DEVELOPING A UNIVERSITY PROGRAM TO FACILITATE ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING AFTER THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

by

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Abstract

The coronavirus pandemic imposed unique constraints that displaced most onsite activities at CSU Bakersfield alongside the other 22 public universities in the California State University System. CSU Bakersfield's transition to "Virtual Learning," also referred to as distance learning, compelled faculty and staff to rapidly adopt new online learning and telework practices. This study offers a program proposal to facilitate crisis recovery and organizational learning at a public university that implemented various innovations in response to the coronavirus pandemic. The program is named “The Presidential Advisory Committee on Innovation and Knowledge Expansion.” Its primary goal would be to reinforce capabilities that contributed to the successful continuation of service provision during the pandemic-induced state of emergency. Additionally, the program could function as a shared governance mechanism for stakeholders to participate in time-sensitive decisions about the future use of recently adopted innovations.

Keywords: American higher education, coronavirus pandemic, crisis recovery, distance learning, innovations, online learning, shared governance, telework
Chapter 1

Introduction

Colleges and universities across the world have adopted new online methods and practices in response to the advent of the coronavirus pandemic (Brannen et al., 2020; Diep, 2020; Mandavilli, 2020; McMurtie et al., 2020; Mladenova, 2020). The exact origin of the novel coronavirus, commonly known as COVID-19, is unknown at the present time. Nonetheless, its spread has led to an unprecedented public health crisis because COVID-19 and its successive variants feature a spiked protein structure that enables the virus to penetrate victims' internal cells with harmful efficiency (Zimmer, 2020). The novel coronavirus, which is commonly known as COVID-19, could not be easily contained to its region of origin because the virus embeds itself into airborne water particles found in the breath of asymptomatic carriers who do not realize that they are spreading the disease to the people around them (Zimmer, 2020).

The profound scope of the public health crisis became dismally apparent when the World Health Organization classified the spread of the novel coronavirus as a global pandemic on March 11, 2020 (Ghebreyesus, 2020). Five days later, on March 16th, the California State University System (CSU System) became the first public university system in the United States to commit to maintaining social distancing guidelines for the Fall 2020 semester and until further notice (Burke, 2020; California State University Office of the Chancellor, 2020). According to a statement issued by the Office of the CSU Chancellor, concern for "the safety and wellbeing of our students and employees" led the CSU System to "expedite the transition of all operations" into "a virtual mode" (California State University Office of the Chancellor, 2020).

The scale and speed at which faculty, staff, and students adopted pandemic-induced innovations stand in contrast with the typical inertia inherent to shared governance structures in
most American public universities (McMurtie et al., 2020). Although the ongoing implementation of social distancing guidelines has been challenging, most American colleges and universities continue to offer educational services and confer degrees through using the most up-to-date internet-enabled software services (June, 2020; Schwarz et al., 2020). The most noteworthy change at many colleges and universities across the world has been the large-scale adoption of synchronous online videoconferencing, such as using the Zoom™ platform, to have dynamic conversations with many students through a reasonably accessible virtual classroom setting (Diep, 2020; Schwarz et al., 2020).

The CSU System is the largest public university system in the United States, and all 23 of its campuses have taken considerable measures to enhance the technological skills of faculty, staff, and students who have been conducting education and work activities at home (California State University Office of the Chancellor, 2020; CSU Factbook, 2021). CSU Bakersfield, one of the public universities in the CSU System, issued several public statements that refer to the ongoing implementation of online learning and telework practices as a transition to "Virtual Learning" (CSU Factbook, 2021; Zelezney, 2020).

Accomplishing such a successful system-wide transformation so briefly demonstrated the adaptability and resiliency of the CSU System and its campuses. Additionally, the university has carried out several charitable operations during the pandemic, such as food donations and providing a space for local healthcare networks to distribute vaccinations to the surrounding community (Avalos, Gamez, & Salazar, 2021). To facilitate campus repopulation plans, the California State University System will require all staff and students to be vaccinated against the coronavirus starting "at the beginning of the fall 2021 term, or upon full F.D.A. approval of the vaccine, whichever occurs later" (California State University Office of the Chancellor, 2021).
Statement of the Problem

The coronavirus pandemic imposed unique constraints which displaced most onsite activities at CSU Bakersfield. The diffusion of new knowledge, the retention of new methods and practices, or organizational learning, were critical to adopting the necessary innovations to conduct university activities in the absence of face-to-face interactions. The transition to "Virtual Learning" compelled most faculty and staff to adopt new methods and practices. The expanded capabilities of faculty, staff, and students represent a positive outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic, so it would be worthwhile to coordinate an assessment of which recent innovations will still be of use when onsite activities resume on campus.

