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Enhancing Academic Preparedness of International Students Coming to X University for Post-Secondary Education

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Abstract

International students comprise an increasing demographic on Canadian campuses and represent increasing diversity in the higher education sector. Student transitions to higher education relate to concepts of equity and inclusivity with respect to these institutions providing the best chances for all students to succeed. X University is in the unique and somewhat difficult position of navigating the effects of globalization. As X University has seen steady influxes of international students, the faculty, staff and domestic students are realizing that the international students themselves have been facing integration difficulties within the university and in its surrounding communities. This realization has led to the belief that the institution has been unequipped to tend to the unique needs of international learners, both on academic and socio-cultural levels. Thus, this organizational improvement plan (OIP) discusses the contextual factors influencing the institution's problem of practice (PoP), potential solutions, the preferred solution of an academic bridging program for international students, my transformational leadership approach, and the implementation plan. The goal is to ease the transition for international students and ensure their long-term success, since it has been identified that international students' formative years of education differ greatly from those of the domestic Canadian students, leading to some learning gaps, integration challenges and academic unpreparedness when they arrive at the university. This difference leads to high rates of academic integrity breaches and, in turn, negative attitudes towards the international students.

Keywords: international students, transitions, equity and inclusivity, transformational leadership, academic bridging program

Executive Summary

X University is an institution with a vision, mission, and values that reflect the importance of creating equal learning opportunities for learners from local communities and beyond. It is now tasked with the responsibility to better assist international students in their integration and acculturation processes. This organizational improvement plan (OIP) addresses the need for X University to offer holistic educational supports to international students based on the problem of practice (PoP), as they acclimatize to their host country of Canada and new learning programs.

Chapter 1 explores the problem and the contextual factors that influence it. The aim of this section is to understand why the problem exists and how this problem translates into the various processes and responsibilities at X University. To begin, the PoP reflects vast differences in education systems around the globe, leading to academic unpreparedness for international students at X University. As a result, the organization lacks the understanding to address these systemic barriers and to become more inclusive and free of prejudice and discrimination. This, in turn, led to the identification of the organizational gap and to its subsequent analysis. Chapter 1 also provides an overview of the organization context, the leadership position and lens, and a summary of the problem of practice. This lays the foundational information for the actual change implementation and how this will occur over the coming period.

Chapter 2 then discusses the leadership approach to change, the framework for leading the change process, the critical organizational analysis, solutions to address the PoP and organizational responsibilities. Chapter 2 also explores potential solutions to the PoP and how realistic and effective each of these solutions would be for X University. The proposed solutions are maintaining status quo; creating a program to bridge the cultural and academic gaps for

international students: implementing compulsory internships, job shadowing, mentorships and collaborative partnerships (i.e. experimental learning); and educating stakeholders on indigenization and decolonization. Each of the proposed solutions hinges on the principles of equity, equalization, integration and inclusion. Of the four possible solutions, the proposed solution is that of creating an academic bridging program for international students to complete in their home countries before their arrival at X University.

Next, chapter 3 addresses the methodology of the organizational change, covering topics such as the plan's alignment with the organizational strategy, how implementation would create an improved situation for equity and social justice, how the transition would be managed, what potential stakeholder reactions to change could be, and which supports and resources would be required to see the project through to success while minimizing the risks and limitations. Ultimately, this section addresses how the overall organizational transition and plan could be managed for all stakeholders. The change plan aligns with the organizational strategy of X University's; one of its primary objectives is to identify and remove barriers to education access for groups and individuals from underrepresented and marginalized groups, out of recognition that not everyone has had equitable opportunities to access education because of systemic barriers.

Overall, this three-chapter OIP is a holistic overview of what X University's PoP is, why it exists and how it can be addressed to create an improved situation for learners' equity and social justice.

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Chapter 1: The Problem

Higher education has transformed over the years, with a significant increase in international student enrolment requiring universities to have clear strategies and policies for internationalization (Knight & de Wit, 2018). This organizational improvement plan (OIP) addresses the need to prepare international students more effectively. Doing so in the long term will result in needed institutional and cultural change.

Researchers have found that difficult transitions lead to negative outcomes for international students, including lower academic achievement and mental health-related issues, such as depression and stress (Poyrazli et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2012). Education systems have been known to contribute to students' exclusion and marginalization based on factors such as ethnicity, gender, ability and sexuality (Tamtik & Guenter, 2019). In the context of this study several groups of international students experience considerable amounts of stress while adapting to the culture of their host institutes (Bartram, 2008). In this case, the institution in question is known by the pseudonym "X University", and is located in Western Canada.

Strategic plans at X University focus on increasing diversity, inclusivity and community as core values for attracting international students. Leaders in the field have called for increased institutional support for the academic and cultural transition of international students (Sam & Berry, 2010; Smith & Khawaja, 2014). Many educators and department heads at X University have reported that they are improperly equipped to successfully manage the transition of international students into their new host institution. Indeed, such a transition requires an understanding that goes beyond just that of the academic sphere of influence. In essence, educators need to act not only as educators, but as mentors, advocates, counsellors, and pillars of

support to ensure that international students have a chance at succeeding academically (Boboc & Nordgren, 2014).

High rates of academic misconduct and difficulties (ranging from poor grades to academic misconduct) associated with acculturation among international students at X University have caused its educators to ask themselves what the driving forces behind these academic misconduct occurrences actually are. Sullivan and Kashubeck-West (2015) identified internal and external factors, such as campus inclusion and social support, that can positively affect international student adjustment outcomes. The focus on equity and inclusion in the OIP is to further strategic planning which can result in sustainable change.

Organizational Context

X University is a multi-campus public university in Western Canada with career-focused areas of study and a current enrolment of approximately 15,000 students. It was founded 50 years ago in response to the need for expanded vocational training in the region. It originated as a community college and has transitioned to university status over the past 15 years. X University currently integrates teaching, research and service to the community. Its economic impact on the surrounding region is approximately half a billion dollars.

Understanding the organizational context of higher education in this western province in relation to leadership, administration and decision-making is critical. Leadership and direction for X University is provided by a provincial government ministry. Diverse degree-granting organizational bodies are integrated into the higher education structure. The funding structure and range of programming provided by the institution is determined by its design. The institution is made up of a bicameral system (Jones, n.d.), typical of Canadian university governance, with a board of directors, a senate, a secretariat and an office of the chancellor. X university is governed

by a board, with a senate responsible for academic governance for policies concerning academic matters and for advising the board on policies. The president reports to the board and has an executive team of four vice-presidents who lead activities such as planning, coordinating, and implementing the educational programs at X University.

The institution is fully accredited both provincially and internationally, and it is also a member of Universities Canada and the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC). X University is known for its small class sizes and over 100 program offerings at the certificate, diploma, undergraduate and graduate levels. Its programs are organized into a college, faculties and schools. The institution also supports its students' extra-curricular development by offering various forms of campus recreation, such as over 60 clubs and associations and collegiate athletics. Moreover, the organization promotes student well-being by providing students with health and wellness resources, such as personal counselling and academic advising.

X University's international students comprise 15% of the total student population. They come from over 50 countries, with India, China and Vietnam being the top three. Because of its substantial enrolment of international students, the university provides a number of support services, such as a broad range of multilingual support services, medical insurance, academic advising, social activities and more. Allocation of resources and services are proportionate to the number of international students, yet internationalization must be integrated within university teaching and research agendas. It is important to note that international students bring diverse perspectives and alternative ways of looking at the world (Schein, 2010).

X University provides resources to faculty and staff to advance evidence-based teaching and learning practices and scholarship. Professional development resources are available to

faculty and staff to improve their educational and pedagogical skills, such as instructional strategies and curriculum development in internationalization and indigenization; however, these are accessed inconsistently. The intention of the professional development resources is to deliver robust programs that combine the educators' subject matter expertise with pedagogical skill.

Vision, Mission and Values

X University's expressed values include integrity, inclusivity, community and excellence, and these values are also present in the institution's mission statement, which expresses a desire to transform lives and engage learners, all while building community. Promotion by X University has expressed a hope to be known as a gathering place for learners, leading to community connection and prosperity (both locally and beyond). These core beliefs and guiding principles are intended to influence the daily behaviour and leadership within the institution. The institution's efforts to integrate international students into the campus life through the various resources provided are a reflection of these values, yet many international students are still finding themselves to be unprepared when it comes to academic preparation.

Organizational Structure and Leadership

The university is led by a president and vice-chancellor as well a senior executive leadership team comprised of Vice President, External; Provost and Vice President, Academic; Vice-Provost, Academics; Vice President, Students; and Vice President Administration. The International office is situated in the portfolio of Provost and Vice President, Academic along with academic programs, research, human resources and teaching and learning across the institution. Each program/office is led by a dean or associate vice president, responsible for the quality of program delivery. X University offers programs across multiple campuses, both in person and online.

Direct and functional leadership responsibilities characterize X University as a matrix organization. Each faculty's dean is responsible for daily operations, program delivery and supports. Within the faculty are department heads, or directors, who report to the deans, who have functional leadership responsibilities over the department heads and directors regarding program development, resources and delivery. The goal of the organizational structure is to ensure focused teaching and learning (Sy & D'Annunzio, 2005).

The leadership approaches modelled by senior leaders align with the characteristics of transformational and ethical leadership. The leaders within X University prioritize transparency and accountability in its decision-making processes, which aligns with the principles of ethical leadership. X University's leadership also prioritizes ethical decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and social responsibility, which aligns with the principles of ethical leadership. Overall, the university's organizational structure and established leadership approaches and practices are aligned with the theoretical frameworks that drive the organization to ensure that the university is meeting its mission and goals in an effective and ethical manner.

Transformational and ethical leadership approaches are evident in the practices of the University's leaders. Transformational leadership emphasizes the leader's ability to inspire and motivate followers to work towards a shared vision. This approach can be particularly important in a university setting, where leaders need to inspire faculty and staff to work towards the institution's mission and goals. On the other hand, an ethical leadership approach is important in ensuring that the institution upholds ethical standards in its decision-making and operations. This is because ethical leadership emphasizes the importance of integrity, accountability, and respect for ethical principles and values in leadership (Brown & Trevino, 2006).

Leadership Position and Lens

An overview of my leadership role, philosophy, theoretical and experiential lens as it relates to the PoP is provided in this section. I believe I am in a position to influence the development of different paths with others for change within the institution to create meaningful, long-lasting results for international students, as I am responsible for providing strategic leadership and planning to enhance and develop learning initiatives and service-related opportunities.

Personal Position

In light of my leadership role at X University where I manage the university's innovative and comprehensive portfolio of foundation programs, I am in a unique position to address this PoP. My positionality as an administrator is integral to X University's overall strategic vision and is responsible for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed learning initiatives, and for formulating and managing strategies for the delivery of new programs and services to local, national and international clients. In this process, I bring my own experience, beliefs and worldview (Creswell, 2007), and I myself have experienced being an international student throughout parts of my educational journey so I have a personal connection to this study. Understanding the experience, culture and diversity within international student populations, I know firsthand the dimensions of international students' struggles and trauma and am committed to providing equitable access to holistic education for those international students who are systemically marginalized. I believe in advocacy and have participatory values. I use a trauma informed and critical lens to examine injustices and inequities present in the university system and the international student experience (Davies et al., 2011; Phifer & Hull, 2016).

Being a person of color in an executive position in the international office of a higher education institution historically dominated by white male leadership has furthered my personal connection to this research. I have a passion for social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. In turn, I strive to positively influence the well-being and academic integration of international students, as I must advocate for their wedged (and often disadvantaged) position between foreign and domestic educational frameworks to ensure they are equipped with the necessary supplementary resources to thrive during their educational experiences at X University. Berry (2005) argues that international student adjustment is affected by the host culture at universities. Despite international students developing strong intercultural skills and openness to social integration, if an expectation by gatekeepers of campus culture exists for international students to assimilate or to accept marginalization, then successful pursuit of inclusion and social integration may be difficult or impossible, thus negatively impacting those students' academic performances.

Transparent and transactional communication between leaders and educators is integral to my practice, where I actively engage stakeholders in decision-making through strategic planning and program development as a member of the leadership team that manages the institution's portfolio of foundation programs. (Ko et al., 2018). I value advocacy and embody collaborative processes, as I view the PoP from a lens of critical theory and social justice and as I seek to create actionable steps towards change (Bogotch & Shields, 2014; Burns, 2019). To further connect the idea of using a critical theory and social justice lens with my passion for social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, I draw on critical race theory as a theoretical perspective. Critical race theory recognizes that racism is not just an individual bias, but a systemic issue deeply ingrained in society's structures and institutions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Through

this lens, I aim to identify and challenge the ways in which inequity and marginalization are perpetuated within the education system.

In practice, using a critical theory and social justice lens means that I approach issues with a critical eye, questioning the status quo and looking for ways to create more equitable and inclusive practices. It also means that I actively seek out diverse perspectives and value the experiences and voices of marginalized communities (Hooks, 1994). By using this lens, I aim to create a more just and equitable learning environment for all students.

Through my leadership actions, I empower others to develop their own advocacy skills to address their needs through using their unique strengths for the problem-solving process, resulting in better engagement and collaboration among us (Ryan, 2016). My leadership position provides me with the agency and connections to implement the OIP through a leadership style that embodies building and sustaining relationships (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

Leadership Philosophy

Leadership theories used in this OIP must align with the people and culture of the institution, as situations require leaders to understand the context, issue and culture in order for change to occur. Transformational and ethical leadership are the theoretical frameworks guiding my leadership approach (Hallinger, 2003). Sharing power through the use of collaboration and trust to create a community in support of the vision for change are key qualities of a transformational leader (Basham, 2012). I seek to demonstrate a strong sense of moral purpose as a transformational leader. Diverse intersections related to culture, ethnicity, language and socioeconomic status must be considered when determining leadership approaches for international student success (McDonald, 2009). I believe in securing the support of all within organizations, and I am motivated by a higher purpose to transform the organization's culture

(Northouse, 2021). Through transformational leadership, I demonstrate that relationships involving transparency and open reciprocal communication between leaders and educators are central to reaching common goals, benefiting all stakeholders (Hollander, 2009).

As Bass (1998) shares, transformational leaders enhance the commitment, involvement, loyalty, and performance of supporters. Four transformational leadership components have been identified in the literature (McCleskey, 2014); these include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Transformational leaders clearly demonstrate these four components in varying degrees to motivate and inspire others in the change process. Building on my personal position and leadership philosophy, I am also committed to the components of ethical leadership. Ethical leadership is closely aligned with equity and inclusion in higher education (Ko et al., 2018; Sharif & Scandura, 2014). As stated by Den Hartog (2015):

Morality has become an important topic in organizational behavior/psychology, and in line with that, the attention of researchers for moral and ethical issues in leadership has increased, too. Bass & Steidlmeier (1999) argued that authentic transformational leadership has an ethical/moral foundation and is a positive form of leadership that emphasizes serving the collective rather than oneself. (Den Hartog, 2015, p. 409)

Transformational and ethical theories guide my practice to create a culturally competent institution, removing barriers to success and supporting international students to reach their potential (Ko et al., 2018).

In terms of ethical leadership, the concept refers to the practice of leading with integrity, accountability, and respect for ethical principles and values. It involves demonstrating a commitment to ethical behavior and promoting ethical conduct within the organization. Key

theorists in this field include Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005), who developed the Ethical Leadership Scale, which measures the ethical leadership behaviors of leaders. They define ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (p. 120).

Northouse (2018) defines ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate behavior through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such behavior to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (p. 311). He notes that ethical leaders prioritize ethical principles such as honesty, fairness, and respect for others, and actively work to create an ethical culture within the organization.

To me, ethical leadership means leading by example and demonstrating a commitment to ethical behavior in all aspects of leadership. It involves being accountable for one's actions, fostering an ethical culture within the organization, and promoting ethical behavior among followers. Ethical leadership is important because it helps to build trust, respect, and credibility, and can ultimately lead to more effective and sustainable organizations.

Another perspective that I bring to my work is that of the constructivist theory, which posits that learners construct meaning and knowledge from their learned experiences and actively participate in shaping the plan for change (Creswell, 2014). Several learning principles are embedded in this OIP: Learning is an active process, learning involves building systems of meaning, the mind actively constructs meaning, the language we use influences learning, and learning is shared and does not happen in isolation (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003; Hein, 1991). These principles indicate that students and faculty have their own subjective opinions based on their

lived experiences and history with the issue. This perspective allows me to explore the culture and history of X University and to challenge the institution to suspend outdated beliefs and conventional approaches. Doing so will make it possible to achieve the goal of collaboratively developing a new framework that supports equity, diversity and inclusion for international students embarking on a Canadian education.

Leadership Problem of Practice

The leadership problem of practice addresses the need to further our support of international students who would be better served by a more inclusive learning environment. International students are challenged with current expectations as they are required to conform to organizational and pedagogical norms that in many cases stand in contrast to their own previous experiences.

Transition within the educational context (from home-country to host-country institution) relates closely to questions of equity and inclusivity and how the higher education sector goes about giving the best chances of success to all students. When the higher education institution represents a monocultural environment, considering a cultural difference theory would suggest that students raised in different environments will be unfamiliar with the behaviours and attitudes expected of them, leading to stress and underperformance, unless special efforts are made to teach those “culturally different” students (Ecochard, 2015). As it has been reported in the literature, there is a shared responsibility between university and student for international student engagement and retention (Akanwa, 2015). The organization’s underlying goal is to address systemic barriers and become inclusive and free of prejudice and discrimination so that we can develop a learning culture and supports for all students to receive equitable opportunities for learning success. Because equity, diversity and inclusivity are embedded in X University’s

strategic plan, approaching this issue from multiple internal, external, political and societal perspectives is critical.

