

“Organizational Change and the use of power”.

Power and conflict in the University of New England



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Summary

This research thesis focuses on the process of organizational change or reorganization within the University of New England, more precisely the school of Economics, Business and Public Policy (BEPP).

The first chapter will give an overview of the history of organizational change and reorganization of UNE. It will be made clear that UNE has coped with more than one reorganization in the past. It is further stressed that the aim of the present UNE reorganization is to achieve regional and global impact and explained how, according to the UNE, this aim should be achieved. And that in order to make the organizational-change successful one could analyse and characterize the internal organization and organizational process.

The theoretical framework discusses the key terms and issues within this research project. Important within the research is the process of change in organizations, the triggers of such change, the influence of the environment and the fact that no process of change is the right or only one because of the special character of organizations. The characters that make a university special and how these can influence the organizational change process are explained. Next to the formal and informal relations that live within an organization, the fact that a university can be seen as a political organization and the importance of the terms power and conflict within the decision-making process is stressed.

This research is a combination of exploration, description and explanation and can be seen as a cross-sectional study because of the limit period of time available. The used research method is a qualitative field design: this is a good way to produce data by studying and observing social phenomena. Observations, interviews and the study of written information are used in order to collect data during the research.

The central research question is: How can the process of change within the school of BEPP of the University of New England be characterized and analysed? And is answered by answering three research questions. How is the school of BEPP organized and which actors within the school are there? How can the interdependency of the actors within the school of BEPP be analysed and described? And how can the field of power within the school of BEPP be analysed and described?

This paper concludes that the organization of the school of BEPP was difficult to describe while the reorganization process was ongoing. However the strengths and weaknesses of both the 'old' and 'new' UNE organization have been described. Remarkable is that both the commitment of the staff and the high quality of teaching within UNE was a strength of the 'old' situation but wasn't stated as a strength of the 'new' situation. Furthermore, that the school of BEPP is a fairly divided school comprised of many smaller groups. The disciplines within the school are the main important groups and many of the goals set are set on a discipline level. Both positive and negative interdependence have been found within the school of BEPP. Furthermore, the decision-making process within the school is one of many committee meetings and concessions and makes that the process is slow and not open to innovations. The morale within the school is low and this is a result of the uncertainty the ongoing restructuring process brings along and the few communication channels. Finally is stated that there is a difference in formal and informal power field within the school of BEPP. However both formally and informally the Head of School is the most powerful position within the school because of his formal responsibilities and power and his access to information.



Samenvatting

Dit onderzoek richt zich op het proces van verandering ofwel de reorganisatie van de University of New England, meer precies: de school voor Economy, Business en Public Policy.

Het eerste hoofdstuk geeft een overzicht van de geschiedenis van de UNE en haar relatie met reorganisaties in het verleden. De huidige UNE reorganisatie heeft als doel om regionale en wereldwijde invloed uit te oefenen op haar omgeving en dit onderzoek wijdt verder uit over de manier waarop dit, volgens de UNE, moet worden bereikt. Verder wordt in dit hoofdstuk beschreven dat het van belang kan zijn de interne organisatie en het organisatie proces te analyseren en karakteriseren om een organisatieverandering tot een succes te maken.

Het theoretisch kader beschrijft de termen en zaken die binnen dit onderzoek van belang zijn. Van belang zijn het organisatie veranderingsproces binnen organisaties, de zaken die verandering veroorzaken, de invloed van de omgeving en het feit dat geen enkel proces van verandering de juiste hoeft te zijn aangezien dit afhankelijk is van het soort organisatie waar men mee te maken heeft. Aangezien ook de universiteit een aantal 'unieke' karakteristieken heeft zullen die worden benoemd. Net als de formele en informele relaties die binnen een organisatie bestaan, dat een universiteit kan worden gezien als een politieke organisatie en het belang van macht en conflict binnen een besluitvormingsproces.

Dit onderzoek is een combinatie van explorerend, beschrijvend en 'verklarend' onderzoek en kan worden gezien als een 'cross-sectional' studie aangezien er maar beperkt tijd was voor het onderzoek. Het gebruikte onderzoeksontwerp is een kwalitatieve: dit is een goede manier om data te produceren door het bestuderen en observeren van sociale fenomenen. Observaties, interviews en het bestuderen van geschreven informatie zijn dan ook gebruikt om de benodigde data voor dit onderzoek te verzamelen.

De centrale onderzoeksvraag in dit onderzoek is: Hoe kan het veranderingsproces binnen de school BEPP van de UNE worden gekarakteriseerd en geanalyseerd? Deze vraag wordt beantwoord met behulp van drie onderzoeksvragen: Hoe is de school BEPP georganiseerd en welke actors zijn er binnen de school? Hoe kan de onderlinge afhankelijkheid van de actors binnen de school BEPP worden beschreven and geanalyseerd? En, hoe kan het krachtenveld binnen de school BEPP worden beschreven en geanalyseerd?

Dit onderzoek besluit met de conclusie dat het niet eenvoudig was de organisatie van de UNE te beschrijven aangezien het proces nog gaande was. Wel zijn de sterke en zwakke punten van de oude en nieuw organisatie beschreven. Opvallend was dat de sterke punten: 'commitment staff' en 'high quality of teaching' in de nieuwe situatie niet meer werden genoemd door de respondenten. De school BEPP is verder een zeer diverse school bestaande uit veel kleinere groepen. De disciplines binnen de school vormen de belangrijkste groepen en veel van de doelen worden gesteld op discipline niveau en zowel positieve als negatieve onderlinge afhankelijkheid zijn waargenomen. Het besluitvormingsproces binnen de school is er een waar commissievergaderingen en compromissen een grote rol spelen, waardoor het een traag proces is welke niet of nauwelijks open staat voor innovatie. De moraal binnen de school is laag wat het resultaat is van de voortdurende onzekerheid over de positie van de academici, het nog steeds lopende proces van reorganisatie en het ontbreken van genoeg communicatie kanalen. Tot slot wordt er gesteld dat er daadwerkelijk een verschil bestaat tussen informele en formele macht en posities. Echter, zowel op formeel als informeel niveau is het hoofd van de school de belangrijkste en machtigste persoon binnen de school BEPP. Dit komt voort uit zijn formele verantwoordelijkheden en macht maar ook uit zijn toegang tot informatie.



Preface

This research report has been written as a conclusion of my Bachelor study Public Administration of the University of Twente. August 6th 2007 I departed for Australia to execute my Bachelor thesis: *organizational change and the use of power* at the University of New England, Armidale.

The reason for executing my bachelor thesis overseas was not a planned event. However, I did plan to execute my thesis abroad and thanks to Anneke Luijten-Lub I encountered Leo Goedegebuure who offered me an internship at the UNE, Australia. A great opportunity! I spent over four months at the UNE for this thesis and was surrounded by beautiful nature, most of the time beautiful weather but most important with very kind people and lots of work to do.

Looking back at the things that I have experienced and the lessons I have learned I am very thankful that I have been given such a special opportunity. There have been times that it was not easy being this far away but an experience like this in a great country surrounded by great people makes everything bearable and worthwhile!

Very thankful I am to all people that have helped me complete my research report and took care of me, especially in the first weeks of my stay and during the preparation phase and the execution phase. In person I would like to thank, Anneke Luijten-Lub for arranging the contact with Leo Goedegebuure! I also would like to thank the family Goedegebuure for showing me around at Armidale and all those beautiful places in the neighbourhood and for the numerous barbeques and day-trips! Very thankful I am to Leo, who patiently worked through my numerous versions of the research report and gave me feedback! Thank you Leo, without your help this piece of work would not have been this good! I would like to thank Jeanet van der Lee who turned out to be the best colleague I ever had and a good friend as well! Finally, I would like to thank my family and my boyfriend for supporting me through the internet during the whole period! All these people made my time in Australia unforgettable.

This being said, I am proud to present my Bachelor Thesis: "*Organizational Change and the use of Power*".

Armidale, Australia, December 14th

Janine Rebel



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I. Preamble

This first chapter will focus on the background of the subject of this thesis. First, I will address shortly the history of reorganizations in the Higher Education area of Australia, reasons for the present reorganization of UNE and the importance of the environment and social network within this process. Secondly, I will formulate the central research-question that will form the basis of this research. Finally, there will be a reading guide that will guide you through this Bachelor thesis.

Reorganization at the University of New England

History

Organizational change or reorganization is not new to Australian universities and this can also be said for the University of New England (UNE): it has faced changes in the past. According to Marginson and Considine there was a time when Australian governments saw universities as independent organizations that did not need many governmental guidance, however this view changed. (Marginson, S. and Considine, M. 2000: 21-23) Marginson and Considine consider the introduction of the new public management in 1987 as a turning point for this change. The New Public Management changed the focus of the universities, which became more economic. Important became a competitive relationship between institutions and efficiency in day-to-day conduct. (Marginson, S. and Considine, M. 2000: 28)

The Green Paper, *Higher education: a policy discussion paper* and the white paper *Higher education: a policy statement* (1987) by John Dawkins is, as argued by Marginson and Considine, crucial for this period. The papers proposed to *elevate the institutes of technology and colleges of advanced education to the level of universities*. It proposed mergers among the institutions in order to achieve economies of scale and specialisation. (Marginson, S. and Considine, M. 2000: 30) The UNE also took part in the amalgamation process, one of

Amalgamation: the combination of two or more separate institutions into a single new organisational entity, in which control rests with a single governing body and a single chief executive, and whereby all assets, liabilities, and responsibilities of the former institutions are transferred to the single new institution. (Goedegebuure 1992, p 16)

its reasons for that was, according to Harman and Roberson, because UNE would have been too small on its own to be qualified as a comprehensive research university and became a network university. (Harman, G. and Roberson-Cuninghame, R. 1995: 3) However, the process of reorganization was not smoothly and Harman and Roberson argue that this was because the four former institutions, which came together to form the network UNE, were not only from different sectors of higher education but were different in size and character. (Harman, G. and Roberson-Cuninghame, R. 1995: 4) And indeed the reorganization process came to an end, and the UNE network, broke in 1994 after years of conflicts, into two universities: Southern Cross University and the University of New England. (Harman, G. and Roberson-Cuninghame, R. 1995: 11) Marginson and Considine further argue that through the years Higher Education has changed from its broad role in public culture to an idea that favours business values and income generation. (Marginson, S. and Considine, M. 2000: 37) History shows that the combination of UNE and reorganization is nothing new, UNE has a rich history concerning reorganization. Next to that, it can also be argued that these processes not always progress as smooth as one had expected or wanted.



Rationale of UNE reorganisation

The present reorganization of UNE intends to achieve regional and global impact by clarifying and strengthen the role of Faculties and Schools. (University of New England, 2007: 2) Next to that, it should ensure that responsibilities, accountabilities and decision-making are at the appropriate level of the organizational structure. (University of New England, 2007a: 4) Following from the Academic Reorganization report the reorganization should streamline management within the University, and also put the University in a stronger position to be competitive and to implement the objectives of the Strategic Plan. (University of New England, 2007a: 23) Therefore, it could be argued that the problem of UNE is that they cannot attract enough students: UNE is not innovative, well structured and does not stand out in research. UNE tries to solve these problems by restructuring the internal management structure. In general, three main changes can be addressed, namely amalgamating the four existing Faculties to form two new Faculties and amalgamating some of the Schools to form ten new Schools and finally amending and clarifying the roles of the Schools and Faculties, the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Deans and the Heads of School. (University of New England, 2007a: 5)

The amalgamating of faculties would involve the following faculties being combined: the faculty of arts, humanities and social sciences and the faculty of the sciences will form the new faculty of Arts and Sciences. The faculty of Economics, Business and Law and the faculty of Education, Health and Professional Studies will form the new faculty of the Professions. (University of New England, 2007a: 5)¹ The key role of the Faculties will be to add value to the work of Schools by providing strategic leadership, performance management, compliance monitoring, and provision of shared services, mentoring and coordinating. (University of New England, 2006: 6) All this should lead towards a university that is competitive in the Australian and international higher education and research market.

