

Preface

Introduction

Change is the operative word of the 1980's and 1990's in the workplace. Re-engineering, downsizing, and global competition—all fueled by technological advancement—demand that businesses respond to changing workplace needs. Many businesses struggle to keep pace with rapid advances in technology that undermine the stability of organizational cultures and practices. These shifting grounds have been examined by business leaders, managers, human resource development professionals, and educators with surprisingly similar suggestions. The consensus is that adapting to change requires a knowledgeable, skilled, and flexible workforce that understands business trends and supports the company's vision for the future.

Achieving that workforce is a demanding undertaking given Corporate America's patterns in workforce development. Traditionally, the greatest allocation of training and development dollars have provided educational opportunities for the smallest segment of the organization: management. This trend relied on the “trickle-down” theory that the learning achieved by the manager or leader would filter through the ranks to even the lowest-level employees. The problem with this approach is that the “trickle-down” time is greater than the flow of work and the time constraints on adapting to refreshed business practices. Developing the entire employee chain in a comprehensive approach to workforce development is becoming one answer to the shortened reaction times that many companies are facing. Human capital investment is thus becoming central to Corporate America's competitiveness in the national and international arenas.

An approach to reaching that entire employee chain that has emerged over the past decade is the corporate university. This phenomenon has surfaced as one way to cascade learning throughout an entire organization in a more balanced approach to workforce development. Most of the outcomes of the corporate university are positive. Through the corporate university in Corporate America, increasing numbers of employees a) have access to educational opportunities that help them perform their jobs better, b) have a voice in the content areas covered in the educational opportunities, c) are valued as contributing members of the organization's strategic plan, d) have a clear vision of the purpose and intent of that strategic plan, and e) value individual development for their company and for themselves. Many companies that have adopted the corporate university model appreciate the need for this comprehensive approach and connect it to their business successes.

Purpose

Despite the successes and benefits, the corporate university is full of complexities that are not easily rationalized. Simply put, the corporate university blurs the lines between management and labor and between training and education. It merges employee development with effective management and suggests that corporations are assuming a role that higher education has previously filled alone.

These complexities are fuel for discussion about the purpose of the corporate university and the methods that it employs in achieving its organizational goals. The topic has found its way into management, human resource development, and education journals with mixed responses from all three arenas. The intent of this thesis is to examine the corporate university—its

development, its purpose, its structure, and its future role—in leading to greater understanding of the corporate university and its place in business, human resource development, and higher education. To this end, this thesis proposes a history, a conceptualization, a model, and the future of the corporate university.

Method

In reaching this end, a multi-tiered approach to data collection was utilized. The starting point involved a literature review of the existing books and articles in print about corporate universities. While the number of works dealing specifically with the corporate university are limited, the construct involves theories and practices from human resource development, organization development, and higher education. One book, *Corporate Quality Universities: Lessons in Building a World-class Workforce* by Jeanne Meister, guided the research and led to inquiries in these related fields. Texts from all these areas were reviewed to uncover related workplace learning and adult learning theories, the underlying concepts of the corporate university, if and how the corporate university is defined, and the relationship between the corporate university and higher education.

The literature review led to various case studies of existing corporate university examples. The *Corporate University Review* was a vital source of information regarding existing corporate universities and people and events related to the movement. Various case studies outlined in this and related journals led to platforms for formal and informal dialogue with corporate university practitioners, both developers and managers. These conversations revealed common and uncommon processes by which different corporate universities have been developed.

Through the literature review, case study analyses, and dialogues, this thesis captures the essence of the corporate university as it synthesizes its components into a comprehensive conceptualization. This conceptualization provides a base for a program planning model for corporate university development. The emerging model presented in this thesis is a starting point for a more extensive, tested construct to assist corporate university planners. This emerging model has been reviewed by a panel of experts that represent the stakeholders in the corporate university movement. Ms. Lynn Densford, editor of the *Corporate University Review*, was chosen for her unique perspective on business needs and interests in the corporate university. Ms. Densford has edited the journal since its inception in 1996 and is closely connected with various program examples. Dr. Louise Rainis, Director of Economic Development at Northern Virginia Community College - Alexandria Campus, joined the review panel as a representative of higher education's interests in the corporate university. Dr. Rainis reviewed the model for its consideration of academic concerns and goals in workplace learning. With the voices from Corporate America and higher education intact, Dr. Peter Murk, Professor of Adult Education at Ball State University, examined the model for its soundness as a construct for program development. Dr. Murk has developed and published various non-linear program planning models for adult educators. His expertise in program planning and model building were invaluable to the soundness of the emerging model presented in this thesis.

Through this methodology, the current resources are synthesized into a historical and conceptual description of the corporate university. Theories of adult learning and organization development theories that have been neglected in the literature are explored and suggested as critical components of the corporate university. The model is a suggested construct for

addressing the informed development of the corporate university in anticipating and filling the gaps and providing a useful and sound approach to program development. Finally, suggestions for future research and issues that require further examination show that the corporate university is a work in progress that demands examination for it to be a valid vehicle for reaching the incumbent worker segment of the adult learning population.

Chapter 1: A HISTORY OF THE CORPORATE UNIVERSITY

The corporate university is a strong, collaborative initiative that works to achieve an organization that learns and continues to learn through internal and external partnerships with shared funding commitments, programming responsibilities, and resulting benefits. Sharing appears to be a critical component of corporate universities as companies take a holistic approach toward workplace learning. However, the corporate university did not begin as the collaborative initiative that it is today. In fact, the programs that catalyzed the movement competed, not partnered, with traditional education providers and were often concerned with only certain levels of their workforce population. The term “corporate university” was not popularized until the mid 1980’s. Even then, the term was loosely defined and applied. Understanding how the corporate university evolved and what it is today calls for an investigation of previous workplace training practices that have inherently influenced the corporate university movement in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Meister (1997b) cites General Motors as the first corporation to open a university within the organization when it formed General Motors Engineering and Management Institute (GMI) in 1927. GMI’s fundamental principle of increasing productivity through human capital development is the foundation of the present structure of the corporate university. GMI taught itself; it did not partner—at least in the beginning—with anyone in designing and delivering the employee development classes and programs. The corporation kept education entirely internal and centralized. However, GMI’s intent to produce more knowledgeable workers with the results of increased production and competitiveness represents the first undercurrents of becoming a learning organization through the corporate university approach.

Even prior to General Motors development of GMI, Dr. Charles Steinmetz of General Electric advocated corporation schools as early as 1914 (Cranch, 1987). Such programs were, again, entirely internal employee development initiatives aimed at preparing and maintaining effective workforces. The focus was structured around corporate goals with little emphasis on credits or diplomas. Corporate schools were popular as the Industrial Revolution progressed in industries such as manufacturing, insurance, publishing, utilities, and chemicals. As long as diplomas and degrees were not necessary, many corporations elected to provide their own employee development programs, sometimes in efforts to maintain control over content (Cranch, 1987).

Neither General Motors nor General Electric considered themselves to be corporate universities; the term itself did not even exist. Their attempts to bring training and learning to the workplace represent contributions to the workplace learning movement in the United States. Their influence on corporate education over the next several decades changed the way Corporate America felt about employee education. These underpinnings of investing in human capital without the aid of outside educational partners led to a rise in corporate accreditation. In the early- and mid-twentieth century, many corporations sought and earned accreditation for their own employee development programs (Eurich, 1985). From the 1920’s through the 1980’s, banking institutions, insurance firms, management consulting firms, architectural centers, electronics and engineering firms, health organizations, computer companies, and textile industries sought and earned degree-granting authority.

In the mid-1980’s, however, workplace learning shifted from tight controls exemplified in the GM and GE models to broader approaches that can be seen in modern-day corporate

universities like Disney University and Motorola University. In these examples, learning is central to the organization. Meister (1994) noticed this shift and attempted to distinguish it with a change in terminology. Meister called examples like GE and GM “corporate universities” and attempted to apply a new term, the “Corporate Quality University”, to the more comprehensive models that were developing. Meister defined the corporate university as a corporate campus that offered a “cafeteria curriculum” (p. 21) of training programs for workers. Classes were not typically aligned with overall business plans but were consistently reactive to observed problems in the workplace. Most programs were designed for management level and above with few selections for front-line employees. Meister recognized that a shift in thinking about employee development in relationship to corporate growth was taking place in the early to mid-1980’s. Corporations were embracing the idea of filtering learning throughout their organizations and were more willing to spend training dollars on those front-line workers in return for increased productivity and competitive advantage. Corporations also began to consider self-development programs to boost employees’ performance in the organization’s core competencies (the skills, knowledge, and abilities particular to and defined by the organization itself). Meister (1994) called this changing initiative the “Corporate Quality University” where companies “train their entire business chain, not just their professional managers, and to view training as a way to inculcate key stakeholders in the vision, values, traditions, and culture of the organization.” (pp. 21-22).

Meister explained the shift in training practices as a new approach that deserved an updated label. And, she described the “Corporate Quality University” as an advancement of the corporate university that appeared to be a narrowly defined term for an expanding process. In later articles and surveys (1997a and 1997b), however, Meister has retreated from the change in terminology. Although she initially envisioned a new movement with the Corporate Quality University, she has subsequently returned to the notion that the changing practices were simply progressive shifts within the overall corporate university initiative. Thus, “corporate university” is the accepted terminology regardless of the time period.

Disney University is one example (typically cited as the first) that has grown into the modern corporate university as defined by Meister. Walt Disney himself called for the creation of Disney University in 1955. The purpose was to train and educate a “cast” of highly competent employees around a core set of corporate principles aimed at one central goal: generating guest happiness (Densford, 1996). The initial structure of this corporate university centered on the creation of a “university” within the company that awarded certificates (not accredited in the beginning) and where employees graduated from various classes. One constant in the program was the connection between the class content and the core philosophies of The Walt Disney Company.

Since 1955, Disney University has grown and changed from a centralized building for learning to more active partnerships with the company’s business units and more portable learning opportunities. Disney University takes its programs to the business units as opposed to having the employees attend a central learning center. The education staff partners with the leaders of the business units to prepare programs (not always isolated to a classroom setting) that meet the changing and distinct needs of the individual units. Customer service is always an underlying theme, but their programs are directly related to the business units’ work as the unit managers have a clear voice in the content and objectives. While it has not partnered externally with a

college or education consulting firm, Disney University has taken internal partnership to great heights with equally significant returns.