This emerging challenge can be characterized by the increase in the number of international students who are not academically prepared for the rigours of undergraduate studies as a result of their social, cultural and educational histories (de Wit & Deca, 2020; Jibeen & Khan, 2015). Some examples of this in X University's classrooms include international students' lack of understanding of the cumulative grading system, the need to use a learning management system during their studies, and experiencing applied learning. What is particularly important to note is the widespread lack of awareness surrounding what plagiarism actually is for many foreign students. This lack of understanding can be attributed to differences in culture (and in turn, education) between East and West. For example, Confucian thought has substantially influenced the intellectual philosophy and pedagogy of East Asian countries, such as China, Korea and Vietnam (Cambridge Network, 2020); this is important to note as many international students at X University come from these countries. According to these teachings, students are taught to respect those who provide knowledge and to avoid challenging authority, often leading to rote memorization being an integral part of Eastern pedagogy. Additionally, students may believe that knowledge belongs to society as a whole as opposed to the individual; they may copy texts because they believe that the original text was written better than they could express the idea themselves; and they may not be aware that plagiarism is considered stealing or cheating in the [North] American educational systems (Cambridge Network, 2020). The challenge of academic integrity breaches stands out as one area of acclimatization that needs to be addressed at the beginning of a student's experience in North American post-secondary education.

Now, the essential matter at hand is to identify how these problems can be solved while encouraging integration of international students, not assimilation. The latter part of this task is one of improving cultural literacy among educators and respecting the existing backgrounds of each international student while providing them with the appropriate resources, allowing the students to build upon their current understandings.

The PoP itself really reflects wider problems in global higher education such as the fundamental differences in pedagogy and educational frameworks between international students' home countries, and the practices of X University. At X University, analysis, conceptual clarity and critical thinking are encouraged and developed, contrary to the institutions many international students arrive from (Adhikari, 2018; Akanwa, 2015; Boboc & Nordgren, 2014).

Framing the Problem of Practice

This section identifies the contextual factors contributing to the gap between home-country education, and host-institution expectations taking into consideration the relevant Eastern and Western pedagogical factors. According to Wilder (2013) as cited in Balajee and Todd (2018):

While working to achieve equity within higher education, we must also acknowledge the history of higher education . . . as a tool of colonialism and a producer of knowledge used to maintain slavery and white supremacy, not deconstruct and subvert it (Wilder, 2013). In acknowledging this history, [the] approach is shaped into one that strives to not just provide training as a transaction (you give us time, attention, money—we give you strategies, knowledge, solutions) but indeed to guide personal and institutional transformation so that higher education can more deeply fulfill its public purpose and generate equity and justice, instead of reinforcing inequity by elevating only a narrow understanding of what constitutes knowledge and scholarship. (p. 104)

A significant number of international students tend to experience poor academic performance, limited communication and collaboration, mental health challenges and potential disciplinary action (Báez et al., 2019). Although these difficulties all differ from one another, they go hand-in-hand and international students consequentially tend to face more than one at a given time (Andrade, 2006). All of these difficulties are true and present in the case of X University, yet X University has placed limited focus on advancing the academic integration of incoming international students. With a mission of preparing all graduates for the workforce and supporting the economy, X University has an opportunity to engage international learners and transform their lives by addressing their unique academic literacy needs. International students are encouraged to remain in Canada and contribute to the workforce as they work towards permanent residency. Additionally, it is in the best interest of X University to invest in holistic educational efforts for international students, both for recruitment and retention purposes. This would enable international students to benefit from the same foundational knowledge which the domestic students have been taught throughout their formative years of education in Canada. Research by Tamtik and Guenter (2019) identified five leading strategies that Canadian Universities have used to focus on their vision for equity, diversity and inclusion. These include political commitment, student recruitment, programmatic supports, research and scholarship, and institutional climate.

The five strategies mentioned by Tamtik and Guenter (2019) are important to note because the current situation points to the fact that X University staff are not trauma-informed as they are not interacting with international students based on an understanding of the experiences of their students. This can be linked to educators' potential unconscious biases towards international students, where international students may be improperly labeled as disengaged

from learning, incompetent and dishonest by their educators and peers because of the lack of trauma knowledge exhibited by those providing the education (Adhikari, 2018). Such biases hinder equity, social justice and inclusion within the classroom settings at X University.

Furthermore, educators directly connected with students affected by trauma may face increased burnout and compassion fatigue (Koenig et al., 2018). In essence, despite the vision and stated mission of X University aligning with trauma-informed care, the organizational climate is not facilitating an in-depth understanding of international students' cultures, past educational norms and current needs (Akanwa, 2015).

Deszca et al. (2020) argue that we need to have an “awareness of political, economic, social, technological and environmental aspects of any organization’s external environment” (p. 38) in order to focus leaders’ actions and decisions. Exploration of the dynamics influencing the issue within the context of X University are essential to bring about change. Given the complexities of the operations of higher education institutions, the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal analysis (PESTEL) will be used to gain a deeper understanding of the context of the problem of practice; this is due to the fact that “when environmental factors such as technical, political, or cultural systems change and shift as organizations grow, they necessitate corresponding organizational changes.” (Wackerbarth et al., 2015, p. 129).

Political

The first element to consider in the PESTEL is the political environment. Changes to government policy affect higher education institutions because they receive direction and leadership from the provincial and national policies, such as those which “contribute to an equitable education system” (OECD, 2015, p. 6). The economy is driven by political decisions

regarding internationalization and immigration. X University is publicly funded, and this status may put it at risk and affect resources. Limitations may be imposed by government-instituted programs, which could divert funding from educational institutions towards alternative programs, such as skill development, social programs, infrastructure development, healthcare or other perceived priorities.

The next political consideration pertains to Canada's International Education Strategy and the Global Markets Action Plan, the goal of which is to recruit and retain high-quality talent and to prepare for the global knowledge society. In recent years, X University and its surrounding areas have seen steady influxes of immigration, resulting in high numbers of international student enrollment. In fact, 55% of the current international students in Canada have come from India and China (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada [IRCC], n.d.). This applies to X University as well, given that the majority of international students at the university are from the same two countries. This high enrollment led to academic and cultural misalignments within the pedagogical sphere at X University, such as differences in the formative years of education for Chinese and Indian international students, versus those of domestic students at X University. Risks include limited resources to meet demands, competition between domestic and international students, poor faculty development to manage international classrooms and inequity resulting from poor supports in place. Nevertheless, a bright opportunity for both domestic and foreign students is increasing internationalized education.

Furthermore, the international global agenda to support inclusivity influences higher education. The United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2030 Framework for Education specifically identifies "inclusive and equitable quality education" (UNESCO, 2016, p. 3) as a priority. In 2017, for example, to receive federal research funding,

institutions had to develop and publish institutional equity, diversity and inclusion action plans (Government of Canada, 2018). This renewed focus on equity, diversity and inclusion has created an ideal climate for the development of this OIP.

Economic

In addition to political concerns, a PESTEL analysis also calls for consideration of the economic context. Canada is a preferred destination for international students, with 450,000 being welcomed in 2021 (El-Assal, 2022). Becoming a welcoming place for international students is important and involves collaboration between businesses and higher education institutions. International students also significantly contribute to the economy through part-time work, which they use to afford tuition and high living costs.

Economic downturns may lead the institution to subsequent opportunities. In such times of increased economic instability, the educational sector tends to perform better than in other periods because of the realization by the population that only through an improvement in their skill set can they obtain and retain well-paying jobs (Postiglione, 2010). Ultimately, the economic environment plays a determining role into the success of the educational process, as the population also tends to migrate towards areas with improved quality of life, access to superior infrastructure and the ability to generate meaningful revenue for their personal or family development. The exploration of how to reduce costs or increase revenue through collaborations and tuition streams, such as increasing international student enrolment, also presents itself as an opportunity for X University.

Another economic consideration is that of changes to fiscal legislation pertaining to interest taxes related to student loans. Here, some risks may include negative effects on the organization's cash flow. For example, higher taxes may deter students from choosing X

University as a study destination. Similarly, higher interest rates may negatively affect a learner's ability to access funds required for education. Economic contractions might also affect parents' ability to fund their children's education (both for families of domestic students and for international students). The primary opportunity here relates to decreased interest taxes for student loans having the potential to lead to a higher influx of international students at X University.

Sociocultural

Sociocultural factors are an important consideration in a PESTEL, especially given the context of this particular PoP at-hand. In terms of exogenous social factors, the most salient considerations pertain to societal pressures and trends, demographics, and public pressures for supports like mental health services for students. Global issues are at the forefront of social movements advocating for immediate change. Societal and organizational disparities are forcing higher education institutions to critically reflect on their policies, practices and procedures. Systemic racism and the marginalization of populations within X University are being explored by the Task Force for International Student Success with an expectation to implement changes in leadership development, pedagogy, curriculum and overall organizational culture. For example, the reconciliation process is advanced through the 94 calls to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. These calls address the history of residential schools, bringing to the forefront that decolonization is for everyone (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Furthermore, these Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action address issues of diversity and social justice. X University's President's Task Force on EDI is actively engaging in processes to respond to the calls to action and to pursue equity, diversity and inclusion.

Societal pressures and trends also include risks related to immigration, which play a role in determining the fortunes of the educational environment. Subsequently, the possible lack of integration of immigrants within local communities, including the possibility of clustering based on ethnical backgrounds, presents itself as a risk in this context. Nonetheless, the emergence of new consumption trends may also lead to major shifts in the types of skills and competencies required for the future success of community members. Such shifts may directly affect the type of skills and competencies required and thus the type of academic programs and curricula instituted by educational providers which could, in turn, affect international student academic preparedness and the PoP.

Technological

A number of technological factors in the external environment present opportunities and risks. The need for the development of new skill sets is exacerbating the speed with which the educational curricula and programs are changing. These new skill sets relate to various Industry 4.0 technologies, including automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, big data, additive manufacturing and 3D printing. Obsolescence of computer hardware and software can also be considered risks for the institution. This shift will drastically change the educational process, and it has the ability to impact how international students may or may not be prepared for post-secondary studies in the Canadian context (Moraes et al., 2021).

Issues related to academic integrity breaches and cheating due to the unrestricted access to a plethora of sources and resources could lead to a corrupt educational process; and the speed of transmission of information (with both positive and negative potential impacts) should also be considered. This relates to the PoP because academic integrity breaches among international students are already widespread, and this issue could be exacerbated. Moreover, a lack of

funding for new technology in the academic sphere could present as a critical issue. Contrarily, technological opportunities include rapid technological advancements. Unbridled access to information, networks, infrastructure and high-quality education provides opportunities for X University to gain a wider reach. The emergence of online educational platforms, such as EdEx, Coursera and even platforms such as YouTube will forever change the educational milieu. In addition, broad access to reliable internet, mobility of the learner through virtual learning, and the shift from paper textbooks to e-books also present opportunities for X University to help international students in their academic preparedness.

Environmental

Environmentally speaking, X University must take into consideration its impact on the environment and its location in relation to existing infrastructure. In essence, an increased environmental impact through an increased carbon footprint due to emerging technologies presents a risk. Nevertheless, the shift away from paper and traditional textbooks can increase available resources, reducing waste and increasing recycling, thus creating positive environmental impacts. Last, restrictions to mobility present a pertinent risk through constraints on modes of transportation where learners may be unable to physically travel to campus leading to remote learning with the risk of plagiarism and academic misconduct becoming heightened (Byungura et al., 2019).

Legal

In addition to those environmental factors, it is also important to take into account various legal concerns. The primary consideration regarding the external legal environment pertains to new legislation and policies that can affect higher education. Risks include the cost of compliance with legislation (i.e. staff knowledge), and opportunities include beneficial changes

in protective legislation as it relates to discrimination. Such changes can improve the quality of life for marginalized communities, including international students.

Furthermore, political ideologies at national, provincial and institutional levels can influence the PoP. From an external perspective, the advancement of equity, diversity and inclusion is on the political agenda at all levels of government. Nevertheless, organizational members such as educators at X University may not align in how they view the problem based on their individual values (Bolman & Deal, 2017). In light of those differences, addressing the PoP requires political skills such as assessing the political milieu, networking and building connections, and negotiating. Understanding the power structures and the flow of information are useful skills in moving forward with the OIP.

The OIP in Relation to PESTEL Findings

The economic and social impact of the OIP can increase diversity across all levels of the organization. It may enhance international students' preparedness through funding for programming to help students achieve their educational goals, including expansion of access to education for international students. Because 55% of international students in Canada come from India and China (IRCC, n.d.), which also reflects the situation at X University, these countries are focused on to distinguish the most relevant pedagogical differences that could be contributing to the PoP. A historical lack of formula-based funding and decentralized management of schools in developing countries have plagued their educational systems, creating great disparities between schools (Arunatilake & Jayawardena, 2010). These disparities can be seen not only among schools in proximal school systems but also between Canadian schools and foreign schools, especially. Thus, these contributing factors lead to the PoP; X University accepts international students with the assumption that they are academically prepared to succeed, but in

reality, the international students' educational backgrounds differ greatly from those of domestic students, who have been gradually equipped to thrive in the Canadian academic sphere.

According to Burt (2004), Russell (2004), and Sonleitner & Khelifa (2005), as cited in Mahrous & Ahmed (2010):

The differences in students' learning styles, student and faculty interaction, and classroom culture between the Eastern and Western learning systems imply that the pedagogical tools used in Western classrooms may not be suitable for Eastern classrooms. (p. 290)

The preceding excerpt describes the nature of pedagogical differences within classrooms across the world (particularly between East to West), and how these differences can render educators' teaching methods ineffective with one group of learners, despite another group thriving within that same pedagogical framework. Essentially, it appears in the literature that students in the East are expected to regard teachers as an absolute authority and use rote learning methods to meet their performance standards. Furthermore, the literature suggests that students are not encouraged to autonomously learn beyond what they are taught in school (Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010; Sonleitner & Khelifa, 2005) nor to engage in group or team activities (Burt, 2004). As Mahrous and Ahmed (2010) point out: "This type of educational background, along with the pedagogy and assessment style discussed above, translates among students [to] a lack of problem-solving and communication skills and little experience of expressing what they think and feel or acting on their curiosity" (p. 290).

Although the issues underpinning the PoP have existed for a number of years within the organization, these realizations are relatively recent for X University. Moreover, it has only increased in importance as the influx of foreign students at X University has also increased in recent years. The institution's focus on the matter has been somewhat limited, and now the

challenge of conveying this information to all organizational stakeholders in order to create meaningful change still remains. Until now, many educators at X University have not understood the importance of adapting their teaching activities and methods for international students (Clarke & Flaherty, 2003), and others have felt frustration at the idea of possibly hindering the classroom experience for domestic students by having to revert back to foundational topics and teaching styles. Thus, in order to move forward, it is essential to consider the concept of preparation for pedagogical shifts and how this can propel the change forward.

Guiding Questions Emerging from the Problem of Practice

This section identifies questions emerging from the PoP. The first question is critical to explore: How will the current leadership embrace change or demonstrate reluctance in relation to implementing new educational supports for international students? It is important to understand whether X University is truly ready to undertake systemic, institutional and cultural changes on the pathway to equity, social justice, diversity and inclusion. To assess its readiness, it is necessary to identify supporters within the organization. According to Deszca et al. (2020), a stakeholder analysis helps determine various interpersonal relationships, social dynamics and predispositions to change as well as how such factors can influence an undertaking. Furthermore, this matter truly hinges on the organization's perception and understanding of the international student experience of culture shock and acculturation (Bossio & Bylyna, 2006) in both academic and socio-cultural realms.

The subsequent question is closely connected to the first: Who are the stakeholders affected by this change, and how can they be engaged to ensure positive implementation of the OIP? I need to identify the stakeholders at all levels of X University, as well as the external stakeholders, who will be affected by the change. The key stakeholders can be narrowed down to

the students, staff and faculty. Knowing the stakeholders helps determine who should have roles in the change process. This identification of stakeholders aligns with the theoretical framework outlined in my leadership lens. Being a transformational leader, I seek to inspire a vision through my commitment to work with a pan-institutional team.

The last question is this: What impact will the successful change implementation have on the academic environment of X University, its international learners, and on surrounding academic institutions? This question relates to key insights that can lead to the longevity and adaptability of the change plan as the needs of international learners and their surrounding communities evolve over the coming years. Some of these changes may be attributed to a successful implementation of the change plan, while others are derived from changes in the external environment. Learning from other academic institutions' established frameworks of supporting international students and from their lessons learned will be valuable. These guiding questions help to inform the direction of the OIP.

Leadership Focused Vision for Change

The goal of this OIP is to address systemic barriers faced by incoming international students in their pursuit of quality education at X University. The focus is specifically on incoming international students as they have no or minimal prior knowledge of the Canadian learning management system, academic culture, and knowledge of institutional policies for academic integrity. As a transformational leader, I aspire to constantly reassess the organization's current processes and whether they are continually serving the purpose of engaging learners (locally and beyond) while also creating an inclusive and shared vision for the organizational members of X University.

A vision for change is a precursor for stakeholder “buy-in” to the solution, and “buy-in” requires clear and direct communication that provides a rationale for the decision-making process (Bateh et al., 2013). In order to remain successful in an ever-globalizing world with steady influxes of international students, X University must be able to adapt in the face of newly apparent challenges. This adaptability requires flexible leadership practices that are able to hold the “underlying social fabric of the firm” (Deszca et al., 2020, p. 19).

Assumptions in Western classrooms are made by educators and domestic students that international students have mastered both English and the academic skills needed to succeed in the Canadian university environment before starting their programs; however, in reality, they require clear direction, support and feedback on their academic skills (Adhikari, 2018; Austin et al., 2005; Colella-Sandercock & Alahmadi, 2015; Eaton & Otoo, 2017). Unfortunately, this disconnect between expectation and reality leads to international students being marginalized as they are not equipped with the skills required. It is essential for all levels of leadership to foster an inclusive learning environment that provides equitable foundational skills for students, meaning that all students understand concepts surrounding academic integrity regardless of where their education took place pre-X University. Equity, diversity, inclusion, respect and accountability must be embedded in strategic plans. Collaboration must be at the centre of this process in order to achieve a more socially just community.

