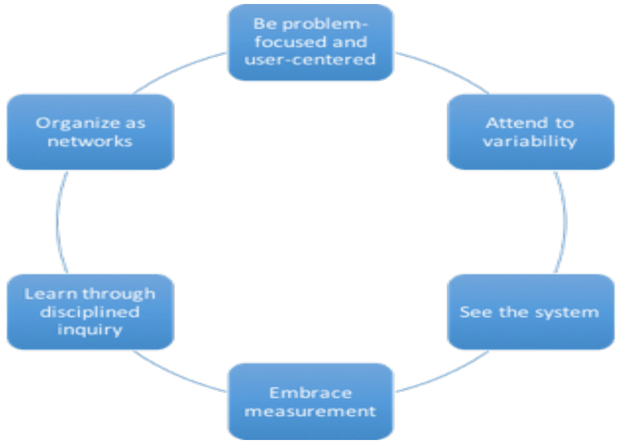

Figure 2. Six Principles of the Problem Approach Model. Adapted from Bryk (2015).

Learning to improve. (Video file). Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4YsnuHlJZco.

With this approach in mind, this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) will seek to mobilize resources within a large Canadian research–oriented university towards ratifying and consolidating disparate student recruitment practices and processes into either an overarching, institution–wide system, backboned by a technological CRM platform and linked to Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Student Information Systems (SIS), and internal communications platforms, or a consolidated vision which will incorporate individuated and unit–based solutions, organically linked to ERP, SIS, and internal communications platforms, providing aggregate information into centralized data reporting system. From a leadership perspective, this project will require development of the solution's vision, the solicitation and maintenance of executive sponsorship, ongoing buy–in and participation from numerous, cross functional team members, and engagement and investment in subject area experts and technical resources, both from a project perspective as well anticipating the operational environment.

This OIP will primarily draw from an interrelated leadership style most closely affiliated with Path–Goal and Adaptive Leadership theories (Heifetz et al., 2009; House, 1996; Northouse, 2016). While a CRM implementation within MaSU will undoubtedly be influenced by a variety of leadership theories and practices employed throughout the organization, Path–Goal and

Adaptive Leadership theories stand apart for good reasons. From a Path–Goal perspective, the ability of the leader to assess and set direction, clarify the path, and remove both strategic as well as tactical obstacles will be key factors in ensuring success. Given the distributed nature of autonomy within higher education institutions, a CRM implementation in an HEI setting is inherently complex and a Path–Goal approach can assist in reducing project–oriented and adoption risks. Moreover, the Path–Goal approach assumes that there are multiple relational points between the leader and followers and that motivation is a key underpinning component of these sets of relationships (Northouse, 2016). Motivation in this sense is affiliated with remaining engaged with the change and feeling empowered to make contributions to the project in a positive and progressive sense. Associated with four broad categories, the Path–Goal Leadership approach unfolds as iterative and interconnected, and is comprised of leadership behaviours such being *directive*, *supportive*, *participative*, and *achievement–oriented*. In the following sections, I will outline how each of these components will factor into a successful project implementation and in how my role as Director can be leveraged.

Directive.

Leadership within this behaviour is concerned with decision–making and clarity of vision for the project at hand. The leader is required to establish standards of performance and that allocation of work is appropriate and achievable. From an overall perspective within MaSU, leadership and decision-making authority is quite dispersed across the organization. As a Director who leads a student recruitment and support function, and one who is technical in orientation, there are components embedded within the directive behaviour that I would be able to engage. Specifically, ensuring that a clear vision of why a CRM implementation would assist in galvanizing MaSU’s overall student enrolment goals through consistent processes and established customer-service orientation will be key. In addition, ensuring that the project team and executive sponsorship, as well as the key stakeholders dispersed across the campus, are aware of the specific metrics involved and in how the data capabilities of CRM system can assist in downstream decision-making will fall under my portfolio. Through a well-articulated project charter and organizational chart and supported by a robust communications plan, my leadership through this process will be also enhanced by my background in Information Technology (IT) leadership.

Supportive.

Consistently–applied support of project and downstream operational resources are paramount to the success of a CRM implementation in a complex distributed leadership environment. Within MaSU, these supportive approaches would include involving stakeholders at both the senior and junior levels in terms of requirements–gathering and establishing processes that allow for modifications throughout the implementation (Fowler & Gilfillan, 2003). The supportive behaviour ensures that team members' concerns are valued through every stage of the project. In a separate sense, understanding the various expertise and knowledges extent within the team and empowering these resources through their own decision-making is part of my leadership agenda. The roles associated with this project will need to be aligned with business and technical aspects and in this manner the project team will have more expertise that myself as a leader will have. It is vitally important to foster an environment that will privilege these voices.

Participative.

Combined with the supportive behaviour, the participative behaviour is specifically concerned with establishing formal and informal opportunities for resources and affiliated stakeholders to have voices in the project. This behaviour allows for the dialog to occur while still allowing for decision–making to unfold at the appropriate location. Anticipating the Adaptive Leadership approach and echoing the supportive behaviour, this aspect of the model engages with the leader-follower dynamic and ensures that project resources are integrated in how the project is conceived, organized, and implemented. Engaging with project resources, as well as executive sponsorship ensures participation and ownership. My own leadership style has largely been to implement these changes through my own actions, but in the case of a CRM initiative, it is important to ensure that the downstream resources who will inherit the platform(s) have had a distinct and valued input into the project.

Achievement–Oriented.

Through an achievement–oriented approach, the MaSU change leader will establish the timeline and sequence of milestones that need to be achieved for project success. Taken in concert with the other three behaviours, the change leader allows for agility and inclusivity in a bid to be responsive to concerns in realistic fashion. Specifically, the project plan I would develop will include progressive and achievable milestones that can be used to gauge the project's traction. The project members will have both individual as well as embedded goals and tasks, formed to deliver certain components. This tact provides a mechanism for project engagement as well as success in implementation.

From an Adaptive leadership theory standpoint, a CRM implementation is centered on the "work and how [resources] are mobilized to" enact tasks (Northouse, 2016, p. 258) and through this lens I will be required to react to and resource against emerging circumstances. Success of CRM initiatives relies heavily on executive sponsorship as well as on the frontline employees' motivation to engage in the human and system processes at hand (Hrnjic, 2016, Payne & Frow, 2006). As will be developed further in this document, the Adaptive Leadership framework is concerned with situational challenges, largely divided between or a combination of technical and resource-oriented. My role within MaSU and the execution of this particular OIP are well-suited to the Adaptive Leadership approach as there will be a heavy reliance placed on mitigation strategies meant to overcome somewhat immovable issues. As a leader who understands the business of the university from an academic perspective, an organizational context, and a technical view, I am able to 'see the landscape' and mitigate these concerns. As referenced earlier, the Path-Goal and Adaptive Leadership approaches have distinct kinship which complement each other. The four behaviours present in the Path-Goal Theory find affiliation with the leader's behaviours in the Adaptive Leadership framework. My approach, which will be discussed further, is to integrate these approaches to formalize a project environment that privileges expertise and achievement.

While there are transformational aspects associated with CRM processes, in large measure the change is much more focused on operational concerns and not overall transformation of the business itself. However, the utilization of data produced through such an implementation could be leveraged within a transformational project. In a somewhat aligned manner, while there are transactional components inherent to a CRM implementation within the institution, transaction–enacted leadership would fall short of ensuring success. Placed into context, it is reported that somewhere between 30-70% of CRM implementations fail at some point or at some level in the organization (Croteau & Li, 2003) and these circumstances are brought on by five typical conditions within the environment: Lack of vision, executive sponsorship gaps, the wrong technical apparatus, poor planning processes, and a lack of successful change management (Croteau & Li, 2003; Daradoumis et al., 2010). At a level above or alongside these items, is the overall notion of organizational change readiness and the ability to leverage on–the–ground leadership resources found within the adaptive framework.

Leadership Problem of Practice

At present, organizations such as MaSU are challenged by the need to thrive in an ever-increasing competitive environment. These institutions are at the mercy of legacy processes which might impede growth, consolidation, or fine-tuning of these resources. What I observe as a leader in MaSU is a student enrolment management gap where improvement can be a lever to greater growth. This problem of practice (PoP) is centered on the implementation of a student recruitment Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) system to make more efficient and productive the manner in which students become aware of, apply to, and are selected for admission into to MaSU. In a pervasively competitive marketplace, the arrangement of processes and infrastructure should be aligned to maximize these efforts and give students every reason to say 'yes' to the institution. Implementation of this solution can take many forms, but regardless of its scope or how many units it implicates, the previous statement stands as a guiding goal. The problem of practice this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is predicated upon is related to the disparate nature of decision–making and the seemingly disconnected student recruitment processes spread across the organizational structure of an anonymized higher education institution in Canada. Specifically, the proposed solution herein could mitigate current prospective student engagement gaps and issues related to departmental siloes to provide mechanisms for positive enrolment in a variety of university programs. It is important to pause here and discuss the implication of the term *engagement*. Engagement is a directed concern within HEIs in the sense that universities are measured to an extent on how the administration and its academic functions relates to its active student body and to its alumni base. The use of the term engagement within the context of this OIP is related to contact points within the process of converting a prospective student to enrolled status.

Given the distributed nature of governance found at MaSU, leading a CRM implementation project within the institution will be presented with significant challenges. According to Burke (2018), leadership concerns the "use of self, how to be persuasive, how to deal with resistance, and how to be political, in the best sense of the phrase: how to embody the vision of where one wants the organization to go" (p.322) and through this statement it can be seen that a requirement for developing a singular vision for change and the ability to convey the need for change of paramount importance to a CRM implementation project. My leadership role at MaSU allows me to voice the concerns of our current apparatus while demonstrating the value of such a project with my own portfolio. When I refer to data associated with this project, my nomenclature and processes are well-received throughout the organization. As articulated earlier, the Path-Goal Theory and Adaptive Leadership approach allows me to establish specific points in the organization that need remediation. The Adaptive Leadership approach allows for diagnoses against multiple processes where Path-Goal concepts provides a guiding model for structured behaviour.

Internal data related to a specific area of MaSU suggest that over a three–year period in excess of 12,000 contact points spread across three academic units have either been lost or not fully realized due to the lack of a coherent student recruitment CRM solution (MaSU, 2017c). A recent survey of American higher education presidents and leaders indicates that undergraduate enrolment is a major concern amongst institutions and that accurately targeting prospective students is of chief importance—students who are prone to being retained at the institution and to degree completion (Inside Higher Ed, 2018). Taken in concert with the notion that there are discrete enrolment challenges for specific programs and an ongoing pressure to bring to market revenue–generating initiatives, these student relationship gaps provide a sense of the problem at hand. While there are certain centralized accountability points at MaSU, the distributed nature of decision–making and autonomy provides an environment where units can exist in a fiefdom–like scenario, effectively isolated through the demonstration of several line of business processes. It is important to bring into relief the leadership styles in place at the organization and the leadership required for this project. The organization is not going to change or alter it the distributed nature of leadership in MaSU, but the two leadership approaches being explored in this document have the ability to mitigate these concerns.

An input/output logic model (see Figure 3) assists in understanding where information flows through the organization (information in this context can stand in as prospective students as they traverse the environmental processes). Palmberg (2009) applies a business process management lens as a means to remove functional barriers, improve internal processes, identify opportunities for improvements through outsourcing and use of technology, and improve organizational effectiveness (p. 209). The Kellogg Foundation (2004) defines a logic model as a means to demonstrate a systematic and visual understanding of the relationships and processes found within a particular function, with foci on the many aspects that feed into the outputs and subsequent outcomes that inform its purpose.

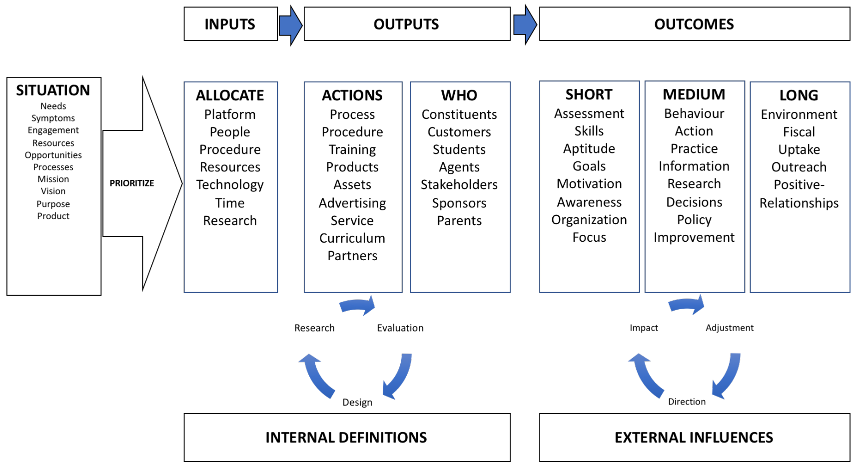

Figure 3. Problem of Practice Logic Model. Adapted from Kellogg Foundation (2004) and Palmberg (2009).

From a leadership problem of practice standpoint, the logic model above provides a context for my own project leadership in terms of where current gaps might exist. By specifically examining the needs and symptoms of student recruitment, conversion, and enrolment processes within the institution through situational analyses, I am provided a starting point to assess direction of the project. In concert with the diagnostic capabilities afforded through the Adaptive Leadership approach, I am able to triangulate areas ripe for improvement. Interventions might include deeper data provisioning processes or automated workflow but might also require innovation or process replacement. Moving through the model, assessment of processes and contact points that currently exist provides an opportunity to ratify scripts, best practices, and repeatable and predictable responses to queries and application advancement through the process. My ultimate leadership-oriented goal through this initiative, is the ability to standardize metrics and provide a commonly understood Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reporting system, an aspect at MaSU that is quite localized and disparate across the organization.

To inform the achievement of these goals and implemented in conjunction with the models previously discussed, I find that Burke (2018) deploys a model where leadership can be situated in of an overall organizational model (see Figure 4) and provides a context for the centrality of leadership in how substructure units enact projects and operations.

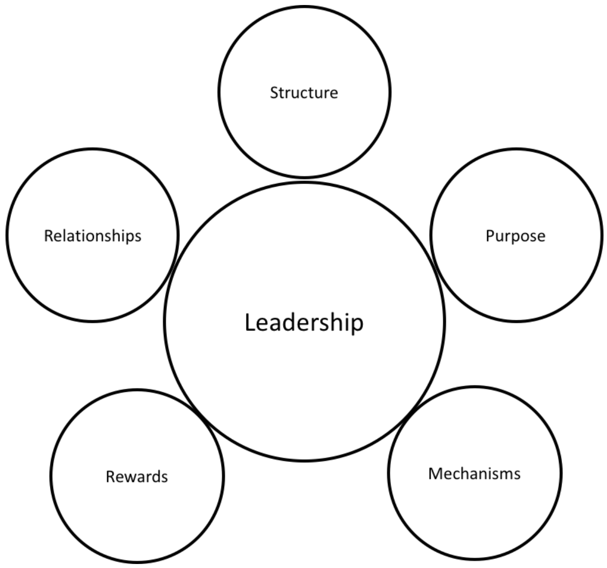

Figure 4. Organizational Model. Adapted from Weisbord through Burke (2018).

Conflict management, task allocation, maintenance of the purpose of either the unit or the initiative in question, the technical aspects, and the payoff for effort and investment are all kept in balance by leadership in this model. These aspects can function individually, and indeed they do, but the success of an initiative or a unit is dependent on how each are given weight relative to each other and peripheral programs. In conjunction with this model, leaders' functions are examined and defined through the *prelaunch*, *launch*, *post–launch*, and *sustainment* phases of the initiative (Burke, 2018, p. 348), nicely intergrating with the Adaptive Leadership model for diagnosing situational challenges.

Prelaunch.

At this stage, I would gather relevant information related to current processes, establish the need for change, provides clarity of vision for the proposed change, and engages/solicits full support of executive sponsorship. In this case, I would liaise with distributed marketing, recruitment, and admissions resources, as well as their manager- and director-level leadership to determine the data required for downstream decision–making and any anticipated needs of the unit to build out meaningful process change. Further, my role will ensure that executive sponsors are informed of the proposed gains, the benefits of information fidelity, and, most importantly, that a solution or set of solutions can be established within the complexity of the environment. The envisioned change would include resource deployment, investment requirements, and any needs for process change.

Launch.

During this phase, my role will engage in overall communication strategies related to the need for change, key activities, and specific resistance mitigation. Within my insitution, this phase would include communications with decanal and departmental leadership, line management, and frontline resources to demonstrate the value of a student recruitment CRM system within disparate units. Careful attention will need to be paid to where payoff exists within downstream units and the establishment of reasons why this initiative is of importance to not only the organization, but to the localized interests as well. There will be workload implications that need to be factored into this project and in a conservative institutional landscape, this is a make or break aspect. My mitigating approach is to establish a cost/benefit analysis per unit.

Post–launch.

Thinking about postlaunch posture should be at the forefront of my approach where the model is consistent, iterative, and open to remediation. The operational posture of the institution is vital to the organization and a student recruitment CRM solution will have pronounced impact on the practices and processes in a post–implementation environment. I will need to assure disparate units of the positive impact the introduction of new processes is having on the organization, but also will need to provide adequate training and documentation for new procedures and conditions. I will further need to establish milestones in a post–implementation environment that will ensure quick wins and time set aside to celebrate. In this sense, it is important that I establish not only the implementation project timelines, but also the capabilities inherent in the operational environment.

Sustaining the Change.

I must also be account for downstream consequences, intended or not, and to continue change momentum, ensuring succession in terms of project or operational accountabilities, and be onboard to launch new initiatives which could include improving the implemented project. MaSU is an institution where change comes slowly, but there is no shortage of long term and emerging priorities, provoking shifts in attention and resourcing. My major challenge is in ensuring that the implemented change in student recruitment processing is sustainable and possesses the characteristics needed to invite further change and enhancement. This adherence is maintained by advocacy, environmental KPI dashboards, and project progression.

Framing the Problem of Practice

Customer/Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) strategies are often perceived as a technological panacea (Parvativar & Sheth, 2001), but it is within the human and business systems processes that organizational change is actually realized. There are external factors including innovations within the technology space, shifts in the employment landscape, and governmental incentive initiatives which impact how programs are brought to market within higher education institutions (HEIs). Further, there are myriad factors which influence universities from semi–external loci, factors which include other HEIs as competitors, perceived and actual demand for specific programs, and sector–based (public or private) partnerships. When ingested comprehensively, the overall system(s) of influence are multiple and complex (see Figure 5) and are imbricated in significant ways. As such, any interrogation of the problem(s) plaguing higher education environments and student recruitment needs to be unpacked by utilizing an array of tools to tease out the various perspectives associated. Framing the problem from the outset requires multiple angles as the problem

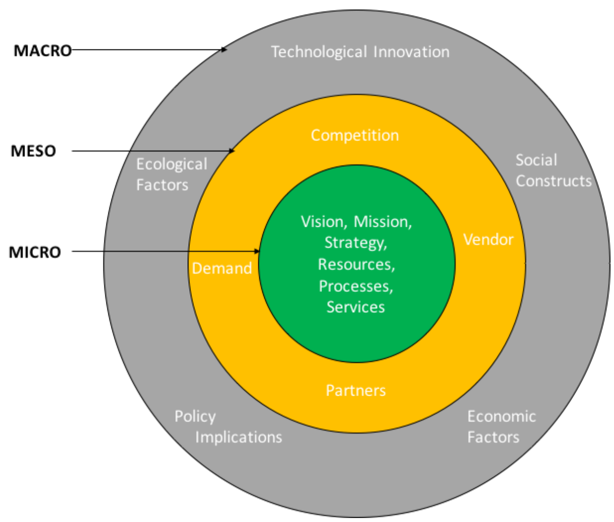

Figure 5. Overall systems of influence to student recruitment CRM in HEIs.

embedded in this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is laced with potential potholes along its road. As the model above moves from the macro concerns lying at the periphery of the problem of practice, it moves from the external factors towards the nucleus of the intervention, which is to make positive contribution on the overall university mandate. However, it remains an important notion that these influences are in tension with each other and shift as circumstances change. For example, as provincial governments in Canada develop Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMAs) designed to provide focus to HEIs and the programs they offer, substantive pressure is placed on institutions such as MaSU to modulate its response to new processes, audience development, and student recruitment tactics required to ensure success

(Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, 2017). Conversely, MaSU might respond to a shifting macro market condition made evident through locally–enacted market research that might require response or policy enactment at the governmental level.