The advent of the pandemic was so intense and prolonged that it’s possible to keep university personnel acclimated to disruptions caused by modernization long into the future. Our goal should be to transfer some of the knowledge gained by these individuals into a form that would benefit the organization long after the duration of pandemic-induced practices and gathering restrictions. Fragmented decision-making procedures and limited managerial control over faculty will make it challenging to achieve a broad organizational consensus. However, online learning will remain a core feature in higher education since technology is rapidly becoming more intelligent and user-friendly. Faculty and staff at institutions that implemented social distancing guidelines stand to gain more in the long term because they have endured an unprecedented learning experience and the opportunity to explore alternatives previously outside their capabilities.
Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to propose the formation of a discussion and planning group that examines how virtual modes of instruction and student services brought on during the pandemic have introduced value-added strategies, platforms, and techniques that should be continued, enhanced, and developed. Another goal of this program proposal is to support an organizational culture conducive to adaptability and innovation. The proposed planning committee includes the following Program Components:

1. Program Goals
2. Program Components
3. The Role of Program Participants
4. Organizational Workflow
5. Program Model
6. Proposed Workplan

Importance of the Study

The CSU System and its 23 campuses are ideal subjects for prolonged comparative studies regarding public universities' response to the COVID-19 emergency. This study will help practitioners in higher education institutions respond to societal crises in the future by illustrating the process of applying proven computer-assisted methodologies to assess external challenges to their respective organizations. The Presidential Advisory Committee on Innovation and Knowledge Expansion will take the form of a collaborative advisory process, in which the faculty, staff, and students will have several avenues through which they can participate in discussions regarding future innovations on campus.
**Desired Program Outcomes**

The program proposed in this study is an advisory committee designed to facilitate the diffusion of innovation throughout CSU Bakersfield. The Presidential Advisory Committee on Innovation and Knowledge Expansion should be convened as soon as possible. Faculty, staff, and students would be asked to volunteer as members of the advisory committee. The Presidential Advisory Committee on Innovation and Knowledge Expansion could help university stakeholders assess innovations adopted during the coronavirus pandemic. The committee would be convened as an advisory board and be subject to oversight by the Office of the President of CSU Bakersfield.

This program attempts to mitigate the current situation, in which faculty and staff are learning on their own accord while fulfilling their institutional responsibilities. Faculty and staff at institutions that implemented social distancing guidelines have increased their abilities because they have learned new skills. They stand to gain more in the long term because they have endured an unprecedented learning experience and the opportunity to explore alternatives that were previously outside their capabilities. As of May 1, 2021, approximately 2.55 million new doses of a coronavirus vaccine are being administered each day in the United States (New York Times, 2021). Since the United States has made progress towards distributing effective coronavirus vaccines, the benefits of a repopulated campus may soon outweigh the convenience of virtual gatherings.
Research Questions and Summary

As CSU Bakersfield transitions towards repopulating campus facilities without coronavirus restrictions, the university should assess the extent to which pandemic-induced innovations should be maintained and enhanced. The program proposal to convene the Presidential Advisory Committee on Innovation and Knowledge Expansion is based on research that addressed the following questions:

a. What do practitioners and scholars in higher education say about the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on instruction and student service delivery?

b. What does the research say about change, innovation, and organizational learning?

c. What does the research say about program design for social outcomes?

The next chapter, Chapter 2, is a literature review that provides an overview of the prevailing consensus among scholars and practitioners regarding the impact that the coronavirus pandemic has had on colleges and universities. The chapter briefly discusses the role of public universities as social institutions and facilitates the design of pertinent program features. Crisis recovery, organizational learning, and technological change are discussed to the extent that they are useful for the strategic planning process and emergency management. The third chapter consists of a program proposal and sample work documents that would facilitate an inclusive conversation among university stakeholders regarding innovation and knowledge expansion. The fourth and final chapter of this thesis discusses implementation recommendations and potential obstacles for the Presidential Advisory Committee on Innovation and Knowledge Expansion.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review provides an overview of insights from higher education scholars and practitioners, which are instrumental in shaping a strategic response to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The chapter begins with a brief discussion about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Next, the literature review discusses the evolving role of higher education institutions in the United States in order to provide a better context for analyzing the mitigation measure put in place by CSU Bakersfield and the other universities in the CSU System. Afterward, the chapter discusses a select body of literature on "crisis management" and "organizational learning" to contextualize recent online learning innovations within a framework that is conducive to crisis recovery. Finally, the literature review closes with a discussion on the Value Creation Framework, which is applied to shape the features and goals of the subsequent program proposal. It is important to incorporate students and community stakeholders in a broad range of discussions regarding the future use of methods and techniques adopted in response to the coronavirus pandemic, since the program goal is to facilitate organizational learning and knowledge expansion at CSU Bakersfield.

The Evolving Role of Higher Education in American Society

CSU Bakersfield has acted as a vital distribution site for the surrounding community, which draws attention to the actions taken by university staff to improve the lives of others. Margolis (2001) writes about institutionally embraced social responsibility in terms that encapsulate the "psychological and social forces" which shape organizational behavior.
Margoilis' research led them to conclude that focusing on "creating responsible agents, and not simply on assigning responsibility, puts human dignity at center stage and requires that the organization context of responsibility be taken seriously." (Margolis 2001, pp. 432-433).