Present UNE reorganisation and her environment

This reorganization is, however, not only about the internal management reorganization. In contrary, the present reorganization of UNE is also influenced by **her environment**. **The vision and positioning of the UNE is: "powerful performance, regionality focus and global reach". (University of New England, 2006: 7). The UNE strategic plan states: "One clear reality is that our external environment, including the expectations of students and users of research, has been changing dramatically and UNE must respond with clarity of vision and in a timely, purposeful way."** (University of New England, 2006: 3) This indicates that there is a certain influence of environment on UNE, which in this case also determines, in some aspects, the direction UNE is heading.

Next to that, this reorganization tries to increase efficiency, reduce the number of Faculties and Schools so that interaction throughout the university is improved. The Strategic Plan states some key external signals on a changing higher education **policy, one of them is: "Market and policy pressures for universities to diversify by identifying and harnessing strengths, elimination some activities, improving performance and building particular expertise"**. This reaffirms the influence the environment has on some of the changes or decisions the UNE makes.

¹ The old and the new organisational structure can be found in annex A.



Opposition to present UNE reorganization

As Harman and Roberson found in their research of the former reorganization of UNE, one of the issues related to reorganization processes is the opposition that occurs among diverse actors within the organization. Therefore, it is not surprisingly that during the present UNE reorganization opposition can be observed.

During the research period I found that the general idea of the employees concerning the reorganization was negative. For this are various reasons that can be stated and different aspects of the reorganization are point of discussion. Some employees argue that pre-planning did not take place. For example, no budget was reserved for the movements of a numbers of Schools, but it was planned and expected that they had to move. Others argue that the rationale of the reorganization was not clear. Another point of critic is that the link between the problem of UNE: the fact that few student numbers are attracted and the solution of an internal reorganization was not obvious. Therefore resistance has grown to cooperate with the process of change. Mal-communication and uncertainty about the process of this kind can lead to more and more opposition to the present UNE reorganization and has a negative influence on the morale of the employees.

Reorganization and the importance of the internal structure

Now the history, rationale, the importance of the environment and the opposition concerning the UNE reorganization has been elaborated the importance of the internal structure should be addressed. I would like to illustrate this by the example of the failure of the UNE network university. Why did this amalgamation failed to achieve its objectives, why did it not survive? Indicators identified by Harman are: differences in culture, problems of geography, weaknesses in the legal and administrative structures, different perceptions about the network, failure to achieve academic cooperation between campuses, and conflict over the distribution of **resources and additional funded student load**. But also: **'strong ambitious and uncompromising personalities in senior management positions**. And: **'the departure from Armidale of leaders who believed in the long-term benefits of amalgamation'**. And: **'there was considerable unhappiness on the Armidale campus because of 'the lack of debate of the issues and denial, by management and its supporters, that there were realistic options...to their preferred course of action'**. (Harman, G. and Roberson-Cuninghame,R. 1995: 222) Internal structures have a role of importance here, however the last three quotes draws attention to the fact that not only the formal roles (organizational charts & official positions) but also informal roles are important. How do people react in times of change, are they cooperating or are they trying to influence the process in a negative way? The process of reorganization can fail or workout fine because of the informal relations and because of this importance this bachelor thesis focuses on the internal structure of one of the schools of UNE: BEPP.

Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of the history of organizational change and reorganization of UNE. It has been stated that UNE has coped with more than one reorganization. These processes were not always driven from the inside out but also triggered by the environment. The aim of the present UNE reorganization is to achieve regional and global impact by strengthening and clarifying the internal organization. Furthermore is stated that from an historical perspective organizational change will have to face opposition among diverse actors within the organization. Finally, in order to make the organizational-change successful the importance of the internal structure and an analysed and described organizational process has been explained.



II. Research question

The University of New England is, at the moment, working on a reorganization which aim it is to optimize the internal management. As a consequence of this reorganization faculties and schools have to be incorporated. Traditionally, among other things, (associate) professors have a very important role. This can lead to the conclusion that not only the comparison of programs need attention, my expectation is that the process will be a strongly politicized one (which is in general the case with merging). Because of this expectation it is important to define which persons within **UNE's new School of Business, Economics and Public Policy, are responsible for the main decisions.** Besides that, the balance of power between the (associates) professors and other actors should be characterized. From the above, it follows that the central research question will be:

How can the process of change within the School of Business, Economics and Public Policy of the University of New England be characterized and analysed?

Reading guide

This first chapter provides information about the history of the UNE reorganization process, the present reorganization and the importance of the environment and key actors within the organization. Chapter two will provide the theoretical framework I have used during my research. The organizational change theory will be elaborated as well as the importance of interdependence and the use of power within the decision-making process and the process of change. Chapter three will focus on the research itself and the used research methods. I will try to explain how I tried to find answers to my research questions, which research methods I have used during my research and explain why I used them and how I applied them. Chapter four will provide the answers to the research questions combined with a theoretical part. Finally chapter five is the conclusion of my research, an answer will be given to the central research question.



III. Theory

This chapter will provide the theoretical framework I have used during my research. The most important terms during my research will be explained along with theories that are used in my field of study: Public Administration.

Change

Change and resistance

"A change in organisational strategy is an attempt to alter the organization's alignment with its environment. The change may focus on any area of strategy." (Griffin, R.W. 1993: 318) The UNE is changing her internal structure to be able to focus more on her environment, for example, the expectations that future students have of a university. (University of New England, 2006: 3) And UNE is not the only organization that is going through a process of change: change seems to have become a permanent feature of the public sector. Why the need to change? Triggers for change can be shifts in the external environment, such as changes in the ideology of particular governments or global influences. These triggers can have a huge impact on the organizations and will serve as internal triggers, generating further changes within the organization. (Coventry, H. and Nutley, S 2001: 164)

What is change? There is no such thing as one single manner to define or manage change, in fact there can be different sorts of change. Following from Coventry and Nutley: two general change processes can be distinguished: a *radical change*, a huge change within an organization over a relatively short period of time. Or *incremental change*: small steps, which can result in significant change over relatively long periods of time. (Coventry, H. and Nutley, S 2001: 164) Both change processes have their own difficulties to cope with.

Within the change process lots of different approaches can be found. There can be several phases within a change process and the process can take several years to accomplish. Griffin defines six phases: he argues that the process of change starts with the recognition that the organization should change. Therefore, there should be an incentive for change in the first place. The next phase within the changing process can be the establishment of goals for the change: a Strategic Plan. For example: UNE wants to be a university with a regional focus (University of New England, 2006: 10-12) In order to achieve the goals set the relevant variables should be diagnosed: who or what does UNE need to achieve her goals. After the execution of the process of change, finally **there's the moment that the effectiveness of the change should be tested**. Did UNE achieve the goals set or are alterations necessary in order to achieve the goals.

Some theories are quite clear about the changing process; there are few steps one could take which could lead to a successful changing process. However, in reality change is not always easy to manage. There are factors that can make a changing process very difficult. One thing that managers should keep in mind while starting or operating a change process is the resistance to change among their staff. Managers need to know why people resist change and what can be done about their resistance. Theory states that there can be many reasons for resistance, for instance uncertainty, different perceptions or feeling of loss. According to Griffin (1993) uncertainty is perhaps the biggest cause of employee resistance to change.

Griffin (1993) defines uncertainty as follows: employees do not know what will happen to their positions or the organization as a whole and feel more comfortable keeping the old situation alive. This sort of behaviour can also be observed in reality. For example the UNE reorganization: uncertainty about keeping or losing jobs because of the reorganization can create resistance among employees. Whenever facing change, employees may become anxious and nervous for different reasons.



Next to uncertainty Griffin (1993) defines 'threatened self-interests' as a resistance to change. A change might threaten the self-interests of some managers within the organization, potentially diminishing their power of influence. For instance in case of downsizing an organization, making two faculties out of the existing four, there's no doubt that two managers are not 'needed' anymore. This can be a reason for the current head of faculty not to cooperate in this reorganization. Another reason for resistance is a different perception, which may also be a problem: people may resist change because their perception of the situation differs from the managers'. For example, one of the four faculties is doing very good and attracts many new students, why should they be part of this reorganization too? Finally, according to Griffin (1993) there is the feeling of loss: many changes involve altering work arrangements in ways that disrupt existing social networks. Because social relationships are important, most people resist any change that might adversely affect those relationships. (Griffin, R.W. 1993: 314)

The process of change is not always as easy as it seems, there's a lot to keep in mind whenever executing a changing process and many different approaches could be executed. However, one thing should be clear: change should be planned very carefully and one of the most important factors to keep in mind when planning a change is the resistant to this change of the employees.

Organisational change theory

As a formal subject for study and application, change management can be said to have begun some 50 years ago with what has since become known as the planned model of change. This model has been developed by Lewin and is called the "unfreezing, moving and refreezing model". (Lewin, K. 1947) Lewin describes three phases in the changing process: unfreezing the present level or the present organization because change is necessary, moving to the new level that is desired, refreezing the new level because the process of change has been ended, the desired organizational change has been achieved. (Burnes, B. 1996: 11-12) During the years this model has been further developed and according to Coventry and Nutley, nowadays two approaches can be distinguished: the planned approach and the emergent change approach. The "unfreezing, moving and refreezing model" of Lewin can be seen as a planned approach. (Coventry, H. and Nutley, S 2001: 166-167) The planned approach emphasise the importance of rational and systematic consideration of the need to change, of careful planning and phasing of change activities. (Coventry, H. and Nutley, S 2001: 168) The planned approach is primarily aimed at improving group effectiveness, leadership from the top and involvement from the bottom throughout the process and is most suitable for stable environments. It is based on the assumption that common agreement can be reached, and that all the parties involved in a particular change project have a willingness and interest in doing so. (Coram, R. and Burnes, B. 2001: 96-99) However, there has been some criticism on the planned approach, for example that there is no such thing as a stable environment: the environment is always moving and changing and the organization will have to adapt to this. Next to that as already has been discussed earlier in this chapter, there's a fair chance of having resistance within the staff instead of common agreement. (Coram, R. and Burnes, B. 2001: 96-99) In response to this criticism on the planned model of change, the emergent change model came into existence. The emergent change is a continues process of experimentation and adaptation aimed at matching an organizations capabilities to the needs and dynamics of an uncertain environment.(Coventry, H. and Nutley, S 2001:168-169) Both approaches relate heavily on the influence the environment has on the organization: a system approach. The system approach builds on the principle that organizations are 'open' to their environment and must achieve an appropriate relation with that environment if they are to survive. (Morgan, G. 1986: 44) More in general the contingency theory



deals with the issue of organizations adapting to the environment. Burns and Stalker (1961) established the distinction between mechanistic and organic approaches to organization and management. They found that when change in the environment becomes the order of the day, as when changing technological and market conditions pose new problems and challenges, open and flexible styles of organization and management are required. (Burns T. and Stalker G.M., 1961) Thus, the organic approach should be applied instead of the mechanistic approach. However, when an organization faces a stable environment without many changes the mechanistic approach prevails over the organic approach. (Morgan, G. 1986: 50) It should be said however that not only the organization influences the organization: there is no such thing as a linear relationship between cause and effect. Rather the relationship is as a circle of reciprocal interaction and influence. The environment influences the organization and the organization influences the environment. (Birnbaum, R. 1988: 47)

