

## Resistances, results and learning from Organizational Change. The case of the Higher Education Institution in central Mexico

### Resistencia, resultados y aprendizajes del Cambio Organizacional. El caso de una Institución de Educación Superior del centro de México

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#### Abstract

Organizational change processes are constant and inherent not only in organizations, but in life itself. In this particular case, we will refer to a public institution of higher education (IES) in central Mexico which, as of January 2009, began to operate with a new academic-administrative structure, going from a Napoleonic model to one matrix-departmental-multicampus. Although it seems simple, although the legal-normative process involved difficulties, they were not as many as the resistance that has been experienced since then, and the lessons learned to achieve the transformation that, indisputably, represents this proposal in the academic field. In this work, the results of an investigation dedicated to the analysis of this change and its relationships with the organizational culture will be reported. For the development of this project, documentary research, classical methods such as analysis-synthesis and self-observation were used; all this, with the aim of reflecting on the administrative, labor, academic and personal implications of an organizational change of this magnitude. Likewise, a brief description of some gaps, opened and overcome, is presented; of the learning and the indicators that show us that it is possible to advance in the realization of this organizational change.

**Organizational Change, Higher Education Institution, Organizational Culture**

#### Resumen

Los procesos de cambio organizacional son constantes e inherentes no sólo a las organizaciones, sino a la propia vida. En este caso en particular, nos referiremos a una institución de educación superior (IES) pública del centro de México la cual, a partir de enero de 2009, comenzó a operar con una nueva estructura académico-administrativa, pasando de un modelo napoleónico a uno matricial-departamental-multicampus. Aunque parezca sencillo, si bien el proceso jurídico-normativo implicó dificultades, no fueron tantas como las resistencias que se han vivido desde entonces, y los aprendizajes para llegar a concretar la transformación que, indiscutiblemente, representa esta propuesta en el ámbito académico. En este trabajo se dará cuenta de los resultados de una investigación dedicada al análisis de este cambio y sus relaciones con la cultura organizacional. Para el desarrollo de este proyecto se utilizó la investigación documental, métodos clásicos como el análisis-síntesis y la autoobservación; todo ello, con el objetivo de reflexionar sobre las implicaciones administrativas, laborales, académicas y personales de un cambio organizacional de esta envergadura. Asimismo, se presenta una breve descripción de algunas brechas, abiertas y superadas; de los aprendizajes y los indicadores que nos muestran que es posible avanzar en la concreción de este cambio organizacional.

**Cambio Organizacional, Institución de Educación Superior, Cultura Organizacional**

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**Introduction**

*No one bathes in the river twice because everything changes in the river and in which he bathes.*

Heraclitus

When we talk about organizational change, we think of modification, movement, conversion, moving and, above all, transformation... Because change is inherent, not only in organizations, but in life itself, since every day that passes, we are a little older and, therefore, something is different.

According to the magnitude of the change, it can have implications in very different components and levels of organizational development, since it functions as a system that integrates a set of coordinated parts, in interaction or interdependence to achieve certain objectives (Johansen, 1993). Thus, in any organization, be it a company or an educational institution, when a profound change is made, it integrates both the organizational structure and the individual people, the groups and, above all, the interactions between these essential elements of Organizational Behavior, linked to the culture and dynamics of the organism in question.

In this case, we will refer to the University of Guanajuato, a public higher education institution in central Mexico which, as of January 2009, began to operate with a new academic-administrative structure, moving from a model based on schools, centers, faculties, and institutes (known as Napoleonic), in force since 1945, to a model based on Departments, Divisions and Campus (called as matrix-departmental-multicampus). Saying it this way might seem like a very simple, simple change, without major complications. However, not only did the legal-normative process involve multiple difficulties, but these were minimal in relation to those experienced, since then, by all the actors involved. Hence the importance of addressing this type of study.

Moving from a Napoleonic model to a matrix-departmental-multicampus model not only concerns the change of names or the organizational structure, but also the construction of a new paradigm in the substantive functions developed by the University:

Teaching, research, extension-dissemination and management and, fundamentally, in the distribution and activities of the main actors of the educational process: students, the reason for being of the Institution; professors, guides of academic development, and, executive authorities, who have as one of their essential faculties, to guide the work of the corresponding academic-administrative unit. All this, to concretize the indisputable transformation that this proposal represents in the academic field.

