

Engagement: Harnessing the power of the human element to drive successful  
change

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## **Dedication**

*This is dedicated to my dudes. My husband Todd and dog Newman for whom I am eternally grateful.*

## **About the Author**

Amber Cellotti is an employee of Academic Support Resources at the University of Minnesota and has worked in graduate education student services for the last 10 years. Through this role she has been a part of several change initiatives varying in scale and even though change management is not written into the job description it is one that is taken on with pride.

Ms. Cellotti's first experience with change at the University was as an undergraduate student experiencing the quarter to semester conversion and implementation of PeopleSoft 8.9. As an end user, the change was seamless speaking to the quality of the work done by those behind the scenes.

As an employee of the Graduate Student Services and Progress office, Ms. Cellotti was heavily involved in managing the student service's website content migration from Contribute to UM Content. While relatively small in scale, this project laid the foundation for understanding the importance of being strategic with content available online and creating a user-friendly interface.

In July 2012, Ms. Cellotti changed reporting lines from the Graduate School to Academic Support Resources and with that sparked her interest in managing the human component of change and the effects of ill-managed initiatives. The change in reporting lines was part of a larger graduate education restructuring and with that brought new policies to be implemented. Ms. Cellotti currently serves as a co-chair of the ad-hoc graduate education policy group looking at revising policy language so that the content is concise and reflects day-to-day practices. The restructuring of graduate education has also brought with it new tools available to students and staff to move away from paper processes and Ms. Cellotti has worked on several of these projects in both design and communication.

Most recently, Ms. Cellotti is serving as a subject matter expert (SME) on the Academic Advisement (AA) module for the Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program. In this role, she works with business analysts and stakeholder groups to gather business requirements to aid in the design of the AA degree audit and online graduate degree plan.

In the future, Ms. Cellotti will be moving on to a new role in the Office of the Registrar at the University of Minnesota focusing more exclusively on that office's project and change management initiatives in both undergraduate and graduate education.

## Executive Summary

This study used the Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program (ESUP) at the University of Minnesota to test the research question: how does engagement impact perceptions of change and feelings of self-efficacy? ESUP, a complex initiative involving many different audiences and various levels of engagement, provided a perfect opportunity to gauge differences between perceptions of change and feelings of self-efficacy dependent on levels of involvement as well as developing an understanding of messaging techniques to reach a variety of end-users.

Kurt Lewin's (1947) change management model and Isabella's (1990) individual journey through change model were used to set the stage for looking at engagement from a system and individual perspective. Individual variables such as resistance to change and the importance of building readiness through engagement were also explored. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) was identified as a key component in engagement due to the tenets of creating self-efficacy through perceived behavioral control. Looking to a deeper level of involvement, Participative Decision-Making was explored as a way to "bring meaningfulness to work" (Conway, 1984). Finally, Media Richness Theory created a framework to analyze the current messaging strategy for ESUP.

Three research methods were deployed to study the overall research question as well as two hypotheses. A communication channel audit was completed on 219 communications and the results discovered that along the media richness scale, 64% of communications were through a lean channel. An online survey was conducted to gauge external engagement and the results showed that the relationship between engagement and perception ( $p < .001$ ) and engagement and self-efficacy ( $p < .001$ ) was supported, suggesting that those who are more engaged in the change are more likely to have positive perceptions of change and greater feelings of self-efficacy. In-depth interviews then looked to internal engagement and a deeper level of involvement through Participative Decision-Making. Results suggested that as the level of involvement increases (from low to high) that the perception of change trends more positive. The results regarding self-efficacy were too variable to draw a direct correlation between the level of involvement in participative decision-making and feelings of self-efficacy.

The overall findings lead to eight recommendations for the ESUP team to consider as it deploys its communication strategy for delivering messages about change. Recommendations include, mapping the individual end-user journey based on key audiences to reach the communication "sweet spot," creating opportunities for engagement through richer media, generating genuine messages while operating from a "single voice" perspective, and creating clearer feedback channels.

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## INTRODUCTION

Change is an ever-increasing staple in organizational life, and in order to remain at the forefront, organizations need to be able to adapt and be nimble. Changes can range from small-scale implementations such as a new way to report vacation time to large-scale system-wide changes with impacts that spiral out to all facets of the organization. Understanding how to manage change regardless of scale is a technique that any organization must have at their disposal. In addition, organizations need to look at change not only as a system, but also the individual components and in particular, the human element. According to Informationweek.com, “the failure rate for technology projects is anywhere from 37% to 75%” increasing the need for strong communication and engagement.

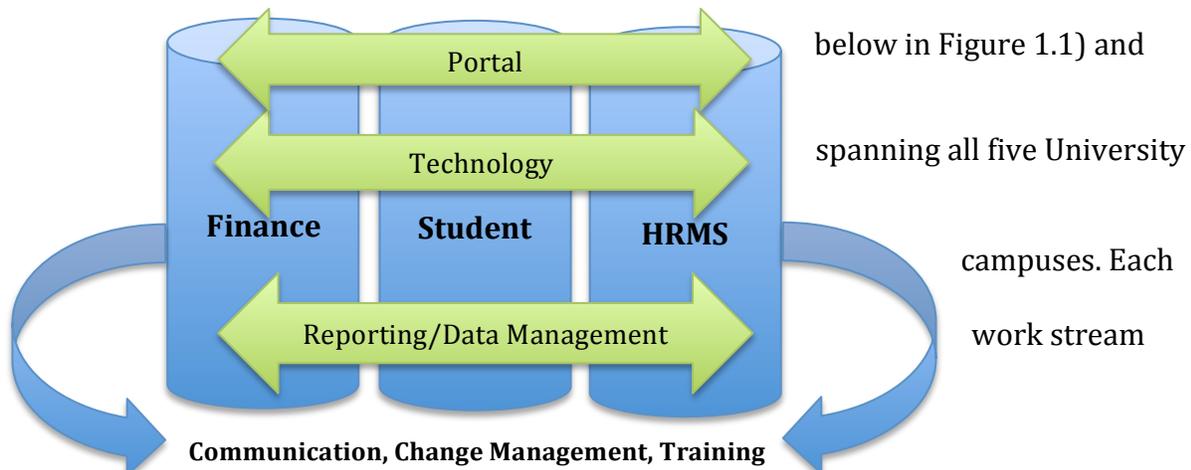
So, how do organizations know which model to use? A simple Google search of “change management model” yields 95M results – slightly intimidating. While many of the models are simply recreations of the same wheel with tweaks here and there, they do share something in common. They lack the understanding of the human element in change and the power that comes with harnessing that understanding. Developing new technology or techniques or enhancing existing processes can seem to move an organization forward, but if end-users do not adopt those changes or support them, it is time and money wasted. Organizations must recognize that a system is only as good as the people who are using it and the people who are supporting it. By optimizing opportunities for engagement, organizations can build a feeling of connectedness to the end product increasing the likelihood of success.

This study asks the question: **how does engagement impact perceptions of change and feelings of self-efficacy?** Additionally, the medium (or media) used to disseminate communication regarding change will also be explored. These two factors will be analyzed under the lens of the Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program (herein referred to as “ESUP”) at the University of Minnesota (“University”).

**Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program**

ESUP is an \$83.5M project initiated in 2012 chartered to upgrade the technical platform (PeopleSoft) of student, human resources, and financial systems at the University. The ESUP team is charged with analyzing business processes that use these core systems, simplifying systems where possible (often resulting in changes), and providing change management, training, and support. The main goal of ESUP is creating a technical platform that allows the ability to adopt more best practices in higher education.