For these reasons, the vision for change includes a radical shift towards foundational and fundamental academic preparation in order to address the PoP at its root; however, the matter of this problem of practice tends to be two-fold. First, the institution needs to be better prepared to handle any challenges and obstacles standing in the way of providing quality education for its international students because they face many challenges and may experience the trauma of

culture shock (Bossio & Bylyna, 2006). International students are dealing not only with sociocultural differences but also with academic changes and pressures resulting in fear of academic failure (Bai, 2016; Major, 2005). Second, the international students have to feel fully prepared to undertake their academic endeavours in a new country, irrespective of their previous educational background.

The vision for change includes fostering positive relationships between students and educators. Such relationships can assist international students in utilizing their strengths with a new-found academic preparedness and confidence. Addressing the PoP will include motivating key actors in the change process to create a preliminary depiction of what the organization will look like once the change has been made. This will demonstrate the institution's ability to build relationships with and assist international students in academic, social and cultural integration while simultaneously reducing incidents of academic misconduct and the considerable stress faced by international students.

Bartram (2008) and Telbis et al. (2014) discuss the immediate need for international students to adapt to the academic environment when they arrive. With limited self-directedness and autonomy, international students are at risk to lose confidence in the transferable academic skills they do have. Telbis et al. (2014) also refer to the experience of learning shock that is heightened for international students. That is, not only do they experience culture shock in moving to new surroundings; they also experience a feeling of unease and frustration with unfamiliar learning and teaching methods and expectations.

Academic preparedness initiatives should address social and cultural adaptation; if international students are connected in these realms, they are be able to focus more on

academics. The literature supports international students bringing their own social and cultural history with different social and academic expectations (Bai, 2016; Bell, 2016).

Drivers of Change

The leadership-focused vision for change involves introspection on the drivers of this change (Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010), the first being senior leadership. Decisions by this leadership team to create inclusive learning spaces should involve examination of demographics, economics, facilities, delivery methods and location. The second driver of change is the entire student community. They are affected by learning environments, financial status, cultural and learning backgrounds and service needs. Educators are also drivers of change. As the demographics of the student body change, simultaneous changes to faculty should occur through hiring or appropriate cultural awareness training, including modifications to the curriculum and services—they should be made culturally relevant to all learners.

External drivers of change, such as government, industry and community, also affect the implementation of the OIP as drivers of change (Wray, 2015). Government is the main funding source; therefore, priorities and policies should be at the forefront. Industries look to X University to hire qualified graduates, so relevant industry players should be kept informed and engaged as they learn about changes that may affect their potential workforce. For continued support and growth of students, communities should be engaged in the change process (Jackson et al., 2018; Edwards, 2012).

All the above stakeholders are currently engaged with X University and would be affected by the changes implemented through the OIP. Work and learning environments may change, and work placements may be affected by the change. Additionally, benefits to industry,

community and government may shift as the organization prepares international graduates through holistic educational strategies (Lauricella & MacAskill, 2015).

Change in the Context of Equity, Social Justice and Decolonization

The establishment of ethical leadership and change processes can encourage international students to form a sense of pride and membership resulting from a feeling of belonging within an ethical institution (Jeon & Kukla-Acevedo, 2019); thus, an ethical change process throughout the implementation of the OIP may inherently stimulate a reduction of academic integrity breaches among international students, and an increase in feelings of student membership. “Ethical Work Climate is defined as the prevailing perceptions of typical organizational practices and procedures that have ethical content. When [stakeholders] perceive that policies, procedures, and practices in their organization are developed (and enforced) in ways to support ethical values and behaviors, [they] perceive that ethical work climate is present in their organization” (Jeon & Kukla-Acevedo, 2019, p. 459).

The main ethical consideration in this PoP is remaining mindful of international students’ personal backgrounds, contexts, and cultures. In the realm of education policy and pedagogy development worldwide, culture emerges as a pivotal determinant (Soetaert et al., 2004). To navigate the complexities inherent in education, particularly in diverse international settings, cultivating intercultural fluency among change agents stands as a compelling solution. The primary objective of this fluency is to bridge the evident gaps in pedagogical approaches while still respecting the socio-cultural dynamics that underpin the educational experiences of international students (Gill, 2007). However, this vision for change extends beyond the realm of international students; it possesses the transformative potential to positively impact Indigenous communities as well. By placing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) at the forefront of

educational practices, we not only foster a more welcoming classroom environment for international students but also embark on a journey towards greater understanding and appreciation of Indigenous cultures, histories, and perspectives (Fuentes et al., 2021). This commitment to EDI can serve as a potent counterforce to the historical perpetuation of harmful stereotypes and misinformation that have adversely affected Indigenous communities (Battiste, 2002).

The increasing demand for higher education in previous years has resulted in tremendous growth for the industry (the number of international undergraduate students more than tripled between 2000 and 2014; UNESCO, 2014), yet higher education remains highly Eurocentric (Sidhu, 2006; Stein, 2018). Although the highest number of students come from Asia (particularly China and India), “little attention has been paid to how internationalization discourses produce representations of the host nation, and the effects of these representations on international student expectations and experiences” (Stein, 2018, p. 461).

Now, a key consideration for the organization as it moves to bridge the cultural and academic gaps of international students is “how educators [might] address the challenges of interrupting exceptionalist narratives in the context of marketized international higher education” (Stein, 2018, p. 462). For example, it is necessary to address the difficult challenge of growing resentment against international students, where common perceptions are that they are taking jobs and classroom spots “meant for” Canadians (CBC News, 2014). X University is tasked with the ethical responsibility to change such oppressive perceptions and provide international students with the resources they require to flourish academically and socially, both within and outside of the institution’s walls.

The social justice context of the PoP can be summarized as follows: “Education is known as the great equalizer, but this promise of equality cannot be achieved when fundamental injustice exists within school systems” (Mills University, 2019). The challenges of equity and social justice must be considered in the process of change planning through the enablement of educators to create meaningful change; in other words, “teaching social justice does not mean informing future educators, administrators, and policy leaders about social justice; it means training [one] in a reflective model of leadership that encourages openness, collaboration, and information sharing” (Mills University, 2019).

The task remains that the gaps between home-country education and host-country institutional expectations of X University must be addressed. Doing so will help achieve the social justice and equity that is well deserved by international students but that is currently lacking. Only once the “playing field” is levelled and equity is achieved, can institutions expect to see increasing student success rates among international students.

Organizational Change Readiness

The organization’s readiness for change is discussed in this section, as effective change implementation requires evidence of an organization’s readiness for change. Many models and tools are available to assess an organization’s preparation to accept and implement a change.

Armenakis et al. (1993) suggest that there are five characteristics that influence readiness for change: 1) the presence of a gap between organization’s current and desired state is assessed; 2) actors and stakeholders believe the proposed change is the right change, and 3) they have confidence to successfully make the change; 4) the change is supported by key institutional leaders; and 5) individual benefits of the change have been discussed. These characteristics are also identified by Deszca et al. (2020). The complexities and difficulties of organizational change

must be recognized and reflected upon by leaders. Before persuading others that change is necessary, leaders must understand the need for change. Stakeholders also need to believe leaders have the capacity, competency and decision-making power to lead the change. “Change readiness is a multilevel and multi-faceted construct (team, department, or organization). So, the statements of ‘I’ change to ‘we’ in questions or statements relating to change readiness” (Soomro et al., 2021, p. 5). Although seemingly counterintuitive, Deszca et al. (2020) claim that dissatisfaction must actually be created among stakeholders and change actors in order to effectively change the status quo. Soomro et al. (2021) also claim that change readiness should be assessed through organizational members’ resolve to change together (change commitment) and their actual collective capability to change (i.e. change efficacy). The determinants of these factors are both how much organizational members value the change and how many resources they have available to do so. Thus, the change readiness of X University must be measured both by commitment to change and change efficacy. The preceding claims by Soomro et al. (2021) offer an important perspective on organizational change readiness—one that decodes the common assumption that change readiness only relates to how much organizational members value the proposed change at all levels of an organization.

In order to further assess the current state of X University and ensure readiness for change across departments, a readiness rubric and organizational assessment is key for successful management of the change. McKnight and Glennie (2019) state that using a readiness rubric and organizational assessments can eliminate a common barrier in academic institutions: the sense of urgency that pushes organizations to effect change immediately without having a clear understanding of whether or not the correct environment exists to foster a successful change. The readiness rubric in Figure 1 below (adapted from McKnight and Glennie, 2019) displays X

University's current state of organizational change readiness in relation to the various organizational components.

Figure 1

Organizational Change Readiness Rubric

Component	Institution-wide Characteristics Indicating Readiness	Presence at X University
Leadership capacity & support	Leaders are committed to the proposed change and provide early and lasting support, including needed resources, to those implementing change	Currently present: Transformational leadership using an approach of engagement, enthusiasm and relationship building (McCleskey, 2014) to inspire stakeholders is used to highlight the need to explore holistic supports for international students
Shared vision for change & how it will influence the institution	Leaders facilitate a shared decision-making process to co-create the change vision, goals, and implementation plan for the institution	Currently present: Transformational leadership with a trauma-informed approach is the chosen approach; leader believes in trust, empowerment, intrinsic motivation and inspiring a collective vision
Alignment with core values	Leaders support stakeholders (e.g. staff, students) in aligning the required changes with their core values and articulating how change will ultimately benefit students	Currently present: The approach is multi-faceted and ethically driven as educators will learn to adjust how they teach and administrators will adjust policies and procedures from a trauma-informed approach
Collaborative institutional climate	Staff & students trust leaders and colleagues and work together to determine the direction of the school and to problem-solve	Currently lacking: X University staff are not trauma-informed and may not be interacting with international students in a way that their experiences are being understood, but the institution-wide climate is changing direction towards solving this
Implementation plan	Co-created by stakeholders, the school's plan identified clear roles and responsibilities, tasks, timelines, and indicators of success, all of which are aligned with the change goals and fit the unique context of the school	Currently present: clear roles and responsibilities, tasks, timelines, and KPIs have been identified
Staff capacity	Staff members have the capacity to carry out the new work and are given any needed supports (e.g. professional development, materials, resources); supports are aligned with the change goals	Currently present: A trauma-informed approach is centred on relationships between and among individuals and groups. The approach requires providing education, resources and supports to both educators and students to become trauma-informed and implement sensitive strategies
Resources	Institution has taken inventory of needed resources & identified how to get missing resources and knows how to effectively leverage what they have. In acquiring and allocating resources, school accounts for competing initiatives.	Some resources lacking: Inventory of resources is currently present, but resources themselves may be lacking (e.g. financial)

Note. Adapted from McKnight and Glennie, 2019.

As identified by Deszca et al. (2020), some important change readiness elements are previous change experience, executive support, credible leadership and change champions, openness to change, reward for change, and measures for change and accountability. These themes are briefly discussed below.

Past experiences can be an indicator of potential success with future change. Receptiveness to change is more likely if prior experience with change has been positive. Trust and capacity to support the change are explored in this section as is the evidence of systems thinking. Executive support must be in place for transformational change to be successful. In order for the change process to move forward, support from the president and board of X University is essential.

Having the right human capital in the correct positions is critical for effective change. The questionnaire by Deszca et al. (2020) has a series of six questions to ensure that trustworthy and capable individuals are in place to lead the change. In addition, systems thinking is required for sustainable change and support from all levels of X University. Being open to the change is another critical factor to assess when engaging in organizational change such as the one proposed in this OIP. Internal and external environmental scanning, a culture of innovation and accountability, effective communications, resources and demonstrated systems thinking are assessed by this questionnaire. Exploring reward for change helps to assess the appetite for failure.

Accountability and measures for change are essential for moving the change forward. A question of whether the correct data is available and accessible needs to be explored. This may include data on employees and international students. This OIP provides an opportunity to broaden the data collection to include more diverse actors and stakeholders. Other tools, such as

the strategic plan, education plan, policies and procedures, and data from institutional research can also help address challenges and celebrate successes.

It is crucial to recognize that change is challenging and that readiness, motivation and institutional change are required to deliver equitable, diverse and inclusive education to international students. Those in powerful positions must understand and accept the need for change before persuading others (Deszca et al., 2020). Collaboration across the institution is required for the acceleration phase to ensure capacity to support the change is in place (Armenakis & Harris, 2002). The context of the organization and personality characteristics both influence individual readiness for change (Vakola, 2014). Using a trauma-informed approach within the organization to build trust, effective communication and support is essential to create buy-in. Educators should seek mentorship on how to support trauma-affected international students to improve their functioning in the classroom and their overall academic, social and emotional well-being.

Without using tools such as readiness rubrics, X University runs the risk of ineffectively implementing change efforts, subsequently bringing about organizational crises (Fatima et al., 2020; Probst & Raisch, 2005). Effective leadership is needed to ensure readiness to embrace change and to navigate the structure and culture of the organization.

Chapter 1 Conclusion

In the exploration of Chapter 1, the organizational history, context, and structure of X University were examined. Within this backdrop, transformational and ethical leadership styles were analyzed within the framework of theory, offering insights into the multifaceted factors shaping leadership within the institution.

This investigation unveiled a compelling problem of practice: the glaring inequities experienced by international students as they grapple with the challenges of adapting to the Canadian academic landscape. The academic difficulties, limited opportunities for collaboration and communication, and the increasing mental health concerns among international students all signal systemic inequalities within the institution.

This inquiry-driven approach sets the stage for a leadership-focused vision for change, rooted in a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). The vision seeks to clearly improve the international student experience at X University, embracing proactive, systematic change to dismantle barriers and empower international students to excel. However, successful transformation necessitates more than just a vision; it requires the readiness of the organization to adapt and implement change. Therefore, the readiness of X University for organizational change was also assessed, examining its capacity to support the envisioned transformation. Overall, X University has shown an overall readiness for change in this context.

In the chapters that follow, a comprehensive exploration of practical strategies and solutions will take place. Actionable steps that align with the leadership-focused vision for change will be outlined, all while considering the unique context, leadership position, and lens that define X University. This journey toward a more inclusive and equitable academic environment engages every facet of the institution and commences with a deep understanding of the current state and a clear vision for the future.

Chapter 2: Planning and Development

The high rate of academic integrity breaches among international students at X University points to one of the needs that leaders need to gain a better understanding of how integration support should be organized across the various levels of the institution for incoming international students. Thus, this chapter explores how the social and learning environments at X University may be inhibiting the overall success of incoming international students and how changes driven by transformational and ethical leadership styles can be made to provide overall integration support (both institutional and societal), bridging the cultural and academic gaps.

Social justice, equity, and decolonization initiatives are embedded throughout in the context of addressing the PoP. I address the chosen leadership approach to change more deeply, discuss my change framework and I used the congruence model (Nadler & Tushman, 1989) to identify gaps and organizational change requirements through my critical organizational analysis.

Leadership Approach to Change

Change is a complex process (Senge, 1990). With the goal of achieving the institution's vision and goals, leadership is defined as the influence on stakeholders to achieve those goals (Leithwood et al., 2010). A leader's behaviour influences their approach to change and its implementation, but research shows that up to 70% of change initiatives do not succeed (Higgs & Rowland, 2005). A leader's ability to build the capacity to change and adapt within an organization is critical for successful organizational change to occur.

Aligning Transformational Leadership with Organizational Context

Transformational and ethical leadership principles to bring forth individual and organizational change need to be embraced at X University (Eisenbeiss & van Knippenberg, 2015; Ko et al., 2018). Used strategically, a transformational leadership approach can propel the

change forward by raising the level of human conduct and ethical aspirations of both the leaders and the people being led (Adserias et al., 2017) with respect to achieving social justice and equity for international students. Transformational leadership involves creating connections to raise motivation and morale in both leaders and those being led (Bass, 1998; Larasati & Martono, 2020). This approach to change aligns with the organizational context and the PoP in that it constructs an attractive vision for the future, one that focuses on the importance of decolonization and intercultural fluency. Such an approach seeks to provide international learners with the resources to integrate and thrive—both within X University and the host-society. With intrinsic motivation, team development, trust, empowerment and a collective vision, I plan to lead using creativity within a transformational leadership approach, motivating those being led to do more than expected (Bass, 1998). Transformational leaders exhibit four dominant factors: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Northouse, 2021).

A Transformational and Ethical Leadership Approach

Transformational leadership raises levels of consciousness about goals, motivates team thinking (rather than self-interest) and addresses higher-level needs (Bass, 1998). Having a clear vision of the future state at X university and the development of this vision is my priority as a transformational leader. Embedding equity, diversity and inclusion goals into this OIP aligns with the strategic direction of X University, which seeks to address the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Report—namely, to counteract the social injustices experienced by Indigenous populations within X University. Building trust through existing and new relationships, I will use my transformational leadership approach to address the persistence of inequity and unacknowledged biases within the organization (McCleskey, 2014; Northouse,

2021). I recognize the flexibility required in the transformational report and the need to integrate approaches with tact and strategy to move forward the vision for change (Hallinger, 2003).

The Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action are of paramount significance within the framework of my transformational leadership approach aimed at better integrating international students at X University. These calls to action not only confront historical injustices endured by Indigenous communities but also underpin the fundamental principles of diversity, inclusion, and social justice—cornerstones of my leadership philosophy. By actively embracing these calls to action, X University demonstrates a resolute commitment to effecting a transformative cultural shift towards a more equitable and inclusive educational milieu.

In line with my transformational leadership approach, the reconciliation process advocated by these calls fosters a comprehensive transformation of our institutional ethos. It promotes a collective awakening to the value of diverse perspectives and histories. This emphasis on reconciliation aligns perfectly with the overarching goal of my leadership—to inspire positive change and growth within the university community.