Considering the complexity and broadness of the subject, the objective of this article is to give an account of a preliminary analysis of the administrative, labor, academic and personal implications that mean living an organizational change of this magnitude in the Maximum House of Studies of the state of Guanajuato. To this end, and only as a first approach within a more comprehensive research, the present work is dedicated to the study of this transformation and its relations with the organizational culture.

In general, we opt for a qualitative inquiry, and various strategies such as documentary research, self-observation, classical methods such as analysis and synthesis, as well as the beginning of the application of Marvin Weisbord's Six Box Model are included, all of which are presented in the following section. On the other hand, in the development of the article, the links of change with the organizational culture are exposed, based on antecedents, examples and milestones of the institution studied that give it identity.

The environment, theoretical references and some challenges of change are addressed, based on institutional documents that guide and condition it. Also, as part of the results, it is analyzed: the change and the tensions that it has generated in the UG; the organizational structure from the University Normativity and, certain contradictions between change and tradition

Finally, and, by way of conclusions, a brief description of some gaps, open and overcome, and the indicators that show us that, although there is still much to do, fortunately, we are in a new stage that allows us to trust in hope and take advantage of the learning to achieve the realization of this organizational change.

## Methodology

The approach of this work has been based on qualitative research and various methodological strategies have been used, to achieve the proposed objective. In general, within a qualitative approach to research, this is conceived from a holistic perspective since the studies, oriented with greater emphasis to people in particular scenarios, are visualized as a whole, in the search for a global and not fragmented understanding because "what is expected at the end is a smooth description, an experiential understanding and multiple realities" (Álvarez-Gayou, 2006, p.29).

Likewise, educational research is flexible, data collection strategies and, even, the questions that are taken as a starting point are consolidated during the study, in which researchers approach and learn from people in their context, try to identify with these people and not be intrusive, in addition to being respectful and understanding of all perspectives and, in essence, humanists (Álvarez-Gayou, 2006). In this case, the question that has guided this work is: What have been the administrative, labor, academic and personal implications of the change in the organizational structure of the UG? In particular, among the methods used for the development of this project is documentary research, understood as the construction of knowledge from the sources, as "a way of ensuring the tradition of original thought, and bringing it to the present with a hermeneutic reading that favors discussion by making new contributions to scientific development" (Gómez, 2011, p. 230).

Around the subject in question, due to its breadth and complexity, the search for documents was oriented, not only to organizational change, but also to organizational culture, dynamics, and behavior; to what is related to the philosophy of organizations, and to models linked to the analysis, among other aspects, of the structures of institutions. Although some researchers, perhaps, do not consider documentary research as a scientific method to collect information and contribute to knowledge, we agree with Gómez (2011) that, in recent times (more for the social sciences, although not exclusively), it has become a necessity to return or to the sources, to the documents that account for the original thought or proposals, it is, to grant them due credit and contrast with other interpretative sources.

It is about dialogue with the authors and, with this search, "allowing reality itself to be expressed, with logic and arguments, thus building new knowledge" (Gómez, 2011, p. 229). Along with classical methods such as analysis and synthesis, self-observation was used, which "offers the advantage of greater depth and introspection in the meanings and core experiences" (Álvarez-Gayou, 2006, p. 108). Finally, some components of Marvin Weisbord's Six Box Model were also taken up, as a diagnostic tool for Organizational Development, which addresses both formal and informal aspects; that is, what is officially proposed and should happen, along with what is happening (French and Bell, 1996).

From this model comprising: 1. Purposes / 2. Structure / 3. Relationships / 4. Rewards / 5. Leadership, and 6. Useful mechanisms, the first two *boxes* were addressed and the beginning of the analysis of the very diverse and complex relationships between the people who make up the Institution, with their different functions and roles, as well as the main academic-administrative entities that make it up.