ESUP is a complex initiative comprising eight different work streams (depicted



*Figure 1.1 ESUP Organizational Structure*

Three pillars make up the main work streams of ESUP – Finance (i.e., EFS), Student,

and Human Resource Management System (HRMS). Across those pillars are four smaller work streams (reporting and data management are considered separate, but represented as one) that span across the main work streams as each have touch points within the respective silos. The portal work stream represents the front facing system that will replace the myU portal and will act as the “gateway” into the self-service functions in PeopleSoft. The technology, reporting, and data management work streams are critical in ensuring that end-users have the data that they need in a way that is accessible. The final work stream focuses on communication, change management, and training and is arguably the most important – an organization cannot implement a system if the users don’t know about it and don’t know how to use it. This work stream encompasses the entirety of the project and with that the most challenges.

### **Issue Background**

Due to the complex nature of ESUP, this study will focus specifically on the “student” work stream, which looks at functions related to academic advisement, admissions, financial aid, SEVIS, student finance, and student records. All of the work streams are operating under the same project management methodology adopted by the University’s partner, Cedar Crestone (CCI). This methodology moves ESUP through five phases as shown below in Figure 1.2.



**Figure 1.2 CCI Methodology**

The student work stream is also using this methodology to drive the overall student communication plan. The communication plan is divided into two sections focusing on internal communication and external communication. Internal communication is being driven by the first two phases: Plan and Discover and Analyze and Design. The goal is to build communication channels and trust internally. These first two phases allowed for several engagement opportunities with internal staff through “fit-gap” sessions and interactive design and prototyping sessions. In these sessions, internal staff looked at the functionality in the current 8.9 version of PeopleSoft along with the delivered functionality in version 9.0 to determine where there were gaps in functionality as well as making many business process decisions to retire current functionality. This allows the University to use PeopleSoft 9.0 as a delivered “out of the box” product and utilize all of the features and standard functionality without having to make costly modifications to the system.

The second phase of the student communication plan looks to the final three phases of the CCI methodology in order to leverage channels and relationships established internally in order to build engagement externally. This is where the student work stream currently stands and where this study seeks to provide direction. The audience makeup for the student work stream is so varied that care must be taken to deliver the right messages, at the right time, to the right people, in the right way – the communication sweet spot. Finding that “sweet spot” is tricky as students and employees are constantly inundated with a variety of messages from

many different facets of the University so care must be taken to strategically craft messaging that stands out and engages the audience. Not doing so creates the potential for important information to get lost amongst the myriad other communications and creating a sense of “nobody told me,” that can lead to frustration and negative perceptions later on. The overall goal of this study is to determine if there is a relationship between engagement and perceptions of change and feelings of self-efficacy and how to optimize that relationship to drive successful change.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature reviewed herein will focus on several themes related to the overall research question seeking to establish a relationship between engagement and positive perceptions of change and engagement and increased feelings of self-efficacy. Several models are explored that look at the phases of organizational change. One model is then selected to set the stage for an individual focus on change looking to how individuals process change, what contributes to change resistance, and how to optimize opportunities to build readiness and engagement. One particular engagement method will be reviewed with respect to the internal focus of ESUP – participative decision-making. Finally, to round out the communications structure, message delivery will be explored.

### **Organizational change**

Understanding change at a system level creates a backdrop for understanding change at an individual level. The phases of organizational change show that success

may be contingent on a variety of factors and also allow organizations to plan for engagement opportunities.

The literature available on organizational change and implementing change is vast and varied each with its own perspective on the phases of organizational change. Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) narrow the literature in their review of organizational change theory and research and focus on four particular models to condense the vast landscape into a focused understanding from which to build upon.

Lewin's (1947) simple three-part change management model (Figure 1.3) describes change progressing through successive phases – unfreezing, changing, and (re)freezing. Lewin quite literally took the concept of a physical change with water and used that to describe organizational change at a high level. His model outlines the need to ensure employees are ready for change, executing and supporting the change, and then reinforcing the change to make sure it is adopted and permanent. The simplicity of this model by no means undermines the complexity of many change initiatives; in fact it is this model with a less prescribed approach that allows the most flexibility and fluidity for organizations. The structure is simple, but the room for interpretation and building in multiple engagement points gives it weight.

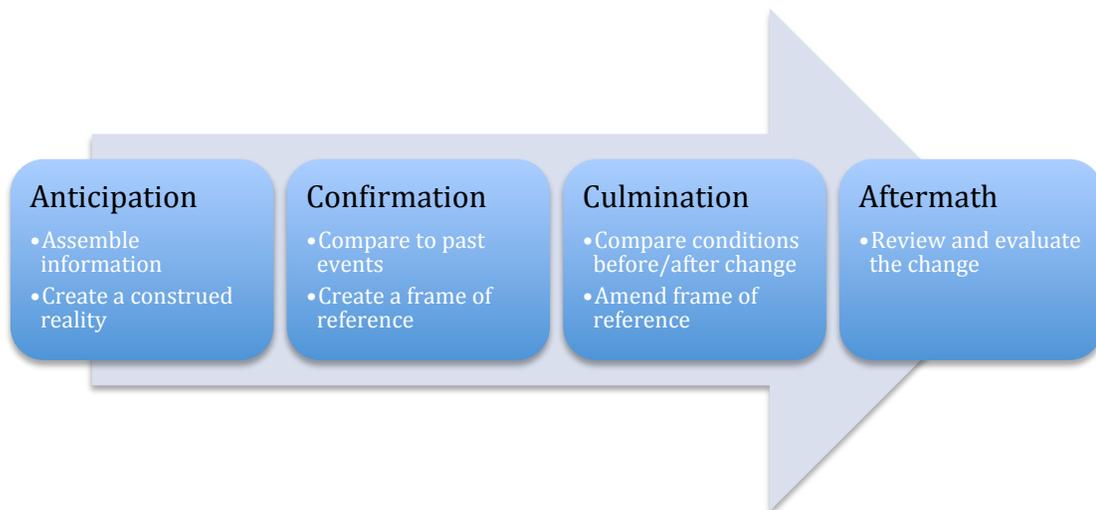


**Figure 1.3 Lewin's Change Management Model**

Lewin's model will be the backdrop for the following sections focusing on the individual journey.

## Processing organizational change at the individual level

Anderson & Anderson (2001) contend that the initial phases of organizational change cover the majority (50-60%) of the decisions made throughout the change strategy and plan. Looking to Lewin's model, his first phase focus heavily on the individual. The individual journey begins with how individuals process change. Isabella (1990) outlines a 4-stage model of how employees in an organization interpret events as a change initiative unfolds. This model is depicted below in Figure 1.4.



**Figure 1.4 Isabella's Individual Change Model**

Isabella's model, like many change models, is conducted on a very linear path. Similar to Lewin's model, it is rather simplistic in nature and allows flexibility and room for interpretation between the stages. Looking at Isabella's model, there are some similarities between organizational and individual processing of change. Both begin with information gathering followed by understanding the change in the frame of reference and end with evaluating the change. The organizational journey

and individual journey should be viewed holistically in order to build in opportunities for engagement that make sense to the phase of the change and the individual readiness to take part in the change.

### **Why we resist change**

The human element of change brings with it the possibility of resistance. Engagement has the opportunity to combat this resistance by creating a feeling of connectedness to the end product. Based on the literature reviewed, organizational change seems to happen in a linear fashion, but at any point along that path resistance can occur. It is therefore important to understand why individuals resist change and what can be done to combat resistance and move towards engagement.

Kotter & Schlesinger (2008) provide a critical analysis that discusses the four most common reasons individuals resist change. Resistance can be driven by: (1) a desire not to lose something of value; (2) misunderstanding of the change and its implications; (3) belief that the change does not make sense for the organization; and (4) low tolerance for change. Miller, et al. (1994) measure attitude and resistance based on individual needs (e.g., need for achievement, need for affiliation, organizational identification) and the result of available information (e.g., previous information, role ambiguity, knowledge of co-workers' roles). Both of these factor into the individual perception of change.

