

Running head: Organizational Comparison Analysis

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Abstract

Every organization operates from its organizational structure, including colleges and universities. The American higher education system consists of various types of institutions that also offer a range of organizational structures. Learning more about the structure of an institution enhances understanding of institutional priorities. This analysis will focus on the organizational structure of Berea College and the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Introduction

The effectiveness of any organization is influenced by its organizational structure. The organizational structure determines how the institution will function and how the various entities within an organization will work together. In the context of higher education institutions, organizational structures vary depending on the classification and mission of the institution. American higher education institutions are classified as either public or private and can be categorized further as land-grant, sun-grant, sea-grant, liberal arts, women's college, or historically black (National Association of State Universities and Land Grant College). Berea College in Kentucky and the University of Missouri-St. Louis are examples of the different distinctions among higher education institutions represented in the United States. Berea College is private liberal arts institution and the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) is a public land-grant institution and member of the Missouri University System. The organizational structure of Berea College and UMSL differ in formation, yet it is their commonalities and differences that enable each institution to fulfill its ultimate goal of educating students. In order to understand the complexities of each institution it is imperative to learn more about the environment in which they exist.

Institutions at A Glance

Berea College is liberal arts institution founded in 1855 on the principle of establishing a desegregated curriculum for black and white students. Berea was the first institution in the South to admit people of all races. With roots in Christianity and social justice, Berea remains dedicated to the ideals of equality for all people. Currently, Berea enrolls approximately 1,600 students and offers degrees in 28 majors. The School

identifies its mission in a document that is referred to as The Great Commitments of Berea College. Its overall mission is to show God's love and mercy to every human being and specifically provide educational opportunities to students, that lack resources, from the Appalachian Region (<http://www.berea.edu/>).

Almost a century after Berea was established, UMSL was formed in 1963 as a land grant institution to provide an affordable alternative to the high cost education of neighboring private schools. Historically, land-grant institutions were funded by receiving federally controlled land to teach agriculture, mechanics and home-economics. Land-grant institutions were the result of the Morrill Act of 1862. UMSL began over a hundred years after the Morrill Act. Societal priorities were quite different when UMSL received its land-grant status as compared to the period in which the legislation was enacted. The institutions mission reads as “ The University of Missouri-St. Louis is the land-grant research institution committed to meeting the diverse needs for higher education and knowledge in the state's largest metropolitan community” (<http://msu.edu>).

Organizational Structure

Due to their differing priorities and missions, Berea College and UMSL also operate from distinctly dissimilar organizational structures. Berea College endorses a collaborative team environment with the Office of the President at core of the organization and various departments on the periphery. This is reflected in its centralized administrative organizational structure. The next layer beyond the presidency is composed of the Vice President for Finance, Dean of the Faculty, Academic Vice President and Provost, Vice President for Labor and Student Life, Vice President for Alumni and College Relations and Vice President for Business Administration. It is

critical to note that the President performs dual roles of responsibility because the position it represented in the secondary level in addition to the core. The tertiary layer is representative of all the academic and administrative departments within Berea College. Moreover, on this layer all of the departments are clustered by function and represented to the President by a member of the secondary layer (<http://bera.edu>). Berea's organizational structure is appropriate for its small student body and the institution to minimize bureaucracy.

In contrast, UMSL functions through a hierarchical structure, defined as an organization in which each entity is subordinate to another except one. Power is distributed to those on the top of the organizational structure and diminishes downward. The Office of the Chancellor is the pinnacle entity and the Office of Equal Opportunity is the subsequent (OEOD) department. The OEOD is charged with providing service and policies to the University community that will ensure compliance with federal, state and local laws on issues related to diversity.

UMSL administrative chart is organized in such a way that it seems as if the OEOD has jurisdiction of all over offices. The purpose of the OEOD being the succeeding division to the Office of the Chancellor is questionable. As it is previously mentioned, the mission of this Office is to focus on equality practice, not overall legal compliance. It would be more logical if this particular Office was dedicated to overall legal affairs and not specifically, diversity compliance. It is interesting in an organization of UMSL's magnitude not to have an Office of Legal Affairs reflected in its administrative chart. Robert Birnbaum suggests in *American Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century*, as a result of increase legalization before any major decision is

made the legal ramifications have to thoroughly analyzed (Birnbaum, 1998). By its distinct classification, UMSL is bound to adhere to state policies regarding higher education. If there is such an office of campus then to administrative chart should be considered as misleading.

