These are exciting, challenging and treacherous times for leaders in higher education. They are exciting because virtually every tradition, convention, or practice is open to question. They are challenging because many of its leaders have not been formally trained or experientially prepared to lead in a climate which demands change and flexibility, caution and risk taking. They are treacherous because there are so many obstacles to overcome in the form of defensiveness and resistance among those without whose support change cannot occur.

It seems almost unfair that at a time when many programs are recognized the world over as superior and innovative that many of us are in turmoil and confusion as priorities are challenged and assumptions are tested. It reminds me of the per-
plexed 40-year old who, for years, has bragged that he weighs the same as he did when he left college and still wears the same size suit. But, suddenly, with no apparent change of lifestyle, his weight has ballooned from 175 to 195 pounds and try as he might, the weight will not come off. Clearly something has gone wrong and he doesn’t have a clue. He doesn’t realize that for many years he had been changing from a muscular, high energy college grad to a soft, sedate and somewhat flabby, middle aged man who seldom exercises and consumes nearly the same number of calories he had 20 years earlier. Nor does he realize that since muscle burns more calories than fat, as his body slowly became less muscular, he actually required fewer calories to sustain the same weight. At some point (for him at 40) the unspent calories not burned off by large muscle exercise began to accumulate as additional body fat. His bad habits, developed over two decades, left him looking soft, overweight and ill prepared for the discipline and control which will have to be exercised if he ever hopes to get back in shape. Somehow he feels cheated even though he is the source of his own discontent.

In a similar fashion, many of our college and university leaders have been taken by surprise and feel ill prepared for what it’s going to take to regain the appearance, let alone the reality, of fiscal health. To make matters worse, there are many who have the convoluted belief that they are entitled to what has always been, and resist strongly that anything must change. If successful change is to occur, some key aspects of leadership must be addressed.

**Seduction of the Leader**

Leaders face a strange paradox as they move up through an organization: The more influence they gain, the greater their success, and the more experience they accumulate—the more they depend on the truth from those reporting to them—the more certain they are to be victims of half truths and deception.

They may be protected from bad news in general, or from the deception of individuals hiding from the fallout of their own failures. Even worse, leaders often deceive themselves as they deny the obvious or avoid tough issues. ¹

**Seduced by Ourselves—The Dilemma of Leader Infallibility**

University and college systems are notoriously critical places. People are hired to be competent, to be knowledgeable, and to lead. Yet few are hired at the level of expertise expected of them. The consequence can be an unhealthy fear of personal failure, of needing to appear competent and busy all the time. A further result for many is a lack of openness to feedback, an unwillingness to be fallible and to seek the help they need. Worse yet, the need to be critical of others—employees or peers—makes it difficult for people to admit their own limitations. This deluding of ourselves is exacerbated by the natural isolation that occurs as one climbs the ladder of success within higher education.

**Seduced by Others—The Dilemma of Isolation at the Top**

Even leaders who pay attention and struggle to understand themselves and their impact are
faced with the natural and insidious nature of “seduction” perpetrated by others. Those who report directly to leaders often have just as high a need to look good and to achieve as do their bosses. The need to be liked, to appear competent, or to buckle under in the face of intimidation and fear works against the honesty and candor at the heart of trust and open communication.  

If seduction is commonplace and acts to break down the ability to gain the truth, is it any wonder that meaningful change is difficult to come by? The nature of change is such that those involved will tend to feel vulnerable and inadequate as they attempt to transition from the known to the unknown, from the comfortable to the unfamiliar. To believe that good intentions and the good will of those participating in the change process will overcome the insidious nature of seduction is naive. Reducing the implicit risk in seduction demands strategic action around data gathering, structured problem solving, follow-up, and team building on an individual, small group, or system level. Most important is that over time consistent signs of change occur to provide individuals the belief that to risk openness will be rewarded and not result in the rejection, abuse, or other repercussions people fear.

One Answer to Seduction

The threat and inconvenience created by asking others to sacrifice and open themselves to the vulnerability inherent in almost any change process can be offset if leaders are willing to model change in their own lives. The notion of 360 degree feed-back, pioneered nearly 25 years ago, can provide a simple and efficient means of modeling an effective change process incorporating diagnostic, problem solving, and action phases. By being willing to open their own leadership to the scrutiny of employees, peers and clients, leaders can reduce the fear that change has to be threatening, painful, or traumatic. This is especially true if the leader has the courage to make the data feedback from the various stakeholders public, and then is willing to track his or her progress openly. Also, by gathering the data anonymously and then freely sharing the information, the secrecy and self-protection that often accompanies data gathering and feedback disappears.