## Development

### **Around organizational culture: milestones to understand change at the University of Guanajuato**

It is often referred to that changes are continuous and constant processes, which concern both living beings and organizations. Therefore, it is considered that organizational change is not only inherent but imminent and implies the participation of many efforts and wills, to obtain an improvement (Pérez, Maldonado and Bustamante, 2006). However, although improvement is the goal of any change, it does not mean that it is always achieved on the first attempt, much less that the path is straight and unobstructed. What is an unquestionable fact is that organizations change, as do human beings? In Acosta's words:

*How can we not think that organizations evolve by themselves and by the effect of the environment in which they are realized, if their nature is not properly inert because, saying it sharply, the substance of them is human and in this sense, they are living organisms and are generators of thought (culture) (2002, p. 21).*

From this perspective, it should be noted that these changes in organizations are linked to organizational culture, understood as the system of meanings shared by the members of an organization, which distinguish it from others and can be considered, as in individuals, as their personality. It is a dominant culture, which expresses the main values with which most of the members of the organization identify with, and share (Robbins, s/f).

And why talk about organizational culture? For being the set of values, beliefs, knowledge, and ways of thinking in an organization. Also, because among the elements to understand the organizational culture are stories, anecdotes, legends, ceremonies, symbols ... All this is found at the macro level, both in the federative entities of the Mexican Republic, as well as in the institutions at the meso or micro level.

As for the Institution of Higher Education (IES) that concerns us, as well as in the city of Guanajuato there are multiple and very diverse stories, myths and legends that have transcended the borders of the State (that of the "Alley of the kiss" or the very famous "aunts": the mummies of Guanajuato), there are also many legends (which, sometimes, are confused with history) around the public university of the inhabitants of Guanajuato. Such is the case of the one that exists around Doña Josefa Teresa de Busto y Moya, considered the benefactor and promoter of the Hospice of the Holy Trinity (1732), where the origin of the Institution is established.

It is said that, when Doña Josefa gave up her house to found the College, there was in her room a beehive that she took with her when she moved her residence and, after her death, the bees returned to her home. From this legend were born several deep-rooted symbols, such as: that of the "Legendary Beehive"; the shield of the UG, in whose fields stand out a natural hive, a natural honeycomb and three bees, all of which symbolizes the intense joint work that characterizes us as a university community (see Figure 1), and the fact that "we are bees" (University of Guanajuato, Website, recovered from <https://www.ugto.mx/conoce-la-ug/>).

## UNIVERSIDAD DE GUANAJUATO



**Figure 1** Coat of arms of the University of Guanajuato  
Source: Taken from the Institutional Image Guide.  
<https://www.ugto.mx/imagenug/escudo-ug>

Another important symbol that gives identity to the UG is the University Anthem and, since the beginning of the lyrics by Don Fulgencio Vargas (February 1928), there are well-known iconic phrases (especially the first), not only by the community, but by authorities of different state and even national government agencies:

*Gloria y honor al viejo relicario  
Que prende en argentífero solar  
De sus aulas al nido legendario [...]*

In a brief timeline, it is worth noting that it has been recognized as a Jesuit school from 1744, and after uncertain stages and consolidation, among which its denomination as a State College (1870) stands out, the current University of Guanajuato acquired that status in 1945. Since then, it has maintained a unique organizational profile, perhaps nuanced by the recognition of its autonomy (1994).

All of the above, and many other elements, are part of a strong organizational culture, which is necessary to know because, as Robbins and Judge expressed: "A firm culture provides stability to an organization. But [...] culture doesn't go well with everyone. And for some organizations, it even becomes a major obstacle to change" (2013, p. 512).

The milestone we are dealing with began to take shape at the beginning of the 2000s and was concretized in May 2007, when the LX Constitutional Legislature of the State, approved the new Organic Law of the institution, in force from October of the same year.

With this legal instrument, and with the application of the Organic Statute (March 2008), the University proceeded to change its Napoleonic organizational structure to one of a matrix-departmental-multicampus nature.

