

Reflections

How to Create Institutional Change:

A View from a Higher Education Change Scholar

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One of the best ways campuses can encourage deep and lasting change is by creating organizational learning around new learning spaces. The various steps in this guide will lead to such learning including:

- Organizational learning starts by creating a focus – what do we want to or need to learn more about which is where the institution needs to collect and gather information. Starting with the desired learning outcomes is a focus and direction for learning.
- Collecting data on learning outcomes and assessing learning spaces are key steps in organizational learning – campuses need to identify data needed to make good decisions that are specific to the campus context
- Create diverse, thinking teams to interpret data. Data alone will get you nowhere. You need people on campus with the appropriate perspective to think together about the right learning spaces and this should include – architects, facilities managers, faculty (representatives of all faculty both tenure track and non-tenure track), students, institutional researchers, librarians, graduate students and others. Assembling the right thinking team is one of the most important steps toward creating change.
- Examine the data and information infrastructure. Often we make decisions based on information we have rather than create more robust data systems or gather more information to inform decisions. If initial discussions demonstrate you do not have enough information from the architect, related to facilities challenges, or on student learning, slow down and get better data.
- Practice learning together to make change and leaders should put a good team facilitator in place. It is not easy to listen to multiple voices especially when looking at the same information, but coming up with different conclusions. Often there is tension among planning groups and then the loudest voices win out. The team leader will be key in helping the diverse perspective on new planning spaces emerge.

Change is all about learning and learning happens only when campus leaders set up the right circumstances.