The Assumption of Conflict Aversion

Closely tied to seduction is the reality that conflict is a hugely repellent factor in most personal relationships and within most organizations. Many of us have been raised and bred on the belief that conflict is bad and should be avoided at all costs. In university and college systems where being “nice, bright and polite” can be represented in powerful norms, member behaviors can become predictable and stylized, with conflict either being intellectual and argumentative or going underground when it involves disruptive or abusive personal behaviors. The intellectual debates and discussions so legitimate in the name of academic freedom are tethered to tenure, and often do not occur on the administrative side where caution and fear of job security can deter. Such discussion is essential to the consensus process so often alluded to and so seldom effectively managed.
By its nature, consensus demands the willingness of people to advocate their positions and the ability to engage in conflict openly and safely. In addition, quality time must be made available if there is to be the hope to resolve differences in good faith with people working for the good of the group or community over their own self interests. Advocating one’s position strongly requires trust that you will be heard; being open to conflict assumes participants desire to reach an agreeable outcome; and taking the time to work issues through assumes people are willing to let go of their personal positions and move toward an outcome that is best for the organization. What we know is that people cannot come together and work openly with a consensual mindset unless some trust exists within the deliberative body. This assumes that the influence of large size egos is outweighed by the skill and courage of those desiring to reach a solution, accompanied by a well designed and utilized structure. Since trust is built on the experience of past successes, it behooves leaders to train and develop their decision making groups so that they have both the skills and history to sustain an effective problem solving and decision making process.

Most people understand the concept of a safety net. It is a structure that provides insurance against disaster should something unforeseen occur. Most meetings and working groups provide only the minimum structure of an agenda to focus the group. This is usually not a sufficient enough safety net to secure the group against the volatility and aggressiveness of certain members. Since conflict is often not legitimate and people are not skilled in handling it, loud voices and blustering can often win out and derail the group as members fold their tents and wait for another day. Designing a structure and some ground rules to ensure an open dialogue and a process that invites full participation in a safe climate is essential. This is where up front training sessions in group process, meeting design, and conflict resolution skills can pay huge dividends while at the same time establishing more constructive cultural norms.

The Dysfunctional Gap Between Faculty and Administrators

It is our experience that after 10, 20, or 30 years of dealing ineffectively with conflict, many well intentioned faculty members bail out of the day-to-day university or college business in frustration and move increasingly toward their own personal interests and projects. Lacking the skills, patience and will to continue working within the governance system, these individuals often reflect a deep disillusionment and increasing passive aggression toward the larger organization. Creating successful administration and faculty task forces is difficult, and large scale efforts at community building, for example, through collaborative planning, are often seen as a waste of time and the source of unacceptable aggravation. Thus, a cycle of alienation builds and disillusionment can easily turn into a hopeless malaise. The administration become an easy target for faculty who refuse to deal with their own dysfunctional governance practices and are increasingly dominated by a few individuals with greater tolerances for pain or more political interests.
The Move Toward Common Ground

One of the problems with reversing this cycle is the unrelenting interest in dealing with what appear to be irresolvable issues. Thus, at a time when success among warring parties is so greatly needed, there is an almost masochistic inclination to continue pursuing issues where little room or desire for compromise exists. This can keep a community torn between the warlike camps. In recent years, great progress has been made in developing strategies for bringing skeptical and disillusioned parties into dialogue where visible progress can be experienced. One of the keys to these successes is working on issues that encourage the coming together of people and where the benefits for compromise are recognizable. After tasting success and experiencing the benefits of creative problem solving approaches, it becomes easier to engage skeptics in other constructive management processes. The breach between faculties and administrators need to be lessened if the necessary changes facing much of higher education are to be successfully resolved. 4

A Healthy Beginning

At one midwestern university, the disillusionment between the faculty and the administration had reached such a profoundly unsettling level that outside help was solicited to do something—anything—before more drastic actions were taken. On a campus where overt conflict is seen as a subversive act, the angst and antipathy had gone into the underground or informal system. Had the campus been a person, it would have been identified as being alienated and depressed.

In an effort to bring the campus together, the university underwent a truly comprehensive and collaborative planning effort that would be a visible means of experiencing new attitudes and practices on the part of the faculty and administration. At the same time, the effort itself would create a breath of much needed optimism and hope while providing a precedent for future shared problem solving.