In the Opinion of the Commission of Governance and Constitutional Points of the Congress of the State of Guanajuato, it was established the relevance of this transformation and that the University:

*It has proven to be a mature institution with stability in its governing regime. Since its origin it has evidenced its capacity for evolution [...] during these thirteen years of validity [it refers to the Organic Law in force since 1994, when university autonomy was recognized]. However, the university community considers it pertinent to enter a reform process that allows greater dynamism and responds to the current requirements of higher education. That is why the proposed law reflects new academic modalities, Campuses, Divisions and Departments for higher education (University of Guanajuato – UG, 2008, p. 16).*

To understand this reform, it is important to consider that: "Organizational change consists of the set of transformations that are carried out in the different dimensions of organizations, it is produced both by natural forces and driven by the will of those who create and drive them." It is a *planned change*, which can be seen from "the perspective of organizational development, which seeks to promote the improvement of the organization in parallel and contingently with the development of people." And this planned change, constitutes an "intentional transformation, of great magnitude and scope, of the organization, in order to improve its current performance and to project itself into the future" (Acosta, 2002, p. 22).

Although, obviously, this was the intention of the change, in these years, the university community has had moments of hope, uncertainty, frustration, anger, claim, acceptance, adaptation ... in a learning phase not always shared, but immanent to everyday life. We review, then, how this change has been experienced, the costs and value of it, as well as some circumstances, which, from the theoretical and experiential foundation, can result in a more venturesome stage for university academic development.

### **Environments of change. From "Glory and Honor" to Self-Criticism at the University of Guanajuato**

The passing of the years has given us answers about the change at the University of Guanajuato. Some members of the university community, we wondered, at the time of the initiative, why the change of structure was necessary, if the University enjoyed a prestige that the indicators showed: quality programs, suitable profile of the teaching staff, certified administrative procedures, favorable work climate, etc. A glory and an honor, that beyond the lyrics of the University Anthem, we all believed and enjoyed.

However, trends in external evaluation drove to be better and it was decided that the change of academic-administrative structure would be the next step. In addition, the goal of coverage was still pending (the University barely absorbed 3% of the demand) and indicated in the Institutional Development Plan (PlaDI 2002-2010), for which this radical transformation was imposed. That was the indisputable element to believe in the reform, to face the challenges that it would bring with it and to pay the costs that were necessary. The other indicator of the change in structure concerns the cultivation of sciences isolated from each other, in the different academic fields, before which the proposed solution arose from the formation of the Divisions; that is, the great academic challenge of this change was interdiscipline first, and transdiscipline later. In this sense, on the one hand, it is explicit that the Organic Law:

*It must contribute substantially to increasing, with quality, equity and relevance, the number of spaces [...] in such a way that the opportunity for young people to access higher education is strengthened by the permanent action of the University of Guanajuato, in all regions of the State (UG, 2008, p. 13).*

On the other hand, it was emphasized the great importance of the integral formation of the students, and in how the academic-administrative reformation would allow "that the students have more opportunities for an interdisciplinary formation [... that] will temper their character, develop their skills and equip them with the tools that allow them to be more open, understanding, tolerant, respectful and socially productive entities" (UG, 2008, p. 14).

Based on theoretical references, organizational change implies, on the one hand, a response to external changes and, on the other, an internal rearrangement (Acosta, 2002). And, from the general theory of systems, every organization is considered as an open system that, therefore, interacts with the external environment and, at the same time, impacts on the internal areas and units of the organism in question. In the same way it works in educational institutions, and, in the case of the University of Guanajuato, it is evident (although it is not shouted) that the change responded, to a large extent, to external pressures, above all, from evaluation bodies that guided the existence of a matrix structure that, at least in theory, is more transversal and contributes to interdisciplinarity.

It is common for transformation by pressure and not by conviction to be assumed as a trend and that, despite understanding the need for change, it is carried out without a deep analysis and without being able to foresee or ensure the results (Sandoval, 2014). In the case of the UG, although it cannot be said that the change was not thought of, it was probably impossible to conceive how the actors were going to react, how much resistance they were going to put in, or prevent the bureaucratization of administrative procedures.

As Acosta (2002) put it: "organizational change occurs in the entire organization or in its structures, in processes, areas or dimensions (politics, internal functioning, external relations, etc.)" (p. 10). However, it depends on the emphasis that is placed, either on the formal organizational structure, properly, on the organizational culture, human behavior or, in procedural, technological or infrastructure aspects.

