A Study of Shared Governance

Northwest Indian College
Bellingham, WA

A Report Prepared By
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Spring, 2010

Introduction

Located on the Lummi Nation in northwestern Washington, Northwest Indian College (NWIC) serves the citizens of the Coast Salish Lummi Nation and non-citizens through its main campus near Bellingham, Washington, and surrounding tribal and non-tribal residents through extended full service sites at Muckleshoot, Port Gamble, Swinomish, and Tulalip in Washington and Nez Perce in Idaho. Chartered in 1983 by the Lummi Nation as Lummi Community College, it grew out of the Lummi Indian School of Aquaculture, which was founded in 1973. In 1989, Lummi Community College's name was changed to Northwest Indian College in order to meet its mandate to serve other tribes throughout the Northwest. The College received full accreditation in 1993, with reaffirmation of accreditation in 1998 and 2008. The curriculum at the main campus and extended sites is delivered to approximately 1200 students by 27 full time or pro rata (50% or more on a prorated full time annual contract) faculty, the majority of whom are located at the Lummi campus, and 71 part time faculty, who primarily provide instruction at extended campus site; several staff employees also receive part time faculty contracts to teach one or two classes

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study of shared governance at Northwest Indian College was to:

1. Describe the extent of faculty involvement in governance at NWIC.
2. Describe the understanding of the administration, faculty, and Board of Trustees regarding shared governance, decision making processes, and domains and responsibilities of each entity.

3. Describe and discuss linkages and discrepancies (of the above) between and among the administration, faculty, and Board of Trustees.

The goal of the shared governance process, as stated by President Cheryl Crazy Bull, is to use the results of the shared governance study to build a relationship between administrators and faculty that honors and facilitates the continued development of NWIC as an effective tribal college.

The study was guided by a framework in which President Crazy Bull asked the following questions:

1) What is our common (or not common) understanding of what governance means and what shared governance is, especially with a focus on improved teaching and learning, improved communications, and transparency in decision making?
2) What does shared governance mean from a cultural perspective, especially of the Coast Salish People?
2) Given our discovery of what shared governance does or does not mean and our knowledge base of what shared governance is from a cultural perspective, are there areas we can work on such as:
    - Can we agree on a common understanding?
    - Can we define what shared governance is from a cultural perspective?
    - Are there then areas of agreement regarding what shared governance is and how shared governance is carried out?
3) Upon completion of this process, have we improved governance at NWIC?

4) How has this shared governance process improved teaching and learning at NWIC?

President Crazy Bull explained that she did not want to replicate a mainstream model of shared governance. Instead, she wanted to hold firm to the ideal of what a tribal college means; therefore, the cultural context of NWIC had to be considered in this exploration phase of formalizing shared governance. President Crazy Bull shared her interpretation.

> The ideal is an environment grounded in Native control of the educational process inclusive of all aspects of the decision making and leadership process. Promotion of Native control of education in this context means that the direction of program development, standards for institutional effectiveness and processes for participation in decision making must be driven by the Native voices in the institution. Historically among the tribal colleges, formal faculty participation though typical mainstream or western models such as faculty senates have not been fostered or encouraged because of concerns that a predominately non-native faculty (as is prevalent in all of the tribal colleges) may undermine the concept and practice of Native control.

This study then encourages the exploration of shared governance in what is a seemingly disparate set of goals or intentions of shared governance among Native and non-native leadership and faculty at NWIC.

In the following sections of the report, shared governance is described in the context of American colleges and universities, and Tribal colleges and universities (TCUs). It is followed by the research design and methodology of this study. The next section includes the results from the various data gathering approaches used for the study. The last two sections contain the conclusions of the study based on the results and the recommendations of the study that are based on the conclusions. Finally, there is a reference section that includes all works of others to which there is reference throughout the study.

Background

The term "shared governance" comes from mainstream American colleges and universities to describe the policy and process wherein decision making responsibility is shared among those affected by the decision. Most often this responsibility is shared between administration and faculty.

For perhaps the last 75 years, "shared governance" has been the overriding principle that guides decision making in American universities. [1] According to Tierney, "The tradition of shared governance rests on the assumption that faculty should hold a substantive role in decision-making, and the most visible vehicle for faculty involvement is typically a faculty senate or some similar body with a different name."[2] Throughout the literature, shared governance is defined similarly; however, shared governance is interpreted, structured, and implemented differently across the wide spectrum of postsecondary institutions in this country.

Not wanting to replicate a mainstream model of shared governance, Northwest Indian College began the process of exploring and defining shared decision making within the cultural context of this Lummi Nation tribal college. However, the work of William G. Tierney, a scholar who has written extensively about shared governance (see previous reference) for nearly thirty years may provide guidance in exploring the meaning and cultural context of formalizing shared governance at NWIC.

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[1] Kezar, Lester, and Anderson 2007, 121 cited in Leach, W.D., 2008. *Shared governance in higher education: Structural and cultural responses to a changing national climate,* p. 5. Sacramento: California State University Center for Collaborative Policy.
[2] Tierney, W.G. & Minor, J.T., 2003. *Challenges for governance: A national report,* p. 1. Los Angeles: University of Southern California Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis.

Tierney, whose experience includes two years at a tribal college, suggested that "an appropriate stance for those of us involved in the governance of postsecondary education is to recognize that colleges and universities are organizational cultures composed of structures and processes that continually change and adapt." [3] Thus, the way to improve governance is through an interpretation of the organization as a dynamic culture. Tierney goes on to say that "The interaction of individuals and structures can be oriented toward improvement and high performance when an institution's leaders utilize cultural strategies aimed at organizational redesign rather than structural arguments over one or another decision-making apparatus."[4] Tierney believes that the tension with governance on most campuses comes from the lack of common language about the role of different constituencies in making decisions.

While there is a wealth of articles about shared governance in mainstream colleges and universities, there is a dearth of articles about this topic as it relates to tribal colleges and universities. That is not to say that shared governance does not exist at other TCUs, it simply means that there are no articles describing their models. For example, Haskell Indian Nations University, a TCU in Lawrence, Kansas, and Oglala Lakota College, a TCU on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota are baccalaureate institutions experienced in working with faculty on shared governance decision making.

