

EDHI 9050
Organization and Governance of Higher Education
Core Organizational Values, Structures, Processes

Structure:

- Board(s): institutional and/or system
- Executive (president, chancellor, rector, etc.)
- Administrative: line academic, line business, staff
- Legislative/Shared Governance (faculty, university via committees, senates, etc.)

Goals of the Enterprise:

- Goals ostensibly drive any rational social organization
- Classic goal theory: goals are shared, written, clear, measurable, ordered, stable, transparent, consistent with actions of organization, motivating
- Reality: goals are contested, negotiated, conflicting, discovered, constraining, unordered, shifted/displaced/distorted over time, fantastical, unmeasurable
- Operative goals can be manifest or latent (survival, peace, stability, protecting interests, etc.)
- Environments can force goal shifts, via market signals, coercive pressures, etc.
- Core org. challenge: meeting organizational and individual goals simultaneously
- Universities as multi-purpose organizations: teaching, research, service, and more
 - risks: incompatibility, strains on capacity, dominance of “easier” or popular goal, sacrifice of goal clarity for ambiguity (typical “mission statements”)
 - benefits: synergy, openness to shifting interests at individual and org. levels, recruitment advantages

Coordinating and Controlling Higher Education:

- Forms of coordination: bureaucratic, professional, political, market
- Nations and states vary in dependence on these forms
- Governing bureaus: variation in levels of centralization
- Markets: students, faculty, funding, prestige
- Coordination in the U.S. states: consolidated boards, coordinating boards, and planning agencies

Shared Governance and Collegiality: values/norms especially distinctive to higher education

“Loose Coupling”:

- Colleges and universities have features of “loosely coupled systems”
- Structure: delegated discretion; infrequent across-unit communications; lax quality inspection
- Technology: Uncertain theory of production, i.e., inputs, processes, outcomes
- Many examples of loose coupling: intentions and actions; top and bottom of hierarchies; academic line and administrative staff; means and ends; processes and outcomes
- Disadvantages for executive leaders: Weak top-down coordination and control; slack times; slow influence spread; slow response times; weak connections between actions and effects; duplication; poor across-unit coordination; quality disparities across units; persistence of anomalies
- Advantages: stability; elaborate ground-level sensing mechanisms; localized process and structural adaptation; greater efficiency at local level; lowered costs of coordination, control, dissemination, inspection
- Consider: in what circumstances is loose coupling functional and effective?