Another firm that recognizes the importance of internal partnership is Motorola, Inc. Like Disney University, Motorola University started as a centralized and controlled training office centered on the company's core values and competencies. Motorola chose to avoid external partnerships due to the company's desire to control and maintain its own programs. In fact, Motorola is one of the corporate universities that has earned credit approvals for several programs including many in business management. Like Disney, Motorola includes its business units in all its programs regardless of whether the program is accredited.

Unlike Disney University, however, Motorola has expanded its view of partnership over the past five years. Motorola actively works with other businesses that have corporate universities to share best practices, and they work to establish tighter communication lines with traditional centers of education like high schools and colleges. For the past two years, Motorola has sponsored a conference for business and education leaders to share ideas for the future of education and work in America. Largely due to the deficiency of skilled workers in technical areas, Motorola recognizes its role in preparing the next generation of high-tech employees. By sharing ideas, Motorola has taken a collaborative stance in the educating and re-educating of the American workforce. Although their first inclination was to work alone, Motorola now serves as a model for education/business partnership.

Since 1989, Motorola has depended on the local community colleges to help educate their workers to at least a seventh-grade mathematics level and to teach English courses, especially English as a Second Language (Wiggenhorn, 1990). Motorola's definition of partnering with the education community has widened since then. The company now collaborates with higher education to have a voice in degree programs that relate to the work performed by the company. Their interest is largely centered on helping the universities prepare a workforce qualified to fill vacancies in the high-tech environment. Other corporate universities (especially those with smaller budgets and fewer workers), however, look to traditional education for their own current employee development initiatives mostly due to time and funding limitations. Examples include National Semiconductor University, Land Rover University, and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office University.

The shift in approach to workplace learning seen in the above models resulted, in part, to Senge's (1990) insight into the learning organization. Senge explored five disciplines to generate learning organizations: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning. The guiding principle is systems thinking. This theory suggests that understanding comes from contemplating the units that interact and relate to form an organization. The four other disciplines explain how systems thinking is achieved. Personal mastery is the first discipline necessary to achieve systems thinking. Senge explains this discipline as the cornerstone of the learning organization in that it encourages lifelong learning and continuous clarification of personal insights and visions. This idea relates to later work of Marsick and Neaman (1996), Watson (1996), and Bierema (1996) who all indicate that organization development is really a result of individual development. The personal mastery that contributes to organizational development hinges on the development of mental models. This discipline describes the personal images or insights that employees rely on to understand the way the systems in their organizations function. Often, those models differ from person to person. Senge advocates sharing those individual mental models and reaching agreement on

organizational models for the good of the organization. Developing collective mental models can result in shared vision where all employees have a voice or contribution to the overall vision of the organization. Building shared vision is not a vision statement. By participating in defining the goal, Senge argues that the employees desire to contribute and share in the results. The shared vision helps employees work in teams which results in a higher level of learning. Senge asserts that team learning represents a higher level of learning as employees share their personal mastery, mental models, and shared vision. As individuals develop themselves, they are better able to contribute to their teams and raise the level of learning the team experiences.

In the late 80's and the early 90's, which marks the explosion of the number of corporate universities, companies began to recognize that a commitment to lifelong learning with practices in systems thinking and cross-functionality as introduced by Senge (1990) and explored by Nolan, Goodstein and Pfeiffer (1993) and Beckhard and Pritchard (1992) among others, was a way to keep up with technological advancement and global competition. Becoming a learning organization became the desired status throughout Corporate America. Achieving that goal meant rethinking the corporate philosophy toward employee development. Corporate managers accepted the need to educate and continuously re-educate their employees, but actually making organizational change happen seemed to be an uphill challenge complicated with union needs and demands, pressures to remain competitive during the transition periods, and desires to turn profits. Terms like re-engineering, re-inventing, and organizational change dominated Corporate America. The centralized and controlled employee development programs of the past would not meet those corporate goals. The choice to become a learning organization coupled with the need to stay competitive sparked, at least in part, the corporate university movement.

The need to develop a learning organization through the corporate university is closely linked with changing business practices. With the end of the Cold War and the relaxing of global trade barriers, Corporate America began to compete with markets around the world. American companies were experiencing pressure to keep up with expanding competitor bases which demanded improved customer service, better products, and shortened delivery times. In order to stay competitive, American companies had to work more efficiently. Complicating the widening global markets were rapid advances in technology.

Finding or establishing a workforce committed to a company's spirit of competition and qualified to keep up with technological advancement has become a difficult endeavor throughout Corporate America. These rapid changes and expanding markets have left American corporations searching in vain for qualified workers. The U.S. Department of Commerce recently published labor statistics that indicate America's slowness in responding to these changing industry trends; 190,000 professional technical jobs are currently vacant because of a deficiency in qualified skilled workers. Those vacancies could reach the one million mark by the year 2005 (Gordon, 1997). The lack of qualified workers to fill technical jobs is compounded by the fact that knowledge today has a shorter "shelf life" than in the past. Louis Ross, Chief Technical Officer at Ford Motor Company, estimates that knowledge's "shelf life" in engineering is less than three years (Meister, 1997a, p. 37). Employers are recognizing that employees need to stay current within their fields in order to maintain a competitive edge.

With all these influences on business practices—advances in technology, demands for knowledgeable workers, the growing deficiency of qualified workers, and the reduced shelf life of knowledge—the need for degrees and certification in the emerging knowledge economy has become vital to a company's survival. Seeking accreditation was the answer for some previous

training offices, but most companies during the 80's and 90's had neither the time nor the resources to commit to the accreditation process. Yet, they needed a credentialed, knowledgeable workforce. The very different purposes of higher education and corporate employee development did not provide an environment ripe for collaboration in educating the American workforce; however, Corporate America began to look to traditional colleges and universities to help them educate their employees.

Companies are currently realizing that they can take advantage of the best academic programs in various areas and from various schools by developing partnerships with traditional colleges and universities. In fact, 40% of the present corporate universities throughout the United States have developed such partnerships (Meister, 1997a). This trend is blurring the lines between the purposes of "education" and "training." Cross (1981) notes that maintaining the distinction between traditional education and corporate training is becoming increasingly difficult. As these lines fade and as the demand for the credentialed worker increases, the bridge that connects business and education is becoming stronger. Business and education are both realizing that they can no longer rely on their traditional relationships in preparing and maintaining a knowledgeable, adaptable, employable, and competitive American workforce.

Fed by these changing industry demands and the shifts in opinion about business and education partnership, the corporate university is taking hold as a dynamic vehicle for making new and improved relationships between business and education with the collective purpose of educating and re-educating American workers. The historical development of the corporate university is relatively consistent despite the fact that most programs of this nature developed without a model or prescription to follow. In fact, most programs looked to others to share practices on what techniques to try and what to avoid. This collaboration has led to a fairly tight-knit community of corporate universities with a common commitment to increased productivity through individual development. Theorists like Marsick and Neaman (1996) and Watkins (1995 and 1996) and Bierema (1996) have recognized that individual learning transforms into organizational learning, and many companies that embraced the corporate university concept put that revelation into practice and are enjoying the returns on their human capital investments today. While the corporate university began as a management development initiative, it has certainly expanded its focus to include entire organizations in all encompassing workplace development programs that teach the fundamental competencies of the organizations themselves.

Thus, changing industry and technology factors as well as new thinking about workplace learning catalyzed the corporate university concept and movement. This historical perspective provides a basis for understanding and conceptualizing the corporate university as it exists today. In its current state, the corporate university is a process by which companies and organizations bring formal and informal learning opportunities to the workplace. The purpose of most corporate universities is to achieve organizational goals and plans through core learning and development. While the purposes remain relatively constant, the processes by which corporate universities achieve their learning goals and performance standards are varied, complex, and often unique. Despite the variety in process, the corporate university as a construct does rely on some fundamental components which evolved from changing industry demands, shortened shelf lives of knowledge, and deficiencies in the American workforce. The historical development thus leads directly into a thorough conceptualization of the corporate university through an examination of its purpose and its structure.

Chapter 2: A CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE CORPORATE UNIVERSITY

With more than 1500 examples throughout Corporate America, the corporate university has emerged as a highly influential employee development initiative over the past two decades. Driven largely by the complexities that arise in developing a workforce prepared to handle changing industry demands and rapid advances in technology, the corporate university has emerged as one way for companies to remain competitive while dealing with these business pressures. Thus, the purpose and structure of the corporate university have developed in response to these pressures. The purpose is typically modeled around the company's individual challenges in initiating or managing change. The structure subsequently follows the purpose. Both elements are driven by the sponsoring organization which provides the freedom to consider and compensate for corporate climate and culture. Despite the variety in the definitions of the purpose and structure among corporate universities, most programs share some common characteristics that conceptually define the corporate university.

Understanding the purpose and structure requires an examination of the terminology. Companies that have adopted this workplace learning process support and promote its usefulness, envisioning the corporate university as a refreshed and updated approach to workplace learning that has reacted to the changing demands of business and industry today. Despite this advocacy, some critics, documented in Rose (1997), Peak (1997), and Ginsberg (1997), argue that the corporate university is merely an intriguing and perhaps unrepresentative name for a company training office. While this description could be accurate for the earliest examples, the corporate university today takes a fundamentally different approach toward workplace learning. Training offices of the past maintained tight controls on what, how, and when their employees learned (Watkins, 1995). For many companies, this approach was successful, especially in unchanging workplace environments. However, as the United States has evolved from an industrial-based to an information-based society, training practices have been likewise changing to keep pace with rapid advances in technology, communications, and automation. While the corporate university began as a label for a corporate-run training program, it has evolved into an innovative and successful employee development initiative that capitalizes on collaborative partnerships, technological advancements, and emerging business philosophies.

Conceptualizing or defining the corporate university is difficult because its implementation varies from company to company and because technology and competition demand that the corporate university change its shape to remain cutting-edge (Densford, 1998). A few recent definitions (Peak, 1997; Allen, 1997; and Rose, 1997) have been presented over the past few years that capture the essence of the corporate university influx since the mid 1980's. These definitions rely on the first comprehensive definition of the corporate university which emphasizes process rather than place: "a process where all levels of employees, as well as key customers and suppliers, are involved in continuous lifelong learning to improve their performance on the job." (Meister, 1994, p. 30) Meister stresses that corporate universities do not have to be buildings with ivy walls but must embody individual and corporate growth in improving organizational performance. While this definition seems simple and not fundamentally different from that of other workplace learning programs, the corporate university actually embraces a few distinct concepts, such as partnership and competencies, with the overall goal of becoming a learning organization in improving organizational performance. The corporate university is really an innovative business approach to *revamping* corporate training offices by creating employee

development programs that are intertwined with corporate missions and goals in collaboration with various internal and external stakeholders.