In 1981 Tierney co-authored an article with Elgin Bad Wound, former President of Oglala Lakota College. Published in the *Journal of American Indian Education*, the

[3] Tierney, W.G., ed. 2009. Improving academic governance, in *Competing conceptions of academic governance: Negotiating the perfect storm,* p. 203. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
[4] Ibid, p.203.

article titled "Leadership and American Indian Values: The Tribal College Dilemma,"[5] recognized the lack of research in organizational governance and decision making at tribal colleges and suggested a cultural model that was better suited to tribal colleges. Using the rational model as contrast, Tierney and Bad Wound proposed a tribal college model. Using five elements that characterize all organizations, i.e., goals, participants, technology, environment, and social structure,[6] Tierney and Bad Wound presented a generalized tribal college perspective. They suggested that the rational model adheres to the Western belief in order, reason, and logic, all of which are helpful to administrators in day-to-day organizational life. However, since the model emphasizes hierarchy (e.g., chains of command) and rigidity, they suggested that it is inappropriate for tribal colleges "insofar as they seem to emphasize informality and flexibility in decision-making."[7] Tierney and Bad Wound concluded that "…the rational model of governance and decision-making fails to be an adequate predictor of organizational behavior in tribal colleges."[8] They presented a comparison of the rational and tribal college models across the five organizational elements and across leadership and philosophical concepts which underlie each model. Although nearly thirty years old, this presentation provides a useful means of contrast and comparison for tribal colleges to consider as they explore organizational governance and decision making.

Research Design and Methodology

[5] Tierney, W.G. & Bad Wound, E., 1988. Leadership and American Indian values: The tribal college dilemma. *Journal of American Indian Education,* 28:1, pp. 1-5. http://jaie.asu.edu/v28/V28S1lea.htm.
[6] Scott, W.R., 1981 cited by Tierney & Bad Wound, 1988.
[7] Tierney & Bad Wound, p. 2
[8] Tierney & Bad Wound, p, 3.

This study of shared governance at NWIC sought to define shared governance in a tribal college context where cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors are paramount. The study was conducted January 5-7, 2010 on the main campus of Northwest Indian College. An Appreciative Inquiry approach was used to conduct the study.

Appreciative Inquiry is an organizational development process that engages individuals within an organizational system in its renewal, change and focused performance.[9] This approach identifies and builds upon what works. It is different from traditional diagnostic models in that it searches for solutions that already exist and amplifies what is working rather than defining problems and fixing what is broken.[10] The following assumptions of appreciative inquiry[11] were used for the study and shared with the participants in an open meeting at the beginning of the campus visit:

1. In every society, organization or group, something works.
2. What we focus on becomes our reality.
3. Reality is created in the moment and there are multiple realities.
4. The act of asking questions of an organization or group influences the group in some way.
5. People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future (the unknown) when they carry parts of the past (known).
6. If we carry parts of the past forward, they should be what is best about the past.
7. It is important to value differences.

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[9] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appreciative_inquiry. Accessed 8/31/09.
[10] What is Appreciative Inquiry? Joe Hall and Sue Hammond, Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry, Thin Book Publishing Co., Plano, TX, 1996; http://www.thinbook.com/docs/doc-whatisai.pdf. Accessed 10/19/09.
[11] Ibid

8. The language we use creates our reality (pp. 3-4).

The schedule for data gathering began with a general meeting of the faculty and academic administrators on January 5, 2010 at 9:00 am. President Crazy Bull began by introducing the study of shared governance at NWIC. She stated that the college is in a discovery stage and stated the framework questions noted in the previous section. She presented an overview of the process that included data gathering through focus groups and interviews scheduled for the next three days, and data gathering through an online survey that was made available that day. She explained that I would be using an Appreciative Inquiry model for data gathering.

The Appreciative Inquiry approach was described and the assumptions were discussed. Participants were asked to share their thoughts on what is working in regard to shared governance and decision making at NWIC. Participants' comments were recorded on flip chart pages and posted around the room. Focus groups and interviews were scheduled with 25 faculty, staff, and administrators; the intent of the study was also explained in a meeting with the Board of Trustees. In focus groups and interviews, participants were asked to expand on the comments expressed in the general setting and prompted to respond with ideas for building upon what is working or what is good about the degree to which faculty are involved in making decisions about academic affairs and other matters of the college. They were also asked for their ideas on how shared governance could be improved. The responses and comments from the focus groups and interviews were recorded (by hand), transcribed, coded, analyzed for themes or patterns, and summarized.

Simultaneously, faculty, administrators and board members were invited to participate in an online College Governance Survey posted from January 5 through January 22, 2010. The survey asked 17 detailed questions, including demographic items, about shared governance using a Likert-style response format. A total of 49 respondents started the survey; 40 (81.6%) completed it. Of the 49 respondents, 23 were full time / pro rata faculty (which is the entire full time/pro rata faculty); 17 were administrators (out of 22 potential who received the email to complete the survey); three were members of the Board of Trustees; three were part time faculty; one scholar in residence; one assistant site manager; and one person identified as administration/faculty. The survey items were reported in actual numbers (in direct response questions, for example), percentages and simple graphs. As with other qualitative responses, the comments or elaborations were coded, analyzed for themes or patterns, and summarized. Exemplar comments are used throughout the results to illustrate perceptions or opinions.

Additional data gathering included the review and analysis of previous surveys, published documents such as the Faculty Handbook, a chronology of faculty governance, and notes from faculty meetings. Themes or patterns of shared decision making were noted in these documents and included in the results.

Results

The themes that emerged from the Appreciative Inquiry approach to what is working at NWIC with regard to shared governance served as a launching point for more detailed focus groups and interviews. The prevalent themes of what is good at NWIC included communication, opportunity for input, relationships, shared mission, commitment, tension that is not dysfunctional, flexibility vs. rigidity, and a welcoming environment.

As is typical when identifying what works, there is a flip side that suggests there is room for improvement. Through the responses and comments from focus groups, interviews, and survey results, it is clear (and typical) that there are differing perceptions of what is working and what needs to be improved.

The results from the focus groups, interviews, and the online survey were organized to respond to the three areas outlined in the purpose of the study: faculty involvement in shared governance at NWIC, understanding of shared governance, and linkages and discrepancies in shared governance. The results begin with an understanding of shared governance followed by faculty involvement and linkages and discrepancies.

Understanding of Shared Governance

This section describes the understanding of the administration, faculty, and Board of Trustees regarding shared governance, decision-making processes, and domains and responsibilities of each entity.

There was an assumption that shared governance may have different meanings and is enacted through various models at other colleges/universities, including other TCUs, but there appears to be a general understanding of the standard meaning of shared governance at NWIC and other TCUs.

There were few indications that employees did not know or understand what shared governance means. Survey responses ranged from a full definition demonstrating an informed understanding of shared governance to a statement that said "people don't know what it is or isn't." One academic administrator shared this definition:

"Shared governance is the set of practices under which college faculty and staff participates in significant decisions concerning the operation

of their institutions. While we ask faculty to participate in committees which have some decision making powers, faculty and staff are excluded from other key decision making opportunities."

The last point was echoed by faculty who stated that they do not want to be involved in all decisions; only those that pertain to academic affairs, and those that affect them as an employee (e.g., salaries, job security). The desire to be involved when appropriate is evident in this statement, "I am glad to be left out on many of the discussions regarding policy on campus. On certain matters that relate to my core expertise and or experience, however, I would expect to be consulted."

