"FLE06272"
Mary-Anne Fleming
University of Southern Queensland.

Academic Interest Areas: Translating the Vision into Reality

Abstract

This paper examines, from the perspective of a 'workplace challenge', the ways in which the culture of an organisation can be changed from a hierarchical structure to that of a learning organisation. The paper focuses on the concept of Academic Interest Areas (AIA), which evolved from a University Faculty restructure.

Firstly, the reasons for change are discussed and contextualised. Secondly, the Faculty restructure and the development of the AIA initiative are explored. The paper describes the institution and the place of the education faculty within the institution. It further outlines the faculty restructure, its impact and how the AIA initiative subsequently evolved from this restructure. A discussion of the development of workplace change, the culture of the organisation and subsequent leadership issues, provides a context for the analysis of the challenges and successes of the AIA to date.

Information gleaned from documentation, collegial discussion and interviews with academic staff involved in the AIA process provides the basis upon which to reflect on the AIA initiation. The initial findings indicate that the AIA initiative is largely accepted by Faculty academics as a worthy concept but that it falls short in the transition of the AIA concept into a fully functional initiative.

Introduction

In today's post corporate world, characterised by "a move towards smaller, autonomous, interdependent, collaborative units made up of empowered individuals", (Limerick, Cunnington & Crowther, 2002, p.19), and with the challenges of globalisation, organisational management requires unique skills in order to fulfil the objective of perpetuation and growth. To achieve this in the ever increasingly difficult environment in which they operate, it is now believed that many of the previously understood techniques of corporate management are no longer applicable (Dawson; 2003; Limerick et al; 2002, Morgan; 1996). Educational management is similarly impacted by globalisation and the changes therein and management now requires

flexibility and the ability to make rapid changes in the dynamic environment in which they operate. Moving an organisation forward involves fostering openness and finding alternative organisational structures that will allow individuals to redefine identities while working together collaboratively (Rouleau and Clegg, as cited in Limerick et al 2002). To move an organisation forward in an era of change and discontinuity requires leadership, vision, empowerment, cooperation and commitment.

Setting the Context

The Faculty is set within an Academic Organisation, (AO) which is a dynamic regional university. It services a large number of students approximately both internationally and nationally, through its well-developed and internationally recognised distance education program. The Faculty designs and delivers programs and courses which are aimed at ensuring that all levels of graduates are imbued with the confidence that the vocation of teaching will become the paramount profession in order to develop and lead society into the knowledge-based paradigm of the twenty-first century. The faculty, as part of the University's strategic plan for flexible delivery, provides diverse modes of delivery, utilising both traditional and contemporary technologies, including on-campus, traditional distance education and on-line processes, involving teleconferencing, residential schools and inter-institutional library networks. The faculty aims to ensure that the educational, instructive practices are progressively forward thinking and underpinned by authoritative theory.

The Reasons for Change

In the 1990s, most organisations faced dynamic changes in the operating environment, changes, which in turn, required organisations to adapt to new ways of working (Robbins, Waters-Marsh, Cacioppe, & Millett, 1994). 'Change or die!' is, according to Robbins, Millett, Cacioppe, & Waters-Marsh (2001, p.697), the rallying cry among managers of today, worldwide.

Robbins et al (2001) identify six specific forces for change as being:

- The Nature of the workforce
- Technology
- Economic shocks

- Social trends
- World politics
- Competition

According to Robbins et al (2001), "We live in an age of discontinuity" (p.698). Limerick et al (2002) introduce the concept of the Fourth Blueprint environment, which they describe as a new paradigm for organisational life characterised by high levels of social, economic and technological discontinuity within which the future can no longer be predicted from the immediate past. If an organisation is to survive, it must respond to changes in its environment and this is recognised as being no easy task to achieve in an organisational setting. Robbins et al, discuss organisational resistance to change and six tactics that can be used to help overcome resistance to change. They further provide a planned approach to change, which identifies the factors needed for successful change but focuses on what managers need to do to effect change. The factors for successful change according to Robbins et al are:

- pressure for change
- a clear, shared vision
- actionable first steps
- capacity for change
- model the way
- reinforce / solidify the change
- evaluate and improve

Discussing the future of organisations Robbins et al (2001) contend that, "Managing strategically is a challenge that involves maintaining a degree of continuity with the past and present, while at the same time projecting the organisation into the future by skilfully managing change" (p.537). They identify one of the implications for organisations in the future is to "influence OB (organisational behaviour) towards developing a learning organisation" (p.540). They define a learning organisation as, "an organisation that has developed the continuous capacity to adapt and change" (p.540).