Furthermore, other key leadership positions in the structure are the Vice Chancellor of Managerial and Technological Services, Provost/Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and the Vice Chancellor of University Advancement, which all report directly to the Chancellor. The remaining administrative offices and academic divisions are represented in this structure by the four previously mentioned positions. The challenge to this structure is to benefit from synergy and to effectively utilize resources. Dr. Thomas George, Chancellor of UMSL, is creating new initiatives for administrators to dialogue about the maximum use of resources and measures to reduce the duplication of services (<http://msu.edu/>). Due to its size, UMSL will indeed need to employ to appropriate communication mechanisms to across the various departments to determine new collaborating relationships.

A distinct characteristic of this structure is that there are many subsystems in the overarching system. Subsystems are entities that work within the context of the larger environment; yet, they can also act as independent agents that respond to incidents and factors of the external environment (Birnbaum, 1998). The subsystems of UMSL, have their unique culture and are guided through a divisional mission which would ideally correspond to the institutional mission. For example, the Public Policy Research Center (PPRC) is a unit that exists within the institution, but also provides direct applied research services to surrounding community and governmental agencies and non-profits

organizations. The PPRC enables UMSL to fulfill its mission as a land-grant institution through providing community leaders and policy-makers information to make sound decisions. In order to promote cultural identity, the PPRC sponsors in-office cultural photography gallery so the office visitors can also gain more insight about other cultures.

Organizational Structure Related to Institutional Mission

Ideally, the organizational structure should promote optimal performance. Berea College and UMSL utilize two distinctly different organizational structures. However, their similarities are positioned in the institutions ability to reflect its mission and priorities in the organizational structure. For instance both colleges share a dedication to recruiting students from surrounding communities. Berea's obligations is to serve the students of the Appalachian Region and UMSL focuses on students from the St. Louis metropolitan area and the outlying state of Missouri.

In regard to Berea, the Appalachian region spans across 12 states, from the southern point of New York to Northern Mississippi and has been documented as one of the poorest regions of the United States, with conditions similar to that of a third world country. Berea is financially structured so that all students receive a tuition scholarship. Each student earns a tuition-free education and learns the value of work through completing on-campus labor placement. Therefore, by focusing on students in the geographic location, the school is also enhancing economic development of the region. Berea responds to the direct needs of the people living in the Appalachian region through serving as a grant-awarding intermediary to non-profit organizations. Appalachian Fund recipients are direct-service non-profit organizations involved in the healthcare, education, social services and leadership development (<http://berea.edu>).

Both Berea and UMSL are structured to provide resources and good-will services to community in which they respectfully represent. Just as UMSL's PPRC is an example of a subsystem it can also serve as an illustration of the University obligation to provide research and knowledge for the advancement of the St. Louis area and State of Missouri. The PPRC conducts research on a variety of local issues such as the impact of over 55 community gardens throughout St. Louis and their impact on committed crimes within those communities. Other projects include an examination of recycling infrastructure, homeowner sustainability, and early childhood literacy (<http://msu.edu/>).

In terms of an overall relationship between these two institutions and their respective mission, Berea's mission is reflected in its administrative organization charts; however, this not true for UMSL. Berea's mission statement is very specific; therefore, perhaps it is easier for Berea to have a structure that aligns with its mission. In comparison to Berea, UMSL's mission statement is more conceptual and abstract. One would need to engage in further research into the institution to understand its priorities and goals. However, UMSL mission does state its commitment to prepare students for leadership roles in the areas of health professions, liberal and fine arts, science and technology, business, education, and public policy. Each of these professional fields are represented by a corresponding academic division on the institution's organizational chart. Therefore, the organizational structure does comply with the portion of the mission statement that refers to the various academic disciplines offered at UMSL. The second paragraph of UMSL's mission statement refers to build regional partnerships to address quality of life issues. This commitment is not clearly recognized in the

organizational structure. Yet, it is possible that partnering is a theme that is interwoven throughout the culture of the institution.

Recommendations

Both Berea College and University of Missouri-St. Louis are structured to meet the demands of the internal and external environments. They share commonalities and differences in order to fulfill their individual mission. In order to maximize effectiveness, the following organizational structural changes should be considered for each institution.

Berea College's administrative organizational structure suggests that the President is at the core of the system and also assumes programmatic responsibilities over a certain aspects of the college. I recommend the president solely focus on the activities related to providing leadership to the College and not perform other administrative tasks. The position within the secondary level should be occupied by an individual other than the president of the College. Also, the school's chart suggests collaboration within the cluster, but this may or may not be true.

Regarding UMSL, the greatest objection to this structure is the absence of a legal affairs department being identified as a high-ranking office. Again, if such a department presently exist then the current structure is misleading. The Office of Alumni Relations and the Office of Constituent Relations do not present sufficient evidence to be two distinct entities; therefore, they should be combined these departments into one. It is also suggested the each institution demonstrate the working relationships among the various entities within each respective.

References

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