Defining the corporate university requires a look at the terminology which itself is misleading. The term “university” is problematic. The term typically implies accreditation and credit-granting authority. In reality, most corporate universities have not applied for nor achieved accreditation, and it is not cited as a requirement to use the term “corporate university” in any of the previously mentioned definitions. The first to use the term was Walt Disney in the 1950’s. Arguably, his intention was to redefine his own company’s approach to employee development and corporate growth. The term spread throughout Corporate America with both positive and negative reactions. On the positive side, some companies adopted the term because it lends credibility. On the negative side, some companies worry about the implications of the term “university” and the anxiety associated with a return to traditional institutions of higher education.

There has been argument over the legitimacy of the term for corporate development programs that are not accredited (Rose, 1997). If the corporation is not providing or sponsoring college-credit activities for its employees, then the use of the term “university” is misleading and illegitimate. Some corporate universities, like McDonald’s Hamburger University and Northrop’s Nothrop University, have avoided the criticism by seeking and earning their own accreditation (Eurich, 1985). Others, like National Semiconductor University, work in partnership with local colleges and universities. In these cases, employees have the opportunity to attend college credit classes in distinct curricula provided by the partner college but sponsored by the corporation. Those corporate universities that provide credit-earning activities may have a greater right to use the term than those that avoid college-credit options altogether. Regardless of the right to use the term, the word “university” is unlikely to disappear in this movement. As Meister (1994) noted, the process, not the terminology, defines a corporate university. In fact, some companies have avoided the controversy altogether by excluding the term from their programs. An example is the Shell Learning Center that has embraced the corporate university process but avoided the name.

Understanding that process, though, is critical to understanding the way that it defines workplace learning. Finding consistencies among corporate universities is an arduous task; the differences seem to overwhelm the similarities. Meister (1994), Peak (1997), Rose (1997) and Densford (1998) have discovered a number of consistencies at least in the components that comprise the corporate university. Most corporate universities appear to embrace a common purpose, corporate growth, that takes a strategically aligned, integrated, proactive, partnership, and long term approach toward learning and change in the organization. The manner in which these components are adapted in each organization varies, but the studies suggest that these underlying principles are constant in the corporate university movement.

Purpose

In this decade of unprecedeted business growth and global competition, the corporate university has become a driving force behind improving an organization’s competitive edge. Companies educate and train their employees to see overall business results. The purpose of the corporate university is corporate growth. Improving the performance of the organization is built into the definition proposed by Meister (1994) and reinforced by the survey her firm conducted in 1997 (Meister, 1997a). Under this broad umbrella of corporate growth, Anthony Fresina (1997) of Executive Knowledge Works suggests a narrower breakdown of the corporate university’s

purpose. He recently described three prototypes modeled around the purpose of the corporate university that have emerged in relationship to Meister's definition (Fresina, 1997). While the broad definition of corporate growth still applies as the ultimate goal, Fresina envisions three different prototype corporate universities: those that reinforce and perpetuate, those that manage change, and those that drive and shape.

A corporate university that reinforces and perpetuates is one that is satisfied with the current state of the organization. Fresina cites Disney and Federal Express as examples. In both instances, the author recognizes that neither organization avoids change. He merely emphasizes that their current and primary purpose is to perpetuate proven and existing practices. The second prototype deals with managing change. Corporate universities of this type manage and sometimes lead organizational change. Fresina argues that the change takes place outside the corporate university and that the corporate university is asked to make that change happen. Fresina's assumption is that corporate universities that manage change will eventually reach their desired states and fall into Prototype I category where they will reinforce and perpetuate. The final prototype is a corporate university that drives and shapes the organization's future. Arguably, those corporate universities that have the power to drive and shape are the most influential within their corporate frameworks. It is the true integration of the training and development component to organizational effectiveness. Motorola is Fresina's example followed by GE and Lincoln National Corporation's Center for Breakthrough Business.

Fresina indicates that all corporate universities should fall into one of these three categories as they speak to the program's primary purpose. That is, in identifying the primary purpose secondary to organizational performance and corporate growth, the corporate university category falls into one category despite any short-lived shift to another. He does purport that the pursuit of Prototype II includes Prototype I activity and that Prototype III demands mastery of I and II. Fresina's categories have not yet been tested, but his prototyping certainly lends some clarity and promise for even greater understanding of the corporate university.

The purposes and prototypes provide a global picture of the corporate university and its relationship to the overall organization. It appears to be a central element in business performance as the need to capitalize on intellectual capital becomes central to the business's survival and competitive edge. Breaking the corporate university into smaller components, however, provides even greater understanding of how the vehicle achieves the performance goals.

Components of the Corporate University

Strategically Aligned

Corporate growth is undoubtedly the main function of a corporate university; strategic alignment is one element that makes such growth possible. Total Quality Management (TQM) has encouraged a greater relationship between human resource development and strategic business practices which lead to organizational growth (Watkins, 1995). While strategically aligning employee development initiatives with organizational goals began with Total Quality Management, the concept has become central to the corporate university. Until the adoption of TQM, training offices typically provided interventions based on clearly identified workplace problems in both hard and soft skill development. Without the rapid changes in technology, workplace training offices might still be taking this approach to employee development. It works

harmoniously with the reactive nature of previous training methods: identify the problem and solve it. However, this approach limits the training office's ability to work toward future goals with no link to strategic plans. Change demands that anticipation and preparation.

A corporate university that is inherently related to the mission and goals of the organization centralizes learning in achieving the organizational strategic plan. While the corporate university has the ability to notice and correct workplace problems through employee development, it also has the energy to show how that one intervention relates to the strategic plan of the organization. Solutions are intertwined with corporate visions as the corporate university works toward greater, more future-oriented goals.

The danger in perpetuating the strategic plan relies on the soundness of that vision. Much thought and consideration go into developing a corporate vision. What happens, though, when that corporate vision misses the mark? Consider, for instance, a corporate goal that envisions 100% automation in all business processes. Yet, the technology does not exist to make that vision happen, and the company does not have the funds to support it. This example is, of course, far-fetched; however, it speaks to the importance of a realistic vision for the future. The corporate university's ability to make that vision happen rests partially on its soundness.

Ensuring that the corporate university is closely aligned with the organization's goals for the future usually involves including a Chief Learning Officer and/or a board of management and labor representatives (Rose, 1997 and Meister, 1997a). The Chief Learning Officer, sometimes called the Chief Knowledge Officer, is a senior manager or even the Chief Executive Officer of the organization. This role is crucial to the development of a learning organization through a corporate university approach. It ensures that upper management has endorsed the idea of cascading learning throughout the company and has committed the organization to a lifelong learning mode. This role is also essential for the strategic alignment component as the senior managers usually have the final word in future plans. The Chief Learning Officer is supported by a board of employees who represent middle management and employee interests. Since the overall goal is to incorporate the needs and interests of the entire organization, this representation is necessary to ensure buy-in and subsequent participation. Together, the Chief Learning Officer and the board decide and generate policies and procedures and make curriculum suggestions for the corporate university.

Integrated Curriculum

The corporate university overall is closely connected to the corporate vision and/or strategic plan. It typically develops a core curriculum that is intertwined with the mission and goals of the organization. Meister, (1994 and 1997a) calls the core curriculum the three C's: corporate citizenship, contextual framework, and core competencies. Corporate citizenship represents lessons in the corporation's culture, history, and values. The contextual framework exemplifies industry trends. The final component, core competencies, are the key skills, knowledge, and abilities that are unique to the organization itself. In addition to the core curriculum, many corporate universities consider leadership development, career development, and business literacy to be central learning areas (Meister, 1997a).

The integration of the curricula emerges when considering the competencies themselves. The competencies define the skills and knowledge central to a particular organization. No one competency exists alone. They are inherently connected to each other and to the overall function

of the company itself. The curriculum of the corporate university captures and teaches the connection between and among the competencies, emphasizing the integration of all competencies to the core values of the organization. The success of the company rests on the corporate university's ability to develop those competencies in a coherent, collective, and structured way.

The curriculum is also integrated in its methodology. The corporate university espouses an integrated curriculum that incorporates a variety of learning interventions (Allen, 1996 and Meister, 1997a). Learning is not contained in a training classroom but dispersed throughout an organization through a variety of means and methods. The corporate university is really an umbrella that covers everything from mentoring and tutoring to workshops, computer-based learning, and college classes (Meister, 1997a and Rose, 1997). Technological advancement have helped make many of these means and methods possible. Some corporate universities have incorporated intranet components that allow employees to tap into their own best practices to solve job-related problems. At Eddie Bauer University, developing the intranet is a major initiative during this fiscal year (Densford, 1998). It intends to capture best practice descriptions from throughout the organization and make them available to all employees through technological means. The corporate university works to develop a curriculum of programs that are inherently related to each other and tied to the overall goals of the organization. A growing trend in Career Development Centers in corporate universities is ensuring this connection. The career components work within the corporate university framework to assess needs, analyze skill gaps, provide distance learning opportunities, and advise employees (Meister, 1997a).

This comprehensive approach moves beyond skill enhancement and sensitivity awareness into critical thinking, strategic conceptualization, and logical analysis. The approach is more holistic. It is integrated because the variety of means and methods allow all kinds of learners (i.e. visual, auditory, etc.) opportunities to learn according to their own strengths and preferences. But, the integration extends past variety of method. All the learning opportunities fit into the business framework of the organization. Actual workplace case studies are incorporated into various methods. The solutions become tangible as the application phase is frequently built into the learning.

Proactive Approach

Most corporate universities take a proactive approach toward employee development and organizational growth. In the corporate university context, a proactive approach indicates anticipation and preparation for change. Because corporate universities are designed to create learning organizations that can think cross-functionally and adapt to, maintain, or drive change, the proactive approach is logical and possible. This force has resulted from rapid increases in technology over the past several decades as well as the major shifts in management practices through re-engineering, downsizing, and rightsizing.