Burns and Stalker (1961) also found that there is absolutely no guarantee that organizations would find the appropriate mode of organization for dealing with their environment. Successful adaptation of organization to environment depends on the ability of top managers to interpret the conditions facing the organization in an appropriate manner and to adopt relevant courses of action. (Morgan, G. 1986: 54) This theory suggests that effective organizations depends on achieving a balance or compatibility between strategy, structure, technology, the commitments and needs of people, and the external environment. And because the relations between organization and environment are the product of human choices, they may become mal-adapted. In such cases, organizations are likely to experience many problems both in dealing with the environment and in their internal functioning. (Morgan, G. 1986: 55) As Burnes (1996) argues, *there is no 'one best way' to manage change. All the approaches on offer appear to be situational, limited in terms of the circumstances in which they are effective. Therefore, managers need to choose an approach that is suitable for their situation rather than assuming that what worked in the past will also work in the future. In some situations, it may be necessary to combine, either concurrently or sequentially, different approaches to change.* (Coram, R. and Burnes, B. 2001: 101)

Characteristics organization

As was already stated before, Burnes (1996) argues, *there is no 'one best way' to manage change.* And the type of change should be dependent on the nature of the organization it is dealing with. Therefore, it is time to look at the nature of the university as an organization. Colleges and universities are all involved in one way or another with doing the work required for fulfilling their teaching, research, and service missions. (Birnbaum, R. 1988: 44) However, a university, or for example a hospital, is a specific organization with certain characteristics that this sub-chapter will focus on. One characteristic of Higher Education concerns the authority of the professional experts. Mintzberg (1979) wrote about this: *"In higher education institutions many decisions can only be made by the professional experts."* This is the case because many decisions are very much focussed on the knowledge of the academics. For example: in what way should academics be teaching, what should the academics be teaching and what should they investigate. All these questions can and at the moment are addressed to the professional experts: the academics themselves. This is not because they are the only ones that would like to do it, but they are the only persons that are able to oversee their specialised fields. And as Mintzberg (1979) states: *"Only they [professional experts] are able to stimulate the enthusiasm of students for specific objects of study. This is why professional autonomy is so important in higher education institutions and this is why these institutions are called 'professional bureaucracies.'* (Mintzberg in: Van Vught, F.A. 1989: 51-52)



A second characteristic is the fact that in higher education institutions the knowledge areas forms the basis of the university. As van Vught (1989) describes it: "The knowledge areas are the 'building blocks' of a higher education organization and without some institutionalisation of these knowledge areas a higher education organization cannot exist." These 'building blocks' leads to fragmentation in these organizations. Throughout the organization specialised cells or blocks exist which can be seen as loosely coupled systems. (Van Vught, F.A. 1989: 52) A third characteristic of higher education institutions is the extreme diffusion of the decision making power. Because of the organization of a university in 'building blocks' the organization is fragmented and there is a need to decentralise. This leads to an organization where the decision-making power will be spread over a large number of units of actors. (Van Vught, F.A. 1989: 54)

By defining the characteristics of a university, it is stressed that a university as organization has more or less unique elements. And therefore an organizational change process should be designed carefully to meet all these characteristics. If a typical business organization and a typical university were compared, the university would have a greater specialization by expertise, a flatter hierarchy, lower interdependence of parts, less control over raw materials, low accountability, and less visible role performance. (Birnbaum, R. 1988: 21)

Loose coupling

As was made clear in the previous part, one of the characteristics of a university as an organization is their loosely coupled organization structure. Clark (1983) stated: *The university is a gatherings place for professionalised crafts, evermore a confederation, a conglomerate, of knowledge-bearing groups that require little operational linkage.* (Van Vught, F.A. 1989: 53) Clark describes that within universities many different groups can be found all focussed around knowledge 'blocks'. Additionally, Clark (1983) wrote that as an inevitable consequence of knowledge as primary production material, a university has a loosely coupled organization. (Clark, 1983: 16) Loose coupling can be defined as: *coupled events that are responsive, but each event also preserves its own identity and some evidence of its physical or logical separateness.* (Weick, K.E., 1999: 127-128) Loose coupling suggests that any location in an organization contains interdependent elements that vary in the number and strength of their interdependencies. The fact that these elements are linked and preserve some degree of determinacy is captured by the word *coupled*. The fact that these elements are also subject to spontaneous changes and preserve some degree of independence and indeterminacy is captured by the modifying word *loosely*. (Orton, J.D. and Weick, K.E., 1990: 204)

According to Orton and Weick, several researchers have suggested that causal indeterminacy causes loose coupling. This means that because people have limited information-processing capabilities and short attention spans they notice different parts of their surroundings, will tune out different parts at different times, and will process different parts at different speeds. As a result, people will find it difficult to coordinate their actions and will share few variables or weak variables, all of which leads to loose coupling. A fragmented external environment can also cause loose coupling. Whenever the external environment asks for specialized help the organization tends to become more loosely coupled. Finally, a fragmented internal environment can cause loose coupling. As Pfeffer (1978: 37) explains it, this is because few participants are constantly involved or cares about every dimension of the organizations operations. (Orton, J.D. and Weick, K.E., 1990: 206-207)

Loose coupling can be both advantageous and disadvantageous. Loose coupling can be advantageous in a complex and turbulent environment. An organization that has many semiautonomous units can be more sensitive and responsive to changes in different parts of its environment than can a centralized organization whose parts



of its environment than can a centralized organization whose parts are tied together. (Birnbaum, R. 1988: 166)

But loose coupling makes it difficult to repair defective subsystems and also makes coordination of activities problematic and makes it difficult to use administrative processes to effect change. Lutz (1982) even argued that if coupling were tighter, institutions would find it easier to communicate, achieve predictability, control their processes, and better achieve their goals. (Birnbaum, R. 1988: 40)

Concluding, one of the main characteristics of a university is its loosely coupled organizational structure, and one should be aware that this is not necessarily a positive characteristic.

Importance of formal and informal relations

Now the characteristics of a university as an organization and her loosely coupled organizational structure is clear the importance of formal and informal relations should be elaborated. According to Morgan (1986) organizations are mini-societies that have their own patterns of culture and subculture. The beliefs of organizations of how they see themselves, shared meaning, fragmented or integrated, and supported by various operating norms and rituals, can exert a decisive influence on the overall ability of the organization to deal with the challenges it faces. By observing this culture one becomes aware of the patterns of interaction between individuals, the language that is used, the images and themes explored in conversation, and the various rituals of daily routine. (Morgan, G. 1986: 121)

According to Birnbaum (1988) colleges and universities have many political characteristics. Therefore, one might consider a college or university as a political system where super coalitions of sub coalitions with diverse interests, preferences, and goals are normal. (Cyert and March, 1963: in Birnbaum, R.: 132) Morgan analyses organizational politics in a systematic way by focusing on relations between interests, conflict, and power. Organizational politics arise when people think differently and want to act differently. This diversity creates a tension that must be resolved through political means. The choice between alternative paths of action usually hinges on the power relations between the actors involved. (Morgan, G. 1986: 148) In other words, political systems depend on social exchange and, therefore, on mutual dependence. The power of any party depends to some extent on the value of that party's contribution to the political community and the extent to which such a contribution is available from other sources (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980: in Birnbaum, R.: 132). To make a change or reorganization work it is very important to understand the diverse interests and preferences of employees. This because there are ways to get things done in academic institutions even in the absence of collegial agreement or bureaucratic directives. (Birnbaum, R. 1988: 130)

Knowledge about the interaction flows could be helpful then. Collegial or bureaucratic systems like universities are coordinated through the development of stable vertical or horizontal interactions. Formal and informal groups change, overlap, are created, and fall apart, as they search for the power to induce outcomes consistent with their preferences. (Birnbaum, R. 1988: 140) Some groups are stronger than others are and have more power, but no group is strong enough to dominate all the others all the time. Those who desire certain outcomes must spend time building positions that are supported by other groups as well. (Birnbaum, R. 1988: 135) These groups can be created and developed in two ways namely by coalitions and by negotiation. In case of coalitions, one will consider joining other individuals or even a group in order to achieve a level of power and influence that cannot be achieved by acting alone. In case of negotiation, the process before joining a coalition is being discussed. Before one can decide whether to join forces with others, one must try to assess their own power, the power of potential coalition partners, the degree to which the interests of the parties coincide, and the potential costs and benefits of forming alliances.



(Birnbaum, R. 1988: 140) So the mixture of collegial interactions, bureaucratic structures, ongoing coalitions, change and cognitive processes by which people make inferences and judgments under conditions of uncertainty is of importance. (Birnbaum, R. 1988: 165) There are both positive and negative sides of political systems. An advantage is that they permit decisions to be made even in the absence of clear goals. Next to that, the inefficiency of political systems provides institutional stability. However, there are also some downsides, for example, some groups could control information as a source of power to achieve their own ends, and this may weaken other organizational functions. In addition, coalitions can arise that are not concerned about protecting the weak. (Birnbaum, R. 1988: 138-139) Whenever one is able to define which coalitions there are and which actors are in power one can try to change or influence the preferences, interests and goals of these groups in order to make the changing process work. This is exactly what a social network intends to do, as Wasserman and Galaskiewicz (1994) put it: " *The primary focus of social network analysis is the interdependence of actors and how their positions in networks influence their opportunities, constraints, and behaviours.*" (Wasserman, S. & Galaskiewicz, J., 1994: 894)

Decision-making, power and conflict

As follows from the previous sub-chapter, power and conflict have an important role within an organizations decision-making process, let alone in an organizational change process. And as Baldrige (1971) writes, sociologists want to know how the social structure of the university influences the decision makers, how decisions are forged out of the conflict, and how the policies, once set, are implemented. (Baldrige, J.V. 1971: 21).