Faculty appreciated being involved in committees whose purpose is to generate ideas for the good of the college (e.g., strategic planning, long range planning, and retention) which are then used by the administration and Board of Trustees to make decisions.

Most responses illustrated a clear understanding that shared governance means faculty and staff are involved in decision making, especially as it relates to academic matters, whether they agree with shared governance or not. They understand that shared governance requires some structural organization so that there are opportunities for voices to be heard. One person stated, "I believe the current system is adequate. There could be room for improvement in terms of clarifying when and how faculty members participate in decision making." This opinion was echoed by an academic administrator who said, "There are three things to think about [in shared governance]: <u>how</u> should people be involved, <u>why</u> should people be involved, and <u>when</u> should people be involved." Another person said that shared governance "could be more clearly defined; there is a need for more opportunities to discuss key issues." And another person thought

that "…everyone has the opportunity to get involved…in shared governance of this institution if they want. If they are not [involved], they choose not to be."

There is some skepticism that while input from faculty/staff is solicited, the administration does not take the opinions or ideas into consideration when making decisions. A statement such as this:

> "Although faculty is often asked for input on programs and/or strategic plans, administration most often does not hear, validate or act on input. Communication does not occur in a reciprocal manner."

is contrasted with a statement such as this:

> "Cheryl asks people what they think and gathers hard data. She follows shared governance in the way she operates; she makes sure all voices are heard."

The statements above indicate that the decision-making process may not be clearly understood by all; therefore desired transparency is compromised. The perception of "being involved or asked, but not heard" is a reality for many employees. However, not all employees want to be involved. Several responses indicated that it is not important to some individuals to understand or be involved in decision making processes. "The administration leads. That is all that matters." The underlying reasons that some employees feel "unheard" was not clear and could be due to a number of factors, such as desiring greater feedback or believing that to be heard means to agree. It could also mean that employees feel they were not heard when the decision was not in agreement with what they wanted as an outcome.

Trust emerged from meetings and survey responses as an important theme and essential element of shared governance. The need for trust was also a theme in the interviews conducted by Tierney in his national study of shared governance in colleges and universities.[12] Tierney suggested that a culture of trust is founded on three premises. First, "…the underlying assumption is that men and women of good will may have differing opinions about a particular topic, but such differences do not negate the importance each brings to promote the common good." Second, "…those who are involved in making a decision outline how the decision will be made, and they stick to the plan. Third, "in a culture that values language, individuals are precise with their words." Tierney concludes that "The creation of trust will not resolve all problems, but without it, governance becomes much more difficult."[13]

The discrepancy between policy and practice seemed to be a trust issue for employees. Unequal, uneven, and inequity were three words used to describe the perception that the faculty salary schedule is not followed. There is also a perception that there is impropriety in hiring practices. Preferential hiring of Native people, salary offers that are responsive to market competition and the hiring of individuals for the express purpose of training them as Native faculty and curriculum developers – all of which would be appropriate in a native institution located in a competitive educational market – contribute to these perceptions.

Accountability surfaced as a topic worthy of mention. It was not a theme or thread that ran through the responses; however, it was prominent in a few responses from both administrators and faculty. There is a reciprocal sense that the "other" is not held to the

[12] Tierney, 2009.
[13] All quotes from Tierney, 2009, p. 211.

same accountability standards. Since this perception is also related to trust, it is mentioned as a consideration of shared governance.

Closely related to trust, respect emerged as an important theme related to understanding and practicing shared governance. A majority of respondents believe that employees model respect for one another. One academic administrator described the environment at NWIC as such:

> "Teaching and learning is an important focus here at NWIC. It appears to me that the College is committed to creating and maintaining positive learning and working environments both in and out of the academic classroom. While it is understood that disagreement will and should occur in a collegiate setting, open communication, intellectual integrity, mutual respect for differing viewpoints, freedom from unnecessary disruption/disorder and a climate of civility are important institutional value(s)."

However, opposing views suggested that respect is not always modeled and demonstrated by all employees.

Perceptions of trust and respect are related to another theme that emerged from the meetings, interviews, and survey results -- feeling valued. While there were several examples from faculty and administrators to illustrate that they felt valued, there were also expressions of faculty members feeling marginalized and not valued. Salary and job security were two topics that surfaced as reasons for not feeling valued, even though there was an expression of understanding that this is a budget condition not only at NWIC but at other colleges and universities, including TCUs. As one person put it, "If

we can't be paid well, we have to feel valued in other ways." Another perspective was that the financial situation makes it difficult to stay in spite of the passion and commitment to be there. Faculty may feel verbally appreciated, but consider it a sacrifice to work at NWIC.

Communication was noted as a strength at NWIC and illustrated by one person who said, "I think most communication is open and trustworthy. When it is not, it may be personality based." Another person summarized it by saying "Communication has improved the last few years. Administrators and faculty have several opportunities to communicate on various issues throughout the year. This has improved trust. The communication gap has narrowed." Several comments focused on elements of communication that need attention such as listening and hearing. One person said, "You can listen, but do you hear?" Another person described a perception of being "…asked then not listened to…." One academic administrator offered that it is important to be "intentional about listening to people." This administrator made an intentional effort to listen and "unpack" statements for the real message. Yet another person's perception was that "we communicate a lot; quantity is not the issue, reciprocal and follow up is." In a subsequent section, communication between faculty and administration is more fully addressed as a lingering concern.

The time element of shared governance emerged as a theme to be considered. There were expressions that there is not enough time for input and meaningful two-way conversations. It takes time to know all of the issues and to be fully informed before giving input on a particular topic or project. Another expression was that it is possible to have too many things decided by committees. There is a perception that shared

governance could result in more meetings and time wasted in the process. Likewise, the time that consensus takes in decision making was not viewed positively by some as illustrated in this comment, "I don't believe that consensus is the accurate term for inclusive decision making since I think that consensus is generally not timely nor precise. Consultation is more manageable."

Faculty Involvement in Governance at NWIC

This section describes the extent to which the faculty at NWIC is involved in shared governance and decision making. It begins with a brief history tracing faculty involvement from 1983 as Lummi Community College to the present.

Until the late 1990s, faculty had no formal representation in decision making or communication with the administration. Thereafter, faculty had periodic representation at the president's monthly management team meetings; however, only for communication about faculty matters. The representation rotated among faculty members on a quarterly basis. Faculty met monthly with the vice president through 2001 when there was a change in leadership. Faculty had representation on the committee creating the faculty and student annual contract schedule and other committees that were concerned with faculty development issues through grants funded by the Bush Foundation.

