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Organizational Culture, Knowledge Structures, and Relational Messages in Organizational Negotiation: A Systems Approach[1]

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It is no secret that contract negotiation in higher education has proven to be a complex and occasionally problematic process. A quick Google search of "faculty strike" displays 12,600,000 unique news articles, citing the woeful state of collective bargaining in higher education. It has not always been this way, though, especially not for Central Michigan University (CMU). CMU has successfully negotiated with as many as nine unions on campus, without much issue. In fact, the university had never seen impasse result in a strike until 2012. However, the discord resulting from the collective bargaining process between the CMU administration and Faculty Association (FA) became the "most significant causal factor to deteriorating campus relationships" demonstrating the impact collective bargaining can have across an entire university climate, not just in the bargaining room (Moore, 2012, p. 7).

What began as a typical negotiation, quickly escalated into a deleterious climate for the entire community. When the contract expired without being temporarily extended, faculty members were quoted in the student-run newspaper (*CM-Life*) in June calling this negotiation, "…uncharted territory for us." The contract negotiation at CMU began in April 2011 and a new contract was not ratified until January 2012, marking the longest negotiation process for the FA in CMU's history. The FA started organizing and informing members early in November 2010 with their newsletter and Facebook page, while the administration did not begin publically informing until July 2011. In April 2011, the FA newsletter featured information to help members understand the financial state of the university in a direct, but non-controversial manner. However, in the beginning of July 2011, the two parties reached a turning point as they met an impasse in the negotiation room, causing a state mediator to conduct the bargaining sessions. Merely two weeks later, the mediator could not help resolve any issues and a state fact-finder was brought in by the FA and administration to provide recommendations for a contract. By August 2011, the FA newsletter was titled *Crisis Edition,* marking another turning point in

[1] Although we recognize that this article has significant stylistic flaws, as editors we think it beneficial to our readers to see it now, rather than in a possible later edition, due to its combination of articulation of the commonplace (no one is surprised to learn that faculty unions and management characterize, "spin," information to shape the opinion of an external audience) and analysis via tools unused previously in negotiations analysis.

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relations between the faculty and administration. The administration chose not to extend the existing contract while negotiations continued—a norm formed in previous contract negotiations—leaving faculty members vulnerable and panicky at the beginning of a new academic year. Additionally, by not extending the contract while negotiations took place, faculty who had recently been promoted could not receive their added income until after a new contract came into effect, uniting faculty against the administration. By the end of August 2011, the faculty engaged in a work stoppage, cancelling thousands of classes on campus and leading administrators to seek legal advice and a court injunction on the faculty to return to the classroom immediately. Other issues creating conflict between faculty and administration were the creation of a new medical school, misleading public statements regarding funds for an events center, and program prioritization (Moore, 2012).

This study analyzes the negotiation process between the Faculty Association (FA) and CMU. CMU is a Carnegie classified research/doctoral university with nearly 28,000 students and over 1,000 faculty members. The FA is the oldest operating faculty union in the United States and was founded in 1969. In April 2011, the FA began bargaining for a new contract and the negotiation process continued until January 2012. During this ten-month process, negotiations broke down resulting in faculty filing a work stoppage. The state ruled that faculty had to continue working and ordered a state-issued fact- finder to intervene. The conflict between the faculty and administration eventually drew in student participation. Relations between the faculty and administration hit its nadir when CMU's academic senate, comprised mainly of faculty along with some administration and student representatives, passed a "No Confidence" resolution on the university's president and provost; several academic departments followed suit, passing their own resolutions endorsing the actions of the academic senate. University relations were strained because of concerns "emerg[ing] as a result of dysfunctions in campus constituent relationships that occurred during negotiation of the CMU's collective bargaining agreement." CMU hired an outside consultant to aid the university in moving forward with its strategic planning initiative and to help restore the "over-all effectiveness of campus relationships and leadership" (Moore, 2012, p. 2).

These negative repercussions resulting from collective bargaining conflict warrant study to prevent other universities from experiencing similar breakdowns in faculty-administration relations. This paper begins by laying out a framework for understanding the negotiations within an organizational culture emphasis. We proceed by surveying the environmental factors surrounding higher education and collective bargaining within higher education.

Negotiation Framework

To understand how the negotiation process among the administration and faculty left residual distrust and organizational dissatisfaction during and after negotiations we turn to Donohue and Ramesh's (1992) system based control model of relational messages. However, we expand the model by placing it in a constituent-negotiator context, allowing the adapted model to explicate how the faculty and administrators' constructed relationships were changed during the negotiation process primarily through the creation of different organizational knowledge structures.

