Increasing Collaboration Between Noncredit Staff and Credit Faculty

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Abstract

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) focused on two specific stakeholder groups within a liberal arts postsecondary institution in western Canada: the noncredit faculty (NCF) and academic faculties. A third group, the external community, is also a key stakeholder that will benefit from the OIP through relevant programming for work-ready graduates. The NCF, in which noncredit certificates, diplomas, and professional development programs are offered, is tasked with revenue generation. It is an outward facing arm of the organization, with a strong focus on building relationships with the business and nonprofit community. The goals of the academic faculties are to develop and grant undergraduate programs and degrees. The problem of practice is to develop more organized opportunities for both stakeholder groups to better collaborate, understand each other’s work, create relevant programming opportunities for students, meet faculty and institutional goals, and work closely with external stakeholders in the community. Various potential solutions are explored, while documenting the challenges and benefits of each. Working to provide a solution to the gap in collaboration across campus, and the impact which that may have on program development, the OIP used a combination of distributed and behavioural leadership approaches, as well as the four-stage change path model. Using institutional and provincial strategic planning documents, an outline of the current and desired future state is identified, as well as the framework to lead the change process. A communication plan and implementation process are outlined to address the changes and create fundamental change. As the goal is for the change process to be iterative, next steps and future considerations are also outlined.

Keywords: collaboration, distributed leadership, change path model, continuous learning, noncredit
Executive Summary

Innovative programs that meet the needs of learners are a foundational component of any postsecondary institution. However, with their reputations as traditional organizations, postsecondary institutions do not always develop programs in an innovative way. This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) provides a plan to address program development through meaningful collaboration.

This OIP is centered within a problem of practice (PoP) in a liberal arts undergraduate university in western Canada. The university credit programming is focused on developing undergraduate degrees, whereas the noncredit faculty (NCF) is focused on offering certificates, diplomas, and professional development opportunities to adult learners. In addition, the NCF is a revenue-generating arm of the organization, and there is an expectation that the programs it offers provide a financial return to the university.

The provincial government that provides funding for the university has prioritized collaboration and program growth ([Ministry of Higher Education], 2020b). Although the programming goals of the noncredit and credit faculties are different, there is a missed opportunity to better leverage the expertise between the two faculties. This issue can be remedied through an organized effort to collaborate and develop shared programming to the benefit of students, the university, and the larger community.

The PoP articulated in this OIP is focused on collaboration. Specifically, it asks how the NCF can facilitate new programming opportunities while working collaboratively with internal credit faculty members and external community partners. Currently, noncredit programming is developed primarily within the NCF without significant input from credit faculty members, and credit programming is developed without insights from the NCF. The opportunity, then, is to
better collaborate between the two faculties, to allow for more robust programming that not only meets the needs of students and is academically rigorous, but also addresses gaps in the workplace to support employers with work-ready students. In addition, the provincial government that provides funding to this public institution has prioritized collaboration across postsecondary institutions and the development of innovative programs.

This OIP considers three possible solutions to address the PoP, ultimately recommending the creation of a community of practice (CoP), consisting of both NCF staff and credit faculty members, who would work together to develop shared programming. Although this change challenges the status quo of program development within the organization, it is not out of reach, and will be guided by change frameworks (Cawsey et al., 2020; Duck, 2001).

The leadership approach that will guide this process is distributed leadership, which “focuses on how leadership practice is distributed among formal and informal leaders” (Harris, 2004, p. 14). This leadership approach provides a framework to distribute leadership to stakeholders who hold expertise, ensuring that those with the appropriate experience are engaged in the CoP. A critical organizational analysis underscored by Nadler and Tushman’s (1980) congruence model highlights the lack of alignment between the two faculties. It helps to pinpoint where there is an opportunity to address those gaps through understanding how tasks, people, structure, and the culture of an organization can contribute to change.

An implementation, evaluation, and communication plan is applied with consideration to the plan-do-study-act model (Moen & Norman, 2009), which is in an iterative model that allows for the critical evaluation of the change initiative. The communication plan is based on principles by Klein (1996) and Cawsey et al. (2020) and includes recommendations regarding when and how, and with what mechanism, to communicate to various stakeholders.
The university at the centre of this OIP has a well-regarded NCF with strong programming that meets the needs of its learners. Likewise, the undergraduate offerings are in demand and led by expert instructors. Successful implementation of this OIP will allow for enhanced learning opportunities for students while leveraging expertise from both faculties.
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Acronyms

CoP (Community of Practice)
NCF (Noncredit Faculty)
OIP (Organizational Improvement Project)
PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act)
PESTE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, and Environmental)
PoP (Problem of Practice)
WIL (Work-Integrated Learning)
WLAU (Western Liberal Arts University)
Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem

A western Canadian provincial government has prioritized innovation and entrepreneurship in postsecondary education. One of the key objectives identified by that province’s responsible governing body (herein anonymized as Ministry of Higher Education) in its strategic plan is to “support postsecondary institutions’ efforts to diversify revenue and to explore more entrepreneurial approaches to program funding and delivery” ([Ministry of Higher Education], 2020b, p. 7). Another key goal is to “increase program relevance and the employability of learners” ([Ministry of Higher Education], 2020b, p. 7). Postsecondary institutions in the province must adapt to find ways to meet the government objectives while staying true to their core values. This organization improvement plan (OIP) identifies a strategy to achieve that end, while meeting institutional goals as well, with a focus on the academic division of the postsecondary institution.

In this, the first of three chapters the organizational context of the higher education organization at the heart of the OIP is discussed and a leadership position and lens statement are articulated. In addition, a leadership problem of practice (PoP) is articulated and framed using analysis tools. Guiding questions emerging from the PoP are captured, and a leadership-focused vision for change is articulated, including change drivers and the current and desired future state. Finally, a brief analysis of the organizational change readiness closes out the chapter.

Organizational Context

The organizational context of the university this OIP focuses on provides an institutional background that highlights the rationale for the PoP to be addressed. In the following sections, the organizational context, vision, goals, organizational structure, leadership approaches, and a brief history are highlighted.
The Western Liberal Arts University (WLAU; a pseudonym) is situated in western Canada, and it serves over 10,000 undergraduate students in its degree granting programs (WLAU, 2020). Offering an exceptional undergraduate experience is the key vision of WLAU, an over 100-year-old postsecondary institution. With a significant focus on community outreach and partnerships, the word community is mentioned 22 times in the organizational strategic plan (WLAU, 2020), underlining the value the university places on outreach and working with external stakeholders to achieve its goals. The process of collaboration between the community and those in postsecondary institutions “can contribute to the larger community need of building social capital and for people to work together” (Gronski & Pigg, 2000, p. 783). Community outreach is achieved through various means, including WIL opportunities, program advisory committees, practicum placements, guest speaking opportunities, alumni events, and more.

WLAU is an autonomous entity regulated by its provincial postsecondary learning act. It follows a bicameral model of governance that is based “on the principle of having formal corporate governance mechanisms to balance the public interest and the university’s academic interest” (Austin & Jones, 2016, p. 38) with the board of governors serving as a bridge between external stakeholders and the organization (Austin & Jones, 2016). The General Faculties Council is responsible for the academic affairs of the university (WLAU, 2020) and is subject to the authority of the Board of Governors, which oversees the management and operation of the university’s business and affairs (WLAU, 2020). The academic affairs division of the university includes six academic faculties, of which five are focused on undergraduate degree programming and one is focused on noncredit adult continuing and professional education.

The unique noncredit faculty (NCF) is not bound by the academic governance of the university in the same rigorous way as the credit faculties, such as the long and formal
curriculum review and submission processes to which the credit faculties must adhere. Within
this process, new credit courses can take up to 18 months to be approved before they are made
available to students. This key difference in program and course approvals provides the NCF the
opportunity to be nimble and responsive to programming needs, which is key to its business
model and financial success as a revenue-generating arm of the institution.

The NCF offers professional adult education and programming and has over 7,500
unique registrations each year (NCF, 2018). The programming includes online, face-to-face, and
blended courses that provide a combination of online and in person course delivery. The NCF is
entrepreneurial, works closely with industry and professional associations to inform
programming, and prides itself on its responsiveness to new and emerging learner needs in adult
continuous studies. Some of these partnerships include being an endorsed education provider of
professional associations, such as the Project Management Institute, or working collaboratively
with the Canadian Payroll Association to offer its approved programming to NCF students (NCF,
2018). As it is not bound by many of the academic institutional policies, the NCF is the faculty
within the academic affairs division best positioned to have alignment with community outreach
and to be responsive to the needs and opportunities from external stakeholders.

The NCF has approximately 50 staff members supporting its work. At the helm is the
dean, who reports to the academic vice president, and reporting to the dean are two directors. I
am one of those directors, responsible for programming in the NCF (the other director oversees
music education). In addition to the staffing complement of the NCF, over 500 contract
instructors support the various programming it offers. A unique feature of the NCF is that none
of the instructors are part of the collective bargaining faculty association; instead, they are hired
as independent contractors. Staff within the NCF also fall outside of the faculty association and
are instead members of the WLAU staff association, as is the case with staff in the credit faculties. The dean is a member of the General Faculties Council, and that is the only role in the NCF with direct connection to an academic committee or governing body. Other credit faculties have more representation on these committees, with faculty chairs, associate deans, and professors making up the majority of the membership. Although a contributing and valuable member of the academic affairs division at the university, the NCF is quite disconnected from the academic business of WLAU. It operates more as a private enterprise within a public institution, with a strong focus and expectation on revenue generation to support its activities as well as those of the larger university.

The credit faculties that support undergraduate students working to achieve their bachelor’s degrees are distinct from the NCF; however, opportunities exist for collaboration and resource sharing. For example, during the development of courses or programs in the NCF, there is a consultation period that requires endorsement from the corresponding credit faculty. When the NCF was developing a certificate in project management, for instance, it was required to reach out to the business faculty for an endorsement, and in fact the associated credit dean is an approver on the curriculum submission. This process allows the NCF to discuss the programming opportunity, access instructors or subject matter experts to assist with the development of programming, and most important, keep the different faculties connected to the work happening in the NCF.

In a large organization such as a university, it can be challenging to align all aspects of the organization towards a common goal. Conflict around the appropriate goals occurs via internal and external stakeholder involvement (Manning, 2018) where priorities and limited resources are often in competition with each other. It can be difficult for the institutional strategic
plan to capture the goals and priorities of every stakeholder within an organization, which can lead to tension between various units. The PoP identified provides an opportunity for the NCF to actively participate in a meaningful way in the goals of the organization, while highlighting its expertise in community engagement and program management.

The NCF has an over 70-year history at WLAU and is one of the longest-standing programming areas at the university (NCF, 2020). Originally working from three distinct campuses including a downtown centre, the NCF is now centralized on the main campus. It offers all programming in one dedicated building, built specifically for the NCF in 2014. The university’s commitment to provide dedicated space to the NCF demonstrates its value within the organization. In addition to professional programming, a music education program falls under the purview of the faculty, and a state-of-the-art performing arts centre was recently built, increasing the campus footprint of the NCF and its programs.

Significant change has occurred throughout the entire institution over the last 10 years. There have been three different presidents, the senior academic officer of the university has abruptly changed three times, and three different deans have led the NCF. During this period of change, there was uncertainty in the NCF as to its priorities and goals, and how it was perceived by the rest of the institution. The last three years have seen a shift—the NCF has been downsized considerably, the priority has been revenue generation through quality programming, and identifying opportunities to contribute to the academic mission of the larger institution has been at the forefront. For these reasons, addressing the PoP that has been identified will help to raise the profile of the NCF as an integral part of the larger university ecosystem.
Leadership Position and Lens Statement

My role at WLWU is director of programming at the NCF. Within that role, I am part of the senior leadership team reporting to the dean. I am responsible for the strategic direction and overall management of the over 60 certificate programs and diplomas within the NCF, developing and managing revenue generating programming, building relationships and partnerships with community and business stakeholders, and managing the NCF budget.

I have worked at the university for just over 14 years, and worked my way up to this role, starting as an assistant when right out of university. My experiences with various roles within the unit have provided me insight regarding opportunities that are available with external partners, what programs are better positioned to expand and grow with external collaborators, and perhaps most important, which credit faculties and departments are receptive to working with a noncredit unit, and which may be less likely to engage with a unit perceived as being less academically rigorous.

Over the last four decades, leadership in education has often been conceptualized as a solo activity, with a strong focus on the individual leadership of school principals or headmasters and those in senior leadership positions (Crawford, 2012). Given my position at the university, squarely in middle management, I recognize that I have more or less influence in some areas, given the situation, and rely on other leaders or a shared approach to influencing change and achieving my goals. Spillane (2006) stated, “Expecting one person to single-handedly lead efforts to improve instruction in a complex organization, such as a school, is impractical” (p. 26), which is why focusing on common goals and outcomes benefiting all stakeholders will be key in this OIP. Benson and Dale (2015) highlighted the importance of becoming an effective leader through thinking about, defining, and articulating one’s own personal leadership philosophy.
Taking time to consider personal leadership philosophy is beneficial to leaders as it provides consistency, connects them to their work, and becomes their true north, helping them maintain a clear path forward.

With this in mind, and taking time to reflect on my core values, I have identified the following to be key values of my leadership philosophy: building relationships, meeting people where they are, being an effective communicator, and fostering trust with my colleagues. Northouse (2016) expressed leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. As such, and with consideration to my values, distributed and behavioural leadership approaches appear best suited to addressing this PoP.

The behavioural leadership theory focuses on two essential characteristics of a leader and is a well-suited approach to my personal style when leading in the workplace. Bass (1985) identified two key elements that are the focus of leaders within this approach: employee centered, which emphasizes genuine concern for the team the leader oversees through mutual trust, respect, and positive relationships; and job centered, with a strong desire to complete tasks at hand through supervision, processes, and rewards and acknowledgement. Balancing relationships while remaining focused on the task at hand and modelling the behaviour I wish to see exhibited from others are important components of my leadership style. By being present with team members, which may include attending meetings, being available for questions, or simply checking in, I model that I am engaged and interested in the work happening within the NCF. My goal through this approach is to demonstrate that I am invested in the success of the unit while continuously working to build rapport and maintain trust with my team.

Tasks and relationships are the two guideposts for the approach, but it is up to leaders to determine where they will focus. Modelling a behavioural approach allows leaders to perform
these roles more adaptively, with more flexibility and more appropriately depending on the 
organizational situation (Zaccaro et al., 2001), and this helps to ensure that a one-size-fits-all 
approach is not taken. This flexibility will be key when working with multiple stakeholders, 
especially those who sit outside of higher education and may not be familiar with the processes, 
administration, and policies that need to be considered before undertaking a new project.

The second part of the behavioural approach, relationship behaviours, which help 
“followers feel comfortable with themselves, with each other and with the situation in which 
they find themselves” (Northouse, 2016, p. 32), will be important when working with multiple 
stakeholders. Different stakeholders approach projects, challenges, and relationships in different 
ways with different focuses. To be successful, stakeholders must have trust, open dialogue, safe 
space for sharing feedback, and the opportunity to get to know one another. Engagement is key 
to inspiring and motivating staff, and that cannot occur in a meaningful way without some type 
of relationship between a leader and team members (Boyatzis, 2012). Fostering relationships and 
seeing how interactions with various stakeholders can positively influence change are two 
reasons why I also value the features of distributed leadership and apply it in my practice.

When applying distributed leadership, it is important that the role of leader be clearly 
defined. It is equally important to ensure that stakeholders and employees feel supported, and 
that mechanisms are in place to allow for active participation, consultation, and feedback in the 
processes that are developed. This leadership approach allows for shared ownership and can help 
create positive outcomes in change processes. It promotes open participation and allows “both 
the supervisor and the subordinate to exercise mutual influence on outcomes [that] can contribute 
to job effectiveness as well as satisfaction” (Blake & Mouton, 1981, p. 448). A distributed
leadership approach will help create a strong foundation on which to build the change process and is within my purview as director of the NCF.

