



**EASTERN OREGON**  
UNIVERSITY

**SYSTEMWIDE INTERPRETATION OF HEALTH AND QUALITY**  
**SIHQ<sup>®</sup> Report**  
**December 9, 2008**

**BA 461 -- ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR CLASS**  
**COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**  
**FALL 2008**

TO: The Eastern Oregon University Community  
FROM: BA 461 – Organizational Behavior – Fall 2008

THANK YOU!

*Thank you for your time and your patience. The Organizational Behavior class and concerned individuals from through out the University have been involved in this project and are truly concerned about the exciting times at Eastern Oregon University and the continued health and well being of each and every individual. Your responses are valued deeply and your continued positive contributions are appreciated.*

*The Systemwide Interpretation of Health and Quality (SIHQ) is an attempt to take a current picture of your work group. That picture provides beneficial information to assist positive improvements that will benefit both the University and all individuals. There was a reasonable response to the online survey. The scores were compared to a large database of individual scores from representative general work groups. No individual scores were given (or will be) to any one other than the individual who took the survey. Information was collected and will be reported by demographic groups and the total work group. Charts of this information are included in this report and numerical versions of the charts are available from the instructor by request. One approach for reviewing these scores is to compare and contrast scores with the immediate work group and total work group scores looking for patterns, gaps and similarities. It is sincerely hoped that you continue your involvement and willingly and openly communicate with others in the organization regarding future personal and organizational behavior. Higher education is changing globally, as is Eastern Oregon University. Continued work toward personal and organizational mutually determined directions will assure an exciting but stable future.*

*This class will not give specific recommendations of organizational improvement based on specific perceived non-compliance of stated organizational desired behaviors. The world is constantly changing, and each and every individual in every organization should be treated with dignity and respect. Most people are constantly striving to better their own and their organization lives. To this end result, we believe that ALL individuals, bottom, middle AND top should constantly strive to increase awareness and understanding, which makes the world a better place. Use this information, talk to each other, and continue to make Eastern Oregon University a benefit to society.*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
II. ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE EXPLANATIONS .....	1
FOCUS .....	1
ASSUMPTIONS .....	1
METHOD .....	1
TEAMWORK .....	2
LEADERSHIP .....	2
PRODUCTIVITY .....	2
PROCESS .....	3
IMPORTANCE AND IMPLICATIONS .....	3
III. SYSTEMWIDE PATTERNS .....	4
TEAMWORK .....	4
LEADERSHIP .....	5
PRODUCTIVITY .....	5
IV. DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP INDICATORS .....	7
ACADEMIC AREA .....	7
ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL .....	8
SENIORITY - EMPLOYEES .....	9
SENIORITY - STUDENTS .....	10
GENDER .....	11
AGE .....	12
STUDENTS – BY ACADEMIC AREA .....	13
EDUCATIONAL MODALITY .....	14
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS .....	15

## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

A systemwide assessment of critical variables that drive organizational effectiveness was collected from a sample of the administration, staff, faculty and students of Eastern Oregon University. An organizational climate and effectiveness assessment was administered that consisted of nine specific variables that are grouped into three important effectiveness categories: TEAMWORK as measured by clarity, peer cohesion and work pressure; LEADERSHIP as measured by autonomy, control and supervisor support; and PRODUCTIVITY as measured by innovation, involvement and task orientation. In broader implications this assessment process explored the inter- and intra-actions of all of these items intra-actively with the selected demographics.

Every individual in the system had access to the secure on-line self assessment that collected the demographic data and a 90 question survey. The assessment was designed as a very user friendly process, however, a number of technical and access issues limited participation. There was a reasonable response to the online phase of the assessment project. The scores were compared to a database of approximately 1400 individual and group scores using converted standardized scores from representative work groups. The overall organizational profile was compared to two other organizations.

The data was collected to establish base line data about the inter- and intra-actions within the entire organization in order for individuals and work groups to build on existing strengths while minimizing negative factors. Optimal future desired behavior should be determined by reconciling the current perceptions with the goals and directions of the overall work group AND the inter intra actions of the various groups.

## **II. ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE EXPLANATIONS**

### **SIHQ @ (seek)**

SIHQ stands for Systemwide Interpretation of Health and Quality.

### **FOCUS**

The overall focus of this phase of the assessment process has been toward organizational improvement looking at the entire system through individual and collective interactions. The Work Environment Scales attitudinal assessment by Ralph Moos, a multivariate statistical analysis and the value added interpretive analysis of this process, together, make up the primary diagnostic method used for this analysis process. For this class project, the multivariate statistical analysis was not included due to limited time and a limited knowledge base of the analysis team.

### **ASSUMPTIONS**

Any understanding of organizational health and effectiveness must be determined systemwide. Leadership is a systemwide phenomenon. It is not simply a designated top management function. Leadership happens through out the system. Self assessment is a valid information collection process. The use of personal perceptions and attitudes can provide extremely useful management information for determining organizational behavior. Personal perceptions are what drive organizational behavior.

### **METHOD**

A systemwide assessment of critical variables that drive organizational effectiveness was given to the University community. The personal attitude assessment consists of nine specific variables grouped into three significant effectiveness categories: TEAMWORK as measured by clarity, peer cohesion and work pressure; LEADERSHIP as measured by autonomy, control and supervisor support; and PRODUCTIVITY as measured by innovation, involvement and task orientation.

**TEAMWORK**

- Clarity - degree to which individuals know what to expect and how clearly rules and policies are communicated.
- Peer Cohesion - degree to which individuals are friendly and supportive of each other.
- Work Pressure - degree to which high work demands and time pressure dominate the job.