The AO, like most Higher Education institutions was not insulated from the impact of change happening in the corporate world, changes encouched in terms such as 'Globalisation', 'Knowledge society' and 'Economic rationalism' impacted across all communities. The effects of these changes had many implications for higher

education and institutions, such as universities, needing to acknowledge the changes in the economy, society and knowledge areas and make plans to be able to compete, in order to remain viable into the 21st century. Continuing changes in government policy over a number of years has, and continues to have, an enormous impact on higher educational institutions.

In the context of change and its impact, throwing down a challenge to educators, Jones (as cited in Limerick, et al., 2002), postulates that,

> *Educators and trainers must forever drop the arrogance of academic isolation. Your challenge is to:*
> - *Build a partnership with business*
> - *Develop a culture of continuous change and improvement*
> - *Adopt new training technologies*
> - *Focus on portability and credentialing*
> - *Form new strategic alliances*
>
> *Most importantly you must become an integral part of the constantly evolving economic environment* (p.11).

Restructure of the Education Faculty

The organisation of the Faculty, prior to the restructure, appeared to follow the structure of an industrial model, reflecting that of a second and third blueprint organisation as identified by Limerick et al., (2002). The Faculty was organised into departments, each having its own head and it would appear from correspondence and anecdotal reports that there was little cross fertilisation of ideas and that the culture of the organisation was one of a 'silo' mentality, with staff working in isolation within their own department. The idea of restructuring was initially mooted in the year 2000, due to internal issues within the Faculty. The Faculty Assembly, an internal university body made up of all staff assigned to the Faculty, both academic and non-academic, whose role is to address and discuss matters referred to it and to make recommendations to appropriate university authorities, did not take up this recommendation; rather it undertook a strategic review of the Faculty as a whole. Factors cited as contributing to the need for a review of the faculty were:
- the way in which Departments had evolved had left one department as a non-cohesive group of staff 'left overs' from the two new departments.

- changes in staff as the post seventies expansion staff retired.
- influx of new staff and growth in part-time staff.
- expansion and change in courses and clientele.
- growth and changes in areas of strength in research.
- changes to modes of course delivery.
- changes in the field of teacher education and education generally. (Reed, Anstey, Wright, Redmond & Mander, 2001).

However, following the strategic review, it was recognised that a restructure was required in order to meet the key objectives identified by the review. The central aim of the restructure was intended to provide an organisational structure that would enable the resulting Faculty to not only achieve its vision, but also to deliver the vision in regard to its new professionalism and effectiveness.

Identified in a Report to the AO Council in March 2004, the key objectives of the Faculty restructure were:

- To devolve more responsibility for pedagogical decision-making to academic staff, individually and collectively.
- To provide the Faculty staff with increased flexibility and choice in teaching assignments.
- To provide satellite education staff with a clarified status and increased site-based responsibility.
- To enable the Faculty to achieve increased consistency and equity in workload policies and practices.
- To encourage a wider distribution of leadership roles within the Faculty and to provide more opportunities for leadership and managerial development.
- To facilitate the successful implementation of recently accredited core programs.
- To ensure consistency with emerging AO priorities in research and entrepreneurial activity.

Extract from the Report to the AO Council

Among benefits to the resulting Faculty, in terms of professional dialogue across departments, was the development of shared vision and pedagogy statements and

reports. A Faculty Pedagogical Framework was drafted to provide a guide for review and renewal of teaching, learning and research within the Faculty. Another area of great interest to the Faculty was in leading the Pedagogical Framework to a holistic shared approach within the Faculty to inform all the programs and practices and to ensure they were aligned with the shared Pedagogical Vision "Educators Empowering Educators". (Reed, Anstey, Wright, Redmond & Mander, 2001).

'The pedagogical framework is achieved through a shared vision of best practice and a commitment to world class performance'.

'We value and we practise:

Inspired teaching and learning • Designing creative learning environments • Motivated learning • Celebrating successes	Inclusivity and justice • Pastoral care • Equity and access • Diversity • Reconciliation • Sustainable world
Professional leadership • Lifelong learning • Ethics • Mentoring • Graduate attributes • Modelling pedagogy across university • Continuous enhancement of the pedagogical framework • Influence on educational policy	The generation of new knowledge • Research • Technology • Professional learning • Multiliteracies • "Literate futures" • Sustaining, enhancing and enriching our faculty pedagogical framework • Integration of theory and practice • Transferability of learning, knowledge and skills
Collaborative teaching and learning • Partnerships • Collegiality • Networking (Internal/External)	Learner centredness • Student engagement • Responsibility • Facilitation • Empowerment
Critical reflection • Personal theorising • Authentic dialogue • Advocacy	Responsive and responsible change • Adaptability • Flexibility • Agents of change • Innovation

Faculty of Education – A Pedagogical Framework, (Reed, Anstey, Wright, Redmond & Mander, 2001).