Foregrounding the plan required to implement a student recruitment CRM system within MaSU lies a set of ideological concerns that, due to the various actors involved and listed earlier in this document, requires a brief discussion here. The current and emerging processes that contribute towards the commercialization of higher education could be construed as a natural evolution of the academic world in which we live (Fallis, 2013; Collini, 2012). However, such a statement is likely to be incredibly divisive within HEIs as, at a fundamental level, the Canadian university landscape is at a point in time when its ideological purpose and its need to survive are colliding in significant ways (Côté & Allahar, 2011). While this sentiment might seem unduly alarmist, it is important to note that some forms of student enrolment is either in decline across the disciplinary landscape or achieved through maximal or asymmetrical effort (Tapp et al., 2004). What is meant by that statement is that some faculties and departments are in dire need ot more students, but do not know how to achieve this goal and in other cases, a large effort is required to fill relatively small cohorts in challenging disciplines. In the areas of higher education where success is being realized, competitive pressure is building as sister institutions respond to shifting and emerging conditions as well (Christensen & Eyring, 2011; Collini, 2012; Fallis, 2013; Keith 1998).

While beholden to provincial agencies in many ways (financial and accreditation), self–governance has remained not only the providence of the academy, but its emphatically desired state. Escalating costs and increased competition amongst domestic, as well as international, institutions has given way to the neo–managerialism that is now see enacted within HEIs. The assumption made in this OIP is that higher education in Canada has reached a point that it can be seen that each institution may claim ownership, or at least expertise, over compelling and rich programs (Fallis, 2013; Keith, 1998)—further, these programs are thought to be unique, although a scan of offerings across the landscape would indicate otherwise. If each university operates under the belief that they are in possession of programs students (and their parents) find desirable, and the relative pool of domestic or international prospective students is declining, then other manner of pursuing the consumer needs to be put into place. Coupled with these issues is the relatively recent trend of universities duplicating programs from each other.

As fees continue to rise and outcomes and objectives take on concretized forms, a service level agreement formulation is becoming increasingly brought into focus. Students and parents have begun to perceive higher education as an exchange for goods or services (Benjamin & Caroll, 1998; Collini, 2012; Côté & Allahar, 2011). These attitudes have developed over periods of time and now have indicated how students engage with their instructors and the administrative aspects of the institution. As Côté and Allahar (2011) state, students have come to believe that, by virtue of the economic transaction of payment to the institution, program acceptance and completion will be done according to their satisfaction (p. 92). While an unfortunate effect of commercializing student recruitment, these attitudes of entitlement and heightened expectations may be further underscored and reinforced as the processes inherent to a CRM initiative enhance the customer–focused aperture. Through a CRM engagement, institutional administration, students and parents would feel the overt influence of the commercial model, with established response times, service level agreements, return on investment metrics, and the increasing of constituent expectations.

Taken in concert, these ideological concerns inform the overall approach suggested in this document. This OIP, indeed any document, will not mitigate the concerns that academic circles have regarding the commercialization of HEIs in Canada, the issues inherent to that particular divide are too complex to discuss here. But what is important is to understand how these concerns are layered into the organizational culture at MaSU. The organization is changing and as stated earlier and supported by the research, several components of higher the education apparatus in Canada have become highly transactional in nature. There are rightful concerns to be assessed in terms of how these components might influence the quality, prestige, and relevance that a university education might possess. Specifically, as an administrative leader at MaSU, my role is to market academic programs and attract prospective students for enrolment. The tactics we are currently using are borrowed from the commercial sector and a CRM implementation is the taking of the next step in terms of managing process and the information.

The manner through which academic programming governance is enacted within HEIs is also a problematic construct (Christensen & Eyring, 2011; Collini, 2012; Fallis, 2013). As described earlier, this governance structure unfolds within compartmentalized faculty units which report recommendations to various academic bodies throughout the sequence until approval is reached. The problem within this structure is that it does not include voices from other constituents, informed by datasets that academic resources may not possess, have access to, or understand. A student recruitment CRM system is such an instrument that can inform the discussion in illuminating, albeit commercial, ways. The change driver to be discussed within this context is based on a need to alter a resistant hegemony. This aspect is related to the previous discussion detailing ideological concerns. For the most part, the financial implications of program conception and delivery have only recently come to the fore within academic oversight committees and, even then, integrating an administrative voice in the equation has been an issue.

Interestingly, CRM systems have actually been in use within HEIs over the past number of years, but largely relegated to the areas of alumni development and fundraising efforts. Public HEIs are complex environments, housing disparate units and operational cultures. As such, there are individuated cultures within the overall culture of the university itself and these differences need to be understood, ratified, and leveraged to ensure that the needs of the organization and the sector are being served. Bolman & Deal (2013) articulate frames that can be used to usefully articulate the change and leadership approaches and a student recruitment CRM implementation. The *Structural*, *Human Resources*, and *Political* frames (Bolman & Deal, 2013) provide certain coverage in terms of understanding the environment within MaSU. Further in this document, Pearce's (as lensed through Brown, 2005) cultural framework is explored through the articulation of a communications plan, but within context, this OIP would acknowledge that the ecology of MaSU is not homogeneous and that different cultures exist within the institution where quite disparate priorities might lie.

Structural Frame.

The structural frame indicates tensions on two fronts: 1) how roles, responsibilities, and processes are differentiated *from* each other and; 2) the manner through which these components would be integrated *with* each other (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Articulated within this frame, the Mintzberg Model (Bolman & Deal, 2013) for work differentiation is applied, imbricating the aspects of knowledge/skills, time, product, customer, geography, process. This OIP approaches the problem of practice through both vertical coordination where policies, organizational structure, and hierarchy are enacted, as well as within a laterally–focused manner where unit–to–

unit communication, process hand–offs, and stakeholder engagement unfolds. My role as leader in this context is to coordinate these communication and organizational efforts, structuring a project plan and reporting relationships which honour how each unit is integrated, the timing of such integration, and the requirements of each resource. It is important to note here that the project plan is quite separate from the operational context. I will work directly with distributed leadership to ensure that inherited processes and expectations are appropriately understood, documented, and implemented.

Human Resources Frame.

Student recruitment and enrolment practices at MaSU have largely been disconnected from a unit to unit perspective, with autonomy left in the hands of the academic unit. While there are examples of collaboration within the institution as well as the requirement for official admissions processes to be by central services, recruitment and enrolment practices have not allowed for seamless activities between multiple players in the organization, potentially resulting in students selecting other institutions, or having students dissatisfied with their experience. The human resources frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013) invokes the needs represented by the adequate allocation of personnel and skills required to serve the needs of the structure put into place. Within the context of a student recruitment CRM system implementation, existing roles will inevitably be re-cast and emerging roles will need to be introduced into the organization. A key factor related to the failure of CRM system implementations is due to either an overall lack of staffing, or a misjudgement of operating conditions (Almotairi, 2009). Linked to the structural frame, the human resources frame is imbricated with the idea that people need the organization and that the organization needs the people (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Further, as the operators of the inherited landscape are our people, the Human Resources context is an important ethical concern, which I discuss from a leadership perspective further in this document.

Political Frame.

Through a CRM engagement, there will be significant economic impact embedded in the downstream outcomes, both in terms of implementation cost and also in terms of projected enrolment–related revenue. There will also be significant social apparatus in play which will influence the communication to and from constituents, amongst units, and with stakeholders the CRM system overall will be a mitigating technological component for these interactions. On the political side of the equation, there are divergent perspectives that will need to be managed. As stated earlier in this document, prospective students and their personal advisors have come to view post–secondary life as an investment, whereby objectives and accountabilities on the part of the university are emerging as discrete value propositions (Chafee, 1998; Collini, 2012; Côté & Allahar, 2011; Fallis, 2013). There is distrust evident between academic strata and the administrative functions as it relates to the purpose higher education and it is within this tenor that this OIP finds fertile ground. The political frame is applicable in how distinct leadership would need to foster coalitions amongst stakeholders and determine the manner through which appropriate or mitigating priorities would be established.

The Political Frame requires further discussion within the context of my own leadership position and also through the lenses of the leadership approaches I have indicated earlier in this document. Organizations in general are highly political in the sense that moving change initiatives through the system requires multiple levels of discussion and approval and gaining traction within departments is an exercise in patience and calmness. However, HEIs are particularly political in the sense that pockets of the organization can possess specific ideological concerns that may not be symbiotic with an initiative regardless of its benefits to the organization. This division is often ontological in orientation and speaks to paradigmatic affiliation more than anything else. This OIP is taken up by what could be construed as neo-liberal concerns, efforts which are preoccupied privatization, corporate influence, and a primacy of financial success over other more intangible extracts. While I do acknowledge that these aspects are present within the context of a student recruitment CRM implementation, I would favour the term neo-managerialism as more apt label for this shift in paradigm. Universities are attached to a strange combination of conservative and liberal perspectives (Collini, 2012; Côté & Allahar, 2011), but both standpoints are somewhat resistant of the influence managerial creep is having on our public institutions (Bess & Dee, 2014; Carlson & Filner, 2017). The resistance, which will be difficult to overcome through the enactment of this OIP, is centered on resisting this administrative encroachment on academic decision-making.

Guiding Questions Emerging from the Problem of Practice

As universities and colleges within Canada cope with the challenges of recruiting students into competitive programs, how can a formal Constituent/Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system find purchase within institutional Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) approaches? In what ways can student recruitment CRM system produce competitive advantages in attracting top students to myriad extent and emerging programs? As stated earlier, this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is concerned with the implementation of a student recruitment Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) system to better manage the manner in which students become aware of, apply to, are selected for admission into, and say ‘yes’ to MaSU. Typically, a CRM system is utilized in large organizations whose focus is on customer development and service. As higher education institutions (HEIs) have developed over the past number of decades, competition amongst them has increased in terms of funding, academic and administrative resourcing governmental and sector–based attention, and even with the subject of engaging with prospective students.

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) articulates at least two relevant and interrelated strains related to student recruitment CRM strategies and how they relate to an institution's operational practices, governing policies, and overall vision. The first strain is concerned with adopting the change process within the organization and the project that would be used to determine, modify, and develop the processes and resources required to implement such an initiative within the institution. The second strain is concerned with the ways in which a CRM system would be used to inform organizational direction and priorities, measure its efficacy against set goals and objectives, and contribute positively to the overall and sustainable health of the university.

Emerging questions.

The emerging/guiding questions to be used in this study would include:

1) To what extent is the specific higher education organization within this study ready for such a major change;
    a. How human and system processes are readied for the proposed change; and
    b. How leadership within the institution is prepared for or aware of the need for change?
2) Are the expected outcomes from such an initiative mapped out effectively;
    a. Within such an institution, how are each units' needs mapped into the process?

3) Are all units expected to participate in the CRM initiative (if relevant) and if so, how will the uptake/outcomes/objectives be measured for success (or failure)?
4) To what extent is the organization ready to invest in the overall solution;
   a. From a human resources perspective; and/or
   b. From a systems' perspective?
5) Finally, how can an overall return on investment (ROI) calculation be made to ensure that the investment is paid back into the institution over time;
   a. If a subsequent ROI cannot be demonstrated, in what ways is the institution prepared to continue working within established processes and gain the competitive advantage desired?

Emerging inquiries would include examination of the organization's willingness and/or capacity for change and the phenomena associated with the factors that promote a positive student relationship, the institutional resistance of neo–managerial reform in the face of an emerging commercial enterprise, and the willingness for groups to share their processes and engage in critical business analysis. This OIP seeks to ratify a mixed relationship environment where disparate and related processes need to be mapped with each other to ensure a successful CRM system implementation.

Leadership–Focused Vision for Change

Earlier in this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP), Bryk's (2015) six core principles for implementing change with an organization was invoked. This framework is particularly apt when taken in concert with an overall vision for change within the environment and is reinforced through the leadership theories explored in this section. Functioning as a set of guiderails for the leader, Bryk's (2015) model allows the leader to move along a continuum, iteratively and reflexively. While these principles can function semi–autonomously, there are significant relationships embedded throughout the sequence. Organizations need to be focused on the problem at hand, to allow for variations in the plan, and to see the whole field. By ensuring strong measurement practices through the process, iterative, co–owned learning can be infused into the overall improvement project. Within the context of a Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) initiative, this reflective, systems–oriented, and iterative process allows for the leader to remain focused on the delivery of a solution against a complex and distributed problem. Byrk's (2015) model provides space between the conceptual points to differentiate what might be a change management project versus what should be a change leadership initiative. Indeed, change leadership is at the core of implementing CRM within the higher education student recruitment portfolio. Unlike change leadership initiatives that might be centered on program development or overall university mission and vision paradigms, a CRM initiative is closer to the ground and while it requires galvanizing resources across disparate functions within the institution, it requires the leader to be problem–focused—allowing for variability in the system as well as within the implementation. Importantly, the overall system is in scope of this initiative which underscores the requirement for leadership as opposed to management. Finally, the leader must showcase an ability to leverage multiple stakeholders and sponsors across the organization in such a way that adherence to the end–goal is kept at the forefront. With this approach in mind, this OIP is meant to mobilize resources towards ratifying and consolidating disparate student recruitment practices and processes into an overarching, all–encompassing system, backboned by a technological CRM platform and linked to institutional Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Student Information Systems (SIS), and internal communications platforms.

Fundamentally, the organizational footprint found in universities in Canada are considered as collections of individual fiefdoms, at times working together towards common goals, at times governed from top–down edicts, but mostly autonomous in how programmatic disciplines are enacted and governed (Fallis, 2013). It is important to understand that this autonomy within the institution is considered a feature within the institution and not as seen as a defect—academic governance at the disciplinary level is at the very root of how the academy values itself. While important to the vitality and sustainability of academic disciplines and the areas of research and scholarship, aspects of the educational landscape are changing at a pace that the slow–to–change academy is not able to match (Collini, 2012; Falis, 2013). Strong program differentiation and a robust reputation might play a role within certain disciplines, but enrolment across universities in Canada has emerged as a challenge as each institution competes for domestic and international students alike.

There are many points in the chain where a student maintains the ability to affirm or not their affiliation with the institution. The opportunities to convert potential students are multiple and engaged through myriad players. It is anticipated that closing the gaps in process and communication will result in an increase in student satisfaction as they move through the application and admissions procedures and will factor into a positive outcome in terms of institutional selection and will make more efficient the underpinning structures that deal with these files (Houston, 2008; Tapp et al., 2004). A simplistic model being proposed appears below (see Figure 6):

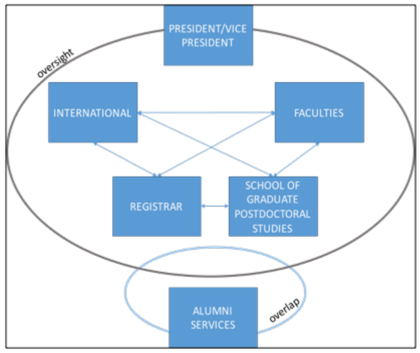

Figure 6. Potential Future Organizational Distribution at MaSU.

The future state reflects disparate functions within the organization, while maintaining significant and articulated connections between them ensuring clean oversight. The problem of practice (PoP) in this document is related to ratifying and improving the processes already in play at MaSU and further positioned within a system for accuracy, consistency, and repeatability. As this section is related to a leadership vision for change, it is important to pause and conceptualize what this might mean operationally. As indicated earlier, my leadership role at my institution is as a Director in a particular function where I have the capability of full implementation of a CRM system within my area of autonomy and where I have significant influence over organization-wide concerns. However, leadership at MaSU is distributed and the ability to not participate in an organizational approach, whether due to financial concerns or issues related to governance, is a fundamental challenge. My leadership approach to mitigate this concern is to model a solution and build it as scalable.

Organizational Readiness

Organizational change does not exist or emerge *a priori*, it is the result of a series of processes provoked by the awareness of specific or general issues within the fabric of the organization. Further, organizational change is not necessarily a singular action that is executed and put aside unexamined. Rather, organizational change is invoked by people, either individually or collectively, within an organization as a means to improve effectiveness among organizational components such as its mission, vision, values, culture, systems, processes or structure (Cawsey, Deszca, & Ingols, 2015). Change initiatives are inherently risky as they may introduce substantive alterations to work operations and individuals within the organization could be impacted in both anticipated and unanticipated ways (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Cawsey et al., 2015; Hiatt & Creasey, 2012). Change readiness is often conflated with resistance to change and, as Heifetz et al. (2009) point out, this sentiment is often erroneous—individuals are largely embracing of change but are highly resistant to loss. While shifts and evolutions in technology might influence and provoke change within an organization, largely it is the culture itself that is being addressed through these initiatives (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Given that culture is a reflection of the people within an organization, attention must be paid towards organizational readiness for change, whether the change be large or small.

Organizational change readiness is reflected in the "members' beliefs, attitudes, and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organization's capacity to successfully make those changes" (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993, p. 681) and as such is much more related to the human–oriented processes as opposed to the structural. Change with the organization is initiated through, affected and inflected by, and shaped through forces that are both internal and external. This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) examines the various factors involved in implementing a student recruitment Constituent/Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system by analyzing overarching conditions and mechanisms within a higher education institution (HEI). As an initial tool, a political–ecological–social–technological–economic (PESTE) model establishes relationships as both independently oriented as well as intertwined in varying. This methodology is gleaned from change analysis approaches developed by Armenakis & Fredenberger (1997) and Cawsey et al. (2015) through its instrumentation a wider angle of the organization can be viewed. The PESTE model is particularly apt for a student recruitment CRM implementation in an HEI due to the direct correlation to each component represented, but also in how each relates to the other. By utilizing a PESTE analysis, internal *push* factors such as capabilities and capacities, resource limitations, senses of dissatisfaction and needs for improvement, requirements for net positive results, and pressures to innovate and reinvent are discussed as advocacy for student recruitment CRM processes within MaSU. Conversely, there are also external *pull* influences that come to bear on this problem of practice as well, which include customer–led and market condition factors, technology–led implications in terms of sector–based innovations, competitor–oriented influences, and the effects of governmental policy enactment. Each of these change resistance or readiness components form my approach as a leader for communication and implementation.

Political.

Political influence can come to represent the manner through which program changes are influenced by governmental pressures, but it can also be deeply connected to how a nuanced institutional environment and it subordinate organizational units relate to each other. As discussed earlier, within MaSU there are substantive political apparatus that need to be ratified and managed. Program development and implementation requires concerted and directed effort in terms of navigating through the requisite approval processes and a deft leadership hand is needed to ensure marshalling of these processes. As a student recruitment CRM system is enacted, the leadership deftness found within these processes will be equally required to ensure that ongoing commitment from extra–unit jurisdictions remains intact, assuring success within locally–enacted initiatives.

Ecological.