In academic year 2002-2003, a Bush Foundation grant made it possible to focus on faculty communication. The faculty group overseeing this component worked with faculty as a whole to develop structures for faculty to communicate better among them and with administration (resulting in the formation of the Faculty Executive Council),

and to develop a faculty learning center.[14] In a document titled, *Faculty Organization and Communication*, dated 12/16/02 and adopted by the faculty on 1/23/03, faculty agreed that NWIC "shall have a faculty body consisting of the *General Faculty*" that included "…all those who teach for NWIC, regardless of whether they are hired under a faculty contract." The document states that "The institution needs more faculty input into institutional management issues. AND Faculty needs to be kept abreast of college issues, the discussions about those issues, and the decisions that are made." In addition to expressing the desire to have faculty representation on all appropriate college committees, the document outlined a structure and ways in which faculty would communicate among themselves.

From 2003-2005, a faculty chairs structure was instituted by the college administration and functioned with three faculty members whose contracts included administrative duties. Faculty chairs facilitated faculty meetings; the academic vice president met occasionally with the faculty. In 2005-2006, the faculty chairs positions were eliminated from the college leadership structure and a Dean of Academics position that reported to the Vice President for Instruction was instituted. Faculty continued to meet independently on an ad hoc basis with no specific sanction from administration as a representative body. During the 2005-2006 academic year, the faculty did not meet regularly as the faculty representatives did not bring the group together. This was due in part to internal tensions within the Faculty Executive Council.

[14] The teaching and learning center was not implemented but it re-emerged as part of President Crazy Bull's teaching and learning initiative through the current Woksape Oyate grant.

The Institutional Wellness project began in the fall of 2005 with a survey of all employees. The project focused mostly on the administrative level and resulted in work plans for administrators and a series of trainings and retreats led by Diarkis, a consulting group.

The next year was one of transition when vacancies occurred in November 2006 in the Vice President for Instruction and, later, the Director of Extended Campuses. Both positions remained vacant until July 2007. During this time faculty didn't have a clear channel of communication with the administration, causing increased concern and the formation a group by some full time faculty to facilitate communication between the faculty and administration in 2007-2008. Calling themselves the Faculty Liaison Committee, three faculty representatives requested to meet with the president and upper administration on a regular basis, although they were not viewed by the administration as a formally sanctioned body. Most of the monthly meetings were with the Dean of Academics, The Dean of Extended Campuses, and or the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services; one or more meetings were held with the President. The Faculty Liaison Committee continued to seek communication with the administrative leadership through the next year. Some faculty perceived that the individuals on the Faculty Liaison Committee were not positively regarded by the administrative leadership. In July 2008, the administrative leadership was restructured. The two dean positions were merged into a Dean of Academics and Distance Learning position; an Associate Dean position located in the faculty building had a specific role to communicate with faculty. With this structure and administrative personnel, communication with faculty improved. In 2009, a Faculty Roundtable was created by faculty as a way for faculty to discuss issues. This

faculty group continues to clarify its role, aspects of its regular agenda and to develop the communication paths that ensure high functionality. Evidence of faculty involvement in governance was situated in their participation on college governance activities for the past two years as indicated on the College Governance Survey 2010. For example, since 2007, faculty was represented to a high degree on the Academic Standards Committee (16) and the Curriculum Committee (12), and as expected, to a much lesser degree on the Administrative Team (1) and the Board of Trustees (3). Apparently faculty served as trustees prior to their faculty role, since there is no apparent position on the Board for a faculty representative. Faculty involvement also included representation on other permanent committees, such as the Personnel Policy Committee and the Scheduling Committee, or ad hoc committees such as long range planning, retention, strategic planning, self study for accreditation, special events, and others that are grant specific. There is also evidence of in-service activities in which faculty were asked for their opinion/input. When asked how satisfied they were with their involvement in governance, over half of the faculty indicated that they were somewhat (11) satisfied or more (4), with their level of participation; seven indicated less satisfaction.

When asked about the extent of their involvement in several aspects of decision making, faculty rated their greatest involvement in determining academic course and program outcomes; identification and promotion of new programs; and academic program design. To a little lesser extent, they rated re-design of existing programs; strategic planning; and academic policies. Student policies and institutional effectiveness strategies were rated lower with ten faculty indicating no involvement (5) to little involvement (5) in decision making on institutional effectiveness strategies; and nine (5

and 4 respectively) rating their involvement as none to little in student policy decision making. Three areas ranked lowest were selection of key academic administrators; budget development and review; and personnel and institutional policies; no one indicated involvement to a great extent. Faculty generally felt that they have little to no influence in determining faculty contract content, faculty salary schedule, and faculty benefits. There is evidence of more influence in faculty work load and course scheduling determinations. However, it was their opinion that they should have influence in all of the areas to a higher degree than they do. Interestingly, one-half or more (on some items) of the 23 non-faculty respondents agreed that faculty should have more influence in all five areas. One person indicated that the

> "…perception of faculty work load is tricky. Administration worry that we don't teach enough students. We worry about that too, and wish that resources went into recruitment that seem to be going elsewhere. We have to prepare course, outcomes, syllabi, lesson plans, etc. no matter how many students there are. And believe it or not, when there are too few students, faculty sometimes have to work harder to ensure that students learn from each other in innovative ways since there are too few student voices to draw from. So if you asked me, I would say recruit, recruit, recruit."

Faculty work load input apparently is getting better with the institution of individual faculty work plans by the Dean of Academics and Distance Learning. Course scheduling brought one comment: "…again, ask faculty what we think works best. If you don't, you lose out on valuable information. Do we need to actually create the schedule? No,

absolutely not. But do solicit the information that could make your jobs easier and make the schedule work well."

Linkages and Discrepancies in Shared Governance

This section describes linkages and discrepancies between and among the administration, faculty, and Board of Trustees regarding shared governance, decision making processes, and domains and responsibilities of each entity.

There was agreement or linkages among all groups completing the College Governance Survey 2010 on several statements about shared governance. Five statements brought a high average rating on an agreement scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent):

- Faculty should have appropriate representation on all college committees that affect faculty issues (4.38).
- NWIC should have a shared governance structure that supports the mission of the college, indigenous self determination and knowledge (4.23).
- There should be mechanisms in place for the administration to consult with faculty which allows time for faculty to consider issues before offering recommendations (4.18).
- Faculty should have significant influence in long range planning (3.95).
- It is important that the voice of all members of the NWIC community influence college decisions even if the decisions are made by the native leadership (3.85).

Conversely, a majority of the respondents (67%) did not agree with this statement:

- Faculty should be informed of decisions but not necessarily be consulted or have significant influence (2.13).