The review also resulted in the identification of a number of specific challenges for the Faculty. These challenges were identified in an unpublished case study by a faculty member, *The Development of the Academic Interest Areas (AIA) in the Education Faculty: A case study in ascribing the responsibility of pedagogical leadership to the Faculty's teaching staff.* as being:

Challenge One – to enhance the public image of the Faculty and the teaching profession, particularly in the local region.

Challenge Two – to heighten the Faculty's research function and expand strategies for external linkages for research funding.

Challenge Three – to ascribe significant leadership functions evenly throughout the Faculty.

Challenge Four – to increase the infrastructural support available to academic staff.

Challenge Five – to heighten the Faculty's capacity to respond to emerging external trends and developments.

Challenge Six – to enhance the transparency of Faculty decision processes.

Challenge Seven – to strengthen alliances with external political, professional and community agencies.

Challenge Eight – to streamline academic decision structures and processes, including accreditation and quality assurance.

Challenge Nine – to ensure that the Faculty's Pedagogical Framework becomes the basis for a holistic, shared faculty approach to teacher education at all levels and through all delivery mechanisms.

Together with the nine specific challenges, the case study also identified an 'overarching challenge' facing the Faculty, which is described as the challenge, "to strengthen and refine the Faculty's vision, identity and organisational structures and processes." The resulting Faculty restructure was deemed to be essential to meet these challenges.

The case study recognised that the restructure of the faculty was an imperative to the achievement of Challenge Nine, as it enabled the Faculty's teaching staff to take the responsibility to effectively respond to this specific challenge. By ensuring that the Faculty's pedagogical Framework became the basis for a holistic, shared faculty

approach to teacher education at all levels and through all delivery mechanisms, the Faculty would achieve its articulated vision *"to be recognised globally as a FOE which inspires and equips educators to realise the pivotal role of their profession in transforming the future."* The case study acknowledges that within the newly structured Faculty, the delivery vehicle for the pedagogical transformation necessary to meet both the vision and the challenges became known as the AIA.

In conclusion, the case study raised the very significant and important question, concerning the faculty restructuring, "has it made a difference?" In answer to this question, the author identified a number of areas where, "there is growing evidence that the AIA have already achieved identifiable outcomes." These achievements included:

- significant renewed enthusiasm for pedagogical development in the Faculty, for example, an agreement on ICT integration; the development of significant rethinking about the delivery of courses; cross disciplinary course development.
- a significant rethinking in regards links with the field.
- an increased ability to respond to external demands/developments – changed course requirements imposed by Board of Teacher Registration; and responses to international students' course needs.
- a growing confidence of the Academic staff as they are becoming aware that they are being recognised as contributing to the enhancement of the teaching profession, particularly in the local region.

As part of the conclusion to the case study it was noted that in 2005, the Faculty would conduct, "an evaluation of its new structures, including the AIA".

The Disconnect in the AIA - Towards Reality

In spite of the acknowledged achievements of the AIA in delivering identifiable outcomes, it is apparent from internal Faculty correspondence, that all is not well in their functioning. This contention is also noted by the Dean of Faculty in the Dean's Briefing Notes to the Faculty, "AIA developments: The AIA concept, while very promising, encountered some difficulty in late 2004 and is in need of clarification.

Structures and functions in particular are in need of reconsideration" (Faculty correspondence.).

The majority of the faculty staff appears to support the concept of the AIA, but the implementation and on-going functionality of them is not so well supported. What is clear from the correspondence circulating within the faculty in respect of the AIA, the function of the AIA and the duties and responsibilities of the Convenors, is that there is a disconnect between the intent of the AIA and the observed (perceived) reality. The questions must be asked, what has caused the obvious disconnect? How can this disconnect be overcome and what management or leadership strategies must be implemented to realign the AIA to become, "the delivery vehicle for the pedagogical transformation necessary to meet both the vision and the nine identified challenges and the overarching challenge to strengthen and refine the faculty's stated vision'' (Faculty correspondence.).

The faculty restructure and the subsequent development and implementation of the AIA initiative must be considered to be significant change events in the AO organisation, requiring high-level transformational and visionary leadership. Successful change is hinged on a picture of a desirable future and it is vision, which provides this picture. Vision must be recognised as being credible, realistic and future focused and it must be seen to be achievable. It must convey a sense of excellence, be easy to communicate and be able to be understood at all levels of the corporate structure (Collins & Porras, 1995; Kotter, 1995; Nanus, 1992).

From analysis of collated information, it would appear that the possible disconnect occurred in the initial implementation of the AIA initiative, as a review of the overarching challenge outlined in the case study in respect of the restructuring process and the identified key responsibilities of the AIA, gave every indication that the AIA were destined to provide a 'supporting and supportive' role to the Faculty's drive towards the vision, aims and objectives. However, the proposed definition of an AIA in the Discussion Paper 2004 would indicate a somewhat different picture, as they are defined as being "the primary workgroup in the Faculty." The AIA are to be considered "the main vehicle through which the Faculty ensures scholarly and pedagogical enhancement and leadership." They are also referred to as "the structure

that will deliver pedagogical reform" (unpublished case study). The terms 'primary workgroup', 'main vehicle' and 'the structure' do not conjure up visionary images of change for a better future, rather a change implying more work, duties and responsibility.