Within an ecological (or environmental) perspective lies the sector and other factors that will come to impact an implementation of student recruitment CRM processes. Competitor strategies and shifting or emerging internal project priorities are examples of threatening factors as this project unfolds. Ratifying student recruitment processes into a technologically–mediated platform constitutes a series of iterative and overlapping approaches involving multiple resources across the organization and over time. Higher education environments are now in positions of having to mediate multiple concerns, both known and emerging in nature, with student enrolment existing one of many other issues. As such, changes to the academic landscape, executive leadership, and more pressing matters can have a deleterious effect on this project. The assumption that the considerations applied to MaSU as a public–oriented institution can be found across the pan–Canadian landscape accordingly reinforces the notion of mounting externalized pressure.

Social.

Deeply related to the political prism, the social consideration extends from the internal upstream machinations to the downstream parties affected, namely the prospective student. As an instrument, a student recruitment CRM system is concerned with mediating the relationship between the prospective student and the institution through ratified processes and by established roles and responsibilities. Various scripts, communication templates, and program information will need to be developed and integrated through the overall outreach approach. Further, a distinct communications strategy for post-implementation is required as the channel between student, institution, parents, and potentially other agents, are nuanced and will play a significant role in the conversion process.

Technological.

Reserved as an item unto its own lies the technological. In the final analysis, a CRM implementation of any stripe is backboned by a technology platform, typically of an on–premise or cloud–based disposition. While not a comprehensive list, technology organization such as Salesforce ™, Blackbaud ™, and Microsoft Dynamics ™ inform the vendor landscape. It is vitally important to ensure a complete understanding of what will be required of the institutional organization and what is expected of the vendor from a consultancy and service level agreement (SLA) perspective from the outset of the project. Typically, these understandings are discovered through a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) procurement process, but this upfront activity underscores the need to ensure that the right technology platform is selected (Croteau & Li, 2003). Secondly, a student recruitment CRM implementation is as much a data project as it is a process remediation initiative. Data interfaces, extract–transform–load (ETL), and technical configuration will be required throughout the implementation project and will continue to be needed within a support posture post–implementation.

Economic.

Finally, there are substantive concerns embedded within the financial aspect of the PESTE model and the implementation of a student recruitment CRM system and these aspects largely fall under two overlapping concerns—market advantage and total cost of ownership (TCO). The engagement of such a system is oriented around building organizational competitive capacity and the gaining of market advantage over rival institutions. From an economic standpoint, an outcome measurement will be concentrated on subsequent student enrolment and the sustainability of academic programs within MaSU. Demonstration of these outcomes are embedded in the iterative measurement and evaluation section of this document. Secondly, an initiative of this type requires investment in terms of both systems licensing and configuration as well as in human resources, an aspect commonly known as a total cost of ownership (TCO). Each *crm* process will need to be ratified, redeveloped, and integrated within the technological solution. Platform licensing and consultancy costs can be realized fairly easily (although, neither are inexpensive), but the underestimation of internal human resource needs is cited as a major factor in CRM implementation failure rates (Almotairi, 2009; Croteau & Li, 2003).

An organization's readiness for change is based on a number of factors, which include interlaced perceptions and beliefs that: 1) a/the change is required to move the organization forward; 2) the organization has the ability to adopt change effectively; 3) benefits stemming from change will be realized; and 4) the organization has the *capacity* to conceive of the change. (Armenakis et al., 1993; Armenakis & Fredenberger, 1997). Armenakis & Fredenberger (1997) further suggest that organizational readiness can be determined through observing, interviewing, and administering surveys. By asking broad questions about organizational strengths and weaknesses and employee attitudes and expectations, followed by more specific probing questions, change agents can assess an organization's readiness for change (Armenakis & Fredenberger, 1997). Taken in a different light, the four points above can be reversed in terms of articulating reasons *not* to change and that effective absorption of the desired change cannot be sustainable.

Adopted from the work of Payne and Frow (2006), Hiatt and Creasey (2012) and Kim and Kim (2009), the model below (see Figure 7) is a tool designed to comprehensively assess the sponsors, stakeholders, and actors involved in implementing a CRM within a higher education. This rudimentary model for assessing employee engagement in change is provided by Prosci™, a training and certification organization working within a framework known as ADKAR©—

awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012). Within this model, sponsors and distributed leadership are represented in an organizational chart as colour–coded objects, designed to establish where resistance might exist in the organization.

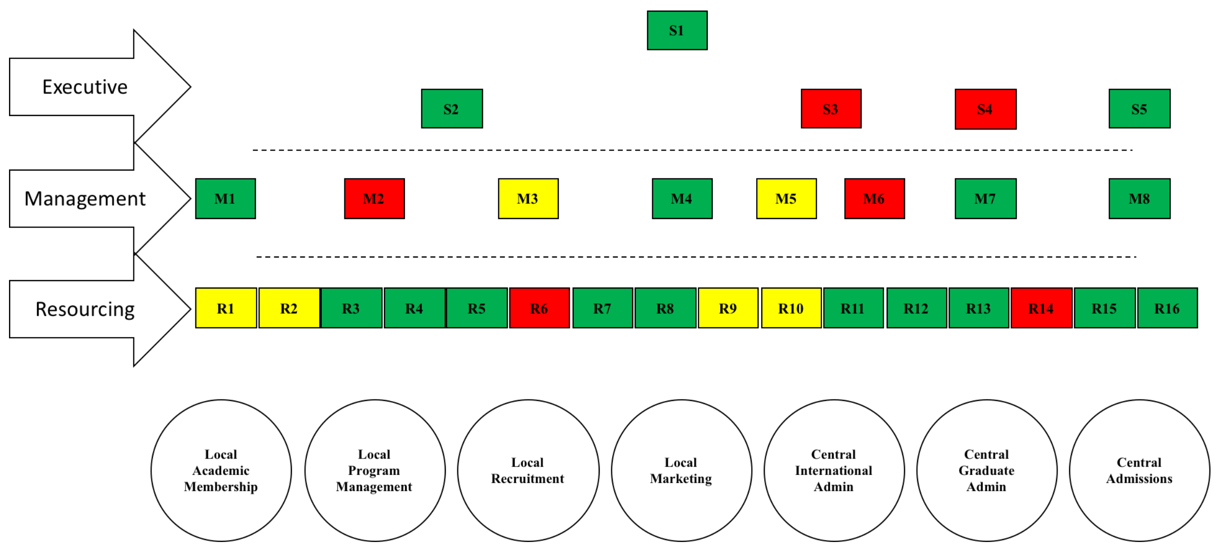

Figure 7. Readiness Assessment Model. Adapted from Hiatt & Creasey (2012).

Note. S = Sponsor, M=Unit Leader/Chair/Manager, R=Member/Operator

Green = Support is high, Competency for change is high

Yellow = Support is high, Competency for change is low or medium

Red = Support is neutral or dissenting, Competency for change is low or medium

Within this representative model, I have selected an academic faculty unit from MaSU as an example. To maintain anonymity, the actual organizational structure is not featured but rather indicated within the model. Taken from the Executive function and moving down through the approach, it can be seen that there is strong support and competency for change at most points in the model. However, the change agent can use this model to ascertain that there are points in the diagram where specific attention will need to be placed in terms of remediation. Specifically, the management M2 resource marked as red represents a line management risk to the resource R3 and R4 resources marked in green below in terms of leadership. At an even higher level, the sponsorship S3 and S4 individuals represent a significant leadership threat to the overall initiative. Through establishing where these points are in the organization, the change leader can establish protocols for engagement and remediation, sourced from appropriate levels in the organization. The purpose of this model is to ascertain what areas in the organization need further work in terms of *selling* the need for change, or the need for alignment to be imposed—it is not a remediation methodology in and of itself.

Drawing on work by Hiatt and Creasey (2012) and Cameron and Quinn (2011), this OIP is preoccupied with triangulating change resistance locations within the organization. As stated earlier, an organizational CRM implementation encompasses not only common processes within the institution, but also incorporates and subsumes resources spread across multiple governance systems throughout. Due to the nature of how the university is governed (Fallis, 2013; Collini, 2012), many operations are complicated due to a mix of distributed and centralized componentry, often favouring local decision–making. Change readiness, in this sense, becomes a set of variables at times beyond the absolute control of an organizational project. Hiatt and Creasey (2012) have developed a scoring system that can assist in elucidating at both a departmental and role–based level exactly where readiness needs shoring up. These departments would include central offices as well as faculties and could include ancillary units that might touch upon client support (areas such as Alumni Development). Within each of these functions, the stakeholders would include members of the executive layer, decanal structure, program management streams, and recruiters and admissions personnel. Mitigating issues that might arise from these disparate groups, specifically within the realm of galvanizing support, begins with clear communication and a well–developed path for implementation. Tailored communication, designed to address specific concerns is required for each branch of the organization.

Chapter Summary

This chapter is centered on describing potential addressment of student recruitment gaps within the organization through the implementation and utilization of a Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) system. The organization in question has been anonymized to a large, research-intensive university within the Canadian context. Described as a change initiative, such an implementation would affect various components of the institution and the discrete issues inherent to such an initiative are detailed above. This chapter deploys organizational and change analysis tools such as a PESTE analysis, change readiness assessment, and logic modelling to determine the size, shape, and scope of the initiative to be proposed in the forthcoming chapters. The Path-Goal Leadership Theory and the Adaptive Leadership are utilized as a means to place this problem of practice in relative context. Finally, this chapter establishes the organization's current structure and anticipates a future state.

Chapter 2 – Planning and Development

Framework for Leading the Change Process

Project inception within complex organizations can be a multi–layered and highly varied process (Obolensky, 2010). Major change initiatives intersect with systemic processes and across multiple resource platforms and areas of the organization requiring disciplined approach in terms of project planning and implementation, but also in terms of how the change is conceived and thought out. Framing the change within the context of the organization, industry, and theory becomes an important, albeit under–realized, component of the overall initiative. All too often, change projects are brought to market only to realize lackluster adherence or under–performing productivity. This issue is specifically true of technical projects such as CRM implementations where technology is thought of as a panacea to a broad range of issues (Debnath, Datta, & Mukhopadhyay, 2016; Fink, Edelman, Hatten, & James, 2006; Harris, 2016).

Lensed through the overlapping and complementary frameworks meant to illuminate aspects of the organization, the various leadership components required, and in how the change initiative will take route within the organization. This change project is complemented by the application of Lewin's (Burnes, 2009, Lewin, 1951; Cawsey et al., 2015) Stage Theory of Change (see Figure 8) and accented by Bryk's (2015) model for understanding and exploring the problems inherent.

Figure 8. Stage Theory Model. Adapted from Lewin (1951).

Lewin's (1951) model is an older model, but relevant to this problem of practice. As Burnes (2009) stipulates about Stage Theory of Change, "rather than accepting organizations and society as they are, or seeing certain behaviors as immutable, Lewin's approach was designed to allow those concerned to bring such behaviors out into the open, challenge and change them" (p.376). Its relevancy lies at the simplicity of its approach, but also within how the change theory can be applied across the organization. Lewin's (1951) perspective, according to Burnes (2009), offers us an "optimistic view of human nature and the ability of human beings to create better organizations and build a better world" (p.376). Due to the nature of resource and process distribution within the university, it is imperative to establish the route to success as potentially through multiple implementations, aligning well with Bryk's (2015) attendance to variability, as well as being able to survey the 'system' at large. Bryk (2015) conceives the organizational problem as being part of a 'network' and has built into his model the notion of complexity.

Unfreeze.

Extending Lewin's (1951) conceptualizing of unfreeze as a process of distributed 'thawing', the organization enhances its ability to apply multiple pressures on various components across the organization. Systems theory can be used to perceive a complex organization, such as an HEI, as biological, with its processes and components intertwined both relationally and interdependently (Jones, 2010; Manning, 2018; Marceau, 2014). Through establishing via Bryk's (2015) model that the problem is apparent and systemic (networked), a series of thaw points can be established. Specifically, a CRM implementation is unlikely to be successful as a fulsome enterprise (Payne & Frow, 2006), whereas individuated implementations, unit by unit within MaSU, are seen to be more viable. Allowing for executive recognition to move forward, thawing certain processes at key strategic locations such as central registrar services and graduate studies would allow an unfreeze step to occur at a downstream, business–

facing unit such as a faculty. Recognizing the synergy between the unfreeze motif and the system as a biological entity is particularly useful within my own leadership role, but it is also useful in how to inform the implementation of this project in iterative growth steps. Isolating each area of concern as a system in and of itself yet taking into consideration the wider array of systems within the organization helps me to conceive of the overall approach discussed in this and the next chapter.

Change.

Through the change step, the project will be in a serial state of “considerable uncertainty” (Cawsey et al., 2015, p. 46) as the change moves iteratively throughout the organization. Given the cascading and distributed nature of the ‘thawing’ phase, the change step would also be variable in orientation, altering operationalization in one area, while simultaneously examining the next environment in the chain. As the ‘thawing’ process is initiated, change must follow quickly and allow for variations as indicated in the Bryk (2015) model. Again, by extending the biological systems analogy, I am able to observe that this stage is when the organism is at its most vulnerable, requiring the leadership behaviours and attributes discussed in the previous chapter. The Adaptive Leadership approach quite nicely integrates with both the Lewin model and the notion of in-motion change.

Freeze.

The most difficult element of Lewin’s (1951) model is the component of freeze, made increasingly difficult due to the disparate nature of the changes required. In a sense, the freeze step can never truly be enacted, but instead inform the state that best resembles an environment that is malleable and open to continuous improvement processes. Further, the organization itself might resist the freeze process in terms of rejecting specific operational conditions (Cawsey et al., 2015). As stated earlier, the CRM implementation at MaSU will largely be a set of individual changes that are connected through data definitions and adherence to a specific student conversion model and as such the freeze stage will remain in a state of flux.

Throughout all aspects of the Lewin (1951) model, there are oversimplification flags, but as compared to other models, it remains the most germane framework for implementing a CRM system within the institutional enterprise. Lewin's (1951) model is open and can be modified to be reflexive (Burnes, 2009) via a rethaw and refreeze concept.

Critical Organizational Analysis

Within any organization, organizational change is subject to the force of homeostasis, the tendency of an environment to seek equilibrium, or a return to a known state (Jones, 2010; Cameron & Green, 2015). While tendencies towards this disposition might vary in terms of intensity and in how innate (or externalized) abilities engage with change, the organizational organism itself seeks to ensure that survival of the *system* is of paramount importance. It is within this context that proposed organizational change is troubled—to extend a systems theory metaphor, change is biologically inevitable yet challenged at every turn. Within the Canadian public higher education sector, the nature of how institutions are governed and operated could be construed as potential hurdles at the forefront of major change projects and it is important to understand the disposition and composition of such an environment prior to engaging in any change proposal. Expectations of public higher education institutions are multiple and varying, ranging from being perceived as locations where new knowledges are generated and disseminated to being mechanisms meant to fulfill various market conditions endemic to industrial and economic competitiveness (Abdolvand, Albadvi, & Ferdowsi, 2008; Chafee, 1998; Marceau, 2014). As stated earlier, Marceau (2014) asserts that "though universities have long embraced a plurality of stakeholders and outcomes, there is no standardized view of how universities should optimally be governed or managed" (p. 1). Despite this assertion, public higher education institutions (HEIs) in Canada are typically arranged as bicameral: Boards of Governors/Senate and an operational (Vice)President/(Vice)Provost structure (governing both the academic and operational machine). These high–order organizing principles are important to consider as they were conceived at a different time in the history of higher education. Manning (2018) invokes Max Weber in terms of how universities have structurally become bureaucratic organisms, or "rationally ordered instruments", purposefully designed to achieve quite specific objectives (p.13). The ideals at the center of running the institution along these lines include rationality, impersonality, and objectivity as they relate to decision–making (Bess & Dee, 2014; Chafee, 1998; Collini, 2012; Manning, 2018). Whether HEIs live up to these ideals provokes questions outside the scope of this document, but it is important to consider how deep–rooted structural implications lie in wait of comprehensive change initiatives. As indicated earlier, there are distinct ideological and political complications lying in wait of any change initiative within MaSU and these concerns can be conflated with the notion of bureaucratic decision-making and rationality. There should be questions raised as to the impartiality of these assertions. CRM implementations, and other technology and data-related initiatives, only serve to help fill out the information gap to assist in direction-setting, they do not form decisions in an of themselves.

MaSU is positioned as facing significant (present and future) challenges in terms of student recruitment, student application and conversion, and subsequent enrolment across a wide spectrum of diverse programs. Further, a perceived hyper–consumerization of higher education as a commercial entity is under significant and critical scrutiny by multiple stakeholders, resulting in organizational tension between the administration, the academic vanguard, government, and the public (Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Chafee, 1998; Collini, 2012). A critical organizational analysis must include the challenges facing the organization at present and into the foreseeable future, the organizational theories which underpin the functioning and ideological standpoints of units within this institution, as well as the macro governing factors of the university itself.

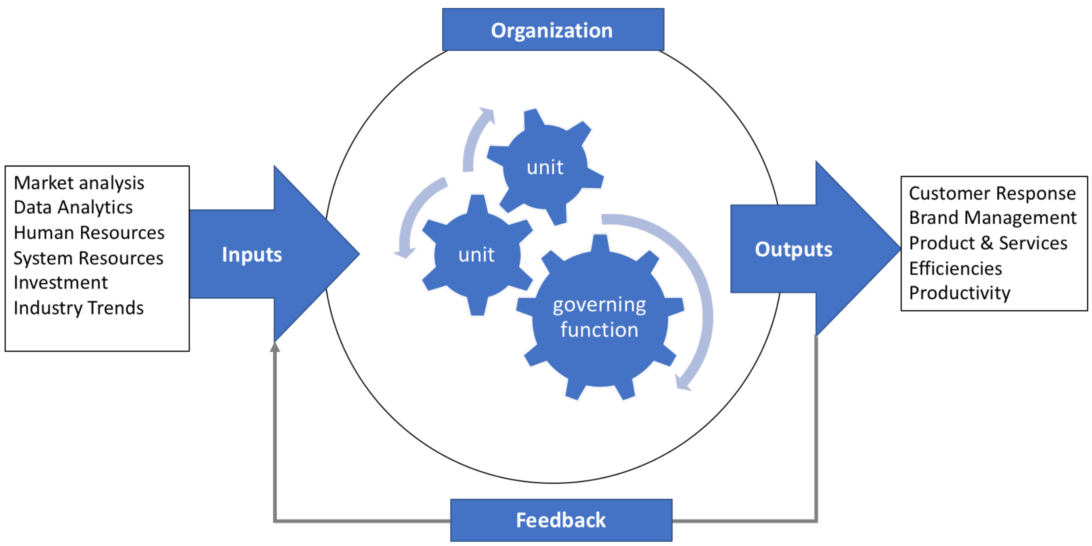

Figure 9. Systems Model. Adapted from Berwick (1996).

Considering the organization from a systems theory perspective, the university is a complex environment, built upon a series of interdependent and semi–autonomous subsystems each connected to and distinct from the other. Systems theory affirms the primacy of the system over individual components or even the sum of its parts (see Figure 9) (Berwick, 1996). This perspective does not detract from the importance of individual aspects of the model as they are distinct and required by the organization as well.