According to Greenhalgh (1987), the relationship between participants remains a crucial part of negotiation that researchers fail to explore. Research analyzing the interchange of offers often assumes negotiators focus only on the utility of offers and ignoring questions regarding the parties' commitment to their relationships when deciding whether or not to reject proposals or abandon negotiations. Donohue and Ramesh (1992) have suggested that the concept of relationship should play a more central role in negotiation research, which they attempt to do by conceptualizing the relational development process in negotiations for future research.

In doing so, Donohue and Ramesh (1992) propose a systems perspective based on the role relational messages play in negotiation. Employing a systems perspective in their studies of communication, Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin, and Don Jackson (1967) found that relational messages influence the extent to which negotiators engage in substantive or trivial problem solving. These messages can take the form as either negative or positive feedback; positive feedback is information causing the system to change, or move away from desired outcomes, while negative feedback is information that corrects deviations from the desired goals, or helps maintain a stable social relationship.

Donohue and Ramesh's (1992) definition of a relationship is modeled after Robert A. Hinde's (1979) conception of relationships due to its adaptability to negation practices. Accordingly, a relationship is (a) a sequence of interchanges that is essentially dyadic; (b) occurs over an extended period of time; (c) has specific cognitive and affective effects. According to Hinde (1979) in order to understand a relationship, both the affective/cognitive states and the interchange sequences must be studied because they mutually inform one another regarding the status or condition of the relationship.

Three elements make up the system model purposed by Donohue and Ramesh (1992): set point, system functions, and system environment. First, the set point is the global goal that interactants seek to achieve. In the context of negotiations, the set point is usually reaching a mutually satisfying agreement; however, the set point can change depending on changing needs

and conditions. Second, system functions are the sequencing or patterning of the elements that enable the set point to be achieved. Based on Donohue and Ramesh's elaboration of Hinde's model, the system elements consist of three types of distancing messages that negotiators send to one another as they interact: role, social, and psychological. The system functions also include relational messages that focus negotiations on realistic issues, or unrealistic issues that might lead to a breakdown in negotiations. Third, the system environment is the circumstance in which the system exists. All systems function in some environment. The environment can place varying degrees of stress on the system which can hinder or facilitate the system's functions. Too much stress can compromise the regulatory functions of the system, causing the system to fail. Under Donohue and Ramesh's (1992) framework, disputants' cognitions, or their expectations, goals, and understandings of one another, and their affective orientations regarding values and feelings, either facilitate or hinder the communication system from doing its work.

Donohue and Ramesh's (1992) framework models how relational issues might affect negotiation at the bargaining table. However, during the negotiations in this case study the administrative bargaining team and the Faculty Association's bargaining team both signed confidentiality agreements which prohibited the individuals at the table from directly informing the public of what was happening at the bargaining table. Instead, both the administration and the FA relied on their communication teams to explain their positions to their constituents and the university without being able to cite specifics or quote what was being said at the bargaining table. Therefore, to model how intra-organizational negotiation functions we incorporate bargainer-constituent relations into the organizational context.

According to Linda Putnam and Tricia Jones (1982), research should focus on bargainer-constituent interactions because negotiation at the table often hinges on communication activities in caucus sessions. Indeed, negotiators usually act as representatives who are influenced not only by the negotiating situation but also by also by their constituents (Druckman, 1977; Roloff & Campion, 1987). Therefore, the outcome of the negotiation is influenced by the negotiators who are influenced by their constituents, leading us to look at how the faculty and administration explain to their constituents how to perceive and react to the negotiation process.

Environment Context: Higher Education and Collective Bargaining Under Attack

On January 17, 1962, President John F. Kennedy signed Executive Order 10988 under the National Labor Relations Act granting public employees the same collective bargaining rights as the private sector. Once 10988 was enacted, two community colleges in Michigan signed the first faculty contracts with the Merchant Marine Academy following suit in 1967 (Cameron, 1982). It was, however, in 1968 that the movement markedly advanced with the CUNY campuses in New York establishing the first major faculty union (Aussieker & Garbarino, 1973; Brown, 1969;

Cameron, 1982; Mintz, 1971; Wollett, 1971). The growth continued in California and expanded widely across Carnegie institutions, becoming a norm for faculty. Cameron (1982) describes the surge in faculty unionization in conjunction with three factors: 1) collective bargaining laws for public employees, 2) the establishment of multi-campus systems, in which the state makes key decisions for all branches and 3) economic issues due to cost increases and a decrease in enrollment. By the mid 1990s, 38% of faculty members were represented by some sort of union (Ehrenberg, Kezsbom, Klaff, & Nagowski, 2002).