Strategic alignment allows such proactivity to occur. Before TQM, businesses had business goals, but the training office did not consistently connect their courses, programs, and learning initiatives around those goals specifically (Watkins, 1995). Training was typically reactive to noticed problems with limited resources to prepare for upcoming changes. This approach was effective and efficient before such rapid advances in technology and the opening of global markets demanded quicker responses to noticed workplace problems and eventually led to a need for anticipation and preparation for potential problems and changes.

Being proactive does not mean that the corporate university no longer responds to noticed problems. The corporate university has expanded the responsibilities and approach of the employee development office, partly due to changing management practices, advances in technology, and widening markets. The corporate university thus has the ability to react to a workplace problem. The additional freedom to prepare employees for upcoming change though, allows the corporate university to empower employees to anticipate and handle the change before and as it happens. Corporate universities need to be aware that being proactive does not mean neglecting current problems. It should, and usually does, have the power to help business units recognize and change existing problems.

Partnership

The cornerstone of the corporate university is partnership. Because the corporate university centralizes learning to the entire organization and encourages active and consistent participation from all employees, it relies heavily on creating and maintaining partnerships within the organization (i.e. labor/management) and outside the organization (i.e. higher education, customers, etc.). The overall purpose of partnership is to generate a spirit of collaboration in the corporate university.

Internally, the corporate university is chartered to work with the business units—in a partnership relationship—in providing training and education that best meet their needs and that realize the company's strategic plan. The partnership means that the corporate university representatives and the business unit managers share the commitment, responsibility, and success in workplace learning. In many cases, they even share the cost as some corporate universities operate on a chargeback system; others work from their own cost centers (Meister, 1997a). Regardless of the payment system employed, the partnership arrangement demands that both parties (the corporate university and the business unit) collaborate to solve the existing problem or to make the vision happen. They become stakeholders in the process and the outcome. Other internal partnerships include labor/management collaborations that ensure employee involvement, and space sharing arrangements.

External partnerships are becoming increasingly popular among corporate universities, as well. More than 40% of the known corporate universities throughout the United States have partnership arrangements with traditional colleges and/or universities. This statistic emphasizes the growing trend and need for transportable credentials and also notes the payback for employees. Their participation in corporate university learning activities translates not only into corporate growth and continued employment but also into certificates or degrees. Of course, the downside of this is that the employee is employable elsewhere which demands even more from the organization to hold on to that knowledgeable and skilled employee.

The nature of partnerships with traditional institutions of higher education is growing out of urgent needs. Employees need credentials and the conceptual knowledge that higher education offers to maintain their employability. Moreover, employers need employees with those credentials and conceptual knowledge in order to remain competitive. Higher education needs the students that businesses can provide as competition among even the best colleges and universities makes meeting enrollment quotas difficult.

While the needs are prevalent on both sides, the desire to partner is enmeshed with perceived problems. Many corporate universities are critical of developing relationships with

colleges and universities because of their perception that traditional education is too slow to meet quickly changing business needs (Peak, 1997). They perceive that traditional education is out of touch with the demands of the workplace; conceptual frameworks and theories are difficult to apply to real-world situations. Moreover, they perceive that higher education does not possess the flexibility to adapt their curricula to the workplace environment. From higher education's standpoint, they are apprehensive about partnering with corporate universities for several reasons. First, most corporate universities are not accredited, but they insist on using the term "university". Educators worry that aligning themselves with an unaccredited body that implies that it has achieved this rank will undermine their own accreditation and academic reputation. Second, they wonder if they can provide the flexibility that corporate universities demand in their programming. Will such partnerships endanger their own accreditation? Third, they worry that the drive to achieve corporate growth is so strong that the employee is lost in the process and used to advance the corporation with little concern for his/her needs as an individual learner.

The concerns, on both sides, are legitimate and well-founded and have hindered successful partnerships. Yet, many corporate universities and traditional colleges have found ways to resolve these concerns and provide avenues for effective and productive partnership arrangements. NYNEX and 23 community colleges in the New York and New England areas have taken partnership to the extreme (Peak, 1997). Through NYNEX University, 23 different community colleges collaborated to develop an Associate in Science curriculum in telecommunications for employees at NYNEX. Most partnerships in corporate universities are not as extensive and encompassing as the NYNEX relationships. However, it is an interesting example of how the hurdles that keep business and higher education from partnering can really be surpassed. The benefits, of course, are overwhelming. Businesses acquire a workforce population with credentials, conceptual knowledge, and critical skills related to their own environments. The employees are provided opportunities to learn knowledge and skills that relate to their jobs and ultimately maintain their employability. The colleges have a voice in the education of the workforce population of adult learners thereby ensuring quality and non-exploitative learning environments.

Long Term

After the detailed discussion of rapid change and the shortened time companies have to prepare their employees for change, long term seems out of context and even paradoxical. However, the corporate university is long term in its attitude toward individual development. While some learning activities may be short, the overall inclination is to provide developmental opportunities throughout an employee's career. This trend captures the essence of adult learning in the workplace. Through the corporate university, the emphasis is on lifelong learning. Again, technological advancement is a key factor in this lifelong approach. Companies know that the labor shortage in technical areas demands a look inward to their own employees with an internal approach to training and re-training, educating and re-educating their workforces. Employees must participate in training initiatives consistently and cyclically in order to keep up with technological advancement.

Through the corporate university approach, training initiatives are competency-based and strategically aligned. This expanded approach allows employees to participate in these short bursts of training over a longer period of time. It is no longer expected that an employee will

participate in only a few training or learning initiatives during the course of one year. Instead, learning takes place over longer periods of time and is cascaded throughout the organization (Meister, 1994). This shift has afforded greater latitude in the time, place, and method of the learning opportunities provided. Learning does not occur strictly in the training classroom but on the production lines, through technology-based or distance-based approaches, and through interactive video. The corporate university is designed to maximize the time spent in training by eliminating traveling times and costs. Learning is brought to the job. The filtering of learning throughout the organization, unbound by location, increases the frequency of learning opportunities which positions training and education as central to the development process within the organization.

To an employee, the long term nature of development within the corporate university framework can be either a blessing or a curse. On the positive side, employees are given opportunities to learn and value learning in their work and personal lives which is in line with Lindeman's (1926) earliest theories about adult learners. The more closely related the learning is to the employee, the more he/she will value the experience. This education is a blessing because it allows employees the chance to learn knowledge, skills, and abilities that will allow them to keep their jobs. Although there are never any guarantees, an employee who can show an individual and team contribution to an organization is in a much better position than one who resists the learning and cannot show his/her own improvements and advancements. On the other hand, this experience is a new dynamic for employees to embrace. In the past, showing new skills or knowledge often meant a promotion and an increase in pay. Today, learning sometimes means maintaining one's current position. In this sense, the long term nature of learning within the corporate university can be seen as a curse, one that perpetuates a feeling of sameness and immobility for the employee. The downside of this experience is a lack of motivation and loyalty. Some corporate universities are counteracting that by-product with job paths and promotional opportunities. Employees are asking themselves if learning is enough or if they should be rewarded for making corporate growth happen by participating in the corporate university.

Management

Making corporate growth happen through a corporate university requires a commitment from the entire organization. While the Chief Knowledge Officer and governing board typically have the final word in policy and curriculum, the corporate university depends on the active participation of the employees in meeting the goal of corporate growth. Support and commitment from management—senior and mid-level—is necessary to promote the idea of the corporate university and garner support from the employees. Management of the corporate university is usually an internal function closely connected with the human resources office. Outsourcing the management process entirely is rare.

Whether the management is internal or contracted, the need to operate as a business is vital to a corporate university's performance. In this role, the corporate university should develop a marketing plan, create evaluation measurements, understand the current and future needs of its customers, and develop systems thinking skills (Meister, 1997a). Evaluation appears to be the most neglected area in the literature of corporate university management. Measuring a return on a human capital investment is difficult to do in terms of dollars which most business units are required to report. Indeed, this area is one that demands attention as the corporate university

takes a more active role in defining the future of an organization. Measuring the return on the investment or evaluating the effectiveness of the corporate university undoubtedly will become increasingly important as the programs mature.

These evaluations will become necessary due to the financial responsibility that the corporate university bears. A corporate university requires funding. The size of the budget depends on the size of the organization and the extent to which they provide learning opportunities to all employee levels. On average, 2.2% of an organization's payroll is committed to the management of the corporate university (Meister, 1997a). The corporate university typically operates as a business unit itself as it receives a funding allocation. Increasingly popular practices involve charging back to the business units throughout the organization. Sharing the funding encourages business units to share the responsibility for providing appropriate and timely learning opportunities. Other corporate universities generate their own funds through sponsoring learning opportunities to customers. Provided that these activities are tied to the overall strategic plan and support corporate growth, serving customers through the corporate university is consistent with the definitions provided and followed.

Individual and Organizational Learning Theories

Meister's (1994) definition foregrounds the need for individual and organizational input in achieving organizational growth but does not overtly suggest the need to consider adult learning and organizational learning theories in achieving that growth. This consideration is left up to the corporation and is the very factor that opens the corporate university to criticism about employee exploitation. Provided that the corporation embraces a marriage of adult learning and organizational learning theories, the possibility of exploiting the employees for corporate growth is diminished.

Synthesizing individual learning and organizational learning relies on the company's ability to harmonize adult learning theory and corporate growth. Senge's theories about the learning organization provide the bridge between individual and organizational learning. He advocates that building shared vision, surfacing and testing mental models, and systems thinking will help leaders and employees become contributors to a learning organization (1990). Senge encourages leaders to work with, not against or at the expense of, the employees who can lead the organization to increased competitiveness. The corporate university is an ideal tool for generating the collective vision for the future, understanding the various mental models at work, and thinking about the "big picture" because it is connected to strategic planning.

Theories of adult learning and organizational learning are closely connected as corporate growth is really a by-product of individual development. According to Senge (1990), Marsick and Neaman (1996), Watkins (1996), Bierema (1996), and Swanson and Arnold (1996), organizational learning, which leads to corporate growth, is achieved through individual development. While this theory is central to the corporate university, it assumes that the employees want to learn and participate in the corporate university itself. The danger in this assumption is that unless the employees place some value on the learning, they may not choose to participate thereby jeopardizing the goals of the corporate university.