First, however, it was necessary to create enough initial credibility to bring the faculty out of hiding. The strategy was to take the president, the provost, five key faculty and five key administrators away for three days. Acting as a steering group, the leaders’ first task was to determine whether the proposed planning process could succeed. If so, the group would then guide the year-long project with a commitment to involve their peers as fully as possible. The assumption was that if such a disparate group could leave the first three-day session stimulated, challenged, and fully engaged, interest on campus would peak. Then, at the end of a second three-day session, a similar outcome would draw some of the key nay-sayers into a contributory role. The steering group used some of the same design strategies that would be used on groups of 40 to 100 during the proposed planning effort. The group became hooked on the process, which included sufficient structure to keep unruly individuals in check, and still allowed for deep and meaningful discussions to occur.

Even some of the greatest skeptics agreed that these methods opened communication, built trust, and resulted in meaningful outcomes. In addition, the steering group was able to clear the air by work-
ing through many of its long-standing interpersonal conflicts. This experience alone proved to be the litmus test for many and provided the hope to move forward. This newfound camaraderie among some of the original group catalyzed the entire planning effort and began the long-term healing process. In addition, during the six days of team development and learning about planning, the process itself was scrutinized as a microcosm of what happens when an effort is made to change old myths, perceptions and the results of historical realities. Members of the group began to see themselves as change agents as well as guardians of the planning process itself.

The Changing Nature of Planning

Given the amount of resources committed to planning and the generally woefully unimpressive outcomes, planning by most measures as a management practice is a colossal failure, reminiscent of one definition of insanity: doing the same thing in the same way over and over again and expecting a different outcome. Most budget-based, incremental, highly structured, cyclical planning processes have been notoriously ineffective. Why? Because undertaking a traditional planning effort without open communication and trust among the key leaders and various stakeholders is a recipe for disaster. Planning usually implies change, and change implies conflict. Without trust, conflict will be convoluted at best. More often than not, the result is a lack of real support of the planning outcomes on the part of those stakeholders who must eventually implement the proposed changes. In our previous example, the steering group had to build trust and new communication norms if there was to be even the possibility of developing a successful planning process.

Traditional leadership over the past 25 years has been predicated on what has been called a transactive model of organizational relationships. That is, if you do what we agree to, I, as your supervisor, will advocate just rewards. Given the early years of modern management where threat and intimidation, and a demand and command mentality often prevailed, this negotiated reinforcement approach seemed very positive indeed. The fact that it often results in unnecessary control and dependency, along with the tendency to micromanage, is clearly a downside. However, over the past ten years, transformative leadership has gained a firm footing in American organizations. This type of leadership is based on the assumption that building an organization around ideals, support, shared outcomes, and the challenge of a compelling vision of the future can move people to a higher level of commitment and performance. Add to this an overlay of transactional rewards and we find an approach that has been remarkably successful. Planning is one of the vehicles used to exploit the positive benefits of the vision and value aspect of this approach, since it provides focus and measured outcomes against which to motivate people.

Back in the late 1960s and early 1970s during the period of sensitivity training and encounter groups, “touchy feely” meant just that—people touching and feeling each other in activities designed to increase trust and intimacy. Clearly the
pendulum swung too far to the left and the proverbial baby was thrown out with the bath water.

The reaction inside corporate America to the early liberties taken with these activities unleashed a skepticism and resistance to anything smacking of relationships and even being personal. Today, some view even talking about feelings as going too far. Since most conflict generates considerable amounts of feeling in relation to human behavior, it may not be permissible to even discuss them. Imagine the absurdity of attempting to be honest, open and authentic and not being able to express how the people on a team or in an organization are affecting you or how various policies influence the life of its members. One reason that some planning efforts during the past few years have been so much more successful is that they have legitimized engaging large numbers of people in important dialogues concerning values, vision and goals while legitimizing the open expression of feelings in the process. Historically, the closest an individual often came to influencing the planning effort and the future of the organization was through the completion of a depersonalized questionnaire. Unlike the new data gathering strategies that emphasize dialogue and full engagement, those responding to the questionnaire rarely believed their answers would make a difference. Again, the lack of eventual support could be traced back to years of feeling impotent and disassociated from the planning process itself. This is why it is so crucial to involve large numbers of faculty if any significant change effort is to be successful.