**LEADERSHIP**

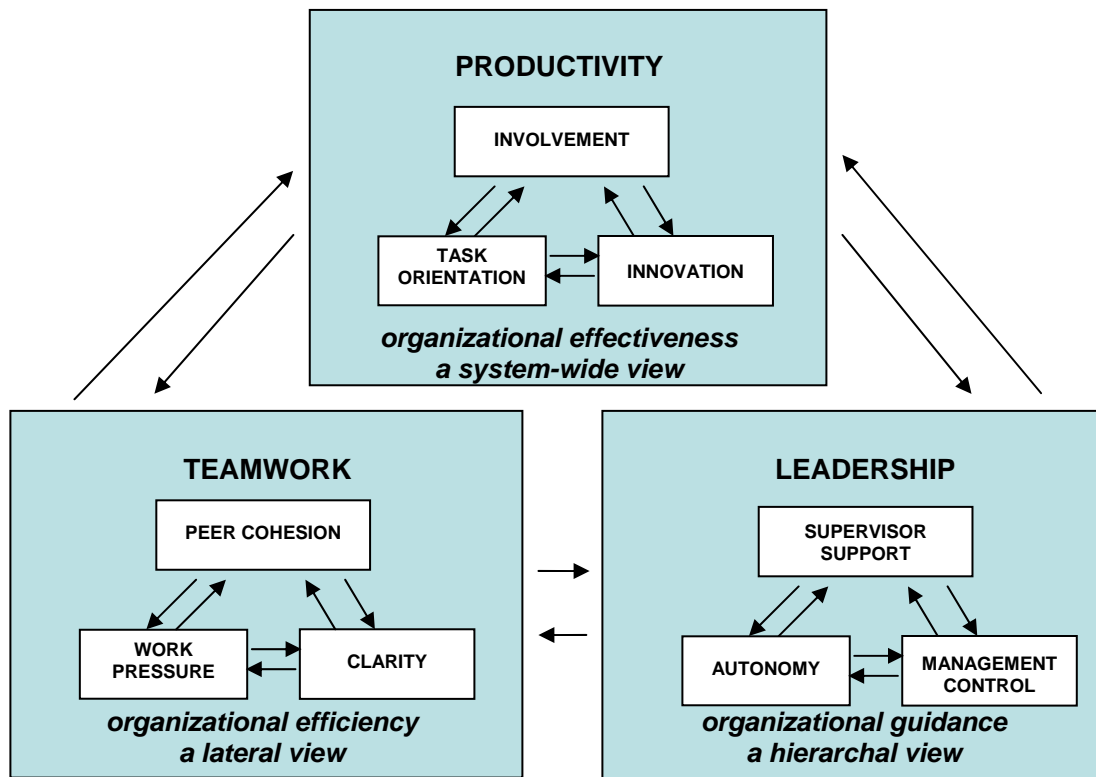
- Autonomy - degree to which individuals are encouraged to be self-sufficient and are free make their own decisions.
- Control - degree to which management uses excessive rules and pressures to keep employees under control.
- Supervisor Support - degree to which management is supportive of employees and encourages mutual support.

**PRODUCTIVITY**

- Involvement - degree to which individuals are concerned about and committed to their jobs.
- Task Orientation - degree of importance placed on good planning, efficiency and getting the job done.
- Innovation - degree of importance placed on variety, change, and new approaches.

**SYSTEM-WIDE INTERPRETATION OF HEALTH AND QUALITY**

SIHQ @ (seek)  
Design Concept



## **PROCESS**

Every individual in the system had access to the secure on-line self assessment that collected the demographic data and a 90 question survey. The assessment was designed as a very user friendly process, however, a number of technical and access issues limited participation. There was a reasonable response to the online phase of the assessment project which can provide statistically valid information. The survey was sent through employee and student 'info' lines to approximately 3300 individuals. There were 63 usable employee surveys and 152 usable student surveys. These scores were compared to a database of approximately 1400 individual and group standardized scores from representative work groups. The overall organizational profile was then compared to two other organizations.

## **IMPORTANCE AND IMPLICATIONS**

While the WES is a detailed measurement of the nine variables, the SIHQ process explores the broader inter- and intra-active perceptions that drive people's behavior. The social climate of the personality in the work setting and each person in that work setting fosters and influences an image of the workplace from their experiences within that work setting. Social climate can have strong influence on people in the work setting. Individual perceptions impact behavior and aggregate behavior creates that organizational personality. The loop continues, as in turn that unique organizational personality impacts individual perceptions which in turn drive existing behaviors in the organization. The WES measures attitudes driving these behaviors. Ralph Moos, the WES author divides them into three dimensions: 1. relationship, 2. personal growth and goal orientation and 3. system maintenance and change. The SIHQ further categorizes these nine factors into three quality related issues: Teamwork, Leadership and Productivity. This design concept is the foundation underneath the analysis of the overall effectiveness and quality of the work group. Each individual item takes on a deeper meaning when viewed collectively.

Each organization is different. It is important to look at base line data about the inter and intra actions in the entire organization. Optimal future desired behavioral inter and intra actions of these issues should be determined by reconciling the current perceptions with the goals and directions of the work group. The purpose of the SIHQ is to determine the current inter and intra actions in order for the work groups to build on existing strengths while minimizing negative factors.