Therefore, there is agreement that faculty should be consulted and have significant influence in decisions. Also with high agreement (3.5 and above) were the following statements:

- Primary authority should lie with the President, Vice Presidents and Deans for day-to-day college decisions (3.70).
- Faculty should be consulted about all issues that relate to them and then administrators make the final decisions (3.63).
- Faculty should have a formally recognized decision making body, such as a faculty senate, whose membership is full time and pro-rata faculty, that can bring proposals directly to the President and the Board of Trustees(3.60).
- NWIC should have a formally recognized decision making body, such as a college senate, made of faculty, staff, exempt managed and students that can bring proposals directly to the President and the Board of Trustees (3.55).

Still above average but with less strong agreement were the following statements:

- Native leadership should decide major college wide issues (3.43).
- Major decisions of the college should be made through consensus within and among the groups involved (e.g., faculty groups) (3.03).

The statement with the lowest average and highest discrepancy was the following statement:

- Faculty should have primary authority in hiring new faculty (2.68).

Forty-five percent of the respondents (who were primarily non-faculty) rated the statement one or two in terms of non-agreement, while 30 percent (who were primarily faculty members) rated it four or five. Twenty-five percent rated it three, indicating their middle of the road opinion.

All of the above results indicate strong linkages of opinion between and among the various constituencies at NWIC regarding shared governance. While discrepancies exist, the majority of statements brought above average agreement ratings.

Clearly, there is a belief that faculty and staff should have a voice on issues that relate to them, and an affirmation that the primary authority for decision making rests with the administration and the Board of Trustees. There is apparent agreement that NWIC should have a shared governance structure that includes a formally recognized body such as a faculty or college senate.

While the domains of decision making were not clearly delineated in the results from the focus groups, interviews, and the College Governance Survey 2010, it is clear that faculty and staff do not want more authority than they have now; they do want more involvement and communication. They recognize that all final decisions are made by the Board of Trustees, the President, and administrators to whom the President has delegated that authority. There are strong indications that faculty want and general agreement that they should have a voice in academic decision making and other college matters that affect them.

Faculty recognize and respect that the final decision on the selection of academic leadership is the responsibility of the President and Board of Trustees; however, they

want a voice in interviewing and recommending candidates for academic leadership positions. They would also like to have an opportunity to participate in determining salaries, contracts, and benefits.

Will Shared Governance Improve Teaching and Learning?

Seventy percent (70%) of all respondents to the College Governance Survey 2010 believe that shared governance will improve teaching and learning "somewhat" to "a great extent." Thirty percent (30%) indicated "I'm not sure," or "not at all," to "somewhat." Fifty-nine percent (58.8%) of the administrator respondents believe that shared governance will improve teaching and learning "somewhat" to "a great extent." Forty-one percent (41. 2%) indicated "I'm not sure," or "not at all," to "somewhat." Eighty-five percent (85%) of the faculty believe that shared governance will improve teaching and learning "somewhat" to "a great extent," and 15 percent indicated "I'm not sure," or "not at all," to "somewhat."

One non-faculty person confidently declared that "If it increases morale and trust between administration and faculty, it will improve teaching and learning." One faculty person believed that "A feeling of ownership of the institution on part of the faculty could lead to an increased commitment to results, and a sense of shared responsibility for those results."

While optimism more clearly resonated among the faculty, there is an overall belief that having a greater responsibility or role in decision making on the part of faculty will lead to improved teaching and learning.

Will Shared Governance Improve Communication and Transparency in Decision Making?

Positive thinking was evident in 60 percent of the responses to the College Governance Survey 2010 when asked to what extent they believe that shared governance will improve communication and transparency in decision making. For 40 percent of the participants, there was less optimism. As noted in an earlier section, the time element of shared decision making or shared governance was an issue for some employees. There is a belief that the time it takes to make a decision will be extended with the involvement of more people because there will have to be "…more meetings and more time wasted 'in the process.'" Hope was also expressed that communication and transparency in decision making will improve if shared governance is structured effectively.

There was a long history of NWIC faculty asking for better communication. The current administration has been able to reverse this trend and communication between the faculty and the President has improved. What appeared to be faculty discontent with lack of involvement in decision making in past years may have been frustration or concern about lack of communication with the administration. It is always challenging to determine how much of communication concerns are personal and perceptual and how much is actually the result of a lack of communication.

What does shared governance mean from a cultural perspective, especially of the Coast Salish People?

Forty percent of the respondents to the College Governance Survey 2010 answered "somewhat" when asked to what extent they were knowledgeable about the cultural practices regarding governance in Coast Salish communities. Another 15 percent felt a

bit more knowledgeable. However, throughout the focus groups, interviews, and survey comments, there was not a clearly stated framework of concepts or governance practices that one could identify as Coast Salish or Lummi. Instead there were questions about how to"Lummi-ize" the college; how to have more "Lummi-ness," and how to be more "Lummi-centered." An elder suggested that there has to be a holistic approach to the process. Another person offered, "The Lummi vision for creating this place is to share with other people's children, but it's still Lummi." One person's comment illustrated a Lummi perspective regarding leadership. "There is no question who the leader is; no debate. Issues are dealt with head on, very direct, face-to-face; when it's over, it's over." Getting the job done is most important and one must work at it until accomplished. There was a frustration that "you can't be forthright."

The Coast Salish Institute was established to revitalize language and culture. Within the Institute, young people are being mentored with the intent that they will develop to their capacity to become teachers. For three or more years they have been recording the language, and several excellent videos have been produced by the Institute.

Others within the college are clearly looking to the Coast Salish Institute for guidance in defining the regional cultural perspective and assistance in implementing cultural outcomes within the NWIC curriculum. As noted in the Faculty Handbook, the quote below implies that faculty will incorporate culture into the courses they teach.

"You have been hired to teach a class or classes because what you can offer compliments the ideals around which the College is built. The fact that you are here indicates your willingness to incorporate Indian culture and perspectives into the

courses you teach, and your commitment to the community development, which these courses of education represent."

Doing the right thing is uppermost in the minds of faculty expressed through their comments and survey responses. It is apparent that all involved with NWIC and its mission understand that to be a tribal college is to be grounded and centered in the culture, language, and history of the chartering tribal nation. Therefore, it is imperative that native faculty, staff, and administrators (especially those from this land area) and community members take the lead in guiding non-native faculty development.

Conclusions

The goal of this study was to explore shared governance at NWIC in order to build a relationship between administrators and faculty that honors and facilitates the continued development of NWIC as an effective tribal college.[15] The purpose was to describe the extent of faculty involvement in governance at NWIC; describe the understanding of the administration, faculty, and Board of Trustees regarding shared governance, decision making processes, and domains and responsibilities of each entity; and describe linkages and discrepancies (of the above) between and among the administration, faculty, and Board of Trustees. The results of the study were intended to answer several questions posed by President Crazy Bull as stated in a section at the beginning of this report. The results addressed some of the questions and provided a launching point for understanding other questions that could not be addressed at this time.

