

## A Case Study in University Transformation

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This study examines the influence of three of the country's largest non-profit philanthropies — the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the James S. and James L. Knight Foundation, in collaboration with the educational agendas of the American Council on Education (ACE), the Wharton School of Business, the Institute for Research on Higher Education (IRHE), and the American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC)—on the efforts of California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (CPP) and the California State University system (CSU) to implement instructional technology and outcomes assessment during the five year period 1995-2000.

### Introduction

In 1995 California State Polytechnic University, Pomona was selected to participate in the American Council on Education Project on Leadership and Institutional Transformation. ACE supports initiatives that benefit a wide range of educational institutions, from large research universities to small liberal arts colleges. CPP was one of 26 schools chosen from 110 applicants for the five year project. The purpose was to help colleges and universities respond to financial, demographic, technological, and other external demands that make transformation an imperative for higher education. ACE selected diverse institutions of higher education that were committed to creating their own agendas, identifying their intended outcomes, and making significant change (<http://www.acenet.edu/programs/transformation/>). The participating institutions were grouped into “clusters” for the purpose of sharing strategies and processes. The ACE project was funded by a 1.2 million dollar grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, founded in 1930 by the cereal industry pioneer. The foundation has current assets of approximately 4.9 billion dollars, and provides seed money to institutions for projects on health, education, and welfare. A significant interest in the foundation's programming is higher education.

### The Pew Educational Roundtable

CPP's Project on Leadership and Institutional Transformation began with a Pew Educational Roundtable. The Roundtable is a “national laboratory” funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, a non-profit Philadelphia based foundation. It consists of seven charitable funds begun in 1948 by the children of the Sun Oil Company founder Joseph N. Pew. The trusts support non-profit activities in various fields, including education. Like the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Pew Trusts are one of the country's largest private philanthropies, with assets of approximately 4.9 billion dollars. In 1999 they invested \$250 million in nonprofit organizations (<http://www.pewtrusts.com/>).

The educational program of the Trusts has stated strategic objectives. They include standards based educational reform, strengthening accountability for student learning, and making assessment a core aspect of university life. The program has an “accountability agenda” and aggressively backs institutional change. It favors “new tools” for measuring university “quality,” as well as initiatives to promote student mastery of learning outcomes, rather than relying on course credits, also know as “seat time” ([http://www.pewtrusts.com/return\\_results.cfm?content\\_item\\_id=38&page=rrl](http://www.pewtrusts.com/return_results.cfm?content_item_id=38&page=rrl)).

The purpose of the Pew Educational Roundtable is to foster discussion on educational transformation and to help create a “change agenda.” It seeks to identify and test “best practices” for academic restructuring. The program was developed in 1986. The first roundtable discussion brought together approximately two dozen leaders in higher education from across the country. As explained in the Pew Educational Roundtable handout material, the mandate of the program “was to foster an informed national dialogue on the challenges and opportunities facing American colleges and universities.”

The original roundtable program was expanded in 1993 with a series of campus roundtable discussions. A national meeting was held in St. Louis to announce the beginning of the campus roundtable program. The pilot program involved 30 higher education institutions, which were to pursue administrative and academic reform. By 1994 an extended invitation was made to other higher education presidents to convene roundtables in partnership with the Pew Higher Educational Roundtable. By October 1996 the program had organized 130 campus roundtables, including the roundtable discussion at CPP (<http://www.arl.org/arl/proceedings/129/wegner.html>).

The Pew Educational Roundtable assigns a consultant or “Senior Liaison” to visit the campus prior to the campus roundtable. The liaison meets with the university administration to identify the important issues facing the institution and how the roundtable effort can assist an institutional planning effort. On the basis of this preliminary discussion the roundtable participants are selected from the campus community. The roundtable is structured so that ideally all of the members can pull their chairs up around one table. There are approximately 20 to 30 participants. Half of the participants are faculty, and the remaining participants include administrators, students, trustees, and others who can participate in a dialogue of ideas. Two roundtable discussions are held, each over a two day period, approximately six weeks apart. The liaison guides the discussion and provides verbal summaries of the themes.

Sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trusts, in 1988 the Pew Higher Education Roundtable began publishing *Policy Perspectives*, a national quarterly “focusing on the three central issues affecting higher education: cost, quality teaching, learning and access” (Pew handout material). The issues reflect a strongly articulated point of view and agenda for change. A frequently quoted 1994 *Policy Perspectives* report entitled “To Dance With Change” asserts “the danger is that colleges and universities have become less relevant to society.” The report argues that institutions of higher education must respond to the challenges or “market forces,” as well as the rising costs of higher education, which are primarily in instructional personnel and labor-intensive teaching.

A 1995 *Policy Perspectives* report entitled “Twice Imagined” observes that “universities are being regarded—by students, legislators, and the public generally—as educational suppliers that should be willing to change in response to consumer demand.” It notes how “those who approach higher education institutions as ‘purchasers of a service’ now want a larger say in when, how, and where they get their educations,” and cites convenience as an important student expectation. The report also sets forth the business concept of “‘fitness for use,’ which is central to modern definitions of quality in the production of other goods and services.” “Fitness for use” in the context of higher education means improving student learning by more efficient deployment of faculty time and energy.

The discussion of “change” issues in higher education, particularly faculty performance, continues in subsequent issues. An April 1996 *Policy Perspectives* report entitled “Shared Purposes” argues faculty has “a natural resistance to change unless the case for doing so is very strong.” It further observes that faculty “find it difficult to accommodate the notion of students as ‘customers’ whose needs determine the services offered.” The May 1997 *Policy*

*Perspectives* report entitled "Turning Point" also cites the discomfort of many faculty with "market forces" as the criteria for their own agenda. The report also identifies faculty difficulty in responding to "pressures to recast the nature of work through technology."

*Policy Perspectives* is published by the Institute for Research on Higher Education at the University of Pennsylvania and copyrighted by the university trustees. Established in 1980 the IRHE is a center for educational research and policy analysis of postsecondary education. It is jointly chartered with the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School. The IRHE developed and hosted the first roundtable discussion. In 1993 the Pew Charitable Trusts asked the IRHE to take the model they had originally developed to individual campuses.

The California State Polytechnic University, Pomona roundtable discussions were held in January and February of 1996 at the Kellogg West Conference Center. The roundtable process begins with dinner and an evening discussion that continues the following day. Discussion materials are provided to participants in advance. The purpose of the roundtable is "to set the stage for the change process" (<http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/ace/aceprt2.html>). At CPP the roundtable brought together approximately two dozen members of the campus community. One of the roundtable members was Jim Hornbuckle, Regional Vice President of Southern California Edison Company, CPP's energy supplier. He provided reading material on "Business Process Reengineering," which included the case study of a business implementing organizational change (Cooper & Markus, 1994). "Business Process Reengineering," also known as BPR, describes radical change in an institution to eliminate unnecessary processes, and to increase efficiency and productivity. It also refers to changes in "work culture," such as alterations in employee attitudes, values, and patterns of behavior.

The "Senior Liaison" for the CPP Roundtable was Mary-Linda Merriam Armacost, who has been a facilitator for over twenty Pew Higher Education Roundtables. She also is a facilitator and senior liaison for the Institute for Research in Higher Education, and a senior fellow at the American Council on Education. She also works as a management consultant for business and the non-profit sector. She is a past president of Moore College of Art and Design and Wilson College, both in Pennsylvania. Her Ph.D., with a concentration on interpersonal communication and small group process, is from Pennsylvania State University (<http://www.tahperd.sfasu.edu/ace/MLA.html>).

Armacost sees "the university models of both the American colonial college and German university [which] have served us well in the past" less relevant in the modern marketplace. She believes that universities must now compete in a consumer society for their "market share." Today's customers (students) demand that education be more accessible, a development made possible by modern technology. "We can no longer sit on a pedestal dictating the terms upon which the American public can attend and graduate." In a market driven economy university education must be accountable and demonstrate its value to the customer (<http://cis.clarion.edu/~smaby/roundtable/facilitatornotes.html>).