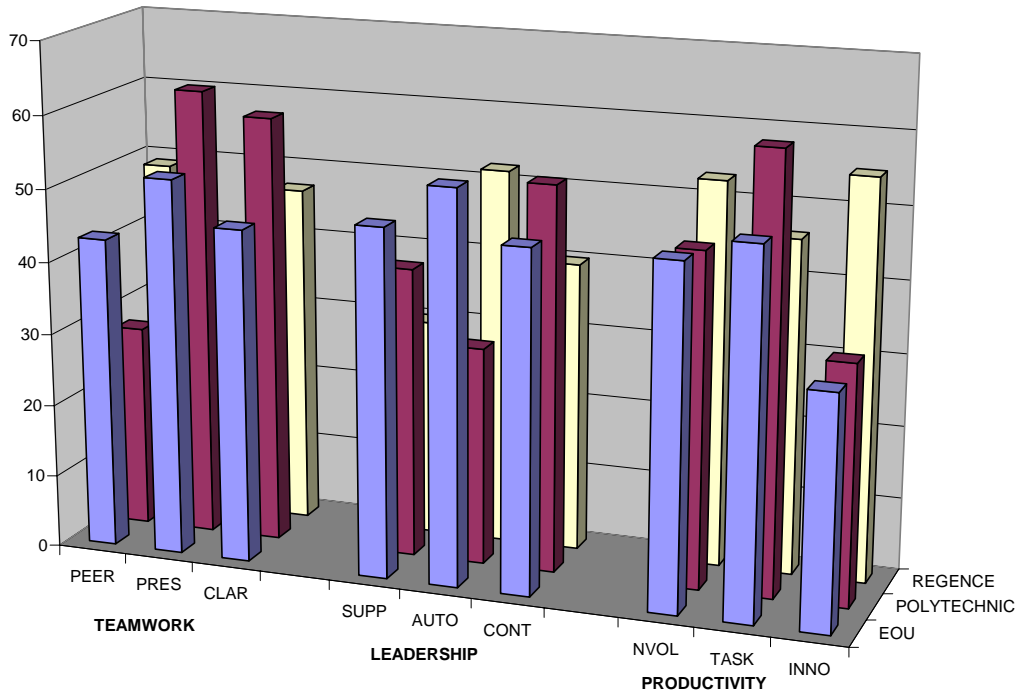
Today there is still continued debate between the need for quick decisive action and the demand for involvement in the decision process. Most organizations are facing the struggle between top down management styles and bottom up management styles. Also the issues of shared or even virtual processes further complicate day to day work in most organizations. What do these various organizational theories mean and what is the impact on results producing behavior? This organization also faces these questions. Regional data is inconclusive, but the University is definitely diverse and needs to continue to move in mutually determined strategic actions toward a single vision. Unity of direction is a critical management function, and happens only through persistent efforts from each and every employee.

Part of this is the continued difference in perceptions of the definitions of leadership. The SIHQ process assumes that leadership is throughout the system and not top designated formal management only. A shared leadership concept seems to embrace this idea, and is present in the policy and procedure documents of most institutions of higher education. However, the prevalent model in industry today is still the top down process. Even organizations such as this one are facing monumental struggles overcoming those perceptions, which in turn cause autocratic behaviors on the part of designated managers and apathetic behaviors from followers who are unwilling to go beyond the 9 to 5 workday. This University needs to continue to reaffirm in word and deed a shared leadership vision.

### III. SYSTEMWIDE PATTERNS

In general, the indicated aggregate perceptions are recurrent patterns of behavior within the organization. However, a detailed analysis of each demographic group does reveal perceived differences. The first picture presented is a comparison of three different but similar organizations and the overall pattern of the nine variables that all shape end results.

EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY COMPARISON



#### TEAMWORK

**organizational efficiency – a lateral view  
workplace energy**

Synergy, creativity, efficiency, and flexibility are often increased positively when a team structure is implemented in an organization. Teamwork can also be more rewarding, enjoyable and productive as long as there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Organizational effectiveness is increased by teamwork because employee talents are better utilized. Peer cohesion is an important factor in organizational productivity. The organization and functions of the team directly affect cohesiveness and therefore productivity. Clarity of communication is also desirable because confusion has negative impacts on productivity.

This organization has good clarity in communication. The peer cohesion in most work groups is scattered and unfocused. This lower level of peer cohesion is compounded by the extreme work pressure that is indicated throughout the organization. Moderate work pressure is healthy, especially in competitive and growth environments which is certainly true for EOU. Either too much or too little work pressure has a negative impact on the overall work environment. Work pressure on teams in amounts that are higher or lower than normal has a negative impact on productivity. There is not a noticeable organizational climate of negative conflict, but the very low peer cohesion and excessive work pressure tend to offset the supposed clear communication within the system and should be a focus of future organizational improvement efforts. The communication around organizational problems is positive and overall the sensed perception is one of moving the University in directions that expand personal and organizational goals.

Teamwork in an organization is very important to the growth and creativity of an organization. It is the glue that holds the organization together. In this report team work was reported in a three part system that included peer cohesion, work pressure, and clarity. EOU's teamwork levels seem to be fairly average compared to other organizations, but peer cohesion and work pressure are issues at EOU.

## **LEADERSHIP**

### **organizational guidance – a hierarchal view direction shaping**

The significant cause and effect relationship (i.e. what factor drives another factor) appears to be an aggregate combination of intra-active effects of moderate supervisor support and a perception of excessive administrative control. While this is a pattern seen in many schools, the turbulent environment around EOU compounds this feeling of control. University communities, especially favoring faculty governance, seek less administrative control and more autonomy at the faculty level. The current perception in this organization is that control is a driving factor. The overall perception through all demographic categories is one of a strong directional control.

Organizational guidance is the more hierarchal view of an organization. One correlation in comparison with successful and surviving organizations is the high sense of autonomy and the lack of management control. This is often essential at a University and this survey shows patterns of management control.

Leadership in an organization is essential to the movement of core values and behaviors. It is the vision that moves the organization. In this report leadership was reported in a three part system that included supervisor support, autonomy and management control. EOU's leadership levels seem to be fairly average compared to other organizations, except management control which is perceived as excessive.

## **PRODUCTIVITY**

### **organizational effectiveness – a systemwide view system integration**

Perceptions regarding levels of involvement and task orientation are driving factors in this organization. Another significant driving perception is the lack of innovation at EOU. This is possibly coupled with the high degree of perceived administrative control. External factors such as the competitive, technological, political and sociological environments create a need for innovation as the school continues major ideological and operational shifts to meeting the needs of a consuming public. The rapid changes in local, regional and national demands for education also indicate the need for innovation in product content and delivery. This organization should overtly articulate its position on the issue of innovation. However, whether low innovation is pushing involvement and task orientation up or whether higher involvement and task orientation are pulling innovation down is not the current issue. The lack of innovation is the issue. One important discussion is whether innovation is important for the University and what is an appropriate response. In addition, there is a high perception of task orientation. If focused, this task oriented behavior is good. However, if scattered and unfocused, attention to task creates short term results that tend to pull faculty, staff and administration in too many different ways.