In sum, resistance can be born of both internal (e.g., need for achievement, desire not to lose something, low tolerance for change) and external factors (e.g., poor communication about change and ambiguity) and both need to be accounted

for in order to build an engagement strategy. Kotter & Schlesinger (2008) developed 6 different strategies for overcoming resistance to change; the most relevant to the discussion of engagement is the strategy of participation and involvement. This strategy allows potential (or identified) resisters to be involved in some aspects of the design. Kotter & Schlesinger (2008) cautiously state that involvement in all aspects of design and implementation could prove to be disastrous depending on overall attitude.

### **Building readiness and engagement**

Lewin's model directly calls out ensuring that employees are ready for change. The Theory of Planned Behavior is useful in explaining resistance to change, but also in providing context for building engagement and readiness. This theory, developed by Icek Ajzen (1991), looks at an individual's perceived behavioral control (as well as actual control) and how that, amongst other factors, drives the intent to act or actually acting. Bagozzi, et al. (2002) state that, "people will intend to perform a behavior to the degree that they believe they have control over the action" (p. 72). Optimizing the tenets of this theory requires organizations and individuals to determine their level of readiness regarding change and build engagement opportunities in order to increase feelings of perceived behavioral control.

Beginning with the system, the organization must create a culture that supports readiness and engagement (Jones, et al., 2005, Wiltermuth & Heath, 2009); assess the overall organizational structure to determine fit for the organization (Sirkin, et al., 2005); and evaluate stakeholder relationships (Anderson & Anderson,

2001). These pieces set up a framework for the individual journey and create feelings of self-efficacy. If the organization is not readied for change, the individual journey will be strained.

Jones, et al. (2005) and Wiltermuth and Heath (2009) show that creating an organizational culture that allows for readiness and fosters an environment that creates cohesion and cooperation amongst the workforce are factors that drive successful adoption of change. Jones, et al. (2005) used self-efficacy and active participation, whereas Wiltermuth and Heath (2009) used synchrony to drive a supportive change climate. They define synchrony through activities such as marching in step, singing and chanting in rituals, etc. With this synchrony makes participants feel like they are on the same team, even if there are conflicts with personal self-interest.

With a culture in place that supports readiness for change, organizations must then look to their structure to determine if the structure itself supports change and engagement. Sirkin, et al. (2005) identify four key factors – duration, integrity, commitment, and effort – for structuring the organization and the change initiative itself. Duration not only looks at the length of the project itself, but how often the initiative is reviewed. Integrity and commitment both look to the individual component and the extent to which organizations can rely on their key players to execute change as well as commitment by top management as well as employees. Effort looks again to the individual and calculating the work needed to execute

beyond the day-to-day work of employees. These four factors allow organizations to build in efficiencies to support effective change.

Anderson and Anderson (2001) bring together organizational structure and the community aspect of change. Their project community (i.e., relevant stakeholders) and community map reveals the relationships between individual stakeholders – both internal and external – and looks to identify discrepancies in perceptions about change. Their system diagram serves as the organizational chart as it maps the organization’s underlying structure and leverage points for change.

Creating an organizational culture that supports change as well as a structure that allows change to be effective at the system level opens the door to build engagement and create a more successful individual journey. Wanberg and Banas (2000), Maslach and Leiter (2008), and Avey, et al. (2008) look at how individual variables predict openness to change and engagement.

Wanberg and Banas (2000) focus on individual variables (e.g., self-esteem, perceived control, optimism) and context-specific variables (e.g., change information, participation, self-efficacy, perceived impact) as predictors of employee openness to change. Wanberg and Banas hypothesized that higher levels of resilience – self-esteem, perceived control, and optimism – will be associated with higher levels of openness to change. Change acceptance was also determined by higher levels of change-related self-efficacy meaning those who felt that they were competent to adapt to change were more accepting of the change itself. Finally, participation factored into a positive view of change.

Maslach and Leiter (2008) shift the perspective from openness/resistance to change to predicting engagement and burnout during change. Their longitudinal study developed a Burnout–Engagement continuum consisting of three dimensions: Exhaustion–Energy; Cynicism–Involvement; and Inefficacy–Efficacy. Burnout indicates that both the exhaustion and cynicism dimensions are present, whereas, these are both absent in those who are predicted to be engaged. An engaged employee, therefore, is one who is energized by the change, involved and has increased feelings of self-efficacy.

Avey, et al. (2008), also look at how individual attitude and engagement can positively affect organizational change. They use psychological capital (PsyCap), which is based on four criteria – hope, efficacy, optimism, and resilience – and relate it to attitudes (engagement and cynicism) and behaviors (organizational citizenship and deviance). Avey, et al. (2008) argue that, “one of the most important aspects of positive organizational change is how the employees respond in terms of their attitudes and behaviors” (p. 50).

Based on Wanberg and Banas (2000), Maslach and Leiter (2008), and Avey, et al. (2008), involvement and self-efficacy/perceived control are two key factors in building readiness at the individual level.

Overall, the literature has shown that creating an organizational culture prepared to ready the organization and its individual employees (Jones, et al., 2005; Sirkin, et al., 2005) with a focus on creating feelings of self-efficacy (Avey, et al., 2008; Jones et al., 2005; Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Wanberg & Banas, 2000) and

opportunities for engagement (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Sirkin, et al., 2005) are more likely to implement successful changes. The direct relationship between engagement and perceptions of change and engagement and feelings of self-efficacy are explored in the literature and point to the main hypothesis for this study.

*H1: High levels of engagement lead to positive perceptions of change and increased feelings of self-efficacy regarding the change.*

### **Participative decision-making**

Individual involvement in change can range from no involvement to high involvement. This study is looking at involvement on a continuum. As previous literature has revealed, engagement is an effective strategy when looking to general involvement. This section looks to a greater level of involvement and the impacts of that involvement through the participative decision-making process.

Participative decision-making is a lot like how it sounds. It is a joint decision-making process between superiors and subordinates (Lam, et al., 2002) wherein decisions regarding activities are arrived at by the very persons who are to execute those decisions (Lowin, 1968). This model is useful, if employed strategically and thoughtfully. If not, it can breed cynicism and threaten the adoption of change.

Black and Gregersen, 1997 outline six dimensions of participative decision-making, which are useful in providing context for determining internal engagement and will be used to help structure part of this study's methodology. The first three dimensions, rationale, structure, and form, provide the "why" and the "how" to participative decision-making. Rationale looks to two dimensions – humanistic and

pragmatic. The humanistic rationale says that, “people have the right to participate in decisions that effect their lives” (Black & Gregersen, 1997, p. 861) whereas the pragmatic rationale uses participative decision-making to achieve higher productivity. The structure of participative decision-making can be formal (i.e., explicit rules and procedures) or informal (i.e., decisions are open as to how to participate) and the form of participation can be direct (i.e., participants involved immediately) or indirect (i.e., individuals are elected or appointed as representatives).

The final three dimensions outlined by Black and Gregersen (1997) are decision issues, degree of involvement, and decision process. It is these three dimensions that provide a structured framework to determine how the level of involvement can impact perceptions and feelings of self-efficacy. Decision issues may include work and task design and strategy issues. As this relates to ESUP, decision issues include business process changes, system design, and security access. The degree of involvement in participative decision-making is described “on a continuum: (a) no advance information concerning a decision is given to employees, (b) employees are given advance information, (c) employees are allowed to provide their opinion about the decision, (d) employees’ opinions are taken into consideration in making decisions, (e) employees can veto a decisions, and (f) the decision is completely in the hands of the employees” (Black & Gregersen, 1997, p. 862). The ESUP program tends to fall in the middle of this

continuum. The final dimension is the decision process, which looks at issue identification, solution generation, and planning, implementation, and evaluation.

In order for participative decision-making to be effective, it must be employed strategically and thoughtfully and expectations need to be managed from the onset. Many employees experiencing organizational change want to feel like their voice is being heard, but including everyone at the decision-making table is not feasible especially with large-scale changes such as ESUP. Conway, 1984 addresses this when he states, “more important than who participates however, is the question of representativeness. That is, do participants reflect the feeling and attitudes of their constituencies?” (p. 21). Having a true representative population is the start to successful participative decision-making.