As quoted in Harris and Spillane (2008), “Distributed leadership recognizes that there are multiple leaders and that leadership activities are widely shared within and between organizations” (p. 31). It is practiced by engaging staff and faculty who are decided upon based on their knowledge, roles, and expertise in relation to the challenge at hand (Harris, 2006). This key feature of distributed leadership is what makes it an appealing approach to the PoP and OIP. The strong focus on collaboration and reaching out to multiple stakeholders, regardless of title for input and expertise, is a key component of distributed leadership and the idea of distributed leadership can be seen as “part of a wider discussion on shared leadership” (Crawford, 2012, p. 612). It allows for multiple stakeholders to provide insights and unique perspectives to the task at hand and places value on “engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organization rather than seeking this only through formal position or role” (Bush, 2015, p. 39). The focus shifts to the greater goal, and pooling expertise (Bush, 2015) versus working in a silo and without collaboration.

An additional benefit of distributed leadership, specific to this context, is that it allows for all stakeholder voices to be heard and valued. This collegial approach also allows for confidence building as various stakeholders, despite job titles, can contribute in a meaningful way (Bush, 2015). Distributed leadership helps to increase capacity for change and improvement through shared decision-making (Bush, 2015); this approach may help lead organizations to be innovative as they explore alternative approaches to addressing challenges, by engaging experts throughout the organization. Distributed leadership looks beyond organizational hierarchies (Harris, 2012), which is especially important for addressing this PoP as the three stakeholder
groups will not have a shared organizational hierarchy between them, and limiting the value placed on that characteristic allows for more collaboration and empowers all stakeholders to contribute in and equitable way. Another element of distributed leadership that is well suited to this OIP is that it highlights the “emergent property of leadership as groups of people work together” (Crawford, 2012, p. 613). One of the foundational elements of distributed leadership is anchored in relationship building, collaborating and working together with “the many, and not just the few” (Crawford, 2012, p. 613).

Distributed leadership is also well suited to my current role. Given that I am not the final decision maker, but do have influence, it recognizes that expertise is not only held by a position or title but can be distributed throughout the organization. It is a democratic approach to leadership which allows members of the team to lead when called on due to their expertise, and then step back when others are able to come forward (Northouse, 2016). Addressing this PoP will require expertise in different areas that no one stakeholder would be able to meet at all times. This approach also speaks to the complexity of organizations and recognizes that multiple stakeholders can add value to the organization, and that for an “organization to be dynamic, then it needs leadership flowing throughout it” (Crawford, 2012, p. 617).

**Leadership Problem of Practice**

The PoP to be addressed considers the expectations of the provincial government, captured previously and expanded on further in this section. In addition, some of the relevant institutional goals and priorities are highlighted, including how the NCF could help to meet those goals. The explicit PoP asks how the NCF within a postsecondary institution can facilitate new programming opportunities while working collaboratively with external and internal partners. For the purposes of this OIP, the frame of reference for external partners includes professional
organizations, other universities or colleges, nonprofit organizations, community, and government stakeholders. Internal partners include academic credit faculties within WLAU. Expanding on this frame of reference, academic credit faculties are faculties that grant undergraduate degrees that have been approved by the ministry. The university currently offers 11 four-year baccalaureate degrees with over 20 majors (WLAU, 2020). A significant part of my role as the director of the NCF has been program development, including market research, competitive analysis, financial forecasting, and promotion. This foundational knowledge and background as a program developer will be enhanced by involving additional stakeholders in the development process.

The provincial government has focused heavily on connecting postsecondary institutions to the workplace. A comprehensive system-wide review is currently underway in the province with a goal to transform the adult learning system to focus on the high-quality education, skills and training required to meet current and future labour demands ([Ministry of Higher Education], 2020b). A key objective of the ministry business plan is around increasing awareness of the value of skilled trades and apprenticeship programs ([Ministry of Higher Education], 2020b) and a focus on preparing learners for the workforce. WLAU does not have apprenticeship or trades programming; however, there is a strong focus already on work-integrated learning (WIL), practicums, and field experience. The NCF provides extensive WIL opportunities and prioritizes the benefits of community outreach in its programming. This priority is demonstrated by approximately 200 community practicum partners and over 4,500 hours of scheduled experiential learning in its programs, including practicums, work experience, or community outreach (NCF, 2018).
As stated above, the provincial government is focused on supporting postsecondary institutions to diversify revenue. The NCF is well suited to help meet this objective as “noncredit programming is often at the center of innovation at colleges due to its flexibility and adaptability” (Arena, 2013, p. 373). The NCF prides itself on its entrepreneurial spirit and its ability to be responsive to student needs through dynamic and diverse programming. As such, with my strong understanding of the inner workings of the NCF, I am well positioned to lead this PoP and work with other stakeholders while addressing the goals of the ministry and the institution.

The focus on community outreach in the institutional strategic plan is well documented; in fact, an entire section is devoted to enhancing community outreach (WLAU, 2020). The NCF also has an internal strategic planning document that has a strong focus on outward-facing goals such as increasing engagement from program advisory committees, identifying leading subject matter experts from relevant industries to support programming, and creating WIL opportunities for students. The NCF is well positioned to be the lead on addressing this PoP.

**Framing of the Problem of Practice**

Understanding what needs to change is critical to the success of the OIP and to engaging stakeholders. Careful analysis of the postsecondary institution is required.

The NCF has been serving noncredit learners for over 70 years. This longevity at the institution speaks to the value placed on it and the credibility it has built over the many of years of offering programming. That said, as with any higher education faculty or department, there are still challenges to address and risks to mitigate. For example, although there are hundreds of highly valued noncredit instructors (NCF, 2018), there are challenges in maintaining engagement
when teaching is not their full-time profession, and remuneration must constantly be balanced with budgetary constraints.

The full- and part-time staff working in the NCF are members of the university staff association. In fact, of the total number of employees in the staff association from its academic division, the NCF has almost 20% of those members (WLAU Staff Association, 2019), the largest of any faculty within academic affairs. This high representation in the staff association is offset by another key difference between the NCF and credit faculties: The NCF is the only faculty within academic affairs that does not have any employees represented on the faculty association. The NCF instructors are hired as independent contractors; as such, they sit outside both the staff association and the faculty association at WLAU. For some NCF instructors, this arrangement can be a point of contention, as they may not feel as valued or as respected as their credit faculty colleagues. As well, without any NCF representation, the faculty association is less likely to be aware of issues relevant to the NCF. Representation is thus another obvious indicator of the many differences between the credit and noncredit faculties.

To better understand the current forces shaping the PoP, Bolman and Deal’s (2017) reframing theory is outlined and applied. The four frames of this theory, structural, symbolic, political, and human resources, can be applied to the PoP to acknowledge the multiple perspectives that may impact it. A frame is a coherent set of ideas or beliefs that enables individuals to better understand the world around them (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 43).

WLAU is a liberal arts university that prioritizes the undergraduate student learning experience. One of the core tenets of the structural frame is the notion of minimizing personal static and maximizing people’s performance on the job (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Although the NCF is outward facing for the institution, and has strong ties to the community, there is the
potential for friction between noncredit and credit stakeholders as some credit faculty members may not feel that the NCF is a legitimate academic arm of the institution. In addition, the organizational structure is not necessarily compatible between the three sets of stakeholders: NCF personnel, credit faculty members, and external community partners. For example, the academic governance body that oversees credit faculties does not oversee NCF programming. External community partners have distinct hierarchies and organizational structures that are unique from university models. In terms of organizational structure, the NCF and the credit faculties differ in the makeup of support staff and faculty, and how the work is divided, as has been previously discussed.

One of the key assumptions of the structural frame indicates that “organizations exist to achieve established goals and objectives and devise strategies to reach those goals” (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 48). There is ample opportunity for the noncredit and credit units to come together and expand their focus beyond their own goals and priorities, while also including strategies and changes that allow them to contribute in a meaningful way to organizational goals. Expanding this focus will ensure their organizational differences do not impact the external stakeholder, or the opportunity to develop valuable and relevant programming.

Bolman and Deal (2017) stated that the symbolic frame generates an understanding of values among people who share a culture, and those values characterize what an organization deems worthy of commitment. When reviewing the historical context of WLAU, both the NCF and credit faculties are well positioned to be worthy of commitment for their unique contributions to the success of the university. The NCF has its longstanding history at the university and its ability to be responsive and nimble in serving learner needs because it is not bound by the more rigorous academic governance followed by other academic faculties.
Meanwhile, the credit faculties are tied directly to the academic mission of the institution, and through their scholarly research and service to students provide quality undergraduate experiences for students. It will be important through this frame to highlight how each of the units can bring value to the larger institution and community at large, and to ensure that each stakeholder group is aware of the positive impact that can be made.

One of the key political assumptions that makes up the political frame is that “goals and decisions emerge from bargaining and negotiation among competing stakeholders jockeying for their own interests” (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 184). Although this frame can sometimes highlight the competition between stakeholders for access to scarce resources, prioritizing their own needs above all else, in this instance, the political frame provides a strategy for the multiple stakeholders to work together effectively. Clearly identifying how the collaboration would benefit everyone’s unique interests and goals will be a key factor to initiating the change in how the NCF interacts with academic and external stakeholders. In addition, recognizing that organizations are coalitions of different individuals and groups (Bolman & Deal, 2017) is another benefit. Each stakeholder group will be able to bring a unique perspective and skillset to the triad that will be to the greater benefit of all participants.

The unique environment of a postsecondary institution has all employees, managers, faculty, and administrators working under one organization even though they are not all governed by the same norms, responsibilities, policies, and expectations. This can create a number of challenges and inequities—both perceived and actual. Faculty associations, staff associations, managers, and exempt staff serve the organization in different ways, and there are policies and processes in place to ensure that the fit between an individual and the system they serve is strong. The human resources frame helps to highlight connectivity between humans and
organizations (Bolman & Deal, 2017). The challenge then becomes the fit between the different stakeholder groups within the organization. The NCF and various credit faculties both serve one of the basic assumptions of the human resources frame, that a good organizational fit allows individuals to find meaningful work and that organizations get the talent and energy required to succeed (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Although the NCF did experience a reduction in its staffing complement, those staff that are still with the NCF are a strong fit and engaged in their work. This frame does highlight a potential challenge as the NCF and credit faculties are sometimes at cross purposes with each other, and adding a third, external stakeholder from the community could add complexity to the OIP.

In addition to the reframing theory of Bolman and Deal (2017), the political, economic, social, technological, and environmental factors of the organization, referred to as a PESTE analysis (Cawsey et al., 2020), are also analyzed to determine how these factors might impact the change process. These factors can negatively or positively impact the change processes that organizations undertake, and it is important to understand them as they influence the context of the organization and ultimately the change process. In addition, a PESTE analysis highlights for change makers the various factors that can impact the organizational change process. It is also important to recognize that each of the factors may carry different weight depending on the institution, a specific point in time, and stakeholders, to name a few variables. This fluctuation underscores the importance of understanding the context and how it frames the PoP.

This OIP includes an examination of how the political, economic, social, and technological factors impact this PoP. The environmental factor is not significant enough for this context to address at this time. The PESTE analysis provides more clarity around the various push and pull factors and influences that can impact the PoP. Push factors such as political and
economic influence and expectations, the need to be innovative with programming offerings, and the desire to have a more robust collaboration between the NCF and various credit faculties are discussed as factors that promote change. Some inhibiting factors may include human resource capacity and staff and credit faculty hesitancy to work collaboratively together. Each of these components that may positive or negatively impact the change process will help to inform the best leadership approach.

Being a publicly funded institution inextricably links the organization to political and economic factors that impact the city, province, and sometimes even the country. The current context in the province is trying to manage the low price of oil, high unemployment, and ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, funding cuts to postsecondary institutions by the provincial government ([Ministry of Higher Education], 2020a) have created urgency in the postsecondary realm to address budget shortfalls through innovative programming. External stakeholders are also dealing with many of the same challenges, and any effort to engage them in the triad will require clear benefits to their organization and clarity as to what the added value of working with the postsecondary unit would be. In terms of shaping the PoP, these political and sociological factors may help to build a case for innovative collaborations. It is important to note the challenges these factors present as well, such as limited human and capital resources due to a downturn in the local and provincial economy. In addition, the impacts of COVID-19 have created challenges for many organizations, including downsizing and temporary closures. These factors may influence the willingness of stakeholders to engage in a new project that sits outside of regular operations, as they are likely focused on maintaining their core business and meeting their own strategic priorities and goals.
The sociological factors around this PoP and OIP are less impactful than the political and economic issues; however, they should be considered. There are some negative perceptions between the NCF staff and the faculty members. For example, staff may perceive they are overworked at the expense of faculty who get summers off, whereas faculty carry a significant teaching load, with bloated class sizes. Credit faculty professors may perceive difficulty in trying to manage their time effectively, while staff have the luxury of not taking their work home with them each day. These false narratives create tension between the groups that will need to be overcome in order to work together effectively.

Technological factors that need to be considered in the change process include the tools used for program delivery. The NCF is well situated to effectively develop and deliver courses and programs online, whereas the credit faculty primarily works in the face-to-face realm. The university has a learning management system where online courses can be developed as well as access to instructional designers. There is also a great opportunity to leverage the expertise and resources of the external partner with the academic institution to deliver programming in a meaningful way that connects students to the industry or profession they may be working in one day which could include relevant software for specific programs.

The four frames (Bolman & Deal, 2017) and PESTE analysis (Cawsey et al., 2020) address factors that impact the NCF and the various stakeholders outlined. Both show how better understanding the context can help to facilitate meaningful collaborations between the three stakeholders while also successfully addressing the PoP. The next section explores guiding questions that emerge from the PoP and ensures the OIP is launched while considering the challenges and opportunities presented with those questions.
Guiding Questions Emerging From the Problem of Practice

The guiding questions discussed in this section require reaching out and collaborating with other stakeholders to address them, and they also shift the focus of the project to the greater goals of the group, instead of a narrow stakeholder focus. As this OIP aims to identify opportunities for collaboration across various stakeholder groups, it will be important to anticipate and give thought to questions that may emerge from the PoP.

Ensuring that stakeholders are properly on boarded and have confidence in collaborating with the NCF is integral to the success of the OIP. One of the key guiding questions will be how I, as the change leader, will effectively communicate the benefit of the proposed plan to partners? As Rajhans (2018) stated, “Effective communication management signifies a process in which multiple types of communications are delivered in such a way that the objective for which the communication is released is achieved to the maximum extent” (p. 49). Themes that require further exploration and discussion to properly address this question include a strong and effective communication plan that has clear goals and provides answers to anticipated questions from the external stakeholders. In addition, it will be important to identify decision makers or influencers and communicate with the appropriate person from each stakeholder group. Monitoring stakeholder communications throughout helps to determine if “the gap between current attitude and the target attitude is closed” (Rajhans, 2018, p. 49). This will ensure that the communication has been effective, the information is being received by each of the stakeholders, and they are engaged in the process.

Another factor that may contribute and influence the problem is the perception of the NCF. What level of understanding do external stakeholders have of the NCF, and how does that understanding shape their willingness to engage with that faculty and its staff? Information
sharing will be key to address this question. The NCF will need to have a well-refined elevator pitch that quickly and precisely educates stakeholders on who it is and why the stakeholders may want to collaborate. Again, effective communication can help to manage negative influences on the stakeholders by “modifying their perceptions through proper communication and also by increasing the positive influence through right messages” (Rajhans, 2018, p. 60). Further strategies may include holding information sessions, sharing strategic planning documents that speak to the goals and priorities of the faculty, and working at finding champions across the various stakeholder groups to speak to the success of previous collaborations or projects.