There are many different factors that could cause innovation to be lower than average. One of the biggest factors that could contribute to this is rigid classroom structure that does not allow students and faculty to integrate their own ideas and meaning into the curriculum. Another factor is the organization being stuck in old habits. With EOU's current financial situation, it would be

wise to look into ways to emphasize innovation and generate change that could excite faculty, staff, and students alike and ultimately increase productivity in the organization as a whole.

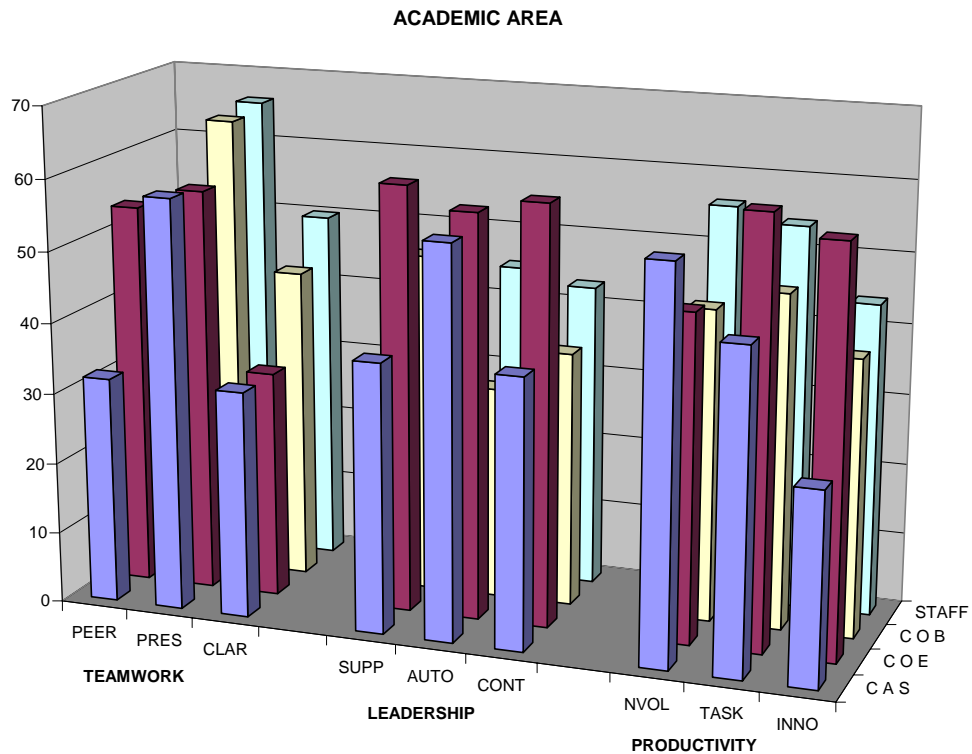
Productivity and its measurement are diverse. It is not simply a counting of the number of things produced. In this report productivity was reported in a three part system that included involvement, task orientation and innovation. EOU's productivity levels seem to be fairly average compared to other organizations. However, the lack of perceived innovation is a significant factor that needs to be addressed in any future organizational improvement efforts.

**IV. DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP INDICATORS  
ACADEMIC AREA**

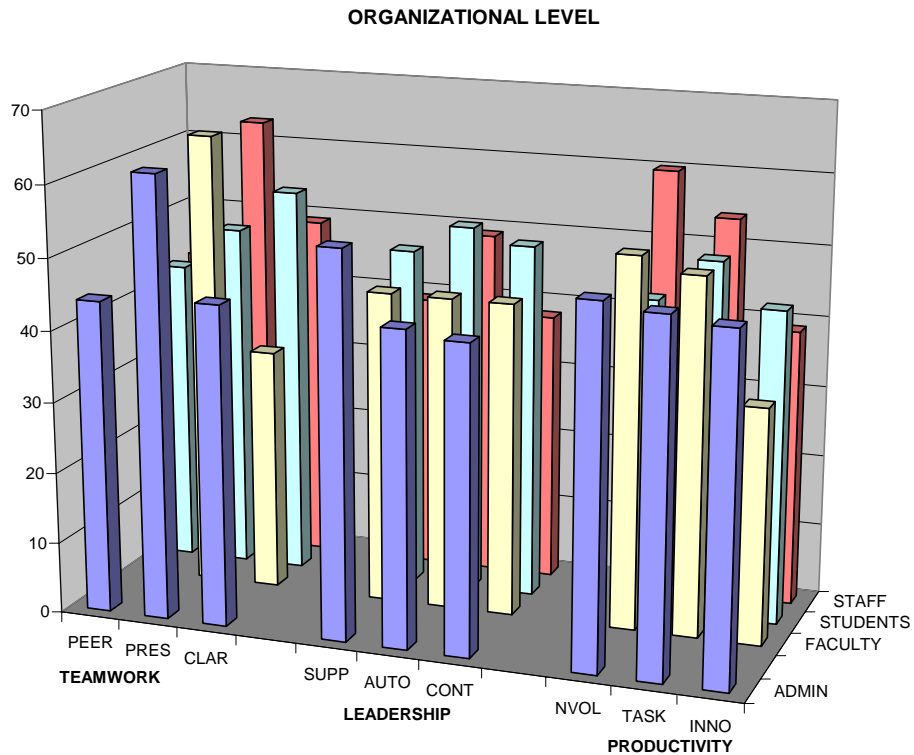
The College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Business have a lack of peer cohesion. There is an overall trend of high work pressure through out the University. There is a pattern of low clarity of communication within the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education.

Overall the patterns indicated in the leadership area are within normal comparative ranges. However, the supervisor support in the College of Arts and Sciences is relatively low as is the sense of autonomy in the College of Business. There is a sense of high management control within the College of Education.