Exemplar responses and comments described the understanding of shared governance and decision making processes from various perspectives. While there is a general

[15] As stated by President Cheryl Crazy Bull.

understanding among the participants, several related themes emerged. These themes should serve as the basis for discussion relative to shared governance. For example, trust and respect are essential components of shared governance. According to Tierney, "Without trust, legislative structures, symbolic processes, and formal and informal means of consultation and communication are irrelevant."[16] In an earlier publication, Tierney and Minor offered a finding from their national study of shared governance that is relevant to the discussion on trust. "Apathy and lack of trust are the most significant barriers to meaningful faculty participation. Individuals [in their study] related that meaningful involvement is difficult when the faculty voice is not respected and shared governance is not taken seriously."[17]

The extent of faculty involvement in governance at NWIC was described over the past three administrations. Consistent throughout is the faculty request for better communication with the administration. There was expressed appreciation for the current President's style of leadership and communication. While there are informal systems in place for faculty to communicate with administration, a more formal or formally sanctioned structure that is appropriate for NWIC and compatible with Lummi/Coast Salish cultural seems to be needed.

The linkages and discrepancies were identified and delineated. Also described was the extent to which employees believed that shared governance would result in improved teaching and learning and improved communication and transparency in decision making. There appear to be more linkages than discrepancies and that is a good place to be as NWIC further explores the concept of formalizing shared governance. As one

[16] Tierney, 2009, p. 210.
[17] Tierney & Minor, 2003, p. 11.

academic administrator put it, "…there has to be a healthy tension through which we can agree to disagree."

In essence, but perhaps not in great detail, the results address the framework question, "What is our common (or not common) understanding of what governance means and what shared governance is, especially with a focus on improved teaching and learning, improved communications, and transparency in decision making?" What is left to do is to develop the common language that Tierney suggests is essential in enhancing governance from a cultural perspective—"ensure that the organization's participants are speaking the same language."[18] He goes on to advise that "Attempts to develop common understandings will be rooted in dialogues that take into account the history and future of the institution."[19]

Less conclusive are the results which address the question, "What does shared governance mean from a cultural perspective, especially of the Coast Salish People?" What is conclusive is that this study provided a platform upon which to begin the dialogue to address the question. The study produced a breadth and depth of understanding of shared governance in general, that when embedded within the cultural framework of Lummi or Coast Salish beliefs and practices, will define a common understanding of shared governance at Northwest Indian College.

To arrive at this understanding and framework, the questions outlined in the beginning will have to be asked.

- Can we agree on a common understanding?
- Can we define what shared governance is from a cultural perspective?

[18] Tierney, 2009, p. 212.
[19] Ibid.

- Are there then areas of agreement regarding what shared governance is and how shared governance is carried out?

At the end of the process, the questions to be addressed will be,

- Have we improved governance at NWIC?
- How has this shared governance process improved teaching and learning at NWIC?

Finally, lessons can be learned from mainstream colleges and universities who have a longer history of shared governance. These thoughts come from Gary A. Olson, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Idaho State University:

> "True shared governance attempts to balance maximum participation in decision making with clear accountability….Genuine shared governance gives voice (but not necessarily ultimate authority) to concerns common to all constituencies as well as to issues unique to specific groups. The key to genuine shared governance is broad and unending communication. When various groups of people are kept in the loop and understand what developments are occurring within the university, and when they are invited to participate as true partners, the institution prospers."[20]

Recommendations

In addition to the set of framework questions noted above that will provide direction and next steps in exploring shared governance, the following recommendations are respectfully offered as a final step in this study on governance. They derive from the goal, purpose, results and conclusions of the study.

[20]Olson, Gary A., "Exactly What Is 'Shared Governance'?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 23. 2009. http://chronicle.com/article/Exactly-What-Is-Shared/47065/ accessed 2/8/10.

1. The Tierney and Bad Wound article, though it might be considered dated, is the only one in the literature that presents a tribal college perspective or model of organizational governance and decision making. The article (see Appendix A) should be read and the following questions asked: Does NWIC fit the Tierney and Bad Wound tribal college model? Does NWIC view itself in the same cultural dilemma as other tribal colleges described by Tierney and Bad Wound?
2. A common definition or understanding of shared governance should be developed or adopted. A common language that will be used to talk about shared governance including what it means and doesn't mean in the context of NWIC should be developed.
3. The Board of Trustees and the administration should discover ways to demonstrate to faculty/staff that they are valued. While salaries and job security are primary sources of valuing expressed by faculty, they mentioned other ideas. For example, the week before classes started in January was described by faculty as a valuable time where there were few scheduled meetings and sufficient free time to think about and plan for classes. It was described as a mini-sabbatical time. Find more of those mini-sabbatical times for faculty to read in their field of study and reflect on their responsibilities in teaching and learning at NWIC. Find other innovative ways to demonstrate that all employees are valued and essential to the core mission of teaching and learning.
4. In most organizations, including colleges and universities, communication is always identified when questions are asked about improving organizational effectiveness. The same is true for NWIC. A communication plan that explores

and publishes ways in which the administration will formally and informally communicate to faculty and staff and vice versa should be developed. This plan should describe how feedback from meetings will be processed and addressed; this not only responds to communication but a sense of trust as well.

5. Trust was a major theme throughout the focus groups, interviews, and survey responses. The Board of Trustees and the administration should explore ways in which to build trust between and among the various groups within the college. Developing a set of "we agree" statements about trust might be a good place to begin the dialogue of expectations.
6. A "strategic conversations" format used at Maricopa County Community College District in Arizona might be a good format for NWIC to adopt as a way to ensure interaction within the college that focuses on formalizing the governance process.
7. Search committees are effective ways to involve faculty and staff in the process of selecting academic and other mid-level administrators. The administration should seriously consider a search committee process to fill *future administrative and faculty positions.*

Finally, the set of five strategies for improving governance identified by Tierney and Minor are paraphrased below as recommended strategies for NWIC to consider. The five strategies are:

- Delineate responsibilities: Challenges associated with governance often stem from conflict about who decides what. Establishment of clear areas of responsibility can decrease confusion and provide opportunities for sustained involvement.

- Articulate the meaning of shared governance: Campus constituents often employ multiple definitions of shared governance which create varied expectations about decision-making. Developing an institutional understanding of what shared governance means helps consolidate ideas and expectations.
- Utilize multiple decision-making venues: Far too often individuals assume that for meaningful engagement to occur, all decisions must be processed through the same governance unit – such as an academic senate. Such a mindset creates the potential for a logjam. Instead create systematic plans for multiple arenas of meaningful engagement.
- Communicate: Colleges and universities exist in "loosely coupled" environments. A mistaken tendency is to try to tighten the loose coupling. Instead, accept that our institutions exist in decentralized organizations and that the faculty's engagement with an issue may be sporadic. A key to effective governance is to communicate consistently with faculty. Utilize the multiple media outlets that exist and follow the schemas that have been established.
- Create the conditions for trust: Trust exists as a reciprocal relationship where both parties accept the importance of one another and have bonds of mutual obligation. Trust is not a "pie in the sky" value that is impossible to articulate. Trust is accomplished over time as a group or individual sees that what was said is done.[21]

[21] Tierney and Minor, 2003, p. 19.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Journal of American Indian Education

Volume 28 Number 1
October 1988

LEADERSHIP AND AMERICAN INDIAN VALUES: THE TRIBAL COLLEGE DILEMMA

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The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the need for research in organizational governance and decision-making that takes into account the values that are inherent to American Indian culture, and hence, to tribal community colleges.