The next hurdle is managing expectations. Lawler and Suttle (1973), describe Expectancy Theory as, “the force impelling a person to perform a particular action, as determined by the interaction of (a) that person’s expectancy that his act will be followed by a particular outcome, and (b) the valence of that outcome” (p. 482). As the participative decision-making model increases the level of involvement and in turn increases expectations, it is crucial to be clear from the onset how participation in the process and feedback will be used towards the end goal and final decisions regarding change. Informing participants early on will reduce the amount of potential cynicism as it will be clear how point a leads to point b.

Involvement in the process can “bring meaningfulness to the work” (Conway, 1984, pg. 12) and create satisfaction based on the degree of involvement and types

of decisions. That involvement will be dependent on the readiness of the individual to participate in the decision-making process. Lam, et al. (2002) state, “people who are high on self-efficacy will utilize participative decision-making opportunities to achieve what they desire, whereas those who are low on self-efficacy may tend to become distressed when presented with such opportunities” (pg. 906).

The participative decision-making process is a useful way to create engagement provided the right people (e.g., representative population) are brought to the table, those individuals are prepared for the task, and their expectations of their involvement are managed from the onset. In this study, internal end-users are analyzed with regard to their participation in business process decisions.

*H2: Internal end-user involvement in participative decision-making will lead to positive perceptions of change and increased feelings of self-efficacy if expectations are managed appropriately.*

### **Delivering messages about change**

Thus far, the literature reviewed has looked at a system approach and an individual approach to the change journey as well as creating an organizational structure and culture to support change and building individual readiness for change through different levels of involvement. The focus now is on how organizations talk about changes both internally and externally. Harkening back to Lewin’s change model, messages about change span across all three phases – unfreezing, moving, and refreezing – and different media may be needed to communicate during those phases depending on the targeted audience.

Daft and Lengel (1986) look to Media Richness Theory when positing that organizations process information to reduce uncertainty and interpret equivocal situations. Organizational change and change initiatives can be unclear and ambiguous and as demonstrated by Miller, et al. (1994) and Kotter and Schlesinger (2008), poor communication and ambiguity can lead to negative perceptions about change and an overall unsuccessful change initiative. Daft and Lengel (1986) state that, “rich media facilitate equivocality reduction by enabling managers to overcome different frames of reference and by providing the capacity to process complex, subjective messages” (p. 560).

Klein (1996) suggests that there are two key principles that should be present in communication strategy about change. The first is message redundancy (to create retention) and a multimedia approach. He suggests that face-to-face communication is critical depending on the messages to allow individuals to pick up on non-verbal cues and that a multimedia approach helps to reduce uncertainty. The second is identifying opinion leaders that can serve as effective change agents to sway attitudes and opinions.

Media richness will be explored in this study as it relates to the channels used by ESUP to current messages as well as how those channels can be optimized to deliver messages about change.

## **METHODS**

Data for this research was captured through two quantitative studies and one qualitative study. A communication channel audit was completed to measure

communication reach and to determine the landscape of channels that ESUP is currently using to deliver messages. An online survey, focusing on ESUP's external audience, was developed to measure attitude towards change, self-efficacy, engagement, and perception of change. Finally, in-depth interviews were conducted to determine the impact of greater involvement (through participative decision-making) within ESUP's internal audience.

### **Communication Channel Audit**

A quantitative approach was used in the audit to determine the audience and channel makeup of a select sample of communications from the student work stream of ESUP and the frequency with which messages were pushed through those channels. The main objective of the communication channel audit was to discover how the student work stream of ESUP was using previously established and newly created channels and to determine what channels would be most effective for delivering messages about business process and system design changes. The author selected channels that were readily accessible, were used with greater frequency, and provided a variety (e.g., audiences and channels) to analyze. The messaging content of each communication was not analyzed due to the variances in messaging across communications and channels, thus not allowing for an exclusive or exhaustive coding scheme.

### **Sample of Content**

Nine communication channels for ESUP were used for the audit and were chosen due to their accessibility to the author as well as providing content delivered

through multiple media and to a variety of audiences. Within the nine channels, there were 219 overall communications analyzed based on the structure of the “parent” channel. Each of these communications was coded along two variables – audience type and channel type – and communications were evaluated over a span of time from September 2012 – April 2014. The selected samples and their frequency are outlined in Appendix A.

### **In-person Channels**

The Student Records Town Hall sessions were held primarily in-person, but an online participation option was available through Join.me for individuals on the other system campuses. Work stream leads and functional steering committee leads were responsible for leading the town halls. The intended audience for these sessions was PeopleSoft end-users, which could range from administrative staff to management to faculty. Registrar Advisory Committee sessions, facilitated by staff in Academic Support Resources, were also held in person with online participation available through UM Connect. The audience make-up for RAC sessions includes undergraduate advisers and college and departmental staff. ESUP related content was delivered to both undergraduate and graduate populations. The College Advisory Group, directed by staff in Academic Support Resources, was delivered in an in-person format with online participation only available to the University of Minnesota – Duluth campus. Participants included “college coordinators” for each of the colleges on the Twin Cities campus and staff in the graduate office at Duluth. CAG is a graduate education focused meeting and ESUP related content was directed

towards the Academic Advisement module that will be rolled out for graduate education. The All-Student meeting is the final in-person channel used and was focused more internally on staff within ASR and those directly involved in ESUP.

### **Online Channels**

Several online channels were utilized to communicate about ESUP, the majority of which were external facing. The Post-Baccalaureate Education (PBED) Digest is a bi-weekly e-newsletter for graduate education sent out primarily to plan level coordinators, college coordinators, and directors of graduate studies. The Graduate and Professional Student Update (GPU) is one of the few channels used to connect directly with students. The primary audience for this e-newsletter is graduate students. The Upgrade is an e-newsletter whose focus is on the end-user. Similarly, the Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program (ESUP) Blog is the most heavily used channel to communicate and is also focused on the end-user. News & Notes is an ASR-specific (one of the few exclusive internal channels) bi-weekly e-newsletter sent out to ASR staff and includes a variety of information, but will be used more extensively in the coming months to deliver information about changes to the PeopleSoft system.

### **Definitions and Coding**

The two variables analyzed were audience type and channel type. Audience type distinguishes between “Primarily External” and “Primarily Internal.” A primarily external audience is defined by the author as a composition of faculty, program/departmental staff, and collegiate staff. A primarily internal audience is

defined by the author as a composition of staff from Academic Support Resources (ASR) and full-time employees (FTEs) dedicated to ESUP. Channel type distinguishes between “in-person” and “online.” In-person channels are those communications delivered in-person (e.g., group meetings). Online channels are those communications delivered online (e.g., email, blog post). The coding for these variables is as follows.

<b>AUDIENCE TYPE CODING</b>	<b>CHANNEL TYPE CODING</b>
1= Primarily External	3= In-person
2= Primarily Internal	4= Online

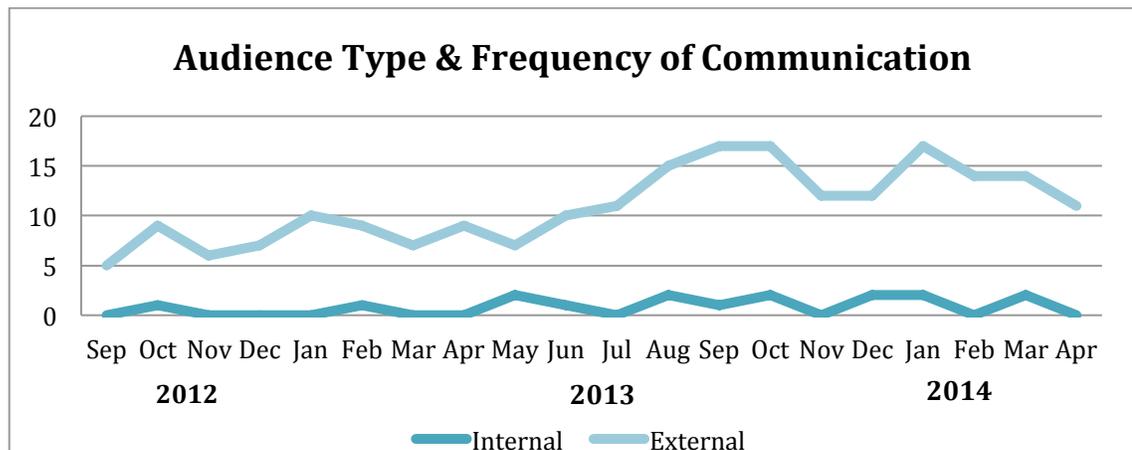
*Table 1.2 Communication channel audit coding scheme*

Each of the nine overarching communications (i.e., “parent” communication) were coded by the author and from there, the communications contained within each (i.e., “child” communication) were coded the same. Each of the child communications were coded by the author twice, once in March and a second time in April.