Certainly, it is apparent that CSU Bakersfield took on the responsibility to partner with government officials, nonprofit organizations, and health care providers to coordinate generous community health initiatives.

American higher education institutions faced the challenge of adhering to various rules established by local, state, and federal government agencies in a politicized climate that generated mistrust. The role of colleges and universities in the United States has changed according to the societal priorities of states and the federal government (Ford, 2017). Marcus Ford observed that "It is simply assumed that the primary function of higher education is economic. What the history of higher education in the United States makes clear is that higher education can take many forms and that the primary function of higher education has changed over time." (Ford, 2017, pp. 576). Whereas critics of higher education institutions, such as Giroux (2002), have chastised colleges and universities for being business-driven and "indifferent to broader public issues," Ford's insight about the evolving purpose of higher education in the United States reflects a pattern that became apparent when public colleges and universities undertook extraordinary measures to provide tangible goods and services to their host communities during the coronavirus pandemic (Avalos, Gamez, & Salazar, 2021).

CSU Bakersfield is the largest public university in a hundred-mile radius, and it is a critical node of technological expertise that influences the region’s wellbeing. Regarding the importance of higher colleges and universities, Joy Blanchard and Benjamin Baez observed that higher education institutions have become critical "in determining our futures" and that asserting
"their necessity" "does not come without a cost to their autonomy" (Bastedo et al., 2016, pp. 305). Furthermore, Aims McGuinness Jr. suggests that the "capacity to respond to major societal problems" is a core strength of American colleges and universities (Bastedo et al., 2017, pp. 239). Thus, the exchange of autonomy in favor of community integration and a leadership role for higher education institutions is agreeable because communities may come to see colleges and universities as going beyond the mission of creating well-educated employees for the local economy.

**Principles of Emergency Response and Crisis Recovery**

According to Kapucu & Özerdem (2013), a wide body of literature on the subject of emergency management makes distinctions between a crisis, disaster, emergency, and incident (Kapucu & Özerdem, 2013, pp. 2). For example, Kapucu & Özerdem (2013) note that scholars generally agree that a crisis can be “immediate, emerging, and sustained” whereas an incident is most likely a “localized disruption” (Kapucu & Özerdem, 2013, p. 2). Aside from an immeasurable body of content generated on social media forums, statistical indicators illustrate the degree to which the spread of COVID-19 constitutes a “crisis” that has impacted all aspects of American society. According to the New York Times, the first confirmed case of the coronavirus in the continental United States was detected in Washington State on January 15, 2020 (Rabin, 2020). A little more than a year later, during the last week of April 2021, the New York Times reported a total of 32 million COVID-19 cases in the United States, and at least 570,000 people have died from COVID-19 so far (New York Times, 2021).

Coordinated risk reduction, or mitigation, analyzes the existing susceptibility towards harm to implement preventative measures; and is used after (Sylves, 2015, pp. 21-22). Online public statements issued by decision-makers at CSU Bakersfield state that campus staff had been
devising coronavirus contingency plans as early as February 27, 2020 (Zelezney, 2020, February 27). A month earlier, university health officials issued a public notice that they were monitoring the spread of COVID-19 on January 27 (Rico, 2020). Even though faculty had to take personal responsibility for learning how to adopt new online learning and telework methods, online public statements issued by decision-makers at CSU Bakersfield state that campus staff had been devising coronavirus contingency plans as early as February 27, 2020 (Zelezney, 2020, February 27). A few weeks later, CSU Bakersfield's transition to "Virtual Learning" took place between March 12 and March 27, 2020 (Zelezney, 2020, March 12).

Sylves (2015) outlines four phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery (Sylves, 2015, pp. 21-23). These phases do not necessarily happen in a sequential order, but they typically occur at the expense of concurrent efforts since emergency management is inherently comprised of high-cost organizational initiatives. For example, the ongoing implementation of social distancing is an example of continuous mitigation, which is occurring at the same time as the university’s emergency response efforts to provide food, vaccines, and internet service to vulnerable people in the campus community.

Crisis management tactics used by CSU Bakersfield are not exclusive to education institutions. Henry Mintzberg & Frances Westly observed that organizational change transcends individual learning initiatives when learning becomes "the basis for a new perspective, in effect, a new vision of some aspect of organizational life" (Mintzberg & Westley, 1992, pp. 44). Meyer (1982) examined the response of hospitals to various "environmental jolts" and found that destabilizing events present opportunities for "organizational learning" and "strategic reorientations," but their research also warns that "hard-won success breeds resistance to change" (Meyer, 1982, pp. 535). The pivot in modalities presents underexplored organizational
opportunity for capitalizing on gains made during CSU Bakersfield’s COVID-19 response efforts. Ideally, this program would be implemented as soon as possible to help improve student outcomes in the “recovery” phase proceeding with the implementation of the university’s COVID-19 response. Richard Sylves suggests that the phase of recovery includes a short-term phase that addresses present needs and a long-term phase that involves "restoration, rebuilding, and returns to normalcy" (Sylves, 2015, pp. 23). Accordingly, The Presidential Advisory Committee on Innovation and Knowledge Expansion will prioritize strategies that contribute to restoring what has been lost during the pandemic-induced shutdown of campus facilities.