From this perspective, the transformation at the University of Guanajuato focused on the organizational structure, although, obviously, issues related to people, their functions (within the framework of structural change) and their interactions were also addressed; in addition to aspects related to institutional philosophy, such as the Mission, aims and university values.

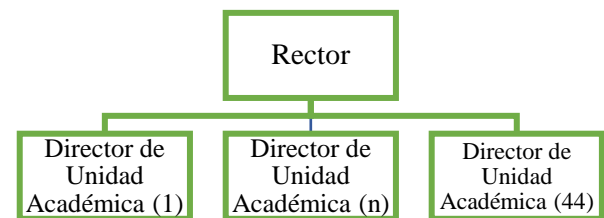
"Glory and honor to the old reliquary..." Could it still sound after these years of having undertaken the reform? Some data of what we experienced, which we present below, can indicate the meaning of the phrase.

## Results

### Change and tensions: from theory to practice and everyday experiences

The Organic Law of the University, approved in October 2007, by the LX Legislature of the Congress of the State of Guanajuato, marked the greatest milestone in its history since 1945. Thus, the Institution, with its schools and faculties, lived its last months as such, in a transition towards the departmental-matrix-multicampus model.

A description of the structure of the University of Guanajuato up to that date was simple. As for the government exercised by the one-person authorities (we will focus on them, for practical purposes, without ignoring that the collegiate bodies are the highest governing structures), it was reduced to a Rector and the Directors of the various academic entities (Institutes, Faculties, Schools and Centers). The authority, responsibility and decision of university life was concentrated in these two figures (see Figure 2). In the current model, the governance of the University consists of a Rector General, Campus Rectors, Division Directors and Department Directors, who respond to this structure.



**Figure 2** Outline of the one-person authorities in the previous structure

Source: Own elaboration based on the Napoleonic structure

The first concrete derivation of the Organic Law was the appointment of the single-person authorities in 2008: the Rector General, 4 Campus Rectors, 13 Division Directors and 49 Department Directors, were appointed in staggered and consecutive processes. The university community lived and continued, almost normally, in the daily life of its chairs and other activities. A conviction and confidence that something good would come was breathed in the environment, in a context of expectation and interest.

At the end of 2008, the collegiate governing bodies were erected: General University Council (highest authority), University Campus Councils and Divisional Councils. With these figures, the structural change and the scenario were ready for the implementation of the matrix-departmental-multicampus model. The academic structure was established. Where did the administrative structure forget, who would be the people in charge of communicating, animating, and supervising the new organizational model? The theoretical analysis shows us that it was omitted to detect the "agents of change [...] who are in charge of the task of implementing the necessary changes for organizational development [...] It is up to them to convince, stimulate and coordinate and manage all the human and material resources that lead to the desired objective." (Garbanzo-Vargas, 2016, p. 74). Undoubtedly, the results of this process would have been different – perhaps with more certainty – if we had selected these agents, capable of collaborating in the transition from one university to another.

In addition to this selection of agents, as Zimmermann has put it, it was necessary:

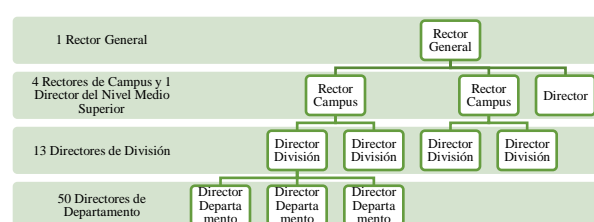
*To capture [this] change thoroughly as an organizational learning process that aspires to change both attitudes and values of individuals, as well as organizational processes and structures. The axis of rotation consists of a communication work, cautious and sometimes slow, to prepare the opening and the entrance towards a possible planned change, so that the organization becomes "smarter" (2000, p.74).*

As stated above, at dawn 2009 the "new" University was outlined, with two subsystems: Higher Level and Upper Middle Level (Article 11 of the *Organic Law of the University of Guanajuato* – LOUG).