In the context of this OIP, the definition of champion is stated as someone who contributes to the project by generating support from other stakeholders and advocating for the project in a distinctive manner (Markham, 1998). Given the sometimes-negative perceptions of the NCF by academic faculty members, it would be important for this champion to sit outside of the NCF. In order for this plan to be effective, a sense of community and trust must be built across the triad and a clear understanding of the work and goals of the NCF will be an important factor in building that trust.

A final consideration that looks to the future is how can this initiative be sustainable in the long term, given multiple institutional priorities that focus on credit and not noncredit programming? To consider this question, a focus and priority will have to be put on developing a process that is sustainable and can be easily duplicated for future iterations. In addition, because of the institutional focus on credit programming, it will be important to maintain, highlight, and prioritize the connection to credit faculties. Finally, because revenue generation is a key priority of the NCF, it will be important that the initiative does not draw on institutional funds, but instead, contributes to the financial success of the university.
The guiding questions contain challenges and considerations that are specific to this OIP, however, there are other challenges that more broadly encompass the change process such as change fatigue and resistance to change. For these broader challenges, and for the change initiative to succeed, it is important to note that “the emotional and behavioral aspects must be addressed as thoroughly as operational issues” (Duck, 2001, p. 87). With this in mind, as a change leader it will be important to balance the complex components that impact change processes.

Clear guiding questions provide an opportunity to address gaps or identify potential additional resources to consider when addressing the OIP. In the next section, a collaborative vision for change is explored and change drivers influencing the OIP are addressed.

**Leadership Focused Vision for Change**

The leadership-focused vision for change in this OIP is to create meaningful collaborations between institutional partners through the development of innovative programming that meets the needs of students and each of the three stakeholder partners – NCF, credit faculty and community partners. The NCF has done an exceptional job in identifying external partners to offer noncredit programs to students through various licensing agreements. Current licensing agreements are primarily made up of inbound opportunities whereby the NCF uses existing programs from other postsecondary institutions or professional associations and offers them as part of its catalogue (NCF, 2020). These relationships have proven to be beneficial for both parties: WLAU benefits from quality curriculum and programming without a significant investment or risk, and the partnering institution benefits from an additional market of students that it would not normally have access to or brand recognition with. The credit faculties at the institution also work with external partners, with the bulk of the collaborations being WIL
opportunities, practicums, and directed field studies opportunities for students. At present, there has not been a successful collaboration incorporating all three stakeholders.

The envisioned future state sees seamless and welcome collaborations between credit, noncredit, and external stakeholders that meet the needs of learners in relevant ways, while addressing the goals of each stakeholder. The chasm between credit faculties and the NCF will narrow and instead a deeper understanding of how collaboration can lead to innovative and unique programming opportunities to better serve the goals of the university will be achieved. To remain a competitive and premier undergraduate institution, the NCF must emerge as a partner of choice for external stakeholders. It must not only solicit inbound opportunities, but also host outbound opportunities as well, ones that are beneficial for all parties. Step to achieving this goal include a shared vision, good personal relationships, and high levels of trust with various stakeholders and teams (Bush & Glover, 2012).

To move forward in a cohesive manner with both internal and external collaborators, it will be important to develop a clear framework around the goals of this triad, and the framework the triad will follow. As stated in McRae (2013), who has written about continuing education organizations similar to the NCF, “It is important to develop a shared understanding of community engagement and how it can influence the strategic direction and practice of the university continuing education unit” (p. 5). The future state must have a clear definition of community engagement and collaboration that meets the needs of all three stakeholders and provides a clear path to each of the stakeholder group’s goals and objectives. A clear definition will assist with providing expectations for each stakeholder group, understanding the value of each collaborator, and clarifying how each party and their stakeholders will positively benefit through the collaboration. In addition, it will be important to lay clear expectations regarding the
level of commitment; roles and responsibilities; investment, including financial and time; and resources required by each stakeholder to support the triad. The importance of stakeholder communication cannot be understated, as the success or failure of a project or plan is dependent on how well stakeholder expectations are met (Rajhans, 2018).

Change drivers can be internal or external and restraining or enabling. Drivers of change can help usher in new processes and opportunities to improve an organization, but they can also be unwelcome and foisted upon an organization, leaving it reeling and on its heels trying to adapt. The change drivers can be restraining or enabling and can be placed within Bolman and Deal’s (2017) frames; specifically, the structural, human resources, and political frame are most relevant.

The structural frame (Bolman & Deal, 2017) highlights the inherent differences between the stakeholder groups and would be categorized as a restraining force. The different stakeholder groups are so unique in their governance, goals, and business operations that they are sometimes at cross purposes with one another. For example, a credit faculty has a spend-down budget, whereas the NCF, and likely an external partner, are required at a minimum to cover their costs, but more likely return a profit to the institution or shareholders. In addition, the staff at the NCF are in specific and targeted roles, and their work is segmented based on their duties. This division of labour compliments the notion that people are in the “right roles and relationships” (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 45) because their work is focused and targeted to a specific stakeholder group. For example, a student liaison role works only with students, and an instructional assistant works only with instructors.

This runs counter to how work is divided in other academic faculties, and although it may present challenges in collaboration, it does allow for different perspectives and insights that
would not be available if there was not any collaboration. It is important to acknowledge and communicate that diverse networks can help members deepen their learning, question their practice, and have a significant impact on their repertoire (Stoll, 2006). This key message must be reiterated to the stakeholder groups because although these gaps are significant, there should be enough commonalities and benefits between the stakeholder groups to work together effectively.

The human resources frame (Bolman & Deal, 2017) addresses the limited human resources available in the NCF to operationalize the change. As mentioned earlier, there has been a significant decrease in staffing in the NCF, and current staff have limited capacity for new projects. Although the staffing complement is smaller, the benefit is that the staff are engaged and generally willing and eager to support the goals of the NCF. This willingness from staff to support the goals of the NCF, is largely in part due to the leadership at the dean and executive level, which is far more transparent and inclusive than it has been in the past. As Alfes et al. (2019) stated, “Employees who feel supported by their organization are more likely to reciprocate by supporting the organization in its change program” (p. 242). Although the NCF is smaller in numbers, a keen and mobilized staff could positively influence the PoP.

Finally, the political frame (Bolman & Deal, 2017) continues to be inextricably linked to higher education. In this instance, the focus is on getting through the downturn in the local and provincial economy and managing the shifting landscape of investment and industry ([City X] Economic Development, n.d.). City X (a pseudonym) is at the heart of the industrial digital transformation with a focus on reskilling displaced oil and gas workers. External partners may not have the interest to work with a postsecondary institution given the other demands that they are dealing with. In addition, WLAU is a liberal arts–focused institution, which may be a
restraining force for more business-focused external stakeholders and could limit the pool of potential collaborators. From an enabling perspective, the provincial government has had such a focus on skills for jobs and preparing students for the workplace that this proposed collaboration could positively benefit all stakeholders politically. Additional enabling forces include a provincial government which has worked to develop a strategy that will achieve the following aims:

- Strengthen relationships between postsecondary institutions;
- Guide educational programming;
- Develop work placement opportunities;
- Empower institutions to become entrepreneurial; and
- Seek new sources of revenue. ([Ministry of Higher Education], 2020b)

The government priority of building more meaningful connections between industry and education provides this PoP the opportunity to address the institutional budget shortfalls while collaborating with relevant external stakeholders. This practice is common as, in the “search for funding from non-public sources to make up for cuts in public funding, universities increasingly engage in commercial activities by cooperating with industry” (Bruneau & Schuetze, 2004, p. 4). Finally, and likely the most important enabling force, is that of a supportive executive leadership team. The academic vice president, who is responsible for the academic portfolio, has a keen understanding of how the NCF works and the value it can bring, and has been a champion of its various initiatives. This level of support also comes with intense pressure and scrutiny of the NCF to ensure the faculty is offering high-calibre programming, is remaining competitive in the market, and is providing a financial return to the larger institution.
Using Bolman and Deal’s (2017) framework to reflect on the PoP has illuminated the complexity of WLAU and provided opportunities to examine the problem through various lenses. Moving towards collaborative practices will require a multiframe approach like this one, and the ability to change requires a commitment to flexibility and different perspectives.

**Organizational Change Readiness**

Creating a network in which each stakeholder is engaged and eager to contribute to the success of the collaboration, and ultimately to the success of the whole group, will require unique leadership attributes, but change will occur only if there is readiness from the various stakeholder groups (Matthysen & Harris, 2018). The flexibility and adaptability of an organization, the level of engagement by the leader, trust between staff and leaders, and past change experiences are factors that may impact an organization’s readiness for change (Cawsey et al., 2020). Two tools are proposed to examine institutional gaps and the emotional or human components of change. The change path model (Cawsey et al., 2020) and the five-stage change curve (Duck, 2001) focus on different aspects of change, and when combined, provide a more fulsome approach to change and the theories that underpin them. In addition, Judge and Douglas’s (2009) eight-point outline and Cawsey et al.’s (2020) readiness for change questionnaire are used to determine WLAU’s change readiness.

**The Change Path Model and Change Curve**

The first process in the change path model is awakening (Cawsey et al., 2020). It begins with a critical organizational analysis which requires leaders to constantly scan and evaluate both the internal and external environment and understand the forces for or against any particular organizational shift (Cawsey et al., 2020, p. 53). The driver for change originates outside of the organization, in the form of provincial government expectations and goals. The next phase,
mobilization, is where what exactly needs to change is decided and the change vision is further developed through stakeholder engagement (Cawsey et al., 2020).

The third stage, acceleration, involves planning and implementation and the development of an action plan (Cawsey et al., 2020). The change leader analyzes formal structures, organizational culture, stakeholder groups, and change recipients and leaders. This information gathering leads to the final stage, institutionalization, which transitions to the desired new state. Measurement and evaluation tools are an important part of this phase and set up the organization for future change initiatives (Cawsey et al., 2020). In the context of this PoP, this step will ideally provide a framework to entice other external stakeholders to work with the university as part of future triads.

When dealing with change, it is always important to consider the human and emotional elements. Whereas Cawsey et al.’s (2020) change path model focuses on the organizational analysis of formal structures, the five-stage change curve (Duck, 2001) is focused on people and emotional considerations to change. Phase 1, stagnation, occurs due to poor strategy, a lack of leadership, or an outdated process, to name a few issues, and causes people at the organization to feel comfortable or safe (Duck, 2001). According to Duck (2001), the end of the stagnation phase can be marked by an externally initiated initiative (p. 21) and can transition an organization to the next phase, preparation, which starts when a decision is made. If too much time is spent in preparation, or leaders are not aligned, the initiative is less likely to succeed—the phrase heard at many large institutions, death by committee, likely refers to this phase of the process.

During the third stage of the change curve, the implementation phase (Duck, 2001), the actual change is announced. This stage can create a multitude of emotional reactions from
various stakeholders, including confusion, resentment, or inadequacy (Duck, 2001, p. 25). A key takeaway from this phase is that although many operational changes may occur, it is just as important to change “mindsets and work practices” (Duck, 2001, p. 25). Determination is the penultimate phase, which Duck (2001) described as the most critical phase of the change process. During this phase, the change process is in most danger of failing because if the efforts of the previous phases are not yet clear and present, change fatigue may begin to set in. If the organization can clearly communicate that the change is real and is ongoing, then the organization moves to the final stage, fruition, where “many different areas throughout the organization combine and fuel each other” (Duck, 2001, p. 33).

External factors of change continue to have a significant impact on higher education. The relationship between government and higher education is incredibly important. Many postsecondary institutions, including WLAU, are dependent on base grant funding from the provincial government to support operational costs, and if there is a shortfall, it must find ways to balance the budget. With many Canadian universities facing financial uncertainty (Coates, 2013), exploring innovative programs and strategies will be key, and the NCF will be well positioned to support these initiatives. The great benefit is that the NCF, as with other noncredit faculties or departments that work with external stakeholders, has used online or distance delivery and has “become accustomed to living with constant change” (Coates, 2013, p. 1).

Internal factors influencing change include the willingness of faculty members to support this initiative. As stated earlier in the chapter, a level of tension exists between faculty and staff at WLAU, and it will be a significant barrier to change. However, there is an opportunity to again highlight and communicate the positive effects the NCF can have not only for faculty and staff, but all stakeholders. With its connection to external partners and “bringing intelligence
from the community and region into the academy” (Coates, 2013, p. 7), the NCF has an opportunity to make a significant cultural shift in the key internal factor influencing change.

**Eight Considerations of Change**

Another method that will be used to evaluate organizational change readiness is by applying eight “distinct but interrelated” (Judge & Douglas, 2009, p. 683) considerations to the organization. They are trustworthy leadership, trusting followers, capable champions, involved middle management, innovative culture, accountable culture, effective communication, and systems thinking (Judge & Douglas, 2009).

The first consideration is trustworthy leadership (Judge & Douglas, 2009). As previously indicated, the NCF has done an excellent job over the last few years building trust and engagement in its staff. The leadership team is generally well regarded and trusted by NCF employees. Both leadership and employees understand that relationship building is key to the success of the NCF, and collaborating with credit faculties across the university is a meaningful way to meet the goals of the NCF while staying aligned to its core values.

Judge and Douglas’s (2009) second consideration is trusting followers. In the context of this PoP, followers include NCF employees and credit faculty members. In the NCF, with continued transparency and communication from NCF leadership, and their openness to feedback, there are no concerns regarding trusting followers, as the environment has prioritized trust and transparency. Looking beyond the NCF, it will be important to engage with credit faculty members in the same way to build foundational relationships through open communication, trust, and respect. Credit faculties have trust within their own areas, so the NCF will need to build and foster those relationships with external faculties in the same way it has done internally.
Third, identifying capable change champions will be important to confirming change readiness (Judge & Douglas, 2009). The best champions have both social capital, such as trust networking and information, along with human capital such as personality and experience (Chrusciel, 2008). Fortunately, the NCF has worked collaboratively with credit faculty members in the past in various projects. There are change champions who would be supportive of this change, signalling a readiness for change in the university.

The fourth consideration is involved middle management (Judge & Douglas, 2009). The WLAU has a strong leadership group with numerous avenues for middle management (directors and managers) to connect and work together. There is a good communication channel between this specific employee group. Similarly, credit faculty chairs, also middle managers, have numerous opportunities to connect with each other and build trust and capacity within their colleague group. Ensuring a strong communication channel between the two groups will be important to foster the organization’s readiness for change and trust building.

Fifth, organizational change readiness is affected by innovative culture (Judge & Douglas, 2009). The disruptive change of COVID-19 this past year has demonstrated that innovation is possible. A quick shift to online learning for credit faculty members, and other forms of alternative course delivery, were required due to the pandemic. Looking ahead, the opportunity to be more purposeful and targeted in the innovation around program development and delivery will help to facilitate and foster an innovative workplace. These truths point towards an organization that is innovative and receptive to change processes.

Accountable culture is the next consideration (Judge & Douglas, 2009), and of the eight points, this one presents the most prospective challenges for WLAU. In the past, some projects across the university and within the NCF have been delayed or cancelled due to changes in
leadership. Ensuring that resources remain attached to the change process regardless of who is in charge will be important to allay fears of a wasted effort.

The penultimate consideration to be applied to assess readiness is effective communications (Judge & Douglas, 2009). Fortunately, the NCF leadership team is highly communicative with its staff. There is an open-door policy that allows for open and two-way feedback that is mirrored at all levels. Tools used to effectively communicate with staff include in-person meetings, a monthly newsletter, smaller team meetings, and informal coffee chats biweekly. In addition, the NCF communicates with stakeholders such as employers, instructors, and advisory committee members through targeted email blasts once per month, on the NCF website, and during in-person meetings as required. In this regard, the NCF has effective communication plans in place to support a change process.