There is an overwhelming feeling of high involvement and attention to task through all of the academic areas. Perhaps one of the more striking patterns is the daunting feeling of little innovation in this organization.



## ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL



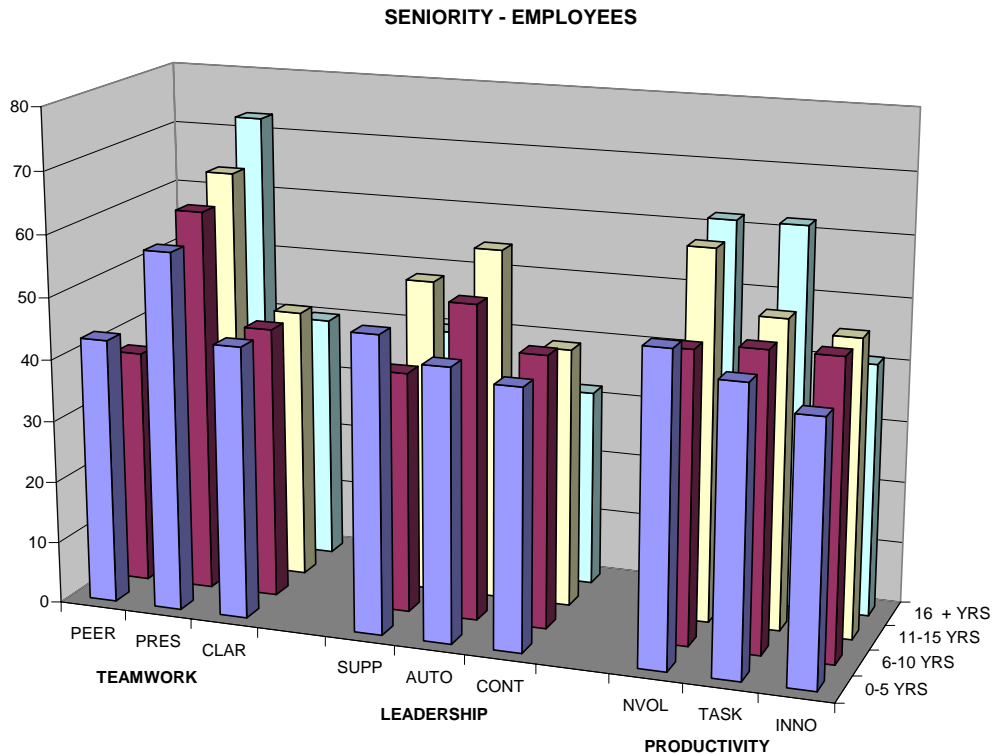
One of the more difficult pieces of information to isolate is exactly which supervisor the respondent is evaluating. In 'critical incident' theory, that would be the most recent connection to the individual answering the survey. However, this institution in the last three years has experienced significant turmoil through out all supervisory ranks. The answer is not easily addressed by pre-defining the 'supervisor' as the individual who most recently left from the top, or the interim replacements, or immediate department heads, or even, in the case of students, a teacher as supervisor. Given the sociological nature of the survey itself, it is best to simply become aware of overall patterns, similarities and gaps.

Once again, the ever present perception of high work pressure is indicated through out the demographic category of organizational level. When the students are calculated into this category, their standardized scores as a group indicate high levels of communication clarity. This is extremely positive, because the primary purpose of this organization is to serve students.

Hall way conversation indicates that the faculty as a group feel excessively controlled, however the actual survey results are within normal comparative ranges. Perhaps the most significant stand out perception in this set is the perceptions of supervisor support within an apparently tightly monitored executive group. From general perceptions of students, faculty and staff, apart from survey results, there is an overall feeling of separation between upper administration and the rest of the University.

One of the more positive patterns in the work environment is the high sense of involvement. The organizational level grouping also reinforces this trend. The lack of innovation continues to surface within the overall patterns of this analysis. In this case specifically, the lack of innovation is felt by the faculty.

## SENIORITY - EMPLOYEES



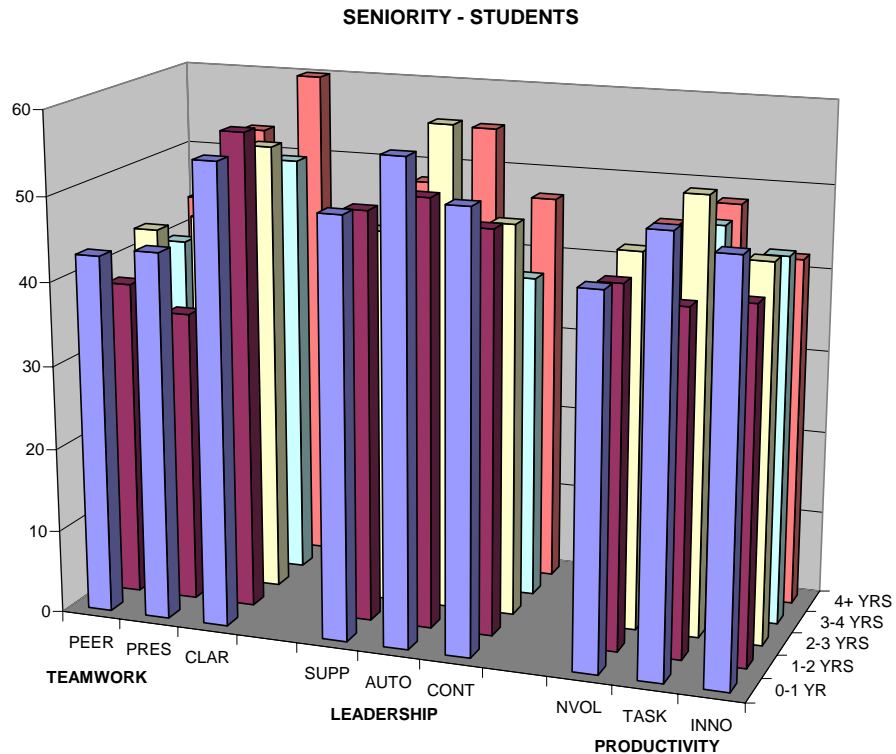
An advantage of this detailed breakdown of demographic groups is to isolate patterns within groups to nurture strengths and become aware of potential gaps and weaknesses that would move the institution away from competitive advantages resulting from core values and behaviors.