Further, a review of the duties and responsibilities of the AIA Convenors reveals that the convenors will, 'develop', 'maintain', 'rationalise courses', 'manage', 'link with activities', 'meet with' and 'work with', all of which are action or action associated words and therefore can be construed as tasks. These appear to be distinctly managerial / administrative tasks that the convenors will be deemed responsible for. Faculty responses would appear to concur with this perspective.

"The system has made it difficult as there is a managerial role as well as a knowledge building role" (questionnaire response).

"Should separate the management role from the Academic Interest role. The AIA should focus completely on the Academic interests of people and should have smaller groups and more people involved" (questionnaire response).

This requirement of managerial/administrative duties and responsibilities would indicate an immediate increase in workload for the AIA convenors and the correspondence reviewed would indicate this was, in fact, the case, as workload constraints to AIA involvement featured highly in staff responses. Further, if no recognition, allowance or rewards were offered to compensate for increases in workload, the obvious reluctance to fully engage in the concept is understandable. As Willcoxson (2002, p.7) states, "it is critical to develop compensation, performance management and promotion systems which encourage and reward ongoing learning as well as ongoing implementation of the outcomes of learning."

Also impacting on the implementation of the AIA initiative is the fact that since its inception there have been further changes within the Faculty. A number of staffing changes have occurred, with people leaving and new staff being appointed, this has further diluted the understanding of the AIA concept and has further exacerbated the

disconnect, or discontinuity, impacting on the effective functioning of the AIA, as the following responses from new staff members make very clear.

"Being still relatively new, I have only been in one meeting of my AIA, and haven't yet established a clear understanding of its role, and my place within it. My daily operations haven't yet been affected by membership in this AIA, so I am still very much 'learning the ropes' of the focus and intent of the AIA as a whole" (questionnaire response).

"The initial coming together of the AIA occurred 2 days after starting at AO at a Faculty Retreat. So you could suggest that involvement was from a novice's perspective" (questionnaire response).

A new employee, without being inducted into all aspects of an organisation, invariably does not know where she or he belongs or how aspects of the organisation are aligned. However, if they are effectively introduced to the organisation, then they are able to offer a huge amount of enthusiasm. "New staff offers new energy, new direction and new ideas and the challenge is to preserve the mission and the values and to prepare faculty to be successful in a changing and, possibly more complex, environment" (Boggs, 2005, p.24). The faculty leadership, in respect of the AIA initiative, has not tapped into the enthusiasm identified by Boggs.

The Way Forward – Sharing the Vision

Kotter (1995) talks about transforming organisations through vision, but in order for the vision to be taken up, the vision must be a shared vision, which includes all the members of the organisation. The lack of a communicated vision for the AIA initiative, the lack of a visioning process for the implementation of the initiative and the failure to align new, incoming, staff members would give every indication of a disconnect between the AIA concept and the Faculty vision. Was the AIA concept an afterthought perhaps? Did the restructure leave the Faculty out of alignment with the espoused Faculty vision and was the AIA concept implemented to try an achieve realignment? As one faculty member responded, *"I believe that whole restructure has left many "things" falling through the cracks and it was hopeful that the AIA could pick some of them up"* (questionnaire response).

In today's organisational management literature there are innumerable definitions of vision but common to all definitions is the need for an image, a dream and a desirable future shared by members of the organisation with values, beliefs, purposes and goals that allows the organisation to move to a desirable future beyond where it is now (Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Kotter; 1995; Sergiovanni; 1994). Most writers would appear to be in agreement that vision is a vital ingredient to the process of change. 'Without a sensible vision, a transformation effort can easily dissolve into a list of confusing and incompatible projects that can take the organisation in the wrong direction or nowhere at all' (Kotter, 1995, p.4).

Purportedly based on a paper by a member of faculty, the AIA grew out of an element of discontent, leading to a working party review and resultant Faculty restructure. What is unclear from the research is the source of the AIA as a concept and what the vision was of what the AIA might achieve, if there was in fact, an AIA vision at all. What is clear is that the current vision for the AIA cannot be owned or shared by the new members of the organisation, those who have joined since the AIA inception, until they are invited to join, and share in, the vision. Paradoxically, what is also apparent from the research is that the concept of the AIA, in spite of the obvious discontinuity, is now considered to be integral to the Education Faculty. That it is an evolving process, and that the visioning process will continue, is indicated in inter faculty correspondence following the February 2005 Retreat.