The eighth and final concept Judge and Douglas (2009) outlined is systems thinking. This concept is addressed throughout this OIP and will consider different change drivers, internal and external forces, and different frames from which to view the PoP. Systems thinking allows the organization to understand interdependencies and the big picture that extends outside itself.

Of the eight indicators outlined, WLAU demonstrates a readiness for change with the majority of them. Trustworthiness, innovation, strong relationship networks within middle management across the university, effective communication, and systems thinking provide a strong foundation for change readiness. The area that may present a barrier is in accountability, and it will be important to mitigate that possibility with proper resources.

Organizational Change Readiness Questionnaire

Determining if WLAU is ready to change will require analysis on many fronts. Cawsey et al. (2020) based organizational change readiness on the following dimensions: (a) previous
change experiences, (b) executive support, (c) credible leadership and change champions, (d) openness to change, (e) rewards for change, and (f) measures for change and accountability. In this section, these six dimensions are applied to WLAU to determine how ready the organization is for change based on how the criteria are satisfied.

**Previous Change Experiences**

The first dimension focuses on the previous change experiences of the organization (Cawsey et al., 2020). Looking back, WLAU has had a number of change initiatives that have been successful. Change has not been without challenges, but it has not experienced abject failures in relation to change processes. Within the NCF, staff have dealt with numerous changes in recent years, including changes to leadership, program suspensions due to budget constraints, and the addition of new programs due to institutional restructuring. Given the entrepreneurial nature of the NCF, change is expected, and the general desire is to be better understood by and work more closely with credit faculty. As such, the NCF’s experience with previous change initiatives, as well as the benefit collaboration with credit faculty could have on the NCF, indicate that it is ready for change based on this dimension.

**Executive Support**

In addition to previous change experiences, executive support is another important factor in determining an organization’s readiness for change (Cawsey et al., 2020), one that cannot be understated. According to Cawsey et al. (2020), “It is not unusual to find differences of opinion concerning change at the senior management level” (p. 111). The NCF is well positioned in this regard as the senior executive leader of Academic Affairs at WLAU is supportive of the NCF and, in general, is keen to support initiatives that create collaboration across the institution. The
analysis of the executive support of this change initiative is a promoting factor for change readiness.

**Credible Leadership and Change Champions**

The dimension of credible leadership and change champions (Cawsey et al., 2020) serves as a strength: The dean of the NCF is supportive of this improvement and has influence not only over the NCF, but with other academic leaders on campus. As a change champion, and the director of the NCF, I am confident that my experience in change processes and my leadership approach have earned the trust of staff and colleagues alike. Overall, this dimension is a promoting factor for change readiness.

**Openness to Change**

Within the change readiness questionnaire, the openness to change dimension has the highest number of criteria (Cawsey et al., 2020). According to Cawsey et al. (2020), if the organizational culture supports environmental scanning and encourages a focus on identifying and resolving problems, rather than “turf protection,” that organization will be more open to change (p. 111). The entrepreneurial nature of the NCF has allowed for program development in new and emerging areas of study that has required input from credit faculty experts and industry professionals. Consulting with these stakeholders has set a strong foundation for the NCF to undertake more intentional collaboration, and as such, the NCF scores highly on this dimension.

**Rewards for Change**

The fifth dimension of organizational change readiness is rewards for change (Cawsey et al., 2020). No reward system is currently in place for individuals within the NCF to promote innovation in a concrete way. Of course, many staff are intrinsically motivated to be high performers and explore innovative solutions, but the NCF does not have a formalized reward
system. The launch of successful programs that meet or exceed budget targets may be considered rewarding, but identifying a clear reward system that recognizes contributions and helps to motivate staff would benefit the NCF and should be prioritized.

**Measures for Change and Accountability**

The final dimension in Cawsey et al.’s (2020) organizational change readiness questionnaire is measures for change and accountability. Rating customer satisfaction and attending to the data collected are some of the criteria that are assessed in this section (Cawsey et al., 2020). In this regard, the NCF performs well in this dimension and scores well. Student data and feedback are collected at the end of each course, and recommendations are documented and implemented when possible. In addition, employee evaluations take place annually, and graduate surveys are sent to recent graduates of programs in the NCF.

These six dimensions and their corresponding criteria (Cawsey et al., 2020) provide important insights into the NCF’s change readiness and where there may be gaps. The NCF is well positioned in many fronts, but some areas, such as reward systems, will require additional attention in order to implement a successful change plan.

**Chapter 1 Conclusion**

The first chapter of this OIP provided a detailed description and organizational context of the NCF and WLAU. A review of distributed and behavioural leadership approaches was completed, including how they are well served to address this PoP. In addition to the organizational context, I placed myself within that organization and shared my leadership position. The PoP at the heart of this OIP—how the NCF within a postsecondary institution can facilitate new programming opportunities while working collaboratively with external and internal partners—was articulated, including framing the PoP through a PESTE analysis
(Cawsey et al., 2020) and Bolman and Deal’s (2017) four frames. Guiding questions were thoughtfully considered and a leadership focused vision for change was articulated. Finally, organizational change readiness was discussed through the lenses of the change path model (Cawsey et al., 2020), the five-stage change curve (Duck, 2001), and eight interrelated considerations (Judge & Douglas, 2009).

Looking ahead to Chapter 2, the spotlight shifts to planning and development and change management. A chosen leadership approach and a framework for leading the change process as it relates to the PoP is identified, potential solutions outlined, and ethical considerations explored.
Chapter 2: Planning and Development

Chapter 1 provided an in-depth organizational analysis of WLAU and described the PoP that centres this OIP—organized collaboration between the NCF staff and credit faculty members to develop relevant programming to better serve community and industry stakeholders. This chapter provides further analysis of the organization, WLAU, and identifies the changes needed to address the gaps between the NCF and the credit faculties to move towards the desired state of change for the institution. This work is done through further investigation of the leadership approaches for addressing the OIP’s PoP and why they are appropriate, as well as a critical organizational analysis including what to change. Potential solutions are explored, and finally, ethical considerations of the desired change are examined.

Leadership Approaches to Change

The leadership approach that guides my day-to-day work is distributed leadership. As discussed in Chapter 1, this approach engages various members from a team based on their expertise and knowledge, with less weight associated with hierarchical titles and positions. In addition, distributed leadership can contribute to building internal capacity and organizational improvement (Harris, 2004). This approach will help to propel the change forward in relation to the PoP as it will build on the experience and expertise of many stakeholders who will contribute their experiences and insights while addressing the PoP. This leadership approach will also frame the discussion and planning on how to move the change forward in relation to the PoP.

What is appealing about the distributed leadership approach is how it is differentiated from other approaches. For example, traditional leader–follower leadership approaches focus on a prescribed versus a described division of labour (Gronn, 2002). These approaches are sometimes regimented, and tasks and duties outlined are connected to roles and responsibilities.
Taking the approach of describing a specific “bucket of work” that needs to be completed, and working with others to complete those duties, is more aligned with the distributed approach, and is a better fit for a project where collegiality and collaboration will be important. In a complex, fast-paced world, leadership cannot rest on the shoulders of the few (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003). Rather, it requires support and input from stakeholders.

This approach will allow stakeholders within the NCF, the larger WLAU, and external partners to create a “reciprocal interdependency” (Spillane, 2006, p. 146). The success of the larger group will be dependent on the contributions of various stakeholders, who must realize that locking intelligence up in the individual leader creates inflexibility and increases the likelihood of mistakes and errors (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003). In addition, this approach signals to all stakeholders that although the NCF is initiating the change, all stakeholders will be able to contribute, as distributed leadership is often used to describe any form of shared or dispersed leadership practice (Harris, 2006).

As cited in Gronn (2002), distributed leadership also provides a mechanism for “pooling distributed capacity” (p. 428). This pooling of resources will be an important characteristic in addressing this PoP. Gronn elaborated on this idea by stating that individuals with differing skills and abilities, perhaps from across different organizational levels, pool their expertise and regularize their conduct to solve a problem, after which they may disband. Although staff at the NCF and credit faculty members both work for the same organization, there are many differences within their faculties and their roles, and they bring unique perspectives to their work. This idea is expanded upon further when potential solutions to the PoP are examined.

Distributed leadership is best suited to my own personal leadership approach, but also, it lends itself well to the role I have at WLAU. The director role that I currently occupy has
authority and influence over the NCF; however, it does not necessarily extend beyond that scope. This limitation is why the distributed leadership approach is appealing to address this PoP—it allows me to identify other stakeholders in different units and engage them in this change process. Finding others who have expertise in their fields, regardless of whether they are a senior leader, will be fundamental in moving this PoP forward.

Being deliberate about identifying stakeholders who would be able to participate in the change process will be integral. It does not mean finding the most senior person in each department or faculty and asking them to engage, but rather, determining who has the interest and expertise to be able to participate. This approach will ensure that the appropriate stakeholders are included, and that together we will be able to build a network of engaged and interested participants with enthusiasm for the project to develop collaborative partnerships across the institution and with external community members. It is also an appropriate approach as the champion is expected to have or to gain the respect of those affected by the change initiative (Chrusciel, 2008). Distributed leadership provides space as a leadership approach to develop relationships and build trust and capacity with one’s work colleagues.

Although this leadership approach is a strong fit for this OIP, it is important to acknowledge and anticipate some of the challenges that may occur. They include having clear and open communication amongst various stakeholders and ensuring that everyone is focused and working towards the same goal. A cohesive and collaborative approach is vital because if there is turnover or changes in stakeholder representation, there could be negative impacts. In addition, with various stakeholders likely balancing multiple priorities and projects, it will be important that the work associated with the PoP and OIP is prioritized. Finally, although this approach lends itself to the PoP and is my personal leadership style, it may not be the preferred
choice of other stakeholders. As such, it must be clear from the outset how this approach will be able to move the PoP forward and ensure that all stakeholders are invested and committed.

Combining components of a behavioural approach (Bass, 1985) with distributed leadership provides a fulsome approach to the PoP. With its strong focus on relationships, this leadership style will be key in engaging other stakeholders who have not worked with, or may not be familiar with, the NCF. My ability to manage relationships as I lead this PoP and work towards organizational improvement will be an important factor in propelling this change plan forward. As stated in Zaccaro et al. (2001), leaders need to integrate multiple units, even when their members have conflicting goals and demands. Zaccaro et al. also discussed the notion of social capital. Again, this is where the NCF excels, having already engaged multiple stakeholders from the community to support curriculum development, sit on program advisory committees, or even teach in NCF’s classrooms. The importance of relationships cannot be understated and as a change leader, it is important to leverage relationships to “create a common culture of expectations around the use of individual skills and abilities” (Harris, 2004, p. 14). Utilizing a distributed leadership style supports opportunities to nurture relationships and build social capital while leveraging expertise from multiple stakeholders.

Behavioural leadership also recognizes that one’s approach may need to change depending on the organizational situation (Zaccaro et al., 2001). This is another key element of the PoP as the organizational context of NCF is unique from the larger institution, which in turn is unique from the community stakeholders it is working to actively engage. Behavioural leadership approaches allow for flexibility depending on the organizational situation. Flexibility is especially important when working with external stakeholders who may believe that postsecondary institutions are rigid or bound by process and procedure. This approach allows me
as a leader to adapt and work with others towards common goals through relationship building, modelling behaviour, and focusing on shared goals.

**Framework for Leading the Change Process**

The two framework models of the change path model (Cawsey et al., 2020) and the five-stage change curve (Duck, 2001) are explored for leading the change process for this OIP. Both models were introduced in Chapter 1 and are now expanded upon, including addressing their benefits and challenges, and exploring the impact of each as it relates to creating cross-institutional and community collaborations.

The change path model combines “process and prescription” (Cawsey et al., 2020, p. 53) and has four distinct stages: awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization. Each of these phases and their impact on the NCF are outlined below in more detail. Stage 1 in the change path model is awakening, when leaders identify the need for change, and the vision for change is “characterized in terms others can understand” (Cawsey et al., 2020, p. 59). To effectively characterize the vision for change, it is important that leaders at WLAU understand the forces for or against any particular organizational shift (Cawsey et al., 2020). This information-gathering stage will require engaging stakeholders from credit faculties, the NCF, and external community members. The input of these stakeholders will allow me to get a sense of their position on this process and understand why they may be resistant—or eager—to collaborate. In either instance, important information will be captured that can help facilitate change and understand the process ahead.

Articulating the gap in performance between the present and the envisioned future state (Cawsey et al., 2020) will be a key priority for me and other leaders in the NCF. Identifying
specific challenges of engaging external stakeholders independently versus working together to collaborate on programming opportunities can better help all stakeholder groups.

Stage 2 of the change path model is mobilization, where what specifically needs to change is further developed (Cawsey et al., 2020). The importance of relationships was discussed in the selected leadership approaches above, and relationships will be important during this stage, where nurturing the participation of others in the change process (Cawsey et al., 2020) is a key task. The NCF needs to engage a cross-section of faculty members through various institutional committees or working groups, including faculty-specific dean’s advisory groups. These groups are made up of a cross-section of faculty and staff representation and advise deans on specific matters related to that faculty. Building relationships with members of these groups will be helpful to advance the change (Cawsey et al., 2020).

Stage 3, the acceleration stage, involves action planning and implementation (Cawsey et al., 2020, p. 54). Momentum building is an important part of this stage, and effective relationship building and engagement with appropriate stakeholders will help to advance the change (Cawsey et al., 2020). With so many competing priorities not only at the NCF, but also throughout WLAU, it will be essential to maintain momentum through concerted engagement and continuous connection with stakeholders.

The final stage of the model is institutionalization, which signals the transition to the desired new state (Cawsey et al., 2020). Implementation of the change would involve continuously working with faculty from credit faculties and staff from NCF to “gauge progress toward the goal and make modifications as needed and mitigate risk” (Cawsey et al., 2020, p. 55). Monitoring progress in an intentional way ensures that a mechanism is in place for continuous feedback and improvement from the various stakeholders.
The PoP would benefit from using the change path model (Cawsey et al., 2020) as a framework for leading the change as it has a strong focus on engagement and creating an invested community of stakeholders. Each step has a connection to stakeholder engagement, allows for relationship building through input and feedback, and measures progress along the way, being flexible and open to making modifications as required (Cawsey et al., 2020). One challenge may be that although the NCF could easily implement the first three stages of the plan, awakening, mobilization, and acceleration, it may be more of a challenge to see through institutionalization due to my limited authority across campus.

Unlike the change path model (Cawsey et al., 2020), which is a framework that focuses on formal organizational structures, Duck’s (2001) five-stage change curve is focused on people and emotional considerations as they relate to change. As shared in Chapter 1, there are five stages in Duck’s theory: stagnation, preparation, implementation, determination, and fruition.

Stage 1, stagnation, requires a change from an external pressure (Cawsey et al., 2020; Duck, 2001). This is an important catalyst for change, because as mentioned in Chapter 1, there has been a push from the provincial government to work more collaboratively and identify other sources of revenue. This external push is the catalyst the NCF can use to initiate the change and communicate the challenges of the current state to stakeholders across campus.

Stage 2, preparation, requires significant planning and operational work by the leaders (Cawsey et al., 2020; Duck, 2001). This phase can take months and requires operational assessments such as reviewing the organizational structure and identifying key stakeholders (Duck, 2001). It is important to note that this phase is a critical point in the change curve. If too much time is spent in preparation, or leaders lack alignment, the initiative is likely to stall. The behavioural leadership approach (Northouse, 2016), with its focus on relationships, is an
important pair to this phase, to ensure the NCF can engage and align stakeholders and other leaders.