#### The ACE/Kellogg Project

The California State Polytechnic University ACE/Kellogg "change initiative" was to address the challenge of "moving from a teaching-centered to a learning-centered environment via technology." Using the discussions of the Pew Educational Roundtable as the foundation, the CPP university cabinet explored "areas of potential transformational change." As a result of its discussions, the cabinet chose the change issue "transforming teaching and learning at Cal Poly Pomona through the application of information technology." The formal initiative became "Developing an Integrated Campus Strategy for Enhancing Learning and Teaching with Technology" (<http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/ace/acefr9.html>). In the

fall of 1996 a campus steering committee or ACE Leadership Team was selected to lead the change process. Team members began to facilitate the project objective of improving teaching and learning through technology. As part of their strategy, the ACE Leadership Team organized two Take Part Charette workshops in February and November 1997 based on the Charette interactive process of building “win/win” consensus. The ACE team endeavored to solicit a consensus for change from various “stakeholders” in the CPP campus community (<http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/ace/acefr9.html>).

The team also identified existing efforts in information and instructional technology. The final report noted many “signposts” of change at CPP including a computer leasing program; technology infrastructure, labs, and smart classrooms; technology projects, fairs, forums, panels, speakers series, workshops, classes, and committees; a Minor in Multimedia; a Summer Digital University; and a Fall Technology Quarter. The division of Instructional and Information Technology and the position of Dean of Instructional Technology and Academic Computing had also been created (<http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/ace/acefr9.html>).

Papers describing CPP’s progress towards institutional transformation were presented to the ACE Comprehensive Universities Cluster in Washington DC in June 1996. However, as the report noted, “a major barrier to change was faculty concern that the goal of promoting technology was to improve ‘efficiency,’ reducing the quality of the educational environment (including face to face contact), while reducing faculty prerogatives and power” (<http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/ace/acemp5.html>). After three years CPP and 22 of the original institutions decided to extend their participation in the ACE project for an additional two years. Nevertheless, by January 1999 “only a handful of degree programs [at CPP] were offered off-campus through technological means. Breaking the link between seat time and course credit remained largely a tantalizing but unattained opportunity” (<http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/ace/acejhs3.html>).

#### The American Productivity and Quality Center

In November 1996 senior faculty and administrative leaders representing the 130 campuses that had participated in the Pew Educational Roundtable over the previous three years gathered in St. Louis for a “Return to St. Louis,” the site of the first meeting in 1993. Robert M. Zemsky chaired the convention. Zemsky is the founding director of the Institute for Research on Higher Education and senior editor of *Policy Perspectives*. Educated as an historian, with a Ph.D. from Yale University, his groundbreaking research on how colleges and universities can be “market smart” appears in *Policy Perspectives* and *Change* magazine. He is chair and convener of the Pew Higher Education Roundtables, which were organized under his leadership (<http://www.talperd.sfasu.edu/ace/Zemsky.html>). At the St. Louis convention Zemsky shared some observations that had developed out of the work of the IRHE through campus visits and roundtables. As he noted, “faculty are getting the message that productivity needs to be enhanced” ([http://www.nacubo.org/website/members/bomag/ftpd\\_1296.html](http://www.nacubo.org/website/members/bomag/ftpd_1296.html)).

An important aspect of the meeting in St. Louis was the decision to bring institutions together with management experts to focus on problems that institutions have in common. This resulted in a set of roundtable institutions working in conjunction with the American Productivity and Quality Center to “benchmark” academic processes. The APQC, a “think tank” in Houston, Texas, defines “benchmarking” as the process of identifying, sharing, and using “best practices.” The APQC teaches business improvement concepts and strategic initiatives such as Benchmarking Best Practices, Knowledge Management (KM), and Total Quality Management (TQM) (<http://www.apqc.org/education/student/dispTools.cfm>).