Organizational Learning

This section focuses on organizational learning, which has been defined as a process through which organizations gather information and encounter changing circumstances and environmental factors (Schermerhorn et al. 2004, pp. 5). Some faculty from CSU Bakersfield had experience in teaching classes that were fully or partially online. Platforms that were already in wide use included BlackBoard and Canvas, where faculty could facilitate digital classroom discussions, which provided a consistent space for students to gain understanding without the tether of a limited timeframe found in non-digital classroom discussion. This dynamic provided both students and faculty with the application of their ability to utilize such modalities.

In their book Core Concepts of Organizational Behavior, Schermerhord et al. (2004) define abilities as "knowledge and skills that an individual currently possess," and aptitude as "a person's capability of learning something" (Schermerhorn et al., 2004, pp. 53). Aptitude, however, became a challenge in the non-optional context of Virtual Learning during COVID. Mandatory social distancing forced faculty which had not previously developed the ability or potential intuition needed to effectively adapt to the innovations which Virtual Learning
necessitates. This lack of aptitude disrupted the effective transmission of information, posing consistent impediments for students of CSU Bakersfield to meet learning objectives. With more frequent use of BlackBoard of Canvas prior to COVID-19, it may have been possible that faculty would have the aptitude needed to continue administering their courses with more ease. Such repetition is a key aspect of learning, so it's valuable to incorporate technology use routinely to decrease the anxiety about high-tech reporting mandates (Karmelita, 2017). Alternatively, Levitt & March (1988) define organizational learning as the process through which organizations "[encode] inferences from history into routines that guide behavior" (Levitt & March 1988, p. 319). These definitions describe similar behaviors, such as gathering information but yield insights that are distinct from one another. For example, the definition offered by Schemerhorn et al. (2004) is conducive to having an expansive discussion on the factors that influence an organization's responsiveness to external factors. In this case, we would consider how the danger imposed by the coronavirus helped campus leaders overcome resistance to having everyone on campus learn how to navigate teleconferencing software and online education practices.

On the other hand, the definition of organizational learning offered by Levitt & March (1988) articulates how important events can lead to the creation of bureaucratic artifacts that become routine to future generations of institutional actors. For example, it could become routine to conduct more meetings online if the participants find it agreeable and convenient. Organizational learning can even be used to define important characteristics of an organization’s various components (Rosenbloom & Kravchuck, 2005). These definitions of organizational learning seem to suggest that an organization that supports organizational learning beyond the individual level must help program participants understand the impact of external pressures on
the university and derive alternative approaches to encoding insights from their own experiences in ways that will be useful in the long-term.

**Views on the Diffusion of Innovation and Knowledge**

The advent of the coronavirus pandemic compelled rapid learning initiatives to form a baseline measurement of the adaptability and resiliency of disparate groups on campus who shared the experience of undergoing a rapid learning process during the pandemic. Mladenova, Kalmukov, and Valova (2020) observed that "distance learning" through "eLearning" is at least 20 years old and that the coronavirus pandemic led to the rapid diffusion of new practices (Mladenova et al., 2020). In fact, there are already many innovative, highly specialized sources of academically sound education that are offered to virtually anyone in the world with access to the internet. Massive open online courses (MOOCs) have been an emerging trend in which "full-length courses [are] delivered over the Internet to large numbers of students at little or no charge" (Bastedo et al., 2019, pp. 444).

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, educational institutions such as CSU Bakersfield have responded to the coronavirus by relying on electronic mediums to facilitate online instruction and student service delivery. However, the pedagogical practices and technical protocols of virtual learning were not invented because of the gathering restrictions imposed by the coronavirus.

Luo et al. (2016) define knowledge expansion as "the nonlocal search of new knowledge across technological or organizational boundaries beyond the current expertise of an organization… It represents a process of knowledge transferred from one external source to the organization." (Luo et al., 2016, pp. 870). This perspective adopts a "recombinatory search
framework" that facilitates "organisational learning as a result of combining the new and old knowledge elements possessed by the firm" (Luo et al., 2016, pp. 871). The pandemic elicited the necessary process of taking curriculum designed for in-person learning, which assumed all students would have access to resources such as libraries, computers, and internet access on higher education campuses, and adapt those course designs to the limitations of virtual learning. This conversion had to be executed so quickly that such knowledge expansion was flawed and underexplored.