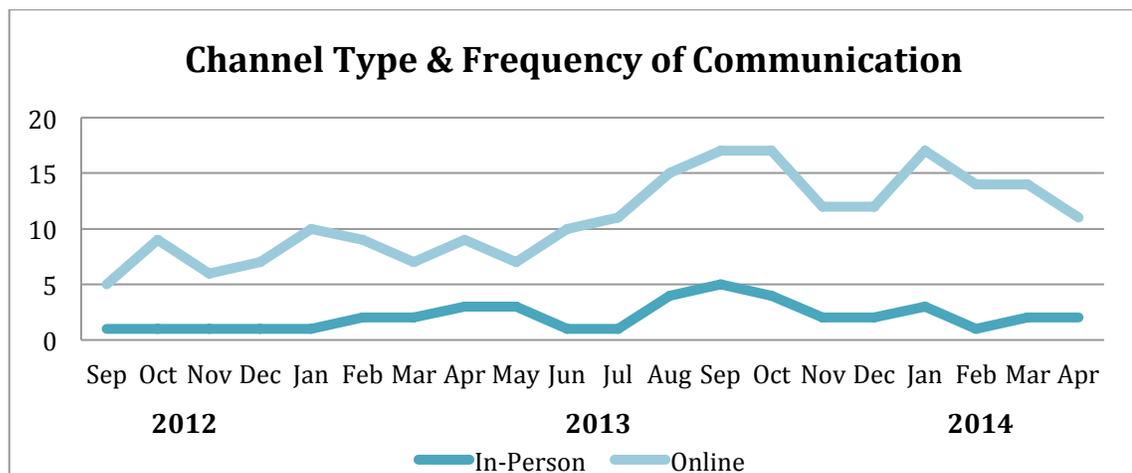
**Results**

As the author coded the results of the communication channel audit, intracoder reliability needed to be established. Holsti’s reliability formula was used, which determines the reliability of nominal data in terms of a percentage agreement (Wimmer and Dominick, 2013). The formula is  $2M/N1+N2$  wherein M represents the number of coding decisions on which the coder(s) agree(s) and N1 and N2 are the total number of coding decisions by each coder. While typically used for intercoder reliability, this method was selected due to its ease of use and distinct coders were replaced with coding decisions during time 1 (i.e., March 2014) and

time 2 (i.e., April 2014). Using Holsti's reliability formula for this audit,  $M = 207$ ;  $N1 = 207$ ; and  $N2 = 219$  producing results that were 97% reliable. The communication channel audit revealed that of the 219 communications analyzed, the majority were delivered to an external audience (94%) and through an online channel (82%). A much smaller percentage were delivered internally (6%) and in-person (18%). During the established time frame (September 2012 to April 2014) there was a noticeable jump in the frequency of communications across all variables during the late summer-early fall 2013, which is depicted below in figures 1.1 and 1.2.

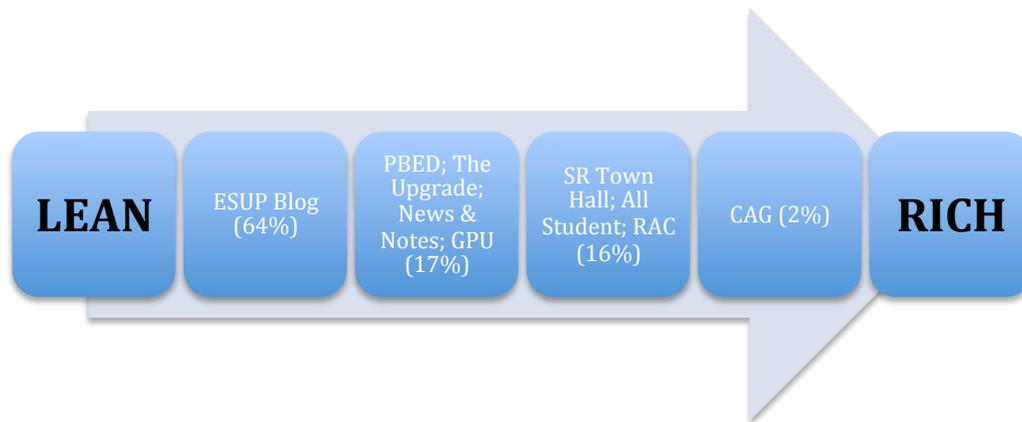


**Figure 1.5 Audience Type Frequency**



**Figure 1.6 Channel Type Frequency**

The results of the communication channel audit also reveal that the student work stream is relying heavily on lean media rather than rich media. This will require a shift in strategy when delivering messages about change. Figure 1.7 below depicts the breakdown of channels along the media richness continuum.



**Figure 1.7 Student Communication on Media Richness Continuum**

Figure 1.7 shows that lean media such as blog posts and email communication are utilized too heavily in that 81% of the communications were funneled through lean media. In order to be most effective in communicating change, ESUP must focus on shifting towards richer media and maximizing opportunities to talk about change in an in-person setting.

### **Survey**

One online survey, administered through Qualtrics, was emailed to 1,839 individuals at the University of Minnesota and was open for two weeks from April 3, 2014 until April 18, 2014. A total of 284 surveys were started with 261 of those completed, yielding a response rate of 14%. The main objective of the survey was to

evaluate attitudes by the external audience and H1: High levels of engagement lead to positive perceptions of change and increased feelings of self-efficacy regarding the change.

### **Sample**

A purposive sample was used for the survey and individual emails were collected through a query used to identify individuals coded as “adviser,” “director of graduate studies,” “plan level coordinator,” or “college coordinator.” The query returned 1,839 emails. This sample was selected as it was the most representative of the audience makeup contained in the sample of content used in the communication channel audit. The sample was most likely to have used PeopleSoft in some capacity resulting in pre-existing familiarity with the system itself.

### **Participant Profile**

Participants were surveyed on all five University of Minnesota campuses with the majority, 67%, responding from the Twin Cities campus and 33% responding from the other campuses (i.e., Crookston – 6%, Duluth – 21%, Morris – 5%, Rochester – 1%). The majority of participants were female (63%) versus male (36%) and 79% reported completing graduate level work (i.e., master’s or doctoral degree). This is likely due to the sample as 45% were faculty with 48% representing program and/or collegiate staff. Of those who responded, 52% had been employed at the University of Minnesota for up to 15 years with 47% reporting 15+ years of employment.

### **Survey Design**

The survey comprised four sections measuring (1) attitude towards change; (2) engagement; (3) ESUP; and (4) demographics with a total of 25 questions for the questionnaire. Survey respondents were prompted to complete a consent form prior to starting the survey stating that they had read the consent form and voluntarily agreed to participate. The majority of the questions were administered on a seven-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree to 7-strongly agree).

Section 1 of the survey focused on attitudes towards change and self-efficacy. Change attitude questions were developed using Oreg's (2003) Resistance to Change Scale and self-efficacy questions developed using Schwarzer & Jerusalem's (1995) General Self-efficacy Scale. Section 2 of the survey focused on engagement and message delivery. All questions in this section were developed by the author after review of the relevant literature related to engagement.