While union membership has remained at steady levels since the mid 1990s, there has been a sharp decline in economic effectiveness. Smith and Balough (2011) found a decline in bargaining power for faculty unions across the United States starting in 1995. At this point, unions experienced change in their purpose. Due to state and local governments becoming more involved in regulating the workplace, people began to feel more indifferent to their union (Smith and Balough, 2011). This is not to say that people did not value their unions, rather they had no apparent reason to fight along side them with relatively stable conditions. What was once a method of protection for workers has shifted to profitable potential for union leadership, often seeking out members instead of members seeking unions (Smith & Balough, 2011).

Across the United States today, collective bargaining is perceived as being under attack. In some states (e.g. Michigan and Wisconsin), policies are being created to limit collective bargaining in terms of abilities and inclusion. For example, Governor Scott Walker of Wisconsin successfully stripped nearly all collective bargaining rights from many public employees in 2012, and in doing so received national attention as public unions occupied the State Capitol staging massive protests. In addition, the state of Michigan became a “Right to Work” state in 2012, damaging the ability of unions to remain effective in the state. Once again, the legislation brought controversy to the Capitol with thousands of union members and supporters coming out to protest the bill. This existential threat faced by unions in a time of economic austerity presents itself as a possible environmental stressor relevant in times of contract negotiation. How administrators or union members are influenced by outside issues such as a sluggish economy or legislative threats to collective bargaining leads us to ask the following research question.:

Changes in Higher Educational Culture

Economic austerity and budget cut backs over the years have taken a toll on higher education in other ways as well. Looking at transformational change in higher education, Peter Eckel and Adrianna Kezar (2002) identified financial constraints in addition to changing demographics, and increased competition as disruptive sources of change which result in greater public scrutiny of funds, greater reliance on technology to offset costs, and changes in faculty roles. The financial pressures began in the 1970s as a result of tax revolt and extend to present

day (Archibald & Feldman, 2006). Not all states are faced with this issue, but the majority of states have decreased funding to higher education (Zumeta, 2009). Instead of supplying universities with the majority of their funding, state governments are now calling for greater accountability and the use of much fewer resources, more efficiently (Alexander, 2000). This burden indisputably changes the way higher education exists and places pressures of higher education into practicing "academic capitalism" or commercialization (Bok, 2003; Gould, 2003; Rhoads & Slaughter, 2004; Rhoads & Torres, 2005; Ylijoki, 2003). The entrepreneurial activities of academic capitalism explore the private sector as a source of primary funding, privileging certain disciplines that are more valuable to the corporate world. Kevin Williams (2008) claims this to be an assault on education as a whole, isolating scholars as business ventures. Scholars agree that corporate culture is corrosive to the foundation of higher education and creates an environment of market driven research (Giroux, 2002; Vlasceanu, 2002, Williams, 2008). Not only does depending on an ever-fluctuating market appear hazardous, but it also violates a principle of public education being a public good, for the public good. Higher education and the for-profit service sector are two very different worlds, with different rules that challenge organizational norms (Vlasceanu, 2002). This transformation in higher education policy directly translates into mutating employment terms for faculty (Brown, 1969).

Due to academic policy changes, the issues between faculty and administration revolve around control and vulnerability of faculty, who believe they could potentially lose their scholarly identity (Bleak, 2005; Lane, 2007). Scholars agree that when faculty needs are not met, administrators breach dangerous lines of uncertainty, damaging morale and relationships (Ambrose, Huston, & Norman, 2005; Rosser, 2005). Should these needs go unaddressed, the risk of losing quality faculty is significant; not only would this cause more stress on an institution undergoing change, but it also would deflate institutional reputation. How administrators respond to economic obstacles can potentially position them in an adversarial relationship with faculty. Should faculty and administration goals become incompatible, the complex interactions that occur through changes in policy could create a climate of mistrust and combativeness in collective bargaining (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993).

The way faculty and administrators understand their position within the university could potentially create distinct cultures. William Bergquist (1992) explores four different academic cultural archetypes with varying degrees of emphasis on administrative and faculty control: collegial culture, managerial culture, developmental culture, and negotiating culture. The collegial culture focuses primarily on faculty as the center of the university. Faculty make important institutional decisions and administrators simply act as advocates of faculty decisions, often times serving to implement faculty choices. The collegial culture is one of long-standing tradition and values. The managerial culture, on the other hand, values effectiveness and

efficiency by managing faculty with fiscal responsibility as a determinant to decision- making. The developmental culture values growth of all members in the institution, encouraging progress of all members. Finally, the negotiating culture values equal power and confrontation to establish institutional progress. Negotiating culture can include many committees to make decisions, consisting of both faculty and administrators. The first two cultures differ significantly from the last two, which are cultural archetypes established due to failure of collegial and managerial archetypes (Bergquist, 1992). As higher education continues to transform and evolve, universities might find their organizational culture also evolving. How universities manage this process will have significant repercussions on their university's culture whether positive or negative. An organization's cultural will also influence how it will prioritize its resources—an issue acutely present during contract negotiations.