The implementation stage of the change curve (Duck, 2001) is where some of the most important changes need to happen—changing people’s emotional maps and habits (Cawsey et al., 2020). This is also the stage where operational changes happen, including organizational restructuring or job descriptions (Cawsey et al., 2020). This operational focus is well aligned to the work in the NCF, where administrative processes, organizational capacity, and operational success are key to the day-to-day work it does.

The determination phase will require all change leaders associated with the project to have high energy and enthusiasm (Cawsey et al., 2020; Duck, 2001) as the challenging work of living the change begins. For WLAU, this will require support from multiple leaders in the university, including the NCF and the faculty members. Creating a culture of engagement and enthusiasm can be achieved by celebrating wins along the way, recognizing successful changes or even incremental steps forward. This culture of recognition and celebration is already present in WLAU, where there is a strong community spirit and successes are shared informally at faculty meetings and more formally through presidential addresses and campus-wide newsletters.

Although Duck’s (2001) process is referred to as a change curve, it might be more accurate to refer to it as a change cycle, as after fruition—the final stage of the model—enjoying the success of the completed change process, stagnation may not be far behind. In this phase, the focus must remain institutionalizing the improvements made and confirming that the collaborative processes developed between the NCF and credit faculties have created improved processes and better results.
Duck’s (2001) five-stage curve model focuses on the human aspect of change, and matched with my preferred leadership approaches of behavioural and distributed leadership, it is the preferred framework to lead the change at WLAU. Duck prioritized emotional impacts to change over organizational impacts. This emphasis is important and relevant to this OIP and the PoP as it recognizes the sometimes-limited reach the NCF has across the organization. Instead, it allows for the focus to be on people, where there is more latitude for the NCF to exert influence.

**Critical Organizational Analysis**

This section provides a critical organizational analysis of the culture and context of WLAU and describes the needed changes to move the change process forward. In addition, specific stages of the congruence model (Nadler & Tushman, 1980) are examined, along with how this framework will positively impact the proposed PoP.

Understanding and prioritizing the changes that need to be addressed at WLAU will ensure that all stakeholders, both from the NCF and the credit faculties, are invested in the change process. In addition, it is important that everything possible be done to make required adjustments and changes in advance of implementing the change process, such that the institution is positioned for success as best as possible. Three important changes are identified: bridging the communication gap between the NCF staff and credit faculty members, better highlighting institution wide the achievements of the NCF, and developing a clear and fulsome catalogue of external partnerships and collaborations already occurring at WLAU.

Bridging the communication gap between the NCF and the credit faculties would have multiple benefits. One of the communication challenges that exists between the different units is that their working vocabularies are different, and employees have limited knowledge of what happens in other parts of the organization (Bell & Martin, 2014). Currently, no formal
mechanism is in place that allows the different credit faculties to ensure other university stakeholders are apprised of the work happening in their faculty. As with any large organization, gaps are present in awareness and understanding of the various projects, research, and program initiatives taking place across campus. Creating a mechanism that allows for the different faculties and NCF not only to share their updates with the larger university community, but also to include a mechanism for feedback, questions, or two-way dialogue, would help to bridge this gap.

Communication could be as simple as a newsletter that is distributed to the campus community with updates from each faculty and appropriate contact information for outreach. Each faculty could host an open house or invite selected staff and faculty from different faculties to department meetings to learn about the daily operations of the unit and to ask any questions that may arise. A benefit of this approach would be a deeper understanding of the work happening across the institution, which may help to identify where there may be similarities or differences, and how contributions from other faculties could support that work. Working in cross-functional teams, having the ability to ask questions, and sharing information in a way that others can better understand helps to open lines of communication across the organization (Bell & Martin, 2014).

The next change that should be addressed is better highlighting of the achievements of the NCF. This is an important change to work to implement as it will help build the credibility of the NCF, not only in its programming success, but also in its operational and administrative success. It would also help to explain why the NCF is well positioned to lead this OIP and collaborate with external stakeholders. For example, programming success could include highlighting national programming awards that have been won for noncredit certificates.
Operational success could include sharing and highlighting processes in curriculum development that allow for quick and responsive course development in lecture, online, and blended formats. Administrative success would include best practices in processes such as onboarding new instructors and ensuring that they feel connected to a faculty where they may teach only one 15-hour course per semester.

Highlighting these achievements would not only signal to the rest of the institution that the NCF is well positioned to lead change, but also reinforce to the NCF staff that through their work, they contribute to a strong faculty. Acknowledging the NCF in this way will help to bring the staff together to face challenges and changes collectively, and help boost morale (Klann & Klann, 2004). Staff need to be confident in their abilities when dealing with stakeholders from outside the NCF when addressing the PoP.

The final change that is needed, one that is operational, requires the cataloging of all external partners collaborating on programming with either the NCF or the credit faculties. This centralized repository of external stakeholders should be designed to include areas such as alumni affairs, fundraising, corporate training, and the NCF’s work at WLAU. The creation of this repository will be important to identify duplications, see under- or over-represented sectors, and create a dialogue between the NCF and credit faculties about successes and challenges of working with specific external stakeholders.

Instituting this change would provide a detailed document that could be shared with appropriate internal stakeholders and facilitate conversations about opportunities and learning. It would also be a concrete artifact demonstrating that although the goals of the faculties are sometimes different, much of the work taking place within them is similar. Documenting this information should help to bring the NCF and credit faculties closer together by demonstrating
that they are not so different in how they approach working with external stakeholders. Table 1 summarizes the changes and their potential impacts.

**Table 1**

*Change Priorities and Desired Outcomes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change priority</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Desired outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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| Bridging communication gap between NCF and credit faculties | • Allow for open communication between credit faculty members and NCF staff.  
• Match staff managing NCF certificates to corresponding credit faculty programming staff. For example, staff overseeing programs in Children Learning Through Play certificate at the NCF to be matched with faculty in the Department of Education.  
• Opportunity for relationship building and resource sharing with colleagues across campus.  
• Creates space for networking in a structured and meaningful environment with appropriate stakeholders. |                                                                                           |
| Highlighting NCF achievements across the institution | • Provide better internal promotion and recognition of programming and community partnerships managed within the NCF. |  
• Creates a sense of pride amongst NCF staff.  
• Institutional recognition creates an opportunity for dialogue and information sharing.  
• Raises the awareness of the diversity of programming and community impact of the NCF. |                                                                                           |
| External partner repository                          | • Create a centralized repository of external partners that can be accessed by key stakeholders across the institution. |  
• Limits duplication of efforts in engaging external partners.  
• Creates a natural pathway via a shared contact for introductions.  
• Better organizes the work happening at WLAU and maintains historical data of past relationships. |
Organizations are effective when the four key components of performance—tasks, people, structure, and culture—fit together (Sabir, 2018). Cohesion is a critical point that will be used to drive OIP forward. Ensuring that the change process is managed with the specific task and goal in mind, with the appropriate people and stakeholders properly engaged and communicated with, in a structure and culture that allows for safe sharing of ideas and emphasizes collaboration, will be paramount to its success.

Nadler and Tushman’s (1980) congruence model (see Figure 1) is an appealing model to address these four components. It will help address the lack of alignment between the NCF and the credit faculties, which has created challenges in collaboration efforts in the past. This model “takes inputs and transforms them into outputs” (Nadler & Tushman, 1980, p. 47) through a process composed of tasks, people, structure, and culture. These topics are expanded upon below, including how they will help to move this OIP forward.

Figure 1

The Congruence Model

Nadler and Tushman (1980) defined inputs as “all factors, including institutions, groups, individuals, events and so on, that are outside the organization being analyzed, but that have a potential impact on that organization” (p. 40). With that in mind, and in the context of this OIP, the greater environmental inputs on the NCF include the provincial government, the academic leadership at the institution, and other faculties and departments within WLAU. Of the two leadership approaches referenced, distributed and behavioural, distributed leadership is most appropriate when examining this component of the congruence model. It will allow me to engage others across campus who hold expertise in these areas to examine their impacts on the NCF. Distributed leadership allows for networking roles, where individuals from different groups or different parts of the organization may work together to “build partnerships for tackling common problems or pursuing shared purposes” (Simkins, 2005, p. 16). One challenge may be accessing appropriate representatives from senior leadership or the provincial ministry to gather comprehensive data on what demands or constraints (Nadler & Tushman, 1980) those specific groups put on the NCF.

The tasks or work of the NCF focus on providing noncredit programming and ensuring students are job-ready with the skills and tools provided to them in the classroom. The larger institution has a primary focus of providing an excellent undergraduate learning experience, which is the core business of the university. It will be important in this change process to assure stakeholders that the primary goal of the university is not changing, and instead, the work between the NCF and credit faculties will expand to provide greater student experiences while engaging external stakeholders.

The people that this OIP focuses on are staff members in the NCF, faculty members from credit faculties, and external stakeholders, and consideration is given to how those three
stakeholder groups can collaborate to provide relevant and meaningful programming opportunities to WLAU students. To be able to move this OIP forward, change leaders should have a strong understanding of the people in each of these stakeholder groups and understand any “dynamics of resistance” (Ballaro et al., 2020, p. 48) from anyone in those groups. As important as it will be to identify people who may be resistant to this type of collaboration and change, it is equally important, if not imperative, to identify people who are champions of this type of work. Not only will they act as ambassadors for the change, but they will also provide credibility to the change process and increase member confidence in the leadership (Cawsey et al., 2020).

The “processes, methods, procedures, and so forth that are explicitly and formally developed to get individuals to perform tasks consistent with organizational strategy” (Nadler & Tushman, 1980, p. 44) ultimately impact how work is done at an organization. Ensuring that work is aligned with the organizational strategy is vital for this OIP, and as stated above, community engagement is a priority for WLAU. The structures in place at WLAU will need to be critically examined to determine if there are barriers to achieving this goal and how they might be addressed.

The culture of an organization consists of its politics, values, behaviour patterns, and rules (Sabir, 2018). As the processes for collaborating with external stakeholders have not been formalized institution wide, there are discrepancies in how credit faculties and the NCF engage with external stakeholders. As stated above, there is not even a repository of external collaborators available at WLAU, which can lead to a duplication of efforts. Making the change to catalogue and clarify external collaborations will require a shift in mindset for many
stakeholders who believe their process is best, yet the effort will have been worthwhile when there is consistency of practice among the faculties.

Finally, the outputs in the congruence model are “what the organization produces, how it performs and how effective it is” (Nadler & Tushman, 1980, p. 43). In the context of this OIP, a positive output could be measured by reviewing the outcomes at an organizational, group, or individual level (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). In that context, at an organizational level, WLAU students could have access to more dynamic programming, the NCF staff could share best practices across the university, and NCF and credit faculties would be able to work collaboratively towards a shared vision.

The congruence model (Nadler & Tushman, 1980) will be an effective tool for change leaders to examine the change in a systematic way, evaluating the various factors that will impact, influence, and potentially impede or influence change within the organization. This model provides a wide lens through which to examine the work a company does, the people who do it, the structure of the company, and its culture (Sabir, 2018). The following section builds off the foundation of this critical organizational analysis and examines potential solutions to the PoP.

**Possible Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice**

In the context of this OIP, collaboration is defined as the pooling of resources by two or more stakeholders to solve a set of problems which neither can solve individually (Hall Jackson et al., 2005). This definition is appropriate as it allows for collaboration within the organization and externally as well, to work to solve a specific problem that otherwise could not be addressed independently. With this definition in mind, and the organizational analysis that has already been highlighted earlier in the chapter, three solutions are proposed to address this PoP. Each solution
is focused on collaboration that will lead to best practices in program development to benefit students at WLAU.

Solution 1 would see credit faculty embedded in the NCF. Solution 2 would be to create a standalone unit with representatives from NCF and credit faculty. Solution 3 would be to create a community of practice (CoP) program. Each of these solutions impacts the organizational culture, some more so than others. Organizational culture is constantly evolving and subgroups within an organization may have different paradigms that may be in opposition to each other (Schein, 1985). These considerations and an evaluation of each of the solutions are explored in more detail below.

**Solution 1: Embed Credit Faculty**

One of the greatest challenges that has been identified in this OIP is the lack of awareness, or recognition, from the larger university community regarding the work that is happening within the NCF. This solution is modelled after some of the service areas on campus that already do something similar. For example, the communications and marketing department is centralized on campus, but it has marketing partners that work with each faculty directly. This allows the marketing partner to have a greater understanding of the faculty they are supporting, advocate for it within their marketing department, and bring with them the expertise and best practices of the central marketing unit to each faculty.

Similarly, having a faculty member work intentionally in the NCF as a faculty partner could increase the awareness of the work that is happening, identify opportunities where credit faculties may be able to support initiatives, and begin to build a more collaborative and supportive relationship between the NCF and credit faculties. Having a better understanding of the work, processes, and programming that is coming out of the NCF would help to build its
credibility, as well as clarify any misconceptions of it, within the larger university. In addition, the faculty partner could share any best practices from their home faculty with the NCF to support its work and improve processes.

The resources that would be required for this solution would be limited. Rather, it would require significant investment in the idea of what could be. For example, the credit faculty partner would still be employed by the larger institution and would still be tasked with their credit faculty duties, but as part of their service learning, would add the NCF faculty partner to their duties. This adjustment would require approval from their dean to release them from other faculty service and allow them to pursue this faculty partnership. The main resource required would be time, both from the faculty partner and the NCF to onboard the new person to the nuances of the NCF.

Solution 2: Create a Standalone Unit

The second solution is more ambitious and requires additional resources and commitment from the NCF and the credit faculties. This solution would see a separate unit that is made up of staff from the NCF and faculty members from the credit faculties to advance the PoP. This solution would create a completely new department separate from both the NCF and the credit faculties that would work specifically on outbound programming opportunities and collaborations. This solution would require significant support in terms of resources, including time, human resources, and financial support.

The time to develop a separate department would be substantial. Although a physical building space would not be required, it would need to have appropriate approvals from the university as any new institute, school, or faculty would. It would require at least 6 to 12 months to go through the appropriate approval and feedback processes. In addition, a new organizational
structure would need to be developed, with appropriate leaders and support systems in place. As a standalone department focused on programming opportunities for WLAU students in credit and noncredit programming, there would be an expectation of cost recovery, so the financial implications are quite severe. There would be significant start-up costs associated with the department, with the pressure and expectation to have a positive financial return on that investment.

Despite these significant investments, this model would bring the best of both worlds under one department with a clear focus and vision on student programming, which aligns strongly with the organizational mission and vision. It would create a blank slate where both the NCF and credit faculty members could create something together that would provide unique learning opportunities for students with external partners.

**Solution 3: Create a Community of Practice**

The third solution is to create a CoP between staff in the NCF and specific credit faculty members to develop strategies to address the PoP. A CoP has been defined as “groups of people who share a passion for something and, together, learn how to do it better” (Ryan, 2015, p. 1001). Developing a CoP will help to build organizational knowledge about the different approaches between NCF and the credit faculties. In addition, this approach could help improve communication between the faculties, which currently work in silos, and increase understanding of the work and programming each faculty does. The peer-to-peer approach used in a CoP is also a strategy that has been piloted in other areas at WLAU, specifically around curriculum development in the Teaching and Technology Department that supports faculty with online course development.
As with the other proposed solutions, this solution requires limited infrastructure resources. However, a significant amount of time and leadership will be required to ensure that the CoP is developed thoughtfully and in alignment with the goals of both the PoP and the university. Mechanisms need to be developed to capture and document learning and best practices, as well as take that information back to the home faculty of each member of the CoP. Endorsement from faculty leaders will be required to ensure the success of the CoP. Additionally, they will be integral in recommending appropriate staff or faculty members to be in the CoP. The success of the CoP will hinge on the efforts, interest, and investment of each of the individual members. The responsibility being placed on each member of the CoP is quite high as well. Members will be tasked with sharing best practices, working together to address the problem, and engaging with stakeholders from campus they may not normally work with. They will be tasked with being champions of this process, and ideally encourage others to participate in future opportunities in an effort to build capacity for this collaborative work around campus.