By embedding the principles of reconciliation and social justice into our institutional policies, practices, and curriculum, we not only honor the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls but also cultivate a welcoming and supportive environment for international students. This proactive approach to leadership sends a powerful message: X University is unwavering in its dedication to nurturing an inclusive community where every individual, including international students, is not merely acknowledged but genuinely celebrated. This approach, rooted in transformational leadership, has the potential to elevate the sense of belonging and integration of our international students, propelling them towards academic and personal success while enriching the entire university experience.

An ethical leadership approach is also used. Ehrich et al. (2015) define ethical leadership as a social, relational practice concerned with education's moral purpose. I describe myself as honest, caring and conscientious, and I make fair and balanced decisions to transform the work of the collective (M. E. Brown & Treviño, 2006). In line with these values, it is also argued that leadership can be described as a sort of "political project that incorporates managerialist ideology through positioning institutional leaders as agents of reform in public services such as education" (Youngs, 2017, p. 141). That being said, the significance and purpose of social-justice-oriented leadership in the context of neoliberalism has now shifted to actually be decentred from one individual, as this can be in opposition to academic values and practices (Ehrich et al., 2016; Hollander, 2009). Leadership may come from various sources and is reciprocal between leaders and those being led. Relationships are at the core of ethical leadership.

Educational institutions exist to serve human needs such as self-realization and provide opportunities for people to participate in educational and social activities. Issues arise when students demonstrate challenging behaviours that interfere with their ability to adhere to policy, procedures and academic success (Ryan, 2016). Currently, the staff at X University are reporting that they are not consistently trauma-informed. Because of this lack of trauma knowledge, trauma-affected students may be labeled as not actively engaged in their educational experience (Bolman & Deal, 2017). At X University, staff and students are struggling to understand and work together, causing withdrawal and resistance by both (Koenig, 2018; Souers & Hall, 2016).

Given the aforementioned information, it can be inferred that a lack of professional learning for stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, leadership) may perpetuate the symptoms of the PoP, such as academic integrity breaches among international students, and difficulties in social and organizational integration (Bath, 2008; Kataoka et al., 2018). In other words, the current lack

of understanding surrounding the PoP is prohibiting educator and student growth as well as international student integration. According to Fuchs and Prouska (2014), establishing interpersonal trust is an important method to stimulate organizational citizenship behaviours and affective commitment to change. In line with these findings, Allen et al. (2013) state that “with today’s ever-changing and competitive environment, one approach leaders can take to create a competitive advantage is to foster an organizational climate that encourages and supports change and creativity” (p. 24).

As stated by Burnes and Todnem (2012), “(1) leadership and change are inextricably linked and their effectiveness in achieving beneficial outcomes for stakeholders is linked to their underlying ethical values; (2) some approaches to change are more likely to lead to ethical outcomes than others” (p. 240). The transformational and ethical approaches to leadership with a trauma-informed lens ground me in my mission to guide X University towards a positive future state where incoming international students are better prepared for their academic undertakings at the institution.

Framework for Leading the Change Process

Change efforts and building organizational readiness require a thoughtful choice of structured change framework(s) combined with clear leadership approaches. My transformational and ethical leadership approaches combined with the change path model (Deszca et al., 2020) and trauma-informed framework are effective choices for leading the OIP.

Trauma-sensitive practices must be integrated into educators’ pedagogies. Understanding the impacts of relocation trauma on international student learning and development is critical for this student population to be supported to experience success in academics (Burns, 2019). A trauma-informed approach is centred on relationships between and among individuals and

groups. The approach requires education, resources and supports to be provided to both educators and students to become trauma-informed and to implement sensitive strategies. According to Overstreet and Chafouleas (2016, as cited in Chafouleas et al., 2015; Cole et al., 2013), "Trauma-informed schools reflect a national movement to create educational environments that are responsive to the needs of trauma-exposed youth through the implementation of effective practices and systems-change strategies" (p. 1). The intent is to foster trusting relationships between educators and international students. Students with trauma are likely to display decreased academic performance and increased mental health challenges (McInerney & McKlindon, 2014).

I believe in trust, empowerment, intrinsic motivation and inspiring a collective vision. My approach is multi-faceted (teaching others, directing others, and modelling for others) and ethically driven as educators learn to adjust how they teach and as administrators adjust policies and procedures on the basis of a trauma-informed approach. The change path model by Deszca et al. (2020) is based on a sequential and holistic approach to examining the process and prescription for change. This four-step process provides a method to differentiate how and what is required in the change process. It posits that those leading the change move strategically through an ongoing process of stimulating interest in change and awakening the institution through mobilization, acceleration and institutionalization. Transformational leaders at X University can awaken the changes needed to address the lack of holistic educational supports offered to international students.

The first stage of the change path model (awakening) identifies the need for change and confirms the issues requiring the need for change. It calls for a leader to articulate the gap in performance between a present and future state, to develop a vision for change and to

communicate the vision through multiple channels (Deszca et al., 2020). The process begins with an environmental scan of internal and external factors affecting the change. This scan includes understanding X University's international student experience from a social justice, trauma-informed lens (Ryan, 2016).

After the awakening stage comes mobilization, where critical organizational analysis results are shared with stakeholders to elicit support for the change. Four key considerations encompass this stage: making sense of systemic and structural changes, assessing power and cultural dynamics to determine allies to support the change, communicating institution-wide messages to manage change recipients and stakeholders and leveraging the currency and relationships of those leading the change to support the implementation of the change vision (Deszca et al., 2020). To begin the phase of mobilization, one should assess how current structures and systems at X University can be leveraged to accept and embrace the changes. Research by Scott (2003) states the most successful changes are the result of a team effort in which the most appropriate and best-positioned people are involved in the process. Data collection through quantitative survey data and semi-structured, in-depth, informant style interviews to assess the gaps in institutional performance also falls into this second phase. Currently, X University collects information on academic misconduct and the number of international students, but it does not have structures in place to explore assumptions, frameworks and perspectives or to critically assess the status quo (Bass & Riggio, 2005).

The third phase (acceleration) calls for articulating the gap in performance between the current and desired state (Deszca et al., 2020). The steps of understanding where all stakeholders may be starting from and including oppressive experiences require a trauma-informed approach (Ryan, 2016) and well-developed transformational leadership to raise levels of consciousness

about goals, motivate movement towards team thinking (rather than self-interest) and address higher level needs (Bass, 1998). Communicating the vision for change in this phase aligns with my transformational and ethical leadership approach. All stakeholders should be involved in this process through creating a culture of openness and providing learning opportunities in a supportive environment (Bass & Riggio, 2005; McCleskey, 2014). The assumptions of educators and staff within X University would be challenged through the implementation of the OIP, likely causing discomfort through discourse, all while focusing on providing an equitable and inclusive educational experience to international students. The collective vision for change can be advanced through a review of the current policies, procedures and processes. This review should include X University's strategic plan; international education plan; equity, diversity and inclusion plan; academic misconduct, bullying and harassment policy; and other relevant policies. Enhancements in these documents would likely generate a need for improvement in the systems and infrastructures that underpin an equitable educational experience for all students at X University (Scott, 2003).

The stage of acceleration converts prior stages into actionable steps that result in the execution of the change. Three steps are involved: acquiring new knowledge, skills and abilities through systematically engaging and empowering others in the change; building momentum and support using tools and techniques; and celebrating milestones (Deszca et al., 2020). In this stage, a strategic approach should be taken, as outlined by Mintzberg and Westley (2001), to develop the action plan. This approach is selected as the vision for change based on rational, data-driven decision-making and a linear context.

Fullan (2007) recognizes there is no step-by-step checklist to transformation; it is a process of building relationships, redefining resistance, and day-to-day reculturing of an

organization. As a transformational and ethical leader (Northouse, 2021), I have a clear and powerful idea of the changes that need to occur at X University in the area of holistic educational supports for international student success, and I recognize the need for a pivotal shift in the environment (Cole et al., 2013). The current organizational structures and processes at X University need change.

As the PoP now stands, the lack of international student integration has led to a period of stagnation for X University, in which the academic success rate (assessed by frequency of academic misconduct, graduation, student feedback, etc.) among international students has plateaued in recent years. The proposed framework for leading this change allows myself and others to take into account the continually changing and turbulent environments within which organizations such as X University operate. It offers structured support and a collection of complementary approaches. In essence, X University's leaders are tasked with the responsibility of synergistically adapting their behaviour and internal practices in real-time to the changing external environment (Beer & Nohria, 2000), which brings new challenges to and from international students at the institution.

Critical Organizational Analysis

In the previous section, I explored the change path model (Deszca et al., 2020) as a framework to drive the change process to address and identify the need for change at X University. I also align the model with my transformational, collaborative and ethical leadership approaches, integrating a trauma-informed lens. Through the change path model's awakening stage, a comparison and contrast between the current state and the desired future state takes place in a process called gap analysis (Deszca et al., 2020). A pivotal role of the leader is to understand

the institution's behaviour and its complexities (Deszca et al., 2020). Thus, this section explores what needs to change at X University and the organization's readiness for change.

The Congruence Model: Understanding Organizational Dynamics

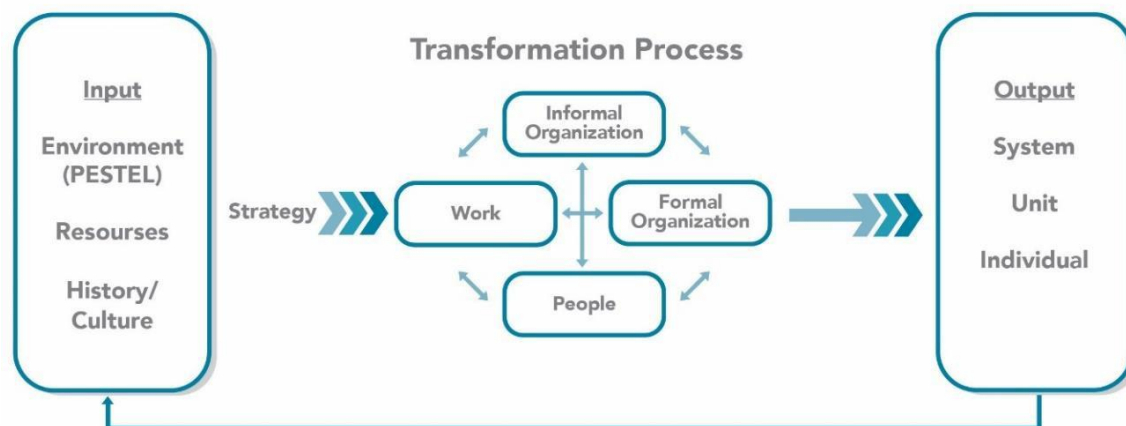
A gap between X University's current and desired state is evident. Universities are complex and are best understood by analyzing their environment, resources, history and strategy, along with the transformation process; thereafter, one can assess the changes needed (Nadler & Tushman, 1989). Nadler and Tushman (1989) offer a useful congruence model to undertake the critical organizational analysis and to identify contradictions, paradoxes and gaps within the institution, with a focus on people and culture. Essentially, a complex and dynamic roadmap is used to examine the university and its openness to change.

Organizations can be understood as living systems, and stakeholders as people with complex needs that must be addressed for them to lead well-adjusted and healthy lives and to perform effectively within the organization (Morgan, 2006). Here, Nadler & Tushman's input elements to change are explored, and these inputs affect the strategy one adopts for change. These inputs directly affect five key elements of the organization: tasks, people, formal organization, informal organization and process (Deszca et al., 2020). Harmony between these factors with the external environment as well as with the organization's strategy determines the success of the organization (Nadler & Tushman, 1989). Organizations are effective when their strategy (which is dictated by the environment, resources and history) aligns with the work, people, formal structures and informal structures. The culture and internal functioning of X University is at the core of using the congruence model, which is useful in how it visually displays the working of the organization and identifies what is needing change. Change is based

on either changing the inputs and strategies or on the need for new and different outputs. Figure 2 outlines this process.

Figure 2

Nadler-Tushman Organizational Congruence Framework



Note. Adapted from “A model for diagnosing organizational behavior” by D. Nadler and M. Tushman (1989).

A critical organizational analysis for X University helps identify areas of weakness for the organization, and how they can be transformed into opportunities for growth. It is helpful for the change process to analyze resources in the context of their value and malleability within the organization (Nadler & Tushman, 1989). X University receives provincial funding and is situated within a broader higher education environment and context in Canada, including federal legislation affecting international student enrolment. Federal and provincial agendas are focussed on equity, diversity, inclusion and mental health for all students, which should inform policy, procedures and budgetary considerations.

Important stakeholders in the change process include students, faculty, staff, and leadership. Currently, 15% of the total student population is made up of international students;

the top five home countries of these students are India, China, Vietnam, the Republic of Korea and Japan. Despite the population of international students, changes to curriculum, services and systems are not clearly defined. Leask (2015) states that “to discuss the internationalization of a university education without discussing the internationalization of the curriculum and student learning is nonsensical” (p. 3). She describes the internationalization of the curriculum as “the incorporation of international, intercultural, and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study” (p. 9).

In essence, students from non-Western countries with education backgrounds that emphasize rote learning often see plagiarism as a form of respect to the original author (University of Manitoba, 2019). Since the institution’s policy on plagiarism is clear and easily accessible to all students, those who plagiarize are reprimanded rather than counselled or corrected. Additionally, international students at X University have reported facing difficulties with using a learning management system, and navigating the cumulative grading system. Addressing the lack of holistic educational supports for international students requires program revisions and professional development initiatives, with a focus on understanding internationalization, the international student experience and traumas associated with that experience. Understanding the international student experience will have an impact on the internal organizational change processes undertaken to improve this experience. (Knight, 2004). Some may resist adjusting to meet the needs of international students—an area that must be considered through the change process. A. D. Brown (2017) presents the way people identify within an organization as “the ways people draw on their membership of organizations in their constructions of self, processes generally referred to as *organizational identification*” (p. 296).

Given this way of thinking, the need for changes needs to be communicated so it is viewed as normal in the work, and not an additional responsibility outside the scope of one's work. It is important to note that X University is doing well in many areas when discussing the integration of the current OIP.

Teaching and learning would be affected by addressing the PoP. Teaching styles and curriculum need to evolve to reflect an understanding of trauma-informed approaches in teaching international students and to create learning spaces accessible to all (Phifer & Hull, 2016). Concerns of low graduation rates of international students and higher incidents of academic misconduct are being noted. As a result, educators are doing their best to meet student needs based on their skills, but increased rates of burnout among educators interacting directly with international students faced with trauma is on the rise (Koenig et al., 2018). Additionally, the culture and unseen approaches to education processes across X University are critical to explore but may be challenging to identify and change (Nadler & Tushman, 1989).

On trend with the shift happening among scholars, policy makers and classroom educators in the past few decades (McCabe et al., 2001), X University is attempting to find proactive approaches to building international student capacity in order to be successful in the Canadian higher education environment by trying to better understand the implications of a heavily Westernized university (Rodríguez Maeso & Araújo, 2015) for international learners. X University should reject the approach of developing increasingly harsh penalties, which may lead to a weakened learning culture. In its current state, X University has supports in place for all students, but the supports are not equipped to meet international student needs as they relate to social, cultural and academic adjustment, as reported by the students themselves.

A significant contributor to the ongoing issues of international students engaging in academic integrity breaches, having difficulty with a learning management system and cumulative grading system, is the lack of understanding from X University itself, which is due to the dominance of a Eurocentric educational framework (McGowan et al., 2020; Pinto & Blue, 2016). Although they require clear guidance, direction, support and feedback on their academic performance (Adhikari, 2018; Austin et al., 2005; Colella-Sandercock & Alahmadi, 2015; Eaton & Otoo, 2017), the assumptions about international students differ greatly from their reality. In Western classrooms, it is often presumed that international students have mastered both English and the academic skills needed to succeed in the Canadian university environment before starting their programs. It is also often assumed that international students are already familiar with academic integrity policies and that the expectations from their institutions back home are aligned with those of the Canadian post-secondary institutions; however, “Canadian higher-ed academic misconduct policies are intended to maintain high ethical standards at institutions and ensure that original authors of cited materials are credited for their works, [literature] suggests that there is an emphasis on enforcement rather than education and awareness building” (X University, 2020). In the Indian context, specifically, students are accustomed to a rote learning system, which can greatly differ from what is customary in the Canadian post-secondary context. If students do not understand the differences between rote learning and meaningful learning (which emphasizes critical thinking as opposed to memorization), they may already be at a disadvantage when entering Canadian academic institutions such as X University. Because of these differences, students are left feeling marginalized and misunderstood (Olsen, 2019).

The Role of Cultural Understanding and Trauma-Informed Approaches

Knowing this, a trauma-informed approach is critical when reviewing covert cultural practices and implementing change to effect the creation of holistic educational supports for international student success, as the approach's five guiding principles are safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness and empowerment (The Institute on Trauma and Trauma Informed Care, 2015). However, it is important to note that this process can cause disruption and stress within the organization. Transformational, ethical practices using principles of shared leadership and creating community need to be used to engage people, to value their contributions and to allow them to take what is working and adapt it for international student success.

The visible, physical infrastructure and processes of X University (formal structure) that comprise the work environment for all stakeholders is the final component of the congruence model (Nadler & Tushman, 1989). The impact of international student enrolment at X University must be explored to identify what infrastructure needs to be changed but also how the current physical environment can accommodate and support international student success. Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, supports for basic needs would mitigate the culture shock of international students, which connects to learning shock and academic performance (Newsome & Cooper, 2016). Various questions should be asked: How prepared is the cafeteria to consider needs of international students? Does the residence provide transitional housing? For some, the initial impact of transition can be traumatic and affect the trajectory of their educational experience. The diminution of this learning shock requires leadership in the prioritization of change and the allocation of resources. Decisions about when, where and how programming will be delivered need to be considered.