Generating that value is possible provided that the organization incorporates an andragogical framework to the corporate university. Undergirding the corporate university with theories of adult learning can ensure that the employees are not forced into undesired learning

situations and that they recognize the value of the learning provided. Malcolm Knowles outlines the general assumptions about adult learners:

Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy....Adults' orientation to learning is life-centered....Experience is the richest resource for adults' learning....Adults have a deep need to be self-directing....Individual differences among people increase with age. (1990, p. 31)

Here, Knowles paraphrases the original work of Lindeman (1926) and foregrounds the characteristics that make adult learners unique and that encourage them to value learning. Capitalizing on these characteristics creates an environment where adults can learn best and thereby make that organizational learning occur. The corporate university must consider these assumptions if it hopes to attract a population of learners and if it hopes to generate a learning atmosphere with the best possible results for the learners and the organization. None of the literature about corporate universities mentions andragogy or theories of adult learning. This appears to be a shortcoming in the development and implementation of corporate universities. While these theories may be adopted and considered by individual programs, an andragogical framework should be considered in the development of any corporate university.

However, the learners' choices are violated through mandatory elements of the corporate university. Some activities in corporate universities are mandatory. An example is the Orientation to the Disney philosophy class (Densford, 1996). The mandatory nature of this course violates the adult learner's need to be self-directing (Pratt, 1993). They have no choice in participating in the learning nor do they have a choice in the content to be learned. Mandatory education, however, does not necessarily indicate a learning experience without value. Nolan, Goodstein, and Pfeiffer (1993) and their ideas about the learning organization provide some insight into dealing with mandatory learning experiences. They rationalize that a "learning organization emerges when the members become genuinely excited about the process of learning, because learning begets learning" (p. 98). They argue that even the most unrelated curriculum can promote on-the-job learning provided that the learner place some value on the learning process. Thus, the key appears to be finding the value in mandatory or prescribed learning activities. Showing how these activities relate to the learners' life plans or how they will help them perform their own jobs more efficiently satisfies the value component in the mandatory elements of the corporate university.

Connecting the corporate university with these theories of individual and organizational learning is a convenient way to rationalize the legitimacy of the corporate university. Interestingly, none of the literature foregrounds any individual adult learning theories. No matter how strong the corporate growth force behind the corporate university is, adult learning theories cannot be ignored. Without the employees who comprise the corporate, by extension, the corporation itself, achieving growth becomes mute. Organizations must consider how important motivated, dedicated employees are in achieving organizational goals. In the corporate university, it can never be simply an "either/or" question. The corporate university must consider the individual and the organization.

While the available literature about corporate universities does not specifically address theories of andragogy or even organizational learning beyond that of Senge (1990), it is clear that the corporate university by definition relies on these concepts. The implementation of all the

purpose, the components, the management, and the funding are defined by the organization itself. They shape and redefine the categories to work within their own corporate culture and climate in establishing a corporate university that will achieve the organizational performance that is inherent to its purpose. It follows that the appropriate theories should be likewise determined by the organization. In this way, the corporate university definition proposed over the past few years has convincingly captured the essence of the corporate university.

However, the components could easily incorporate a category on learning theories to ensure the corporate university's consideration of these concepts. This one area of deficiency could potentially dispel some of the misgivings about the corporate university approach. Foregrounding these areas in the definitions and descriptions may reduce the criticism and promote better understanding of this innovative learning initiative. While criticism is beneficial in pinpointing the areas for improvement and refinement, such arguments have, in the corporate university case, precluded partnerships and collaboration. Critics should understand the nature of the corporate university and provide informed criticism. Developers and managers of corporate universities must be willing to hear and respond to the criticism in improving the image, effectiveness, and soundness of the corporate university as a vehicle for workplace learning. Despite the criticism, the corporate university appears to be a sound model for workplace learning with the potential to centralize learning in organizational performance.

The characteristics highlighted in this chapter are found in most corporate university examples. The way in which these elements are defined and implemented depends largely on the overall purpose of the corporate university itself. Whether the program is adopted to elicit or manage change, it typically incorporates a strategically aligned, integrated, long term, and proactive approach founded on and maintained by partnerships. Some programs place greater emphasis on one element than another which has led to the variety among corporate university examples today. This freedom is an enlightening characteristic that allows for choice and flexibility in creating and managing a corporate university. Perhaps this variety is the result of limited literature and models that deal with corporate university development and management. Regardless of the reason, the sheer number of emerging programs calls for a model to facilitate the development process. In developing a model for corporate university planners, the construct must provide for the freedom of degree but still capture the fundamental essence of the corporate university.

Chapter 3: A CORPORATE UNIVERSITY MODEL

Centralizing learning in organizational performance through the corporate university approach has generated genuine interest stifled by equally valid confusion among human resource developers, corporate managers, and educators. While the conceptualization provided in chapter 2 offers a basic definition of the critical components of a corporate university, it also asserts that the implementation of the components varies from company to company. This variety makes the corporate university a flexible and adaptable vehicle but also confounds its application. No two corporate universities are alike despite the consistencies in the basic components. This complexity has hindered the development of some corporate universities and has emphasized the need for a model for program development and management.

Until the mid-1990's, very little literature existed about corporate universities. Thanks to the *Corporate University Review*, a training magazine devoted to corporate university approaches, and Quality Dynamics, a New York based corporate university consulting firm, this trend is changing. Increasing numbers of articles and books are emerging that explain and support the corporate university approach to workplace learning. These resources are helping new corporate universities discover the intricacies of the approach including not only its strengths but also its weaknesses.

Because of the limitations in the literature, corporate universities largely developed through best-practice sharing. As the Walt Disney Company and Motorola, Inc. maintained competitiveness and business security through their applications of the corporate university, other companies outside the entertainment and telecommunications industries began to look to these leaders in designing programs for their own companies. While modeling existing programs is a collaborative solution to the lack of literature about corporate universities, following another company's lead has its drawbacks. Corporate culture and climate vary and affect the implementation of the corporate university. In other words, one company's successful approach may be another's failure. Collaborating is also limited in that outsiders are typically restricted to non-proprietary information. Companies are reluctant to share their most successful innovations for fear that their competitors may capitalize on their own ingenuity.

In responding to the limitations of the literature and best practice sharing, a company interested in developing a corporate university may turn to existing adult education program planning models, both linear and interactive. In the linear models (Tyler, 1949; Houle, 1972; Knowles, 1980; and Laird, 1985), sequential steps dominate the program planning process. These steps typically include assessing needs, establishing priorities, identifying objectives, allocating resources, and selecting teaching methods, evaluating results, and determining effectiveness (Boone, 1985). Other models proposed by Murk and Wells (1988), Sork and Caffarella (1989), Cervero and Wilson (1991), and Caffarella (1994) emphasize the interaction as opposed to the sequence of the elements. The corporate university aligns itself more closely with the interactive models that allow flexibility in the process. While the components in developing a corporate university are independent, they are likewise connected to each other. The interactive models provide corporate university developers freedom to focus on the components that demand more attention according to their corporate cultures and climates.

Although the interactive models of program planning support the dynamic interplay of the components in the corporate university approach, even these models do not capture the essence of the corporate university in program planning. Corporate universities are not simply programs

or places but processes. That process orientation demands a different kind of model that relies on the theories of the interactive models but considers partnerships as central, defining elements. Partnership plays a role in all the components—assessment, alignment, development, implementation, and evaluation—involved in developing a corporate university. Therefore, partnership is a cornerstone in corporate university development. In considering a model for creating a corporate university, assessing needs, aligning the purpose with the organization’s strategic plan, developing an integrated curriculum, implementing a proactive program, and evaluating the program and the process all integrate with each other and rely on the concept of partnership. The following model (see figure 1) shows the elements that should be considered in developing and maintaining a corporate university.

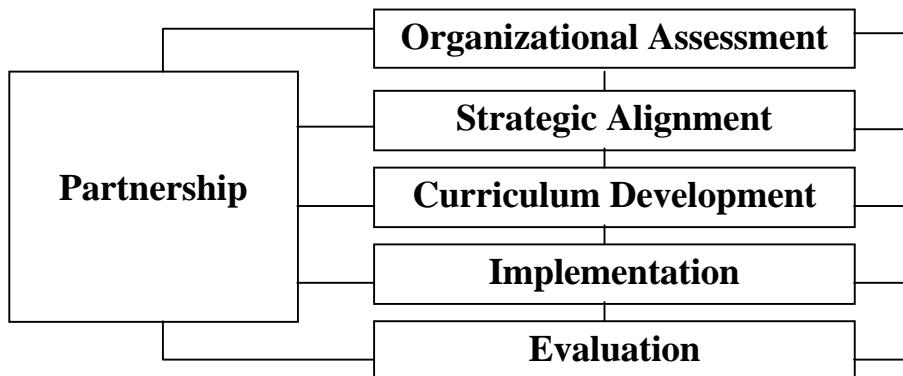


Figure 1: Toward A Model for Corporate University Development

This emerging model aligns itself more closely with the interactive program planning models and their flexible applications than the linear models. In this sense, the corporate university model presented here is not a sequential process. The components are non-linear. The order is determined by the corporate university planners. This order depends on the corporate culture and climate and may change at any time during the setup or maintenance of the corporate university. The elements are likewise not isolated; they frequently overlap. This adaptability ensures the model’s application to a variety of industries throughout Corporate America and exhibits the same changing nature of the corporate university itself.

Partnership

Despite all this flexibility, the model does rely on one constant that permeates the entire development and management process of the corporate university: partnership. As described in chapter 2, partnership is the cornerstone of the corporate university. Partnerships, both internal and external, evoke systems thinking and learning that cascade throughout an organization in attaining corporate performance. Partners can be found internally and externally and are crucial to the development of the corporate university and the recruitment of potential participants. This element of the model deals with the corporate university’s consideration of internal and external

partners that can actively contribute to the development and maintenance of the corporate university. The goal of both internal and external partnerships is to tap into the most useful resources in planning and maintaining such a program.

Establishing and maintaining internal partnerships can be difficult depending on the corporation's attitude toward collaboration. Resistance can be encountered in any environment especially one that is unionized. Ensuring that top management actively and publicly endorses the corporate university approach is a start in establishing partnerships and working through any resistance. Partnering, however, must be energized beyond top management. Mid-level management and employee input should be solicited and considered. If unions exist, representation from labor organizations should also be included. The advisory board highlighted in chapter 2 is one starting point in establishing partnerships with mid-level managers, employees, and unions. It ensures initial and continual dialogue and maintains employee support for the corporate university. On a smaller scale, partnerships can also take the form of internal agreements to capture existing resources to share spaces, to promote the organizational learning concept, and to innovate the learning process. Internal partnership ensures that the "voice" of the organization is heard.