We begin with a discussion of the rational model of organizational governance and decision-making in higher education; we have chosen the rational model because it is the most prevalent organizational theory to analyze postsecondary organizations (Pfeffer, 1981; Chaffee, 1983). We summarize the model in terms of five elements which serve as a framework for diagnosing organizations (Scott, 1981), and then analyze the model's assumptions from the standpoint of our experiences with tribal colleges. Deficiencies of the model manifest themselves as conflicts between the model's assumptions and the values that underlie the tribal college mission. As a result, we propose an alternative way to view an organization and suggest further avenues for investigation.

As elaborated by Scott, the elements of an organization are: goals, participants, technology, environment, and social structure. According to Scott, these five elements characterize all organizations, regardless of purpose or nature. While the elements serve as standards for diagnosing organizations, the way one interprets elements--such as organizational goals or the environment--depends heavily on the way participants view their organization. How we understand our world in large part determines how we interpret elements such as the social structure. The struggle for tribal community colleges is to understand their organizations from their own perspective, as well as that of the dominant society.

The Rational Model

Goals. The rational model assumes that consistent sets of goals exist in organizations (Pfeffer, 1981). Organizations, through decision-making processes of reasoned problem solving, strive to achieve maximal outcomes related to their goals. According to the rational model, when an issue arises that demands action the process of making decisions consists of three basic steps. First, organizational participants develop a set of alternatives. Second, they assess the likely outcomes or consequences of each of the alternatives. Third, decision makers select the alternatives or courses of action which in their view will maximize possibilities for achieving organizational goals. Efficiency is the underlying rationale for the model.

Goals are prerequisites for the decision-making process and act as strategic organizing principles. Organizational participants commit themselves to the goals of the organization and while the recommendations of the participants may vary, they agree on the goals which give meaning to their involvement in the decision-making process (Chaffee, 1985).

Participants. The necessity for a hierarchical organization is predominant to ensure an effective and efficient channel of communication. The unity-of-command principle determines that organizational participants achieve a degree of specialization for their tasks and that all employees receive orders from only one superior. The organization delineates its hierarchy through rules and regulations that spell out chains of command and work expectations of participants. A rigid hierarchy allows the organization to make it clear who is in charge and who is expected to do what.

Technology. Rational and logical problem solving skills are critical to technology in the rational model. Technical competence is particularly critical insofar as decision situations typically consist of complex sets of problems. Participants rely upon extensive and systematic uses of information for decision making and thus information-use skills are important.

Social Structure. The social structure is formal. Given the importance of specialization, the division of labor and differentiation of work tasks is essential. The organization prescribes values, roles, and social positions which are necessary in achieving organizational goals. Participants are united and bound together by common values which are consonant with the goals of the organization. Rather than having the flexibility to pursue divergent interests and to create organizational niches for themselves, participants are constrained by a normative social structure.

Environment. Managers must seal with the environment, but the organization exists divorced from environmental constraints and influences. Leaders derive goals not through interaction with the environment, but through internal discussions about what goals the organization should pursue (Chaffee, 1985). The environment exists "out there" and is a malleable object which managers fit to the organization's goals.

Leadership. Leadership is vested in a central authority who makes the final decisions. The right to give orders and exact obedience is a central tenet of the model. Individuals in the organization participate in decision-making and provide recommendations. However, decisions ultimately rest with the leader. This image of leadership assumes that the central figure is authoritarian; the leader has the confidence of organizational participants to make decisions and to lead the organization.

Tribal College Perspective. The rational model adheres to the Western belief in order, reason, and logic. In some respects, such a view is helpful to all administrators as they confront daily problems. Obviously, some degree of order is warranted in any organization. Otherwise, chaos, intuition, and anarchy may come to dominate organizational life. When such conditions dominate, it is difficult to imagine how any organization can be effective. Since the model emphasizes hierarchy and rigidity, however, it is inappropriate for tribal colleges insofar as they seem to emphasize informality and flexibility in decision-making.

In presenting the tribal college perspective, it is important first of all to discuss the ideals which underlie the rational model and compare them with the fundamental ideals of a tribal college. The rational model emphasizes the Western goals of efficiency and effectiveness with regard to both individual and organizational performance. The ultimate concern of organizations, according to the rational model, is to achieve goals through systematic and orderly processes with minimal waste of resources. The assumption is that all organizations are predicated on similar beliefs.

Our intent is not to call into question Western values such as those that the rational model promotes; rather we intend to demonstrate how American Indian values, and thus, tribally-controlled organizations, have widely divergent concepts about values and goals than those of mainstream organizations. For example, it is worth quoting Astin at length about the meritocratic nature of American higher education:

> In a meritocracy . . . rewards are allocated on the basis of performance. The greatest rewards go to those who perform best. In a meritocratic society, competition plays a central role. . . . Meritocratic thinking reflects a peculiarly American preoccupation with measuring, ordering, and ranking (1981, p. 155).

From this perspective, a primary goal of American postsecondary education is to enable individuals to achieve status and success in society. Society measures success by the material rewards which one accrues. The emphasis is on individual competition. Meritocratic values are inherent in practices such as promotion, tenure, and classification/personnel systems.

American Indian culture, however, has goals that are neither competitive nor meritocratic. Instead, generosity, reverence for the earth, and wisdom are basic values (McNickle, 1973). Members of Indian societies demonstrate generosity through informal and formal means of giving or sharing. Indian societies measure status in terms of how individuals openly display generous deeds. The extent to which individuals acquire prestige depends upon the extent to which they share accumulated wealth with less fortunate individuals. Within Indian societies, a prevailing concern exists for the welfare of the group. Indians revere "mother earth" as the provider of life and as a symbolic representation of deeply-held religious beliefs. The earth provides food, shelter, and water, but also is part of the universe which is embedded with legends and supernatural powers that give meaning for Indian existence. Indians view the universe and the environment in a holistic fashion, rather than as a separate entity comprised of distinct parts.