Data Gathering as an Intervention

One remarkable discovery is that the more people are active in the data gathering itself and engaged in understanding the implications of the resulting information, the more they tend to accept the planning outcomes. What had been missing were the collaborative design methodologies allowing quality data to be gathered in a manner that enhances both participation and, ultimately, understanding. The introduction of large scale visioning and goals conferences in which people can thoroughly discuss issues critical to the life of the organization has changed the face of planning forever. Along the way, we have learned new ways of involving people so that trust is enhanced and seduction of the leader is diminished.

Imagine 50, 100, or even 200 people coming together in a large room. During the course of a day, they have the opportunity to listen to some futurists discuss the trends in their industry. They explore with other individuals some breakthrough strategies and evaluate their potential through a cost / benefit analysis. Finally, small groups paint a picture of a ten-year future dealing with both production and operational issues, values, and the need for new policies. Techniques for organizing the data and integrating the various strategies are introduced.

Ten years ago, the technologies for such initiatives and involvement hardly existed. Today, sophisticated design strategies allow us to tap into the wisdom of hundreds of people who have ideas to share throughout every level of our organizations. This is not make nice work, it’s not meant to pretend
there is involvement. The involvement is real and the products are valued, and move the organization toward a more shared future. What makes this so exciting is that 15 years ago the simple act of an executive team attempting to agree on a mission statement for the organization could take days and even weeks of frustrating, often agonizing struggle. Today the fact that 50 people can be involved for three hours, maximizing creativity and brain power, is difficult to imagine for many task directed, time bounded linear thinkers. Just as computer technology has revolutionized how we organize and engage our work, so too must leaders revolutionize the way they lead. Each leader needs to become an expert change agent capable of involving people in a wide variety of stimulating, challenging and productive activities that build trust, open communication, and enhance productivity and morale. Transformative leadership demands that leaders change some of the ways they do business and begin to be facile with the technologies of meeting design, planning, and strategic problem solving.

Supervision as a Dirty Word

One of the characteristics of university and college life is that it tends to attract dedicated and conscientious people who want to achieve. Another characteristic is that even among administrators a sort of tenure mentality tends to prevail. To question one’s competence or, for that matter, performance, appears to imply such a severe judgment that it strikes at the heart of one’s integrity.

The assumption seems to be that because I’m smart and supposedly motivated, and because I theoretically know the business for which I’ve been hired, that is sufficient reason to leave me alone to do my work. We know, though, that accountability cannot simply be assumed. To make matters worse, people in supervisory positions tend not to be rewarded, trained, or motivated for doing the work of supervision. They may be rewarded with a higher paying position that assumes supervision, but rarely is the actual work of supervision valued at the organizational level.

Returning to the notion that many college and university organizations are conflict averse, supervision, to be effective, implies dealing with conflict, providing feedback, and holding people to standards of accountability. Since one tends not to be rewarded for the act of supervision, why would one be motivated to do it at all, much less to do it well? Since supervision is often so lax, it is easy to assume that accountability around a planning effort or a task force would also be lax. Clearly, such a reality could have important repercussions for the success of any planning effort.

The pattern goes something like this. An individual is hired, and after a period of time, his or her work deteriorates to a level of mediocrity. However, not having time to observe the individual and not being in the frame of mind to administer discipline, a pattern of acceptance of the low work performance prevails. You avoid the hassle of the fall out of a poor review, and the person is given an average review and an average pay increase. The standard is established. Others workers observe the limited
performance and either emulate it or resent it. Since
the norm tends to be not providing feedback, it too
is avoided. Years pass. The individual develops a
reputation of incompetence, but, it’s rationalized.
After all, the person is nice and has been a loyal
employee for a long time. Others know the person
is inadequate, but now, since no one has ever said
so, some feel it is unfair to take action after the per-
son has received five consecutive pay increases
with almost no written evidence of poor perform-
ance. And as a peer reminded you, “Don’t forget,
one individual in a similar position was let go and
immediately sued the university for an unfair labor
practice. Now the supervisor is in a pile of trouble.”

The issue is not that people fall between the
cracks or that incompetence is often overlooked.
The problem is that such failure represents a symp-
tom of a system in which accountability is lax, stan-
dards are insufficient, and the very act of personal
development is not valued. Institutional change
requires organization, discipline, courage, commit-
ment, and a clear sense of purpose. In addition, it
will usually fail if methods for monitoring are unclear
and people are not held accountable to do what
they agree to do. Thus, an inept supervisory pro-
gram invariably leads to an organization where
change is both painful and arduous and probably
will not succeed.