TQM is a model to improve quality, which is now being applied to “faculty work, instructional improvement, and curriculum development” (<http://www.eriche.org/trends>).

administration.html). It is also known as Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). TQM strategies include building teams to improve “key processes” to help businesses deliver services to their customers. Universities are encouraged to develop “Quality Councils” to help insure commitment to quality, which is defined as customer satisfaction. The APQC’s criteria for educational organizations focus on “student-centered” education. This is a strategic concept that demands attention to customer (student) and market requirements.

In 1997 the California State University Chancellor’s Office identified outcomes assessment as a critical priority. The CSU became a sponsoring member for outcomes assessment projects conducted by the APQC. One experiment was “Assessing Learning Outcomes,” an APQC project that included institutions of higher education. Sponsoring members from the private sector included the missile defense systems manufacturer Raytheon. With revenues in 2000 of 16.9 billion dollars, Raytheon is a leader in corporate philanthropy, and makes corporate contributions to organizations whose goals match its strategic interests. More than 50% of Raytheon’s charitable contributions go to educational programs and institutions (<http://www.raytheon.com/community/mission/education.html>). Its program objectives promote quality and “value-added” post secondary education. Raytheon and the APQC advocate the use of “performance indicators,” (known in higher education as “outcomes assessment”), in both the non-profit and for-profit sectors, in order for organizations to successfully compete in the global marketplace. “Performance indicators” are an important aspect of Continuous Quality Improvement.

The goal of the APQC project was to identify institutions, educational and otherwise, that had developed strategies or “best practices” that other institutions could emulate. “Best practices” institutions chosen by the APQC subsequently hosted site visits and intensive one day seminars for representatives from the CSU (<http://www.fullerton.edu/wasc/Newsletter2.htm>). Institutions that have been identified by the APQC as having “best practices” include the University of Phoenix Online campus. The University of Phoenix is a private, for-profit institution in the “education business,” which offers bachelors, masters, and doctorate degrees obtained through programs at nationwide “learning centers” and via the Internet. Analysts predict that student enrollment at the Online university, a company which trades under the symbol UOPX, “will increase at least 50% annually over the next three or four years (Goldberg, 2002, p.38).

#### The Knight Higher Education Collaborative

In 1997 “Policy Perspectives” announced the beginning of the Knight Higher Education Collaborative, “a program to develop shared approaches and solutions to the issues that the Pew Roundtable Institutions have in common” (*Policy Perspectives*, 1997, p. 11). The Knight Collaborative, formerly the Pew Education Roundtable, furthers the “change agenda.” It is funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which has assets of approximately 1.9 billion dollars. It was established in 1950 as a private foundation, separate from the Knight brothers newspapers.

The Collaborative seeks to “understand the higher education market and how to shape it” (<http://www.irhe.upenn.edu/knight/knight-main.html>). It is also committed to restructuring governance in higher education and redesigning the procedures for how decisions are made. Another premise of the Collaborative is the need for institutions to communicate with one another. In addition to publishing *Policy Perspectives*, in 1997 the Knight Collaborative announced that it would develop an “interactive network” utilizing electronic communication. Its purpose is to “link Knight Collaborative faculty and senior administrators in an expanding, increasingly practical exchange focusing on institutional change.” It also announced that it would “establish a program of institutional cadencing,” which is defined as “the periodic visit to a campus by an associate of the collaborative for the purpose of helping to spur an

institution's timely fulfillment of its progress in redesigning the learning experience" (*Policy Perspectives*, 1997, p. 10).

The Knight Collaborative promised to establish its own "focused agenda" to develop programs in several categories. In 1997 it announced that it would organize working sessions with university presidents and chief academic officers to use "market taxonomy" to develop strategic thinking. Universities would compare their institutional data with other market segments. Discussions were to begin in the Philadelphia area and then expand throughout the nation. The Collaborative agenda included the development of programs to "design, test, and implement" alternative models for delivering instruction and utilizing resources. These models would rethink "seat time as the accounting unit of learning" and "faculty incentives—monetary and non-monetary" (*Policy Perspectives*, 1997, p. 9).