To make any transition from the vision into successful reality, there is a need for continuous effort and persistence, a view supported by Kotter,

> *In every successful transformation effort that I have seen … vision always goes beyond the numbers that are typically found in five–year plans. Sometimes the first draft comes mostly from a single individual. It is usually a bit blurry, at least initially. But after the coalition works at it for 3 or 5 or even 12 months something much better emerges through their tough analytical thinking and a little dreaming. Eventually a strategy for achieving that vision is also developed*
> (Kotter, 1995, p.63).

Limerick et al., (2002), in alignment with the work of others, (Kotter; 1995; Bennis & Nanus 1992), stress the importance of organisational leadership to be able to promote a vision for the future that is realistic, credible, attractive and consistent with the core values of the organisation. Linking leadership and vision in the context of learning organisations, Senge (1990), claims that the first leadership act in the drive towards a learning organisation is inspiring the vision. Like Senge (1990), Limerick et al., (2002), affirm that the culture of an organisation can only be changed, or transformed from its existing state, for example an hierarchical structure, to that of a learning organisation by the effective combination of visioning skills and leadership. Intrinsically intertwined with vision, at all stages from inception to implementation is the concept of leadership. Leadership comes in many different guises and is described and defined in many ways, such as by type, trait, style, framework or philosophy. It is through leadership that all participants in the restructuring /change process must be engaged, with all stakeholders having the opportunity to examine their current thinking in order to develop a personal rationale for change and to experience new models of organisational processes (Kotter, 1995).

It is important that leaders create a climate and culture for change by espousing and discussing the vision, often and enthusiastically. Further it is important that leaders initiate celebrations of success, maintain a focus of purpose and determination and, while understanding and appreciating the difficulties of implementation of the vision, they should exude confidence about the potential of the vision (Bennis and Nanus; 1985; Kotter; 1995).

The Imperative of Shared Vision

Collins and Porras, (as cited in Industrial College of the Armed Forces (eds), 1999), although they mention 'shared vision', would appear to affirm that visioning is a leadership function. "The function of a leader - the one universal requirement of effective leadership - is to catalyse a clear and shared vision of the organisation and to secure commitment to and vigorous pursuit of that vision" (p.9). For others, leadership writers and practitioners, a shared visionary process, in which everyone has an input, would appear to be the practical reality. The shared vision of an organisation must be made up of, and built upon, the individual visions of its members. For a

leader in the Learning Organisation this means that the leader alone must not create the organisational vision, rather, the vision is created through communication with members of the organisation. Only by negotiating between individual visions and the development of these visions in a common direction can a shared vision be created. The leader's role in creating a shared vision is to share her / his personal vision with other members of the organisation. This is not to force that vision on others, but to encourage others to share their vision. Based on these multiple, shared visions, the organisation's vision should evolve. The sharing of the vision, together with leadership, are imperatives in the process of changing the culture of an organisation. (Bennis & Nanus, 1992; Kotter, 1995; Starratt, 1995).

It is essential that for the AIA to become effective functional entities that the initial concept from which they were implemented is revisited, with the view of developing an AIA vision and sharing that vision with all faculty stakeholders. 'The practice of shared vision involves the skills of unearthing shared 'pictures of the future' that foster genuine commitment and enrolment rather than compliance. In mastering this discipline, leaders learn the counter-productiveness of trying to dictate a vision, no matter how heartfelt' (Senge, 1990, p.9). When an organisation has a shared vision, the driving force for change comes from creative tension, which describes the difference between the shared vision and the current reality and it is the difference between the current and the future, which will drive an organisation toward its goals, Senge (1990).

> *You cannot have a learning organisation without shared vision. Without a pull towards some goal, which people truly want to achieve, the forces in support of the status quo can be overwhelming. Vision establishes an over-arching goal. A shared vision also provides a rudder to keep the learning process on course when stresses develop.*
> *Learning can be difficult, even painful. With a shared vision, we are more likely to expose our ways of thinking, giving up deeply held views, and recognise personal and organisational shortcomings.* (Senge 1990, p. 209)

Beyond Vision: Organisational Assumptions, Shared beliefs, Culture and Values.

In apparent accord, Bennis & Nanus, (1992), Kotter, (1995) and Limerick, et al., (2002) espouse that more than just establishing a vision is required, there is also the need to meld this with the identity, values and the mission of the organisation. Institutionalising the vision is important to ensure that the vision moves from inspiring rhetoric to the reality of policies, programs, and procedures, otherwise the vision will no longer remain credible (Starratt, 1995).

A further imperative for organisational vision is that it must be based on, and consistent with, the organisation's core values and reflect the culture of the organisation. Culture is a set of beliefs, assumptions, values, and shared feelings that a majority of people hold within an organisation and which are developed over a period of time as the organisation learns to cope with change. Culture is expressed in rituals, ceremonies, images and artefact and is embodied in symbols, processes and forms, which are further supported by various organisational structures and systems (Lewis, 1991 in Lewis, 2001; Limerick et al., 2002; Owens, 1995; Sathe 1985 in Lewis 2001; Schein, 1992). Schein claims that the culture of an organisation is also the prime source of resistance to change and he defines the culture of a group as:

> *A pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learnt as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems* (Schein, 1992, p.12).