Baldrige (1971) stresses that groups articulate their interests in many different ways, bringing pressure on the decision-making process from any number of angles and using power and force whenever it is available and necessary. Power and influence, once articulated, go through a complex process until policies are shaped, reshaped and forged out of the competing claims of multiple groups. (Baldrige, J.V. 1971: 20) Baldrige stresses that power within a university is not unitary but a garbage can of interacting, overlapping and often conflicting influence. Administrators could, for example, use various types of bureaucratic power. Among these are: control over the budgets, appointment of officials and control of a centralized admissions office. Other tactics can be pressure on individual officials, resolutions by organizations, and appeals by professional organizations. Finally, the 'charismatic' appeal of popular and impressive individuals must not be underestimated. (Baldrige, J.V. 1971: 60)

According to Meek (1984) conflict is an inherent feature of all complex organizations, and is the result of a variety of factors: status, the distribution of power, group interest, philosophical difference, and so on. It needs to be remembered that it is people who are in conflict. Structures, for example, do not argue or disagree with each other – people do. (Meek, L. 1984: 120) According to Baldrige (1971) a university should be seen as an organization with a pluralistic social structure. Because of its loose coupled organization conflicts are often fractured along lines of disciplines, faculty subgroups, student subcultures, splits between administrators and faculties, and rifts between professional schools. (Baldrige, J.V. 1971: 107) Within this structure, various groups and subcultures can be struggling to implement their values, but often this can be done only at the expense of other groups. In other words, the pluralistic or loosely coupled social structure ensures that changes will affect subcultures differently and this will provoke political conflict. (Baldrige, J.V. 1971: 58)



Another item that provokes political conflict is what Robert Merton (1957) once called the 'role- set' problems. Merton tries to explain hereby that every individual stands at the intersection of a whole set of roles that may have contradictory expectations. For example, a dean can be caught between the expectations of the central administration and the local departments and these expectations can be conflicting. (Baldrige, J.V. 1971: 113)

Both Baldrige and Meek stress the importance of power en conflict and the fact that it is almost impossible to not have them in an organization, let alone try to exclude the political process within universities. Meek (1984) even points out that an attempt to exclude the political process from higher education institutions is to assume a false model of how the organization really works. No dynamic, complex, heterogeneous collection of groups and individuals is going to demonstrate complete consensus and loyalty to major institutional policies. Those who lose one round of the decision-making game will attempt to recoup their losses in the next round. (Meek, I. 1984: 142) A difficult process within an organization, but also one that is very interesting to analyse.

Conclusion

This theoretical framework was written to examine the background of this research project. Important within the research is the process of change in organizations, the triggers of such change, the influence of the environment and the fact that no process of change is the right or only one because of the special character of organizations. Because of the importance of the special character of the organization, an effort has been made to explain the characters that make a university special and how these can influence the organizational change process. Next to that, an effort has been made to elaborate on the formal and informal relations that live within an organization, the fact that a university can be seen as a political organization and the importance of the terms power and conflict within the decision-making process.



IV. Research outline

The field research for this study was conducted between October and December 2007. During this period, I have done my internship at UNE, Armidale, Australia. During the research, I was afforded the opportunity for participative observation. I was present at a number of committee-meetings and provided with files, documents and other written information. In addition, a number of interviews were conducted.

Purpose of the research

With the help of the available literature and examples from the actual situation within the UNE organization, I will try to gain insights in the organizational change theory and the concepts of conflict and power by characterizing and analysing the process of change within the School of Business, Economics and Public Policy.

The purpose of the study is a combination of exploration, description and explanation. According to Babbie (2007) exploration is social research design conducted to explore a topic, to start to familiarize with the topic. Description is to describe situations and events. The researcher observes and then describes what was observed. Finally explanation is described as a study design that aims to answer questions of what, where, when and how. (Babbie, E.R., 2007: 87-90) All three are combined in this research: first I want to familiarize myself with the topic 'organizational change' then I want to observe, describe and analyse the process of change within the school of BEPP. Because of the relative short period of time available, this research should be described as a cross-sectional study and not as a longitudinal study. Cross-sectional study is defined by Babbie (2007) as a study that involves observations of a sample, or cross section, of a population or phenomenon made at one point in time. (Babbie, E.R., 2007: 102) Units of analysis within this research are the School of Economics, Business and Public Policy, but also the groups of disciplines within that school and the individuals working there and their social interactions.

Research method

Different sorts of research methods can be used in order to characterize and analyse the decision-making process within the School of Economics, Business and Public Policy. A first distinction that can be made is between qualitative and quantitative data. According to Babbie (2007) this is essentially the difference between numerical and nonnumerical designs. Both types of data are useful for different research purposes and as Babbie (2007) also states: every observation is qualitative at the outset. (Babbie, E.R. 2007: 23) Because the aim of this research is characterizing and analysing the organization, observation plays an important role and therefore it should be clear that mainly qualitative data will be used during this research. Quantitative design would not fit well with the need to observe: subtle communications and other events that may not be anticipated or measured otherwise there can be collected when using a qualitative research method. (Babbie, E.R., 2007:289)

A research design that is frequently used according to Babbie (2007) in the social sciences is survey research. Surveys may be used for descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory purposes. They are chiefly used in studies that have individual people as the units of analysis. A big group of respondents will be the target and mostly 'closed-ended' questions will be used. (Babbie, E.R., 2007: 244) Although this research method seems well fitted for the research proposed, the problem is that mostly quantitative data will be collected. Survey research is, according to Babbie (2007), the best method available for who is interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly.



Careful probability sampling provides a group of respondents whose characteristics may be taken to reflect those standardized questionnaires provide data in the same form from all respondents. A stratified sampled group normally is selected before doing surveys. (Babbie, E.R., 2007:244) Because of the limited time, resources and the fact that already two self-administered interviews are being held at UNE at the moment I did not choose for this type of research design.

Babbie (2007) also states that qualitative field research is a good way to produce data by studying and observing social phenomena as for example roles, relationships, groups and organizations. No statistical data will be produced because observations are not easily reduced to numbers. (Babbie, E.R., 2007: 286-287) According to Meek (1984) in sociology and social anthropology, the word **'observation' is almost synonymous with the term 'case study'**. This means that the researchers places himself in, for example an organization as UNE, over a period of time and observes and records the day-to-day activities of its members. (Meek, L. 1984: 20) Babbie, just like Meek, states that the greatest advantage of the field research method is the presence of an observing, thinking researcher on the scene of the action. (Babbie, E.R., 2007: 309)

This research method seemed to fit very well the intention to describe and analyse the decision-making process within the school of BEPP. During my stay at the School of Business, Economics and Public Policy, I observed a variety of formal and informal events. Throughout this period, I sat in on numerous committee meetings, which I found to be of importance for my research. I have been attending meetings of various school levels and have been introduced as a research student. Next to that, I have also been able to observe people and behaviour during my time in the office.

Next to observation, doing interviews are a way of collecting qualitative data. Advantages of the interview is, again according to Babbie (2007) that higher **response rates can be attained, the number of 'don't knows' will be reduced and** the fact that the interviewer can clarify questions, and can observe respondents as well as ask questions. (Babbie, E.R., 2007: 264-265) According to Meek, in a case study, the researcher gathers verbal information from a number of people. During my stay at UNE, some of the verbal information was collected through interviews, based on set topics. Some interviews were of an informal, conversational nature. After a month or so of information gathering, a network of key informants developed. According to Meek (1984) this is typical for many case studies. (Meek, L. 1984: 20) An important reason for taking interviews and collecting verbal information has been that a literature study alone would have given me an idea how the formal organization looked like or how it should work, but it would not give me an answer to the question how the informal ties or organization of the School of Economics, Business and Public policy are shaped. I have selected the respondents by group: academics and non-academics and their role within the organization: both high and low (for example both discipline leaders as the head of school). Finally, the collection of written information can be a way of collecting qualitative data. The study of official documents and records is of importance for two reasons. First, the researcher can use documents to check the accuracy of verbal information. Second, official documents provide the researcher with a sense of the institutions history and development. (Meek, L. 1984: 21) During this research I have been reading several **'official' UNE documents and read the minutes and agenda of several committees.**

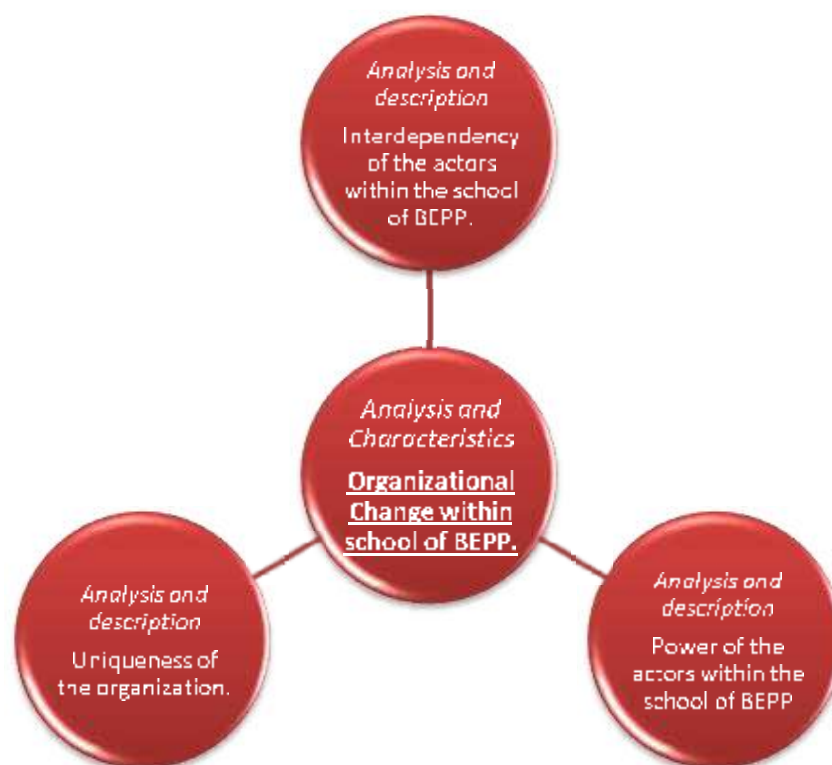


Research questions

During my research, I will divide the central problem formulation into three research questions. The reason why I chose for these questions is, that following from the theoretical framework in a process of change there are three main items of importance that need to be analysed in order to characterize the process: the uniqueness of the organization, the interdependence of the actors within that organization and finally the field of power of the actors within the organization. Therefore, in order to analyse the process of change within the School of BEPP, first we need to know how this school is organized, both in the 'old' and 'new' situation. Second, we need to know which actors there are within the organization and how their interdependence can be characterized. Thirdly, we need to identify and analyse the sort of powers and their sources that will be used within the school. The relation between the central problem formulation and the research questions can be seen in the figure below. Together the questions that follow from this (see below) will hopefully provide an answer to the central research question:

How can the process of change within the School of Business, Economics and Public Policy of the University of New England be characterized and analysed?

- 1 *How is the School of Business, Economics and Public Policy organized and which actors within the school are there?*
- 2 *How can the interdependency of the actors within the School of Business, Economics and Public Policy be analysed and described?*
- 3 *How can the field of power of the actors within the School of Business, Economics and Public Policy be analysed and described?*



Literature used

In order to answer the first research question I gathered mainly data from written information as for example organizational charts and the UNE web pages. Next to that, in order to reflect on this information I used data that I had collected by interviewing various people. In order to answer the second and third research question I both used data from written information as data that I had collected by having interviews and observing during committee meetings etc. However, the main source of information used for the second and third research questions have been the interviews and observations. The theory and written information served as a framework for the data that I collected through the observations and interviews.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research design and the reason why this particular design has been chosen. It became clear that this research is a combination of exploration, description and explanation and can be seen as a cross-sectional study because of the limit period of time available. The used research method is a qualitative field design: this is a good way to produce data by studying and observing social phenomena. Further, it was stated that observations, interviews and the study of written information will be used in order to collect data during the research. Finally, the central research question was stated and the relation between this question and the smaller research questions has been explained. Finally the literature that is used for the particular research questions have been discussed.



V. Research findings

Organization and actors UNE and the school of BEPP

In order to identify the field of power within the school of Business, Economics and Public Policy of UNE the formal organization and actors involved should be explained. Because the reorganization process is still going on and some parts of the organization are at the moment organized in the 'old' way both the 'old' and 'new' organizational structure will be discussed.