Work Pressure continues to increase as employees have been at EOU longer, but is present from the beginning. And in the seniority grouping, low peer cohesion and low clarity is significant relative to the high work pressure.

In a pattern that is consistent to most organizations, workers in the mid-service years tend to approach a decreasing commitment to the organization for many different reasons. Certainly, this group needs the excitement and potential recharging that connects them to revitalized strategic plans. What is more positive than focusing efforts there, is to focus efforts in what is perceived from the under 5 and over 10 years of service employees at all levels. These groups both indicate higher supervisor support, a higher sense of autonomy and personal direction.

A higher sense of involvement and perhaps more importantly a higher sense of innovation is seen in the 6-19 and 11-15 year employee. There is a very real need for the University to innovate in the current environment. Fostering leadership in the 6-10 and 11-15 year employee base has the potential to produce very positive results. Involvement and task orientation seem to increase as employees gain experience. Employees seem to be more motivated between the 6-15 year ranges of seniority.

## SENIORITY - STUDENTS

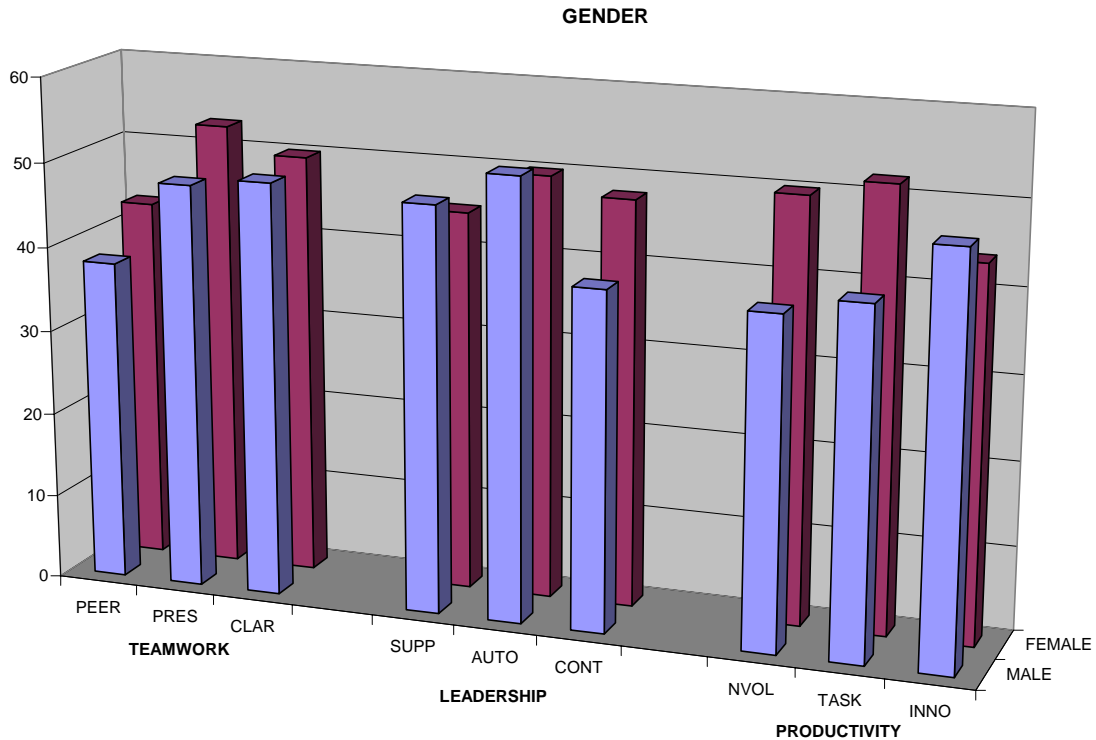


Peer cohesion scores among students tend to fluctuate. As they self select into their majors and degrees, their social circles tend to become more inclusive. The main difference noticed with students was that pressure tended to be high with seniors. Again noticing patterns, a positive indicator is that most student groups have a relatively high sense of clarity.

Beginning students, paradoxically, have both a high sense of supervisor support and management control. In several survey clarifications of 'who are we talking about', many students indicated a teacher student relationship as analogous to the manager employee relationship. Perhaps a beginning student would appropriately feel support from the 'supervisor', we hope, and possibly a bit of control by that same teacher.

In another paradoxical pattern, beginning students displayed a higher sense of innovation than many of the demographic groups. But here, it is only the first year students that perceive this. The balance of allowing that sense of freedom to take risk while also receiving the guidance needed for the 'millennial generation' is an encouraging note for all EOU faculty and staff that deal with first year students.

## GENDER



Assuming that the three to one ratio of female to male respondents is reflective of the University community as a whole, this category, even in close numerical differences represents significant indicators.