Sections 3 and 4 of the survey focus on questions related directly to ESUP and general demographics; all questions were developed by the author. Section 3 focuses specifically on familiarity, perception, communication satisfaction, and engagement related to ESUP. All survey questions, including the survey introduction, are available in Appendix C.

## **Results**

ENTER regression analysis was used to test the relationship between engagement and perception ( $R = .22, p < .001$ ) and engagement and self-efficacy ( $R = .22, p < .001$ ) and the results show that H1 is supported. Respondents reporting higher levels of engagement ( $M = 4.67, SD = .82$ ) also reported positive attitude

toward change ( $M= 4.46, SD= .97$ ) and greater feelings of self-efficacy ( $M= 5.91, SD= .81$ ) when encountering change.

Reliability of the four main variables was also tested. The engagement subscale consisted of 4 items ( $\alpha= .61$ ); the attitude subscale consisted of 3 items ( $\alpha= .58$ ); the self-efficacy/confidence subscale consisted of 2 items ( $\alpha= .71$ ); and the perception subscale consisted of 2 items ( $\alpha= .92$ ).

Results related to ESUP-based questions provided insight into the successes and flaws of the current communication strategy. Familiarity with ESUP was overall good resulting in 54% of the respondents reporting that they were familiar with ESUP. There were, however, 38% that responded as not being familiar, which when coupled with the results of the communication channel audit (i.e., 94% communications were external) has the potential to be concerning. Perception of ESUP was overall positive with 58% of respondents believing that ESUP will be beneficial to the University and 46% believing that changes implemented with ESUP will be positive.

### **In-depth Interviews**

In-depth interviews were conducted to study engagement internal to ASR and ESUP. The Participative Decision-Making model was explored to determine if moderate-high levels of engagement produced different perceptions of change and feelings of self-efficacy based on expectancies as was stated in H2. Interviews were also conducted to provide more contextual data than was extracted from the survey.

### **Sample**

A convenience sample was used for the interviews and comprised employees of Academic Support Resources (ASR) and individuals working on ESUP. Participants were recruited by email and were required to meet three criteria in order to participate – (1) an employee of ASR or ESUP, (2) a working knowledge of the student records work stream, and (3) participated in the student records IDP sessions or contributed feedback to business process decisions within the student records work stream. These three criteria ensured that the participants were familiar with the student work stream of ESUP, were internal to the organization, and had been a part of the decision-making process whether directly or indirectly.

A total of seven participants were interviewed, five female and two male. Length of employment with ASR/ESUP ranged from approximately seven months to ten years and self-reported level of involvement in the decision-making process ranged from low to very high.

### **Setting and Study Mechanics**

Interviews were held May 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014 and were conducted individually in a closed conference room in Williamson Hall on the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities campus. Interviews were audio-recorded on the author’s phone and later transcribed (see Appendix H). One interview was conducted via Google hangout due to the interview participant being located on a campus other than the Twin Cities. Prior to the interview, participants were asked to read and sign a consent form. Each interview lasted on average 45 minutes.

The interview began with an introduction to the study and the author provided context regarding the overall study as well as the participative decision-making model followed by explaining the structure of the interview. Participants were informed that they reserved the right to not answer questions should they not feel comfortable and were informed that they were being recorded and that the recording would later be transcribed.

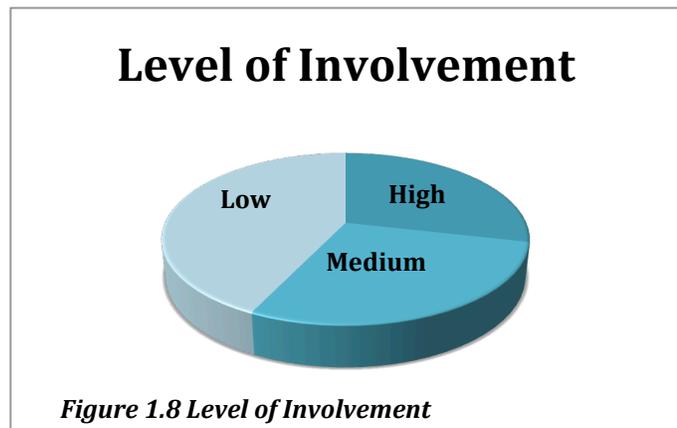
The interview contained three sections with three questions in each section. The first section contained questions related to participation and the participative decision-making model and

sought to provide a baseline for participant level of involvement in change decisions. The second section looked to expectations and outcomes and sought to

determine a correlation between expectations and perceptions as well as involvement and perception and feelings of self-efficacy. The final section contained questions related to the role of communication in change initiatives and specifically focusing on internal communication and engagement.

## **Results**

The objective for the in-depth interviews was to gauge the level of involvement in participative decision-making and to determine how those levels impacted perceptions of change and feelings of self-efficacy. The self-reported



involvement levels of the seven participants ranged from low to high as depicted in Figure 1.3. Participant responses regarding perceptions were coded as “negative,” “neutral,” or “positive” based on the tone of the response and the language used. Excerpts from the interview transcripts were used and are depicted in Table 1.4 on pages 30-31.

Interview participants were first asked about their expectations in the decision-making process and how having those expectations met or not met impacted their perceptions. The majority of the participants (5/7; 71%) reported negative feelings when expectations were not met.

*“For me this is very frustrating because I have what I feel is a good idea of what students expect and how they do things...there are competing camps and I get stuck in the middle.”*

With some leading to negative perceptions due to those expectations not being met.

*“There is a lot more lip service given as to why expectations weren’t met rather than thought out or committed responses that feel genuine.”*

One participant reported positive feelings due to expectations being met and one participant reported neutral feelings, which led to neutral perceptions.

*“I want to feel validated and heard...for the most part that has been met.”*

*“I don’t know if there is really a change in my perception...maybe my perception of people, but not of the change.”*

Participants were also asked how their level of involvement impacted their perceptions of change and decisions that were made as well as their feelings of self-efficacy. Participants showing lower levels of involvement (*“I don’t feel on a personal level that I have a say in anything”*; *“I have all of the responsibility, but none of the*

*authority*) tended to have more negative perceptions or feelings (*"I feel stuck because I can't get a decision out of someone"; "We had the opportunity to provide feedback, but I never felt like it mattered."*). Those who self-reported higher levels of involvement (*"Very high...I really have been very involved"*) tended to exhibit more positive perceptions (*"My perceptions have been positive...the leadership team has worked really hard and have done an amazing job in building trust and listening across the system"*).

Table 1.3 depicts the shift from negative to positive perception based on the level of involvement along with the impact on feelings of self-efficacy. The results regarding self-efficacy, however, are too variable to draw a direct correlation between the level of involvement in participative decision-making and feelings of self-efficacy.

	<b>Level of involvement</b>	<b>Impact of involvement on perception</b>	<b>Impact of involvement on self-efficacy</b>
<b>Participant 1</b>	Low	Neutral	Less prepared
<b>Participant 5</b>	Low	Negative	Neutral; less
<b>Participant 7</b>	Low	Negative	More prepared
<b>Participant 2</b>	Medium	Positive	Totally prepared
<b>Participant 3</b>	Medium	Neutral	Varies; trends less
<b>Participant 4</b>	High	Positive	Neutral
<b>Participant 6</b>	High	Neutral	Very prepared

*Table 1.3 In-depth Interview Analysis*

Overall, the results of the in-depth interview suggest that H2 is marginally supported in that involvement in participative decision-making tends to lead to more positive perceptions of change and increased feelings of self-efficacy.