Knowledge Structures As Ways of Information Sharing

After surveying the evolution of collective bargaining in higher education and the cultural stressors placed on university culture, our discussion moves more specifically to how organizational cultures form. Within this study, we use Edgar Schein's (1990) definition of organizational culture as the deeply embedded patterns of shared values and beliefs. More specifically, organizational culture can be seen as "what a group learns over a period of time as that group solves its problems of survival in an external environment and its problems of internal integration" (Schein, 1990, p. 111). When looking at university culture, we must recognize that organizations of this size are not monolithic structures, but are subject to change due to external environmental factors in addition to how members socially construct their culture. Thus, we take an interpretivist approach to understanding organizational culture. According to Geertz (1973), organizational culture is a collection of interconnected webs spun together by the various actors. The interconnected webs represent subcultures within an organization, guiding interaction and meaning. Thus, organizational culture is "contested reality" subject to change (Papa et al., 2008). This "contested reality" often consists of a passive participation. For example, various departments within a university share different deeply embedded values and beliefs (Schein, 1990) contributing to a cultural whole. William Tierney (1988) argues that culture in institutions of higher education is challenged once codes and structures are visibly broken.

As codes and structures within the organization are broken, organizational members are free to create new meaning structures. Organizational communication theorists indicate that knowledge structures within an organization can create different schema for different members thereby affecting the organization's culture. Those schema and an organization's culture then influence how members interpret the communication strategies of each other and their identification with the organization during the bargaining process. A schema is a knowledge structure that is formed by people through communication when they share an experience in a

given group or organizational environment. Social actors impose this schema on a given context to construct and interpret its form and meaning (Bachrach, Bamberger, & Sonnenstuhl, 1996; Kuhn & Corman, 2003). Schemata provide criterion for our attention and facilitate our encoding of information which we then apply to a situation to help us produce information and interpret an experience, which we then use in making a decision about how to act (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Neisser, 1967; Walsh, 1995). We form schemata through interaction with others and through macro discourses that take place in organization, thus knowledge structures are inherently communicative (Kuhn & Corman, 2003). Organizations can be "ongoing, dynamic bodies of thought and action comprised of distributed knowledge actors" (Kuhn and Corman, 2003) and schemata change as organizational members interact with one another in response to everyday experiences. We can learn how knowledge is dispersed among members and how collective knowledge is created through the construction and reconstruction of conceptual systems as organization member engage in joining activity (Giddens, 1979; Harris, 1994; Wenger, 1998). Knowledge structures do not need to be homogenous, but can be heterogeneous, leaving the possibility for multiple cultures within an organization to form with conflicting notions of what the organization stands for or what how to interpret its function (Kuhn and Corman, 2003).

Following this review we ask the following research questions:

- RQ 1: How do environmental stressors impact organizational member's perceptions of the negotiation process?
- RQ 2: How are organizational members describing the university's higher education culture?
- RQ 3: How are members informed about the negotiations?
- RQ 4: How did relational messages function to sustain or hinder the negotiation process?

Method

Data Collection

According to M. Patton (1990) and R. K. Yin (2003), the use of multiple data sources is both a hallmark of case study research and enhances data credibility. To investigate how two sides in a campus bargaining cycle focused on and filtered messages in different ways during the bargaining process, we collected data from six sources. We focused on written documents from the CMU's public relations website, the FA's newsletters, the articles published in CMU's student newspaper, National Public Radio's coverage of the negotiation process, the fact-finding report produced by an independent, state-appointed fact- finder when negotiations broke down between the two parties, an independent consulting report commissioned by CMU after

bargaining ended to assess the campus climate, and the Friends of the Faculty Facebook site. Each set of artifacts provided descriptions of detailed events and narratives throughout the entire six-month process. The use of multiple sources of data allowed for multiple perspectives of how the process was developing to emerge, following Baxter and Jack's (2008) qualitative case study methodology instructions.

First, we looked at a complete set of interview transcripts from the National Public Radio station at this university. The transcripts can be found on the National Public Radio archives and are available to the public. The transcripts were collected throughout the negotiation and compiled for research. These interview transcripts detail both faculty and administration voices throughout the negotiation. In addition, they provided information regarding turning points throughout negotiations; however, in doing so, the transcripts irregularly covered the negotiations.