Aligning with X University's Strategic Goals

X University's strategic plan is focused on engaging learners, transforming lives and building community (to name a few goals), yet there is an apparent gap between international students' expectations of X University as a service provider and X University's actual service offering, and the cause of this gap can be characterized by international students' diverse academic social, cultural and educational needs and expectations, which have often been shaped by colonialism and racism. Addressing equity for international student success builds upon the current work taking place at X University, with threads of commonality in their joint focus on equity, inclusion and anti-racism. The current focus of support is academic, but holistic educational supports are needed that address the socio-cultural and educational aspects of international student success.

By identifying the existing gap and gathering support from stakeholders, the first stage of the change path model, awakening (Deszca et al., 2020), has already been addressed. Although educators at X University are making efforts to become more informed on the reasons for international students requiring additional support systems (as compared to domestic students), they report experiencing professional burnout and compassion fatigue because of the extended nature of this PoP (Koenig et al., 2018; Souers & Hall, 2016). The process of addressing educator burnout and improving students' mental wellness and academic success requires opportunities for educators to learn about the impact of trauma and toxic stress on their students and how they can better support them.

As we delve deeper into the transformative journey of X University, it becomes increasingly evident that the application of the Nadler & Tushman congruence model serves as an indispensable compass in navigating the complex terrain of organizational change. Just as the

change path model provides a path forward, the congruence model equips us with the necessary insights to identify the gaps and contradictions within the institution. By aligning the model's framework with our transformational and ethical leadership approaches, and by embracing a trauma-informed lens, we not only recognize what needs to change but also ensure that the change is strategically rooted in the congruence of tasks, people, formal and informal structures, and processes. The synergy between these models illuminates a clear roadmap for X University to harmonize its strategy with its culture and internal dynamics, thus fostering an environment poised for meaningful and sustainable transformation. As we progress, it is this holistic understanding provided by the congruence model that will continue to guide the efforts in realizing the institution's vision and addressing the evolving needs of X University's diverse stakeholders.

Solutions to the Problem of Practice

This section introduces and evaluates three possible solutions to address the PoP. The following solutions are proposed to create the most equitable circumstances for all stakeholders involved: 1) creating a program to bridge cultural and academic gaps; 2) providing professional development opportunities for educators; and 3) providing experiential learning opportunities for international students. It should be noted that the solutions are primarily tailored towards X University's international students' academic success and societal integration. The following sections delve into the relevant details of each scenario, while Table 1 will provide an overview of each of the proposed solutions.

Solution 1: Creating a Program to Bridge Cultural and Academic Gaps

The first viable solution for X University to address the PoP is to design a program tailored to international students' needs, in order to assist them with academic preparation and

acculturation. Given that the status quo has been maintained for a number of years and that international students are still facing difficulties within classrooms due to their diverse backgrounds, X University could ameliorate those problems by preparing students before the beginning of their studies. This holistic and proactive approach would address the vast social, cultural, academic, and economic differences between international students' home and host countries, creating a solid foundation on which they can succeed academically. This method is ultimately sustainable because it bridges the vast pedagogical, cultural and social differences between international students' home countries and the practices employed by X University. Indeed, it would likely create long-term positive change for all stakeholders. Morris (2018) asserts that "over the last decade, a consensus has emerged that a holistic or multi-pronged strategy is required for higher education institutions to promote and support academic integrity, and effectively address its 'shadow' – student academic misconduct, particularly plagiarism, collusion and contract cheating".

This solution would provide international students with the necessary resources for academic success (such as foundational knowledge on academic integrity practices), while also offering a solution that addresses the various factors influencing their mental health and well-being. International students face tremendous pressures while adapting to their new environments outside of the classroom. In Hettler's (1976) six dimensions of wellness model, he proposes that dimensions of student development can only exist in relation to one another, meaning that a student's overall identity development cannot exist independently from their psychosocial and intellectual development, as they are intrinsically interlinked. The consequence here is that it becomes extremely difficult for students to develop psychosocially and

intellectually in a new environment, in which they often lack a state of complete physical and mental wellness.

Hettler's (1976) claim that dimensions of student development do not exist independently of each other is consistent with Meyer et al. (1993). Furthermore, this finding begs the following question, as articulated by Bartram (2008):

How can international students be expected to develop intellectually when taking into account the considerable amounts of stress they face while adapting to the culture of their host society, and, more importantly, to the constraints imposed by their host institution? (p. 11).

As the needs of learners change in terms of knowledge and skills required to function in rapidly changing societies, the roles and expectations that education leaders have been historically faced with are now also ever-evolving; thus, the evolution of education leadership at X University currently rests on school and education reform initiatives (Botha, 2013), such as the one proposed here as a solution for the PoP. As asserted by Kier and Ives (2022):

Institutional administrators are responsible for creating and disseminating clear policy and procedures. Providing [preparatory] education and professional development assures that students, instructors, and staff are aware of policy and procedures related to cheating and plagiarism (p. 14).

This academic preparation program could cover topics ranging from the requirements for a smooth transition into the host society to knowledge of academic integrity, classroom expectations and the differences between rote and applied learning. This is due to the fact that mental health of students is inherently tied to learning and social environments and is an emerging area of concern in all of higher education. Recent statistics are alarming; some estimate

that every one in five students has a mental health issue (National Alliance on Mental Illness & The Jed Foundation, 2016), with a large proportion of these cases going completely undiagnosed and, consequently, untreated. Thus, a holistic program which focusses both on personal and academic aspects of international students' lives is most appropriate.

In comparison to domestic students, international students face the additional pressures of adapting to an unfamiliar academic environment while simultaneously dealing with culture shock, language barriers, financial pressures, homesickness and newfound personal independence. As X University works through these complex and sensitive issues, it must consider the special needs of international students, whose self-reported emotional and stress-related problems have been increasing over time.

In terms of drawbacks to the program, the primary issues would relate to capital investment, logistics and human resources. Because it is proposed that the program would take place in the international students' home countries, there would be a financial cost to implement the program, and it would be necessary to identify culturally fluent faculty members from X University's home campus who would be willing to travel abroad for the duration of the program. Thus, travel, accommodations, liaisons and venues would have to be organized; these requirements would result in a higher risk of unforeseen circumstances than if the program were to take place at the Canadian campus. Such efforts would involve education in equity, diversity, inclusion and systemic barriers. Staff and educator time would be needed to develop curriculum, including release time. Nonetheless, technological solutions such as video calling software would allow for the program to be held remotely, but a "follow-the-sun" workflow could be difficult to achieve depending on time zone discrepancies. Overall, \$175,000 CAD would be required for curriculum development costs, travel, cost of facilitators, digital licenses and related

expenses. The funding is available from within X University's Sustainability and Innovation Fund.

The primary advantage to this approach is ultimately ensuring that international students at X University feel prepared to tackle any challenges during their experience abroad. Such preparation could lead to an improved exchange of cultural, political and historical perspectives that would help build a vibrant, diverse campus community. There is support from staff, faculty, and students to move this change forward. Implementing this solution would advance the international student experience as well as strategic initiatives in equity, diversity and inclusion, and it would contribute to X University's mission of engaging learners and building community.

In essence, the challenge of creating inclusive learning and social environments at X University must be approached from two different angles. First, international students must actually be equipped to maintain the positive learning environment that would have been carefully fostered by educators and staff to increase their academic preparedness. Second, it would be necessary to create membership and distributed leadership among organizational change actors. However, it is clear that the implementation of a strategy combining the needs of all stakeholders (particularly, international learners) would lead to an outstanding educational environment, where all participants feel welcome, respected and appreciated (Stein, 2018; Lenning et al., 2013).

Solution 2: Professional Development for Educators on Equity and Social Justice

In order to create an environment in which inclusivity, diversity and social justice are valued, stakeholders within the institution should be better informed on how they play a role in creating community, starting from the micro level (i.e. that of individuals) (Stein, 2018). This process should begin by better informing learners and educators alike on important topics of

internationalization, ethics, equity, trauma-informed practice, decolonization and inclusion; thus, the proposed solution in this scenario is multi-tiered in that all stakeholders must participate (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2021). For example, research has shown that professional development increases educator knowledge of trauma-informed approaches and promotes high-quality implementation of strategies (Chafouleas et al., 2016; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2021).

Essentially, history must be understood so as not to be repeated, and the responsibility to create equity and aid international students in their integration processes belongs to all stakeholders. Through a better understanding of the catastrophic consequences of marginalizing entire communities, a higher level of diversity and inclusion can be achieved. As stated by Yusof et al. (2018), “realizing about diversity is important. To change the perception about diversity needs a lot of work” (p. 51). So, the aim is to examine and explore factors that have the ability to hinder or promote not only learner diversity and inclusion principles but also practices.

Lick et al. (2013) offer that “changing the practices as well as the assumptions and beliefs is a critical requirement for achieving successful school change for institutional improvement and increased student learning performance”. In other words, changing the mindset in the context of learner diversity among the university community is paramount (Yusof et al., 2018). Such a change can hopefully be achieved through applying the lens of Bolman and Deal’s (2017) symbolic frame, which relies on appeal to shared values and morals (in this case, equity, equalization, integration and inclusion) and on the use of powerful organizational symbolism. This solution is believed to be an effective one because it addresses the individual responsibility component to overall social welfare (Schmidtz & Goodin, 1998). In essence, the goal is to create an ecosystem within X University that intentionally enables opportunities for social integration and interethnic contact outside of structured, formal learning contexts through a program that

helps stakeholders develop their ability to appreciate the perspective of others (Yusof et al., 2018).

To continue the process of fully embracing learner diversity at X University, it would be important to consider the internationalization of the academic content itself. A modern Canadian academic educational structure needs to make significant changes. Essentially, it should look at ways to integrate substantive intercultural content in the taught curricula in order to ensure the accomplishment of a high level of comprehension of issues of key importance relating to matters concerning the intercultural communities in the country. It is important to note, though, that this approach is not applicable for all disciplines. This initiative is supported by the Vice-Provost Academic and all deans with exposure to international students.

Nonetheless, such a strategy would be tremendously beneficial for foreign students who are coming to Canada to study because it would facilitate a deeper understanding of Canada's history. This strategy could also prompt international students to make connections to their home countries, shifting from the current Canadian higher education framework, which is characterized by "the dominance of Eurocentric knowledge and cultural production" (Pinto & Blue, 2016, p. 3). Ultimately, the desired outcome would be a deeper comprehension of the "social and political structures that render some people especially vulnerable to being victims of injustice" (Eisenberg, 2018, p. 22), pointing to the importance of reconciliation.

Implementing this solution would be costly, and it would be challenging to ensure that all parties received the professional development. Opportunities for collaboration or for the development of an inhouse team to deliver the trainings would be options. Access to appropriate space and tools would be needed for this training to be delivered. This solution would require follow-up; hence, it is unlikely that the change would be maintained over time, and it is unclear

whether it would be enough to bring about the intended change. In terms of costs, there are pre-established funds available from within X University to execute the identified strategies.

Solution 3: Experiential Learning: Compulsory Internships, Job Shadowing, Mentoring and Collaborative Partnerships

To stimulate increased integration of international students within X University and the surrounding community, mandating that all international students complete an internship or partake in job shadowing could be an effective method to achieve the desired results. Harvey et al. (1998) assert that if strategically planned, organized and implemented, work-integrated learning programs such as internships can be very useful for learners because “these curricula provide the perfect platform to create a hands-on learning experience for students as they develop a useful skill set for today’s business environment” (Reinhard et al., 2016, p. 251). Students can also take part in a compulsory mentorship program where they are paired with X University’s alumni (both domestic and international) in order to have a designated person-of-reference during the adaptation period.

The aim of such initiatives would be to increase the sense of community (both within and outside of the institution) for the international learners to help them find more ease in adaptation. Young professionals and alumni are in a unique position to provide insights to current and incoming students, who may find the process of acculturation difficult. By sharing their observations and experiences gained both during their time at X University and in post-graduate employment, the chosen mentors would have the potential to motivate international students to learn by fully submerging themselves into their study programs. As a result, the students would be set on the best possible trajectory—first academically and, in turn, career wise. It would be beneficial for the integration of international students into the external community to develop

confidence, connections and life skills. However, this solution would require human resources and commitment from various stakeholders in a time when they may not have the capacity. This solution would be relatively simple to initiate as there is an already established Centre for Experiential and Career Education within X University which offers its support in creating these connections.

Table 1

Proposed solutions for the PoP

Proposed Solution	Details
<p>1. Creating a Program to Bridge Cultural and Academic Gaps *Preferred Solution*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here, the task is to design a program tailored to international students' needs to assist them with academic preparation and acculturation. • This holistic and proactive approach can address the vast social, cultural, academic and economic differences between international students' home and host countries. • It provides international students with the necessary resources for academic success but also offers a solution that addresses the various factors influencing their mental health and well-being. • The drawbacks include capital investment, logistics and human resources.
<p>2. Professional Development for Educators on Equity and Social Justice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This solution includes informing educators of important topics of internationalization, ethics, equity, trauma-informed practice, decolonization and inclusion. • This can help to create an environment where “learners are motivated and actively engaged in learning, campus life and governance” through the “promotion of engagement, shared responsibility and accountability for learning, as well as through

	<p>meaningful professional development and growth”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonetheless, ensuring all stakeholders have received the professional development would be challenging to enforce.
<p>3. Experiential Learning: Compulsory Internships, Job Shadowing, Mentoring and Collaborative Partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This solution proposes mandating that all international students complete an internship or partake in job shadowing as it can be an effective method to achieve the desired results. • Students can also take part in a compulsory mentorship program where they are paired with X University’s alumni (both domestic and international) in order to have a designated person-of-reference during the adaptation period. • This solution would require human resources and commitment from various stakeholders in a time where they may not have the capacity.

Selection of the Solution

Based on the above analysis, Solution One of creating an academic preparedness program is the chosen strategy to address the PoP, as it would have the most direct impact on international students and other stakeholders indirectly. It is expected to facilitate long-term change, and it demonstrates the commitment of X University towards resolving the problem of practice. The solution would be approached utilizing a transformational leadership approach which would focus on the vision for change and empowering international students. In terms of approvals needed, the Task Force for Internationalization at X University will make a recommendation to the Provost and Vice-Provost Academic.

It would be implemented before the arrival of students in Canada, and it could prevent potential traumatic experiences during the transition period, preparing international students for

their educational experience from academic, socio-cultural and linguistic perspectives. This solution would empower international students through knowledge and skill-building to engage as learners and build community before arrival at X University. Student attendance could easily be made mandatory and could be monitored. Once staff are trained, they could provide pre-departure training to students as well as guidance and support to other stakeholders in the host university.

Criteria Used to Select the Preferred Solution

Solution 1 offers a comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges faced by international students. It not only focuses on academic preparation, but also considers the cultural and mental well-being aspects. This holistic approach ensures that international students are well-prepared in multiple dimensions for their university experience. This solution also emphasizes sustainability and long-term positive change. It recognizes that addressing cultural and academic gaps between international students' home countries and the host institution is a fundamental issue that can have a lasting impact on the university community. Furthermore, the solution acknowledges the importance of international students' mental health and well-being. Given the increasing concern about mental health issues among students, addressing these concerns is a top priority for the university. In terms of equity, diversity, and inclusion, the preferred solution is explicit in its contribution to EDI initiatives. In the current higher education landscape, promoting these values is a priority, and this solution aligns with that focus. While this solution to address the PoP acknowledges potential drawbacks such as capital investment and logistical challenges, it also offers solutions and alternatives, such as remote program delivery.

Leadership Ethics, Equity, Social Justice, and Decolonization Challenges in Organizational Change

As an ethical leader, my commitment to equity, inclusiveness, and social justice is woven into the very fabric of my leadership philosophy. I firmly believe that fostering an environment where diversity is celebrated, where every voice is heard, and where fairness prevails is not only a moral imperative but also a cornerstone of effective leadership. Through my transformational leadership approach, I aspire to be more than just a leader; I aim to be a source of inspiration and a catalyst for positive change within the organization. It is essential for me to be not only approachable but also a credible role model, leading by example in the pursuit of social justice. Furthermore, I recognize that mistakes are inevitable in any leadership journey, and I embrace them as opportunities for growth and learning. With humility, I acknowledge these missteps and use them as stepping stones towards continuous improvement, always striving to create a more equitable and inclusive environment for all. Drawing inspiration from the works of M. E. Brown & Treviño (2006), Ko et al. (2008), and other ethical leadership scholars, I remain committed to championing the cause of equity and inclusiveness as a leader at X University and beyond.

Globalization and Historical Injustices

As globalization has heavily influenced the way organizations function in multi-cultural environments, it has also highlighted many historical injustices faced by various ethnic groups, Indigenous peoples and cultures. In the context of higher education, this increase in diversity within organizations, such as X University, has brought with it a number of challenges in managing international student populations (Yusof et al., 2018). Such challenges are partially due to historically complex dynamics between “the colonizer” and the “colonized”. “In this conceptualization, colonialism locks those in power into a rigidity trap and those colonized into a

simultaneous poverty trap” (McGowan et al., 2020, p. 304). As stated by Yusof et al. (2018), “[an] influx of foreign students will dramatically change the landscape of higher education institutions into a global village where each potential learner brings along her/his values, beliefs and culture against the backdrop of the existing multicultural background” (p. 42).

Leadership’s Moral Purpose

Ryan (2016) posits that leadership in education needs to be about deeper moral purposes, such as social justice, to contribute to a society that is fair for all. The challenges and considerations that apply to the proposed cultural and academic bridging program within X University would mainly pertain to creating, maintaining and ensuring equity and social justice for international students.