Most CFOs don’t see themselves as change
agents, yet they are at the center of everything that is
changing. To be successful, it is essential that they
explore issues from a system perspective and are
able to step out of their role as keepers of the treas-

Diversity Is “Nice”

No one is quite sure how it happened. The
white, nice and bright western liberal arts college
had, over a 20-year period and without an apparent
plan, evolved into a student body comprised of
nearly 50 percent minority students. The small, well-
edowed campus looked like a mini United Nations.
Many held the college up as a model of diversity
and, for that reason alone, believed that it repre-
sented the best in American higher education. The
mostly white alumni said they liked it. The faculty
said they liked it. The administration and students
said they liked it. However, there were problems that
could spell danger.

Problem #1. People spoke about “open-
ess,” the “spirit of community” that prevailed, and
how well people got along. The problem was that
seduction of the leader was alive and well and few
people were willing to speak with candor to leaders
above them in the hierarchy. The need to achieve
and appear competent left many administrators
masking their real feelings and withholding some of
their ideas as they attempted to maintain the favor of
others.

Problem #2. Politeness and civility ruled
relationships. This was particularly true among the
administrators and students: open conflict was
unacceptable and strong expression of feelings was
seen as an unnecessary excess. Since there was no legitimacy for conflict in open forums, it found expression in the informal system among social groups, cliques, and support networks.

**Problem #3.** Because the expectation was that staff, students and faculty were among the brightest and the best, supervision was often perfunctory. Since the college was reputed to be one of the best, few people left. Over the years, this resulted in increasing numbers of perceived misfits within the administration who, for a variety of reasons, appeared not to perform up to expectation. Even so, few were provided the feedback or specific help to improve their situation. Being nice and conflict averse meant little feedback, little disciplining of aberrant behavior, and few people ever being let go.

Whenever a highly diverse group of individuals is brought together, one can anticipate conflict. The more diverse, the more potential for differences and the more potential for conflict. Of course, the most difficult and mean spirited conflict can involve racial, ethnic and religious differences. This campus had them all. It’s not that such expected conflict is bad. If people have the skills, mental toughness, and will to deal with conflict, such a school environment can provide the richest learning laboratory conceivable for dealing with conflict, as well as examining one’s own narrow and sometimes distorted view of life. The opportunities for just such learning on this campus were everywhere. The only problem was that most of the faculty were in denial that conflict really existed and needed to be dealt with, the administrators were busy always acting nice and not being direct with each other, and almost no one was holding anyone else accountable. Because most people were bright and well intentioned, the college prospered and the lid was mostly kept on the brewing antagonisms and resentments seething just under the surface.

Since most conflict was not legitimate and racial ethnic issues were seen as a source of both alarm and dread, the students took their issues to their dorms where the house heads were underpaid, under recognized, and undervalued on a campus of highly paid and entitled professors. A number had been at the college for ten or more years, and often dominated and intimidated their peers. As a group they had a reputation of being demanding, as they hunkered down in a “me versus the world” attitude. Many felt maligned and unappreciated in what they perceived as the toughest job on the campus. Periodically, a racial incident would explode and dominate the campus for months, unfairly focusing attention on the dormitories as a cause rather than a symptom of bigger problems. At these times investigations were held and task forces and special panels would be initiated to, once again, look at the implications for campus life. Then the storm would slowly subside until the next predictable incident.

Of course, there were always lots of people to blame. The particular house head was faulted for letting such a thing happen. The director of housing was accused of being out of touch and not training her staff sufficiently to deal with these types of issues. The house heads as a group were likely to be vilified for not being more proactive in their jobs.
Only the dean of students usually escaped criticism because this would be an indirect slap at the popular president. Because no one had the courage to confront a cabinet level officer with a problem where there was known to be little accountability, nothing would happen.

How Does a Racial Diversity Problem Cast a Shadow on the CFO?

Over the years the house heads had lost their credibility with the business office. They complained about space, about their wages and benefits, about having to move in the summers. They had burned their bridges with many and found few advocates willing to support their justifiable request for a higher salary. The line among their many detractors was that they were spoiled and, if anything, overpaid. As a group, they felt increasingly defensive and isolated from mainstream campus life. As change agents, it was critical for the CFO and other leaders to understand the systemic nature of the problem:

- The director of housing was good and decent person. He abhorred conflict of any kind. He also had a need to be liked and to maintain harmony at all costs. The other house heads knew this and manipulated him at will. This was common knowledge. He knew that his staff members had flaws, but he overlooked their limitations and rarely imposed feedback or new expectations on them.