The Chronicle of Higher Education estimates that 65% of American higher education institutions have transitioned to distance learning models to reduce the likelihood of coronavirus outbreaks on campus (Elias et al., 2020). This profound change for a majority of these institutions was unsettling for all members of a campus community but posed striking challenges for faculty and students. The mode of Virtual Learning was unfamiliar for these parties, but the wide-reaching changes permitted socially distanced classroom settings to become normalized during the pandemic. Data compiled by the National Conference of State Legislatures has found that over 1,300 colleges and universities in the United States transitioned to online education and ended most in-person classes (Smalley, 2021). Although many higher education institutions have gained a new familiarity with the tools adopted for Virtual Learning, the wide distributions of COVID-19 vaccinations produce a high likelihood of many campuses participating in full- or partial reopening for face-to-face learning. Although how change comes about in any given organization varies, the "diffusion of innovation" often develops in predictable phases, which presumably ends when a series of rapid changes is followed by a new equilibrium (Frederickson et al., 2018, pp. 88-89). Researchers refer to this pattern of change as the "S-Curve" because the
early adoption of innovations is challenging and slow, followed by rapid adoption resulting in a shared knowledge base among colleagues (Knoess et al., 2016).

In an organizational setting, the diffusion of information is associated in some form with the enhancement of operational capabilities. Economists and organizational psychologists have tested the idea that institutional changes occur in a sequence of phases that are characterized by the degree to which innovations are diffused throughout an organization. Mary Maureen Brown describes how institutional innovations can be analyzed through two broad and antithetical perspectives: a) sequential/maturational change b) nonlinear/adaptative change. The two models can be used to articulate characteristics that are inherent to technological innovations in large-complex organizations. For example, sequential changes, or “maturational” changes, are typically derived throughout a deliberative process that results in changes that are planned long before they occur (Brown, 2007). Since the models describe the opposite of their counterpart, it would be reasonable to expect that if a change can be described in terms of one model, it could not be aptly described by the opposite. Therefore, it is accurate to describe the recent wave of innovation in higher education as adaptative change that is occurring as the COVID-19 crisis unfolds.

The delayed response to the coronavirus in the United States certainly demonstrates that information is not always spread through a rational decision-making process. In fact, Frederickson et al. (2018) note that there is a wide body of research that suggests that information spreads throughout an institution in a "contagion process" (Frederickson et al., 2018, pp. 88-89). DiMaggio & Powell (1983) describe how complex organizations could be conditioned rapidly change, since organizations are well suited to mimic the methods and practices which are being used by comparatively successful counterparts in their industry.
(DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Historically, the shift to Virtual Learning was preceded by two decades of heavy investments made by higher education institutions into the professional development of staff and the procurement of technology services that automate clerical tasks and facilitate online course delivery (Thelin, 2019).

**Program Design for Social Outcomes**

Students, faculty, and staff would be the immediate beneficiaries of an institutional effort to consolidate new information which was learned during CSU Bakersfield’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As John Bryson points out, a group of people should be considered stakeholders if their satisfaction is important to the success of the organization's efforts (Bryson, 2018, pp. 131). This categorical principle holds true when applied to the student population, so it is reasonable to insist the communities surrounding the university should have access to the information that this advisory committee produces. This program intends to make use of The Value Creation Framework (V.C.F.) in order to identify the types of benefit for those involved in a program and makes a strategic effect to create conditions and activities that support that benefit or value (Whisler, Anderson, & Brown, 2017). According to Whisler et al. (2017), "Identifying supportive conditions and factors to mitigate risks helped us imagine the environment that would be necessary to achieve the aspirational outcomes and identify actions that might avoid potential obstacles" (Whisler, Anderson, & Brown, 2017, pp. 63). To support organizational learning after the coronavirus pandemic would require a broad university-wide strategic discussion that helps university stakeholders reflect on the experience of rapid change during a prolonged state of emergency.
Chapter 3: Program Proposal

This is a program proposal for an advisory committee that coordinates organizational learning activities at CSU Bakersfield after the coronavirus pandemic. The proposed planning committee includes the following Program Components:

- Program Goals
- Program Components
- The Role of Program Participants
- Organizational Workflow
- Program Model
- Program Goals

Program design should begin with considering the experience of the end-users or its clientele population (Rosenau, 1981). On March 26th, 2020, CSU Bakersfield announced that "There will be no refunds for tuition since CSUB. is not closing and classes are moving forward" (CSU Bakersfield, March 26, 2020). While instruction certainly proceeded, in spite of the widespread uncertainty imposed by the coronavirus pandemic, the shift to online learning elicited discontent and frustration from students who were charged full tuition for an inferior learning experience. For instance, on April 28, 2020, a student was quoted as having said, "Lectures over zoom feel a lot emptier. Sometimes during lectures people have stuff going on in their homes that is very distracting while the professor is lecturing. Sometimes the professor themselves cut in and out while they're lecturing due to poor internet connection. All in all this feels worse than a typical online class because some of the instructors are learning as they go and it kinda sucks." (CSU Bakersfield, April 28, 2020).
Barbara Robertson and Mark J. Flowers studied data gathered from 436 students who underwent some form of online education and “found that the video lecture in combination with a PowerPoint was the most effective study aid” (Robertson & Flowers, 2020, pp. 25). Their analysis of student outcomes also revealed that online video lectures are “better when supplemented with other learning materials” (Robertson & Flowers, 2020, pp. 35).