Ethical leadership is defined as normatively appropriate behaviour demonstrated through the fostering of personal actions and interpersonal relationships (Ko et al., 2018). Ethical leaders model these behaviours and promote them in others within an organization through inclusive engagement and collaborative interactions. Ethical leaders are moral people who influence others through a values-based management style. They are transactional in their style, demonstrating both ethical and authentic leadership, ensuring the needs of all are being met. Ethical leaders are known to actively participate in the change process, increasing the motivation of others in the change process (Ko et al., 2018). Ethical leadership is essential to the change process moving forward at X University. Such leadership includes leader transparency and encouragement of two-way communication between leaders and others in the organization (Sharif & Scandura, 2014).

In addition to moral actions and collaboration, trauma-informed practices contribute to ethical leadership. In this context, students’ experiences of trauma can be productively explored

to identify structural inequities in higher education. This ethical approach suggests student connectedness to an institution can be strengthened through their trauma experiences. How international students are viewed and positioned may result in further trauma. This reality needs to be recognized by leaders, educators and staff in institutions. These experiences can be made to be productive. Processes and decisions should be evaluated using a critical, social justice and trauma-informed approach to avoid re-traumatization (Dutro & Bien, 2014).

Here, three change components must be considered to create meaningful change for international learners at X University: the social justice rationale, the educational benefits rationale and the business rationale (Adserias et al., 2017). While implementing new changes within the organization to improve the integration of international students, all stakeholders and change actors must remain mindful of the various origins of international student stakeholders, including how their communities have been historically affected by colonization, social injustices and a lack of equity.

The chosen transformational and collaborative leadership approaches, which aim to raise the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led (Adserias et al., 2017) through a healing a trauma informed approach, are a true reflection of the “the broader movements for social, racial, gender, and economic justice” (Balajee & Todd, 2018, p. 103). X University is hoping to achieve such justice through the change process. In essence, the organization must become more reflective of changes in demographic trends while addressing both past and present identity-based social inequities (Adserias et al., 2017).

The purposes of addressing such pertinent issues are multiple: on the one hand, it is necessary to address the immediate need to improve the overall learning and teaching climate within classrooms. On the other, X University acknowledges its moral mandate to ensure a

socially just, safe integration of international students within the host society of Canada over the long term. In the context of improving the quality of education for international students, Page (2008) asserts that diversity within organizations ultimately trumps individual talent because diversity allows groups to solve complex problems in innovative ways; thus, increased international student integration would likely prove beneficial for all organizational stakeholders. McGowan et al. (2020) argue that boundary reinforcement in higher education (particularly in the case of Indigenous peoples) “inhibits potentially transformative innovations from scaling beyond individual niches and moments in time” (p. 299). That same inhibition can be applied to boundary reinforcement between domestic students, staff and faculty, and international students.

Boundary Reinforcement and Marginalization

The following excerpt from McGowan et al. (2020) highlights some of the ways in which cultural groups have been marginalized in the context of higher education, leading to an inequitable Eurocentric dominance for all learners of diverse backgrounds:

Higher education organizations played and play a key role in justifying and legitimizing imperialism, presenting minimal inclusion in colonial institutions as a “benevolent gift” to Indigenous peoples, in Canada and colonial nations (Stein & de Andreotti, 2016, p. 373). This directly contrasts with the assertion from Indigenous scholars that higher education opportunities, when appropriate, affirming and engaging for Indigenous students, can be a source of empowerment and self-determination. (Battiste et al., 2002; Stonechild, 2006).

In summary, this excerpt sheds light on the historical role of higher education institutions in perpetuating cultural marginalization and the potential for transformative change when

education becomes a source of empowerment and self-determination, as advocated by Indigenous scholars (Battiste et al., 2002; Stonechild, 2006).

Organizational Responsibilities

As a higher education institution located in a geographical area with robust Indigenous and international populations, X University is responsible for exploring the complex (and often messy) decolonization process in order to better understand why academics are “stuck, misaligned, and even harmful to the process of integrating Indigenous knowledge into curriculum” (Sium et al., 2012, p. 2). In line with the organization’s vision, mission and values, reconciliation with historically marginalized groups of persons who experience a higher risk of poverty, social exclusion, discrimination and violence than the general population is a primary objective for X University with respect to the implementation of the chosen change plan.

In order to address the aforementioned responsibilities of organizational actors, increased intercultural fluency would need to be created among all faculty and staff at X University, as research shows the extent to which faculty, staff and domestic students can misunderstand international students. Despite much research in this area, in Western higher education institutions, international students face stigma and are continually judged as having poor language skills and a lack of academic integrity resulting from academic misconduct.

As per the observations of Chun and Evans (2016), leadership and empowerment must be distributed among change actors in order for diversity to become fully integrated into institutions of higher learning; here, the aim is that through the creation of a campus community and democracy, the responsibility to create meaningful and long-term change for international students should belong to all stakeholders. Educators must consciously process and examine their mindsets, attitudes and behaviours when working with learners from various backgrounds

and with multiple capabilities. There must be increased emphasis placed on the critical importance of reflective thinking, empathy, understanding, raised awareness, sensitivity and sensibility in handling learner differences and variation (Sauce & Matzel, 2013).

Chapter 2 Conclusion

In this chapter I explored the ethical and transformational leadership principles that would be effective in leading the change of the proposed solution (a cultural and academic bridging program). The overall aim of the proposed solutions is for X University to succeed in implementing educational supports that systemically integrate international students into the campus community and that contribute to their educational success. Although learner diversity exists, it is not supported through systems that could ease the process of integration; thus, through the application of transformational, social-justice-oriented leadership in the context of neoliberalism, it is believed that the creation of a program to bridge the cultural and academic gaps for international students as a change strategy would be the most effective solution of the three presented to ameliorate the PoP. I thus propose the creation of a preparatory program tailored to international students' cultural and academic needs as the most appropriate and powerful solution for bridging the gaps created by divergent academic principles and practices. There is full support at the Dean's level to move forward with this solution to the problem of practice. Chapter 3 explores how this solution could be implemented to promote holistic educational success.

Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication

The primary focus of this chapter is the change management process itself. Ultimately, Chapter 3 outlines the desired state of X University after successfully assisting international students in a seamless academic and social integration. By implementing new curriculum requirements for international students before their arrival in Canada, X University would be better prepared to assist international students in succeeding academically, in integrating into the host society, and in becoming integral members of the surrounding communities. A strategic communication plan is proposed, and next steps such as monitoring and evaluation planning are discussed. Finally, future considerations for this OIP are overviewed.

Change Implementation Plan

This change implementation plan considers the organizational change readiness from Chapter 1 and the critical organizational analysis from Chapter 2. The change path model by Deszca et al. (2020) guides this plan because it aligns with my transformational leadership approach. Deszca et al. (2020) support the idea that a deep understanding of organizational functioning and anticipated achievements drives any action plan.

As seen in Appendix A, the plan is designed to fit within the context of the organizational strategy of X University. This systematic institutional and cultural change process aligns with equity, diversity and inclusion strategies, resulting in an improved situation for stakeholders. A transformational process will be used to generate awareness of issues and adoption of the change across all levels of the organization to create an inclusive culture where all individuals are valued and treated with respect and dignity. The goal is to achieve a shared vision for change and to develop the organization to address systemic barriers to marginalized populations in their pursuit of quality education. This process would involve collecting and analyzing data through

institutional research and developing a framework and action plan to analyze the policies, procedures and processes of X University.

In terms of short and long-term goals for the implementation plan, the immediate goals would be considered engaging in the awakening and mobilization stages while the long-term goal is to reach acceleration and institutionalization (Dezsca et al., 2020). In more concrete terms, the awakening stage is already underway, as it involves identifying the need for change. In this phase, the Task Force for Internationalization at X University assessed the overall stakeholder understanding of the international students' experience. This included assessing the existing internal expertise of faculty and staff, and how this has been shaping the experience that incoming international students have at X University, both from a social and academic standpoint. The implementation team has been selected. I have also secured the support of the board of governors, executive, leadership team, administrators, faculty association, support staff and students.

Quick excitement paired with a lack of long-term commitment to actually manage a change can often result in implementation difficulties. Such difficulties can occur when the initial planning phases are not being given sufficient importance or when change actors are not fully prepared to actually engage in and manage the change process; hence, building organizational readiness is a critical phase in managing the transition. Starting with an environmental scan, I have critically examined the internal and external factors influencing the change. Engaging in this process allowed me to challenge the status quo and articulate the gap in performance between the current and future state. Input was required from students, faculty, staff and administration, and capacity building for creating psychological safety across leadership and the change agents was. Self-awareness and checking in with pre-conceived

assumptions and biases has also been a part of the process. In order to drive this phase of the change, key leadership qualities have included the ability to make fair and balanced decisions as well as honesty, care and a strong work ethic (M. E. Brown & Treviño, 2006). I value collaboration, equity, inclusion and social justice, and I aim to demonstrate a grounded approach as I manage the transition from awakening to mobilization from an ethical transformational lens.

The next phase of the implementation plan is the mobilization phase. This phase includes reviewing current policies, and designing the communication plan. As a start, ensuring the OIP has a framework that is aligned with federal and provincial regulations to provide a solid trauma-informed framework is a priority. These regulations may include the British Columbia Human Rights Code (1973), the Canadian Human Rights Act (1977), The Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2008). In addition, an assessment of X University's policies and strategic plans is critical. Examples may include strategic plans, indigenization plans, internationalization plans, admission policies, policies on conduct and integrity, and staff recruitment and hiring practices that align with equity, diversity and inclusion principles. This review would be carried out by the Task Force for Internationalization in collaboration with the president's Task Force on EDI. This means gaining an understanding of how each of these policies has an impact on student equity and inclusion. This phase also consists of the task to develop the communication plan which will engage all internal and external stakeholders.

Next is the acceleration phase. This phase encompasses the development and implementation (Deszca et al., 2020) of the academic preparedness program with the help of the president's Task Force on EDI and the Task Force for Internationalization. The curriculum development would be done by the College of Arts, while program curriculum would need to be

approved by university-wide committees. Once this occurs, the program can officially be launched in international students' home countries. The final phase of institutionalization refers to program monitoring and evaluation once the change has been implemented (Deszca et al., 2020). At this point in the implementation process, the task would be to maintain momentum throughout the chosen change plan in order to see the change through to long-term success. As a transformational leader, I am committed to involving all stakeholders of the PoP to move forward the vision for change.

Appendix A now gives an overview of these four phases, while breaking down important elements of each goal such as what implementation looks like, potential implementation issues and limitations, supports and resources required, identification of stakeholders and personnel, and the timeline required for each goal to be achieved.

Alignment with the Organizational Strategy

According to the institution's integrated strategic plan for the coming years, one of X University's primary objectives is to identify and remove barriers to education access for groups and individuals from underrepresented and marginalized groups; X University recognizes that not everyone has had equitable opportunities to access education because of systemic barriers.

Within institutional theory, the role of external institutions and how they affect policies and regulations in educational organizations is explained (Manning, 2018). For example, "formal as well as informal institutions [such as] the extended family, the private sector and the government, are part of those rules" (Kuijpers & Eijdenberg, 2021, p. 133). In this particular case, external influences of provincial and federal legislations guide the focus on equity, diversity and inclusion. The short-term goals of X University align with the awakening stage of the change path model introduced by Deszca et al. (2020). The president established a task force

to develop an equity, diversity and inclusion action plan, with a commitment to establish concrete goals and actions to achieve meaningful, sustainable change. Work is taking place to engage the diverse perspectives of government, Indigenous communities, students and employee groups. An acknowledgment that equity, diversity and inclusion work is a collaborative, continuous process that requires community engagement at all levels aligns with this change implementation plan, which seeks to explore the systemic barriers and need for social justice and equity in international students' educational experience.

Given this information, the proposed change plan fits within the context of the overall organizational strategy because it increases international students' opportunities to partake in interdisciplinary and integrated forms of engagement. Additionally, X University has mandated that equity, diversity and inclusion are integrated into all aspects of its institutional culture. As a result, providing international students with a program designed to bridge the cultural and academic gaps between home-country and host-country education would complement the university's strategy over the coming years.

An Improved Situation for Equity and Social Justice

The plan will lead to an improved situation with regard to equity and social justice because it focuses on the root problem of differences between international students' formative years of education and Western cultural norms. When the institution represents a single culture, students raised in different environments will likely be unfamiliar with the behaviours and attitudes expected of them, leading to underperformance, unless special efforts are made to teach those "culturally different" students (Ecochard, 2015; Eisenhart, 2001). Constructivist theory supports that learners construct meaning and knowledge from their learned experiences. Other principles to consider include the fact that learning is an active process, that language influences

learning and that learning does not happen in isolation. Thus, the proposed solution to the difficulties faced by the international student population at X University aims to close these cultural and academic gaps, giving international students an increased chance of flourishing both academically and socially at X University.

The constructivist view further supports the idea that students, faculty and staff have personal, subjective perspectives of the issues. Each person has a unique history of engaging with them from a social and historical perspective. This approach takes into account the culture and history of X University with the intended outcome of challenging the institution to suspend current beliefs and approaches and to collaboratively create a new framework.

This proposed change plan is expected to create positive change by creating more equal opportunities for learners of all backgrounds to succeed academically. Such learners will better understand the social, cultural and economic factors that have molded their previous academic experiences. Students can then leverage those skills to create a solid foundation for academic success at X University.

Because the proportion of international students in classrooms at X University is substantial, their experiential difficulties within the institution and its surrounding communities tend to have a ripple effect on other stakeholders. By necessity, faculty have become more than just educators, and their roles have evolved to become increasingly multifaceted to better help international students both academically and personally. Nonetheless, these increased responsibilities can result in professional burnout and difficulty in providing the same experience for every student who may require that level of support. On the other hand, domestic students have voiced their concerns over being in classrooms with international students who do not seem to have an understanding of what is expected of them, both in terms of academic performance

and personal conduct within the classroom setting. This sentiment, in turn, leads to greater divides and difficulties for all students, thus hindering them from achieving learning outcomes.

Understanding Stakeholder Reactions to Change

A common side effect of organizational change is stakeholder discomfort with the changing environment (Klonek et al., 2014; Marques Simoes & Esposito, 2014; Recardo, 1995). Stakeholder analysis clarifies the interactions between key players and the relationships and power dynamics that form the web of interactions between individuals (Deszca et al., 2020). It is essential to first solicit the support of the president and board of governors because they have authority to approve the change. I will need to identify allies within the organization to support and build momentum. I will do so through assessing which programs have organically developed across the institution to address the systemic barriers experienced by marginalized populations connected to the PoP.

Another key aspect of my role will be to have awareness of relationships between stakeholders and to foster collective meaning and commitment to the new vision. In line with Beatty's (2015) findings on organizational change management, the change plan will need to be communicated to the stakeholder groups differently to create persuasive messages tailored to each stakeholder group's needs. To develop such messages effectively, Beatty claims that three components must be addressed: what the compelling reason for change is, what we are striving to become, and "what's in it for me" (from the perspective of each stakeholder group). It is valuable to understand the intersection of power and politics in order to develop effective teams. Forming a culture of shared learning, openness, integrity, honesty, adaptability and creativity is integral to being a change leader and managing a transition.

According to Recardo (1995) and McKay (2017), some of the ways in which resistance to change can be addressed are to communicate a clear vision for change, to modify the appropriate elements of the organization's architecture, to create a communication strategy and to pilot an initiative to demonstrate a quick success. In essence, the key to successfully implementing and managing organizational change is to have clear, multidirectional communication at all points throughout the project. Giving employees the opportunity to voice their opinions (and in turn offering clarification) would aid in communicating the shared vision for the organization's desired state, solicit increased employee input, and identify employee concerns and unresolved issues during implementation (Recardo, 1995).

Supports and Resources Required

In terms of resources required to successfully develop and implement the program for international students, time, human and financial resources would be the primary necessities. In this case, time is sensitive as international students are currently struggling with acculturation and adjustment to a new academic environment (Bai, 2016). That said, it would be ideal for the program to be developed and implemented as soon as possible to serve the needs of incoming international students while still ensuring that the course content is up to the desired standard to achieve the organization's vision for change. Nonetheless, the resource of time goes hand-in-hand with human resources: It is necessary to identify appropriate stakeholders who have time to dedicate to program development, implementation and measurement.

The educators chosen to deliver the program in the international students' home countries must be culturally fluent and potentially available to travel to the destination; thus, time and financial resources are also required to facilitate the actual teaching process in various parts of the world. To pilot the program and ensure its success without increased financial risk, it could

first be delivered in a select few countries, where the majority of the international students are located. Then, upon monitoring the program's subsequent success, the number of locations may be expanded. The impact of the pandemic has highlighted the challenges of online learning in countries where technology is not currently used in the educational realm. Being in the home country to assess and teach students according to their individual starting points is critical to their success (Major, 2005; Quan et al., 2016).

Lastly, the creation of this program would certainly require a financial commitment from X University over the coming years in order to cover the costs of program development, academic content creation, and travel expenses for staff and faculty. Human resources would be required to establish a team comprised of members across the institution. This team would be responsible for moving the change implementation plan forward. The work of this team would be to explore existing policies and to develop new protocols for the new vision. The team would be responsible for the development and implementation of training across the institution as well as for research and exploration of best practices for change. Adequate financial resources would need to be made available to undertake the depth of work required. In addition, staff release time would be required to review and develop policies and curriculum for workshops and seminars. Staff might also require a leave of absence from their current appointments for travel time and meeting attendance.

Potential Limitations & Implementation Issues

The proposed solution of creating a program for international students to complete in their home countries before their arrival in Canada is truly believed to be the most fitting path for this PoP; however, because some potential implementation issues could arise, it is important to identify them beforehand and to develop proactive methods of avoiding them and reactive

methods of solving them. Doing so can mitigate risks associated with such issues going unaddressed.

Change implementation is complex. Having a stable structure can create a culture of complacency that may trap the organization into the status quo. However, past strategies may not be relevant. The level of risk associated with the change may affect the ability to move forward with the change implementation. It is important to understand how the change will affect individuals, systems and organizational structures.