When comparing the three solutions, some similarities can be seen between them, but also key differences. The time, human, and fiscal resources required for each one are summarized in Table 2 and discussed further in the next section.

**Comparing Solutions**

Based on the significant time, human, and fiscal resources required for the development of a standalone unit as compared to the other two solutions, Solution 2 is not a strong option. It requires a significant amount of time, human, and financial resources, and it has the most risk attached to it with regards to long-term sustainability. When examining the remaining two solutions, there are clear similarities. In both instances, the existing infrastructure available at WLAU could be used to facilitate them. In addition, significant buy-in from academic and NCF
leadership is required to endorse the solutions, and there is a responsibility of each of the stakeholders participating in each potential solution to be engaged and invested.

**Table 2**

*Proposed Solutions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources required</th>
<th>(1) Faculty partners embedded in NCF</th>
<th>(2) Standalone combined department</th>
<th>(3) Community of practice program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>Recruitment of appropriate faculty partner, development of training and outcomes in the NCF. Negotiations with appropriate faculty association and dean for faculty service. Moderate resources required.</td>
<td>Approval of new department at institutional level, development of organizational framework and reporting structure, recruitment, and training of staff. Maximum resources required.</td>
<td>Will require significant upfront time to develop the program and recruit staff and faculty. However, once it is running, the time commitment will drop significantly. Moderate resources required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human</strong></td>
<td>Recruitment of the faculty partner would require use of additional human resources, including a selection committee, interview, onboarding, and training. Maximum resources required.</td>
<td>Significant input from human resources across campus, faculty, and staff associations. If standalone department is staffed by existing staff, those gaps will need to also be filled. Maximum resources required.</td>
<td>Recruitment would not be competitive and would not require significant human resources. Process would be managed by the change leader similar to recruitment for other committees or working groups on campus. Minimum resources required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fiscal</strong></td>
<td>Although the faculty partner would be embedded in the NCF, that person would be an employee of WLAU, so the financial cost is net neutral. Additional costs of NCF staff time to provide onboarding and support to the faculty partner. Moderate resources required.</td>
<td>Significant financial resources, including recruitment costs and salaries of the new unit staff. Also, there would be an expectation of cost recovery, if not revenue generation. Infrastructure for the new department is available on campus and would not be an additional cost. Maximum resources required.</td>
<td>The financial impact would be insignificant and comparable to other campus-wide committees. No remuneration as all staff and faculty would participate as part of their current employment. Infrastructure for meeting spaces, technology, and equipment is already available on campus. Minimum resources required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some of the similarities have been noted, but when critically analyzing the two remaining solutions, as a future change leader I also notice some gaps between the two remaining solutions. An embedded faculty partner could allow for concentrated learning and likely would be a fast way to begin to address the PoP; fewer stakeholders are needed to influence and help to lead the change. However, one consideration is the sustainability of this model. It is dependent on a specific faculty member to participate—if that person leaves, changes their mind, or becomes disinterested in the project, the change initiative could falter or fail. The success of the solution is dependent on one person and could all fall apart if that person steps away from WLAU.

The preferred solution that provides the greatest opportunity for growth, can be scaled, and can impact the most employees to be engaged in addressing the PoP is Solution 3, developing a CoP program at WLAU.

**Preferred Solution**

A CoP between faculty and NCF staff will have many benefits. One key benefit is an opportunity for open communication. Effective communication practices encourage and influence organizations to achieve intended changes (Ballaro et al., 2020). In addition, the scalability of the CoP is not dependent on only one participant but allows for greater engagement across the organization and is a safe space for knowledge transfer (Ryan, 2015). CoPs also complement the distributed leadership approach; as stated in Hart (2013), a CoP can provide equal opportunities for participants to learn, and experts come from a range of positions, regardless of professional or other background. Another benefit of the CoP is that it is open to faculty members and stakeholders across campus. Eventually, the goal would be to include external stakeholders from the community within the CoP to better understand their perspectives as they relate to student programming and employer needs. This critical voice will be imperative
in identifying relevant and meaningful educational partners from within the community. The CoP is also the preferred solution as although its goal is to share knowledge and best practices, it is done in a way that is not intimidating to someone who is not from the academy, and learning is not seen as the acquisition of knowledge by individuals so much as a process of social participation (Hart, 2013).

The preferred solution for the PoP will use the model for improvement to measure success, which asks three basic questions: What are we trying to accomplish, how will we know that a change is an improvement, and what changes can we make that will result in improvement (Moen & Norman, 2009, p. 9). The model for improvement is used to identify improvement efforts in informal and complex settings (Moen & Norman, 2009) and is shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*Model for Improvement*

![Model for Improvement](https://docplayer.net/20952698-Evolution-of-the-pdca-cycle.html)

When applying this model to the proposed solution, each of the three basic questions can be addressed. First, “What are we trying to accomplish?” (Moen & Norman, 2009, p. 9). The aim is to develop meaningful and relevant collaborations with NCF, credit faculty, and external community members to develop relevant programming opportunities for students at WLAU. The next question is, “How will we know that a change is an improvement?” (Moen & Norman, 2009, p. 9). Answering this question will require a measurement of qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data can be obtained through feedback loops built into the CoP to allow for real-time feedback on the knowledge transfer and change process. Quantitative data can be collected and measured through the ability to identify external collaborations and programs that can be offered. The final question is, “What change can we make that will result in improvement?” (Moen & Norman, 2009, p. 9). This answer will require making a decision based on the outcomes of the CoP and the stakeholders who are embedded in the work. Through a distributed leadership lens, it is important to empower those who are doing the work and invested in the CoP to make recommendations on how to best move forward.

This section examined three potential solutions for the PoP and selected the solution with the best option for growth and scalability, and for affecting the largest number of stakeholders. The model for improvement (Moen & Norman, 2009) will be used to assess the success of the proposed solution. The next section examines leadership ethics and organizational change.

**Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change**

This section summarizes the various ethical considerations that must be taken into account for this OIP and how they might be addressed. Burnes and By (2012) stated that leaders cannot achieve “sustainable and beneficial change for their organizations unless they act in an ethical fashion and adopt ethically compatible approaches to change” (p. 240). The role of ethics
in change cannot be understated and provides a basis for judging the appropriateness of behaviour (Burnes & By, 2012). Leadership involves many challenges that prompt a leader to make choices that will affect many people within an organization (Derr, 2012). As a responsible change leader, it is important that all my actions are undertaken with care in the implementation of this OIP and consideration is given to the different perspectives of all stakeholders.

Colquitt et al. (2010) defined ethics as “the degrees to which the behaviour of an authority are in accordance with generally accepted moral norms” (p. 162). Placing that definition within the context of this OIP, leadership ethics will be appropriately modelled on the cultural and organizational context of WLAU. Northouse (2016) outlined ethical leadership as a type of leadership concerned with rules, behaviours, expectations, values, and morals that are desirable and appropriate in society. These definitions and frameworks are important considerations to apply when considering the ethical responsibility and duty to implement this change process.

The ethical responsibility of the NCF is to provide relevant noncredit programming to students to help them achieve their personal and professional goals. Continuing to offer programs and learning opportunities that help fulfil student goals is the catalyst for this PoP. Engaging credit faculty to work collaboratively with the NCF and external partners to provide a deeper connection to job skills training and employment preparation through learning opportunities is a testament to the constant growth of the NCF and its desire to provide students with opportunities that will enrich their learning and connect them directly to relevant industry partners. Starratt (1991) stated that no one frame can address all dilemmas. He focused on ethics between principals and teachers, yet his findings can be applied to other educational settings. They provide a way for administrators to think about their work and workplace from an ethical
perspective with three main foci: the ethic of critique, the ethic of justice, and the ethic of caring (Starratt, 1991). This section uses these three perspectives as guideposts to develop an ethical implementation plan for the OIP.

The ethic of critique examines structural issues in an organization as they relate to power, language, and relationships and asks a timely question in relation to these points: “Who benefits by these arrangements?” (Starratt, 1991, p. 189). It also “poses the fundamental ethical challenge to the administrators: how to construct an environment in which education can take place ethically” (Starratt, 1991, p. 189). At WLAU, the majority of student benefits are for credit students. Those students are, after all, the audience of the core business of the university. With that knowledge in mind, it will be important to work to shift the focus to include noncredit students and explain how this OIP can help benefit their learning while still supporting the mission and vision of the larger organization.

In addition, with the selected proposed solution, it will be vital to be mindful of representation and select a diverse group of participants to ensure that no one employee group dominates the CoP. This OIP highlights the inequity that currently exists between the various divisions in academic affairs and illustrates how the proposed solution can address it. Being intentional about the membership of the CoP and ensuring there is equal representation from across the university will allow for different perspectives and insights to be shared in a productive and collegial manner, ultimately benefitting the programming and students. Equity, diversity, and inclusion are discussed in more depth in Chapter 3.

The ethic of justice assumes an ability to perceive injustice in the social order as well as a minimal level of caring about relationships (Starratt, 1991). The ethic of justice, as its name would imply, is focused on policy development and implementation (Martinez, 2014; Starratt,
The ethic of justice lends itself well to a behavioural leadership approach. Chapter 1 discussed how focusing on relationships and modelling the behaviour one wants to see in others are markers of that approach, and those traits are equally well suited to an ethical leader. The focus on relationships of stakeholders in the CoP, but also those in the external community, will be critical: All stakeholders should feel they are able to contribute in a positive way, and any concerns they may have should be addressed. If one stakeholder is dominating the decision-making of the group, that situation must be addressed quickly to ensure that any injustices—perceived or real—are quickly extinguished.

Ethic of care is focused on “honoring the dignity of each person” (Starratt, 1991, p. 194) and the importance or relationships. Again, in the context of the PoP and OIP, the primary focus is on developing positive relationship with all stakeholders, to work towards common goals. An ethical leader’s focus must remain on developing strong relationships through honest communication. One must be mindful of the importance of unique human feelings, self-confidence, and personal anxieties (Starratt, 1991) that may enter into an exchange between a leader and others. In the context of this OIP, not every stakeholder has the same understanding of student programming, developing external relationships, or working with credit faculty, even though they are committed to making positive changes.

I also want to acknowledge that I have benefitted greatly from having an ethical role model (Brown, 2006) who has modelled accountability, honesty, fairness, and general behaviours that exhibit high ethical standards. As such, I am committed to embodying those same behaviours and traits as I move forward with this OIP, as I have seen firsthand the benefits of an honest and ethical leader.
Chapter 2 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the planning and development phase of the OIP. Behavioural and distributed leadership approaches will help to propel the change forward, and the change path model (Cawsey et al., 2020) and five-stage change curve (Duck, 2001) will be the frameworks used to lead the change process. A critical organizational analysis identified changes that needed to be made in the organization, and the congruence model (Nadler & Tushman, 1980) was examined as a framework to help lead the change. Three potential solutions were scrutinized and compared, and a selection was made that will address the PoP: Solution 3, create a CoP consisting of credit faculty members, and NCF staff members. Finally, leadership and ethics in the implementation of the OIP were explored. The next and final chapter addresses implementation, evaluation, and communication of the OIP and addresses next steps and future considerations.
Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication

This chapter covers the implementation, evaluation, and communication plan of the OIP. Applying the organizational analysis from Chapter 2 and the selected solution—developing a CoP—a strategy for change implementation is outlined, with consideration to stakeholder reactions, resources required, identification of potential issues and challenges, and setting up benchmarks to measure progress. Change will be tracked by connecting to the plan-do-study-act (PDSA) model (Moen & Norman, 2009) and leadership approaches to change. A plan to communicate the need for change and the change process is developed. This chapter also includes an overarching OIP conclusion, in which where next steps and future considerations are outlined.

Change Implementation Plan

The change implementation plan outlines the change process to implement cross-collaboration among the NCF and credit faculties alongside external community partners. The goal of this cross-collaboration is to identify and develop relevant and meaningful programming opportunities for students while building awareness of the work that is happening within the NCF and across campus. The change implementation plan will be built around the solution outlined in Chapter 2, developing a CoP made up of programming staff from the NCF and credit faculty members. This chapter also applies the organizational analysis findings and aligns the plan with the change path model. The implementation plan addresses any limitations and challenges and where possible, potential solutions to mitigate those roadblocks. As Duck (2001) stated, “There is generally no clear and definite end to preparation” (p. 147); however, milestones can signify a moment when “one phase is on the wane and the next one is gathering
momentum” (p. 147). The following sections highlight the various benchmarks between the different stages.

**Goals and Priorities**

The strategic plan of WLAU (2020) highlights a number of areas that this OIP can help to address, both from a student and learning perspective and from a faculty and staff engagement viewpoint. Some key areas of the strategic plan that are well aligned with this OIP include goals such as the following:

- Providing students with an opportunity to become deeply engaged in their educational experience;
- Preparing students for personal and career success;
- Fostering career development for faculty, staff, and management;
- Supporting the scholarships, research, and community engagement of faculty and staff through a focus on innovation; and
- Enhanced community outreach. (WLAU, 2020)

The primary goal of the change plan is to create meaningful opportunities for students through collaboration among the NCF, credit, and community partners, with the intention of building a better understanding and fostering a sense of collaboration and innovation between the NCF and academic credit faculties. As identified earlier, this goal will benefit and support the overall goals and strategic direction of WLAU as it has a strong focus on collaboration, community outreach, and innovation.

Some of the dimensions to consider when assessing the scope of a change initiative include organizational structure, roles and responsibilities, size of the workforce, and business model (Duck, 2001). Considering these factors and my position within the NCF, managing this
goal is within the scope of my purview. The majority of the resources required for implementation are already in place at WLAU. However, as the process begins, additional resources to support the work of the CoP may be identified and sought out.

**Change Implementation Plan**

The implementation plan follows Cawsey et al.’s (2020) four-stage change path model including awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization. This is an appropriate approach as it allows for distinct separation of benchmarking goals at each of the stages.

**Awakening Stage**

This first stage of the change path model, awakening (Cawsey et al., 2020), brings to attention the need for change and disseminates that powerful vision for change to stakeholders. This stage of the change process is well within my scope, as I already work with academic administrators across the organization, and have the ability, together with the NCF dean, to present the opportunity at various in-person meetings at the faculty level across campus. The two priorities listed at this stage include building awareness around collaborative opportunities between faculty and the NCF, as well as documenting and highlighting past successes with the NCF and other partners.

Building awareness around this change process will help to highlight the need for a change in the relationship between credit faculties and the NCF and the opportunities that could grow from working together. Having the opportunity to meet with senior faculty leaders such as academic chairs and deans, together with the dean of the NCF, will allow the NCF to answer questions these leaders may have, better explain the goals of the change process, and outline what the specific benefits for faculty could be. This step of the process is important because it
will allow me to disseminate the vision for the change (Cawsey et al., 2020) and work to influence and inform the stakeholders across campus.

In addition to building awareness, the awakening stage will also see the compilation of previous collaborations the NCF has partaken in, such as joint curriculum development with another postsecondary institution in the province, customized project management training for an Indigenous community in the region, and development of a certificate with a learning institute on campus. This concurrent step will allow me and the dean of the NCF to speak to some of the programming collaborations that have already taken place, describe what the successes and challenges were, and highlight their benefits.

During this stage, impacted stakeholders include me, as the NCF director; the NCF dean; other deans and faculty chairs from WLAU credit faculties; and some members of the programming staff in the NCF. Under my supervision, these stakeholder groups will capture and catalogue past collaborations for discussion. At this stage, stakeholder reactions will likely be neutral as they learn more about the change process and where they may be able to support and benefit from it. The goals of this stage are short-term and will likely not take more than three months to implement and execute.