Program Goals

The goals of this program are synthesized using a Value Creation Framework, which helps bring attention to the value a program can bring to its end users (Whisler, Anderson, & Brown, 2017). The Presidential Advisory Committee on Innovation and Knowledge Expansion will benefit by referring to the value creation framework to express desired program outcomes. The Value Creation Framework (V.C.F.) lists seven values that program designers should consider at an early stage: immediate value, potential value, applied value, realized value, transformative value, enabling value, and strategic value (Whisler, Anderson, & Brown, 2017).

Immediate Value: Supplement existing organizational learning initiatives and programs.

Potential Value: Provide a platform for knowledge sharing among affected stakeholders.

Applied Value: Consider and create opportunities to advance university priorities.

Realized Value: Improved student outcomes and streamline clerical services.

Transformative Value: Increase student satisfaction and community building.

Enabling Value: Uphold shared governance principles inherent to public universities.

Strategic Value: Build upon the capabilities which nurture institutional adaptability.
The short-term goal of this program is to facilitate the continuation of innovations that committee members found useful during a rapid adoption of new methods. The Presidential Advisory Committee on Innovation & Knowledge Expansion would be charged with creating an annual innovation action plan to move the university forward in its efforts to stay competitive and up-to-date relative to other public universities in the CSU System. In order to improve student outcomes, the values listed above dictate program components that would make the advisory committee's objective successful. Program components include facilitation strategy, service provision, and clientele feedback. Each of these components features advisory committee seats, which serve to actualize one or more of these values.

**Program Components**

![Organizational Chart](image-url)
The Role of Program Participants

The organizational chart, shown above as Figure 1, depicts the hierarchy of The Presidential Advisory Committee on Innovation and Knowledge Expansion. On top there is a seat reserved for the President of CSUB or an appointed Liaison to the President. A liaison to the President's office would work to connect the ongoing initiatives undertaken by the committee to the President of the university and report the findings of the Advisory Committee to the President. They would work closely with the primary facilitator of the committee to maintain regular updates of the status of findings and initiatives. That person would oversee the work of the committee members that decide which action items should be prioritized which are a) the Chief Facilitator b) the Appointed Faculty Members and c) Student Delegates. The Chief Facilitator is responsible for maintaining a productive coalition that is responsive to campus needs. The Chief Facilitator is entitled to appoint a Secretary, to keep track of ongoing committee business, and an Institutional Historian, so that future committee members have an adequate context to evaluate their own state of affairs.

The Chief Facilitator is one of the several advisory committee members. Their presence on the committee guides other participants in shared responsibilities described by the Organizational Workflow (Figure 2). The Chief Facilitator would work with the Institutional Historian to familiarize the committee with whatever the university's innovative tradition has been. The Institutional Historian must have a working knowledge of the technology needed to access the information held by institutional artifacts outside of current research mechanisms and their interfaces. In collaboration with the Secretary, the Chief Facilitator and Institutional Historian document proceedings of the committee. This action would be initiating a living document that details a comprehensive history of the university. The creation of such a document
would produce the pretense for including the actions of the committee within the university's history of experiences in success and failure in pursuit of advancement. The knowledge imparted by this process for future students and other stakeholders creates potential value for CSU Bakersfield.

To expand the committee's capacity to address the needs of the end-user of the program, including faculty members, is essential. This program proposal suggests that the dean of each of CSU Bakersfield's academic departments shall appoint a faculty member from their respective department to serve on the advisory committee. The distinct insights of these faculty members are essential to the foundation of applied value for their fellow faculty as well as the students they teach. The achievements and challenges they may have experienced throughout the transition to Virtual Learning would vary, and the culmination of their shared experiences provides the committee with the perspective of individuals who work closest to students. Appointed Faculty Members work directly with Information Technology Services and the Faculty Learning Center to measure the feasibility of proposed organizational learning initiatives. Information Technology Services would appoint a staff member to the committee. The Faculty Learning Center will also appoint a staff member to the committee but retain the option to request the procurement of external consultants.

Information Technology Services would have a staff representative present on the advisory committee to help mitigate the obstructions that are prone to arise from the differing levels of technological adaptiveness amongst faculty. When considering which adopted technological innovations warrant continuity, it would be this I.T. Representative's task to evaluate the extent to which innovations enhance the capacity of the university to make timely and confident adjustments to the appropriate learning modes during times of crisis. The
contributing branch of the Faculty Teaching and Learning Center would also help meet the needs of faculty. Their objective would be to create a lesson plan for faculty to help them understand, practice, and use the updated versions of teaching tools at any time throughout the academic year. The Learning Center would be the place where a staff representative would be available for hands-on guidance or troubleshooting as faculty gain experience. In order to establish how the best innovations would be put to use, the Presidential Advisory Committee on Innovation & Knowledge Expansion would bring in an External Consultant. Having a participant who is not an existing member of the CSU Bakersfield community prevents any potential bias favoring the university, which could inhibit candid analysis of the current state of affairs. Their feedback will present which systematic successes are successfully adding value to the experience of students.