In terms of human resources, resistance from change actors as a response to such change could undermine the actual implementation, leading to an increased implementation timeline or to failure to actually see the project through to fruition. According to Recardo (1995), understanding how employees resist change is considerably more difficult than understanding why they do so because there are overt and covert ways of resisting change. As a result, once identified, the appropriate strategy to address the resistance can be applied. Stakeholders may not believe in the change, resulting in no applied changes to be implemented.

One of the main priorities of the project pertains to ensuring that the program is developed in such a way that guarantees the creation and maintenance of equity and social justice for all affected parties. The following principles of learning are discussed by Hein (1991): learning is an active process, learning consists of constructing systems of meaning, the crucial action of constructing meaning happens in the mind, the language we use influences learning and we do not learn in isolation. Based on these principles, it is critical for stakeholders throughout the organization to understand the differences in formative education across the globe. Students and faculty have their own subjective opinions based on their lived experiences and how they have engaged in this issue from a social and historical perspective.

Logistically, other problems could also arise, given the travel restrictions connected to the COVID-19 pandemic, for example. This could relate to a decrease in international student mobility into Canada caused by the quickly changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, a decrease in mobility of faculty and staff to travel overseas for the delivery of the program (for reasons such as COVID-19 vaccination status, travel restrictions, etc.), and an overall lack of resources to execute the project (including human, financial, educational and technological resources). If the former (travel restrictions) were to become a reality and if the influx of international students at X University were to significantly decrease over coming years, then the scope of the project could require re-evaluation, as the scale would also change.

Fiscal changes in university enrolment may affect investment in change processes. This plan may negatively be affected because of a limited ability to secure human and financial resources to support the project. However, although this may affect the project's short and immediate scheduling, the overall vision and approach would remain intact.

Additionally, X University must also consider alternate methods of delivering the program and ensuring that the content is still effectively received and understood by those students obligated to participate. In essence, although online platforms can facilitate the completion of the program, barriers to content comprehension should be considered if such platforms must be used. If the program were to be delivered in person, potential issues could include unavailability of venues and a lack of necessary equipment (i.e. internet connection, audio-visual equipment, etc.), and difficulties in finding a location that can suit the needs of a large number of students simultaneously (both in terms of proximity and reachability from their homes and the capacity of the venue itself).

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure that the organizational change process is implemented effectively, some change monitoring and evaluation measures must be chosen before implementation. While monitoring will be ongoing, evaluation is strategic and will be done at certain stages of the work. Such measures would be meant to ultimately guarantee that the program comes to fruition in a way that does justice to its purpose, and in a way that actually enables the involved stakeholders to meet the desired learning outcomes and achieve the future organizational state.

This monitoring would include observing change through regular, ongoing assessment; routine reflection processes; and assessment of achievements and impacts over the course of the change implementation and beyond (Estrella, 2000). Notably, Estrella argues for the importance of using participative monitoring and evaluation processes because of the benefits of shared learning, democracy, joint decision-making, co-ownership, mutual respect and empowerment—all values that are important to me as the transformational leader guiding this change process. In order to establish a participative monitoring and evaluation process, there are four major steps: planning the framework and determining objectives and indicators; gathering data; analysing and using data by taking action; and documenting, reporting, and sharing information (Estrella, 2000).

The following key performance indicators (KPIs) can also be consulted in order to assess the efficacy of the changes taking place: (1) international students' academic achievements, (2) attendance rates, (3) academic misconduct referrals, (4) expressed learner satisfaction, (5) expressed educator satisfaction and (6) graduation rates. Table 2 further depicts how these KPIs can be utilized:

Table 2*Monitoring and evaluation plan for academic bridging program*

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for Academic Bridging Program				
	<i>Data Sources</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Action</i>
<i>KPI 1: International Students' Academic Achievements</i>	Academic records, grades, assessments, and course evaluations	Quarterly	Academic program coordinators and faculty	Regularly review students' academic progress, identifying areas of improvement and providing necessary support
<i>KPI 2: Attendance Rates</i>	Attendance records for program sessions and classes	Weekly	Program instructors and administrators	Monitor attendance closely and address any persistent issues promptly, provide additional support as needed
<i>KPI 3: Academic Misconduct Referrals</i>	Reports of academic misconduct incidents	As incidents occur	Faculty, academic integrity committee, and program administrators	Document and review all cases of academic misconduct, take appropriate disciplinary actions, and track trends over time
<i>KPI 4: Expressed Learner Satisfaction</i>	Surveys, focus groups, and feedback forms	End of each program session and annually	Program administrators	Analyze feedback and use it to make program improvements, addressing any concerns or issues raised by international students

<i>KPI 5: Expressed Educator Satisfaction</i>	Surveys and feedback from program instructors	End of each program session and annually	Program administrators	Gather input from educators and make adjustments to program content or delivery based on their feedback
<i>KPI 6: Graduation Rates</i>	Records of international students' program completion	Annually	Program administrators and university registrar	Track the number of international students who successfully complete the program and identify any drop-off points where additional support or interventions may be needed

The change can be continually monitored and evaluated strategically through a data collection indicator system in order to obtain the results more efficiently by integrating all data sources into one system. Karelina et al. (2016) recount the importance of monitoring the implementation of system changes in higher education institutions in Russia, the authors exemplify not only how the monitoring process for change can be conducted effectively but also how weak systems of supervision can erode the ties between change leaders and change followers. It is important to maintain objectivity and accuracy throughout the feedback and data collection processes and to maintain a clear monitoring of the change implementation throughout its various phases.

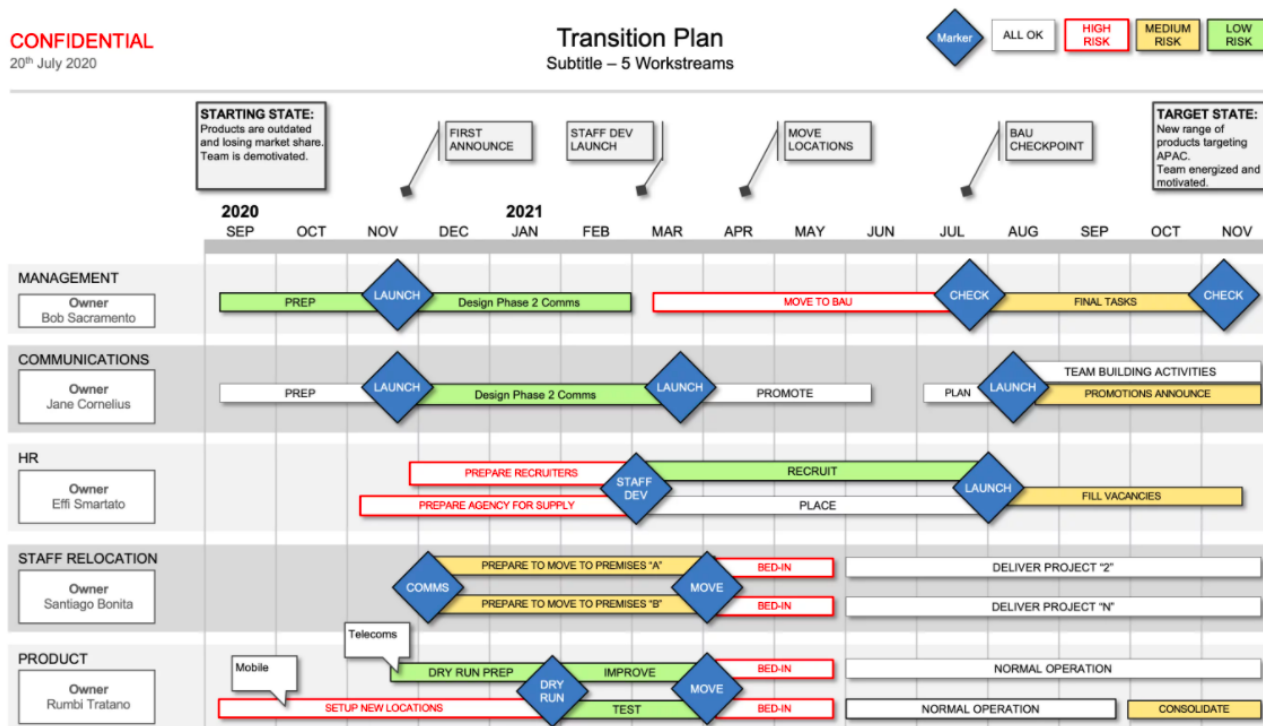
In terms of tools and measures that would be used to track change and gauge progress, the primary concern is that of interdepartmental cooperation and collaboration to share information and create a platform for stakeholders to raise concerns and provide feedback on the

change implementation. Scheduled forums (or similar mediums) can be hosted in order for ideas, concerns and recommendations to be exchanged at fixed intervals throughout the implementation of the change process to better understand the degree to which the program is fulfilling its desired purpose.

Tools such as a transition plan model or GANTT (generalized activity normalization time table) charts will be used as points of reference throughout the change process to monitor the overall time line of the changes unfolding. Setting time-oriented benchmarks such as the ones listed in Appendix A can allow all of the key change agents and leaders to better understand where they are throughout the change process, so we are aware of which elements of the process are progressing as planned, which are excelling and which need to be accelerated to ensure that the project implementation occurs at the designated time. More specifically, the awakening phased is aimed to take place during months 1 to 3, mobilization during months 4 to 9, acceleration during months 10 to 14, and institutionalization from month 10 onwards. The following transition plan, shown in Figure 3, depicts what can be developed for X University in order to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the organizational change.

Figure 3

Change Management Transition Plan



Note. Image from Business-Docs, 2021

A comprehensive transition plan, such as the example displayed in Figure 3, is important to the overall monitoring of the change process, as it breaks down the organizational areas that would undergo transition, shows the tasks in each level, shows the risk levels (focusing attention on areas that require careful attention) and depicts checkpoints and milestones.

In terms of KPIs, Deszca et al. (2020) stress the importance of focusing change agent efforts on monitoring very few, yet precise KPIs to avoid losing focus. Nonetheless, it is important to monitor KPIs from different aspects of the organization—this notion is further explored in the following section, which looks at ways to refine the implementation plan in accordance with monitoring and evaluation findings. It is also important to reduce stakeholder resistance to change by using measures and controls that are perceived as fair and appropriate:

Participation in the development of goals and how they will be measured is well worth considering because it has shown to have the potential to increase the level of understanding of what the organization is attempting to do, heighten legitimacy of the targets, and increase commitment to them. (Deszca et al., 2020, p. 378)

In this particular case, the implementation of the new academic preparedness program at X University will involve the use of diagnostic and steering control systems, which will encompass various key indicators to gauge effectiveness. These indicators will include measuring the speed of execution and implementation, tracking adherence to the project plan and budget, and assessing the realization of benefits through performance improvements for international students and their impact on X University's overall educational environment. In terms of individual measures for change actors, systems would be established to better understand employee engagement, buy-in and participation, alongside the faculty and staff's awareness and understanding of the change, observations of their behavioural changes and overall stakeholder feedback. Feedback could be collected regularly via surveys and progress meetings with change actors.

Similarly, the change's efficacy to improve international student outcomes would then be monitored through certain benchmarks such as the following: international students' satisfaction with the new curriculum implementation (questionnaires can be distributed before and after program completion to understand differences in overall feeling of academic preparedness); international students' satisfaction with in-class and out-of-class learning experiences (anonymized surveys can be used to ensure truthful responses); increased student engagement (attendance and participation) within the classroom setting; a comparison of current rates of international student academic misconduct to rates after students have completed the newly

required curriculum; changes in international student retention rates; and changes in international student graduation rates.

This monitoring and evaluation plan must also be devised on the foundation of the answers to three questions: what is the problem, what is/are the solution(s), and what does success look like? In the particular case of X University, the answers are as follows. To begin with, the problem can be characterized as high rates of international student academic misconduct, integration difficulties (both on micro and macro levels, within and outside of X University), and subsequent negative psychological impacts on international students' mental health and well-being (Takeuchi & Sakagami, 2018). This not only causes increased stress for the students themselves, but educators and fellow domestic classmates report feeling frustrated with the in-class conduct of international students.

In turn, the solution should include increased academic preparedness for international students through the creation of a new program and curriculum. This program should be specifically designed to provide learners with the foundational skills required to succeed in the Canadian academic sphere—specifically, within the context of X University. In addition, it should build inter-cultural competence among organization members to alleviate some of the stigma that international students are often faced with (Boafo-Arthur & Boafo-Arthur, 2016), which further perpetuates their acculturation difficulties. This could be done through cross-functional collaboration and leadership role-modeling.

Thus, success would be lowered rates of academic misconduct, more productive in-class atmospheres (as reported by educators and students), increased retention and graduation rates, and improved mental health among international students. Outside the walls of the institution,

success would also include increased community engagement and employment of international students who studied at X University.

Refining the Implementation Plan in Response to Monitoring and Evaluation Findings

According to Beatty (2015), the following structured approach can be an effective method to guide the change process while leaving room for any required refining as the changes take place: (1) identify the stakeholders; (2) map their degree of influence and impact; (3) define what interests in the change initiative could be; and (4) decide on the communication and involvement approach for each stakeholder. Building on the results from the stakeholder analysis would assist in determining the frequency and format for communicating with each group.

Deszca et al. (2020) also sustain the importance of using measurement systems during change management processes. These systems should boast flexibility and adaptability both for the organization and for the unforeseen future circumstances of the overall change implementation. The authors also recognize the importance of Simons' (1994) findings on the four types of control levers that should be used during the monitoring phases of organizational change processes. Simons argues that managers tend to focus too much on traditional diagnostic control, which can eventually lead to an inability to refine an implementation plan based on limited monitoring and evaluation findings. Simons' proposal of employing interactive control systems, boundary systems, belief systems, and diagnostic and steering control systems presents an opportunity to effectively monitor and evaluate the implementation of the new academic preparedness program at X University. Interactive control systems can facilitate real-time feedback and communication, allowing for adjustments and improvements as needed. Boundary systems can help delineate the scope of the program and identify potential issues in its integration with existing processes. Belief systems may offer valuable insights into the attitudes

and perceptions of stakeholders, informing the evaluation of the program's reception and potential challenges. By leveraging these control systems, X University can ensure a comprehensive and effective monitoring and evaluation process to gauge the success of the implemented changes.

The first type of system proposed by Simons—interactive controls systems—are the systems that sense environmental changes crucial to an organization's strategic plan. An example of this system is market intelligence data that assist firms in better understanding and anticipating the actions of their competitors. For X University, though, as a public higher education institution, such data might be shifts in governmental regulations or shifts in “customer” behaviour (i.e. international students).

The next type of control lever is that of boundary systems, which are the organizational systems that “set the limits of authority and action and determine acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. For example, these would be limits to spending authority placed on managerial levels” (Deszca et al., 2020, p. 381). Such boundary systems could assist X University in monitoring the autonomy of change actors and managers throughout the change process and determining whether their actions are aligned with the organizational expectations.

The third type of control system is belief systems. These systems outline the fundamental beliefs and values of the institution and its employees; those same values underpin the organizational culture and influence organizational decision-making. When implementing changes such as a new academic preparedness program, the belief systems play a crucial role in guiding the organization's culture and behavior. Understanding and aligning with the fundamental beliefs and values of the institution can foster a smooth implementation process. Leaders may use belief systems to promote shared vision and commitment to the program among

employees, making it more likely to be embraced and effectively integrated into the university's operations. Better understanding these beliefs can provide a framework within which the change process takes place.

Finally, Simons identifies diagnostic and steering controls systems. These refer to the traditional managerial systems that focus on KPIs. In this case, such indicators could include the aforementioned international students' retention and graduation rates, for example.

Combining a variety of such controls systems would give X University the best chance of monitoring the change from a holistic viewpoint, one that takes into consideration more than traditional financial KPIs and benchmarks. A combination of the four controls systems proposed by Simons would allow the institution to compartmentalize changes within one of the four categories and subsequently adapt the change strategy with increased ease if necessary. In essence, with this compartmentalization, X University can more easily modify its change strategy as needed, promoting a flexible and agile approach to change management. By taking a holistic approach and combining various control measures, X University can enhance its change management efforts, facilitate adaptation, and optimize the implementation of the new academic preparedness program or any other organizational change.

Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process

Given the complex nature of the PoP and the organizational changes that must be made in order to address the problem for current and future stakeholders, communicating the change plan with organizational stakeholders for effective implementation is key. Torppa and Smith (2011) point to the importance of appropriately designed communication plans to manage change and ameliorate the discouragement that may present itself in association with organizational changes.

Stakeholder responses to the communication of proposed plans and processes are critical to the successful implementation of changes. This idea has also been established by a number of other scholars, including Graaf et al. (2019), Soomro et al. (2021) and Allen et al. (2013). Here, we can see a clear consensus around the importance of creating a sense of “membership” in addressing the problem through a communication plan and shared vision. The four steps that would be used to communicate the change plan as outlined by Deszca et al. (2020) are as follows:

The first step is to arrive at focused commitments concerning international students’ academic preparedness through a collaborative process. In this step, stakeholders must feel a vested interest in order to participate in creating change. The second step is to communicate these commitments effectively so that there is a shared, organization-wide understanding (Leithwood et al., 2010; Robinson et al., 2007). Next, the task is to ensure that these commitments motivate change actors given their current stakeholder positions (educators, staff, etc.). And finally, the fourth step is to invite all change actors to take responsibility for monitoring the progress towards achieving international student academic preparedness as well as improved integration and acculturation.

A key element for ensuring that the need for organizational change at X University is communicated to stakeholders is creating a shared vision for change within the institution. Through the use of Deszca et al.’s (2020) change path model, a shared vision for organizational change would be created and shared during the initial phases of awakening and mobilization; the latter two phases of acceleration and institutionalization would then focus on successfully shifting the process to achieve the desired state.