All systems are related to each other through the expression and transmission of data and as such are all information systems at heart (Abdolvand et al., 2008; Berwick, 1996). As information traverses the expanse of an organization and its subcomponents, it is impossible to disentangle the system from its environment as they are inexorably entwined, developed, and influenced by each other. Within context, the more highly systematized an organization can be, the more efficient its operations become. In a related vein, an organization's efficacy is related to the systems' optimizations. As large and complex organizations are typically a collection of subsystems developed by the overall business apparatus of an organization, analysis and understanding of the individuated units are as important as understanding the whole and, in fact, neither can be ratified without comprehension of the other. In particular, this is where my leadership is key as it relates to this initiative. As an Information Technology (IT) leader, information flow and data characteristics are part of my mandate. There is a synergy between understanding the business components affiliated with student recruitment and conversion and the data required to underpin and support both the implementation as well as downstream reporting and expression of key performance indicators (KPIs).

There are two challenges which might inform an overall organizational analysis. First, while universities in Canada certainly share common challenges with organizations from other industries, higher education institutions are also uniquely inflected by their own specialized ecologies (Bolman & Gallos, 2011). With this concept in mind, it is important to note that not all departments and resources are fully on board for the change being proposed but more importantly, these outliers have the autonomy to opt out of the process altogether. To mitigate this eventuality, my leadership approach is to allow for these errancies and to focus on creating a scalable and repeatable model. Secondly, this type of project is typically perceived as being a technology intervention rather than an organizational change (Abdolvand et al., 2008; Almotairi, 2009; Daradoumis et al., 2010) and this thinking is erroneous from the outset. A shift from an institutional focus to a more customer–focused approach is related to systemic and structural changes where technology plays a mediating role (Daradoumis et al., 2010), but not a lead role. Traditionally, MaSU has relied upon a strong reputation and a focus on quality within programs, not unlike other institutions across Canada (MaSU, 2017a; Marceau, 2014). Within MaSU, the road ahead is beset with myriad potholes as it is an institution which is operationally complex, at varying times distributed and hierarchical, both forward–thinking and conservative, and paradoxically innovative yet static.

Recent thinking has come to view higher education institutions as corporate organizations, complete with several borrowings from the private sector (Bess & Dee, 2014; Chafee, 1998; Collini, 2012). The institutional rhetoric has shifted to include concepts such as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Supply Chain Management (SCM), and Return on Investment (ROI). These terms have long held purchase in the corporate world and their relatively recent inclusion within institutional dialects is viewed as unwelcome by many within higher education. The *organization*, in this sense can be viewed simplistically as the center of a series of relationships, recast as dimensions of a commercial environment. MaSU, as an *organization* is conceived as multiple entities, interrelated and, at times, in conflict with each other. Drawing on the work of Manning (2018), institutional theory can be used to tease out aspects of MaSU which might be useful in understanding the complexities lying behind a CRM implementation. The model holds that the institution itself is a replicated model, both homogeneous and isomorphic in nature. The institution is comprised by a series of organizations ratified by time and kinships to other similarly situated institutions (Benjamin & Carroll, 1998; Chafee, 1998; Manning, 2018).

Marceau (2014) envisions several components as informing the core business of the Canadian university model: Funding, Administration, and Programs. Articulated within this structure as a core business outcome is student recruitment (see Figure 10) and through this strategic positioning, the importance of CRM begins to take shape.

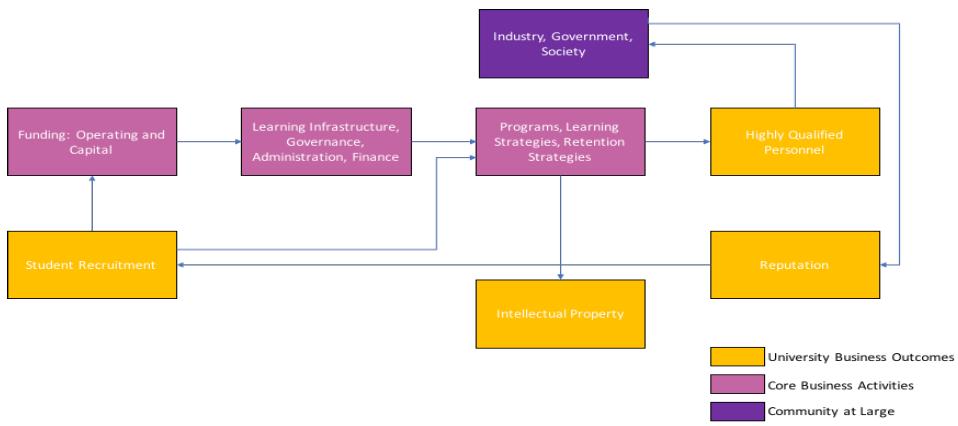

Figure 10. The University's Core Business Model. Adapted from Marceau (2014).

The student recruitment function is established prominently within the context of university core business and necessary for sustainability. It is important to pause here and further elucidate the concerns endemic to the academic/neo–managerial divide that exists within this institution. There are prevailing concerns amongst internal parties that the institution (and the sector itself) is being too alike its (distant) corporate cousins (Bess & Dee, 2014; Chafee, 1998; Collini, 2012). The criticisms leveled against administration that students are *not* customers and that focus on *market* competitiveness and enrolment metrics run counter to the purpose of a publicly–funded higher education institution are well–toned and engage strongly within the academic ranks (Carlson & Filner, 2017, Collini, 2012, Fallis, 2013; Keith, 1998). Conversely, emergent conditions suggest that the operating model of these institutions are flawed and require remediation at the request of the public, the government, and the implications of market conditions. While the concerns are numerous and well–spoken, the sustainability of the university model is at stake. Student recruitment and admissions reveal themselves as core functions which might have a mitigating effect upon these factions at MaSU.

Among the chief benefits of CRM implementations is the notion of systematized contact with prospective and active students throughout their tenure with MaSU (Almotairi, 2009; Croteau & Li, 2003). Through the social and ecological prisms of the PESTE model, it can be demonstrated that MaSU maintains a significant gap in qualitative outreach to prospective students in the form of multiple and redundant processes (spread across varied and unconnected departments and faculties). Further, where student recruitment functions operate (the presence of such processes varies across units), there are communication and process gaps which might hinder prospective students' experiences with the institution. A systems approach would mitigate these factors moving forward and enhance the institution's ability to form strategic apparatus and awareness campaigns in a coordinated fashion. From a technological perspective, the extant gap is revealed through the absence of any system in place at MaSU to deal with the increased pressures of market competitiveness, student choice, and the need for qualitative metrics for analysis. While the investment in a CRM system is significant (Seeman & O'Hara, 2006; Soltani & Navimipour, 2016; Tapp et al., 2004), in terms of both licensing/platform and resource draw, the downstream impact in the form of data analytics, audience development, and the ability to engage in multiple and available marketing streams will be economic in orientation.

Complementary to a PESTE analysis, the tool below (see Figure 11) indicates where issues exist at MaSU as it relates to a CRM implementation (adapted from the work of Hiatt & Creasey, 2012; Kim & Kim, 2009; Payne & Frow, 2006). MaSU (2017a) is highly distributed in orientation and leadership, though also highly hierarchical in many ways. The chart indicates points (in red) which highlight structural and resource concerns within specific areas.

	EXPECTED INPUTS			EXPECTED OUTCOMES		STATUS
	Who	Where	What	Why	How	
MICRO	Internal Administration	University	Vision(s)	Direction, Decision-Making, Sponsorship	Discovery, Discussion, Decision, Evaluation	
	Internal Administration	University	Mission(s)	Direction, Decision-Making, Sponsorship	Discovery, Discussion, Decision, Evaluation	
	Internal Administration	University	Strategic Plans	Direction, Decision-Making, Sponsorship	Discovery, Discussion, Decision, Evaluation	
	Units	Faculties	Processes	Engagement, Implementation	Evaluation, Processes	
	Units	Faculties	Resources	Engagement, Implementation	Evaluation, Processes	
	Dean	Unit		Direction, Decision-Making, Sponsorship	Discovery, Discussion, Decision, Evaluation	
	Associate Deans	Unit		Direction, Decision-Making, Sponsorship	Discovery, Discussion, Decision, Evaluation	
	Directors	Unit		Engagement, Implementation	Leadership, Evaluation, Processes	
	Managers	Unit		Engagement, Implementation	Evaluation, Processes	
	Operators	Unit		Engagement, Implementation	Evaluation, Processes	
MESO	Institutions	Canada	Programs	Competition	Market Analysis	
	Vendors	Sector	Platforms	Product, Platform	Market Analysis, Technology Evaluation	
	Agents	Varied	3rd Party Operators	Engagement, Implementation	Evaluation, Processes	
	Prospects	Varied	Demand	Engagement, Implementation	Lead Acquisition, Application/Admissions, Conversion	
MACRO	Vendors	Sector	Innovation	New products, design	Feedback	
	Prospects	Varied	Expectations	Engagement, Implementation	Customer Service	
	Internal Administration	University	Fiscal Accountabilities	Costs	Project management	
	Internal Administration	University	Policy Implications	Formality	Project management	
	Internal Administration	University	Cultural/Social Implications	Political	Change management	
	External	Province	Policy Implications	Adherence, Opportunity	Landscape analysis, Engagement	
	External	Canada	Policy Implications	Adherence, Opportunity	Landscape analysis, Engagement	

Figure 11. Sample Structural Deficiencies Report.

Conceiving a CRM system as a singular implementation throughout the institution becomes a significant problem as fault–lines emerge at the unit and decanal levels. A mitigating approach would be to implement multiple instances of CRM platforms with foci on nimbleness and responsiveness within discrete units. There are other items (in yellow) which correspond to issues at the process (micro and macro), line and resource management, vendor, and internal machination levels which provoke certain concerns. From a vendor standpoint, selecting the best platform/tool for the function of CRM is an important component as a technology–oriented mismatch is a key factor in CRM implementation failures. Clarity of purpose, however, as reflected within the internal institutional factors are established as the primary reasons for failing CRM initiatives (Almotairi, 2009; Croteau & Li, 2003; Seeman & O'Hara, 2006; Soltani & Navimipour, 2016).

Possible Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) initiatives are prone to failure in any organization, large or small. In fact, research data suggests 30-70% of CRM initiatives experience significant issues, potentially leading to outright foreclosure of the project (Almotairi, 2009; Croteau & Li, 2003; Hrnjic, 2016; Kim & Kim, 2009; Seeman & O'Hara, 2006). Due to the complexity involved in these implementations, the causes for failure range from lack of executive vision or sponsorship to absence of change communication to inadequate technology selection methodology (Kim & Kim, 2009; Seeman & O'Hara, 2006). Typically, CRMs are defined as either *operational*, *analytical*, and/or *collaborative* (Soltani & Navimipour, 2016). Operational CRMs are concerned with systematizing processes and optimizing tasks through automation or routing; analytical CRMs are concerned with analysis and data mining, meant to improve institutional/corporate insight about various customer streams; collaborative CRMs are developed to develop, improve, and optimize communication channels and interaction (Soltani & Navimipour, 2016). With these defining characteristics in mind, a student recruitment CRM solution for higher education institutions would articulate a vision requiring all three approaches to varying degrees. There is a strong case to be made for the influence of a CRM system on operational improvement and on areas of collaboration, but with Student Information Systems (SIS) and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platforms already present within the university environment, a CRM system would provide, over time, insight into academic program viability and student consumption behaviours.

This project leads the institution towards three potential solutions, with a potential for a status quo outcome in the background. These solutions are lensed through the redefinition of current outreach and contact processes and the implementation of a technical platform. Each solution possesses its own strengths and weaknesses and positionality in terms of governance and capacity to execute the project. These loci, defined as *Centralized*, *Decentralized*, and *Hybrid* are described below in detail.

Status Quo Approach.

Overall solution.

At first blush the Status Quo option would suggest a no investment scenario but given the complexity of the Canadian university student recruitment landscape and the competitive nature of program enrollment, this assumption is limited. Today, most faculty units operate within a decentralized framework at the human in systems level, but without the benefit of a technological CRM platform. Further, the human system processes in play are inefficient, not optimized, and under–analyzed. The Status Quo approach would seem to be the easiest one to implement or maintain, at least to the minds of decision–makers and sponsors within the institution. However, what is not invested in now can only be waiting in the wings in terms of impact on program success and investment in resources. It remains a viable approach, but one whose shelf life is limited and not understood.

Resources required.

Within the status quo approach, the need for platform investment is limited by the no longer required vendor technology and consultancy, but investment in the form of human resources, local recruitment assets, and technology support are still required and will more than likely grow. The lack of a CRM solution at either the institutional level or the local faculty level may have unintended financial and resource implications in the long–term, possibly necessitating an eventual technological implementation. The costs model for this approach would need to account for lost efficiencies and unrealized opportunities, which are difficult to derive. As a basis, the costs involved in a status quo approach would be similar to present and would climb appreciably each annual cycle due to escalating salary costs and the need to recruit students using outdated methodologies.

Centralized Approach.

Overall solution.

A centralized approach would encompass a top–down approach led by authoritative departments within the university environment. Such an approach would require an overall vision designed to consolidate various value propositions held by the institution as a whole. A complex environment implementing a large project of this magnitude would require the marshaling of multiple resources spread across the organization, resources which are required to be dedicated to the initiative throughout its lifecycle. Particularly interesting, utilizing a centralized approach would be the potential kinship between the relevant organizational columns of student engagement and alumni development. Due to the fundraising nature found within the alumni development stream there are notably CRM systems in place within those contexts. Implementing a CRM solution within the student recruitment function might find various ways to intersect with overall institutional goals and priorities that are already in place (Hrnjic, 2016; Seeman & O'Hara, 2006).

At the heart of a centralized solution lies both a technical platform as well as well–defined common and agreed–upon processes. Earlier in this document a distinction was made between CRM as a system (indicated as uppercase *CRM*) and human and institutional processes (indicated as lowercase *crm*). Centralization of CRM in the larger context requires both aspects to work together in a manner that benefits the common goals inherent to the institution at large but not necessarily the discrete needs of faculty units at the detailed level. The diagram below (see Figure 12) showcases centrality as prioritized, with central functions acting as

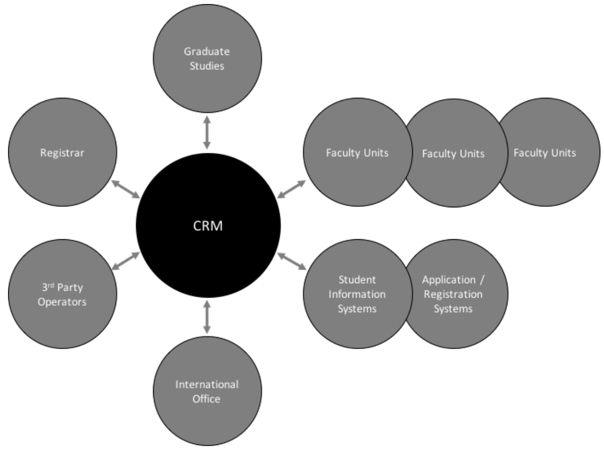

Figure 12. Centralized CRM Approach.

federations agent brokering data and system processes with human processes and procedures. It is important to note the centrality of the CRM as the fulcrum for all processes that flow in and out of student recruitment. Further, this model suggests a one–size–fits–all solution, where potential students are engaged within a consistently applied process. A centralized CRM places the onus of definition, implementation, and support upon central services, thereby ensuring that the overall organizational strategies of the institution are central to its reason for existence (Hrnjic, 2016; Seeman & O'Hara, 2006). The benefits of this model are realized through predictive tactics, common goals, shared understanding, and well–defined roles and systems sequencing. Further, data governance within this model is well–established and downstream data mining and analytics are determined through defined and set attributes allowing for robust analysis and generation of key performance indicators (KPIs) adding overall institutional level (see Figure 13).

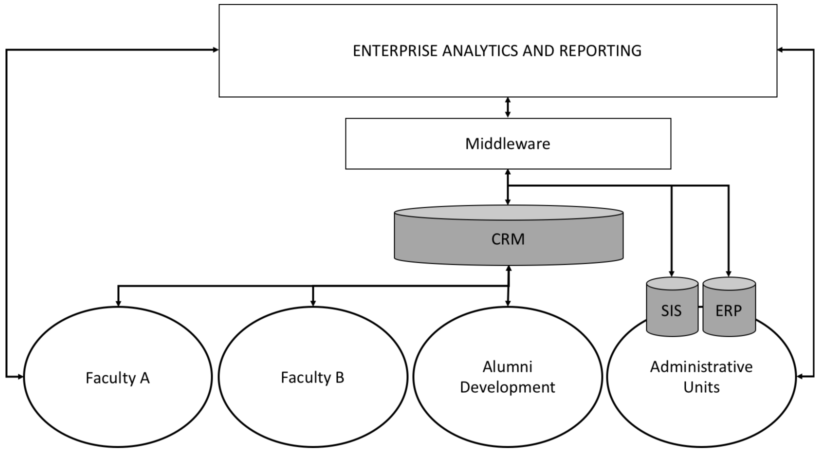

Figure 13. Centralized CRM-influenced Information Flow.

A centralized approach would suggest that institutional goals and priorities as they relate to student engagement and recruitment are in accord across all aspects of the organization. The stated mission and vision of MaSU is such that the student experience is at the center of how the institution's identity is defined (Merchant, Rose, Moody, & Mathews, 2015) and given such a strong adherence to the student experience as an overall identity, maintaining that spread throughout the organization should be a relatively straightforward exercise. However, higher education institutions have notoriously been difficult to ensure common commitment to centralized concerns across various aspects of the organizational environment. Within a centralized approach, the vision of a student engagement CRM would unfold from, and defined through, the office of the Provost. Working in conjunction with centralized functions such as the Graduate Studies, the International Office, Registrar Services, and downstream faculty units, this implementation would attempt, in part, to centralize processes that relate to awareness and brand campaigns, student applications and engagement, and application conversion.

Resources required.

The resources required for CRM solution mounted at the central level are numerous, disparate, and costly. At a systems level, a robust enterprise–level platform is required and within such a defined market segment space there are limited numbers of vendors that can support and overall organizational framework. It is outside the scope of this project document to determine and vet vendor solutions, but it is important to note that enterprise platform licensing, customization, and implementation costs would be high. An institution the size and complexity of MaSU would face a multiyear and potentially multi–million–dollar implementation. In the final analysis, the technology platform and the Information Technology resource requirements are relatively straightforward, although costly, mechanisms to engage. As a special consideration, cloud–based applications are becoming the norm within most enterprise solutions and as such licensing and platform hosting costs may be lower than an on-premise solution requiring infrastructure investment, ongoing maintenance cost, and dedicated internal technical resource allocation. However, it is important to note that the complexity involved in employing an enterprise level solution suggests higher consultancy fees. With these costs in mind, a centralized CRM implementation project would require significant advanced planning and financial allocation, possibly embedded within the multiyear strategic planning processes, or through the annual organizational planning framework.

Adopting a centralized CRM solution will require dedicated resource investment within the institution, working with central offices, and distributed local faculty units to determine data requirements, human activities, and systems processes. Moreover, resources will be required on an ongoing basis to support the platform post–implementation, allowing for the remediation of weak components and the integration of new functionality. At the project level, a high–level project manager reporting to the Provost and imbued with the authority and autonomy to lead the project will be required, along with team leads associated with the departments of Information Technology, International Office, graduate studies, registrar services, and local faculty units.

Within each of these representations, subordinate resources such as database administrators, functional administrators, advisers, and academic leadership will be required to define, inflect, and advise how a centralized CRM is implemented at that level. It is important to stress that such a project is not organic, it is determined, developed, and executed strategically and with appropriate budget and resource allocations. From a budgetary perspective, this approach would be costed in the multi-million dollar range and is impractical in terms of return on investment (ROI).

Decentralized Approach.

Overall solution.