Wisdom is the virtue that is held in highest esteem. Indian societies attribute wisdom to members who have consistently demonstrated adherence to Indian values and who possess visionary qualities to lead. Leadership qualities inherent in individuals endowed with wisdom transcend traditional concepts associated with leadership, such as personality traits or charisma. Central to the qualities possessed by the leader is the notion of spirituality, a condition that is neither learned nor certified, but is attained through the workings of a higher power or being. Indeed, it is wise individuals who sustain Indian culture and whose vision enables Indian societies to endure.

In its purest form, an organization that promotes American Indian values departs fundamentally from the rational organization. The departure stems from the assumptions which underlie the rational organization. For example, tribal colleges do not appear to have preexisting sets of goals which dictate decision-making. Participant welfare is of utmost concern and goals reflect group interests; goals emerge only as a result of extensive group interaction. Participants neither hold allegiance to preexisting goals, nor do they feel compelled by hierarchical chains of command and rigid rules and regulations. Participants tolerate institutional constraints on individual behavior insofar as these constraints do not stifle participatory decision-making.

Specialization, division of labor, and differentiation of work tasks are not predominant technologies as they are in the rational organization, Rather, knowledge of and skills in group dynamics, processes, and interactions are critically important. To be sure, individual labor and program tasks are differentiated, but boundaries between and among positions and programs remain blurred as responsibilities are shared to a high degree.

Unlike the rational organization, where social structure is mainly static and confined to organizational prescriptions for behavior, tribal colleges exhibit social structures that are dynamic and fluid. Participants have a pervasive concern for the group which is demonstrated by constant interactions to share ideas, information, and problems. Organizational values, roles, and social positions develop, but they persist only as long as they contribute to and reflect group interests. These elements of social structure undergo constant change and modification to coincide with emerging ideas and issues.

Instead of remaining distant from the environment, tribal colleges are integral to their environment from both a practical and a spiritual standpoint. Demonstrated concern for group welfare is virtuous, and tribal colleges appear to maintain an active relationship with other entities in the

environment. Colleges interact regularly with clientele, tribal government, and other programs. Further, the environment conveys spiritual significance and meaning. Respect for the earth and maintaining harmony with nature are cherished Indian values. In this sense, colleges share a responsibility to protect the environment.

The leader in the tribal college is a facilitator and promoter of group values and interests. Instead of maintaining autocratic power by virtue of position, the tribal college leader develops authority by demonstrating competence and allegiance to the values which underlie the organization. Participants follow the leader not because of rules and regulations, but because the leader has demonstrated appropriate leadership qualities.

Table 1 compares the rational model with the tribal college model we have conceptualized. The table compares the two models across Scott's (1981) five organizational elements and across leadership and philosophical concepts which underlie each model. While the table is an oversimplification of organizational dynamics inherent to each model, it provides a useful means of comparison.

In summary, the rational model of governance and decision-making fails to be an adequate predictor of organizational behavior in tribal colleges.

TABLE 1
Two Forms of Governance and Decision Making

Elements	Rational	Tribal College
Goals	Prerequisite; Consistent across the organization; Organizing principles and focuses of decision-making	Consistent across the organization; Reflect group consensus; Emerge from participatory decision-making process
Participants	United by common values which relate to and are consonant with organizational goals	Concern for the welfare of the group; Not bound by organizational prescription
Technology	Rational; Logical problem solving; Extensive and systematic uses of information	Group interactions and processes; Sharing of information and knowledge
Environment	Closed system; No active interaction with environment; Develop goals through internal discussions	Open system; Active interaction with the environment; Holistic; Practical and spiritual meaning
Social Structure	Normative, participants bound by prescribed values; Formal, social positions defined for participants	Dynamic and fluid; Unity; Values change and modify to meet emerging ideas and issues
Leadership	Centralized; Authoritarian; Ultimate decision making authority with those of the group	Authority by virtue of demonstrated competence; Ideas and values compatible
Philosophy	Efficiency and Effectiveness	Unity; Generosity/sharing; Flexibility

Tribal college interpretations of the various aspects of an organization, such as goals, participants, and social structure digress fundamentally from the perspectives provided by the rational model. Tribal college managers cannot rely upon the rational model to synthesize effective leadership strategies that account for the basic values of American Indian culture. Yet, the development of

such strategies is critical if tribal colleges are to effectively fulfill their dual responsibilities, which, in many respects, present a cultural dilemma.

A Cultural Dilemma

Tribal colleges, as entities of tribal governments, promote the self-determination aspirations of Indian people. While the maintenance of Indian culture provides the foundation for tribal college organization, the colleges also strive to integrate traditional disciplinary knowledge of mainstream society into their academic programs. The dual mission of maintaining tribal identity and acquiring knowledge and skills for mainstream society is evident in the mission statement of one tribal college which reads in part, "College students need preparation which will enable them to understand the ways of the larger society, as well as the customs and beliefs of the . . . people." Another college states as part of its mission, ". . . to incorporate the wisdom and beauty of (our) heritage with the knowledge and skills of our modern technological society."

In one sense the mission statements are paradoxical and pose a cultural dilemma. One wonders how an organization can successfully integrate diverging and conflicting concepts of knowledge. Indeed, criticism of tribal colleges from the Indian community often relates to this very question. For example, one tribal community member remarked, "The college is nothing more than a poor replica of existing (mainstream) higher education institutions" (personal correspondence). Another member explained, "The college needs to go beyond offering stock material. It needs to develop curriculum which will account for the total Indian experience" (personal correspondence). To adequately serve the needs of the people a tribal college must have effective strategies that draw upon the history and culture of tribal people.

A growing body of literature has pointed out how an organization reflects the people who exist in the organization (Morgan, 1987; Chaffee & Tierney, 1988). Such a view holds that even though rational and political factors influence organizational life, organizations are also influenced by strong forces that emanate from within. Proponents of a new model termed "organizational culture" assume that organizational life is reflected in what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in doing it--without reference to rational or political goals. Organizational life concerns decisions, actions, and communication both on an instrumental and a symbolic level.

The organization is viewed as existing within a dynamic framework where participants help create and define the on-going nature of the organization. "This internal dynamic," notes Tierney, "has its roots in the history of the organization and derives its force from the values, processes and goals held by those most intimately involved in the organization's workings" (1988, page 3). A cultural model of the organization holds much promise for understanding tribal colleges. Rather than rely on rational goals or politically-inspired social structures, proponents of a cultural model seek to understand the reality of the organization from the participant's point of view, and then construct effective decision-making strategies.

Because the model is new, no research has been undertaken that investigates tribal colleges. We have attempted in this article to point out the shortcomings of previous models as they relate to tribal administrators. What remains to be done are studies that incorporate the unique nature of tribally-controlled colleges with a cultural model of the organization. Such a model will allow tribal administrators to develop strategies for their own organizations as they see fit, rather than have the tribal organization adapt to predefined concepts of what constitutes effective goals and decision-making.

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