**Mobilization Stage**

During this stage, formalized systems are introduced (Cawsey et al., 2020) that will assist in implementing and reaching the change vision goals. In this instance, those formal systems include creating a framework for the CoP and identifying potential representatives from across the university to represent their faculty and actively participate in the CoP. This stage will include creating a document that will act as a charter or outline for the CoP, including a schedule, goals, how information will be documented and disseminated and to whom, what
authority the CoP will have, and the different stakeholders and administrative support within the CoP. Having this document created will help to manage the power and cultural dynamics (Cawsey et al., 2020) that may be at play with the different stakeholders making up the CoP.

This stage also reflects the importance of a distributed leadership approach in this change process, where expertise is valued over position title and where the change leader can facilitate and support the leadership of others (Harris, 2013). As considerations begin as to who would be appropriate for the CoP, it will be important to ensure that the framework is in place to signal that each member is a valued participant regardless of position or title. This stage may see some resistance from stakeholders who may be hesitant to work with others outside their faculty, and who may have an emotional response when preconceived notions are challenged by colleagues. Creating a safe and inclusive environment by following the charter and ensuring concerns are addressed will be paramount for the CoP to work as a functional group.

Developing the CoP requires consideration towards equity, diversity, and inclusion. In 2020, the President’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee was set up at WLAU; it comprises faculty, staff, and students, and one of its goals is to advocate for systemic change at the university (WLAU, n.d.). With this in mind, it is important to consider who will make up the CoP. Representation should be diverse in terms of position and faculty, but also in terms of gender, race, and ability. Developing a climate for inclusion where individuals of all backgrounds are included, not just members of historically powerful groups (Nishii, 2013), is an active discussion at WLAU. Strong organizations also promote diversity and avoid the standardization that weakens learning, adaptability, and resilience in the face of unexpected changes and threats (Hargreaves, 2007). A further consideration is to have diverse job roles and functions represented on the CoP, as women and minorities are overrepresented in job functions
with lower status (Bernstein et al., 2020). Having a CoP with representation from across the organization will be integral to ensuring that diverse opinions and perspectives are shared, and will promote the broader organizational goals of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The mobilization phase would impact a limited number of stakeholders. I would work with other administrators in the NCF to develop a framework and supporting documentation; other administrative leaders across campus would also be part of this phase, with recommendations of who from their faculty might be a good fit for the CoP. Effectively communicating the goals of the OIP and working to solicit members of the campus community to join the CoP would require stakeholder support from the communications department at WLAU. Ensuring that messaging properly communicates the need for the change (Cawsey et al., 2020) will require resources from appropriate communications staff, with final messaging being approved by the manager of WLAU. The timeline for this phase would be approximately three to four months and would be considered a short-term goal of the implementation plan.

**Acceleration Stage**

The goals of the acceleration stage include identifying programming opportunities and reaching out to potential external partners. This stage of the change path model focuses on the planning and implementation of the change (Cawsey et al., 2020) as well as celebrating small wins. The focus on the actual program planning through the CoP aligns with this stage. The initiation of these goals and priorities will begin at the completion of the mobilization phase and signals the long-term phase of the implementation, as it would be an ongoing process at WLAU.

The impact to stakeholders throughout the university and the larger community is most significant in this stage. These stakeholders would include various faculty and staff from across WLAU as well as administrative support and the manager of WLAU. The stakeholders involved
would also have the biggest impact on the change process—their engagement and involvement within the CoP would initiate new program development and the engagement of external stakeholders and partners. CoPs have evolved from social learning processes to become an instrumental and intentional tool for knowledge development and management (Buckley et al., 2019). The CoP will provide an avenue for idea sharing, knowledge gathering, and capacity building and ultimately benefit the student experience. Ideally, employees who are members of the CoP will be champions of this process and through their active participation be ambassadors for this change process throughout WLAU.

As this will be a long-term phase of the implementation plan, it will be important that members selected for the CoP can actively participate in this process, as stability and consistency of participants are key as the change process is launched. This phase will take at least one academic year, after which there will be an opportunity for other faculty and staff members to participate in the CoP. This rotation will allow for fresh perspectives and ideas, as well as building capacity and knowledge throughout WLAU.

**Institutionalization Stage**

The final stage focuses on tracking changes and making modifications as required, and on ultimately building new knowledge, processes, and structures within the institution that bring the change to life (Cawsey et al., 2020). With that emphasis, the goals and priorities of this phase include monitoring and assessing the change progress and focusing on continuous improvement. By this stage, the CoP will have been active for over a year, which will have allowed for a significant amount of learning and ample opportunities to adjust as required. Measures of success will include a greater understanding of the NCF, a better understanding of the policies and
procedures within the NCF and credit faculties, a willingness and desire to collaborate, and stronger relationships from employees and faculty members from across the university.

The stakeholders in this stage include me, as the director of the NCF; members of the CoP; and external stakeholders. Together this core group of stakeholders can identify any gaps in the processes that have been developed, as well as measure the progress of the change. The use of a distributed leadership approach as discussed in Chapter 1 is significant during this process as well. The input of all stakeholders will be valued and considered, and the expertise of those who participated in the CoP will be honoured and appreciated. The change plan requires that feedback from stakeholders be considered, regardless of title, especially in this stage where embedding the process within the organization will be so critical. Of note, by this point in the change process, students will also have been impacted through newly launched programs. Their feedback will be important, not necessarily in the change process, but rather in the programming they will be able to access. Comments will be collected through student course evaluations at the end of each semester, outlined in the Appendix.

Table 3 captures the goals and priorities of the OIP as they relate to the four stages of the change path model. In terms of a timeline for this stage, the goal is for this change process to become an ingrained process within WLAU. It will be ongoing and allow for adjustments and evaluation, as well as the celebration of a successful process. The final section of the change implementation plan considers some of the challenges that may arise through this plan, including resources, implementation issues, and a review of potential limitations.
Table 3

Stages of the Change Path Model and Corresponding Goals and Priorities of the OIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change path stage</th>
<th>Goals and priorities</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Awakening         | • Build awareness of the opportunity for collaboration on program development across WLAU.  
                  | • Highlight previous collaborations and successes between the NCF and other partners. |
| Mobilization      | • Develop a CoP framework.  
                  | • Solicit participation in the CoP from faculty and staff. |
| Acceleration      | • Identify programming opportunities.  
                  | • Reach out to external partners. |
| Institutionalization | • Monitor and assess the change progress.  
                        | • Participant feedback process for continuous improvement.  
                        | • Celebrate successes. |


Supports and Resources

As discussed in Chapter 2, the resources required for the solution identified are not so onerous that they would impede the plan. The primary resources required are meeting space and time. An additional resource that requires consideration is the support of the communications department of WLAU. Effective and professional communication must accompany each of the stages of the change path model to achieve success. Professional communication that is aligned with the standards and practices of WLAU requires leadership from the WLAU communications department to manage strategies for any messaging to be delivered to various stakeholder groups.
and the university campus. Although NCF is already a centralized unit, it has access to a dedicated marketing and communication business partner that works directly with the NCF to support its strategic goals and priorities. It will be important to work together with WLAU communications experts who should plan formal messages and determine when they will be communicated, recognizing that the change leaders should have the opportunity to give input and authorize the transmission of messages (Beatty, 2015). Access to university-wide communication tools such as the internal newsletter and university website to highlight and support the change process will also be key to the success of the implementation plan, and signal to the wider university campus that this change process is supported by the leadership at WLAU.

Implementation Issues and Limitations

In any change process and plan, it is important to consider what might go wrong, or where challenges may arise. As such, the following paragraphs outline some issues that could impact the change plan, as well as limitations that should also be considered.

Although unlikely, my own limited agency beyond the NCF may create challenges in launching this improvement plan. To mitigate this potential risk, it will be important to first engage any credit faculty members, together with the dean of the NCF, who already have strong internal relationships with the credit faculty stakeholder group. The endorsement of the dean and other dean colleagues will be important to move along the change plan.

Another potential issue is the separate and unique projects happening across the university that will be prioritized by their own sponsoring departments or faculties. In addition to new projects and initiatives, there is likely to be a bottleneck of projects that have been delayed or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that will require reprioritization. Clearly communicating how this change process could address the PoP, how it is aligned with the
institutional strategic plan, and how it addresses many of the provincial ministry priorities will be important to share with all campus stakeholders and decision-makers. Further, the underscoring the potential for revenue generation while providing quality programming will be critical to ensure that the plan does not lose momentum to other campus initiatives.

More concrete implementation issues concern time and money. As with many publicly funded institutions, financial health is a constant consideration at WLAU. This consideration is at the forefront of WLAU, which is in a province that is dealing with a recession. Although the change plan does not require a significant financial investment, significant human resources are attached to it. If budgetary constraints lead to staff or faculty position abolitionment, or the reorganization of departments and faculties, this plan could be impacted as human resources may not be released. If these redundancies should occur, the benefits of the change plan and how it could positively impact the campus community would need to be highlighted to senior administration for their consideration.

Another potential limitation is the timing of the plan, with consideration given to the global pandemic that postsecondary institutions, businesses, and organizations across Canada are managing. More specifically, the launch of this change plan may need to be delayed as the primary focus of most organizations is their COVID-19 response. As the pandemic has also impacted international enrolment, the ability to offer in person classes and the ability for employers to support their staff through professional development funding, new and relevant program development will be a priority. Any avenue that provides innovative programming and new revenue sources could help to bolster student registration at WLAU, while achieving targeted goals identified in the strategic plan (WLAU, 2020). If the recommendation is to delay
the launch of the change plan to direct resources to COVID-19 issues and challenges at WLAU, the plan could be delayed and still successfully implemented at a later date.

The change plan as described above is within my authority and scope as the author. With the support of the NCF dean, I can lead the change process within WLAU. The limitation that I will be faced with is when looking externally to identify community partners. Although the NCF has many external partners through practicums, program advisory committees, and WIL opportunities through the NCF, I would only be able to recommend programming opportunities to these community members; they do not have the authority to decide to align with WLAU and work with the institution to implement a successful program. However, I have built significant relationships, and WLAU has a strong reputation within the community. Although authority is a consideration, it is not a limitation that would impede the change process.

Understanding some of the potential implementation challenges will allow me to develop contingency planning and adjust the change plan accordingly. The next section addresses the PDSA model (Moen & Norman, 2009) to track change, gauge progress, and evaluate change efforts. The first step (plan) requires the change agent to develop a plan with clear outcomes and goals. In Step 2 (do), the change is initiated, and data is collected. Step 3 (study) is where data analysis is undertaken, and Step 4 (act) is the opportunity to reflect on the data collected and decide next actions. The PDSA cycle allows change agents to plan, gather data, make decisions, and adjust as needed throughout the process, continuing the cycle in an iterative manner (Moen & Norman, 2009).

**Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation**

A plan to monitor and evaluate the change process is an integral component of the OIP (Cawsey et al., 2020). Close monitoring of the change initiative will ensure that real-time
feedback is collected and reviewed, and it allows change leaders to adjust or modify the process if required. Another important reason to closely monitor and evaluate the change process is to identify any implementation issues or limitations at each stage. Evaluation will require data collection; the reflections and feedback of the stakeholders involved will be important to measure the effectiveness of the change process.

Monitoring change processes can address a number of different purposes, including identifying and assessing results, accountability to stakeholders such as WLAU and the provincial government with regards to this OIP, developing capacity through learning and best practices, and program improvement (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). The results-based management approach is cyclical, iterative, and integrated (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016), and is used a “descriptor for a range of efforts to focus the performance of an organization” (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016, p. 31).

The ultimate goal of the CoP is to develop programming through collaboration. As the key feature of results-based management is “to promote a culture of results and integration between the functions of planning, monitoring and evaluation” (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016, p. 34), this approach to performance management is well suited for the OIP. It is focused on results while providing an opportunity to measure change quantitatively (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). Also critical to this approach is the balanced relationship between planning, monitoring, and evaluation (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016), which allows stakeholder input and the opportunity to assess as required. The results-based management approach is represented in Figure 3.

The PDSA (plan, do, study, act) model is a repetitive four-step cycle that allows change leaders to critically monitor and evaluate the change initiative (Pietrzak & Paliszkiewicz, 2015) and is closely connected to the change path model (Cawsey et al., 2020).
Figure 3

Results-Based Management


Figure 4 provides a visual representation of the PDSA model. It is important to note that each organization experiences these phases or stages differently, and “they last longer or shorter and may even overlap” (Duck, 2001, preface). Throughout the process three key questions are asked with regards to making improvements: “What are we trying to accomplish, how will we know that a change has led to improvement, and what change can we make that will result in improvement?” (Berwick, 1996, p. 619). These questions value analysis throughout the process and allow for qualitative assessment of the process. This framework “ensures that you do not drift from the initial objectives, that you have achievable measurements that are valid, and will
show improvement if improvement is realized” (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015, p. 281). It is effective because it is so simple.

**Figure 4**

*PDSA Cycle*

![PDSA Cycle Diagram](https://docplayer.net/20952698-Evolution-of-the-pdca-cycle.html)  

The change path model (Cawsey et al., 2020), which will lead the change process, can be overlaid on the PDSA cycle (Moen & Norman, 2009) to identify where there are intersections between the two frameworks, and at which points. Figure 5 demonstrates this association as the
change is managed through these two models. The PDSA provides a concrete framework that allows for monitoring and evaluation throughout the change process, as well as the opportunity to refine or adjust the plan if needed.

**Figure 5**

*Change Process and PDSA*


Chapters 1 and 2 were primarily focused on the first step of the PDSA model (Moen & Norman, 2009). The first step of the PDSA model requires effective and clear communication to various stakeholders. Outlining the current gaps in collaborative program development between the NCF and credit faculties will be key. Major goals include identifying the need for change,
articulating the current state and desired future state, and developing a shared vision for change.

Organizational learning denotes a change in organizational knowledge (Pietrzak & Paliszkiewicz, 2015), and with that in mind, the foundational step of the PDSA model will be the catalyst for information sharing and knowledge building at WLAU.

Within the context of this OIP, and during the plan phase, data will be gathered that include details on NCF programs, a listing of community partners, and documentation of past collaborations with credit faculties. Provincial data, including the strategic plan noted in Chapter 1 demonstrating the importance of innovation and revenue generation ([Ministry of Higher Education], 2020a), will be assessed. During this phase, the time, budget, and other resources required will also be identified. As a leader who seeks to distribute leadership opportunities, one strategy I will use during this phase is identifying NCF staff members and potential faculty members who could help in the data gathering. As Gronn (2002) noted, distributed leadership requires not one individual who can perform all the essential leadership functions, but a set of people who can collectively perform them. In addition, this shared approach to leadership can enable the “leaders’ practice being stretched over the social and situational contexts of the school” (Gronn, 2002, p. 43). This approach can help with building awareness of the change and making additional WLAU faculty and staff aware of the change process.

The second stage of the PDSA model, do, happens when the plan is carried out and documentation begins (Moen & Norman, 2009). This phase of the plan requires formal contact with the credit faculty groups to share the consolidated research from the planning stage through formal presentations, one-to-one meetings, and university-wide communication. Calls for action will be included in this stage, soliciting members to form the CoP and beginning the work of facilitating these sessions with engaged and eager representatives from the various stakeholder
groups. As part of the facilitation of these sessions, CoP members will be provided with a questionnaire that will seek to understand their familiarity with the NCF, including what type of programs are offered and whether they have worked with the NCF in the past, and open-ended questions such as why they were interested in joining the CoP. This baseline information will be useful in understanding CoP members’ level of awareness of the NCF before their work begins.