Second, we evaluated messages sent using the FA's newsletter from August 2011 to February 2012. This newsletter served to inform the FA's membership on bargaining sessions and their platform, as well as other issues on campus. Here, we see narratives presented by the FA and also directions for how their members should act and interpret information throughout the negotiation period. The newsletters also allow the researchers to follow the progression of dissatisfaction by the faculty throughout negotiations. The FA newsletters are located on the union's webpage[4] and are available to the public.

Third, to understand the CMU's perspective, we analyzed the public relations statements released regarding the state of collective bargaining with the FA. Fifteen statements were released starting in July 1, 2011, once bargaining stalled and the parties employed a mediator and ended on January 13, 2013, when the contract was ratified.

Fourth, we looked at the student newspaper, which throughout the process was the most widely used medium by students and faculty in the forms of both opinion editorials, letters to the editor, and student reporting. The newspaper is an independent news source and has operated since 1919; currently it is published three times a week and is widely circulated around campus and throughout the city.

Fifth, we analyzed the Fact- Finding report. After the collective bargaining agreement between the parties expired and parties unsuccessfully attempted mediation, both the university and the FA filed petitions for Fact- Finding. The Michigan Employment Relations Commission provided a fact-finder on August 1, 2011 who issued a report providing a non-binding ruling on

[4] http://www.cmufa.com/newsletter/

the dispute. This report was used as a map to guide the researchers through the negotiation process.

Finally, we analyzed a private consultant report, which was completed in March following negotiations. The consultant was hired to perform an evaluation of the university's climate by the CMU senior officers and the Board of Trustees. The consultant's report consists of interviews with stakeholders on campus. The stakeholders interviewed were faculty, staff, administrators and one student. This report was not publically distributed, but the authors gained permission from CMU's President, George E. Ross, for research use.

Data Analysis

According to P. Baxter and S. Jack (2008), propositions arising from the literature, personal and professional experience, and theories can be used to place limits on the scope of the study and guide data analysis. For this study, the authors used the literature reviewed above in addition to their experiences during the negotiation process to help organize and categorize the data. At the time of the negotiations, Cavataio was an undergraduate student and the student body president and Hinck was a first-year graduate student. Both authors arranged the data chronologically and organized their observations into themes and patterns. Authors discussed these themes together to insure internal validity while also triangulating their observations from multiple sources. These findings were then grouped into general themes.

Discussion

Findings

RQ1: How do environmental stressors impact organizational member's perceptions of the negotiation process? Our first question was answered definitively from both sides of the bargaining table. The data revealed that environmental stressors did play a significant role in both parties' interpretations of negotiation events. However, the type of environmental stressor differed between faculty and administration.

The CMU administration and the FA put their positions in context of their larger environment. Both parties cited the economic conditions of Michigan, albeit differently. The spokesperson for CMU stated, "Numerous matters still remain unresolved, most significantly is a compensation and benefits package that they have proposed that costs approximately 10 million dollars. This comes on the heels of a 12 million dollar reduction in state appropriations." The university administration repeatedly addressed reductions in state appropriations as damaging to the university in a poor economy. In August 2011, in the student newspaper, the president of the university stated, "In light of reductions of state appropriations, in light of budget projections at

this university and the state, looking at declining high school enrollments in the out years, we're planning financially for our future." The Fact-finder concurred, finding that CMU cannot be as generous with its unrestricted net asset balance because "Circumstances are bad and getting worse. It would be extremely unwise for CMU to eat its seed corn" (p. 5). The consultant's report noted the difficulties CMU faced as related to the climate of higher education in general. They noted that public universities are confronting challenging times with "diminishing financial resources, expanding public expectations and increasing demand for accountability reflect the evolution of what been referred to as the 'new normal' in American higher education" (Moore, 2012, p. 6). Thus, administrators' perceptions of their environment focused on the perceived financial challenges facing them in Michigan and higher education as a whole.

However, the president of the FA took a different approach to the external stressors and stated in the student newspaper in July 2011, "CMU as an institution can help the economy by paying all of its employees, not just the FA, fair and equitable wages." Also, the author of the FA newsletter displayed quotes from university officials at the bottom of their newsletter in a section titled *State of the University* explicating a superior financial state. The FA repeatedly quoted a former chair of the CMU Board of Trustees' statement that, "This is a rock-solid place financially," in addition to other statements emphasizing CMU's financial strength. The repetition of the quote from the trustee primed members to view administrative attempts to downplay the university's resources as untrue; given the political and economic contexts in the United States and in Michigan, FA members therefore saw administrators as doing the same as those on Wall Street, cutting checks to upper management while ignoring their workers. For example, the FA newsletter in August 2011 stated,

> The administration continues to expand through the addition of more and more Senior Officers while the number of full-time tenured faculty remains static…So salaries have increased over 25% over the past few years, while that of faculty has grown only 10%.