a) A College of the Upper Middle Level, now composed of 11 schools. (It is worth clarifying that this subsystem practically preserved the previous structure, with its government figures at the campus level: its academy, its director and its academic and administrative secretaries. The essential change is the introduction of a Director of the College of the Upper Middle Level, equivalent to the Campus Rectors in the Subsystem of Higher Level).

b) Four *campii* for the upper level: Celaya-Salvatierra, Guanajuato, Irapuato-Salamanca, and León. The "Campuses" (it was decided to use the term for both the singular and the plural), are academic-administrative entities geographically located in the development poles of the State, waiting for each one to meet the very specific educational needs of the region. The Guanajuato Campus, as is to be expected, is the most complete and complex of the four since it inherits the core of the origin of the University itself. He only gathered, in round numbers, 50% of the entire institution: enrollment, professors and new dependencies.

c) Thirteen Divisions and 50 Departments. In accordance with the provisions of article 13 of the LOUG, the Divisions are integrated into the Campuses, and "are constituted by Departments due to their similarity or disciplinary affinity or object of study. Educational programs and students are attached to them." The Departments, on the other hand, "are the basic academic entities for the realization of the essential functions of the University. They will be made up of integrated professors based on the affinity of disciplinary or thematic interests." Figure 3 shows, broadly speaking, the not so new academic structure of the University of Guanajuato, considering only the single-person authorities.



**Figure 3** Outline of the single-person authorities in the current academic-administrative structure of the University of Guanajuato

Source: Own elaboration based on the unipersonal authorities within the matrix-departmental-multicampus structure

It is striking that, in theory the matrix model is more horizontal and favors "greater decentralization and deconcentration of decisions, both of collegiate bodies and of single-person authorities" (Current Regulations of the University of Guanajuato, 2008, p. 70), as well as the duty of the University to ensure "mechanisms and procedures for the linkage between its Campuses, Divisions and Departments (fourth paragraph of article 13 of the LOUG).

However, in practice, there is a greater verticality, with more levels and less margin of action in the Departments, which constitute the basic nucleus for the development of essential functions and where there are no own resources and, in many cases, there is a dependency - and even subordination - to the Divisions, in particular, to the qualities as a leader and the leadership styles of executive authority at that level.

As for the university community, the expectations of the various sectors were different: the students barely knowing what was happening, the teaching staff waiting, the administrative staff with an appeased fear, the authorities in the construction of the profiles of functions. Despite this, again, all the actors showed patience and responsibility, held back the anxiety and continued their work as every day.

Raising a great work is not possible overnight. So, from October 2008 to January 2009, the university community was waiting for everything to be not only new, but better. This was not the case in the following ten years, in areas as specific as the lines of authority in the different headquarters and the bureaucratic-administrative procedures. On the contrary, from the beginning, there were perceptions that alerted, warned, remembered, that the much-desired matrix-departmental modality would not be simple. Maybe it would have been easier if it was not based on a previous structure, but it was not so: behind that change a whole tradition of doing things was maintained.

A calmer analysis has shown us that one of the traditions that has charged the most costs are the figures of the old authorities and, therefore, of the faculties and attributions of each one. The University of Guanajuato was a territory governed by a rector and 44 directors of academic units (schools, centers, faculties, and institutes); the rest of the management staff were "supportive". In this way, the professors identified as "bosses" only two: their director and the rector, and they were close presences. Similarly, students identified the academic secretary and the director of and in their academic unit; from those moments, in all cases, the authorities are more and in some cases they are remote. Administrative procedures are slower, no responsibility is identified for various daily matters, etc.

Simply put, we have spent years with the perception that we were better off before, and that the new structure has hurt many and many. The theory accounts for these facts, as a direct result of a resistance. Opposition to change is that it threatens the needs of security, social interaction, status or self-esteem. (Chirinos, s/f). In this regard, it has been hypothesized that:

*Even if the directives have sufficient power to implement the changes, there will be forces that will put up a level of resistance directly proportional to the power of influence they have over the internal groups. From another point of view, the speed of change is determined by a law of inertia, that is: if the organization is in a natural process of change, then it will change rapidly while if it is going through a moment of stability and equilibrium, it will tend to oppose with greater resistance to change and therefore the speed of change will be lower" (Acosta, 2002, p.23).*

Zimmermann confirms this assertion when saying: "When we want to bring about a thorough change in an organization, the time needed is perhaps the most important factor for success" (2000, p. 74). He explains that we often forget that organizations have a certain ambivalence between the productive and social aspect: because the modification of internal rules, the division of labor, the assignment of functions, procedures, technology, etc., "simultaneously change people in organizations and interpersonal relationships" (p.75). He adds: "An organizational change directly affects the biographical and emotional roots and professional career of the people involved, their individual identity and their social position" (p. 73).