Outside the organization, the corporate university provides an innovative way for corporations and higher education to do business. Colleges and universities have been preparing students for the workplace for centuries, and the corporate university is an effective vehicle for continuing and expanding that role. Both credit and non-credit courses and other learning interventions can be developed and integrated into the corporate university. These institutions of higher education, especially those chartered to reach adult learners, frequently incorporate alternative credit options such as the College Level Placement Examination (CLEP), portfolio development, and distance learning. This attitude toward credit offers the flexibility that many companies seek in providing innovative and self-directed learning that supports the goals of the organization.

External partnerships are not restricted to higher education. Many corporate universities provide programs and learning opportunities by partnering with vendors, consulting firms, and training organizations. These entities become partners because their individual learning initiatives must relate to each other in the inter-related and integrated curriculum promoted by the corporate university. They must collaborate with each other to ensure that integration, and they must work with internal corporate university representatives to show how their programs match the organizational mission.

The nature of internal and external partnerships is collaborative. Partnership means sharing common goals and responsibilities. Meister (1997b) asserts that the best arrangements with external partners are those that foster a customer/provider relationship where the vendor, consultant, or college is the provider and the corporation is the client. The company appears to hold more power in this kind of relationship. In this perspective, partnership appears to be contradictory or, at least, unequal. Even in these scenarios, however, the partnership relationship holds true albeit one with an imbalance of power. Ultimately, the company is the source of funds; therefore, it follows that the company's desires carry greater weight than those of the external partners.

The partnership concept makes the corporate university model unique from many program planning models, both linear and interactive. Moreover, the partnership component is the glue that binds the remaining pieces together. Partnership is the one component that filters throughout

the rest of the model in this collaborative and all-encompassing approach to program planning and management. With the partnership concept firmly grounded in the development of a corporate university, five other components are equally important considerations: organizational assessment, strategic alignment, curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation.

Organizational Assessment

Organizational Assessment is a multi-pronged process for identifying and assessing the needs of the organization as a whole through the employees as groups and individuals. The concept follows the theories of Marsick and Neaman (1996), Bierema (1996), Swanson and Arnold (1996), and Watkins (1996) who all assert that organizational learning is achieved through individual development. This theory provides a base for assessing the organization's needs by soliciting input from the employees themselves. In this stage, input and feedback should be collected and analyzed from employees as representatives of the organization as a whole. This component of the model takes those individual needs a step further, however. While the needs of the individuals are identified, this stage also seeks to uncover the company's vision for the future. Thus, the Organizational Assessment deals with two critical layers in an organization: the employees and their needs and wants as well as the organization's needs and wants in achieving its plan for the future.

In dealing with these two layers, surveys and interviews are effective methods for identifying individual needs and wants which can include everything from class start times to preferred interventions to desired content areas. These techniques may also identify potential barriers to the corporate university, such as lack of interest in certain areas, outdated equipment, little management support, etc. An effective follow-up to surveys and interviews is the focus group. Gathering subject matter experts from various offices and/or departments opens a dialogue among employees who may have had little opportunity to share experiences and challenges previously. A focus group provides a non-threatening, collaborative atmosphere for key players and stakeholders to identify potential program areas.

While these suggested methods address the individual needs and wants, a job task analysis is one way to address some organizational needs. In this phase of data collection, the goal is to identify the skills or competencies employees need to qualify for promotion within all organizational departments or for jobs of the future. The job task analysis clarifies the current hiring skill and competence levels but identifies the skills and competencies employees will need to develop in order to remain competitive. Essentially, the purpose behind the job task analysis is to analyze the current state of affairs and anticipate the needs in filling future jobs.

These two layers—individual and organizational—uncover the root of the corporate culture and climate in identifying the major learning needs or content areas and organizational strengths and weaknesses. This stage demands a look into the gap between the current and future conditions. It is this gap that the corporate university, through various learning interventions, will fill. The suggested techniques outlined in this section can be supplemented or replaced with methods aligned more closely with the organization's specific climate and culture. In addition to analyzing these content areas for the corporate university, the Organizational Assessment also provides for identifying internal partners that can assist in the planning, development, and implementation processes. While promotion is not a priority during this stage, the informational

awareness that circulates simply by interviewing, grouping, and surveying is a convenient and beneficial by-product of Organizational Assessment.

Strategic Alignment

This stage of the corporate university model works closely with the Organizational Assessment. Frequently, these two stages are conducted simultaneously. As the gap between the needs of the organization and the employees is identified, the corporate university should begin to align itself around some basic organizational principles. The gap itself becomes the foundation for the corporate university's mission. The goal in this step is to consider the needs of the individual and the company's vision for the future and merge these two areas into an effective mission for the corporate university. The theories behind this step are largely based on concepts of organization development. Beckhard (1969), Bennis (1969), Burke (1982), McLagan (1989) and Rothwell et al. (1995), for example, explain the need to consider and focus on the organization's strategic plan in making and maintaining change. The corporate university and its mission must be closely connected to and intertwined with the corporation's larger plans in initiating and maintaining effective business practices.

The mission that evolves from the gap analysis, however, must also consider the corporation's overall strategic plan. Showing that the corporate university contributes to the larger strategic plan ties education, training, and development to corporate success. This phase synthesizes the results of the data analysis from the Organizational Assessment with the organization's mission or plan for the future. The synthesis of these two sources of information becomes the mission for the corporate university. This step organizes the corporate university around forward-thinking goals for the future while considering the current state of the corporation.

Strategic alignment depends largely on the company's openness in sharing the vision for the future. This openness is sometimes complicated if the corporation (i.e. upper management) is unwilling to share the company's plans. While secretive management practices are largely outdated and often counterproductive to employee buy-in and trust, there are instances when revealing all the nuances of the corporate plan is impossible. Situations that exemplify this point are reductions in force and large mergers or take-overs. In such cases, these conditions should be considered in the strategic plan of the company, but revealing the intentions to the population at large, at least in the beginning, may jeopardize the effectiveness of those efforts. These situations can likewise hinder the effectiveness of the corporate university. The secrecy convolutes the mission of the corporate university itself which makes building legitimacy difficult.

Curriculum Development

Provided that the corporation supports mostly open management practices, defining the curriculum of the corporate university synthesizes the gap analysis and the strategic plan. In this phase, data collected in the Organizational Assessment, the Strategic Alignment, and the Partnership components must converge on an integrated, structured curriculum that meets employee and organizational needs. Again, the model allows for developing curriculum simultaneous to the Organizational Assessment and Strategic Alignment. The sequence is dictated by the corporation. The purpose in this stage is to strategically determine the "best fit"

programming or common ground without compromising the requirements of any stakeholders. Finding this common ground ensures that the needs of the individual, the needs of the organization, and the needs of the partners are met to the satisfaction of all.

Achieving this synthesis requires careful attention to the results of the previous stages. In many cases, compromise drives the discovery of the common ground. This dynamic results from the fact that there are three separate stakeholders in this process: the employees, the organization, and the partners. Each stakeholder has different and specific requirements as determined by the previous phases of this model. In many cases, those requirements cannot be compromised due to corporate educational regulations and/or practices, budget constraints, and/or academic accreditation standards, to name only a few.

Tailoring curriculum is one way to ensure that the needs of each stakeholder are met. An academic institution has the ability to design courses—both for credit and not for credit—to meet the customer's need. This course development does not compromise academic integrity, but it does require collaborative efforts between the academic institution and the corporate sponsor. For instance, at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Northern Virginia Community College met with subject matter experts (i.e. patent attorneys, trademark attorneys, paralegal specialists, and employee development specialists) to design an accredited course in Intellectual Property in 1994. The college presented the course to their board and the American Bar Association and gained the approval and accreditation from both. The course is now an integral part of the core curriculum at PTO University.

Of course, tailoring does not always mean the design of new courses. Existing courses can often be modified to meet the needs of the organization and the learners' individual needs. Suggestions for this type of tailoring include requiring work-related projects, solving existing organizational problems, and including internal documents as required course readings. Adjusting content in this manner does not water down the curriculum; instead, it gives the course a "real world" flair which makes it meaningful to both the organization and the learners.

Tailoring can apply to both credit and non-credit courses. The need for either or both opportunities depends again on the results of the previous assessments. This model has the flexibility to include both. Internal, non-credit certificates can be developed to prepare employees for jobs with no credit education requirements or to educate the workforce on the company's core values and competencies. Or, they can be used as prerequisites to credited certificate and/or degree programs. Building certificate programs that lead to degrees is a way to milestone recognition markers for employees engaged in long-term programs through the corporate university. The point is that the programs, courses, and learning opportunities reflect the needs of the organization.

In tailoring the curriculum and defining the content areas to be covered, the corporate university must also consider relative theories of organization development and adult learning. As mentioned in chapter 2, these related theories are neglected in the literature and often overlooked in corporate university development. While not all programs may align themselves with the theorists mentioned in this paper, all corporate universities should explore and consider the educational and managerial theories on which they choose to build their program. Choosing theories provides a base for the program which serves as a philosophical framework for all aspects of the corporate university.

Another area that should be addressed during Curriculum Development but is sometimes overlooked is employee readiness. Creating a program in C++ Programming will not be a popular

course to employees that do not even know how to turn on a computer. Assessing the basic skill levels can determine the starting point for the corporate university. Multi-level programming is the most common approach to meet the various skill levels. Building prerequisites into more advanced curricula ensures that no employee embarks on an educational journey for which he/she is underprepared.

The methods employed in delivering the curriculum again depend on the organization. Distance learning, computer-based learning, on-the-job training, traditional classrooms, mentoring, coaching, and workshops are just a few examples of delivery methods. Like the curriculum itself, these methods depend on the nature of the organization, its resources, its vision, and its employees. At Southern Company's corporate university, satellite learning is incorporated to provide consistent training for employees in various regional offices. Instruction is delivered from a central training office via satellite to regional office locations where special downlink sites have been established to allow interactivity between the learners and the instructor. While distance learning is not necessarily needed in corporations without regional offices, it is an example of how one company has experimented with delivery method in incorporating technology with instruction.