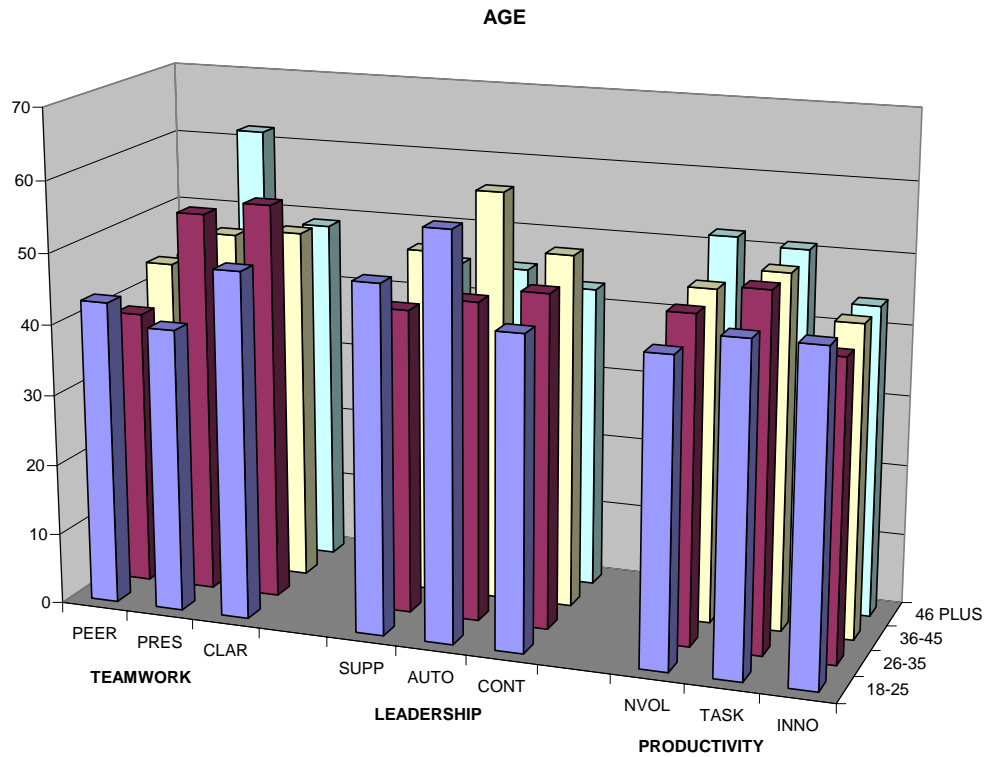
Women were higher in all areas of teamwork with larger gaps in peer cohesion and work pressure. Women reflect higher pressure scores in their overall pattern. Further study of these gaps would be beneficial to increase awareness of the issues and develop positive plans for improvement.

One of the larger gaps in the gender area is the difference in feelings of management control, perhaps due to the small number of male respondents, but more likely due to feelings of being controlled by male managers within the system.

Women also score higher in perceived involvement and task orientation. The males feel a stronger freedom to risk and innovate than do the females.

While the actual numbers in the differences may be small, the differences in relative and statistical comparisons are significant and indicate a need to truly explore these differences and their long term impact on the University.

## AGE

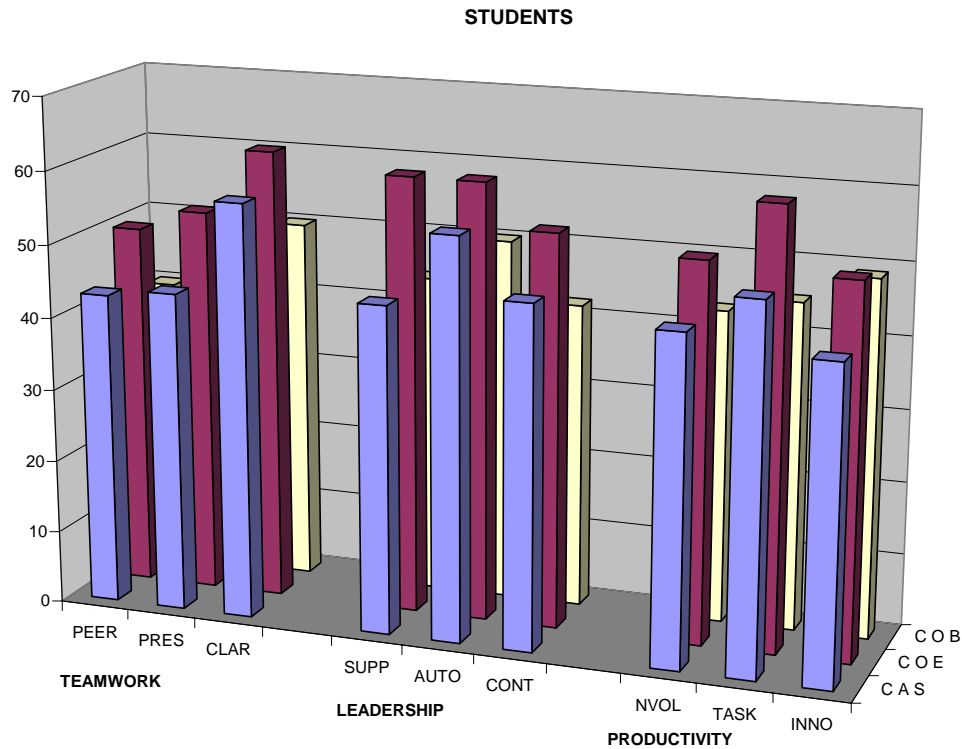


The age separations provide some very interesting possibilities. The 36-45 category is more committed to growth. Certainly the under 35 provides energy and the over 46 group should provide maturity and stability. But the perceptions of the work climate and what that means for future proactive behavior in the 36-45 group indicate positive factors that should be built on. This group could provide example and leadership for the University. The peer cohesion of the 35-45 group is relatively higher than the other age groups. Their group connectivity could be built on for projects in line with the role and mission of the University.

Two other factors that add to the possibility of positive strategic results are the amount of supervisor support and autonomy that this group of 36-45 feels in their work at EOU.

Furthermore, the involvement and task orientation perceptions with the productivity area also indicate a major possibility for leadership roles within the University.