	Level of involvement (self-reported)	Expectations	Expectations met or not met; resulting feelings	Perception	Self-efficacy
Participant 1	Low to medium	Sponsors open and receptive to ideas based on my years of experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frustration</li> <li>• Try to understand and get perspective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spending more time just focusing on getting the work done</li> <li>• Don't want to fail like EFS</li> </ul>	Feel less prepared at this specific point in time
Participant 2	Moderate to moderate/high	Feeling validated and heard	For the most part expectations were met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly positive, but it's hard to give a polarized answer due to complexity of the project</li> <li>• An educational process</li> </ul>	Feel totally prepared due to the level of involvement and understanding the changes
Participant 3	It depends on the decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training decisions: high</li> <li>• Overall ESUP: low to medium</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If I have questions, they will be answered timely</li> <li>• Work until the work is finished</li> <li>• Need to communicate about what is/is not working</li> <li>• Defined roles and tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's difficult to work on a team with different viewpoints and methodologies</li> <li>• If something isn't working, it's my style to bring it up</li> <li>• Okay to have constructive conflict</li> <li>• Negatively affects my perceptions when expectations aren't met</li> </ul>	It goes back and forth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes the task seems insurmountable</li> <li>• Other times feel that there is more together with training and communication than previous University initiatives → EFS</li> </ul>	It waxes and wanes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most at risk when team isn't working well together</li> <li>• Pulled away from initial charge &amp; fear surrounding that</li> </ul>
Participant 4	Very high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If asking for feedback/participation, need to be willing to act on what you get</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Transparency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have to change your game &amp; figure out how to continue to be a representative</li> <li>• If we don't act on participation/feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly positive</li> <li>• We've done a good job of creating a community between the different campuses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grateful for the ability to be so involved</li> <li>• Overwhelmed doing the job of multiple people</li> <li>• More prepared in</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethical leadership</li> </ul>	<p>ack, how will that pop up later down in the line</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trust will dissipate quickly</li> </ul>		<p>areas where the costs are high</p>
Participant 5	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low/muddled</li> <li>There will be no direction and it will be confusing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expectations met in that they were low to begin with</li> <li>Feel confused and like time was wasted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I don't feel like my feedback matters</li> <li>ESUP wants the perception of a University collaborative, but it's not</li> </ul>	<p>Depends on the day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes I leave meetings feeling like I get it</li> <li>Other times I have no idea what we talked about or what it means for the future</li> <li>Never a time where I feel more prepared</li> </ul>
Participant 6	High	All decisions and options will be on the table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Became clear that not all options were on the table</li> <li>Felt demoralizing and bitter</li> <li>Decisions seemed short-sighted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goal is not necessarily to have efficiency</li> <li>Had to shift my perspective into a different lens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very prepared with the changes</li> <li>In light of fighting for what is right, I feel less fulfilled</li> <li>Concerned about the domino effect</li> </ul>
Participant 7	Low	Will be asked for feedback and/or opinion	Met in that feedback was solicited, but not in that I don't know what happens to it and if it ends up in the final decision-making hopper, which leads to frustration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask for feedback, but don't know that it goes anywhere</li> <li>Perception is that someone or a group of people are making decisions for everyone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feel more prepared</li> <li>Getting information out there</li> </ul>

**Table 1.4 Interview Excerpts**

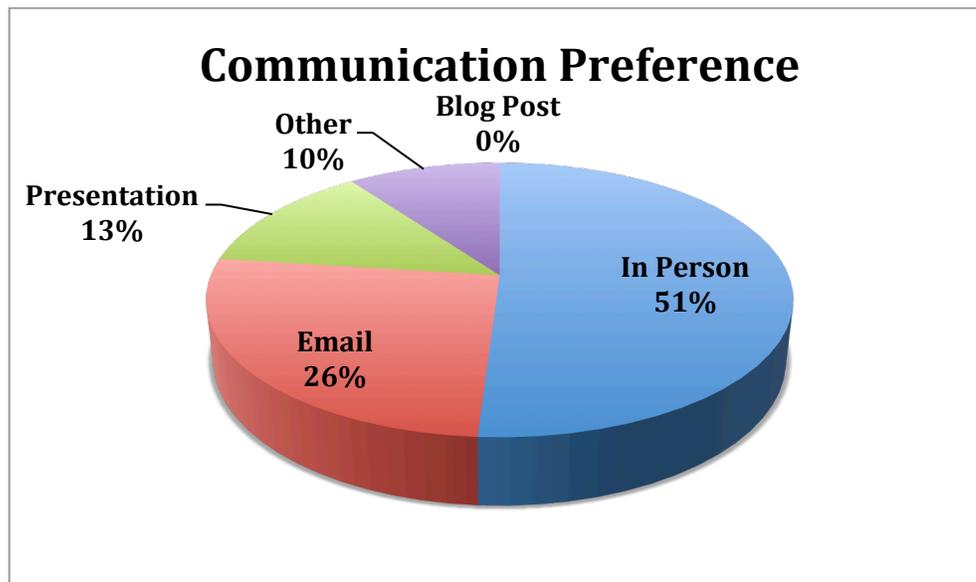
## DISCUSSION

### Key Findings

Creating a communication framework for managing change and change communication is essential to implementing successful initiatives. Within that framework understanding the audience, their expectations, and level of involvement are also important factors in managing successful change. While these concepts seem simple and obvious, they can be overlooked or written off as a to-do later on in the process. The phrases, “that’s just communication” or “it’s only change management” have been uttered numerous times throughout the ESUP process. Often times within ESUP, these two factors (communication and change management) are seen as fixes to problems rather than optimized at the beginning of the process as a strategy to avoid problems in the first place.

Looking to the current communication strategy for ESUP, the communication channel audit brought to light how the student work stream is dividing their communication capital and with that some concerns. The most heavily used channel is the ESUP blog which has the potential to reach a variety of audiences, but is not communication that is directly pushed to any one audience in particular and is too lean to use as heavily for messages regarding change. As the ESUP student work stream shifts into delivering messages about change, this channel will need to be analyzed to determine if it is meeting its intended reach potential. Messages regarding change also need to be delivered through a medium richer than the ESUP blog. While it may serve as a good repository of information, it cannot be the

method in which change messages are delivered. Individuals responded in the survey that they prefer to be told about change in person, however, the largest channel type being utilized is online (i.e., 82% of communication is online). Additionally, none of the survey respondents indicated that a blog post was the preferred method of communication; however, 64% of communications were done through the ESUP blog. The figure below depicts the communication preference of survey respondents and where ESUP should focus their attention when communicating change.



**Figure 1.9** Change communication preferences

Media Richness Theory states that the more complex the message, the richer the medium should be to convey that message. Survey findings agreed with this statement in that 51% of respondents preferred to be told in-person about changes being implemented that would impact their work; 26% of respondents preferred email communication. Of those that responded “other” (10%), email was preferred

to initially communicate the change, followed by an in-person conversation. In order for the ESUP change communication strategy to be effective, important messages must be delivered in the medium most appropriate and which garners the most attention for any respective audience. While rich media is important in communicating change, there are practicality issues. In-person communication requires more resources and time, but the payoff in building goodwill and humanizing change may be well worth the investment.

Feedback is also an important component of any change communication strategy and this is another area of potential concern for the ESUP project. Survey respondents reported that on average they are likely to provide feedback ( $M= 5.72$ ,  $SD= 1.03$ ); however, when asked if they knew whom to contact regarding ESUP, respondents showed that on average they did not know whom to contact ( $M= 3.56$ ,  $SD= 1.85$ ). Additional work is needed in order to ensure those who want to provide feedback know the options available to them and that multiple feedback channels are optimized.

For individuals more intimately involved in the change decisions, care must be taken to manage expectations and acknowledge the experience that representatives bring to the table. Much of the communication for ESUP has focused on external audiences (93%), but is lacking at the internal level. Requesting feedback from individuals supports a participative climate, but those providing feedback need to know how that information is (or is not) being used. Several in-depth interview participants pointed to this by stating, “if you are asking for

participation, leadership needs to be willing to act on that participation” and, “we can’t have the perception of participation and then make all decisions behind closed doors.” Additionally, interview participants stated that there was the feeling that feedback was “sucked into a vortex” or “fed into the hopper” and “if decisions have already been made, I’m not sure what I’m spending my time on.” Conway, 1984 speaks to the importance of participation in that, “involving citizens is a way to find out what they want and to garner their support in order to do it” (p. 21). The key to this level of involvement continues to be the management of expectations.