Calls for an "occupy Warriner Hall," which is the main administrative building, were made on the Friends of the Faculty Facebook page, alluding to the protests against Wall Street executives following the 2008 financial crises and injecting an administrators' versus workers' mentality.

The FA and their members cited the Michigan legislature in addition to other anti-union states to illustrate the need for union support. The unions saw the administration, government officials, and the general tone of US domestic politics as positioned against them. Therefore, administrators, or those in power, could not be trusted, and unions needed to stand firm against those trying to end the unions. In the February 2011 edition of the FA newsletter, the author admonishes, "further attempts by legislators (and allied special interests) to force public

employees to bear the brunt of deficit reduction through wage freezes and salary reductions, and to cripple our right to bargain collectively." The attack on collective bargaining was made clear exemplifying the legislature's actions as an existential threat. In the April 2011 edition of the FA newsletter, the author stated, "Imagine if you will what things might be like for you at CMU without the Faculty Association." This same sentiment was repeated throughout FA newsletters in the following months. In addition, the legislature's proposed union-busting bills were reflected onto the university administration as shared interests:

> If we wish to succeed in our struggle for a contract that values and respects our contributions to CMU, then we must all be willing to act in concert in the face of what I'm sure will be an escalating cycle of misrepresentation of our positions by the administration, reliance on the anti-union sentiments in the state legislature, and attempts to bully us into submission by accepting a contract that is nothing less than a blatant attempt to weaken the FA and a slap in the face to the all of the dedicated faculty at CMU.

By July 2011, the student newspaper and the FA Facebook page cited multiple faculty characterizing the university administrators as union-busters stating, "What we've been offered is a regression…They're trying to break up the union." The FA newsletter told members not to use their university email account to talk about the negotiations and to communicate using Facebook or personal email accounts. As the consultant report found, a "national narrative of anti-government, anti-public employees, anti-public employee unions, etc. may be contributing to a negative campus climate of fear and anxiety" (Moore, 2012, p. 3).

Overall, environmental stressors seemed to significantly impact how the unions understood the negotiation process. As stated in the Fact-finding report, "Politically and economically there has never been a worse time for public sector collective bargaining" (p. 5). These stressors, like Right to Work laws in Wisconsin, a Republican legislature in Michigan, and general feelings toward the administration at the university played a significant role in locking in FA members' interpretations of events and goals by each party, while financial stresses and uncertainty regarding changes in higher education affected how administrators perceived their positions as curators of CMU's future. These differing views were also reflected in the parties' perception of what the university culture should be as evident in the next research question.

RQ2: How are organizational members describing the university's higher education culture? Using Bergquist's (1992) archetypes, the FA's and administration's messages reflected two cultures uncoordinated throughout the negotiation process. Almost at the beginning of the process, a rift developed between what the faculty and administration believed to be the university's culture. This struggle resulted in the administration defining what was good for the university differently from the faculty, often disconfirming the faculty's feelings and concerns, and further entrenching themselves in their own beliefs. For instance, the administration defined

their role as central to student success. Their messages implicitly stated that faculty members are merely a part of their control to ensure student success, maintaining that faculty are a part of student success but are not the key to safeguarding it. The administration demonstrated this culture following the FA work stoppage with a press release on August 21, 2011, which stated:

> The impact of the FA's action places an irreparable and unfair burden on students who want to graduate in a timely fashion, pursue graduate school or launch successful careers. As such, on Monday CMU will request an injunction…to order for faculty to return to class.

In addition, as the FA voted to authorize a work stoppage, the administration sent a disconfirming message regarding the crisis by stating, "Our priority is to ensure the success of our students." The administration's statements were never directed towards faculty relations; rather the focus was always on what the administration was doing to help the students or CMU. Furthermore, the administration would re-assure students that they would start classes on time, while not mentioning the faculty's needs, demonstrating managerial control over faculty.

The faculty, however, saw themselves as playing significant roles in developing a strong collegial culture where they are central to student success. In the July 8, 2011 edition of the student newspaper a faculty member stated, "There's no university without faculty..." This statement was further solidified by the seven similar editorials submitted by faculty to the student newspaper. In the September 30, 2011, edition of the student newspaper a faculty member stated, "CMU clearly has abandoned its commitment to undergraduate education and, while paying lip service to the importance of excellent faculty, the administration's position and tactics send the exact opposite message." In each of the messages sent by faculty members, one thing remained consistent, that the administration is not essential to the university.