Program Implementation

Program Implementation works in conjunction with the Curriculum Development stage. This phase considers the resources necessary to create a learning environment in the workplace. While traditional classrooms with tables, chairs, VCR's, flip charts, and overhead projectors are all vital components for programs that incorporate classroom instruction, the corporate university does not necessarily demand a physical campus as some articles (Ginsburg, 1997) imply. The corporate university may, in fact, take on a virtual campus or a collective thought process about organizational learning and lifelong learning. The purpose in the implementation stage is to generate that learning atmosphere sparked with corporate energies.

One of the major considerations during implementation is promotion. While knowledge of and interest in the corporate university may be achieved piecemeal during the stages already described, gaining buy-in from the organization and its employees is a primary activity during implementation. The methods of promotion depend on the resources available and on the nature of the organization. Open houses, staff meeting briefings, electronic messages, and all-employee meetings are various ways to project the mission of the corporate university, its purpose, its structure, and its relationship to the organization. Like the other three components described, the implementation phase intermingles throughout the program development process. The promotion of the corporate university is an on-going process that can occur during the Organizational Assessment, Strategic Alignment, and/or Curriculum Development stages. The time frame for implementation is variable depending on how quickly the organization wants to promote the idea and on how much funding has been set-aside for promotion.

Counseling and advising are crucial to individual success. Each employee needs to determine the program or curriculum that best suits his/her internal career options *and* his/her academic aspirations. Counseling services are also necessary to help the learner balance a new component to his/her life plan. Balancing work, family, and community commitments already demand an adult's time and attention. With the addition of education or training, the employee must learn to reorganize his/her time to allow for this new challenge. While counseling and

advising can meet these needs on an individual level, other student services options also provide avenues for learning how to balance the learner's life plan. Tutoring and mentoring help the learner improve some rusty skills, deal with conflicting commitments, and structure quiet study time. The corporate university should provide opportunities like these to help the learner balance an already demanding schedule.

On-site administrative services for admission, registration, payment, and student records are other considerations in the Program Implementation phase. The corporate university must consider how to maintain records for the organization, when and if those records would be released to management, and how those records secure jobs or provide career options for participating employees. Partnerships with external providers like colleges and universities complicate the records management process. Confidentiality of student grades and progress are required under the Privacy Act of 1974. Unless employee permission is granted to release that information, even if the company is funding his/her learning, privacy must be maintained. If that permission is granted, transferring records from the on-site location to the university may be done on-line or through more traditional paper methods. In either case, this administrative concern should not be a roadblock to learning. The organization and the external partners must find procedures that ensure records confidentiality and integrity.

Funding is another area to be addressed during the implementation phase. This piece is one that arguably should occur early in the model. Again, however, corporate culture dictates its sequence. For some organizations, budgets must be approved before any other plans are initiated or even explored. For others, budget issues are discussed only after the concept has been examined and presented as a viable option for organizational development. Regardless of when it is considered, a budget must be detailed with funds secured before committing to the employees that any learning opportunities through a corporate university will be available.

The organization itself is ultimately responsible for funding these on-site educational services with the intention that their investment will be returned through productivity. How the organization chooses to provide that funding internally depends on the organization's budgetary processes. Options include employee reimbursement, chargeback to departments, and centralized funding.

Evaluation

Because the corporate university is really a vehicle for developing individuals and maximizing organizational performance, the evaluation of the program must address both the individual and the organization. The point at which evaluation occurs in the development process is a variable determined by the organization. This means that formative (conducted during the learning activity), summative (conducted immediately after the completion of the learning activity), and longitudinal (conducted at a delayed time after the completion of the learning activity) evaluations can be employed at the discretion of the corporation. Equally important to evaluating the effectiveness of the learning activities, the Evaluation stage also addresses the effectiveness of the process itself. The purpose of the Evaluation stage, then, is to ensure that the learning activities meet the organizational and individual needs, improve the overall effectiveness of the organization, and self-consciously address the effectiveness of the program planning process itself.

Kirkpatrick (1959a, 1959b, 1960a, and 1960b) provides a hierarchy of evaluation that lends itself to the corporate university approach to workplace learning. The hierarchy addresses four levels of evaluation: reaction, learning, behavior, and organizational impact. The first two levels examine the impact of the learning activity on the individual in terms of his/her satisfaction with the learning and how well he/she mastered the content. The other two levels address the ability of the learner to apply the knowledge to his/her job and how that application has improved the effectiveness of the organization.

Reaching the fourth level, organizational impact, is often neglected in training arenas. As mentioned in the Program Implementation section, the organization has a clear goal in supporting such a costly venture in employee development: return on investment. Measuring the return is difficult because the corporate university does not have specific stopping points. Instead, the corporate university provides an environment where employees are engaged in continuous learning of a critical and comprehensive nature. The goal is to develop employees who are better prepared and more inclined to contribute to change in the workplace. Placing a dollar amount on that kind of learning is possible but perhaps not a useful measure in determining organizational effectiveness. A better approach might be to capitalize on the strategic alignment of the corporate university in showing how the program has addressed the strategic plan and contributed to advances in production, increases in inventions, reductions in errors, etc. Using the strategic plan as a map, the Evaluation should reflect milestones and successes.

On a regular, Evaluation should involve grade and/or progress reports, course evaluations, assessments, and registration and/or participation records. Because the curriculum of the corporate university has been connected to the future of the organization, reporting the number of employees who have completed programs and achieved new jobs or promotions internally is also an important measure in these semester evaluations.

Collecting this data into an annual Cost Benefit Analysis is one way of showing how the corporate university is achieving its own missions and goals. A Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) is one comprehensive way to evaluate and measure the corporate university's success. In a CBA, all four levels of evaluation should be assessed from participant satisfaction to influence on production. Ultimately, the CBA measures the cost of the program against the outcomes. While the inclination to attach a dollar amount to the benefits may be demanded by upper management, the more qualitative outcomes should be reported as well as the financial rewards. The CBA is an extensive evaluation report and will only be useful with at least a year's worth of data perhaps longer depending on the size of the organization. It can include or be supplemented by customer service surveys, automation analyses, or production reports depending on the nature of the organization. Of course, these last suggestions will need comparison reports from the pre-corporate university period.

Proving that the corporate university alone has improved organizational effectiveness is difficult if not impossible and arguably a far-fetched notion. Many other factors, including new technology, increased automation, and streamlined processing, contribute on various levels to that same goal. The goal of Evaluation is to uncover the corporate university's piece in the overall success of the organization. This niche can be determined by contemplating where the organization would be if the corporate university had not been implemented. Uncovering the consequences of eliminating the program can be just as effective as revealing the successes.

Discussion

The corporate university model is a tool that encourages an interplay of parts. Strategic Alignment can blend into Curriculum Development while Evaluation can find a place in all stages. A corporation's culture or tradition of developing workforce learning programs may dictate a specific order. The sequence in which these components were explained does not imply a rigid structure. The pieces can be moved, manipulated, and modified to meet any organizational trends in program planning. This flexibility in sequence makes the model applicable to developing new corporate universities and maintaining existing programs. A corporate university is not a stagnant concept but a dynamic process that must change as the organization progresses. This circumstance demands consideration of all the building blocks throughout the duration of the corporate university in understanding the current state of affairs and anticipating the future.

The flexibility of the model with its loose structure seemingly confounds the need for a model at all. If the development process is so unstructured, is a model helpful or even necessary? The fact that the corporate culture plays such an influential role in the development only strengthens this argument against a guiding model. However, a model is necessary to help traditional educators conceptualize the corporate university and assist corporations in building programs. Corporate culture and climate affect the application of any program planning model and do not disturb the soundness of the stages and phases that should be considered in program development. This corporate university model relies on this premise, as well. This model moreover emphasizes the need to consider adult learning theories, an area that many adult educators have pinpointed as a deficiency in the corporate university approach. In this way, the model compensates for a recognized need while confirming the process that many corporate university developers have intuitively followed.

While a field test of this model is beyond the scope of this conceptual thesis, several representatives from Corporate America and higher education have reviewed the model for its soundness. L. S. Rainis (personal communication, March 30, 1998), P. Murk (personal communication, April 4, 1998), and L. Densford (personal communication, February 27, 1998), all confirm the need for a model and indicate that this model has potential in the adult education and human resource development arenas. Murk and Rainis both emphasized that the interactive approach closely relates with actual program development practices. Densford commented on the two pieces that seem to distinguish the corporate university approach from other program planning models: partnership and strategic alignment. Overall, there seems to be support from both the corporate and academic communities for the need for a corporate university program planning model. There is no doubt that the number of corporate universities will continue to climb over the next several years. The model is intended to service the population of developing corporate universities in avoiding roadblocks to program success and to ensure that the needs of the learners are not neglected nor ignored in the process.

Thus, the model developed and presented in this section relies on the historical and conceptual perspectives provided in the previous two chapters. The model links business representatives, human resource development practitioners, and higher education professionals. Each of these three arenas represents stakeholding parties in the corporate university movement. As business assumes a more involved role in adult education, human resource developers and traditional educators must guide Corporate American to ensure sound, appropriate, and non-exploitative programs. The corporate university certainly permeates all three professions; the

model serves as common ground where the concerns and emphases of each are considered collaboratively and where the needs of the learners are equal to the needs of the organization.

Chapter 4: THE FUTURE OF THE CORPORATE UNIVERSITY

As corporate America moves into the 21st century, the ability to adapt to change and keep up with technological advancement is becoming increasingly necessary for corporate competitiveness. Creating a learning organization that maximizes its adaptability maintains and reinforces an organization's competitive edge. Becoming a learning organization requires commitment toward growth, both individual and organizational, at all internal levels. The corporate university powerfully intertwines itself with corporate vision and provides avenues for employees to become learners within their places of work while contributing to the corporation's competitive edge.

Benefits

The accomplishments of the corporate university currently are tremendous. Its power to generate the learning organization has kept many companies alive in an increasingly competitive market, in the throes of rapid technological advancement, and in the midst of major labor shortages in technical areas. The corporate accomplishments are joined by the corporate university's ability to promote lifelong learning. Technology certainly fuels the need to learn continuously. Competition in the workplace only strengthens that need. Adult educators have recognized the need, the potential, and even the internal desire for lifelong learning. Through corporate universities, many companies are realizing the need to promote lifelong learning in their employees and are reaping corporate benefits.