Organization UNE general 'old' situation

The official head of UNE is the Chancellor who is elected by a special committee to this position for, in this particular case, five years. The Chancellor can play a dual role, that of the titular or ceremonial head of the institution and 'chair of the board'. (F. Wood and R. Smith, 1990: 5) In other words the Chancellor can either see this function as a symbolic function for special occasions but can also choose to have a more direct influence on the organization. The latter is the case with the present Chancellor of UNE. The Chancellor is an 'ex officio' member of Council: the council is the highest organ of the UNE. All (new) policy or changes in the existing policy (finally) have to be approved by council. Council has members from different areas. There are 'council members', who are the chancellor and the deputy chancellor. Next to that, there are 'official members' (also called ex officio members), the Vice-Chancellor and the chair of the Academic Board. Also, the minister appoints six members and seven members are elected by different groups they represent, which include: academics, non-academics, graduates, post-graduates and undergraduates. Finally, the council elects two additional external members. (<http://www.une.edu.au/secretariat/council-members.php>) The next, two important positions or organs at UNE are the Academic Board and the position of the Vice-Chancellor (VC). There is a division between the day-to-day management, in other words the strategic and operational management and the issues related to the academic domain (teaching and research). Day-to-day management is practiced by the VC and his office. The VC can be called the chief executive officer and is responsible for all the management decisions within UNE as a whole. At UNE, the Academic Board is the principal academic body of the University. It advises the VC and Council on matters relating to teaching, scholarship and research within the University. The Academic Board also considers and reports on matters referred to it by the Council or by the VC. (<http://www.une.edu.au/secretariat/academic-board.php>). Members of the Academic Board are 'ex officio' members, senior management of the university, full professors and elected members. Positions as PVC's, Deans, Head of Schools etc. are among them. (<http://www.une.edu.au/secretariat/academic-board-members.php>)



Strengths and Weaknesses 'old' situation

During this research, members of the university were asked what they found to be the weaknesses of this 'old' situation. The answers were diverse, for example it was argued by some of the respondents that the senior management is making the decisions within the organization but did not always seem to be well informed about what really was going on within the organization. In addition, the communication flow from the senior executive level to the academic level was indicated as a problem. Next to that, the issue of little integration between the various disciplines or the lack of cohesion between the departments in the 'old' situation has been indicated as a weakness. As for example, the fact that the faculty was the cost centre in the 'old' situation while the activities were developed at the school level. However, the academics were not only asked to indicate the weaknesses of the organization but also to identify the strengths. As strengths, the respondents pointed out the commitment of the staff to UNE and the high quality of teaching within UNE. Also, one of the respondents argued that the service level towards students was high in the 'old' situation because administration was practiced at faculty level and the institutional knowledge of the various departments was high.

Organization UNE general 'new' situation

Because the reorganization process is ongoing not all information on the new organization is available. An organizational chart like the one used for the 'old' situation was not available. However a chart that describes the management lines within the new organization was available, which is used to describe the 'new' situation. In the 'new situation', the official head of UNE is still the Chancellor who is elected to this position for five years. Also, the day-to-day management is still practiced by the Vice-Chancellor and his office. The chart used did not show how the communication lines between the Vice-Chancellor and the Academic Board and the Chancellor will be. However, in the new situation there are three positions that report directly to the Vice-Chancellor, namely the Chief Operating officer, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Chief Development Officer. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor is responsible for what you could call the academic pillar. This is the, now two, faculties and the academic and research pillar. The faculties will be led by a PVC/Dean, will have other senior officers supporting them and staff in a Faculty office. (UNE 2007a: 6) Schools are led, just like the 'old' situation, by the head of school. However, the school will now serve as budget and cost centre. The Dean will be still responsible for the overall division of the budget. However, the school budget responsibility in the new situation lies not by the Dean but by the Head of School, although the structures for support of the Head of School and this new situation have not been created yet. The Chief Operating officer will be responsible for all operational affairs within UNE as for example Information Technology Services and Risk and Audit. The Chief Development Officer will be the one in charge of what you could compare with the UT Strategy and Communication department. Marketing and Public Affairs are among his responsibilities. Interesting is that next to the two PVC's responsible for the faculties there are also two PVC's responsible for Research and Academic. The PVC Research is for example responsible for research services but also for all the research centres and institutes. The PVC Academic is in charge of Student Admin & support and for example the Libraries. Another new body within the organization UNE is the AUQA (Australian University Quality Audit) team that will be in charge of the administrative and procedural process of quality control of all education programmes. However, this does not mean that the schools lose control, they still are responsible for the quality of their own programmes. Please see annex A for the 'new' formal organizational chart of UNE management.



Strengths and Weaknesses 'new' situation

During the research the respondents were not only asked to indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the 'old' situation, but also to indicate these for the 'new' situation: the situation after the reorganization process. Again, the respondents have stated various arguments for weaknesses within the 'new' situation as for example the lack of direction and communication by the executive level, the fact that the structures within the organization are not clear yet. In other words, according to the respondents I have spoken, there is a lot of uncertainty within the organization because of the fact that although formally the restructuring has been finished, in reality the process is still ongoing. It has also been stated that the new structure has caused a new layer within the organization while it was supposed to create a flatter organization and that the organization has become more bureaucratic. Finally as a weakness it has been indicated, by one of the respondents, that since the responsibility for the budget now rests with the Head of School this could lead to more tension between the Dean and the Head of School and that the creation of more cost centres has led to more administration which, according to some respondents, has not been realized by the executive level.

However, again, not only weaknesses have been indicated but also the strengths of the 'new' situation. As positive and strength of the 'new' situation, it is argued that more information is made available at lower levels within the organization and that the school will formally be given the responsibility to make decisions. Critical note: among the respondents there is doubt that the Dean will actually support this, new school responsibility. Another strength of the 'new' situation is the fact that new partnerships between disciplines can be developed and that more disciplinary areas can be created. Finally, it is stated by some that money will be saved because of this 'new' situation since resources can be combined.

The figure below gives an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of both the 'old' and 'new' situation as has been indicated by the respondents during the interviews.

OLD situation	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
	Commitment staff.	Senior Management does not know what is going on in organization.
	High quality of teaching within UNE.	Communication flow top-down.
	Service level towards students high.	Faculty cost centre but activities at school level.
	Administration at faculty level, high institutional knowledge.	
NEW situation	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
	More information available at lower levels within the organization.	Lack of communication at senior level.
	New partnerships between disciplines can be developed.	Uncertainty in organization, structures not clear.
	Money saving, because of combining resources.	More tension between Dean and HOS because of the school as cost centre.
		More administration, more work.



Organization Faculty of the Professions

Faculties in 'old' situation

Before the reorganization process started, UNE had four faculties, namely: the faculty of Arts, the faculty of Economics, Business and Law, the faculty of Education Health and Professional Studies and the faculty of the Sciences. These faculties each consisted of different schools (18 in total), as for example: the faculty of Economics, Business and Law can be divided in the School of Business, the School of Economics and the School of Law. Faculties were led by an Executive Dean who reported directly to the Vice-Chancellor. Every school was led by a Head of School. The Head of School was responsible for the day-to-day and academic management within the school. There was also a support structure within UNE that are called 'divisions', for example on the issues of research, development and internationalisation and finance.

Faculties in 'new' situation

After the reorganization process is finished only two faculties are left: the faculty of the Profession and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Next to that, the number of schools has dropped from 18 to 10. The key role of the Faculties will be to add value to the work of Schools, for example by providing strategic leadership, performance management, compliance monitoring, provision of shared services, mentoring and coordination. (UNE 2007b: 6) Faculties will be led by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Dean and will report directly to the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor. The Deputy-Vice Chancellor will report directly to the Vice-Chancellor.²

Organization School of Business, Economics and Public Policy

Responsible for the decisions made within the school is the Head of School. According to some respondents, together with the financial manager he is, formally, the most important and powerful actor within the school. His position within the organization has been stated formally in the UNE 'Executive Duty Statement'. According to this statement his responsibilities are: *"the HOS will be the senior line manager in the school and will be responsible to the Pro-Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Faculty for all aspects of the School's operations and strategic direction."* (UNE, 2007: 1) Within the school of BEPP, there are furthermore three important decision-making committees. The first is the Executive committee: members of this committee are the discipline leaders, the chair of the Research Committee and the Financial Manager. Next to that, there is the Course Advisory Committee: members are the course coordinators. Finally, there is the Research Committee consisting of actors chosen by the Head of School. This structure however is not the final structure, only a temporary solution and some of the respondents foresee that this will change in the coming year.

² The organizational chart of the proposed faculty of the Professions can be found in Annex A, together with the chart of the new school of Business, Economics and Public Policy.



Actors within the school of Business, Economics and Public Policy

Formally, the actors can be divided in two groups, namely the academic staff and the general staff. The academics are for example lecturers, senior lecturers, professors and associate professors. The general staff are for example administrative assistants, program managers, research-assistant and research project officers. The placement of the head of school could be questionable in both of the groups. UNE is not including this actor in any of the two groups and states that the Head of School is part of the executive level. However different groups than mentioned earlier could also be formed, for example on basis of their expertise. A logical division would be the academics of Public Policy as a group, the academics of Economics as a group and the academics of Business. UNE likes to divide groups on basis of expertise, like for example 'economics', 'econometrics', 'leadership', 'management' etc. However also the general staff could be included in these 'academic' groups or could form groups on their own, even groups established outside the school, as is the case with partnerships, are a possibility.

Conclusion

A clear definition about the present organization and structure of UNE is difficult to state because, although formally the reorganization is finished, it is actually an ongoing process. Therefore, this chapter tried to describe both the 'old' and 'new' situation and their particular structures and furthermore discussed the strengths and weaknesses of these organization structures, as has been indicated during the research. Next to an elaboration on the general structure of UNE, this chapter focussed at the structure of the faculties and even more specific at the school of Business, Economics and Public Policy. The most important actors and bodies within the School and their responsibilities have been explained. Finally, the actors within the school of BEP have been a topic of interest and as this chapter shows different groups can be formed with the same actors both within the school as crossing the borders of the school.



Interdependency of actors within the school of BEPP

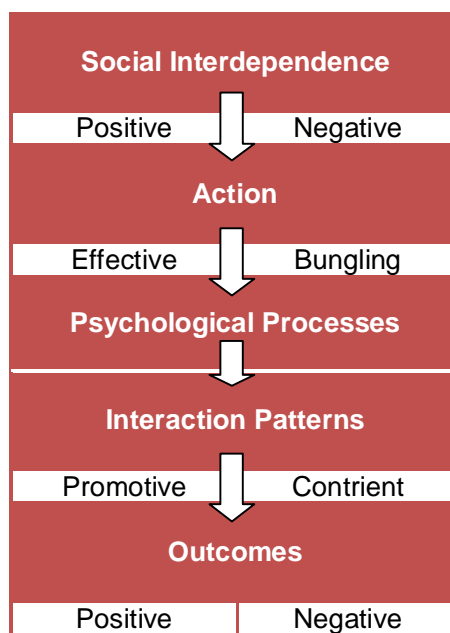
To understand the formal and informal relations between the employees of BEPP it is important to know more about their interdependency. In other words: their relationships and how they relate to each other, their common goals etc.

Interdependency in general

As was made clear in the Theoretical Framework, Kurt Lewin (1946) proposed that the essence of a group is the interdependence among members, which results in the group being a dynamic whole so that a change in the state of any member or subgroup changes the state of any member or subgroup. (Lewin, K. 1946) In order to identify the interdependence within the school of BEPP, Deutsch and Lewin ideas of interdependence will be used, the process of social interdependence towards outcomes will be central and can be found in the figure on the right.