A decentralized approach to student engagement CRM within higher education would take advantage of the overall university organization, much like the centralized approach, but would invert the decision–making apparatus locating the center of the experience within the hands of the individual faculty units themselves. Under such a model, faculties would not only be responsible for the development of strong and relevant academic programs, as they are today, but would also be responsible for all aspects of what could be considered as sales. Each faculty unit would have within its structure, working alongside local program offices and other administrative aspects of the faculty, specific student recruitment resources deployed to market, develop leads, support application processes, and ultimately leave the student towards conversion (the process through which a student is encouraged to accept the institution's offer of admission). A student recruitment apparatus would need to be underpinned by decanal sponsorship and support, agreed upon strategic direction, a technical platform, and alignment across academic and administrative resources within the faculty. In addition, a decentralized approach is a misnomer of sorts—in fact, despite its name, a decentralized solution would still require relationships between the faculty unit and centralized departments to ensure that overall policies adhered to. As the diagram below indicates (see Figure 14), the stress is on

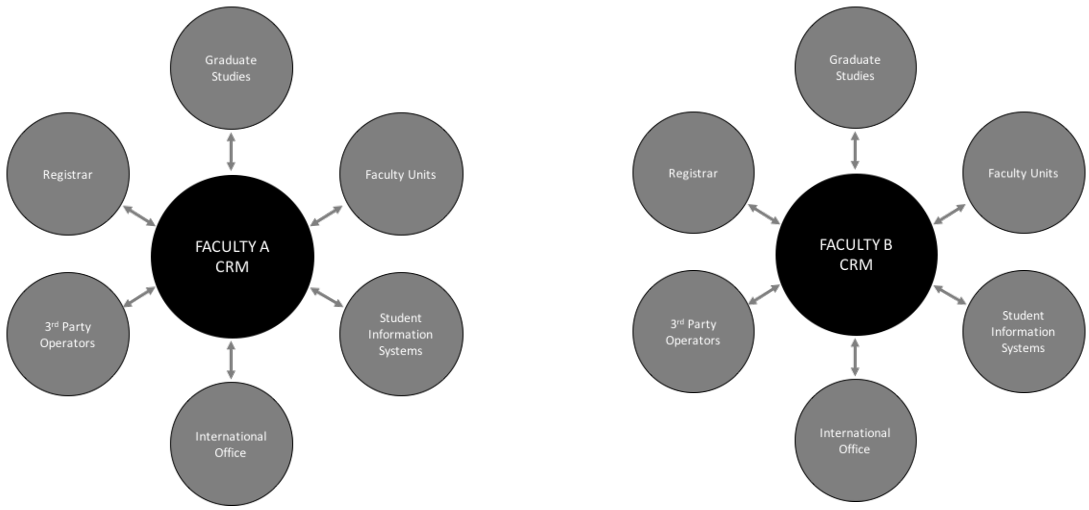

Figure 14. Decentralized CRM Model.

individual faculties to determine both its human and system processes as well as the technology platform required. In effect, a decentralized approach all but guarantees separate and disparate solutions across the organization, including multiple vendors, duplication of resources, and non–standardized outcomes.

A decentralized approach would seemingly be the most cogent implementation for higher education institutions (HEIs), allowing for the business aspect of programs to remain under the appropriate governance of individual academic stakeholders (Chafee, 1998; Collini, 2012; Eacott, 2016; Keith, 1998). An argument could be made that most organizations within the university context already operate within a decentralized model, relying on centralized functions such as the graduate studies, International Offices, and registrar services when needed, but not necessarily for student engagement. It is important to note that at MaSU there are faculty units which employ entrenched decentralized student engagement practices, including student recruitment, while other faculties rely heavily on centralized resources to campaign and recruit for their programs. Largely, this divide is primarily based on the fiscal positions of the faculty units themselves. Those faculties with financial means invest in appropriate marketing, advertising, recruitment, and conversion resources. A decentralized model would call for student recruitment resources to report directly to the decanal level for the faculty in question and would suggest that technical platform implementation would be mounted from same, requiring local technical resources to ensure all aspects are supported. Like its centralized cousin, a decentralized CRM implementation would require project manager whose role would include liaising with central office authorities such as graduate studies, International Office, register services, and Information Technology, as well as faculty–level program office resources and academic faculty members, to ensure the needs of the faculty, and the requirements of the university, are represented through the solution.

Resources required.

A decentralized approach requires significant investment, specifically in the form of local resources or workload increase. However, the needs of the local faculty unit would be better met and tailored. The technical platform might be a vendor–based product but could be represented through other available toolsets, such as Excel, email, and office–oriented collaboration programs. Moreover, the smaller scale other faculty level implementation opens the platform market to smaller set the vendors with lower licensing and implementation fees. A decentralized approach allows for faculty units to engage in solution building without waiting for the overall institutional apparatus, thereby making more agile responses to emerging business needs and market conditions. The agility embedded in the decentralized solution cannot be underestimated (Tapp et al., 2004) since it requires the most straightforward effort amongst CRM implementations. Local faculty circumstances drive the needs and provides the resources to ensure the product or platform is designed or customized in such a way that it becomes a unique offering where processes align specifically with distinct programs requirements. The danger inherent in manifesting a solution in such away is that the organization could become overrun with individual CRM solutions where the technological and business dialects become increasingly difficult to understand at a central level (see Figure 15).

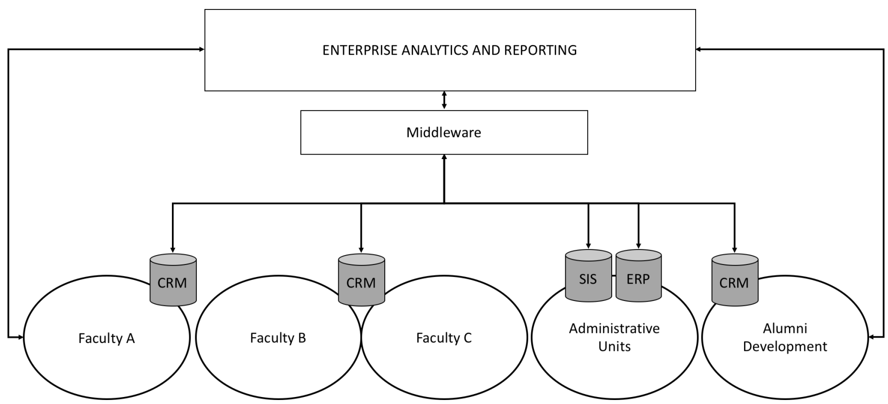

Figure 15. Decentralized CRM-influenced Information Flow.

A further danger with this approach is the potential for duplication of resources and overall financial commitments from various corners of the university into multiple projects. This model is currently in use at most HEIs as each unit, whether a system is in place or not, is utilizing *crm* processes to recruit and convert students. If a CRM system were implemented there would be a budgetary implication in the sense that resources would be allocated at the unit level, but as the aggregate is factored in, the ROI is problematic.

Hybrid Approach.

Overall solution.

Describing a hybrid approach to a student recruitment CRM implementation at the institutional level needs to follow the two polarities described above as it is important to draw elements from the centralized and decentralized approaches and marry them together to build what would be an idealized solution. That is not to say that a hybrid solution is a panacea nor the perfect apparatus to ensure success. Indeed, compromise on the parts of central administration and the faculty units, as the two primary drivers of the above described solutions, are required to map the relevant human and system processes required to ensure institutional success, while balancing individuated faculty needs. The diagram below (see Figure 16) indicates a basic footprint akin to the centralized CRM approach, but allows for distinct and customized process intervention and integration between the CRM platform and the faculty units. Such an approach also allows for the faculty units to have access to SIS and registration systems for the purposes of data mining and analysis (Hrnjic, 2016; Seeman & O’Hara, 2006).

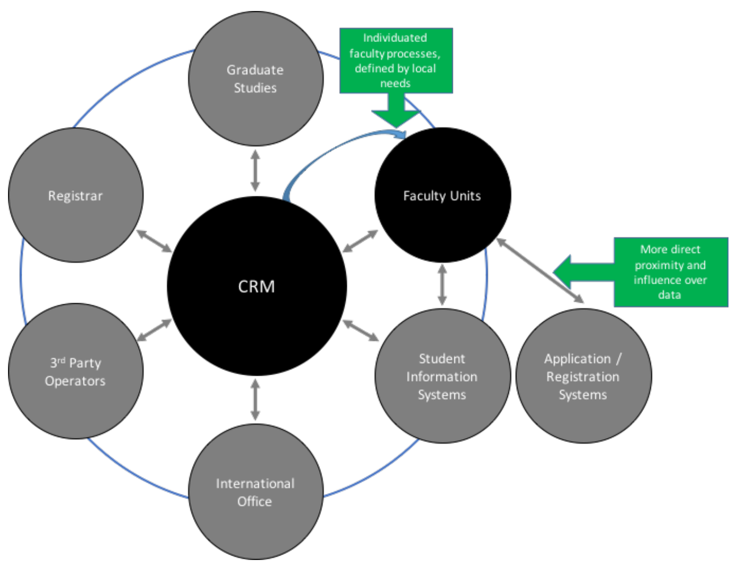

Figure 16. Hybrid CRM Model.

Further, a through–line intersecting the primary constituent partnerships of central administrative functions and faculty units is key as each link in the chain maintains access and integrative relationships amongst each other.

Resources required.

A hybrid approach would leverage the financial and resource strength of the overall organization, while ensuring local faculty needs are center stage. Within a hybridized approach is located a cohesive governing structure which includes multiple stakeholders spread across the organization at large but differs from the central solution in that collective decision–making is referred back to faculty units working in concert with centralized functions charged with student recruitment and customer relationship management. Within this model units operate independently yet cohesively and integrate well with external services such as alumni development. More importantly, the loopback mechanism surrounding the whole, seen as an oversight function, is comprised various key stakeholders maintained through governing group with resources collected from the various units. Through this model there are obvious investments to be made, which include a CRM vendor platform, resource allocation from both central environments as well as local faculty structures, and a deliberate oversight committee. The hybrid approach would still require significant funding from the central administration of the university, at the university would gain from the full support of faculty units through resource commitment and potentially a cost–sharing apparatus.

The listed solutions above are somewhat bound to each other, specifically in how they inherently respond to each other. The centralized CRM solution has benefits which include authority, appropriate resource allocation, and the financial impetus of the overall institution. Further, data and workflow are ratified and controlled and available for deep analysis for key performance indicators. However, its detractions include the lack of agility, a wide and complex organizational footprint, and a potential inability to tailor and customize solutions against specific faculty and program needs (Hrnjic, 2016; Seeman & O’Hara, 2006). The decentralized

CRM solution includes benefits which allow for strong local processes, defined to meet the obligations found within locally defined programs. A solution of this sort has as consequence limited data sharing capabilities and unoptimized workflow amongst units outside the faculty environment. A single overall technology platform solution for a student recruitment CRM is seductive but difficult to attain; while disparate solutions are somewhat easier to mount at the local faculty level, they fail in the shadow of overall institutional requirements (Hrnjic, 2016). The hybridized solution becomes the more apparent positive approach where local definitions and requirements set the stage for centralized vendor platform integration and data sharing amongst constituent partners.

Leadership Approaches to Change

Leadership within higher education institutions can be complex and dynamic, yet also quite conservative in disposition. Decision–making processes within Canadian public universities are both centralized and decentralized allowing for leadership structures that, at times, can play against each other. As these institutions lurch more deeply into the 21st Century, the organizational postures and operating constructs within them need to be adjusted and evolved to meet the growing and changing needs of their constituents. This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) interrogates the conditions of leadership and the roles required to implement and operationalize a project that would see Customer Relationship Management (CRM) processes and technologies introduced and ratified within the environment. A project of this magnitude and technical disposition will require both engaged management as well as explicit leadership. Gill (2002) states that while management is concretized as a necessary part of any aspect of organizational theatre, it is not sufficient, in and of itself, to drive the structure towards stated (and unstated) goals. Kotter (2007) goes a step further in asserting that the concerns of management, such as planning and organizing, are not lined with what leadership should be providing to the project. Vision, organizational focus and commitment, and aligning resources are within the providence of leadership, where adherence to tasks, managing resources, and controlling the implementation are within the realm of management (Kotter, 2007). Fallis (2013), Chafee (1998), and Gill (2002) align in that all too often, change projects are conceived and positioned for implementation through inadequate management platforms, without having the organization actually led through the process. In many ways, the tendency to *manage* the implementation, and by extension the human resources who underpin such projects, may result in disengaged resources. Finally, Gill (2002) would suggest that change initiatives are often the result of the "naïve adoption of management fads" (p. 308) as opposed to necessary evolution and through such a perspective, change projects are discounted as not strategic, but tactical in orientation. This final point could be debated, but the idea being expressed implies that leadership is more concerned with strategic development, where management is engaged in the tactical concerns of the organization.

A Customer/Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) implementation is undoubtedly influenced by a variety of leadership theories and practices. The success of any systemic change initiative relies on both executive sponsorship as well as on frontline management and employees to engage in the human and system processes at hand (Hrnjic, 2016; Payne & Frow, 2006). Drawing primarily on the work of Heifetz et al. (2009), and through Northouse (2016), the Adaptive Leadership framework is seen as a means to establish leadership as a force for mobilization as opposed to an approach preoccupied with the actual technical solution. At its core, Adaptive Leadership is focused on mobilizing resources to deal with difficult challenges and to thrive throughout the process (Heifetz et al., 2009). A CRM implementation within a higher education institution will confront several challenges, some of which are associated with disparate and unaligned cultures, but also of technical nature.

The Adaptive Leadership approach examines the situational challenges confronting the project from the outset and assumes that the initiative will face significant issues and/or conflicts throughout its lifecycle. An Adaptive Leadership model (see Figure 17) will be used to identify, diagnose, and remediate these concerns as they unfold. In a sense, the Adaptive Leadership framework is transactional and iterative as issues emerge and are dealt with. Within the context of my own leadership role, this approach is particularly apt as my primary function is to anticipate technical and resource level constraints or challenges and find ways to mitigate them.

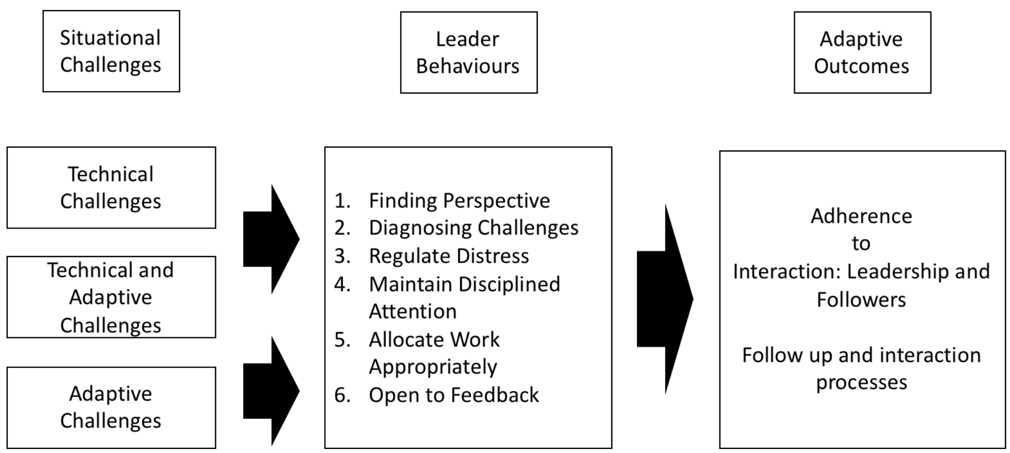

Figure 17. Adaptive Leadership Framework. Adapted from Northouse (2016).

Within the Adaptive Leadership model, challenges can be issued along the lines of several categories—technical, adaptive, and a combination of the two. For the purposes of a CRM implementation, the technical would be associated primarily with a platform (technology) as opposed to employees, but it is important to understand that human resources will need to interact with the technical components. The adaptive challenges would be associated with the human, political, and process aspects of the project. The middle category would reflect the combination-oriented areas where technical components or processes cross with the other forms of resources in the project. As an example, the student application and conversion processes embedded within a particular faculty unit are highly manual and resource-intensive, where a separate unit utilizes Microsoft Excel to track its student prospects to conversion.

Working through this model from a leadership behaviour standpoint, my Director-level role in this initiative is to comprehend these processes and gain perspective in terms of what constitutes issues that need to be ratified by the project and its resources and which issues need to be escalated. As a Director within the organization whose role is to lead student recruitment and conversion processes, separating issues that are related to actual CRM processes versus those that are perceived to be so, but are not, requires an expertise of the landscape and of how the organization functions. Diagnosing and mitigating these challenges becomes a task of leadership and not management or of process facilitation. As can be inferred, several CRM processes are already in play ay MaSU and the task at hand will be to identify and consolidate these processes into a working model that benefits all units. Within such a complex organization, agreeing to or adhering to a singular CRM model is going to be excessively difficult. Due to my work with units across the campus, I am in a unique position of understanding these issues and the role of the leader in this project will be to appropriately identify the processes that can be integrated and those that need to be isolated. Specifically, my technical systems background as well as my understanding of the business environment will be key in bridging these components.

Deeper into the Adaptive Leadership model, the leader is called upon to regulate distress and maintain disciplined attention to the work at hand. These two areas are, in my mind, the most important of the model. The need to create a space for the employees to feel safe to tackle the difficult problems associated with a CRM implementation and the need to maintain focus on solving these problems is significant. My role in these cases is to mitigate topic exhaustion or disengagement, which may result in avoidance behaviours. The leader of this initiative will need to provide technical direction, protect against scope expansion, resolve conflicts, and ensure that the project orientation and production processes are adhered to (Northouse, 2016).

Finally, it is vitally important to ensure that those who are allocated into roles within this project are given the latitude to conduct their expertise appropriately and to provide feedback to leadership when necessary. Related to the earlier aspects of the model concerning engagement, the abilities of the employees are why they are conscripted to the project in the first place. My role as leader is to recognize these inputs and support decisions where implementation is required. Further, a model that allows for project resources to provide vital feedback to leadership in a format that is safe and comprehensive is key. As a leader, my approach would be multi-faceted—regular and structured project meetings and a strong change management process. Bess and Dee (2014) articulate the need for dialogue within the context of sharing information and its value, stating that members of the university community “need to consider ways in which they can provide the right amount of information to the right people” (p.72) and this sentiment strikes at the heart of an Adaptive Leadership approach.

CRM strategies are typically lensed through a technology medium, but it is within the human and systems processes that change is actually conducted and it is against a long-term vision that the desired state is confirmed. Establishing newly developed routes for (more) efficient decision–making within a Canadian higher education institution is confronted by several issues from the outset. For one, the university system is typically decentralized, with a great deal of discrete decision–making ceded to the faculties of the organization. This aspect is important and while related to an individual’s leadership approach, also stands apart. It is within this context that the Path–Goal Leadership approach may serve to provide clarity. Unlike change initiatives that might be more centered on program development or overall university mission and vision paradigms, a CRM implementation is established closer to the ground. The leader must showcase an ability to leverage multiple stakeholders and sponsors across the organization in such a way that adherence to the end–goal is kept at the forefront. From a Path-Goal Leadership perspective, my role as leader is to provide ensure that the end-goals are clearly identified and that the project resource team's motivations to succeed are maintained. To achieve this particular aspect of project leadership, my role will be to provide constancy as it relates to four key behaviours—directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-orientation. Through these behaviours, I will define and maintain our goals (technical and process-oriented), clarify the way, mitigate obstacles, and support the team (Northouse, 2016). There is an obvious affiliation with the Adaptive Leadership approach in this regard, the need to support and listen to feedback from project resources. Combining these approaches allows project resources to feel as though they have the abilities needed to achieve their own goals as well as those of the project. Motivation, in this sense, is informed by a clear understanding of those goals and that the expertise and leadership required to achieve them are in an expectant mode (Northouse, 2016).

Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change

As with any organizational change, large or small, there are considerations that go far beyond the actual business processes and organizational change being implemented. At its fundamental level, organizational change requires *people* to change and alters the manner through which processes as well as relationships are enacted (Armenakis & Fredenberger, 1997; Hartley, 2010). Given that a major component a Constituent/Customer Relationship Management (CRM) project concerns distributed individuals across an organization, it is important to address ethical considerations from the outset of the initiative, allowing for these concerns to have impact on the overall implementation and to strengthen the proposed end state. Through the Adaptive Leadership model and the Path-Goal Leadership Theory, I am able to leverage people-oriented aspects within these paradigms and ensure that an ethical frame is embedded from the outset. As indicated earlier, my leadership capabilities within this project run from significant to influential and it is through these touchpoints that interaction with other units' leadership, downstream frontline resources, and the executive sponsorship layer. On the surface, a CRM implementation seems to hew more towards a technological solution than an initiative bound to human operations, but it is important to note that a CRM initiative is very much concerned with the human processes that lie behind the technology solution than the platform itself (Croteau & Li, 2003; Daradoumis et al., 2010). With this understanding in mind, it is vital that the *human* component is prioritized. The Adaptive Leadership framework anticipates the need to integrate not only feedback from all levels of the project, it also establishes a formalized process to solicit expertise and problem-solving as items emerge. From an ethical perspective, these iterative feedback loops are integral to the success of the initiative. In a similar vein, I am able to leverage the relationship-focused aspects of the Path-Goal Leadership Theory to ground the project within the context of prioritizing employees and their work.

Brown (2005) articulates a useful framework for understanding and rethinking organizational integrity as it relates to ethical leadership (see Figure 18) and through this model an understanding of how aspects related to the non–technical and non–structural begin to take shape. At the heart of Brown's (2005) model lies the cultural aspects of the institution, the various occupational environments that disparate teams and the overall organization find themselves within. As the model implies, the organization as a component relates

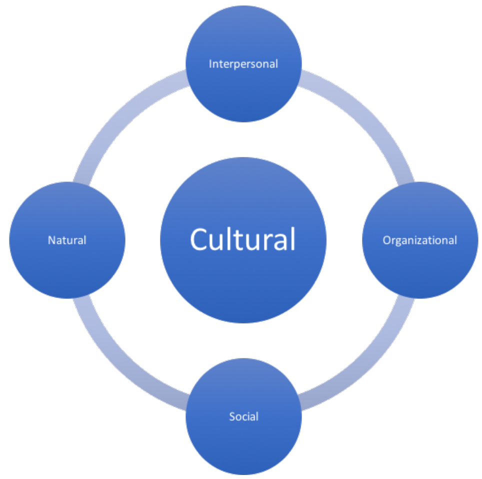

Figure 18. The Ethical Leadership Model. Adapted from Brown (2005).

to social, natural, and interpersonal dimensions through a lens of cultural interpolation. These five dimensions inform the “organizational integrity” (Brown, 2005, p. 9) found within the project implementation and subsequent operational environment and, in turn, produce natural affiliation between individuals within the organization and their civic or natural sensibilities (Brown, 2005, p. 210). In a sense, this model highlights the need for consistency between the purpose of the organizational change being proposed and the conduct that lies behind the project management machinery. Ethical concerns such as these also anticipate the forthcoming communications plan section of this document, componentry where I am able to articulate the explicit relationship between my own role and the execution of this initiative.

There are considerations of conduct to be examined as it relates to functioning as an agent of a public higher education institution (HEI) in Canada and interacting within a globally–minded context (Patzer & Voegtlin, 2013). Sutherland and Smith (2013) introduce the concept of the sustainable leader being comfortable taking a stand within hostile environments and this is an important aspect of institutional leadership as the corporatization of higher education advances and the commercial enterprise within the HEI sector expands. Ongoing pressures and processes related to globalization and product development places organizations in a state of flux, forcing HEIs to adapt or respond to emerging and new challenges within volatile markets. These pressures not only influence organizational needs for change, but also bring into relief the challenges institutional leaders face to meet these demands (Patzer & Voegtlin, 2013). Leaders are now forced to deal with implications related to "economic and ethical [concerns] in post national environments" (Patzer & Voegtlin, 2013, p.14) where global initiatives, unregulated markets, and cultural competencies might not be fully realized.

These leadership and ethical concerns connect well to Lewin's (Cawsey et al., 2015; Lewin, 1951) Stage Theory of Change and the Adaptive Leadership approach and Path-Goal Leadership Theory articulated earlier in this document. By virtue of an unfreezing of current conditions, there are implications for change initiatives at the individual and collective levels. Continuous processes of reorganizing and renewing organizational direction produce a "constant need to motivate a heterogeneous workforce with many different interests and abilities" (Patzer & Voegtlin, 2013, p. 15) and securing commitment to a common ethical framework from a diverse population in times of change is problematic. Burnes (2009) forms a more esoteric argument on Lewin—that "radical perspectives on organizations and change appear to offer support to his view of democratic participation and organizational change" (p.376) and that his Stage Theory of Change model is an enabler of an organization's ethical character. Jones (2010) postulates that adherence to ethical frames has an effect on reducing certain costs individuals bear within the organization. The provisioning of these frames allows the organization's people to assume rules are embedded in their interactions, lightening the transaction load (Jones, 2010, p. 50). Further, Patzer and Voegtlin (2013) examine the notion that the new demands of globalization produce emerging opportunities for ethical consideration, specifically through the interrogation of the legitimacy of the change itself and how the proposed change would affect downstream stakeholders during the change and refreezing exercises. This reflection is no easy task and requires the leader to balance ethical sensitivity with the opportunities new business arrangements produce, ensuring that capacity for building trust with constituents remains intact.

The mission statement of MaSU articulates the preeminent position the institution reserves for a positive student experience and the agents who are charged with utilizing a student recruitment CRM system are often the first points of contact between a student and institution, which invites the very notion of ethical care. In a related sense, a CRM system is also designed to capture and collate large amounts of information about its constituents. The information included in these datasets is rich and contains vital information related to the student, their families, and data related to academic aspirations. There are governing factors which inform how information is treated within the organization, such as the legislative components related to privacy, while others are rooted institutional within internal policies, standards, and guidelines. Further, cyber security is another important facet of any organization the 21st Century and the kind and nature of data collection processes CRM solutions introduces a layer of responsibility related to ethical considerations. Through these lenses, it becomes imperative that a duty of ethical care be embedded in the operationalization of a CRM (Croteau & Li, 2003).

A student recruitment CRM solution within HEIs will affect operations and frontline resources who find themselves operating new technological platforms as a result of implementation. One of the guiding factors involved in any CRM implementation might be finding efficiencies in the organization related to human resources, role definitions, and in the enactment of procedures. The conceiving of a change initiative of the sort should not and cannot rule out job elimination, changes in job descriptions, and potential expansion of responsibilities, Indeed, these outcomes may be layered into the overall objectives of the project from the outset and as such a stated duty of care needs to be embedded within the initiative. Sharif and Scandura (2014) concede that the organization is better served when its management's "transparency during the change process reaffirms the ethical nature of the leader" (p. 185) and through expression of this sentiment throughout the project that human resources can find ways to trust in the process. Change initiatives face long odds in terms of success if there is a conflation of management with leadership and while my own role is situated within an operational context, this project leverages my abilities to reach across the environment to engage resources from disparate areas. From an ethical standpoint, leadership enactment has imbued within it a duty to inform how the tone of the project is to unfold and in what ways the values of the organization live throughout. Problems inherent to how change might be implemented are troubled by lack of commitment, lack of clarity, and an unwillingness to *lead* the change. *Management* sees to how the engaged changes become part of overall operational processing and this aspect of the project differs wholly from that of *leadership*, which should be concerned with how and why an organizational change is implemented, including explicitly those considerations related to ethical care (Gill, 2002).

Chapter Summary

This chapter establishes a framework adopting the needed change identified in the previous chapter. Specifically, the Lewin (1951) Stage Theory Model is explored and applied to the proposed change project. The organization is analyzed through an array of systems analysis tools including a Systems Theory Model (Berwick, 1996) and the University Core Business Model (Marceau, 2014). An analysis of the relationship between the organization and external functions is provided as well as how units within interoperate. This chapter provides four potential solutions and arrives at a proposed conclusion. Finally, this chapter interrogates the leadership commitment to change and ethical considerations inherent to such a project, specifically linking Lewin's (1951) Stage Theory Model, the Adaptive Leadership approach, and the Path-Goal Leadership Theory.

Chapter 3 – Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication

Change Implementation Plan

Devising a plan to move forward with a complex initiative such as a student recruitment Customer/Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) system is daunting from the outset, but there are core components that can be used to inform and ground the overall plan to ensure implementation success and subsequent realization of its stated goals. Operationally, this change initiative would constitute core changes to role descriptions and work responsibilities, requiring resources to engage with prospective students using altered or new processes and procedures. Ideologically, the project could be beset with critics concerned with institutional corporatism and from an operational perspective the initiative could be rife with employee cynicism, bound up in an uncertain future proposed by imposed, and possibly unwelcome, structural and process change (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993; Carlson & Filner, 2017; Choi, 2011; Collini, 2012; Côté & Allahar, 2011).

The selected approach for this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is the hybrid model, which articulates a system whereby individuated units can create and implement their own CRM strategies, but must adhere to a data model that allows for an overall information management system to produce reports and give expression to key performance indicators (KPIs) for the organization. The reasons that the hybrid solution is preeminent are numerous. From a cost perspective, as articulated further in this document, there are significant benefits in how distributed funding arrangements will positively disperse the burden. Further, the costs in a hybrid solution model become highly modular, allowing downstream units to select their own local CRM solution, while adhering to a corporate data model and reporting construct. The hybrid solution also fits my own leadership capabilities within the institution and allows the initiative to start in an area under my own control, while anticipating the scalable requirements that need to be in place within the technology and process areas. The flexibility and scalability are significant positive influences on this selection, but a baser area of influence lies in how my leadership would be able to galvanize global institutional support and convincingly mitigate risks associated with a large-scale initiative. From a global initiative standpoint, there are gains to be made on consistency, repeatability, and control across the campus, but these promises would come at a significant cost, and would be further problematized by organizational aversion to risk.

This section articulates the change implementation plan embedded within this OIP and reflects on three major categories of the planning and implementation of a CRM system within a higher education institution (HEI). These categories are *strategic partnerships* (executive and cross–component), *change management*, and the *transition to new state*. Each of these three areas will be examined in terms of strengths, assumptions, limitations, and the ways these items can be mitigated, ameliorated, or have their effects lessened through careful consideration of their intricacies and the integration of tactics layered into the project from the outset.

Strategic Partnerships.

Whether a full–scale CRM implementation occurs across the entirety of the organization or subscale deployment is localized within a specific unit, forming partnerships with key resources distributed across the organization firmly places this OIP within the context of change leadership. Partnerships in this instance refer to the executive layer of the organization, distributed decanal and academic leadership, and senior administrative leaders, but also indicates bridging out to technical and line management resources as overt partners in the initiative. Communications plans and mandates provide certain coverage for the change initiative but developing partnership attitudes amongst the separate groups integrates the units together towards common goals. Vendor management would also fall under this umbrella term as software platform developers are also deeply invested in assuring success of the project. In the case of MaSU, cross–functional partnerships between the frontline faculty units, centralized registrar and graduate program offices, as well as outreach arms such as international and alumni development departments will need to be managed within the context of the solution selected. Within a hybrid implementation perspective, my role as leader is to form the data model, procure and implement a data analytics system, produce a best practices document, and allow for units to develop their own frontline systems. Specifically, my role is to gain alignment amongst distributed leadership as well as within the executive sponsorship layer. This task is facilitated by employing the directive and participative elements evidenced through the Path-Goal Leadership Theory and realized by establishing clear organizational goals as a means of motivation. The blend of directive, supportive, and participative leader behaviours lends towards an implementation that takes into account the distributed expertise within the project team and the operational environment yet also provides for the empowerment of my role to make key decisions on both a technological and resource level.

Change Management.

Related to project management, change management is a separate process designed to ensure buy–in and organizational readiness for the intended operational landscape and embedded within this modality lies the case for organizational change, the communications plan, and the deployment of an engaged, visible, and active executive group. My role as change leader is to build a stable coalition of key distributed leaders within the organization (Cawsey et al., 2015; Hiatt & Creasey, 2012) so that adherence to established guidelines and data models are agreed upon enforced. The change management component is a key ingredient in terms of engaging organizational resources and in gaining trust and support for the intended operational platform. Change management also establishes within the project a process whereby requests for scope alteration can be vetted and approved for implementation. This layer requires integration of the Adaptive Leadership framework in the form of meeting situational challenges and ensuring that I have implemented a structured way to analyze and form consensus on these elements. Specifically, I would instantiate a change committee comprised of functional experts within the project team would be leveraged to ascertain how change is introduced. As indicated earlier in this OIP, situational challenges which will confront this project are mitigated my leadership's

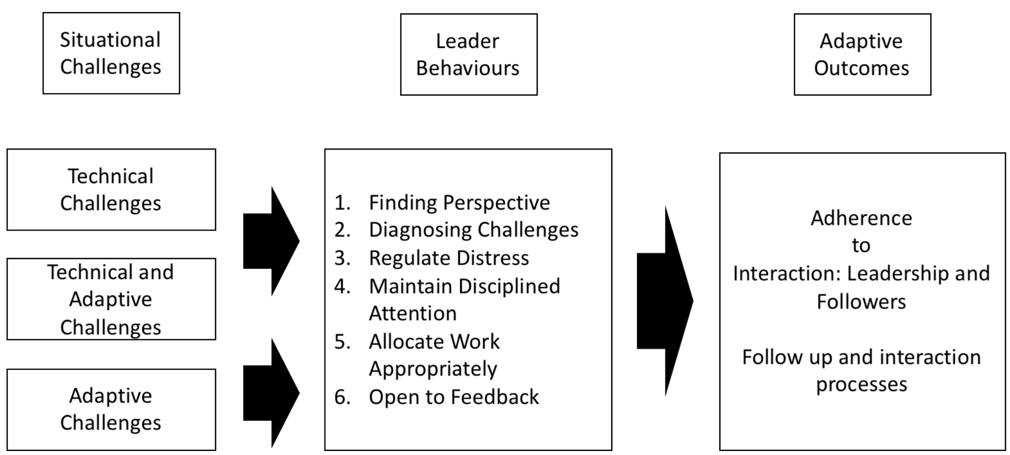

Figure 19. Adaptive Leadership Framework. Adapted from Northouse (2016).

capacity to assess and diagnose emergent issues (see Figure 19), situate the issues within the broader context of the project, and leverage the distributed team's expertise for potential solutions.

Transition to New State.

Finally, the project plan is in motion, resources are working on established work packages, and the initiative is hurtling towards implementation. The new state of operations is still only an anticipated moment at this point and attention must be paid to ensuring usability and establishment of processes that are going to work for line managers and end–users. During development and configuration of the platform, attention to user design components and functionality will need to be documented and prepared for downstream training activities. Most important to the transition process is the defining of key performance indicators (KPIs) and service level agreements (SLAs) which will inform the operating theatre of the new environment. Response times to the prospective student will need to be determined and reporting metrics designed to reflect productivity of the platform will need to be put into place. The transition to a future state is an important component for my own broader leadership role within the organization as it refers to the value proposition of the project overall and the Path-Goal Leadership Theory's achievement-orientation provides a useful mechanism to ensure the project-oriented and organizational goals are articulated well, measured, and addressed.

Payne and Frow (2006) have produced a CRM Strategy and Implementation Model (see Figure 20) which works well within this context of this OIP, specifically in how the approach is linked to organizational readiness, evaluation and measurement methodologies, and the manner through which project management and change management are differentiated.

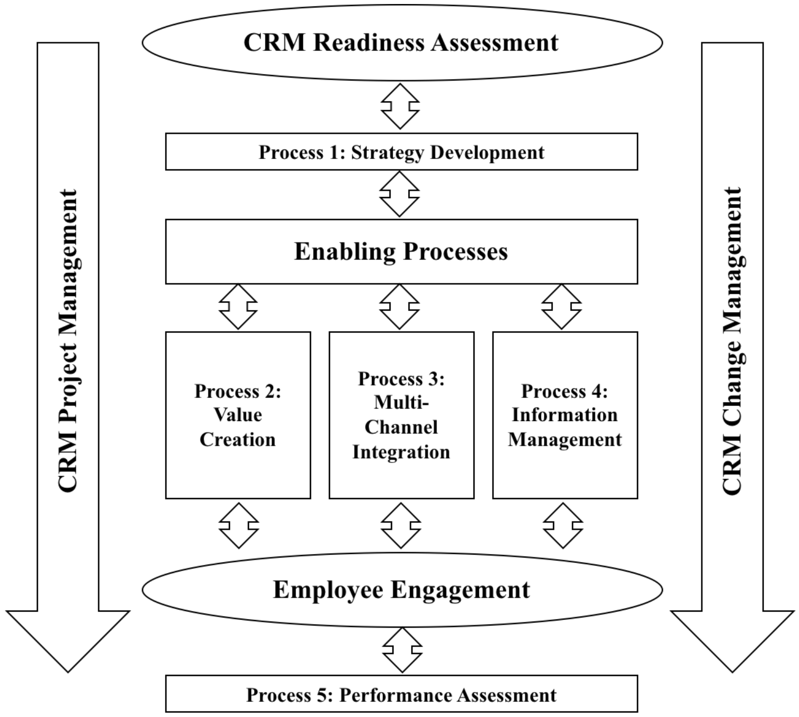

Figure 20. CRM Strategy and Implementation Model. Adapted from Payne & Frow (2006).

This model allows for the binding of purpose to the integration of process flow and makes explicit the extent to which information is managed and federated as a core factor for success. Further, as Payne and Frow (2006) establish, the model is “recursive, rather than linear, in that many of its activities need to be managed concurrently” (p. 144) while others require attention and remediation at other points along the implementation path. From a change implementation perspective, the five cross–functional processes embedded in this model (strategic development, value creation, multi–channel integration, information management, and performance management) are of chief importance as major components informing the project plan.

Strategy Development.

This process lies at the initial stages of business case development reflected in an overall timeline of the project (see Figure 20) but is deeply concerned with establishing “overall objectives and parameter [with a] dual focus on the organisation’s business strategy and its customer strategy" (Payne & Frow, 2006, p. 144). Within the HEI space and at MaSU specifically, this process requires my leadership role to define market segments, product lines, packaging, and allocation of marketing audiences as it relates to academic programs. Business strategy reflects which segments are prioritized and at what points certain programs are acted upon. Further, from a feedback perspective, commercial aspects of the CRM system provide information to academic leadership and the academic program developers in terms of KPIs and strategic program market analysis.

Value Creation.

Building on strategy development, the value creation process interprets the business priorities and develops a process meant to extract and deliver value to the organization. As MaSU faces pressures articulated earlier this document, the development and delivery of programs has become a strategic imperative, requiring balance in terms of defining offerings as being needed by various sectors, whether internal resourcing is in place at the institution, their revenue–generating capacities, and their academic viability. Value is a loaded term, inviting criticism from all fronts who would question how value is defined and for whom does value find purchase in the environment. My leadership role straddles both the technical as well as the business aspects of the organization and these questions are well-served by my capacity to communicate to all sides of the equation. Value creation is related to how developed programs and their audiences can be mapped and worked through CRM processes. Marketing initiatives related to the CRM process would define discrete audiences for each program and frontline CRM resources would engage in scripts and procedures designed to capture lead generation and execute conversion tactics (Seeman & O'Hara, 2006).

