President's Council on Culture  
Meeting Notes  
May 11, 2020  
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting  
1:00-2:00pm

**Attended:** Barry Braun, Catherine Douras, Ellen Fisher, Wayne Hall, Pam Jackson, Sue James, Carmen Rivera, Ashley Wilbanks, Emily Wilmsen, Ann Claycomb, Joyce McConnell, Kelly DiMartino (City of Fort Collins)

**Introductions**
- Each group member shared their name, department & role within the University
- Kelly DiMartino
  - Deputy City Manager of the City of Fort Collins
  - Has an MBA from CSU & is in charge of the Baldridge Program (operational excellence, rooted in culture)

**Kelly’s Presentation: Our Journey to Excellence, Creating a Culture of High Performance (City of Fort Collins)**
- History of City’s Baldridge journey
  - Darin Atteberry (city manager) initially launched the Baldridge journey at the City of Fort Collins
  - Darin’s thought of “I believe local government can be great” was not necessarily a widespread belief, this created motivation for the City.
  - The idea of “Trust Us” as a local government created a need for the City to be more data informed/driven.

- Baldrige is a framework (looks at seven different categories: leadership, strategy, customer, knowledge transfer, workforce, operations, results)
- The City had a significant amount of good going on (initiatives, etc.) but still not everyone was driving towards the same goal. The Baldrige helped with this.
- The Baldrige framework was chosen by the City because it is customer focused, it is a best practice, and is cost effective. The feedback report is also very helpful, as it becomes the basis for improvement.

- Specific results: volunteers, business engagement

- Leading an Excellence Journey
  - The City realized that in order to deliver world class municipal services that they needed a great culture and a great strategy to achieve great results.
  - Having both a great culture and a great strategy is vital.
  - The foundation is around vision, mission, and values.
  - Implementation of this needs vision clarity about where we are going, alignment of resources to that vision, and then create systems that support that. This sounds simple but there is a lot of depth to it!

- Bringing Culture to Life
Baldrige asks you to articulate what your leadership system is, how does your organization operate? How do you make decisions? How do you drive alignment?

City’s leadership system starts with community & city council and goes to strategic planning then goes to alignment of resources then goes to operational execution then to individual contributions then to results & learning then to improve & validate. Culture is in the middle.

Examples of transformational aspects of the City, challenging change initiatives that have helped bring culture change to life:

- New Employee Orientation: moved from decentralized approach to more of a centralized approached by having employees realize they were first, part of the overall city organization and then part of whatever individual team they were joining. This created a significant amount of change. New employees meet with Darin or Kelly to engage in conversation about culture (mission, values, vision) using the ‘we, it, I’ model (the ‘it’ - is the work meaningful? The ‘we’- Do you genuinely care about the people you work for? The ‘I’ – Are your personal needs being met?, if you have all 3 it will likely be the best place you’ve ever worked)

-Creating Systems – Strategic Focus on Results

- The City has created great systems that tie the strategic objectives in the strategic plan to budget offers that get funded (all have a direct tie) and all have metrics attached. See examples here.

- Monthly reviews help to institutionalize this (executive team & department heads)

- This needs to be in leadership conversations so that people know that it is valued.

- They City has put into place a community dashboard to show key Outcomes.

- Prosci uses ADKAR Change Management Model (Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, & Reinforcement, they each build on each other) emphasizes that there are three things needed for successful change management:
  1. Strong executive sponsorship
  2. Strong project management
  3. Strong change management

-Lessons learned by the City

- It is all about being intentional (embracing and utilizing framework, about a culture of continuous improvement, appreciating the value of mentors, focusing on culture and strategy, acknowledging value is in the journey, not an award)

- When you start this journey, you are in it for the long haul.

Discussion/Q&A following Kelly’s presentation

• Initially, how did you identify Baldrige as the best system for culture change? and
do you think it would translate well into a higher education institution? (Joyce)

- The City started Baldrige after following local community folks who had experience with Baldrige (President & CEO of UCH Health mentored Darin & encouraged exploring Baldrige)
- After looking at several other frameworks/systems and comparing them, the City came back to Baldrige and committed.
- Kelly does belong it would be applicable for a university. Doing at an entire system level is much harder than at a college level. Healthcare & education systems are the most prominent utilizers of Baldrige, which allows for a variety of different mentors.

• How big is your workforce? (Sue)
  - 1400 classified employees and double that when you account for hourly & seasonal employees

• How do you balance giving priority to caring about the people in your organization against being data driven? (Barry)
  - This is the million-dollar question!
  - Operational excellence and culture of innovation is not about more. It is about having the right people there, being caring & compassionate. When hard decisions have to be made, adhering to values is important. Striking the balance is possible.
  - Valuing people and caring for them goes a long way in a strong culture, as does leadership.

• What were the paths of greatest resistance you faced in implementing this and transitioning through this journey to create a new system? What did the barriers look like? (Pam)
  - There were two primary areas of resistance when talking about metrics/strategy maps:
    1. People did not have the desire to make the change (had a lot of other work going on, were overwhelmed)
    2. Knowledge (people didn’t know how to make the change and figure out the strategic metrics)
  - These challenges might be bigger for us at CSU (since we are more decentralized than the city & have a larger number of employees) but that does not make it unsurmountable. (Sue)

• Do you think of any key tactics you used to get the managers on board for new employee orientation? (Sue)
  - Persistence!
  - We phased it in, persistent but not brute force.
  - Focus groups with hiring managers (clear with non-negotiables)

• A culture of strategy has been created, there is often a big disconnect between strategy, tactic, goal, etc. Are there specific educational activities that you did to teach people what constitutes a strategy and how does that get incorporated to culture? (Ellen)
  - At the end of the day, language matters a lot. We agreed on what a definition meant for us.
  - Each category has a team that facilitated the conversation about how it would be
applied to the organization and it got shared with the entire team. This is how we got our ultimate approach.

- Monthly reviews for budget offers are vital to institutionalizing things, can you speak about this more? (Sue)
  - People were hesitant to show anything that was not green, had to teach people it was ok for areas to be yellow or red. We helped them make it safe.
  - People had to be taught that everything should be tied to a strategic metric, tracing the path from their work to a specific outcome was tough at first.
  - People need to get used to having processes and systems where there were not any before. (Emily)

- Kelly offered to help make connections and explore resources through other team leads at the City of Fort Collins, or herself.

Next Meeting: Monday June 8, 2020 at 1pm, Microsoft Teams