In this same sense, Chirinos in quote from Gallardo (1996), points out that, in the resistance to change, the emotional aspect is expressed with all clarity, as, in fact, we have witnessed, going from the stage of Denial (anxiety), Defense (apathy and anger and incipient analysis of the situation), Acceptance (impotence, gestation of possible solutions) and Adaptation or assimilation (satisfaction). As in any human experience, there is a multiplicity of nuances, but the evidence allows us to affirm that, in general, the university community has already gone through these phases, in search of consolidation.



### Between change and tradition: gaps and learning

More than ten years after the change of academic-administrative structure, progress has been made in the understanding of these transformations and in the development of the activities inherent to each of the levels within the organization. However, the tradition in the development of some processes still weighs heavily and, therefore, gaps remain in terms of the complete application of the complex organizational changes that were introduced at the University.

One of the problems that persists is derived from the doubling of the structures and single-person authorities, the "windows" increased and, therefore, the bureaucracy... The procedures are slower and, sometimes, involve long transfers, due to the remoteness of some venues. However, it must be recognized that the authorities have tried to expedite them and to comply with the provisions of article 6 of the Organic Law of the University of Guanajuato, which makes it clear that it is up to it: "To develop its academic and administrative organization, observing the principle that administrative activities are subject to those of an academic nature" (section II).

Another situation that has not been eliminated is related to the faculties and scope in the management of the directors of the Department who, despite being the academic leaders and those in charge of conducting the development of the essential functions of the University, do not have the resources for it, and depend on the distribution that is made in the Divisions to which they are assigned. An interpretation of the process experienced around the change of organizational model at the University of Guanajuato, is facilitated by the theory of organizational learning, postulated by authors such as Senge (1992), Argyris and Schön (1996), Leithwood and Louis (1998) Bolívar (1999, 2000a), cited in Chirinos, s/f. An organizational learning conceived by some authors as:

*Process and result, is the process by which people and groups within the organization develop new competencies, and in terms of the result, it would be "learned" knowledge, the demonstrated competencies of the members, which, applied at work, allow them to achieve efficacy (Cervantes, 2021, p. 2).*

In this learning journey, we can appreciate two aspects that explain such a theory: one of them refers to the nature of learning and the other to the subjects who learn. As for the nature of learning, generative and second-order learning is defined as the type of learning of the organization. In relation to the subjects, Organizational Learning supposes the existence of learning at three levels: individual, group and organizational (Romero, 2003, p. 6). Here we allow ourselves to suggest the paths to follow by the different instances once the lessons have been achieved.

The critical mass of the University of Guanajuato, made up of faculty and students, is a patient and understanding community, but, above all, responsible and committed. After odd episodes, at this time, initiatives must emerge from the official leadership, but also from the academics.

It is in the Departments where academic life takes place; made up of full-time professors organized in Academic Bodies or research groups; part-time teachers, who mainly attend to teaching. The forms of collegiate life must arise from the professors themselves, whose essence of their work is identified with the consolidation or promotion of research and teaching, their link with networks of national or international colleagues, etc. In these dependencies is where the following projects or initiatives can and should be forged:

- a) The research nucleated in the academic bodies, in connection with projects of other academic bodies of the Division, the Campus and the University.
- b) The consolidation of educational programs (careers, degrees) through quality teaching of specialists in these areas of knowledge, enriched by the participation of teachers from other disciplinary areas.
- c) The curricular development of educational programs as a product of collegiate work, led by the Department Directors and by the Heads of the Academic Bodies.