Lewin states that group members are made interdependent through common goals. As members perceive their common goals, a state of tension arises that motivates movement toward the accomplishment of the goals. (Lewin, K. 1946) Therefore, an important issue within this research will be the focus on common goals. Deutsch (1949) extended Lewin notions by examining how the tension system of different people may be interrelated. He conceptualised two types of social interdependence- positive and negative that will be used during this research. *Positive interdependence* exists when there is a positive correlation among individuals' goal attainments: individuals perceive that they can attain their goals if and only if the other individuals with whom they are cooperatively linked attain their goals. *Negative interdependence* exists when there is a negative correlation among individuals' goal achievements; individuals engaged in such processes perceive that they can obtain their goals if and only if the other individual with whom they are competitively linked fail to obtain their goals. (Johnson, D.W. 2003: 934-935) Positive interdependence results, according to Deutsch, in *promotive interaction*, which means that individuals encourage and facilitate each other's efforts to complete tasks in order to reach the group's goals. Negative interdependence in the contrary results in *oppositional or contrient interaction*, which means that individuals discourage and obstruct each other's efforts to complete tasks in order to reach their goals.

In short could be stated that the ways in which participants' goals are structured determine how they interact, and the interaction pattern determines the outcomes of the situation. (Deutsch, 1949)



Interdependency within the school of BEPP

Within the school of BEPP, many groups can be identified and many goals at different levels seem to exist. During the research, it became clear that, according to the respondents, the management of UNE both in an informal as well as formal manner has been subject to discussion. The respondents indicated that at the informal level it has been discussed within a team, within the various disciplines. However also in a formal manner the management has been discussed for example at the various school committee meetings and the recently presented UNE voice survey has been indicated as a formal manner. It turned out that at the moment the respondents in general found that the general idea about the UNE management is fairly negative and according to Deutsch' model this leads to bungling and can in the end lead to negative outcomes.

As has been stated different common goals at different levels throughout the school could be identified. There are both 'teaching goals', 'research goals' and 'UNE goals'. Interesting is that almost no common 'school goals' were indicated. These various goals as for example 'high quality of teaching', 'attracting more students', 'doing relevant research', 'enough publications' can be connected to various levels within the school of BEPP. For example some of the goals are especially common on a discipline level as for example most of the research goals. However also common goals on a more general level can be found as for example the 'efficient use of money' or 'advanced technology at UNE'. It also has been argued by some of the respondents that at a school level there used to be clear goals and a clear structure. However, because of the changing nature of the school new groups and common goals have not yet been defined. Finally it has been argued that within the school many small groups work against each other instead of working together and that it is difficult to motivate the staff within the School for 'school goals'.

Interesting is that most of the interviewed staff members are aware and in favour of operating together opposed to operate alone. Arguments as, working together keeps you in track, it is a possibility to check opinions in a broader context and that it ensures the best mix at a teaching level are indicated as positive effects of working together as a group. It has also been stated that in order to get things done at UNE you have to work with certain people: the so-called 'key-actors'. Also interesting is that in order to meet the various deadlines within the school the academics and general staff members I interviewed need to work together. However, there were also many arguments stated that justified working at an individual level instead of working in groups. It has been argued by the respondents that it is sometimes within the school more effective to do things individually. Next to that, it has been stated that group processes can take a lot of time in order to reach consensus and that a more professional approach is needed. Also it was stated that most of all the research and teaching level ask for an individual approach. Finally, it has been observed that the groups within the school have been changed because of the restructuring. Interesting was that most of the respondents argued that this has not been the case because the discipline groups did not have changed. It was also argued that because the Public Policy group physically is still in another building than the rest of the school the former school has not been changed. And even that there are no joint interest with the Public Policy discipline. However also arguments in favour of a changing character of groups have been stated, for example that formally the groups did change because of the amalgamation. A general statement made by the respondents about the new groups has been that it has lead to too many people that are engaged in the decision-making process, for example the huge number of course-coordinators which makes the process slow.



Link theory and practice

The question now is how the theory of Lewin relates to the information gathered from the situation in practice. As stated above Kurt Lewin (1946) proposed that the essence of a group is the interdependence among members, which results in the group being a dynamic whole so that a change in the state of any member or subgroup changes the state of any member or subgroup. (Lewin, K. 1946) However, in practice the respondents argue that although the school of BEPP has been amalgamated they do not feel that this has changed the groups they are engaged with. This could be due to the fact that there still is a physical distance between the groups but it is still remarkable and could indicate that the school of BEPP is strongly divided.

Deutsch argued that there are two types of interdependence, namely negative and positive interdependence. According to the information gathered from the interviews and observations, I feel that both types can be found within the school of BEPP. There are groups within the school that have common goals that are based on a positive idea, for example making sure that lecturers are covering all units. Or, for example, cooperation within a certain research project ran by one of the disciplines. These positive interdependence leads to positive interaction where colleagues are willing to help each other in order to reach the best outcomes. However also negative groups can be identified for example slowing down the mapping exercise of workloads within the school in order to prevent establishing the new, for some disadvantaged, UNE quality system. Or the fact that key persons within the organization are necessary to 'get things done' this indicates that there are also people that leads to contrient obstructive interaction patterns where they will do anything in order to prevent you from reaching your goals.

Conclusion

This chapter described the way organizations can be structured and the importance of common goals within the various groups of the organization. Lewins' theory and Deutsch model of interdependence has been used as a framework and it has been argued that there are many groups within the school of BEPP at various levels within the organization. Remarkable is that, according to the respondents, almost no 'school-level' common goals seem to exist which may be due to the recent restructuring. Finally, the link between the theory and practice has been described and the model of Deutsch seemed to apply to the UNE situation. Interesting issue is that the restructuring did not seem to change the groups within the school, although Lewin describes this as a very dynamic process.



Field of power of actors within the school of BEPP

The analysis of the field of power within the school of Business, Economics and Public Policy is next to the interdependence very important.

Field of power in general

The theoretical framework already stressed the importance of power during the process of change. Birnbaum said about power: "Power is the ability to produce intended change in others, to influence them so that they will be more likely to act in accordance with one's own preferences. Power is essential to coordinate and control the activities of people and groups in universities, as it is in other organizations." (Birnbaum, R. 1988: 12) In other words, in order to coordinate and control activities like reorganization one should know who is in power within the network and what sort of power this actor has. Although there are different sort of power and ways do describe power and the resources of power the definitions of Birnbaum and Baldrige will be used during the research. Birnbaum defines five kinds of power: the first is *coercive power*. This is the ability to punish if a person does not accept one's attempt at influence. The second kind of power is *reward power* by which means the ability of one person to offer or promise rewards to another or to remove or decrease negative influences. Third there is *legitimate power*, this exist when both parties agree to a common code or standard that gives one party the right to influence the other. Fourth, there is *referent power*: the willingness to be influenced by another because of one's identification with the other. And finally there is *expert power*: when one person accepts influence from another because of a belief that the other person has some special knowledge or competence in a specific area. (Birnbaum, R. 1988: 13) As already was stated in the theoretical framework Baldrige stresses that power within a university is not unitary but a garbage can of interacting, overlapping and often conflicting influence. Administrators could, for example, use various types of bureaucratic power. Among these are: control over the budgets, appointment of officials and control of a centralized admissions office. Other tactics can be pressure on individual officials, resolutions by organizations, and appeals by professional organizations. Finally, the 'charismatic' appeal of popular and impressive individuals must not be underestimated. (Baldrige, J.V. 1971: 60) Both Birnbaums' kinds of power and Baldrige various types of bureaucratic power are important in this research project to describe the field of power within the school of BEPP.

Field of power of actors within the school of BEPP

During the research the respondents were asked to indicate which positions within the school of BEPP were both formally and informally most powerful. In general can be stated that the (Transitional) Head of School is both informal and formally seen as the most powerful position within the school by the respondents. The Head of School is formally followed by the financial manager, the professors, associate professors, and the discipline leaders. Remarkable is that no administrative positions were marked as formally powerful.

<i>Formal power field 'academics'</i>	<i>Power sources</i>
1) Head of School	Authority of the position, decision-making ability, access to information, control over allocation financial resources.
2) Financial Manager	Budget control
3) (A) Professors	Research reputation
4) Discipline leaders	Attributed responsibilities



Informal the Head of School is followed by the former head of schools in the 'old' situation and administrative assistants. According to the respondents various assets of a person can make one having informal influence on a decision-making process. For instance, the (research)reputation of a person, the fact that a person brings in a lot of money to the school, persons that are more often in contact with a higher placed person as for example the Head of School, the Dean or Vice-Chancellor or even have informal relations with those persons. Next to that, leadership and persuasion can make a difference during a decision-making process.

<i>Informal power field 'academics'</i>	<i>Power sources</i>
1) Head of School	Academic stature, experience in organization.
2) (A)Professors	Strong research profile, numbers of publications
3) Administrative assistants	Knowledge organization, diary keeping, fill out forms.

Also sources of power have been indicated during this research and again various replies have been given. Working experience, the knowledge of the faculty policies, a formal position, the access to information and the right persons, the control over the allocation of resources, research reputation, sitting in various committee meetings and the ability to communicate information upwards to the organization all have been indicated as sources of power. Most of the respondents furthermore felt that when their position would have been higher up in the organization this would have affected the ability to influence other people. Higher-up in the organization is seen, by most of the respondents, as an equivalent to more power because more people tend to listen to you when your formal position is more important. Next to that persons higher-up in the organization have better access to meetings and therefore information and more access to talk both informal and formal with more higher-up placed persons. However, some respondent stated that it does not matter where you are in the organization because the executive level is in the end powerless to change the behaviour of the staff and therefore the organization. A general statement was made that being higher up in the organization would give you more power to influence the shaping of UNE in general but less in influencing the school itself. The respondents were less clear about whether they were able to make decisions on their own and felt in general that organization wide this was not the case. Especially not in case budget decisions were involved and found that all the decisions have to go to the various committees throughout the organization which makes individual decisions and innovations difficult. On the other hand, they felt that on an individual level decisions still could be made, even within the discipline, and at the very specialized teaching-level this was the case. Finally, it was argued that the formal position of a person and in the case of attribution of formal power for example by the Head of School could be a reason for the ability to make decisions. The communication channels within the school were furthermore part of the research and during the research it became obvious that this is a problem for most of the respondents. It has been argued that **because of the fact that the school of BEPP is big, the 'old' communication lines have been torn apart and the new ones are not finished or robust enough yet.** Among the respondents, there is the feeling that there are not enough communication lines within the school. Furthermore, the fact that no school meeting has taken place yet and that the various disciplines do not know what the others are undertaking, is a problem. However, there are also respondents that feel that there are the committee meetings as a formal communication channel and that the personal contacts with the Head of School are useful.



Link theory and practice

As has been described above, Birnbaum defined five kinds of power. During the interviews and observations various sorts of power could be observed and now it is time to link theory with practice.

Birnbaum: five kinds of power

1. Coercive power (punishment)
2. Reward power (offer rewards)
3. Legitimate power (standard agreed)
4. Referent power (willingness influence)
5. Expert power (special knowledge)

The power that the respondents mostly indicated as present within the UNE organization were Birnbaum's *Expert power and Legitimate power*. For example the power of a professor because of his expertise within a specific research field. Also the

expertise of an administrative assistant that knows all the school and faculty policies or how and when to fill out the right forms in order to get something done within the organization. Furthermore, the legitimate power from persons that because of their formal position within the organization have certain responsibilities and powers. For example, the position of the Head of School that in the end makes the decisions within the school.