Organisational values, which effectively underpin the vision, can be defined as those things that are important to, or valued by, someone, either an individual or an organisation. When all members of an organisation share values, they are extraordinarily important tools for making judgments, assessing probable outcomes of contemplated actions and choosing among alternative options. Perhaps most importantly, they help to align all members with regard to the organisational vision.

Limerick et al., (2002) refer to three different kinds of values:

Transcendental – closely associated with the organisations identity – values such as caring, honesty and respect.

Strategic – those related to commitment to market share, growth and the value of technical excellence.

Operational – those related to day-to-day operations.

The development and implementation of the AIA would appear to be an attempt to bring together shared beliefs, assumptions and values about pedagogy, teaching and learning and one of the major challenges facing the successful implementation of the AIA concept, is how best to develop these shared understandings?

Leadership in Organisations

From the perspective of the initial workplace challenge, which was to examine the ways in which the culture of an organisation could be changed from a hierarchical structure to that of a learning organisation, it is apparent that new leadership imperatives were required to implement the AIA concept. This was acknowledged in faculty feedback correspondence, "For the concept of AIA to achieve its potential, the Faculty will require Fourth Blueprint metastrategic Leadership and it will also require the emergence of Fourth Blueprint parallel leaders from within the academic community of the Faculty". A leadership that will acknowledge and allow for discontinuity, loosely coupled systems, synergies and alliances, collaborative individualism, social sustainability and holism (Limerick, et al, 2002).

Linking the role of leaders and leadership to the development of an organisation's culture, Hodgkinson states that, "Within the growth and change parameters of a viable culture the role of the leader is crucial" (Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 82). There are numerous styles of leadership identified in leadership texts, some of those are: transactional, situational, instructional, charismatic, transformational, distributed, visionary, parallel and laissez-faire. Regardless of the style of leadership, the keys to effective leadership are flexibility and adaptability.

In the context of Leadership in education, Andrews & Forlin, (2002) claim that, "positional authority has been replaced by concepts of leadership such as teacher leadership, leadership linked to culture creation, and leadership as an organisational

quality (a process rather than a person or group" (p.5). They further discuss these concepts, quoting Limerick et al., (1998), Handy, (1996) and Senge, (1997) as being, "reflected in the literature as multiple role leadership, distributive leadership and community of leaders" (p.5). These constructs, "are considered necessary to enhance effective learning and knowledge creation throughout the organisation" (p.5). They introduce a further leadership concept, described as parallel leadership, which Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson and Hann (2002) describe as having "three distinct characteristics: mutualism, a sense of shared purpose and allowance for individual expression" (p.39). "The teacher leaders are pedagogical leaders while the principal enacts a meta-strategic leadership role" (Andrews and Forlin, 2002, p.6). "Leader as teacher" is not about "teaching" people how to achieve their vision. It is about fostering learning, for everyone. Such leaders help people throughout the organisation develop systemic understandings.

Leading the learning organisation

New leadership roles require new leadership disciplines and in learning organisations, these disciplines must be distributed widely because they embody the principles and practices of effective leadership. "Good leadership, while essential at the top, needs also to be seeded throughout the organisation" (Willcoxson, 2001, p. 13).

"Through the achievement of knowledge sharing across disciplines, fostered by respect for diversity of ideas, the foundations of a learning organisation may be laid" (Willcoxson, 2001, p.6). Learning organisations are, according to Senge (1990), "organisations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together" (p.3). The basic rationale for such organisations is that in situations of rapid change only those that are flexible, adaptive and productive will excel. For this to happen, Senge (1990) argues, organisations need to, "discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels" (p.4). In support of Senge's viewpoint, but specifically focusing on leadership, Willcoxson (2001) states that, "it is primarily a leader's responsibility to ensure that the structures and systems in place maximise the opportunity for organisational learning through encouraging the

expression and adoption of diverse ideas, and to ensure that their own actions provide both models of and opportunities for contribution and learning" (p.4)

As an initiative for change within the faculty, the AIA concept would appear to have been the ideal vehicle by which to develop the parallel leadership skills required throughout the faculty and to allow members to share knowledge across disciplines, foster and reflect on the diversity of ideas, and so developing the solid foundations of a learning organisation.

Summary

There would appear to have been two distinct, albeit linked, missions undertaken by the Faculty, commencing at the macro level with the Faculty Restructure, progressing into the micro level development and implementation of the AIA concept. This paper has focussed on the introduction and implementation of the AIA concept.