Members of the student population will hold three seats of the committee. One seat would be reserved for a student government elected to ensure that official student representatives continue to contribute to the design end of a mechanism that ultimately intends to serve students. Additionally, one seat would be reserved for students who are active in club life by being a member of an existing chartered student club or organization that has experience recognizing where improvements can be made in the services rendered for students. Finally, a third seat would be reserved for any CSU Bakersfield student to ensure that anyone who attends the university has a fair opportunity to impact the innovation trends of the university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liaison to the President of CSUB.</td>
<td>President’s Office</td>
<td>This liaison position would bring university stakeholders' priorities to the committee's attention for evaluation and response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Group Status</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Facilitator (1)</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
<td>The Chief Facilitator of the committee will be responsible for ensuring active engagement from committee participants and that the program model (<em>Figure 2</em>) is successfully employed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointed Faculty (4)</td>
<td>Committee Members</td>
<td>One faculty member from each of CSU Bakersfield's academic departments appointed by the respective academic dean:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Arts and Humanities (A.H.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Business and Public Administration (B.P.A.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering (N.S.M.E.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Social Sciences &amp; Education (S.S.E.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Delegates (3)</td>
<td>Committee Members</td>
<td>Three seats available:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- One seat will be reserved for a delegate appointed by the university’s student government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- One seat for a member of a chartered club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- One seat will be open to any applicant from the CSU Bakersfield student body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Auxiliary Participants</td>
<td>Documentation of evolving needs, objectives, and actions of the advisory committee by the secretary provides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Auxiliary Participants</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.T. Representative (1)</td>
<td>Auxiliary Participants</td>
<td>Conduct Feasibility Studies on assigned action items which are approved by a majority vote of committee members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Learning Center Representative (1)</td>
<td>Auxiliary Participants</td>
<td>Build Learning Communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Historian (1)</td>
<td>Auxiliary Participants</td>
<td>This role maintains a knowledge base that gives people on campus somebody who can speak to the history of the university and its evolution since the use of microfilms and into the era of cloud computing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Consultant (1)</td>
<td>Auxiliary Participants</td>
<td>Give an outsider perspective on the university’s strengths and shortcomings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Program Model

Figure 2. Program Model

Phases of Committee Review Process

A. Responding to crises, events, and trends which require allocating resources to facilitate organizational learning.

B. Advising the Office of the President on action items regarding innovation, knowledge expansion, and the maintenance of institutional adaptability.

C. Facilitating communication among disparate cohorts within the campus community while upholding principles that are conducive to shared governance.

D. Pursuing organizational goals outlined in the university’s current strategic plan.

E. Evaluating university skills and needs regarding action items that were identified as institutional priorities.
Staff Assignments

- **a→b** = committee members review action items introduced by university stakeholders
- **b→c** = committee members work with the Office of the President to identify priorities
- **c→d** = committee members call for input from the campus community on action items
- **d→e** = committee members decide which action items are worth exploring in-depth
- **e→b** = committee working groups conduct an assessment of approved action items

Organizational Workflow

The first two phases of the workflow, shown above as Figure 2, for the proposed advisory committee would be focused on recognizing shortcomings within the university's capabilities and bringing these problems to the attention of decision-makers on campus. Phase A is the focusing event that leads to the realized need for a continual evaluation process in which assessment is experiential rather than based on predetermined benchmarks. The process of recognizing a problem and introducing it as an action item to the advisory committee is expressed as **a→b**, where committee members review action items introduced by university stakeholders. In the future, Phase A could occur long after the coronavirus pandemic because Phase A refers to the advent of a focusing event that reveals the need for high-cost capability-building initiatives. Phase B is the phase when the President of CSU Bakersfield is presented with advice on the capabilities and shortcomings of the university. Phase B can vary according to the priorities of the university president or an appointed member of their cabinet.

The next stage, Phase C, is about coordinating the sharing of information amongst disparate communities on campus that may not interact with each other on a routine basis. In order to facilitate Phase C, action **b→c** must take place, where committee members work
together in determining which action items should be prioritized. Phase C opens the opportunity for feedback to the campus community, providing a channel for their input through $c \rightarrow d$. In order to act upon this feedback, Phase D ensures that action taken in response to this feedback will align with the university's strategic plan. The subsequent action $d \rightarrow e$ would be the vehicle for determining which of the action items warrant more thorough exploration. This process leads into the reevaluation stage of Phase E. Phase E sets the conditions of cyclical evaluation of the university's capacity to meet its own institutional priorities. Such an assessment would lead to a secondary iteration of Phase B. Action $e \rightarrow b^1$ would create a feedback loop that promotes the regular improvement of CSU Bakersfield. This proactive approach to issues of readiness in times of crisis promotes institutional management that is flexible and highly responsive.

