(Re)Claiming our Interconnectedness:
Moving from I to We

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The Perfect Season
Beyond having substantial financial resources, abundance is an organizational state marked by exceptional performance and vitality reached only through intentional and transcendent leveraging of tangible (i.e. staff, money, technology, facilities), intangible (i.e. human capacities, culture, reputation, organizational architecture), and leadership (i.e. inclusive leadership practices) resources.
Organizational Capacity

• An organization’s capacity is its potential to perform—its ability to apply its skills, competences, and resources to:
  – Achieve its mission, vision, and goals
  – Meet or exceed its stakeholders’ expectations. Stakeholders are both external and internal.
• Capacity is achieved when the talent, skills, and competencies of people throughout an organization are used to the fullest possible extent.

What does this look like?
Contextualizing Capacity

- Operating resources are declining in adverse proportion to demand in community colleges.
- A commitment to addition—more priorities, programs, services, and staff—prevails in our colleges where as a mechanism for substitution or subtraction lags.
- Organizational life for all employees is morphing into something they did not sign up for:
  - Lean staffing and incremental responsibility
  - Unrelenting demands and expectations
  - Avalanche of communication
  - Competing demands on time and attention
  - Almost unmanageable complexity
Contextualizing Capacity

• Personnel in work groups know less about the work life of personnel in different work groups than at any point in the historical development of community colleges.

• “Presenteeism” is increasingly common—in contrast to “futurism”—in our colleges.

• Increasing size and complexity have reduced the capability of employees to comprehend and relate to the whole organization.

• Loyalty and commitment have shifted from the institution to the operating unit—producing a lack of interconnectedness.
Main Entry: interconnected
Function: adjective
Date: 1865
  - 1: mutually joined or related
  - 2: having internal connections between the parts or elements

The Presidential Debate
• A deep sense of interconnectedness, or oneness, is at the core of decisions and actions that are life affirming and good for the whole.
• Energy follows thoughts and feelings. What we focus on is what we manifest and attract.
• By celebrating interconnectedness, we manifest and attract more of what we want on a global scale: a greater sense of interconnectedness as a foundation for a world that works for all life.

A shift from separation to oneness, a shift from I to We.
Effects of Interconnectedness

- Develop psychological capital of self-efficacy, hope, resiliency, and optimism
- Draw heavily on shared understanding of institutional mission, vision, values, and goals
- Focus on how the present serves as a catalyst for the future
- Work together to foster a vibrant “core culture”
- Consider the meaning of what we do in terms of the wider world in which we live
- Belief in our colleagues and our students

Interconnectedness among our faculty and staff positively affects our students
Characteristics of the Abundant and Interconnected College

- Engaging in change has become an automatic response
- Beyond continuous learning—continuous knowledge application
- The College is always seeking new opportunities to serve stakeholders through discovery, development, and amplification of resources

Being Entrepreneurial in the Midst of Challenge
Characteristics of the Abundant and Interconnected College

- Innovation and creativity have become contagious
- Continual focus on developing greater organizational capacity
- Continuous enhancement of intangible resources
  - Human capacities, culture, communication, reputation, and organizational architecture
- Operates as a network hub and partnership incubator
- Leverages and develops internal networks
Priorities this Academic Year

• Understanding and changing approaches based on context—which includes balancing the strategic and operational
• Encouraging and engaging in inclusive practices
• Meeting the “sense-making” needs of College faculty and staff
• Creating and managing focused change
• Encouraging and embracing risk, vision, and creativity and supporting resiliency at the unit, division, and organizational level
• Spending the majority of time and effort on the intangible and expanding our Abundance Network
  – After Town Meeting: First Wednesday of the month in room 2420 (Lecture Hall)
• http://www.interconnectedness090909.org/ Accessed on August 1, 2009
• Shults, C. (2008) Reinterpreting Community College Leadership and Management in a Knowledge-Economy. Presentation to the Strategic Horizon Network Colloquium, Ann Arbor, MI.