The cultural divide became even more evident toward the end of negotiations. For example, on the FA Facebook page faculty and community members began discussing ways to remove the university's president and provost, beginning in November 2011. The shift from an impasse to extreme cultural differences was clear when a majority of the academic senate membership, which consists of mostly FA members, issued a vote of "No Confidence" for both the president and provost. However, the FA and community members were not pleased when the university's Board of Trustees issued a continuing statement of support of the president and provost. Statements such as, "Given the alleged "continuing confidence" of the university Board of Trustees in president and provost, I think we can conclude that it's time for the board to go, too," were commonly distributed along the Facebook page. These cultural differences were observed in the consultant report where the CMU administration was noted as not being sufficiently consultative and transparent, perceptions of the president being overly engaged in external

responsibilities in place of internal constituencies such as faculty, and polarization as a the result of a recent academic prioritization process. As the two groups became more segregated by cultural differences, more challenges arose from the negotiation process.

Therefore, a clear battle between the two poles of academic culture outlined by Bergquist (1992) occurred at the university. This has serious implications, as the two parties will need to come together to agree on a similar culture or share some understanding of each other's needs. If not, this will serve as a constant sore to the university and further harm other relations. This thought brings us to our third question, which addresses relational messages, much like the ones we observed toward the end of negotiations.

RQ3: How are members informed about the negotiations? While the culture of the university was answered clearly, how each party informed their constituents was only partially revealed through our data. We believe that the FA did demonstrate a conclusive informing process with a specific knowledge structure. However, the administration's side remained indistinct from lack of data.

As previously mentioned, knowledge structures did play a role in informing FA members what was going on and more importantly served an interpretive function whereby the FA explained what the reactions from the administration means, as defined by FA themselves. The FA's newsletters' authors explicitly told the membership how to make sense of the negotiation process. It is also important to note that upon turning points in the negotiations, there was obvious elevation in frequency and urgency of messages. Two sections of the FA's newsletters specifically shaped the knowledge structure of faculty members and are consistently placed in each newsletter. The section titled *FA and You* describes how faculty can best use the FA to their benefit and the *State of the University* section expounds on the finances of the university and how to interpret the numbers. For example, while explaining the administration's position on state contributions, the FA newsletter states:

> So, when you read/hear about cuts to the university, remember that the cuts are to the 19.2% CMU receives from the state of Michigan and **not** the total funding. It would be foolish to suggest that the Governor and Legislature will suddenly have an epiphany and realize that balancing a budget by cutting education does nothing to insure the future of the state's economy.

Also placed at the bottom of each newsletter was a statement made by a former trustee of the university, "This is a rock-solid place financially." Amidst all of the information surrounding the tough economic times, the FA newsletter provided declarative knowledge for faculty as to how they should make sense of the negotiations. The FA Facebook page also served a similar purpose as the newsletter, however the conversation included students, faculty from neighboring

universities, and community members. Both outlets allowed for information to be presented in a way reflecting the faculty's interests and portraying the administration as disingenuous. Furthermore, dissenting opinions were few, leaving only one side of the story for members to read, confirming their preconceptions of the faculty being wronged by the administration. This brings to light questions regarding how an organization informs its members in an ethical way. The following excerpts show how the administration's actions and positions are seen as unjustified. In the August 2011 FA newsletter, the author states:

> To date, the administration has not shown any indication that it faces financial exigencies that would prevent it from offering all employees modest increases in salary and benefits. They would rather remind us that "times are tough" in Michigan. Yes, they are, although record profits (and employee profit sharing!) from some of Michigan's oldest manufacturing sectors gives strong indication that things are looking better. The administration would rather remind us that "we are lucky to have a job" than focus on rewarding its biggest strength – its employees – as we work to build a better CMU.

Additionally, the highlighting of the environmental factors served to heighten apprehension of the negotiations further influencing an "us versus them" mentality. Overall, it was clear that the FA demonstrated distinct knowledge structures, which were shared with its membership primarily through its newsletter and Friends of the Faculty Facebook page.

Our data could not support any conclusions regarding administration knowledge structures. This is most likely because of the differences of decision- making within the different groups. Whereas the FA's membership was much larger, relied on participation in protests, and ultimately had a democratic voting structure, the administration had fewer people to report to, in part because of its hierarchical structure. Ultimately, the university president and provost only needed to communicate and share the same views as the Board of Trustees, while instructing their bargaining team as to how far the administration could go on issues. We did see that the administration adhered to state expectations and had rigid expectations of the negotiations, limiting the need to share any information. It is still important to note that the view of the administration could have been blurred by a confidentiality agreement. Both the FA and administrators in the negotiation room signed agreements that no information could be shared from within that room. The difference is that the FA needed to use liaisons to their membership to inform them, as they would eventually be voting on a contract. The administration did not need to do the same thing as nobody would ever be voting on their proposed contract, it was simply a process for the few senior officers involved.