Multi–Channel Integration.

New to HEIs in general, the development of market channels finds distinct kinship with commercial enterprise in a direct manner (Palmberg, 2009; Tapp et al., 2004). Related to the value creation process, channel definition and integration processes develop key audiences and marketing platforms for CRM engagement. As each program flows from the strategic level of the organization, there does not exist a linear path for discovering prospective students and their subsequent enrolments. At MaSU, as with any complex system, audience development is multiple and simultaneous, requiring development of social media platform engagement, advertising networks, material development, site and program fair visits, and cold–calling, all of which feed information into the CRM system. The costs associated with the advertising componentry are coupled with the other costs required to run programs, providing a fulsome picture of the total cost of ownership (TCO) (Houston, 2008; Lechtchinskaia et al., 2012; Lee & Dale, 1998).

Information Management.

At the heart of any CRM implementation is an information accrual and reporting system. Flowing from the strategic level of the above model, this process attends to the systems of record (SoR) integrations and potentially the management of a 3rd party vendor. Business projects tend to underestimate the resources required for this process which underscores the need to ensure that strategy is in place and the required sequence of the data process are established in concert with the needs of the CRM initiative at large (van Vugt & Knasys, 2015). Student information systems (SIS), enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, and other SoRs are complex institutional platforms, requiring teams to support and enable the business to utilize the produced data effectively. As another information system, a CRM initiative would need to ensure common data definitions, automated feeds, and maintenance processes are in place for long term sustainability. Further, to gain enterprise–level insight into commercial opportunities related to student recruitment at MaSU, these disparate platforms would need to 'speak' with each other for the purposes of robust analytical reporting (Seeman & O'Hara, 2006), requiring investment in central data analytics systems. Part of the synergy with my role as leader would be to develop and implement this apparatus within the environment, working with central Information Technology (IT).

Performance Assessment.

Finally, the final process in this model reflects the need for iterative and recursive evaluation methodologies, allowing for ongoing process improvement and integration of innovative or refinement approaches in the future (Lee & Dale, 1998; Luan, 2002; Mukerjee & Singh, 2009). The assessment process is linked back to strategy management in terms of understanding how value is created through the CRM process. Feedback is assessed by analyzing the quality of information provided to the system by frontline MaSU resources, the fidelity of data definitions between disparate SoRs, and the efficacy demonstrated through the system where prospective student engagement results in a positive outcome for the institution or an understanding as to why an engagement failed. Further, the performance of the system is assessed through the lens of the students themselves (Yusoff, McLeary, & Woodruffe–Burton, 2015) and whether the experience effectively made an impact on decision–making. These feedback components directly loop back to the overall strategy with the intent of process or systems improvement.

Central to any implementation plan, an overarching timeline is required to establish a sequence of events meant to inform the contours of an implementation. Absent of specific dates, the chart below (see Figure 21) showcases a broad timeline sequence beginning to take shape.

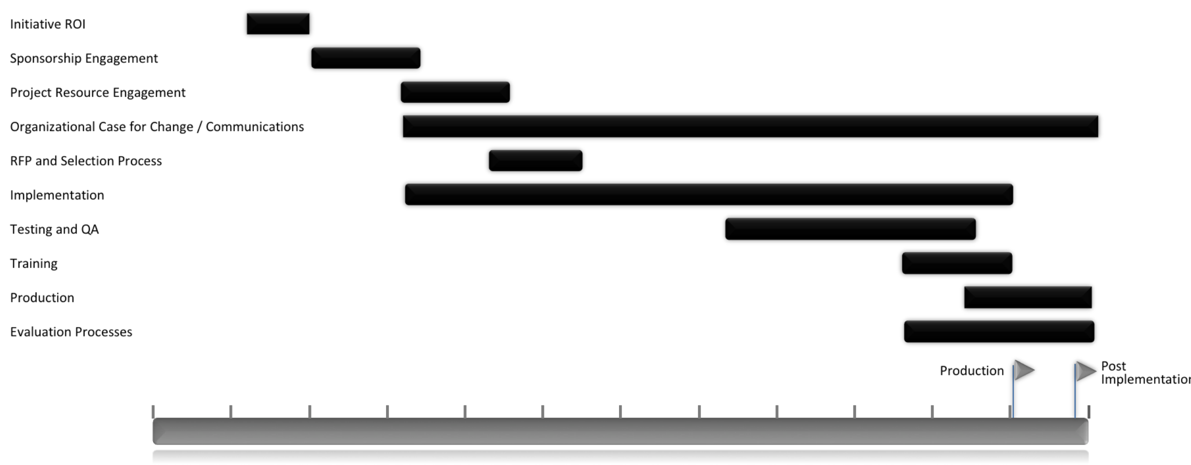

Figure 21. Proposed Project Timeline Gantt Chart.

As discussed earlier in this OIP, determining return on investment (ROI) metrics and the strategic imperatives required of the implementation lie at the outset of the initiative, followed closely by positive executive sponsor engagement. Due to the complexities related to the implementation of CRM methodologies within any organization (Almotairi, 2009), executive sponsor engagement must border on evangelism in terms of the organizational traction required for success. Project resource initiation and the organizational case for change (reflected in communications strategies) follow closely thereafter, effectively drafting on explicit executive sponsorship support. This component is particularly important as this is the area where my implementation of change management processes and my use of the Adaptive Leadership approach and Path-Goal Leadership Theory comes into play. Specifically, I would develop documentation and support points detailing the hybrid approach and the need to adhere to common practices, even if disparate technologies are integrated.

From an operational perspective, there are a number of issues lying in wait for an institutional student recruitment CRM implementation due to the disparate nature of governance and accountabilities in the organization. Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) is a relatively recent entry in the higher education space in Canada and as such is somewhat varied in terms of what would be considered "best practice" or the "proven method". Data out of the United States would suggest that while student enrolment and retention are at the top of priority lists across the landscape, only a third are using data and analytics to support their respective strategies and about two thirds have deployed some sort of local or enterprise toolset such as a CRM system to assist with their endeavours (Unit4, 2017). Further, three quarters of these institutions are not maximizing their data and a staggering two thirds of these organizations are not realizing the data they need to make informed decisions (Unit4, 2017).

For the purposes of this OIP, two major items have emerged in terms of establishing a baseline for comparison as this document moves towards building a model of efficacy: 1) A paucity in the research reflecting whether CRM implementations have resulted in net positive (and of increased quality) student uptake in applications and conversions, and in an ultimately positive admissions decision; 2) a more varied perspective on publicly–funded versus private–sector organizations and the efficacy patterns found therein. The assumption lying at the basis of this OIP is that the implementation of a student recruitment CRM system would place the institution reflected at a distinct competitive advantage. To mitigate the risk of not *exactly* knowing the efficacy this initiative will ultimately produce, a modeling approach is suggested—to employ a pilot implementation designed to create champions of a CRM mindset. These implementations, launched where need and appropriateness dictate, would allow for exploration of relatively inexpensive CRM processes with strong institutional data definitions in place, designed to integrate with other Systems of Record (SoR). Such an implementation model aligns well with the hybrid approach suggested earlier in this document. Among the difficulties present within the university is the ability for units (specifically, faculties) to prioritize their own agendas in terms of resourcing, funding, and implementation. Conversely, an imposed overall university approach driven by central resourcing and leadership is often perceived as encroaching on faculty autonomy. Arriving at consensus amongst the various stakeholder groups is increasingly difficult, so the approach plan for creating alignment is to create success within champion sites and prove out the solution, hence a hybrid model approach is most cogent. From a budgetary perspective, it is important to note that there are specific costs to absorb, both organizationally as well as at the unit level. Institutionally, investment in a platform for data capture and analysis will be required in the form of business analysis software, extract/transform/load (ETL) processes to be developed, and, most importantly, business rules to define and develop within the system. From a technology procurement (hardware) and implementation cost (consultancy and resources) perspective, this amount is estimated at the 100,000.00 to 200,000.00 (CAD) range, with annualized costs of approximately 20,000 – 35,000.00 (CAD) for back up, maintenance, and operational costs. At the unit level, the range is quite wide. The selected solution could be Microsoft Excel, as long as the data model conforms to the reporting system, which would only require resource costs which are likely extant. Scaling from that level, units can opt into selected platforms which are quite varied. For the purposes of this OIP, the selected solution is Salesforce.com which is an annualized cost of 25,000.00 (CAD) and one-time implementation amount of 15,000.00 (CAD). Local, extant resources are being used for the proof of concept which will mitigate hard line salary costs, but it is important to understand that front line CRM system data input will constitute an overhead in terms of time and the analysis components will require internal expertise.

Marceau (2014) specifies the structure of the university environment with student recruitment as part of its core business model. The prioritization of student recruitment is positioned as a means to manage risk to the organization from a sustainability perspective (Marceau, 2014), but also is positioned as a downstream issue should the reputation of the institution itself should become taxed. However, risk is inherent in the project as well. The disparate nature of the institutional organizational structure present at the university makes for difficult implementations, specifically within the context of a centrally–authored and imposed approach. Investment in any enterprise–oriented platform is a costly proposition from both licensing and operational perspectives and an implementation of this sort is inherently risky as each of the downstream units may opt–in or opt–out of the project.

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

Key to the success of any change initiative is to ensure that efficacy and impact are measured from the outset. By integrating upfront monitoring and evaluation methodologies, the project can control for downstream decision–making and the ability to make implementation adjustments as well as anticipate areas requiring addressment during operations. The implementation of a Customer/Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) system is highly contingent on a variety of systems services and human resource operations and as such requires a monitoring and evaluation model which adequately provides metrics designed to deal with both underlying and emerging issues. On one level, a commercial CRM approach to student recruitment in higher education could be seen to have one singular metric related to the overt numbers of students applying to discrete programs and subsequently enrolling within the institution. However, monitoring and evaluating the various actors and systems throughout the CRM sequence can reveal specific break–points in the overall apparatus which, once dealt with, can lead to positive adjustments to the platform and subsequent outcomes.

Due to the relative complexity of a student recruitment CRM system, it is important to note that adjustments, whether subtle or more substantive, in one area can affect the operations of another, sometimes producing deleterious effect. The CRM implementation proposed in this document would benefit from the use of two interrelated monitoring and evaluation methodologies: A Plan–do–Study–Act (PDSA) model for framing iterative, actionable, and qualitative tactical change and an input/output logic model for systems and human resource outcomes. These two models find kinship with each other in fairly tactile ways and are underscored using an overall implementation model which specifies the series of interactive and individual steps of the project, while integrating stated measurement processes.

Rooted in business process management (Lee & Dale, 1998) and adapted from Berwick (1996), and Langley, Nolan, and Nolan (1992), a PDSA approach (see Figure 22) provides a useful model whereby flaws in the system and within descendant subsystems can be brought into relief and dealt with at incremental and discrete levels.

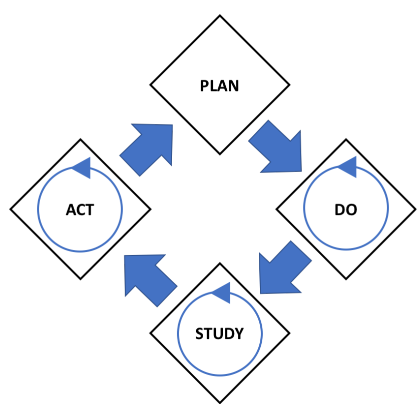

Figure 22. PDSA Model. Adapted from Langley, Nolan, & Nolan (1992).

The specific PDSA model in question is driven by the fundamental questions of any implementation—what is meant to be accomplished, how will change leading to improvement be known, and how can adjustments be made to ensure improvement (Berwick, 1996). Further, the PDSA model reflects on, and is inflected by, the original questions levied at the beginning of this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP):

- How are human and system processes readied for the proposed change;
- Are the expected outcomes from such an initiative mapped out effectively;
- How are each units' needs mapped into the process;
- How will the uptake/outcomes/objectives be measured for success (or failure);
- How can an overall return on investment (ROI) calculation be made to ensure that the investment is paid back into the institution over time; and
- If a subsequent ROI cannot be demonstrated, in what ways is the institution prepared to continue working within established processes and gain the competitive advantage desired?

As stated earlier in this OIP, the concerns that need to be addressed over the course of implementation as well as through the operational theatre of the CRM initiative include the need to:

- Establish clearly the goals for the initiative and the perceived benefits for the organization;
- Determine the path forward with special emphasis upon what is expected of the community;
- Mitigate internal factors such as roadblocks, inadequate processes, inappropriate resource allocation; and

- Mitigate external factors which include competitive advantage, theories on competition, enactment of business practices within higher education.

During the PLAN step, implementation and operational concerns are ratified against management and change processes and then are folded into the tactical environment. The fundamental concern with the planning phase is to develop processes which contribute positively to the prospective student engagement, both at an individual level as well as in the aggregate. From a PLAN perspective, the concerns of the business are ratified and placed within a project framework detailing the various work packages and resource allocations required to ensure implementation. A student recruitment CRM system is typically instantiated to better engage and appropriately communicate with prospective students as they interact with an institution. The CRM initiative mitigates the various points that a prospective student could find themselves engaging with the university and rationalizes the avenues of contact to specific and appropriate front–line resources. The PLAN includes the process–mapping required for proper role–based decision–making, information provision mechanisms, and outlined workflows for where prospects are to be directed. Stakeholders and resources involved with the PLAN stage include academics with program oversight accountabilities, project managers (both technical and administrative), line resources (marketing, recruitment, and admissions officers), and downstream stakeholders (registrar resources, international office constituents, information technology influencers). Typically, the sponsorship level (provost and decanal leaders) of the initiative would not be involved during the PDSA approach but would be leveraged to remove obstacles and resolve conflicts arising from issues of scope, resource availability, and any potential financial constraints. The PLAN step is inherently inductive (Berwick, 1996) and allows for iterative adjusting based on the outcomes of the other steps' evaluation components.

Within the DO step, the enactment of these processes unfolds, with the ability to engage in evaluative action throughout the sequence. The human and system resources in turn inform the implementation and platform configuration through a series of various tasks, processes of information–gathering, and the ratifying of actionable intelligence. Within the DO phase, the operators are able to enact and reconfigure policies and procedures related to student recruitment, designed to improve processes through thoughtful and controlled steps. Lead–generation processes where the CRM technology brokers and tracks the interactions between recruitment agents and prospective students would inform the DO stage and would include key performance indicators (KPIs) such as how long the interaction took, how frequent the contact points between the parties occur, and how the interaction results in actionable service to the customer in question. The overall interaction would be governed by internal service level agreements (SLAs) established by management and enacted by front–line resources. The DO stage enacts these components, which in turn provide fertile data though the information capture and analytical capabilities inherent within the CRM system and its binding to other systems of record (SoR).

Taking advantage of the information collected during the DO stage, the STUDY and ACT steps are able to conduct the necessary analytics to redress any emergent issues from lead–generation processes. Through established monitoring and evaluation meetings held by the student recruitment team(s), the results of call–times, interaction with prospective students, and the resultant commitment of the prospect to the institution can be interrogated, analyzed, and subsequent remediation steps established. Output associated with these stages would include weekly dashboards (marketing, recruitment, admissions data) relating progression heuristics in terms of program engagement and emerging shortfalls, detailed action steps to remediate tactical gaps, and potential resource tasking and/or requests for further resourcing.

At each step throughout the PDSA process, there are cyclical and iterative analysis opportunities to allow for drilling deeper into potential issues—at the STUDY and ACT steps, this componentry could include educative and market research opportunities to discover and establish new audiences, emerging industry marketing trends, and third–party vendor evaluation and engagement. The example below (see Figure 23) showcases the various metrics used for

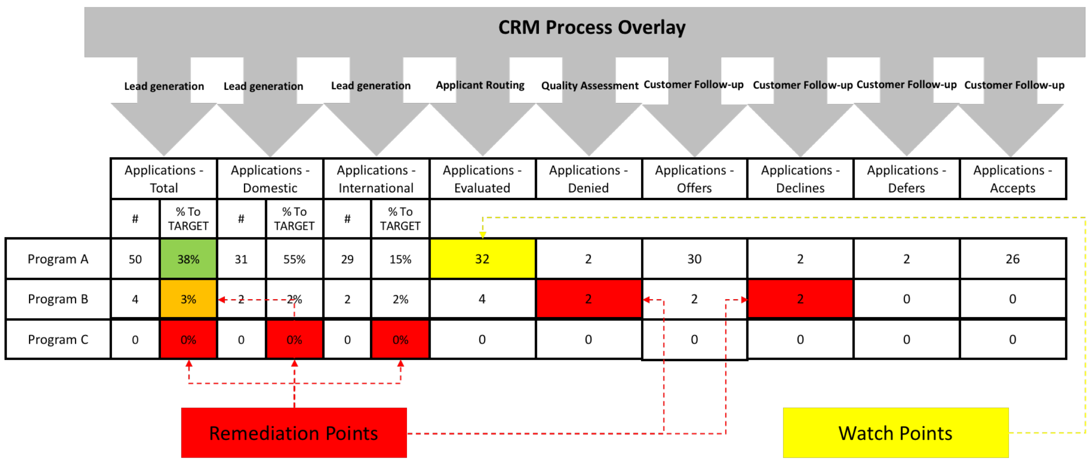

Figure 23. Example of Key Performance Indicator Dashboard for scheduled review.

decision–making throughout the PDSA sequence. Red markers indicate areas requiring immediate remediation, while yellow markers might suggest an issue where specific context could shed further light. In the example above, the yellow item showing 32 student applications evaluated out of a total of 50 submissions might indicate a bottleneck in terms of academic oversight. The number of applications submitted might suggest a marketing gap or a program clarity issue. A second red marker where potential students have either been denied or have declined might suggest academic quality issues or interest alignment, both of which can be flagged early in the process through the CRM platform.

As used to articulate the leadership problem of practice earlier in this OIP, a logic model (see Figure 24) is particularly useful as a complement to the PDSA approach. Palmberg (2009) performed an analysis of articles related to business process improvement and found that the flow of these types of initiatives can be simplistically ratified to the establishment of business inputs (needs) that lead ultimately to outputs (customer needs or business stakeholders). The logic model reflects this idea, with an iterative, reflection–based process allowing for evaluation

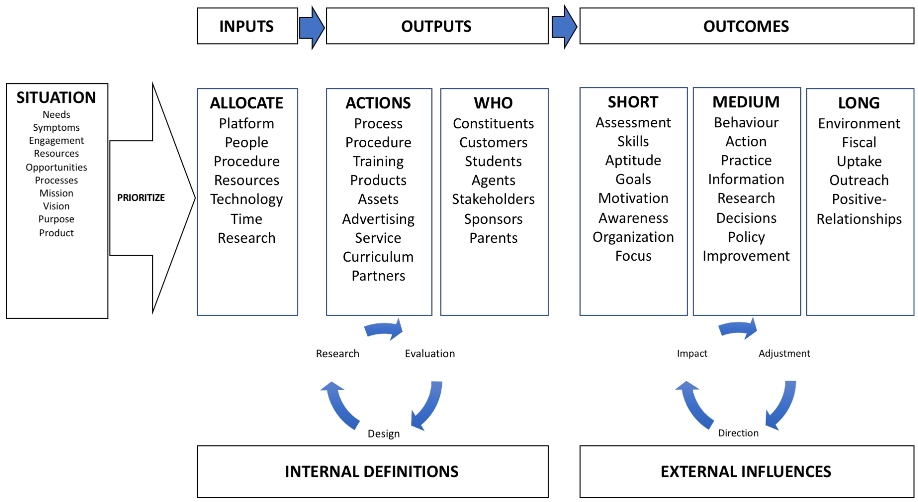

Figure 24. Problem of Practice Logic Model. Adapted from Kellogg Foundation (2004) and Palmberg (2009).

during each step of the PDSA. At each step, the situation is interrogated (from marketing and awareness–building exercises to student engagement and conversion processes) in terms of what is required of the implementation. The situation leads to the initial allocation of resources (human, system, or other), cast as inputs in the logic model. As the actions unfold within the model, outputs begin to emerge, which can be evaluated at each level in the PDSA model, revealing gaps or strengths within the organization and sequencing of processes. As the logic model articulates the outcomes, iterative interrogation can also profit from any external influences in play. The logic model can be leveraged to inform the analysis, implementation, and measurement of the project and can be linked to the PDSA approach as a means to form actionable tactics to deal with remediation throughout the process.