Not only Birnbaum defined kinds of power also Baldrige defined various types of power. It should be obvious that, according to the data the respondents provided me with, I feel that Bureaucratic power is certainly found within the UNE organization. The

Baldrige: various types of power

1. Bureaucratic power (budget control)
2. Pressure on individuals by officials
3. Resolutions by organizations
4. Appeals professional organizations
5. Charismatic appeal (popular, individuals)

financial manager controls together with the Head of School the budget of the School and has therefore the power to decide which projects will be done and which will not. The second type of power I would like to indicate within the school is pressure on individuals by officials. This would be for example whenever the Dean interferes in the school and makes the Head of School make some changes that maybe are not in line with his ideas. The Dean can use his formal position in order to make the Head of School make the changes the Dean wishes for. However, this type of power can be used only limited because in the end other the Head of School will not be very cooperative anymore and stand up to the Dean. Finally, again according to the data obtained by interviewing, Baldriges' *charismatic appeal* can be indicated as a power within the school. Whenever a person has the 'ear' of a high placed person within the organization and is popular in a way that officials need to listen to him, for instance because of an impressive research profile this person can use this power to influence the decision-making process in a way that suits him best. At the moment it was difficult to observe other types of power, however this could be due to the fact that the organization is still searching for its balance and structure.

Conclusion

This chapter used both Birnbaum and Badriddle theories in order to describe the different kinds and types of power. It also made clear how the respondents within the school of BEPP indicated the formal and informal positions of power and which resources they thought would make a person powerful. Finally, a link between the theory and practice has been placed and it was stated that the types of power indicated in theory could also be found within the school of BEPP as for example Birnbaums' *expert power* and Badriddle's *pressure on individuals by officials*.



VI. Conclusion & Recommendations

This chapter is aimed at answering the central research question: How can the process of change within the school of Business, Economics and Public Policy of the UNE be characterized and analysed? Next to that, recommendations will be given for further research.

With a history of reorganizations, UNE is not new to the process of change. Where in the past the university needed to have more layers at the moment less layers is preferred and the numbers of faculties dropped from four to two. The school of BEPP is one of the schools of the Faculty of the Professions where three disciplines: Business, Economics and Public Policy have been amalgamated. According to the respondents, the school of BEPP can at the moment be characterized as a recently amalgamated group of disciplines where many small groups of people work in order to reach their goals. Overarching school goals are not yet set officially and at an informal level, the academics do not seem to initiate such goals. Especially teaching and research goals as covering all units or cooperate in a research project seem to be of interest to the interviewed academics within the school of BEPP. Although the respondents do see the advantages of working together in order to reach their goals they also feel that within the present organization it is sometimes more effective to do things by themselves. They furthermore tend to contact key persons within the school in order to get things done.

One of the biggest problems of the school, which has been brought up by the respondents, is related to the recent restructuring of UNE: the uncertainty of the staff within the school. Because the restructuring is still an ongoing process and many decisions still have to be made the staff feel that they do not know what will happen within the school: this makes the morale among the staff low. Most of the respondents claim that academics complain that there is no official statement about their positions and their formal responsibilities and powers: this seems to make the uncertainty even bigger.

Another problem, indicated by the respondents, within the school is that the recently amalgamated disciplines are not integrated yet. In some cases, they even seem to feel that there is no common ground for integration at all. This is, according to the interviewed staff, among other things due to the difference in physical location of the Public Policy discipline on one side and Business and Economics on the other side. Furthermore communication within the school indicated by all of the respondents as a problem. Most of the respondents feel that there are few communication channels, which seems to be due to the fact that the old communication channels have been torn apart. According to one of the respondents, new communication channels are planned to develop but because of the huge workload, this process has not finished yet. Furthermore, the communication channel between the senior management and the academics seems to, again according to the respondents, functioning badly. The academics seem to feel that the senior management does not understand what is going on, on a day-to-day basis within the school and feel that the new policies do not reflect their work. In the end, the respondents indicate, that this leads to a low morale among the staff and the absence of the willingness to work with the new policies. They also feel that the various disciplines do not know what the other is doing and that the Head of School has not made enough effort to integrate the academics from all the disciplines.



I furthermore found and observed that the school has a very formal decisions-making structure, where all decisions have to go through the various committees of the school and the final decision is being made by the Head of School. This structure makes, according to the respondents, the staff feel that there is not much space for initiative and quick responses and can lead to persons that take initiative on their own by breaking some of the rules. Within the school both formally and informally, the respondents indicated the Head of School as the most powerful position. This because of formal powers and responsibilities, his access to information, the ability to communicate to higher placed persons within the UNE organization, his formal decisions-making power and the control of allocation of the financial resources. Also a/professors are, according to the respondents, within the school, a group with powers. This is mostly because of their research status and their contribution to the school. Finally, the respondents found that the financial manager is not without any power because this position controls the budget and every decision in the end has to have a budget approval.

Furthermore I have observed that different sorts of power are used within the school, for example *charismatic appeal* and *expert power*. A very charismatic person within the school can be able to influence his discipline team in order to make the Head of School change the policy. An example that was more often made by the respondents was that persons that have 'the ear' of the Dean or the Head of School or knew these persons on a friendly basis have more influence on the decision-making process than they formally should have. Not only the academic staff can influence the decision-making process, according to the respondents, also the general staff has some powers. Some of the administrative assistants control the diaries of high placed persons within or outside the school and seem therefore able to control who can talk to them. It can also be the case that they have knowledge that other persons do not have, but will need, which gives them the expert power.

In general, the respondents state that within the school it is at the moment the case that you will have to know your 'key persons' to get things done the way you want them done. The moment you will follow the formal structure of decision-making within the school, patience is necessary because decisions within the school of BEPP but also within the UNE as a whole are not made overnight!

I would like to conclude this paper by stating that the observations and data gathered could be different to the view the school as a whole on the reorganization process. However, although I only have been able to interview a small number of people, I am pretty sure that most of the findings do represent the overall feelings of the school. Another item of importance is that one should be aware of the fact that the school is at the moment in a transitional phase. Therefore, it is likely that new groups and sorts of power will appear within the school the moment the organization is in balance and a different conclusion could be written then.

Recommendations

Because of the transitional phase of UNE a repetition of the research, as has been described in this report, could lead to very different results. This is also a recommendation; the effect of the reorganization on the academic and general staff is of great importance for the future of UNE. Using this research as a basis for research in other schools could also be of interest because a comparison could be made between schools and a more general and wider conclusion could be drawn. Also interesting for further research are the two surveys that have been conducted at UNE. These findings could confirm my conclusion or could conclude that in other schools my findings are not applicable. This also could give the managers of UNE an idea whether their reorganization really has the effect that they were trying to achieve.



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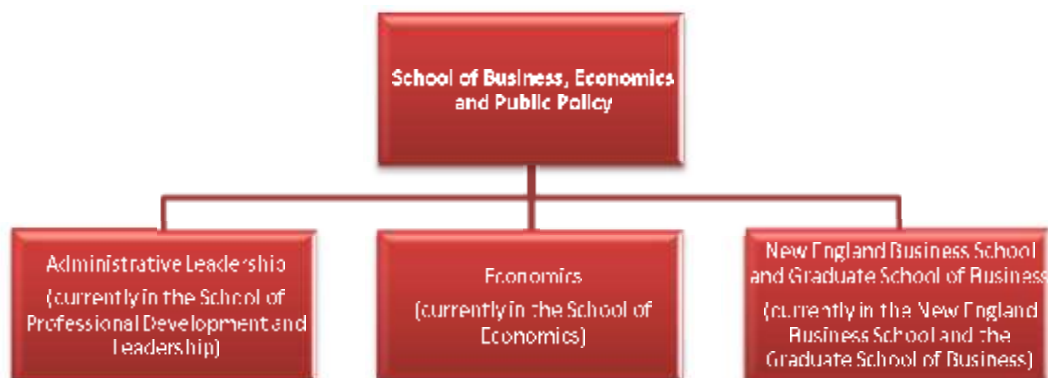
VIII. Annexes

A. Organizational Charts

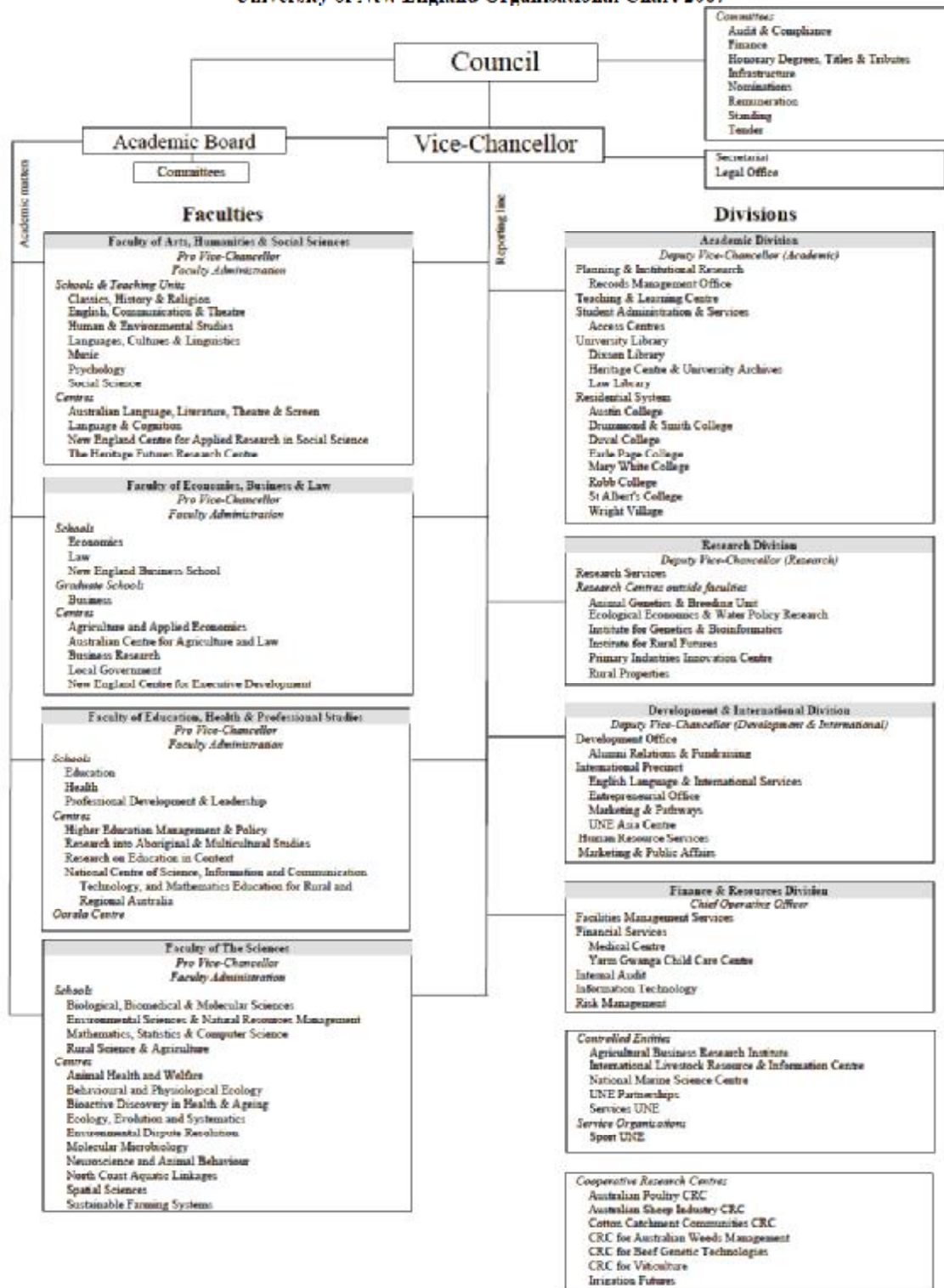
Proposed Faculty of the Professions



Proposed School of Business, Economics and Public Policy in the Faculty of the Professions



University of New England Organisational Chart 2007



B. Interview Questions

During the research the following persons have been interviewed:

Head of School

- Mr. L. Meek, Head of School of Business, Economics and Public Policy

Financial Manager

- Mr. M. Haydon, Financial Manager of Business, Economics and Public Policy.