## STUDENTS – BY ACADEMIC AREA

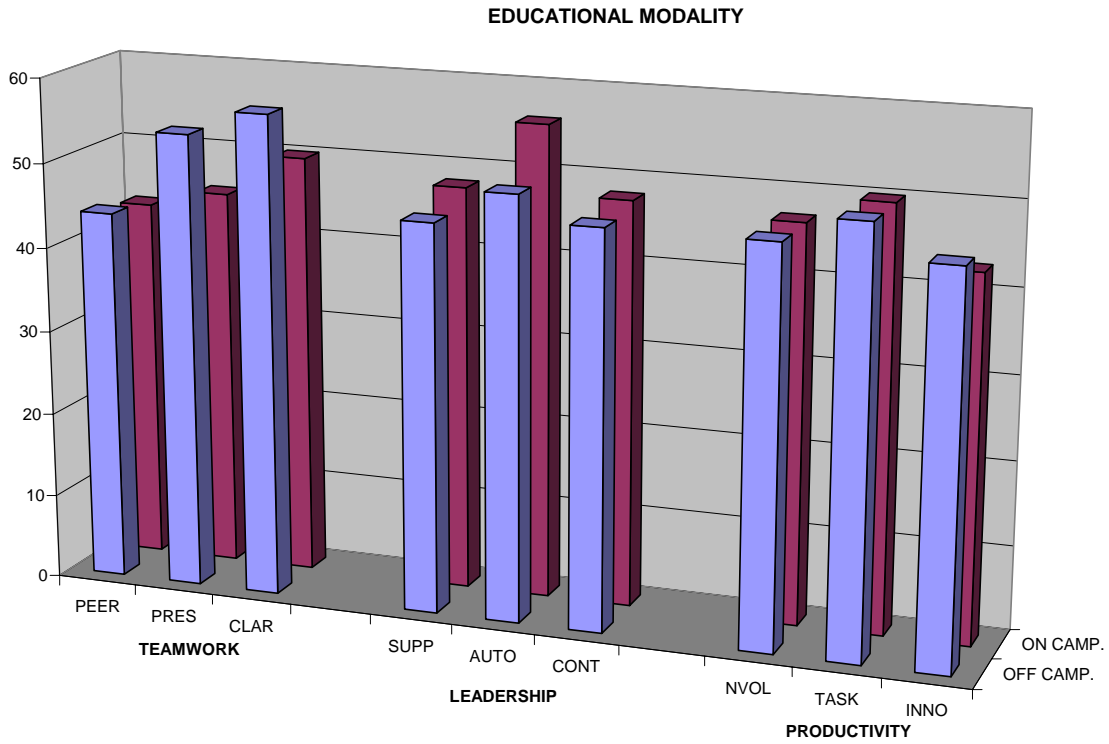


The highest perception of peer cohesion in the students is in the College of Arts and Sciences, perhaps due to the need to protect turf in the small headcount majors. The lowest perception of peer cohesion in the students is in the College of Business. This is perhaps due to the extremely fragmented student base. The COB is the largest headcount program in the University and the percentage of off-campus students range from 35% to 50% of the total. A virtual student is difficult to connect to a group.

The difference in high perceptions of supervisor support and management control in the College of Education and the low perceptions of supervisor support and management control in the College of Business is probably due to the essential role of student preparation. The College of Education is preparing students for a career of rules and regulations while the College of Business faculty are trying to wean their students to independence from the first day of their first business class.

One of the more surprising scores is the low perceived innovation score in the College of Arts and Sciences. In most of the career tracks and liberal arts course, innovation and creativity are cherished. This low score is surprising.

## EDUCATIONAL MODALITY



Students, faculty and staff who consider themselves dominantly off-campus in their focus tend to feel more work pressure and freedom to innovate, but less free and autonomous. Students, faculty and staff who consider themselves dominantly on-campus feel more free and autonomous. This paradox of freedom close to 'headquarters' is a consistent pattern in extended organizations.

## **V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

In early student explorations, even before the survey results were collected, tabulated and displayed, of the foundations of organizational behavior including both structural and behavioral components several differences between EOU and other organizations became apparent. One major difference became glaring in a cursory look at EOU's most recent organizational charts compared with similar institutions of higher learning. EOU places an inordinate amount of emphasis on administration rather than teaching. While giving superficial attention to student centeredness, the charts more accurately reflect the real behavior. Administrative and support functions are reflected in the charts and faculty and students have less space in the picture. The organizational behavior class has discovered that, in theory at least, the central activity of an organization should be obvious from any viewpoint, and the administrative and support functions should be just that, support.

From both student conversations around the campus through out this term, and the survey results, it is apparent that the real behavior focuses more on administrative regimen and not on student learning.

The newer and more progressive theory behind strategic management is that core values should drive core competencies which in turn push competitive advantage in the organization's market place. IF student centered is the core value, THEN EOU needs to revisit it's role and mission AND the way it publically and privately communicates and behave concerning this vision.

Even the limited response rate, while within the normal ranges of survey analysis, are indicative of a significant number of EOU members that only give vocal credence to serving students, their behavior does not indicate the same. Certainly the issues of the turbulence around the University and the significant survival mode might explain the lack of response to a very proactive analysis. Successful organizations today are NOT responding and reacting to negativity; they are proactively defining their core values and acting on them. This institution needs to continue to engage the entire University community, students, faculty and staff in this process, NOT just administrators responding to crisis.

This survey process provided a significant amount of very positive information and a snapshot of the inner workings of EOU. With comparisons to two other organizations, EOU had high levels of work pressure, clarity, management control and task orientation. The surveys indicated low levels of peer cohesion, supervisor support, autonomy and innovation. Perhaps the strongest indicators needing more immediate attention are the high score in management control and the low score in innovation. The most significant areas for continued exploration and discovery are the low peer cohesion and high work pressure in the teamwork area, the high management control in the leadership area and the low innovation in the productivity area. Furthermore, the gender issues need further study. Perhaps one of the most significant findings is the overwhelming lack of innovation in an organization that should stand out as an innovator in society. Jack Welch, of GE infamy, once said "If the rate of change outside the organization is faster than the rate of change inside the organization, the end is in sight". Perhaps, we have work to do. From these results, strengths and weaknesses can be explored and acted on, balancing them for continual growth and development as a thriving University.