Upon completion of this stage, CoP stakeholders will be given a post survey that will measure their level of understanding of the NCF after the end of the cycle. Surveys will be distributed via SurveyMonkey (https://www.surveymonkey.com/) and results will be anonymized. This data collection will be a key stage of the PDSA cycle as the leadership actions of any individual leader are much less important than the collective leadership provided by members of the organization (Gronn, 2002). As the goal of the OIP is to work towards enhanced collaboration, acknowledging the knowledge and historical practices of campus stakeholders on engaging community partners will be informative and enriching for the change process.

Documentation tools in this stage will include a shared Google Drive between me and the members of the CoP. Formal minutes will be taken at meetings and outcomes documented. The final goal of recommendations for best practices in collaboration between the credit faculties and NCF with the purpose of engaging external partners will be drafted. Being transparent and documenting all feedback and outcomes identified through the CoP is important in building trust and moving this work forward. It will also help to inform discussions on campus around the work happening. Formal reporting will be provided to the dean of the NCF, and appropriate updates can in turn be shared with the academic vice president.

The study and act phases are the last two steps of the PDSA cycle (Moen & Norman, 2009), and most closely align with evaluation. During the study phase, the data and feedback
from the plan and do stages are reviewed to determine if the change process has been successful.

As the information is reviewed, guiding questions to help evaluate the success of the change plan may include the following:

- Is there an increased awareness of the NCF across the university? How so and in what capacity?
- Were opportunities for program collaboration identified? What programs were selected and why?
- Were potential solutions developed that would remove perceived and real roadblocks between the various stakeholders? What were those solutions?
- Is the CoP a sustainable model to facilitate the change? Why do you agree or disagree?

Finally, in the act stage, determinations are made regarding the success of the change plan (Moen & Norman, 2009). If it is determined that the change has been successful, the CoP approach can be built into the processes of the NCF and WLAU as a whole year over year. If the plan was not successful and requires adjustment, any new plans would need to complete new PDSA cycles.

Of note, while implementing the PDSA cycle for the first time, part of the monitoring and evaluation process will include being flexible and adjusting timelines as required. Allowing project plans to adapt as learning occurs (Moen & Norman, 2009) is an important benefit of the PDSA cycle. The PDSA cycle is also pertinent specifically to this OIP, where collaboration across different stakeholder groups is important, as it “facilitates the use of teamwork to make improvements” (Moen & Norman, 2009, p. 10).
Plan to Communicate the Need for Change

At the heart of any change process is effective and clear communication. Messaging and communication of the change can help to create “readiness and the motivation to adopt and institutionalize the change” (Armenakis & Harris, 2002, p. 169). As Klein (1996) stated, “Many difficulties often associated with significant change can be more easily dealt with if there is strategic thinking about what and how to communicate” (p. 44). The importance of communication cannot be understated as it relates to the success of this OIP, and an effective communication plan based on principles outlined in this section (Cawsey et al., 2020; Klein, 1996), will be a key factor in helping to ensure that success. Klein (1996) determined seven principles that can form the foundation of a communication plan and strategy:

1. Message redundancy is related to message retention.
2. The use of several media is more effective than the use of just one.
3. Face-to-face communication is a preferred medium.
4. The line hierarchy is the most effective organizationally sanctioned communication channel.
5. Direct supervision is the expected and most effective source of organizationally sanctioned information.
6. Opinion leaders are effective changers of attitudes and opinions.
7. Personally relevant information is better retained than abstract, unfamiliar or general information. (p. 34)

Klein’s (1996) seven points are incorporated within the communication plan. They underpin the four key phases in this OIP’s communication plan: (a) the prechange approval, (b)
developing the need for change, (c) midstream change and milestone communication, and (d) confirming and celebrating the change (Cawsey et al., 2020, p. 345).

**Prechange Approval Phase**

The prechange phase requires change agents to convince top management that the change is needed (Cawsey et al., 2020). As noted in Chapter 1, my position at WLAU is strictly within middle management and has direct access to the dean of the NCF. Access to other senior leaders across the university can be facilitated by the dean of the NCF, who is supportive of the OIP and change process. In order to secure the approval of other senior leaders and stakeholders, it will be important to demonstrate that “the initiative is aligned with the vision and strategy of the organization, advances the organization’s agenda, and has benefits that exceed the costs” (Cawsey et al, 2020, p. 168).

Strategies that will garner the endorsement of senior leaders include in-person meetings with credit faculty senior leaders, such as academic chairs and deans, to share with them the current state and why there is a need for change. This specific audience is a key stakeholder group in the communication plan as “most employees expect their immediate managers to share important company information” (Gillis & Gillis, 2011, p. 197). Meetings with academic chairs and deans must be fulsome, allow for questions, and state the message clearly, as these individuals will be initially sharing that message with their teams. In addition, their endorsement and enthusiasm for the project will help bring others on board and create excitement for the plan. For this stakeholder group, who are focused on institutional goals and priorities, highlighting high-level details such as the provincial government’s priorities for postsecondary institutions ([Ministry of Higher Education], 2020b) and alignment to the WLAU (2020) strategic plan will be pertinent. This stakeholder group is also a priority for the communication plan because an
organization’s senior-most managers must know what is happening throughout the organization (Gillis & Gillis, 2011).

**Developing the Need for Change**

Conveying the need for change to other stakeholders, including faculty members and the NCF staff, will be key in this stage because “if credible sense of urgency and enthusiasm for the initiative isn’t conveyed, the initiative will not move forward” (Cawsey et al., 2020, p. 349). During this step of the communication plan, broader communication through additional mechanisms will be implemented. Klein (1996) indicated that message redundancy can assist with message retention, and the use of different media is more effective than the use of just one (p. 34). With this advice in mind, this stage will see the engagement of the central communications support available at WLAU to utilize campus-wide tools such as the WLAU campus newsletter and social media channels, as well as connect directly with the faculty and staff associations for message amplification through their channels to their respective memberships. These associations will be helpful in amplifying the message as opinion leaders can be effective in influencing the attitudes and opinions (Klein, 1996) of their constituents.

This phase will also align with the solicitation of members for the CoP, and building common ground will be important for enlisting others in the change process (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Highlighting the possibility of innovative program development, stakeholder engagement, benefits for community partners, opportunities for students, and WIL initiatives are key messages for this stakeholder group. Being treated fairly and respectfully is also a feature of this phase (Cawsey et al., 2020). As such, assuring the faculty and staff members that the work associated with this change initiative will be valued and relevant, and that the time commitment
required of stakeholders in the CoP will be measured and reasonable, are components of the plan.

**Midstream Change and Milestone Communication Phase**

During the midstream change phase, it is important for people to understand the progress being made in the change process (Cawsey et al., 2020). As the change process will be well underway at this point, the focus shifts to collecting feedback from participants of the CoP, as well as members of the larger institution, to understand their acceptance of the change process (Cawsey et al., 2020). At this time, any milestones crossed should be acknowledged and communicated, such as a raised awareness of the NCF and collaborative opportunities across campus. Confirmed external partners and new program launches can be celebrated. In addition, any processes and best practices on the launch of codeveloped programs and working with external partners will be milestones worth documenting, sharing with others, and celebrating.

These important milestones are examples of updates that will be shared through faculty and department meetings by members of the CoP, as well as shared more widely through campus communications such as the newsletter. Email communication from me to faculty leaders for distribution within their areas will also be issued during this phase to acknowledge not only the progress of the change process, but also the commitment of the CoP members. A more focused approach requiring the support of the communication department will see targeted updates for community and business partners via email and social media, celebrating the new programs and encouraging their engagement with WLAU.

**Confirming and Celebrating the Change**

The final phase communicates and celebrates the success of the program (Cawsey et al., 2020). The heart of this PoP and OIP is about collaboration, and during this phase those
relationships can be best highlighted. Celebrating the change acknowledges that “when leaders bring people together, rejoice in collective success, and directly display their gratitude, they reinforce the essence of community” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 304).

During this stage, the change process is discussed, and any unfinished tasks are identified (Cawsey et al., 2020). Celebrating the change takes on different forms of communication depending on the stakeholder. Senior leaders that were initially consulted such as deans and faculty chairs will be notified in person and via written updates from the NCF dean. Wider campus communication pieces at this time would ideally include a campus-wide story documenting the CoP and the outcomes of the change process. In addition, other stakeholders such as students and community partners could be engaged to share their experiences in the program and how they benefitted from it. These diverse perspectives will provide a more fulsome view of the change project and help to build connections around the work that happened in the CoP with the intended beneficiaries—students and community partners. Table 4 presents a breakdown of the stakeholders, actions, and communication tools that will inform the plan to communicate for this OIP.

As shown in Table 4, celebrating the change takes on different forms of communication depending on the stakeholder. Senior leaders that were initially consulted such as deans and faculty chairs will be notified in person and via written updates from the NCF dean. Wider campus communication pieces at this time would ideally include a campus-wide story documenting the CoP and the outcomes of the change process. In addition, other stakeholders such as students and community partners could be engaged to share their experiences in the program and how they benefitted from it. These diverse perspectives will provide a more
fulsome view of the change project and help to build connections around the work that happened in the CoP with the intended beneficiaries—students and community partners.

Table 4

*Communication Plan Principles: Stakeholders, Actions, and Communication*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prechange approval</td>
<td>NCF dean and director; credit faculty deans and academic chairs; VP Academic.</td>
<td>In-person meetings with credit deans and academic chairs; dean to raise awareness of this process to the VP Academic.</td>
<td>Communication primarily through in-person meetings. Key messages include highlighting provincial government prioritization of collaboration, revenue generation, and connection to the WLAU strategic plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing the need for change</td>
<td>Centralized marketing department; NCF director; wider campus community.</td>
<td>Develop key messages for different stakeholder groups. Provide mechanism for staff to express interest in CoP participation.</td>
<td>Communication will be achieved through targeted email communication using faculty and staff association distribution lists; wider campus email communication through the internal WLAU newsletter. Key messages include communicating the need for change, desired future state, and solicitation for participation in the CoP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midstream change and milestone communication</td>
<td>CoP members, NCF director, wider campus community, centralized marketing department.</td>
<td>Acknowledge any new program development; profile CoP members and highlight their learnings.</td>
<td>Focused and coordinated announcements of new program development including social media and media release (if appropriate). Spotlight of select CoP members in internal WLAU newsletter to understand the collaborative process of the CoP and what their experience was working with colleagues from various faculties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirming and celebrating the change</td>
<td>Students, community partners, CoP, NCF director.</td>
<td>Highlight benefits of program development from student and community perspectives.</td>
<td>Communication tactics include blog posts on NCF website highlighting a student that completed newly developed program. In addition, community input would be solicited to share how graduates of programs fill gaps in the workplace and help organizations reach their goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter 3 Conclusion**

Chapter 3 was focused on implementation, evaluation, and communication of the OIP.

Using the change path model (Cawsey et al., 2020), a change implementation plan was
developed. Using the PDSA cycle (Moen & Norman, 2009), the evaluation and monitoring of the change process was outlined. Finally, a comprehensive communication plan that outlined stakeholders, tactics, and ways to engage stakeholders was presented. The final section of this OIP presents next steps and future considerations of the change plan.

**OIP Conclusion, Next Steps, and Future Considerations**

The catalyst for this OIP was recognizing that a gap exists between the NCF and credit faculties at WLAU. This disconnect has created a lack of collaboration between the two areas, missed opportunities for programming and partnerships with external stakeholders, and a lack of awareness of the work happening across the university. This OIP highlights the change process that can help to bridge the gap and create a collaborative change process that can ultimately result in new programming initiatives that align with the strategic goals of both WLAU and the provincial government. In order to successfully implement the change process that has been described throughout this OIP, and to ensure that sustainable change is made towards collaboration and innovative program development that will best serve the needs of WLAU students, next steps and future considerations must be explored.

**Next Steps**

To continue the work of this OIP proposal, and bring it to fruition, next steps will be based on targeted communication with stakeholders and cross-campus collaboration with a focus on innovation. Throughout this OIP, an emphasis has been placed on the importance of transparent communication and leadership within the NCF. An important next step will be to make the staff of the NCF aware of the change plan by sharing the goals of the OIP with them and soliciting their feedback. Having the opportunity to provide an overview of the goals of the OIP and its desired impact with this key group will be an important step in moving the plan
forward, as providing opportunities for teamwork and individual growth creates a capability for change (Cawsey et al., 2020). This step also aligns with the culture and value system of transparent communication within the NCF. Once this step is complete, communication across campus with other senior leaders will be an important next step to bring the OIP to life.

The conversations with senior leaders will emphasize the opportunities for collaboration and innovation within the organization and how this targeted change has the potential to raise the profile of the university while still being focused on meeting its strategic priorities and recommendations from the provincial government. Like many large institutions, communication and information sharing about change processes can be challenging at WLAU. The intention is to provide clear messaging to stakeholders to minimize any potential anxiety or misinformation that may occur as the change plan begins to roll out.

**Future Considerations**

Upon one cycle of the change process, and after sufficient review to address challenges and make adjustments as required, a future consideration may include adding other stakeholders to the CoP. Expanding the CoP to include students or community members would provide additional perspectives and valuable insights for other stakeholders across campus and would only enrich the work happening in the CoP. Expanding the CoP to include community members and students who have benefitted from the program also aligns with the distributed leadership model, where a focus is placed on expertise instead of position. The insights of each of those stakeholders after having gone through a change cycle will provide firsthand accounts of the strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations for improvement of the programming developed.

A critical program review of the courses and curriculum developed by the CoP will be required to ensure that they are meeting the needs of students. In addition, the registration and
administration processes of these codeveloped programs must be managed effectively, with processes being communicated to various administrative stakeholders on campus, including the Registrar’s Office, Career Services, and other affected areas.

Financial constraints are a reality of postsecondary institutions that may change the staffing landscape across campus. Department and faculty mergers and staff layoffs are not beyond the realm of possibility. As such, it will be important to build safeguards to ensure that the institutional knowledge developed within the CoP is carried forward and not derailed by potential financial disruptions.

**OIP Conclusion**

This plan has presented a practical and actionable path forward. There is a clear direction for collaboration and program development between the NCF and credit faculties that can benefit students while building awareness of the work that is taking place within the NCF. The CoP can build capacity and understanding within the university. It will allow for growth and resource sharing across campus that will be to the benefit of students and the organization.

Looking ahead beyond the first cycle of this change process, the sustainability and scalability of the change process for future iterations will need to be considered. Ensuring there is institutional support, with engaged members of the CoP who can act as ambassadors and champions of the change process, will be paramount to the long-term success of this OIP. I am hopeful for this change implementation plan as the “gap between the present situation and the future vision is wide enough to challenge the organization and not too wide to demoralize the change effort” (Mehta et al., 2014, p. 3). The change effort will be impactful while being manageable, and the positive outcomes will benefit not only faculty, staff, students, and the community, but the institution as a whole.
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Appendix: Student Course Evaluations

Student Rating of Course Experience

Please rate the following:

1) I am satisfied with the instruction in the course.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Strongly Disagree

2) The instructor is knowledgeable about the subject area.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Strongly Disagree

3) The instructor is well prepared.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Strongly Disagree

4) The instructor communicates clearly.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Strongly Disagree
5) The instructor fosters an environment of inclusivity and respect.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Strongly Disagree

6) The instructor uses interactive learning activities.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Strongly Disagree

7) The instructor relates the content to real-world experiences.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Strongly Disagree

8) The instructor addresses my questions and concerns.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Strongly Disagree

9) The instructor gives timely feedback.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
c. Disagree
d. Strongly Disagree

10) The course outline is clear.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
c. Disagree
d. Strongly Disagree

11) The course was relevant for my career goals.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
c. Disagree
d. Strongly Disagree

12) The instructor communicates clearly.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
c. Disagree
d. Strongly Disagree

13) The instructor is well prepared.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
c. Disagree
d. Strongly Disagree
14) Course content is current and relevant.

a. Strongly Agree

b. Agree

c. Disagree

d. Strongly Disagree