Discipline Leaders

- Mrs. A. Sheridan, academic staff, A/Professor Business and Economics
- Mrs. V. Dalton, academic staff, Graduate School of Business
- Mr. E. Fleming, academic staff, Professor Business and Economics
-

General Staff

- Mrs. J. Munro, general staff, Acting Office Manager
- Mrs. J. van der Lee, general staff, Project Officer

The following introduction to the interview has been used:

I am a Public Administration student from the University of Twente. During my stay in Armidale I am doing a (small) research within the school of BEPP on the topic of Organizational Change and the process of decision-making under the supervision of Leo. Topics I am interested in are: how the school feels about the reorganization, how the formal and informal relations can be described within the school and who can influence the decision-making process and why? I try to critical reflect on the theory by observing during various committee meetings, collecting data from written information and by doing interviews among both executive, academic and general staff within the school of BEPP. The interview will, at a maximum, take 1 hour of your time and of course this interview will be confidential.

Test-interview

After the first interview I have reviewed the questions and added or changed sentences to optimise the effect and clear questions that were found to be unclear to the respondent.



The following questionnaire has been served as a basis for the interviews.

(Re)organization

1. How do you feel about the reorganization process in general?
2. What do you think are the weaknesses and strengths of the 'old' UNE organization?
3. What do you think will be the weaknesses and strengths of the 'new' UNE organization?

Interdependence

4. Do you discuss with your colleagues the management of UNE? And what is the general idea about this?
5. Do you feel that you have common goals with the academics within the school? And can you name some of these goals and the actors or groups involved?
6. In case you have a goal, for example in a decision-making process, do you tend to identify other persons with the same goal or do you try to reach it by yourself?
7. Do you feel that the reorganization has changed the groups you are engaging with?

Field of power

8. Which actor or actors within the school of BEP would you describe as most powerful and why?
9. Do you think it is possible within your organization that people have more influence on the decision-making process than they formally should have? Can you give an example?
10. Are you able to influence people and the decision-making process within your function, and how do you do this?
11. Which resources do you have, following from your function, that make it easy for you to influence people and the decision-making process.
12. Would you be able to influence people better when your position would have been higher up in the organization?
13. Do you feel that you can make decisions on your own? Why is that?
14. Do you feel that there are enough communication channels both in and outside the school?
15. Do you feel that people both within and outside the school take notice of what you say?
16. Do you feel that the university/ faculty/ school stimulate you to do your utmost?



C. Interview Form

Name person	
Position	
Date interview	
Time interview	

Questions (Re)organization

1. How do you feel about the reorganization (restructuring) process in general?

2. What do you think are the weaknesses and strengths of the 'old' UNE organization (before the restructuring)?

3. What do you think will be the weaknesses and strengths of the 'new' UNE (as the restructuring proposes) organization?



Interdependence (formal and informal relations)

4. Do you discuss with your colleagues the management of UNE? And what is the general idea about this?

5. Do you feel that you have common goals with the academics within the school? And can you name some of these goals and the actors (positions) or groups (level) involved?

6. In, for example a decision-making process, do you see the advantages of operating together opposed to operate independently?

7. Do you feel that the restructure has changed the groups you are in contact or work with?



Field of power

8. Which positions within the school of BEP would you describe as most powerful and why? (formal and informal)

9. Do you think it is possible within your organization that people have more influence on the decision-making process than they formally have? Can you give an example?

10. Are you able to influence people and the decision-making process within your position, and how do you do this?

11. Which resources you have, following from your position, that make it easy for you to influence people and the decision-making process. (for example access to information)



12. Would you be able to influence people better when your position would have been higher up in the organization?

13. Can you make decisions within the school on your own? Why is that?

14. Do you feel that there are enough communication channels both in and outside the school? (what sort of communication channels are there?)

15. Do you feel that the position you are in influences whether actors both within and outside the school take notice of what you say?



16. Do you feel that the organization stimulate you to do your utmost?

Evaluation



D. Observation form

Committee:	
Meeting date:	22.10.2007
Meeting time:	11.30 -
Actors present:	

Observations

Interdependence:

Resources power:

General Reorganization:



Evaluation



E. Reflection on internship and research

This report will reflect on the internship that I have done for my Bachelor thesis executed at the University of New England, Australia and the research that I have conducted during this period of time. Past 3,5 months I worked on a fulltime basis in Armidale on my projects. My project contains three main elements: the working experience and the mapping exercise of BEPP units, characterize and analyse the School of Business, Economics and Public Policy at UNE and the acquaintance with and the experience of an unknown culture. A colleague made the first connection between Leo Goedegebuure and me and together we worked out a research and internship that suited us both!

Research process

The research

I started getting to know the organization of UNE by reading articles and information on UNE, for example the UNE Strategic Plan 2007-2010 and the Second Tier plans. Next to that I surfed on the web page of UNE to find some more detailed information and get an impression of the characteristics of UNE as a University.

The following phase within my research project has been structuring my Bachelor thesis and gathering information and literature that I needed for this structure. I have been reading books about the history of UNE, about how universities are organized, about organizational change theories, about loose coupling etc. With this information I have been able to write the preamble and my theoretical framework.

After that I developed and conducted interviews among academics and general staff of Business Economics and Public Policy. Next to that I was able to observe during various school committee meetings. This information was useful to compare the formal en informal structure of the school of BEPP.

Finally when the data-gathering phase had been competed I started to draw conclusions, discussed this with my supervisors and finalized it until the final version of the research report could be presented.

The mapping exercise

As part of my internship I agreed to help Leo with a mapping exercise of the various units within the school of BEPP. During my stay I identified the overlap and gaps between this units. I do think that I have made a contribution to the project, doing the most time consuming work. First I identified all the BEPP units and awards, found out whether there was overlap between these, grouped some of the units that were in the same discipline area and finally did a check up on the PDAL courses and found the details and whether they were up-dated or not. However this project could not be finalized before I left, this was due to the fact that other actors did not have sufficient time to progress with the project. My understanding is that the project will carry on in 2008.

Several other tasks

During the internship I also help colleagues when needed with special deadlines or tasks. For example I have attended a meeting about 'the Australian diploma supplement' to give a student perspective on this topic. Next to that I also helped to send out special mailings for CHEMP. However I was pleased to find that my main task was working on my bachelor project and not doing most of the CHEMP administrative tasks.



Working environment

The period of my stay has been very pleasant, this certainly was because of the nice people I was able to work with. Most of the colleagues were very interested and nice and I liked to talk to them during morning tea. We talked mostly about all the issues going on at UNE and about the differences between the Dutch and Australian Higher Education system. Especially my colleagues Jeannet and Leo were very warm persons and supportive which helped me to continue with my project. In the personal sphere I can say that I also saw some of the colleagues after work or in the weekends. I joined the UNE soccer team and have had some nice barbeques. Overall the working environment was very informal which helped me to integrate very quickly and work very relaxed.

Evaluation

Quality research

Overall I feel that this research is a reflection of the situation I have observed and that one could define it as valid. During the definition of the central and other research question I tried to be as independent as possible and followed the literature. Although I feel that this are good questions I do feel that I might have been influenced by Leo because he already knew more about this topic and gave me some ideas for proper literature. Concerning the theoretical framework, I feel that I have been very precise and used many different authors in order to write down the whole picture. The study of written information has been done very carefully and I analysed all information before I used it in the report. Concerning the data collection trough interviews and observations I feel that this information was very important for the answers of the research questions. This information was not written down in any documents and therefore very valuable. Furthermore, I think I handled the collection of the data well: I did not show any other person the results of the interviews or observations and did not discuss the outcomes as well. However, it can be stressed that this research is not representative for the whole school of BEPP and this is correct. Reason for this is both practical: there just wasn't enough time as organizational: the UNE would not cooperate. This does not mean that the data did not give me a good idea of the informal organization and problems and groups in the school.

Relevance research

This research could be very relevant for the UNE organization as a whole because it describes the effect the reorganization has on their employees, indicates the key persons within the school of BEPP, the key groups and describes what the weaknesses and strengths of the new organization are. By using this information the UNE could anticipate and solve some of the problems, for example the low morale and the badly handled communication. However because the UNE organization was not very cooperative during the data collection and we were forced to tell them we stopped the research it is not possible to hand the report over to them. This does not mean that this research could not be relevant for other students or researchers in the area of organizational change because its shows which problems that are addressed in the theory actually are present in practice.



Personal learning experiences

I feel that this international Bachelor internship has given me a number of important personal learning experiences. Firstly, I now realize that I am very interested in organizational change, the way organizations function and the role the employees have within an organization. This is an area that I did not explore yet during my study but certainly is of importance. Therefore I am glad that I have been able to explore this topic by myself during this internship and I feel that this is not the end of it. I like to explore more of this field and am planning to do the HRM Business Administration Master.

Another personal learning experience has been that political behaviour in an organization is very important. I even experienced this in person the moment one of my colleagues phoned the service department of UNE and told me that I did not have a human ethics clearance. There was no personal motive for her to do this and probably will not achieve anything by doing this but still did it. Very important to keep in mind which persons you can trust and which persons you need to feed very specific information.

This project, for me personally, also confirmed that I am more than capable to carry out a project by myself, make and stick to the planning and deliver a final product.

Personal learning points

Looking back at what I have achieved there are always things that I could and maybe should have handled differently than I did. Below you will find some learning points, however without making the mistakes or decisions I made, I would not have known that a different approach is or could be useful. In other words: I do not regret anything I did during my stay in Australia!

- Be very careful who to trust in the UNE organization.
- Comply with official UNE standards in order to avoid administrative problems.
- Interview more respondents in order to draw more conclusions that are valid.

Supervision internship

I had a really nice relationship with my supervisor. I was able to work very independent, the way I like to work. Every time I wanted to discuss a chapter or part of the research or wanted some feedback, I made an appointment with Leo and we discussed the work. I feel that I have been given the opportunity to develop a high quality final version of my research project because of the interest the supervisor showed during my research and the time he spent revising it.

Conclusion

My internship at the UNE, school of Business, Economics and Public Policy in Australia has been a very good and nice experience. I also feel that an internship like this is a true addition to my study and makes that I will be better prepared in the future for working in a new organization. Although there are some issues within the research that could have worked out better, I feel overall, this is a good research report and I learned a lot from the mistakes I made during the process.