Throughout the awakening phase, Deszca et al. (2020) explain the importance of actually identifying the need for change and confirming the problems or opportunities that incite this need for change through data collection. This phase would include a number of components: articulating the organizational gap between the current state and the envisioned, desired organizational state; developing a powerful vision for change for all stakeholders to share; and disseminating the vision for change and why it is needed (this should be done through multiple communication channels). Given the fact that I am the change leader for the OIP at hand, the responsibility to act as the primary communicator falls to me. As described by the authors, “the challenge for the change leader is to articulate ‘why change’ and their initial vision for the change to key stakeholders in ways that they will understand and move them to positive outcomes” (Deszca et al., 2020, p. 56).

Framing Issues for Various Audiences

The commitment of various stakeholders to organizational change may vary “on the basis of what employees perceive as the balance between costs and benefits of maintaining a behaviour and the costs and benefits of change” (Vakola, 2014, p. 195). Given this information, the respective change agents for the proposed program development at X University are tasked with the responsibility of understanding stakeholder commitments to the change and finding effective communication methods to frame the issue in a way that appeals to the varying interests of different stakeholders. According to Vakola (2014), a common denominator among different stakeholder groups or audiences is that creating a climate of trust and enhancing positive communication also has a positive influence on individual readiness for change. In accordance with these findings, Al-Hussami et al. (2018) state that leadership involves persuasive practices aimed at ensuring that the members of the organization reach a decision on various

organizational undertakings by determining necessary activities, methods involved, and multiple means to enable individual and collective efforts to achieve the shared objectives.

In essence, many of the responses (although non-explicit) would be expected to pertain to stakeholders' curiosity of "what's in it for me?" (Beatty, 2015). In order to proactively appeal to stakeholders' needs in this regard, Alolabi et al. (2021) stress the importance of staying connected to employees by understanding that readiness to change is possible when change management initiatives are aligned with the capabilities of individuals in the organization. Additionally, the varying employee perceptions regarding the existing organizational culture have a close association with levels of change readiness, so the change agents are responsible for understanding these different stakeholder perceptions to better manage the transition towards the desired future state and to develop a shared vision for change. Thus, the communication plan will take these questions into account and consider both formal and informal channels and actions.

Knowledge Mobilization Plan

In order to mobilize knowledge and information interdepartmentally throughout the change project, the five-prong knowledge translation process by Lavis et al. (2003) would be used. The approach employs the following five steps to ensure the transfer of actionable messages: message (identify what should be transferred to decision makers); target audience (identify to whom the knowledge should be transferred); messenger (identify by whom the knowledge should be transferred); supporting communication infrastructure (how should the knowledge be transferred); evaluation (with what effect should the knowledge be transferred; Cooper, 2016).

To dissect this five-step approach further, how to identify what needs to be transferred to decision makers should be understood first. This can be done by identifying barriers and

facilitators of knowledge transfer, determining the effectiveness of dissemination strategies, and exploring decision-making processes and organizational capacity for change (Dobbins et al., 2007). Once this step has been completed, it can then be established who the target audience and messenger are. Most appropriately, determining a specific order would ensure that a messenger with the appropriate communication capabilities is chosen to appeal to the target audience; thereafter, the method of transferring the knowledge can be established. For example, some messages may need to be delivered to smaller target groups while others can be delivered via less personal means, such as email or employee intranet. These factors are dependent on how the message would likely be decoded by the recipient. Finally, the efficacy and efficiency of the overall communication can be gauged by considering feedback from the recipients (preferably through anonymized channels) and by determining whether the desired output has been achieved.

Communication Channels

Many communication channels would be used to communicate the path of change. Examples include email communications, faculty and staff meetings, newsletters, and X University's internal portal. As shown in Figure 4 below, communication channels can include eight distinct subsets: linkages and partnerships; awareness; accessibility; engagement; capacity building; implementation support; organizational development; and policy influence.

Figure 4

Cooper's Brokering Functions

Note. Communication channels are not listed in a particular order.

For X University's project in particular, the appropriate channels include event strategies such as talks, conferences and workshops (linkages and partnerships); workshops and training sessions (capacity building); support services (implementation support); and quarterly meetings, strategic plans and X University's informative materials such as promotional materials (organizational materials). The use of a multitude of channels should ensure the messenger's credibility (Cooper, 2016), leading to increased stakeholder commitment to the change through clear and persuasive methods to frame issues for various audiences.

In essence, Cooper (2016) identifies three primary steps for the use of the brokering functions: (1) designate communication champions; (2) foster cross-functional collaboration; and

(3) establish regular communication channels. The first step includes appointing individuals from different units or departments as communication champions who will act as intermediaries, facilitating communication and collaboration among stakeholders. The second step refers to encouraging those communication champions to actively engage with their respective teams and departments, bridging gaps and promoting seamless communication across the university. Finally, the third step emphasizes the importance of formal and informal communication channels that allow communication champions to share updates, progress, and concerns regularly.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the organizational communication channels proposed by Cooper (2016), it is essential to consider how the organization's overall structure influences their utilization, particularly when faced with internal barriers. For instance:

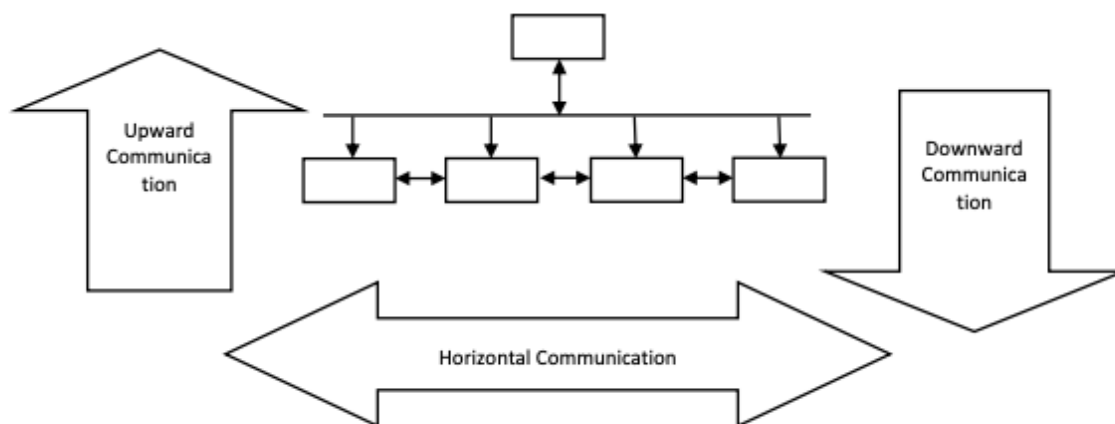
An organization's structure influences the communication patterns within the organization. The structure of an organization should provide for communication in three distinct directions: downward, upward, and horizontal. These three directions establish the framework within which communication in an organization takes place. Examining each one will enable us to better appreciate the barriers to effective organizational communication and the means to overcome these barriers. (Lunenburg, 2010, p. 1)

Although the basic processes and principles of communication are relatively similar in many organizations and contexts, the unique features of organizational structure have a distinct impact on the overall communication process (Greenberg, 2011). "Organizations often are structured in ways that dictate the communication patterns that exist. Given this phenomenon, we may ask: How is the communication process affected by the structure of an organization?" (Lunenburg,

2010, p. 1). The following figure depicts these directions of communication, as described by Lunenburg.

Figure 5

Lunenburg's (2010) Downward, Upward, and Horizontal Communication



To better understand the model, it should first be understood that traditional views of the communication process in educational institutions have been dominated by downward communication flows. This means that the communication is typically transmitted from higher to lower levels of the organization, trickling down the hierarchy from school leaders to administrators to messages in school bulletins. According to Canary and McPhee (2011), there are five general purposes of downward communication: implementation of goals, strategies and objectives; job instructions and rationale; procedures and practices; performance feedback and socialization.

In contrast, upward communication typically refers to communication that travels from staff members to leaders. Here, the five types of information transmitted in an upward flow are problems and exceptions; suggestions for improvement; performance reports; grievances and disputes; and financial and accounting information (Canary & McPhee, 2011). Ideally, the

organizational structure should provide for both upward and downward communication flows. Finally, there are horizontal communication flows. The following excerpt depicts how these flows generally take shape within an organization:

Upward and downward communication flows generally follow the formal hierarchy within the school organization. However, greater size and complexity of organizations increase the need for communication laterally or diagonally across the lines of the formal chain of command. This is referred to as horizontal communication. These communications are informational too, but in a different way than downward and upward communication. Here information is basically for coordination — to tie together activities within or across departments on a single school campus or within divisions in a schoolwide organizational system. (Lunenburg, 2010, p. 5)

Thus, horizontal communication flows can fall into one of the following three categories: interdepartmental problem solving, interdepartmental coordination and staff advice to line departments. Ultimately, horizontal communication flows would prove to be important channels throughout the change process at X University because they would enable distributed leadership and the creation of a sense of membership with regard to the problem and change at hand.

In terms of what this looks like for X University, the downward communication channel would be used to disseminate information about the academic preparedness program from university leaders and administrators to faculty, staff, and students. This can include meetings, official memos, and email updates. In terms of upward communication, this would involve establishing mechanisms for faculty, staff, and students to provide feedback, suggestions, and concerns related to the program implementation. Additionally, utilizing surveys, suggestion boxes, and regular meetings to encourage open dialogue would fall into the category of upward

communication. Finally, horizontal communication refers to fostering collaboration among different departments and units to ensure a cohesive approach to the program's implementation. This can be achieved through the facilitation regular meetings, cross-functional teams, and workshops to encourage information sharing and problem-solving.

Next Steps and Future Considerations

Change is complex, so many issues must be considered throughout the planned implementation. Currently, the change process is in the stage of mobilization in Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path model. The next step is the acceleration phase, which involves action planning and implementation. Thus, future considerations include maintaining open, effective, multilateral channels of communication among stakeholders; implementing the project in a timely manner; and seeing the desired organizational state come to fruition. This OIP would advance the existing work of addressing systemic barriers to equitable education for marginalized groups to create an organizational commitment shared by students, staff and leadership at X University.

To create sustainable change, future directions need to be in place to ensure adequate resources and succession planning to monitor and lead the process. It would be best if personnel were not changed frequently because doing so could affect the initiatives. Maintaining a team of dedicated stakeholders is essential for seamless transitions and for ensuring the OIP is championed across the institution.

The question of communication is one of great importance in the context of a change process because open and effective inter-departmental communication could facilitate a smooth implementation of the new program curriculum. Thus, Lunenburg's (2010) downward, upward and horizontal organizational communication model would be at the forefront of considerations

moving forward. Clear communication plans should be developed and maintained to ensure communities of practice (i.e. groups of individuals who are dedicated to and passionate about the change that work together) are developed.

Additionally, implementing the change in a timely manner is a key consideration because extending the period of time during which the new academic curriculum is not implemented to aid international students could cause a further decline in their potential success at X University. Indeed, the program would reach its full potential the sooner it was developed and implemented in a timely manner. Such speed is important not only for the students' academic performance and the institution's stakeholders but also for international students' mental health. Indeed, their mental health is a considerable factor that may be increasingly negatively affected the longer it takes for them to receive this additional support, which would alleviate one or more aspects of their struggle.

The advancement of this OIP also requires the consideration of questions such as these: Have all stakeholder perspectives been explored? Is the solution collaborative? Does the proposed solution truly trump all other alternatives in the long-run? Ultimately, the desired outcome is to create a foundation of equity and social justice for international students at X University, upon which they can become engaged learners and integrated community members both locally and beyond. To do so, it would be important to stay current on various internal and external factors (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), which continue to have lasting effects on the students and other stakeholders.

The change would be a long-term process, and the scope is wide. However, this issue is time sensitive because international student enrolment will continue to decline if supports are not put in place and if the organizational culture does not shift. In addition, because X University is

publicly funded, the budget, curriculum, policies and procedures are subject to change in relation to the government in power. An important strategy for next steps includes documenting data and research on the impact of the initiative and framing those findings in light of outcomes such as academic achievement, graduation rates, and international student recruitment and retention.

Collaborating with internal and external partners, collecting data and feedback from program participants for continuous improvement and sharing current research with decision makers regarding the outcome of the change process (e.g. academic achievement, graduation rates and staff retention) would be pivotal to gaining long-term support. Sharing of such data would extend to partner agencies and government bodies to advocate for continued resources to support the OIP.

Recruitment and training of personnel who are equipped to develop, deliver and evaluate this program is critical in its success. Next steps would include engaging all stakeholders to assess what is needed, not only to equipping international students but also contributing to the success of the long-term cultural shift within X University. As the program is developed, delivered and evaluated, X University would be situating itself to mentor other organizations experiencing similar PoPs and to lead research initiatives and communities of practice to effect change within education systems. International students themselves would be empowered to become change agents and mentors both within and outside the university upon graduation.

As I move forward with this OIP and evaluate its progress, several questions would be considered, such as whether the critical internal and external issues are being addressed, whether perspectives of all stakeholders are being considered, whether the solution is collaborative, and the extent to which the communication plan is considering the diversity of stakeholders.

Achieving this future vision of X University would be a process and would take time. Having the support of leadership and executives is essential to drive the initiative. Making change is essential for X University to remain competitive in demonstrating international student success. I am excited to be leading the process of positive change.

Conclusion

In order to implement the ideas in this OIP, it is critical to stay current in language, research and literature. The influence of the global pandemic on the international student experience and overall mental health of students, faculty and the community must remain at the forefront of the change process. My hope is that through this change plan, X University will empower its educators to create safe spaces and caring relationships in which international students will thrive. As students learn about social, cultural and academic expectations through a preparatory program and as educators learn about the international student experience and reflect on their practice and pedagogies, I am hopeful that collaborative, trusting relationships will form to positively influence student outcomes.

The OIP stresses the plan's alignment with the organizational strategy, how it would create an improved situation for equity and social justice, how the transition would be managed, what potential stakeholder reactions to change could be, and which supports and resources would be required to see the project through to success while minimizing the risks and limitations; all through a collaborative approach fostered through distributive leadership practices. Ultimately, the goal is to achieve long-term improvement of international students' academic performances through addressing the various socio-cultural struggles they are frequently faced with when entering the Western higher education system (Takeuchi & Sakagami, 2018), all through a comprehensive and holistic academic bridging program.

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Appendix A: Change Implementation Plan

Solution for Change: Pre-departure educational preparation program Strategy for Change: Change implementation plan					
Goals/priorities	Implementation process	Implementation issues and limitations	Supports/resources	Stakeholders/ personnel	Timeline
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>AWAKENING</u></p> <p>Assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder understanding of international student experience <p>Downward communication: Information will be disseminated through meetings, official memos, and email updates to inform stakeholders about the Academic Bridging Program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that faculty and staff can provide strong learning environments for all students, domestic and international 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resistance to change • Development time • Potential need for external consultants to provide training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing internal expertise: faculty, staff and students • Use of external expertise and experience where required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive • Senior leadership • Faculty • Faculty union • Staff • Staff union • Students • Campus communities • Community stakeholders • Employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Months 1-3
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>AWAKENING</u></p> <p>Identify and select</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation team <p>Downward communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage internal stakeholders • Select external partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to devote to project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential shifting of resources and responsibilities • Additional resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executives • Senior leadership • Faculty • Staff • Students • Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Months 1-3
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MOBILIZATION</u></p> <p>Review policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Academic Accommodations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus review on student equity, inclusion, language and supports for international students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the implications of internationalization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current policy review procedures • No additional resources other than the prioritization of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executives • Senior leadership (deans, directors and academic chairs) • Policy owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Months 4-9

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Integrity • Educational Equity • Evaluation Policy • Student Code of Conduct • Others <p>Upward Communication: Mechanisms for feedback and open dialogue will be established through surveys, suggestion boxes, and regular meetings.</p>			<p>these specific policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy developers 	
<p><u>MOBILIZATION</u></p> <p>Assess Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget • Cultural development • Additional hires with international expertise • Increased availability of teaching and learning resources • Support centres for international students <p>Upward Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing assessment of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource limitations would affect speed and timing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government funding • IT • Campus infrastructure • Communication planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive • Senior leadership • Faculty • Staff • Faculty-staff union • Students • Campus facilities • Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Months 4-9
<p><u>MOBILIZATION</u></p> <p>Develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication plan <p>Upward Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages with all internal and external stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating clarity and urgency for plan as well as potential issues • Impact on stakeholders • Feedback mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing budgets with some additional costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executives • Senior leadership • Faculty • Staff • Faculty-staff union • Students • Campus facilities • Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Months 4-9

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing reporting 			
<p><u>ACCELERATION</u></p> <p>Develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic preparedness program for international students <p>Horizontal Communication: Collaboration among different departments and units will continue through regular meetings, cross-functional teams, and workshops.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum development led by College of Arts • Selection of facilitators • Operations/logistics planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving curriculum approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational expertise • Financial resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive • Senior leadership • Faculty • Faculty union • Staff • Staff union • International students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Months 10-14
<p><u>ACCELERATION</u></p> <p>Launch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic preparedness program for international students <p>Horizontal Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive program approval • Launch program in key cities in international students' home countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visa/travel related issues for educators travelling abroad to deliver program • Academic supports • Community supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student engagement and integration • Resourcing from existing budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executives • Senior leadership • Faculty • Teaching and learning • Faculty-staff union • Staff • Students • Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Months 10-14
<p><u>INSTITUTIONALIZATION</u></p> <p>Deploy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and evaluation plan 	<p>Monitor following KPIs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International students' academic achievements • Attendance rates • Academic misconduct referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues related to chosen data collection systems – inaccurate data collection and inaccurate responses given by students and educators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • IT • Data storage system • Human resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior leadership • Faculty • Staff • International students • IT department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Months 10+ (will be ongoing after program launch)

<p>Communication Channels: Channels will remain open and adaptable to maintain credibility and commitment among stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressed learner satisfaction • Expressed educator satisfaction • Graduation rates 				
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