The workplace research evidence reveals a number of issues that have had a significant negative impact on the functionality of the AIA. Most faculty staff appear to concur that the AIA are an interesting concept and that they are also a possible way to move forward in relation to developing an understanding of teaching and learning across the faculty, as well as cross fertilisation of ideas across programs and subject areas. However, a significant issue, among others, was deemed to be the composition of the groups. In one AIA the interests appeared to be so diversified it was difficult to match genuinely common academic interests. Recommendations were made that AIA should be made into smaller or cognate groups that more closely reflect the interests of the members.

A further major challenge identified, was the proposed role of the convenor in the AIA. Convenors have significant roles to play, in that they are expected to fulfil a number of apparently administrative / management tasks, which require significant time allotment, but they also require the ability to lead the group to an understanding of their personal pedagogy and the subsequent effective understanding of teaching and learning. In most cases the other members of the AIA nominated convenors and as one convenor stated, "*they thought that they were elected because they would be*

able to get the job done." In respect of the convenor role, questions to address are, "*Is it a job to be done?*" and "*Should the convenors have managerial roles and responsibilities or should their role be simply one of leading or facilitating the process?*"

The not insignificant issues of Faculty staffing and associated staff workload would also appear to be major stumbling blocks to the successful take-up of the AIA concept. The research feed back from staff in regard to workload in respect of the AIA in their present format was consistent, insufficient time available, particularly for leadership roles such as convenors.

The most significant and important challenge to the concept of the AIA and their original key functions is one of relevance to the original aim of being "the main vehicle through which the Faculty ensures scholarly and pedagogical enhancement and leadership" or "the structure that will deliver pedagogical reform" (unpublished case study). Are AIAs, in their current format, still relevant or is it an appropriate time to renegotiate those functions with the evolving concept of the AIA? Does the AIA concept require such definition, with key functions, roles and responsibilities attached to them or should they have been allowed to develop naturally, once the concept itself had been successfully implemented?

Conclusions

Numerous organisations have implemented a process of delayering or downsizing and in the process have cut out many layers of middle management at both corporate and divisional levels. Unfortunately, in spite of the rationale for the delayering, it would seem that they have often left intact their hierarchical systems of coordination. This has resulted in organisations, in which fewer and fewer people are required to do more and more work. A consequence of this situation is that middle level professional knowledge workers often find themselves responsible for the performance of all the activities of the hierarchical control process above and below their position level. 'The process of work intensification has become an overriding pervasive feature of neocorporate bureaucracies – a new form of corporatism, still embedding the major paradigm of the hierarchical corporate organisation but with an attempt to apply some

of the precepts of the Fourth Blueprint - and those within them are experiencing increasingly high levels of stress accompanied by feelings of alienation from the organisation' (Limerick et al., 2002, p.84)

The above situation description could well describe the organisational situation of the Faculty. The perception of some of the faculty is that the AIA were in fact a strategy to engage non-managerial faculty members in a supporting role to the SMT, to take on duties and responsibilities no longer being effectively managed.

Re-visiting the AIA concept

The most recent retreat (2005) in the Faculty could be seen as evidence of a move towards that fourth blueprint organisation that is described above. Concerned members of the faculty brought the faculty together to reflect on the values of the faculty and the concept of the AIA. Through experimenting with a virtual space they conducted a 'taking stock' activity to collect the positives, negatives and possible solutions about various aspects that impact on the operation of the faculty, including the effectiveness of the AIA. The subsequent discussions at the retreat recognised the concept of the AIA as being a way forward, however, it was recommended that the AIA consist of smaller groupings, with more closely aligned academic interests. It was hoped that these smaller groups would result in better functioning of the AIA, with resulting effectiveness. From the discussions at the retreat a number of proposals were formulated and articulated to the faculty

Proposal One – It was agreed by the majority of Faculty members that the concept of AIA provided an opportunity for AO academics to engage as Fourth Blueprint professionals, in the way that it conceptualises pedagogy as a shared meaning system and a post-industrial form of new knowledge. Re-vision the AIA concept and structure and develop and implement a reward system to ensure buy in and take-up by Faculty.

Proposal Two - For the concept of AIA to achieve its potential, the Faculty will require Fourth Blueprint metastrategic Leadership, from the Dean and the SMT and it

will also require the emergence of Fourth Blueprint parallel leaders from within the academic community of the Faculty.

Proposal Three - The Faculty also requires a Fourth Blueprint process for ongoing organisational development. Development activities in place at present (Retreats, Research seminars, Assemblies, and the like) are good but do not meet the requirements of Fourth Blueprint. It may require opportunities for staff to develop more fully the competencies and skills of collaborative individuals.