The Knight Collaborative Executive Education Program in Higher Education is a joint collaboration with the Wharton School of Business and the Institute for Research on Higher Education. Wharton has 200 executive education programs, which are administered and housed by the Wharton School's Aresty Institute at the University of Pennsylvania (<http://aresty-direct.wharton.upenn.edu/execed/index.cfm>). The goal of the higher education program is to bring together "leadership teams" from roundtable institutions, to help them develop and implement "action plans" that will enable their individual campuses to make measurable progress on a specific institutional need or management problem. New partners in the Knight Higher Education Collaborative send five-person administrative and faculty teams to the program. The four-day intensive course utilizes the individual campus case study approach. It features training by Wharton faculty in strategy, leadership, organizational change, team dynamics, and project management (<http://www.irhe.upenn.edu/knight/knight-prog1.html>).

Institutions become a part of the Knight Collaborative by participating in an Education Roundtable or by having a five-person team attend the immersion program. In four years more than 500 university administrators and faculty representing over 70 institutions participated in the Wharton/IRHE program ([http://www.tc.cc.va.us/planning/wharton/Wharton\\_Pres\\_061000.PDF](http://www.tc.cc.va.us/planning/wharton/Wharton_Pres_061000.PDF)). A university can choose to become a part of a Knight Collaborative Consulting Arrangement, in which, in addition to Wharton faculty instruction, the leadership team meets with technical consultants to further develop their "action plan."

In April 1998 in an effort jointly sponsored by the Chancellor's Office and the CSU, five-person teams made up of administrators and faculty from Pomona and nine other CSU campuses participated in a four-day intensive course at Wharton/IRHE. The purpose of the program was to develop strategies to implement assessment plans at the individual campuses. Qualification for the Wharton experience was determined by a university's previous attempts to specify concrete outcomes for student learning. Teams brought individual campus case studies of current issues, which became the focus of team efforts in breakout sessions. Wharton faculty and Knight Collaborative staff worked with the CSU teams "to begin linking some of the 'process concepts' that lie at the heart of the Wharton curriculum with the kinds of outcomes assessment issues specific to both higher education and the CSU" (<http://www.calstate.edu/AcadAff/Sloa/Spring-ASL.pdf>). These "process concepts" included strategy, "win/win" negotiation, bargaining, team building, participatory management, quality circles, and other principles drawn from Total Quality Management and Continuous Quality Improvement (<http://www.fullerton.edu/wasc.Newsletter2.htm>).

### Summary

The Pew Charitable Trusts, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and John S. and James L. Knight Foundation are among the 30 largest grant making foundations in the United States. The Kellogg Foundation provided the original funding for the American Council on Education within

the Knight Higher Education Collaborative, the successor to the Pew Educational Roundtable. The Executive Higher Education Program provides instruction by Wharton faculty and Knight Collaborative staff on how to develop strategies on institutional needs such as outcomes assessment, an important component in "student-centered" learning. The American Productivity and Quality Center works in collaboration with roundtable institutions, and organizes projects centered on outcomes assessment, with the CSU and corporate sponsoring members such as Raytheon.

These powerful and influential entities, several of which are connected to each other and to the University of Pennsylvania, collaborate on well-defined strategic agendas for the transformation of higher education. Involved in this massive matrix is the California State University system and, specifically, the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona campus. At CPP and throughout the CSU system, the California Faculty Association, faculty academic senates, and individual faculty find themselves in the continuing process of formulating and expressing a response to the growing virtualization and corporatization of the university. To that end it is essential that faculty understand the complex collaboration of non-profit and for-profit organizations, the use of power and private resources brought to bear on the transformation process, and the origin and big-picture agenda of change initiatives and projects, which impact on the mission and vision of the CSU.

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