Saddling the Whirlwind: Exploring the Organizational Culture of a Hybrid Library

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Outline

- A Hybrid Library Concept
- The University Library Reorganization
- Empowering Employees of Cataloging Department
- Two Organizational Cultures
- Q & A
Hybrid Library

- The new concept of a library
- The new information environment should be built
- New information environment should consist of a seamless mix of printed and electronic resources
The University Libraries

- The Wichita State University Libraries is on its way to a hybrid library.

- What need to be done:
  - services to add
  - diverse groups of users to reach
  - new technology should be implemented in all library’s areas
Reorganization Goals at Library Level

- Improve flexibility
- Evolve to respond to changes in academic environment and libraries; ever more information delivered electronically BUT still demands for traditional services and processes
- University Libraries as an integrated whole, no department stands alone
Reorganization Goals at Library Level (cont’)

- Organization must allow for free flow of information and improved communication between units
- Development of corporate spirit and culture with involvement in organization
- Active support of and advocacy for University Libraries goals and mission
- Flatten organization
Need for Empowered Employees

- Staff must be willing and able to look for new solutions to challenges and changing environment
- Employees must know they will be given support to take risks and make significant decisions
- Ability and desire of employees to work together
Beginnings: Changes in Cataloging Department to Date

- **Staff Organization**: Monographs Unit, Serials Unit, Music and Media Unit

- **Faculty (Professional) Positions Have Evolved**
  - Principal Cataloger now Assistant Dean of Technical Services
  - Metadata Cataloger hired
  - Electronic Resources Librarian created (internal transfer)
  - Catalog Librarian responsibilities enhanced (hired for Music and Media cataloging originally – now also in leadership role with ETDs and Institutional Repository)
Employee Empowerment

- As organization has flattened, more employees encouraged to act as leaders and promote improvements
- Cataloger’s responsibilities have increased, but they should also benefit from greater recognition and central roles in the Libraries
Employee Empowerment (cont’)

- Opportunities for activities in public services and collection development (Serve at public desks, collection development roles, public displays)
- Participation in task forces, committees, library-wide initiatives
Challenges yet to Be Met

- Continue to Evolve the Department. Re-evaluate!
- Recognize overlapping responsibilities (roles no longer black and white)
- Continue to Encourage the reluctant to also change
- Are there old procedures and practices we should stop doing?
- Reward professionals and staff who have taken on greater responsibilities
Organizational Culture

- Importance of culture at the time of changes
- “People have often habitual ways of working (and thinking) which are not easily shifted.”
  *(Stephen Pinfield)*
- “We were really aiming at a sea-change, a cultural shift”
  *(Chris Rusbridge)*
Apollonian Culture (Hierarchy)

- A role culture
- Hierarchical order
- Values rules and procedures
- Stability, rationality (job could be boring, but it is secure & predictable)
- Productivity
- Routine operations
- Traditional library functioning

Great order, but: what about creativity & innovations?
What culture do we need now?

- that love innovations and challenges
- the culture of learning
- that accept responsibilities even if they do not written in a job description
- the culture of empathy that allows us to understand another values and standards (which a bare necessity considering the need to work with programmers, vendors, teaching faculty, etc.)
Athenian Culture (Teamwork)

- Task culture
- Flat structure (everybody is equal)
- Brings resources where find it (from any department)
- Values: creativity and innovations
- Teams
- Goals & results oriented (projects)
- Development of the new services

A Fishnet:

independent, equal, flexible, enthusiastic, work for results
Where we are now:
Hybrid Organizational Culture

- Role and Task
  - “Is it in my job description?” vs “I’d like to do it”

- Hierarchy and Flat structure
  - We need to learn the new limits

- Committees and Teams
  - Lead by a position and lead by expertise
Where are we now
Hybrid Organizational Culture (cont’)

- **Operations**
  - Main Activity
  - Continue indefinitely
  - Well established relationships, responsibilities, workflow
  - Reporting line is clear

- **Projects**
  - Extra Activity
  - Continue for a limited time
  - No established relationships, responsibilities, workflow
  - Reporting line is blurring
Conclusion

- To build genuine “hybrid library” we mobilize the internal resources of the department.

- One of the most important resources – young-spirited Athenian organizational culture that help us “to saddle the whirlwind”
Thanks!! Any Questions?

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