(Adapted from "taking Stock" activity Faculty Retreat)

The picture of organisational consolidation and change that is emerging in Fourth Blueprint organisations is very different from the image of the transactional manager improving current operations. "It shows the participants themselves constantly concerned with reflecting on the vision, values, and mission of the organisation, experimenting with new activities, legitimating new activities in terms of that vision and sharing that identity and spirit of empowerment with all others in the organisation. They are managers of 'learning organisations" (Limerick et al., 2002, p.178).

For the AIA to become a successful initiative all participants need to have a shared understanding of what the pedagogical framework for the faculty is and the leadership and relationships that need to be developed so that the culture of the organisation becomes that of a learning organisation.

For the concept of AIA to achieve its potential, the Faculty will require Fourth Blueprint metastrategic Leadership, from the Dean and the SMT and it will also require the emergence of Fourth Blueprint parallel leaders from within the academic community of the Faculty.

REFERENCES

Andrews, D. & Forlin, C. (2002). (eds.), *Changing Leadership Constructs in the 21st Century: Reimaging roles, relationships and redefining professional development.* Occasional Paper, No 1. Retrieved May 3, 2005 from http://www.usq.edu.au/faculty/educate/publish/html/ Occasional_Papers.htm

Bennis, W. & Nanus, B.V. (1985). '*Leading others, managing yourself", Leaders the Strategies for Taking Charge*. Harper and Row: New York.

Boggs, G.R.(2003) Leadership Context for the Twenty – First Century. *New Directions for Community College, 123*, 13-25. Retrieved May 5, 2005 from EBSCO Host.

Collins, J.C. & Porras, J. I. (1995). *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies.* London: Century.

Crowther, F., Kaagan, S.S., Ferguson, M. & Hann, L. (2002) *Developing Teacher Leaders. How Teacher Leadership Enhances School Success*. California: Corwin Press.

Dawson, P. (2003). *Understanding Organisational Change: The Contemporary Experience of People at Work*. London: Sage.

Handy, C. B. (1996) *Beyond Certainty : The Changing Worlds of Organizations.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Hodgkinson, C. (1991) The Central Problem. In D.L. Duke, *Educational Leadership: The Moral Art.* New York: State University of New York Press.

Kotter, J. P. (1995). Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review*, March – April, 59-67.

Lewis, D. (2001). Organisational Culture – theory, fad or managerial control? In B. R. Weisner and B. Millet (eds.), *Management and Organisational Behaviour: Contemporary Challenges and Future Directions* (pp.121-134). Sydney: Wiley and Sons.

Limerick, D., Cunnington, B., & Crowther, F. (2002*). Managing The New Organisation.* Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin,

Morgan, G. (1996). Images of Organisation. California: Sage.

Nanus, B. (1992). *Visionary Leadership: Creating a Compelling Sense of Direction For Your Organization.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ed) (1999). Strategic Leadership and Decision Making. Washington DC: National Defence University Press. Retrieved May 6, 2005 from

http://www.ndu.edu/inss/books/books%20-%201999/Strategic%20Leadership%20and%20Decision-making%20-%20Feb%2099/cont.html

Owens, R.C. (1995). *Organisational Behaviour in Education* (5th ed.). Allyn and Bacon: Boston.

Reed, M., Anstey, M., Wright, M., Redmond, P., and Mander, A. (2001, September). *Educators Empowering Educators: A Faculty Vision Toward Pedagogical Innovation.* Paper presented at the 29th Annual ATEA Conference - Teacher Education: Change of Heart, Mind and Action, Melbourne, Australia.

Robbins, S., Millet, B., Cacciope, R. & Waters-Marsh (2001). *Organisational Behaviour: Leading and Managing in Australia and New Zealand.* Sydney: Prentice Hall.

Robbins, S., Waters-Marsh, T., Cacioppe, R. & Millett, B. (1994). *Organisational Behaviour: Concepts, Controversies, and Applications - Australia and New Zealand.* Sydney: Prentice Hall.

Schein, E. H. (1992). *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Senge, P. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline. The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization,* New York: Doubleday.

Senge, P. (1998). The leader's new work, in K. Starkey, (ed)*How Organizations Learn.* London: International Thomson Business Press.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1994). *Building Community in Schools.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Starratt, R. J. (1995). *Leaders With Vision: The Quest for School Renewal*. Corwin Press, California.

Willcoxson, L. (2001). *Strategies for changing a university into a 'learning organisation'. In* L. Richardson and J. Lidstone (eds.), *Flexible Learning for a Flexible Society*, 720-731. Proceedings of ASET-HERDSA Conference. Retrieved May, 5 from http://www.aset.org.au/confs/aset-erdsa2000/procs/willcoxson.html

Willcoxson, L. (2002). *Using the Learning Organisation Concept for Quality Development within a University*. Occasional Papers. Retrieved May 22, 2005, from http://www.qsdg.unsw.edu.au/pdf/WillcoxsonPaperApril02.pd