- The dean of students supported the less than adequate director of housing because he was easy to control and was an easy excuse for problems arising within the housing domain. He got away with this because the director of housing was personable and totally dedicated and loyal to the institution. The joke was that the only way he would leave the job he loved was in a six foot box. Again, this state of affairs was common knowledge.

- The lack of effective supervision from the president down to the assistant house heads had resulted in problems of inadequate management within the dorms to grow and fester for over a decade.

- The lack of sufficient training in issues of diversity and in conflict management at all levels within the college—student, faculty and administrators—had resulted in an inability to cope with the expected blow-ups and periodic crises that would not go away unless a new approach to diversity was embraced on a college-wide level.

- If the problems surrounding diversity on the campus were not dealt with effectively, good students would be driven away and the reputation of the college could be jeopardized.

- The board, which was extraordinarily cost conscious, tended not to see such issues as cost related or the ways that money could help solve problems of poor management.

Because little money had been allocated for housing or for the issues of diversity in the past, there was no precedent for supporting the system-wide solutions some advocated. If the CFO had a siege mentality about cost increases and could not see the systemic and ultimately bottom line impact
of the diversity issues, there was little hope that effective change would occur. Not only this, but to support some of the following recommendations, data gathering and education would have to occur before there would even be a chance of altering entrenched beliefs and old habits. Imagine how far-sighted the CFO and other change agents would have to be to support the high dollar investment of the following nonacademic and non-bricks-and-mortar solutions:

- First, if the college was to maintain its highly visible policy of multiculturalism, it had to be an ongoing theme in the fabric of both the intellectual and social life of the college. The curriculum would have to reflect multiculturalism in literature, history, political science, philosophy and research. This meant the faculty would have to begin embracing the reality of racism on the campus and their part in its creation. Monies would have to be found to help professors adapt their courses, develop new programs and seminars, and to bring diversity out of the closet in a day-to-day manner. New hires and tenure would be scrutinized partly in relation to interest, skill and openness in dealing with issues of multiculturalism both in the classroom and in the daily life of the college community.

- Second, students would know that part of their acceptance to the college meant daily immersion in the study of multiculturalism. Additionally, they would be required to spend at least three weeks studying the nature of conflict at a personal, interpersonal, and system level. Paradoxically, they would have the opportunity and expectation of cutting their teeth on the issue they had historically tended to avoid. Such training would be expected to be above and beyond the normal curriculum, and the college would have to share some of the direct costs of training, as well as the necessary preparation of such a unique program.

- Third, the role of the maligned house head would have to be upgraded in order to demand more skills in the area of diversity and multiculturalism. House heads would be expected to handle conflict surrounding race, gender, religion or ethnicity as a natural part of a multicultural community rather than as the source of periodic crises.

- Fourth, monies would have to be found to promote special programs and events related to multiculturalism. Speakers and special faculty appointments would reflect diverse points of view and stimulate fresh ideas from any point on the diversity continuum. Conflict and contentiousness would be promoted rather than avoided.

- Fifth, special awards and grants would be established to encourage faculty research, curriculum development, and training in areas related to diversity. In addition to the shakeup within ranks of the house heads, a reorganization of the division of residence would open opportunities to breathe new life into the area.
Conclusion

One of the complaints of many administrators who involve themselves in the change process is that, “I don’t mind the hassles of change, I just can’t abide by the constant political in-fighting.” The fact is, though, that “It’s all politics” and if you don’t like it you should get out of management. Utilizing scarce capital in a system with more demands than available resources is the very essence of management and the challenge of leadership. In this particular college, until recent years, almost every wish list could be fulfilled. Now, there were clear choices to be made. Implementing such a comprehensive program of cultural diversity would change the direction of the institution. Having the vision, the wisdom and the skill to accomplish sufficient change so that the eventual outcomes reflect more than patronizing crumbs to the minorities on campus will demand dealing with issues of seduction, conflict aversion, and ineffective supervision. This particular CEO and many on the campus are beginning to think and act in these terms. They are ready to engage their community in the necessary diagnostic work, education, and political maneuvering necessary to cope with the problems and opportunities they face.

Change must be seen as part of the fabric of university and college life, and strategic change as part of the fabric of a leader’s role. Cultivating the tools for change and understanding how change occurs also must be a significant part of that role. As a learner in a learning organization, CFOs can expand their leadership roles in a manner that is stimulating, challenging and fun. We have learned more about the process of organization and system change in the past 20 years than in the preceding five centuries. If we are willing to move into the future using what we know about human behavior and system change, there should be no excuses for not creating effective change.

References


Endnotes