Finally, Mukerjee and Singh (2009) postulate monitoring and evaluation processes through the lens of commercial adoption of CRMs systems within private industry and the model they propose fits remarkably well within the higher education environment. The performance of a CRM system can be best measured and imbued with "better efficacy if the objectives to be achieved [sic] have been clearly identified" (Mukerjee & Singh, 2009, p. 77) from the outset of the project. The model below (see Figure 25) is used earlier in this OIP to describe the

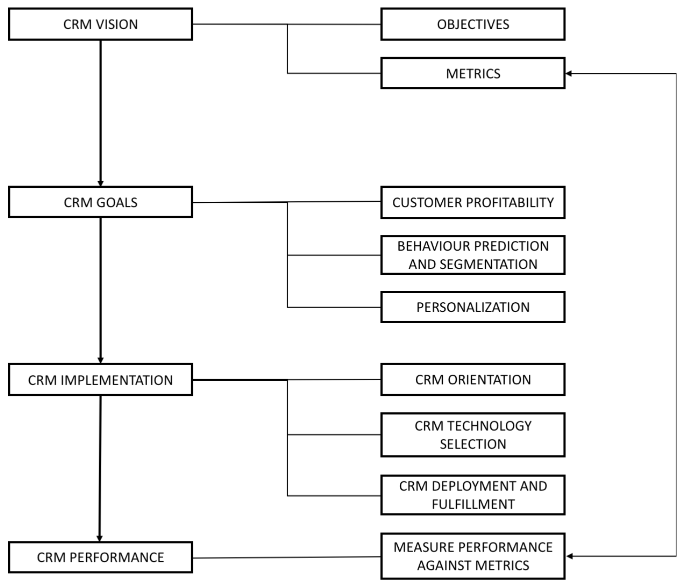

Figure 25. A CRM Implementation Model. Adapted from Mukerjee and Singh (2009).

overall project approach, but it is brought forward at this moment to draw attention to the interdependence of implementation and subsequent monitoring and evaluation capabilities. KPIs, SLAs, and any further metrics must be considered from the outset of the project to mitigate issues related to clarity and purpose of the project downstream. As within the PDSA and logic models described above, the CRM Implementation Model is iterative, effectively linking its stated purpose(s) to its evaluative processes. The project initiation and subsequent operation of the CRM system are bound together through the linking of its vision, goals, implementation, and performance mechanisms and measurements.

Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and Change Process Communications Plan

Often overlooked, or at the very least underestimated, communication related to change initiatives is critical to project success. Whether the impact is felt during inception and development phases or through the actual implementation and operationalization of the change, communication related to the purpose, objectives, and reasons for conducting the initiative needs to be a priority from the outset. Specifically related to organizational CRM initiatives, a lack of communication with executive and senior leadership stakeholders, frontline management and resources, and possibly the overall organization is often cited as a critical factor in implementation failures (Almotairi, 2009; Hrnjic, 2016; Seeman & O'Hara, 2006). This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is predicated on driving value through the organization by making more efficient and productive student recruitment and conversion processes through the implementation of a Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) system. The implementation of a CRM system is to unfold through a hybrid, incremental approach within the organization, leveraging local technical and business resources at the unit level while defining data componentry and reporting requirements from a more global perspective. As such, my role as leader is to develop a distinct communications plan outlining the program's imperatives, key messaging, clear objectives, and milestones not only as a mechanism of information–sharing but to mitigate potential weak points of the project, in part or as a whole. The communications plan for the purposes of this OIP is rooted in a key messaging platform and draws upon Barrett's (2002) Strategic Employee Communication Model to inform how and what information is imparted to stakeholders and in what ways efficacy can be achieved throughout the strategy. The overall communications strategy also utilizes Pearce's (as lensed through Brown, 2005) communication cultures framework as a means to understand where and how disparate, yet related, functions in the organization find meaning in the change initiative proposed. In a related sense, research related to employee attitudes, cynicism, and openness to change will be used to inflect the overall communications plan. Finally, the term *communications* is pluralized due to the plurality reflected in the aspects, stakeholders, audiences, and tactics embedded in the overall change initiative. My leadership role is structured towards facilitating communications at all levels in the organization, at varying times, and with differentiated messaging. This communications model finds kinship with the Path-Goal Leadership Theory and the Adaptive Leadership model due to the emphasis on people and the resolution of emergent issues and concerns.

Structured into three sections, the communications plan for this OIP focuses on awareness–building and the institutional need for change, implementation–oriented key messaging and updates relating to the development and implementation of the project itself, and a continuous post–implementation communications platform which would allow for quality and improvement processes to unfold within an operational modality. Given a proposed staged hybrid implementation of a student recruitment CRM system at MaSU, each of the three communication strategies have multiple, parallel, interrelated, and corresponding components. For example, as the implementation of CRM system within MaSU unfolds, there will be several stakeholders, resources, and engagement points throughout the project, with technical and systemic integration phases throughout. The distributed nature of governance and decision–making of the institution in question implies that there will be multiple sub–projects within the overall initiative. Each unit could potentially have its own leadership, timelines, technical or operational needs, and individuated requirements for communication.

Barrett's (2002) Strategic Employee Communication Model (see Figure 26) works "analytically to break employee communication down into manageable, recognizable parts" (p. 221) while at the same time intertwines each part strategically to facilitate change.

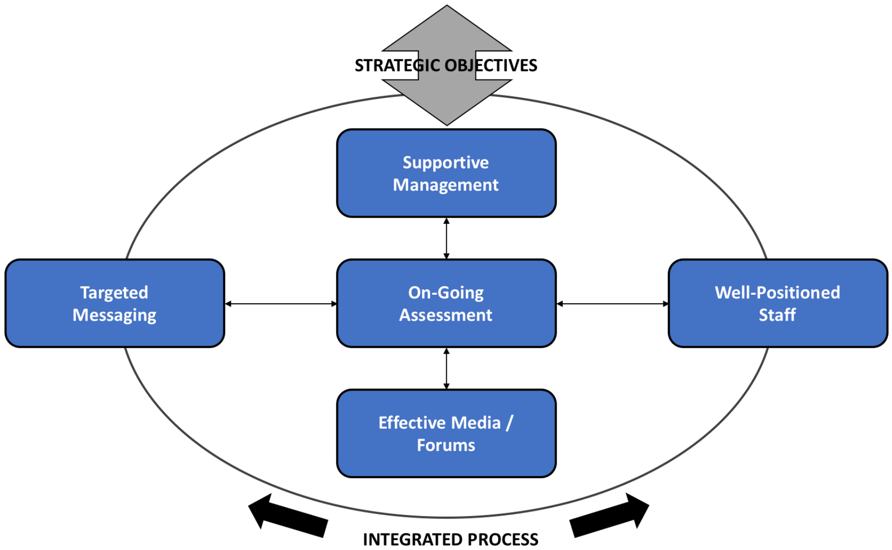

Figure 26. Strategic Employee Communication Model. Adpated from Barrett (2002).

The plan should contain specific correlation between the stated strategic objectives of the organization and the messaging within the integrated communications. The obvious strategic objectives for a CRM engagement are to positively engage prospective students through every step of the marketing–recruitment–conversion chain of events and key messaging should reflect those goals from the outset. Barrett's (2002) model allows for an iterative process, integrating and empowering project and operational staff to develop, reflect, and implement messaging through appropriate media vehicles and to the required target audience(s). Integral to the success of this model is the development of the strategic objectives from the outset—there is an embedded assumption that the project imperatives are agreed upon and championed by senior leaders in the organization and absorbed by management and the placement of staff resources in consistent and meaningful fashion. However, the model is also reflexive allowing for disparity in terms of understanding of strategic imperatives to be highlighted as a concern senior leadership must deal with. This model calls for management and staffing resources to be imbricated in the communications strategy, ensuring consistent understanding and subsequent messaging of the project. My specific leadership role within this context is to ensure alignment with the goals of the project, the work packages defined, and the outcomes being realized.

Awareness–Building.

Through a developed and concerted awareness–building initiative, the need for organizational change can be established and related to key individuals within the institution. In the case of this OIP, an argument for Service Level Agreement (SLA) improvement resulting in increased qualitative student application, acceptance, and conversion to enrolment through a CRM apparatus would be made to the following groups.

Sponsorship and Senior Leadership.

By leveraging documentation from earlier sections of this OIP and through the establishment of how change will improve the current state, gaining support for this group is the first step of the process, not only for the release of potential funding towards the initiative and allowance for personnel to be marshalled towards its implementation, but also for full–throated endorsement of the project and its intended end–state. Lack of full commitment or visibility from this level is often cited as a major component in industrial CRM failures (Almotairi, 2009). At this level, the PVP and decanal layers of MaSU are involved and engaged through strategic planning processes, messaging, presentations, and demonstrations.

Academic Functions.

Often not part of administrative decision–making, it is important that parallel–stream academic partners are aware of the initiative for two major reasons—1) the CRM process is preoccupied with developing relationships with viable students and a shared understanding of what *quality* means between the administrative and academic functions is critical in this manner; 2) there could be a downstream potential for academic personnel to be directly in contact with the CRM platform at some point. At this level, meetings, presentations, and messaging with academic partners at MaSU are key for success.

Academic Program Offices, Central Admissions and Registrar Resources.

The administrative admissions offices across the university are required to understand the new processes and the manner through which their roles might be affected by new machinery. As end–point users, building awareness at this stage is critical due to the impact of unengaged frontline resources on CRM failure rates (Almotairi, 2009). At a more human level, engaging these critical frontline resources is critical due to the fact that a large portion of a CRM system's use will fall into their distributed hands and by involving these resources from the outset will assist in mitigating eventual issues. At this level, meetings, surveys, interviews, and demonstrations are key for success.

Implementation Key Messaging.

During the implementation project, from the kick–off point to the date of a go–live decision, communications related to the development and status of tasks and accomplishments, in addition to addressment of emerging issues and roadblocks, are required to ensure success of the project. Burke (2018) advocates for a significant activity conducted at the "outset of the organization change [as] an event that will capture attention, provide focus, and create the reality that the change effort now launched is not merely an exercise" (p. 334) and through this event, executive sponsorship and organizational engagement can be established as a cohesive front.

In addition to the groups listed above during the Awareness–Building phase of the communications plan, further groups are now integrated.

Technical and Student Recruitment Resources.

Specifically, these resources inform the core team of implementers from the institutional perspective. Partnering with key vendor resources, these technical and functional specialists work with the Project Management Office (PMO) to ensure task determination, allocation, and execution remain on time and in sequence. Communications with these teams will include daily and weekly operations and status–update meetings. In turn, roadblocks, resource constraints, milestone achievement, and project successes are escalated and communicated from the PMO to Sponsorship and Senior Leadership in the form of ad hoc messaging and weekly reports. Further, a monthly sponsorship meeting consisting of the PMO, appropriate project personnel, and specific Sponsorship and Senior Leadership members will allow for multidirectional discussion and allowance for course correction.

The Organization.

Similar to the academic partners mentioned earlier, key messaging towards the overall or broader and relevant community in terms of the forthcoming release, its benefits, and any expectations required of this group will allow for a transparent integration into the operational manifold.

Post–Implementation.

All too often, post implementation concerns are parked in favour of performing the tasks of project implementation (Hrnjic, 2016). The communications platform for this OIP would allow for information–sharing to the broader community and support future quality and improvement processes to unfold within an operational modality. An operational framework would now replace a project disposition and would likely entail timed operations meetings, report generation and dissemination to stakeholders, and a quality assurance process that would gesture towards further business process improvements, further supporting the iterative model discussed earlier in this OIP. Finally, a new constituent group emerges which requires its own key messaging plan.

Students.

Arguably the most important of all constituents in a student recruitment CRM implementation, students would need to be aware that information being collected from them are being used in a database–informed marketing engine. By engaging with the university for the purposes of information–gathering, submitting an application, or enrolment, the student is implicitly taking part in the data collection apparatus, but transparent messaging emphasizing the importance of a positive student experience as initially facilitated by CRM processing is a necessary step.

Pearce (through Brown, 2005) postulates a cultural framework which helps to better understand how different groups deal with change within their specific areas and the organization as a whole. A *monocultural* environment views the landscape as largely homogenous, not appreciably willing to risk resources to engage in change as departments and organizational units are largely similar. An *ethnocentric* culture sees their process as superior, but largely unwilling to risk resources to improve the organization as a whole. A *modernistic* approach observes the whole as well as the part and would seek to engage in change, allowing for risk in the equation, while a *cosmopolitan* ecology seeks to ensure a coordinated overall approach over true coherence of understanding (p.44). What is germane to this OIP and these ersatz cultural understandings lies in how communications can play a role in diminishing, or mitigating, pockets of resistance from the outset of the project. Many organizational units might consider the status quo of their operations as either adequate or already of superior make and quality. Through a substantive communications model, a shift in mindset can begin to take hold, allowing for siloes to be broken down and tolerance for change to be engaged. Change agents such as recruitment officers might be more modernistic or cosmopolitan nature, while Registrar resources might be more in keeping with a combination of monocultural and ethnocentric sensibilities. The point being made that each are using differentiated dialects that do not organically speak to each other. The communications plan is able to mediate these cultural touchpoints.

As a final and highly cursory component, Choi's (2011) literature review on commitment and openness of employees and organizational change contains interesting components that could be utilized in a general way with the communications plan. Divided into four aspects—readiness for change, commitment to change, openness to change, and cynicism towards change—Choi (2011) develops the work of others in understanding how "readiness for change in the organizational context involves individual impressions about the organization's capacity to make a successful change, the extent to which the change is needed, and the benefits the organization and its members can gain from the change" (p. 482) and in what ways employees remain committed to both the proposed or implemented change as well as the organization as a whole. As a corollary, Choi (2011) explores cynicism in how employees view organizations as untrustworthy from the outset or have come to believe that change initiatives largely do not have employees' best interests at heart or have not been fully considered in terms of projected benefits. As future consideration, exploration on this front would be worthwhile.

Chapter Summary

This chapter examines the actual change plan in detail and establishes the partnerships required to transition to a new state of existence. A CRM implementation model is explored as a framework to guide the initiative and gauge impact downstream. Monitoring and evaluating the change initiative in terms of both implementation and subsequent operationalization are explored and ratified and a PLAN-DO-ACT rationale is incorporated for clearer understanding of project instantiation. Finally, a communications model is presented relying upon Barrett's (2002) Strategic Employee Communication Model whereby key messaging and discrete audiences are established.

Limitations and Future Considerations

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) considers the systems, processes, objectives, and outcomes of how student recruitment processes can benefit from the implementation of a systemic Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) platform. While gestured towards in this document, a significant limitation of such an initiative in the HEI space is in data quality, typically associated with front line staff as an input function. This study does not examine the habits or attitudes of front line staff in terms of how a perceived workload increase might affect operations. My leadership-oriented view of this proposal is weighted significantly towards defining and implementing such a system and the ways in which a CRM system would benefit the overall. A further investigation, utilizing primary research methodologies, into how CRM implementations affect front line operations would be a strong complement to this OIP.

A second limitation is centered around the organizational culture of the academy itself and while this OIP is concerned with how a CRM platform could be technically implemented within an institution and will, to some degree, address the change resistance that might unfold from within that organization, there are entrenched values and opinions about how a higher education institution (HEI) could and should be governed and operated. As pressure mounts from quarters of the university in terms of decision–making and program development, there may be feedback that could disrupt executive sponsorship in the large. Connected with this line of thinking is the notion of higher education's executive leadership where a typical academic/administrative leadership position is enacted as a 5–year term and in rotating fashion (Fallis, 2013). This turnover of executive leadership could result in deleterious effects related to long–term organizational change solutions. As a staff-situated leader, one of the benefits my role brings to the initiative is one of consistency and assurance of goal-achievement as my tenure would typically span the academic executive turnover.

Further, a significant limitation of this OIP is related to data fidelity across disparate platforms within the enterprise environment. While acknowledged in this document, the complexities involved in implementing data integrations with other Systems of Record (SoR) platforms are only superficially addressed. Data integration processes which would involve master data mapping, extract/transform/load (ETL) processes, and quality assurance practices are significant projects individually. The success of a CRM implementation, whether in the public sector or private, relies on qualitative upstream information present within systems of record and this study does not investigate the quality of data within those environments.

Finally, a CRM implementation is both a set of processes as well as a technological solution that is brought to bear on commercial enterprise meant to achieve efficiencies within the supply chain and maximize productivity amongst disparate functions within the organization. Universities are decentralized in nature and there exists today an incredible array of differentiated and disparate processes that have been in place for historical as well as functional reasons. HEIs are environments which have seen substantial change over the past number of decades (Chafee, 1998; Côté & Allahar, 2011). Within Canada, it is expected that domestic student opportunities as it relates to higher education enrolment will continue to have increased competitive pressure placed upon it. At the same time, international student recruitment and partnership strategies have emerged at virtually all major public university and college environments in Canada (Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, 2017) and are seen as a way to both bolster global reputation and ranking as well as increase direct revenues to the institutions. Taken in concert, domestic and international student recruitment strategies require planning, executive–sponsored objectives, and coordination amongst diverse units within any higher education institution.

As higher education institutions (HEIs) refine their strategic plans over the coming years, the topic of student recruitment and enrolment, whether it be domestic or international in nature, has emerged as a central component. Under present circumstances, virtually all institutions employ some form of student recruitment CRM systems within their environments, although the approaches may be fractured and local to individual faculty units and departments. The need to consolidate the data within these processes and procedures will inform objective and outcome planning as institutions will seek to gain insight into student application and conversion behaviours. Concerted CRM strategies do not need to include major procurement implementations, but organizations finding opportunities to draw disparate datasets together for reporting and business intelligence purposes will find themselves at a distinct advantage.

In a perfect academic world, institutional administration and academic governance componentry would find a way to work in symbiosis, both contributing to the fabric of a vibrant, relevant, and engaging program apparatus, albeit with quite different approaches and mandates. Honouring the subjectivities and expertise that each group affords the institution will allow for meaningful solution–building into the next phase of higher education existence. The academic culture is needed by the institution through the rigour, knowledges, and status that high–quality research and teaching showcased daily. Conversely, the academic culture now requires the administrative apparatus in ways that perhaps did not exist in the not–too–distant past. The competition–laced global environment within which institutions find themselves is worth critiquing, but also needs to be fully acknowledged. Finally, there is a paucity in the literature related to longitudinal efficacy of CRM systems in non–commercial environments and discrete data would greatly benefit the adoption of these strategies at other institutions.

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