RQ4: How did relational messages function to sustain or hinder the negotiation process? As evident by the examples presented throughout this paper, both parties did little to affirm the other in public. As a result of the confidentiality agreement and continued negative

characterization of each party throughout the process, it is hard to determine how relational messages functioned in this case study. However, two issues of interest came up when answering this fourth research question. First, at the beginning of the negotiations, as the FA prepared its newsletter, it already appeared to have a somewhat negative and distrusting tone towards the administration. The tone of FA statements reflected that administration could not be trusted because they were creating a new version of the existing university, one that adheres to academic capitalism's constraints. For example, in reference to the new medical school, the FA newsletter in January of 2011 stated, "…administration spending on the salary of just 5 Senior Officers (the dean and 4 associate deans of the medical school) is approximately $1.37 million and is equal to a 2.5% pay raise for all 600+ regular faculty." The FA communicated that CMU is unwilling to invest resources into current faculty, but are willing to invest in programs that do not even exist. The negative characterizations of administration before difficulties in the bargaining room occurred highlights the role of environmental factors in this case study, overshadowing the relational messages explanation and suggests breakdown in faculty-administration relationships were already occurring prior to bargaining.

The second issue brings into question what role relational messages do play in providing negative feedback. Do relational messages function to keep negotiators at the table when they already distrust the other? This does not seem to be the case for this study, primarily because such few attempts were made to affirm the other. The consultant report noted the lack of effective communication between the two sides stating "Effective communications is more than 'telling' one-side of the story about the issues; it requires a two-way exchange of ideas and a genuine commitment by all parties to hear one another's voice" (Moore, 2012, p. 8). Whereas communication from the faculty side demonized the administration, communication from the administration was never aimed at communicating to the faculty, but instead promoted their own narrative of caring for the students and the university while ignoring the role faculty played.

However, relational messages might still have a feedback function. Messages increasing in negative tone can continue to provide positive feedback ossifying a group's negative opinion of the other. This hardening of perspective can prevent the groups from feeling satisfied with their end agreements, especially if a lack of flexibility causes the process to go on for an extended time or requires fact- finding and arbitration. We did find an increase in negative messages between the FA and administration as negotiations went on. For example, the aforementioned vote of "No Confidence" was a clear indicator that the issues within the university were no longer just those of policy, but of personal intent of policy makers. Such a serious move has implications lasting beyond the negotiation process. The vote came at the end of the bargaining process and did not explicitly reflect any of the specific bargaining proposals, leaving it to

symbolize a larger issue of distrust and disrespect which exists in the university's current atmosphere.

Overall, there was not a clear answer as to whether or not relational messages function to sustain or hinder negotiations within a constituent framework of negotiations. Though it does seem evident that relational messages inherently referred to a negative relationship between the FA and administration, our data does not adequately show how it impacted the negotiations. Since we noticed negative relations from the start, this brings to question how the two parties informed their constituents to form these knowledge structures surrounding the negotiation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the case study shows the dynamic nature of collective bargaining and higher education as a whole. By analyzing the six artifacts, we found a pattern of growing distrust evolving into the formation of two separate groups with different ideas of what and who were important for the university. Analysis of the artifacts revealed four observations: (a) collective bargaining is under attack, (b) faculty and administration experienced conflicting cultural expectations, (c) knowledge structures shaped the informing process of both parties, and (c) negotiation framework was modified at turning points of conflict. Our observations were largely consistent with the literature reviewed. A significant limitation of the study was the lack of data on the administration's perspective. Additionally, it was difficult to definitely prove the existence of organizational knowledge structures based solely on the artifacts used. Interviews with both faculty and administration during the negotiations would have provided additional support as to what informed the members of how the negotiations were progressing and how each group understood what was happening, however confidentiality agreements made this difficult.

Turning to how administration and faculty could mend their relationship, the university's administrative leaders have launched a "Shared Governance" initiative aimed at restoring relations with faculty. However, from our analysis, administrative-led initiatives are more likely to continue reflecting a managerial culture, one that is in conflict with the faculty's vision for the university. Instead, the administration should attempt to reach out to faculty and address their specific concerns and feelings instead of proposing new administrative initiatives. Furthermore, the apparent disconnect between faculty and administration increases the likelihood and differing knowledge and interpretations regarding the goals of the university. Increasing the face-to-face interaction between faculty and administration in the form of brown bags, visiting departmental meetings, or inquiring into the needs of faculty would more likely humanize the administration in the faculty's eyes and allow for the exchange and formation of common views or opinions regarding where the university should go and the means to get there. Whether this holds the

possibility of reshaping or coordinating the two cultures evident in the messages in the case study remains to be seen.

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