On the other hand, from the Divisions (to which the educational programs and the students are assigned) it corresponds to lead the following tasks, also tending to achieve the interdisciplinary-transdiscipline:

- a) Priority attention to the integral formation of the student, as the center of the Educational Model of the University of Guanajuato (another normative change that was conceived in 2011).
- b) Interdisciplinary research according to the lines cultivated in that area. The Division must then promote the consolidation of its scientific work and even propose the lines of development of transdisciplinary research through coexistence with other Divisions.
- c) The teaching enriched by the professors of all the Departments, from the subjects or common subjects of that Division.
- d) The curricular flexibility that fosters, effectively, a more complete training that goes from monodiscipline to interdiscipline and transdiscipline.

As for the Campuses, from there must start the strategies that meet the development of the disciplines in line with the needs and social requirements of the geographical regions they cover. Among others, the Campuses are responsible for the following tasks:

- a) The design of a master plan to regulate the mobility of teachers and students, privileging the exchange between disciplines, through the issuance and monitoring of strategies for the review, updating, modification and creation of new educational programs with a high sense of social relevance.
- b) The design and implementation of alternative forms of education that optimize the academic and physical infrastructure of the Campuses, which lower the geographical limitations for dialogue between disciplines, teachers, and students.
- c) The constant, permanent and pertinent updating of the professors, through an institutional program, promoting a new work environment that is reflected in the participation and collaboration of the entire university community.

And, in the end, from the General Rectory, we must wait for the institutional policies that govern the entire University. Among other tasks, we write down the following:

- a) The expansion of the coverage and educational offer of the Institution, with quality, equity and relevance
- b) The concretion of the educational model that has students as its center, but that must start from a *new teacher*.
- c) The application of academic models or curricular structure that promotes interrelation through the educational programs of the various disciplines cultivated at the University.
- d) The promotion and strengthening of internationalization, above all, with prestigious institutions abroad.

Finally, it is essential to recognize that, in these processes of constant learning around organizational changes, the most important thing is to focus on people, who are the ones who think, gestate, and develop these changes.

In this sense, we must bear in mind what was raised by Stephen Covey (1995), who proposed as a necessity, precisely, that we consider the people in the organization as we want them to treat the other people with whom they interact. And, we add one of his most famous phrases:

*You can buy a person's work, but you cannot buy your heart or your mind. At the heart are their loyalty and enthusiasm and in his mind, his creativity, his ingenuity, and his intellectual resources.*

Stephen Covey

### **By way of conclusions: a transition to hope**

Beyond the wear and tear and perceptions of the university community, of the real and figurative difficulties, the academic-administrative structure of the University of Guanajuato tries to respond to the demands of a world submerged in uncertainty, in complexity, in the demand for a new profile of students and graduates. In this way, and after having spent the last few years working steadily to reach the concretion of the matrix-departmental-multicampus model, perhaps we are witnessing the gateway to academic work where dialogue, interrelation and collaboration take place.

The invitation to advance begins with department heads, as academic leaders, focused on academic and non-administrative management. Next, the call is for the Divisions, since the educational programs are assigned to them (the administrative part, but also the heading for their academic development), until involving the Campus Rectories, where the strategies for the most socially relevant educational development reside; and, of course, all in response to the leadership of the Rectory General.

From 2015 we began to glimpse a small thread of light towards hope: the one-person authorities already have enough learning to consolidate the structure and clean up the work environment; we trust that the professors have overcome amazement, surprise and even disappointment to work collegially within and outside the walls of the Departments, supported and promoted by the Divisions. And, without a doubt, it will continue to be the students who continue to show us that coexistence and transfers between the various disciplinary positions are possible and let us learn from their flexibility and their confidence in a future that always impels forward.

They have been years of learning, of experiences that can be shared, of reflections that have taught us that we were neither so mature nor so finished, of applying tolerance and humility as authorities, collaborators, and subordinates. We are now on the threshold of a total renewal of the authorities that began in the last five years: welcome the air of hope, of continuing to trust, of waiting for the University to walk through the reality of humanism, respecting the dignity of each person, beyond taking care of the standards and indicators required by external evaluation. The costly learning acquired must now bear fruit.

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