Finding the way to reach the adult population, in making programs desirable, accessible, and affordable, has been a challenge for all types of adult learning organizations including institutions of higher education. The corporate university has provided the access that many adult educators have been seeking. By eliminating the barriers that many adults experience when they consider a return to an organized and formal learning environment, the corporate university has encouraged individual commitments to learning for personal and corporate growth.

Perhaps the most powerful accomplishment is the fact that the corporate university has encouraged higher education and business to rethink their existing relationships. The atmosphere for partnership between these two groups is creating a new way of thinking about education. The corporate university is directing the future of higher education. As increasing numbers of adults return to formal education, the corporate university is offering an organized and structured way to make higher education opportunities available and accessible to the adult population in the workplace.

In rethinking the relationship, all three stakeholders—the employees, the organization, and the university—benefit. The employees have opportunities for convenient educational programs that translate into better jobs in their places of work with the added bonus of academic credentials. The organization develops a population of better educated employees that are prepared to contribute to corporate growth and adapt to change. The university reaches a group of learners that increases their overall enrollment and revenue. All stakeholders win.

Complexities

The three-pronged partnership arrangements, however, bring additional complexities to the workplace education movement. While the benefits are rewarding to all three sets of stakeholders, the definitions of business and education are converging on similar missions. Both environments are seeking to educate adults. These similar purposes are confusing the previously established lines between business and education. Corporate America is taking a central role in the education of adults. Higher education is being asked to think like a business in these kinds of relationships. The corporate university is encouraging mutually beneficial relationships between Corporate America and higher education. Business has left the very clear message that without the cooperation of higher education, Corporate America will educate their employees on their own, thereby undermining higher education's role in educating the population at large.

Adding to the complexity is the difference in scope. Businesses seek only to educate their current workforces or those individuals that will join their workforces in the future (i.e. school to work programs). Colleges and universities, on the other hand, work to educate society at large. In this sense, Corporate America has a narrower scope than higher education. While each experience a right and responsibility in educating their respective populations, higher education must consider that narrowing their own scope, as they are sometimes asked to do, for one business to meet their needs may have repercussions with accrediting boards and other learners.

It is an ethical question whether higher education should change some its standards in meeting the needs of the currently employed population of adult learners. And, it is a question that all institutions of learning must consider in deciding whether the corporate university is an appropriate vehicle for reaching the employed population of adult learners. The corporate university has grown into an unequal partnership arrangement between business and education. Corporate America controls the funding and the access to the adult learners. Their influence in content and method have overwhelmed the direction provided by higher education. This situation is dangerous in that businesses may abandon relationships with higher education if those institutions cannot provide the objectives that the business desires. Ideally, there should be a level of compromise where neither side is asked to relax their standards. At the moment, business seems to be wielding the most power in the relationship. That power must be balanced.

The balance of power could help educators ensure the greatest personal benefit to the learners themselves. One of the most powerful criticisms of the corporate university is its potential to exploit the adult learner. Because the corporation dictates a prescribed curriculum matched with strategic goals, the employees have little choice in learning the mandated objectives and knowledge. This lack of choice is central to creating the most beneficial learning environment for the adult learner (Pratt, 1993). Ignoring this element jeopardizes the depth of the learning acquired by the employees. While some corporate universities allow choices within an organized framework, most adhere to a rigid curriculum modeled around the company's core values. Of course, those corporate universities that incorporate the employee voice into the program itself have allowed for that element of choice. If corporate universities intend to contribute to the lifelong learning movement, they must consider wider choices within their programs to strengthen the value to the learner.

In addition to these dangers recognized by the academic community, there are additional pitfalls that the corporation recognizes. For instance, very little time and money appear to be invested in proving the worth of the corporate university to the organization itself. Even though

many corporate managers realize that the corporate university has generated increased interest in learning and has kept many companies competitive, the ability to quantify and qualify the corporate university's impact is perhaps the weakest element of existing programs. Evaluation is not a strength of workplace education. For the corporate university to survive in the management environment, it must strengthen its ability to show the company the return on the funds invested in human capital development.

The model presented in this thesis should provide a sound guide for corporate university developers as it addresses the weaknesses described above. A field test of the model would help to prove or disprove its value to the adult learning community (both business and higher education). The model attempts to address the potential dangers in a practical, interactive manner which will help planners anticipate the problem areas and develop sound corporate universities that meet the needs of the corporation, the employees, and the academic community.

Recommendations

From the examination of the corporate university, both historically and conceptually, and the development of the model, several recommendations emerge for future consideration and exploration. The corporate university is unlikely to disappear as it has a firm foundation in Corporate America and a growing interest in higher education. In order for the concept to be useful to and representative of both, the following recommendations are offered:

Field Test

The model presented in this thesis is currently untested. For it to be used as a guide, a carefully constructed field test should be conducted to check its soundness and validity. The results of the test should suggest gaps and/or areas for modifications to improve the model's applicability to corporate university development. Provided that a field test produces positive results, the model should be made available to the corporate university community. With a reliable and valid guide, corporate university developers would have the tools to create and manage ethical and fair programs that meet the needs of the adult learner, the organization, and higher education.

Research

The limited research in the corporate university environment calls for the start of informed investigation into the various applications of the corporate university. Fresina's (1998) examination of the three prototypes is an interesting starting point for future research. Categorizing the existing programs by purpose would certainly help new program developers understand the differences between the prototypes and identify the specific purpose or intent of their own programs. Of course, the prototypes should be confirmed and validated before accepting them as valid indicators. Overall, the reliability of the corporate university approach to adult learning should be examined on an empirical level. Such an investigation should include explorations into the specific results that the corporate university produces to all three stakeholders: individuals, organizations, and education.

Consortium

Since collaboration is a key element in developing a corporate university, this concept could be dispersed throughout the corporate university arena. Establishing a consortium or forum for corporate university planners and developers from both corporate and academic realms would increase the dialogue between these groups and improve the efficiency of the construct. This endeavor would involve identifying the current corporate university programs and extending invitations for their participation in the consortium. Motorola, Inc. already sponsors an annual conference for this purpose; however, this recommendation suggests a consortium with contributing members that meet (either physically or electronically) to share ideas and provide insights. The consortium would provide an avenue for collaboration as well as a source of information for new program developers.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the corporate university is a significant component, one that demands greater emphasis. Measuring the financial return on the human capital investment is a critical factor in developing and managing a corporate university. It is a costly endeavor; ways to measure the return on those costs must be examined and assessed. Because the corporate university is ingratiated into the culture of an organization, isolating the impact of the corporate university alone is difficult. While the current methods and processes for evaluation including Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation and Cost Benefit Analyses provide useful foundations, evaluation methods and techniques specific to the corporate university must be explored.

Accreditation

Partnership between higher education and Corporate America is certainly an innovative way to bring accredited programs to the workplace through the corporate university. This collaboration, however, is not without its problems. The scope and purpose that motivates each partner differs and sometimes violates the other. The issue of corporate university accreditation is one way to avoid the partnership complexities and still provide legitimate learning programs for the American workforce. To date, there is no corporate university accrediting board. This area should be explored as a possible way to add credibility to the corporate university and bring higher education and Corporate America closer together in the workplace learning movement.

Partnership

Partnership is a distinguishing feature of the corporate university. Balancing the power in the partnership relationships, both internal and external, would help the corporate university meet the needs of all stakeholders without violating the interests of any. Currently, the organizations themselves, in many cases exclusively upper management, carry the financial responsibility of the corporate university and therefore hold greater power than the other stakeholders. A more equal distribution of the responsibility and the decision-making power would allow more collaboration and provide sounder partnership relationships.

These recommendations are offered to advance the corporate university movement. The vehicle is potentially a powerful and innovative way to reach a large population of adult learners while dealing with the greater societal concern of labor shortages in technical areas. The suggestions recommended above address ways in which the corporate university movement could be improved. The greatest danger is the possibility of the concept disappearing like so many other past management practices that are outdated almost as quickly as they are introduced. Incorporating learning into organizational effectiveness, however, is not simply a management technique. Instead, organizational learning is an overriding concept that encourages lifelong learning related to the mission and goals of the organization itself.

The fact that the corporate university has attracted the interest of the academic community after its start in business and industry is a positive indicator of the increased collaboration. The strength of the commitment of that academic community is really the trump card in the corporate university's longevity. Without the corroborative component with internal and external (especially higher education) partners, the corporate university is no different from a corporate training office. That partnership component is the piece that will provide great staying power in the life of the corporate university as it provides a tangible and transportable credential to the employee. By no means is the corporate university a finished product. The strides in partnership over the past several years have given the vehicle added credibility and increased exposure with greater dialogue on molding and shaping the model. Despite the exposure, the literature on corporate universities is still limited. No empirical studies have been conducted to date. These deficiencies demand more exploration and research, especially from the academic community. Both business and higher education should carefully and critically consider and explore the corporate university and its potential impact on work and education. Without this partnership element, the corporate university will disappear, and this dynamic tool for reaching the adult learner will be lost.

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Assistant Director - PTO University, Marymont University, 1997 - present.

- Same duties as below.
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Program Assistant Manager - PTO University, Graduate School/USDA, 1995 - 1997.

- Developed new academic programs for after-hours, on-site corporate learning institute at U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.
- Prepared, conducted, and interpreted needs assessment and interest surveys.
- Analyzed and reported enrollment data.
- Prepared and conducted executive briefings.
- Managed special events including Graduation, Faculty Orientations, College Fairs, and Information Sessions.
- Conducted writing seminars.
- Supervised staff of nine employees.
- Contributed to cost benefit analysis reports.
- Oversaw registration and admission processes.
- Assessed course evaluations.
- Wrote promotional materials.
- Prepared and conducted conference presentations.

Program Specialist - PTO University, Graduate School/USDA, 1994 - 1995.

- Coordinated manual and automated registration process for 1000 students.
- Established semester course schedules.
- Assigned classrooms.
- Obtained computer resources.
- Prepared promotional materials including Faculty Handbook and Guidelines Brochures.
- Conducted writing process workshops.
- Conducted and summarized mid-term and end-of-year course evaluations.
- Wrote newsletter articles for Patent and Trademark Office's *Pulse* and Department of Commerce's *Commerce People*.

Communications Assistant, Grace Murphy and Associates, 1993 - 1994.

- Developed client relations program.
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American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, 1997 - present

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