**Proposed Work Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment/Responsibility/Task</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiate outreach campaign which clearly communicates the objectives and functions of The Presidential Advisory Committee on Innovation and Knowledge Expansion to interested parties of the campus community with an invitation for collaboration through the announcement of seats available for appointment.</td>
<td>Chief Facilitator</td>
<td>June - July 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The chief facilitator picks among the people who showed interest or reaches out directly if no one is volunteering.</td>
<td>Chief Facilitator</td>
<td>July-August 22 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee members design and administer a survey to the campus community.</td>
<td></td>
<td>August 23 - September 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Committee Working Groups</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee members review survey data.</td>
<td>Committee Working Groups</td>
<td>September 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Consultant Audit</td>
<td>Committee Working Groups</td>
<td>October 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Comment on Draft Innovation Plan</td>
<td>Committee Working Groups</td>
<td>November 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Plan for the Consideration of CSUB President</td>
<td>Chief Facilitator</td>
<td>December 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Budgetary Impacts and Anticipated Resource Needs**

The expected cost of introducing the necessary external consultant for The Presidential Advisory Committee on Innovation and Knowledge Expansion could be a one-time cost of $25,000. This external consultant would conduct an audit of the university's capabilities and shortcomings. Their scrutiny regarding how existing practices can be improved upon will make the Draft Innovation Plan focused on the highest priorities instead of misusing resources to address issues that pose a lower risk of exacerbation.
The diverse student population of CSU Bakersfield should be kept in mind when considering how additional efforts should be distributed. Gaynor & Wilson (2020) provide an extensive introduction to known metrics which prove that traditionally marginalized communities of color are at greater risk of suffering from COVID-19, such as the Social Vulnerability Index, which actually reveal known patterns of "persistent inequity" that make "some communities more vulnerable to human suffering than others" (Gaynor & Wilson 2020, pp. 833). In order to nurture an effective response from this clientele population, additional funding for an expansive outreach campaign discourages participation in misinformation dissemination and motivates this audience to get their COVID-19 vaccination with confidence.
Chapter 4: Conclusion & Implementation Recommendations

In an April 2020 report issued by the Atlantic Council named "What World Post-COVID-19?" Mat Burrows and Peter Engelke postulated three scenarios for a post-pandemic geopolitical realignment. All three scenarios confronted the fact that "there were ample signs of deglobalization, rising anti-immigrant sentiment, and great power concentration" before the COVID-19 pandemic (Burrows & Engelke, 2020, pp. 3). They argued that "only when the public has been properly vaccinated will the virus be completely conquered" (Burrows & Engleke, 2020, pp. 3).

Currently, there seems to be widespread optimism that the worst phase of the coronavirus pandemic has passed. However, the inequitable distribution of coronavirus vaccines in impoverished communities throughout the globe indicates that the emergence of vaccine-resistant variants will likely occur and compound the need for a future sequence of policies and programs to protect the public and the economy from a healthcare-related crisis. Consider, for example, how the inequitable vaccine distribution in the coronavirus pandemic resembles injustices witnessed during the AIDS epidemic of the late twentieth century. Nitsan Chorev's analysis of antiretroviral drug access for AIDS patients details how "pharmaceutical companies did not offer poor countries discounted prices… and wealthy nations refused to finance the expensive drugs because they did not consider treatment a realistic possibility for poor countries" (Chorev, 2012).

The wide-reaching accessibility of the COVID-19 vaccine amongst wealthy nations may serve as a catalyst for a similar treatment of underserved countries. Despite wealthy nations having advanced opportunities to access these vaccines, the number of people in those nations who are receiving these vaccines has stagnated in some places and declined in others. The
simultaneous lack of vaccines for poor nations makes those countries prone to develop new variants of the virus. As the health problems compound in poor nations, and as the resurgence of global trade and travel industries dictate permissible regulation, new variants maintain the capacity to spread to a global population in the same fashion as COVID-19 originally did in early 2020 (Reuters, 2021).

Synthesis of Research Findings

I. Notable barriers to large-scale coordination, fragmented authority, and shared governance are core features of American Higher Education Institutions.

II. Colleges and Universities have taken on more social responsibilities in the era of the coronavirus pandemic.

III. Online learning will remain a core feature in higher education since technology is rapidly evolving and becoming more user-friendly.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that California State University, Bakersfield act with urgency to implement The Presidential Advisory Committee on Innovation and Knowledge Expansion as soon as possible in anticipation of the ensuant emergence of COVID-19 variants impacting social distancing guidelines.

Recommendation 2: It is further recommended that higher education institutions not interpret the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions as the establishment of adequate conditions for the safe returns of campus communities to in-person learning modes.
References


https://www2.calstate.edu/csu-system/news/Pages/California-State-University-Campuses-to-Accelerate-Transition-to-Virtual-Instruction.aspx

https://www2.calstate.edu/csu-system/news/Pages/CSU-COVID-Vax-Requirement-FDA-Approval.aspx


Zelezny, L. (2020, March 17). *Acceleration to Virtual Instruction and Social Distancing for Students/Employees*. California State University, Bakersfield.

https://www.csub.edu/covid-19/acceleration-virtual-instruction-and-social-distancing-studentsemployees