This study has suggested that there is a correlation between the level of engagement exhibited by individuals and their perceptions of change and feelings of preparedness (i.e., self-efficacy) to take on changes being implemented. There were some interesting findings when comparing baseline survey questions related to engagement and similar questions asked related to ESUP directly. For example, those individuals who responded to the baseline question related to actively seeking out information regarding change overwhelmingly agreed that they indeed take an active role in seeking out information ( $M= 5.93, SD= .91$ ). However, when coupled with a similar question related to ESUP, those same respondents showed a greater spread related to actively seeking out information related to ESUP ( $M= 3.48, SD= 1.60$ ). From this one could surmise that the level or type of change (and how relevant it is to their lives) may be a factor in determining how active individuals are in seeking out information on their own. This is also a factor for consideration when

using engagement to develop a change communication plan and understanding the human element in managing change.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that engagement matters in relation to change communication strategy and that the medium (or media) used to disseminate messages regarding change should also be chosen strategically in order to provide the greatest impact and drive positive perceptions about changes being implemented. Those most heavily involved in change must have their expectations managed in order to sustain positive perceptions and feelings of preparedness.

As the ESUP student work stream moves towards their external communication push to deliver messages about PeopleSoft system and reporting changes, a shift in strategy is needed. Messages must be delivered in a multi-media approach and overarching messages should continue to be delivered online with more in-depth conversations happening in person allowing for better opportunities for feedback.

### **Limitations**

Each of the research methods have limitations that should be addressed. The sample of content that was used for the communication channel audit does not cover the entire breadth of communication channels being used for the ESUP student work stream. Other in-person (e.g., Board of Regent's meetings) and online (e.g., Student weekly update) channels were excluded from the sample of content due to the infrequency of use, audience makeup, and/or availability to the author. It does, however, cover the most widely used channels. While 97% reliability was

established for the communication channel audit, the author coding the data was closely tied to the ESUP project, interjecting researcher bias regarding the coding scheme. Educated assumptions also needed to be made regarding the audience makeup of some channels if they were not readily apparent to the author. Additionally, the messaging content of the communications was not analyzed. This is due in part to the scope of the study focusing on frequency of channels rather than the messaging content itself.

Survey results did not yield a high response rate, however, the number of responses provided sufficient data to analyze. The Cronbach's alpha of some of the survey measurement scales suggest that some scales are not as reliable (i.e., engagement ( $\alpha=.61$ ) and attitude ( $\alpha=.58$ )) as others (i.e., self-efficacy ( $\alpha=.71$ ) and perception ( $\alpha=.92$ )) and those reporting more statistically significant need to be interpreted with caution as the number of items used to develop those scales is quite small. Should future research look to age as a factor in understanding engagement and attitudes (i.e., perception and self-efficacy), the results of the survey should be used with caution as the 31-34 age bracket was not represented.

While the in-depth interviews included individuals representing a range of involvement levels, the convenience sample also included individuals that the author works with closely and knows well. Additionally, the author sought to establish an environment wherein individuals felt comfortable being forthright with their answers, but as the interview location was in the same office suite where many of the individuals worked that led to some individuals feeling uncomfortable with

the process. Those feelings had the potential to skew answers to either end of the spectrum – positive or negative. Should this study be replicated or future research pursued, the interview location should be neutral for both the interviewer and interviewees.

### **Future Research**

The ESUP student work stream has just recently begun their push to communicate changes that will be happening with implementation of PeopleSoft 9.0 in February 2015. Future research should conduct a more thorough analysis of the messages themselves as well as the channels used to determine if rich media are utilized more heavily.

Perceptions of change and feelings of self-efficacy were looked at in greater detail in the survey and in-depth interviews of this current study. ESUP and the University would benefit from a more longitudinal study of the perceptions of change and feelings of self-efficacy throughout the entirety of the change process – from planning, to implementation, to adoption (or not) of the new system. There is much to learn from such a large-scale initiative as the University is constantly evolving and changing. An example of this is the President's strategic plan. It is likely that changes will be made upon implementation of this plan and learning from this current study as well as future studies looking at the success (or not) of the ESUP implementation, can only drive the University towards greater adoption of changes.

Along with this, the recommendations could be made into a strategic model adopted both at the individual unit level and at a wider University level. It is the

hope of the author, that some of the recommendations will be used to strengthen the strategic plan already in place.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study has provided insightful information on which the ESUP program and student work stream can draw to create a stronger change communication strategy and plan. The complexity of the ESUP program with its various audiences and business processes presents a challenge when developing a change management model and communication plan, however, it is not insurmountable. Engagement is an effective strategy to bolster positive perception and increase self-efficacy and should be used with ESUP to increase the adoption of changes. If done well, change can feel like an enhancement rather than a burden. The following outlines recommendations for the student work stream of ESUP to consider as they move into the change communication phase.

### **1. Deploy a clear journey for managing change.**

The student work stream must establish a journey for the change itself. Many change management models have been explored in the literature (Galpin, 1996, Judson, 1991, Kotter, 1995, Lewin 1947), but in the case of a complex change initiative such as ESUP, simple is better. It is recommended that the student work stream use Kurt Lewin's change management model as a base from which to build the communication strategy.

### **2. Understand your audience(s) and their journey.**

As stated previously, the ESUP program has a variety of different audiences that are impacted and the main audiences for the student work stream (with regards to system changes) are students, departmental administrators, course schedulers, program and college staff, faculty, and internal users (e.g., ASR support staff, training team, etc.). Each of the audiences has their own journey and communication touch points throughout that journey. It is recommended that the student work stream map out the life cycle or journey for each of the main audiences over the course of an academic year to better understand when and how certain business processes changes will impact the user. In addition to understanding the business journey, it is important to understand the personal journey and how change impacts individuals at a personal level, as well as identifying the barriers that may be present that need to be accounted for.

Outlining the journey allows the student work stream to create engagement and communication touch points. It also allows the team to create targeted messages for each of the audiences that will be more relevant and more likely to be acknowledged. This journey attempts to move closer to finding that communication “sweet spot” and allowing for the ability to reach the right audience, at the right time, with the right message, and through the right channel.

### **3. Create opportunities for engagement.**

This study has shown that engagement does have a marginally correlated impact on perceptions and feelings of self-efficacy and therefore it is important to engage end-users in the process where appropriate. While many of the business

decisions have already been made, there is still room to engage end-users in the process. One key opportunity is creating the journey outlined previously in recommendation #2. The communications, change management, and training team should identify change agents in each of the main audience groups and use their expertise and knowledge to develop the business journey as well as leverage opportunities for direct contact and targeted messaging.

Even though business process decisions have been made, engaging the end-user with the product itself is another opportunity that needs to be leveraged more fully. The student work stream has developed “sneak peek” videos to give end-users a taste for what the new system and functionality will look like, which is one way to engage. It is recommended that the student work stream build on that and select change agents to be given the opportunity to do usability testing and use their feedback to develop job aides, online tutorials, etc. Obtaining feedback from the direct user is more powerful than making educated guesses as to what they might want. It is all about the opportunity to interact and react to the system itself.

#### **4. Outline and manage expectations.**

Engagement is powerful if expectations are managed correctly. Should the student work stream implement recommendation #3, those involved will need to know how their feedback will be implemented in decisions that might be made. Conversely, if feedback is not utilized, those involved will need to be informed why it was not used. The student work stream must have regular contact with those

engaged in the process to ensure that all involved continue to remain on the same page.

### **5. Generate genuine messages.**

The student work stream needs to start operating from a “single voice” perspective. There are so many audiences to tap into each of which have different messages that need to be delivered; however, the student work stream should have an overarching message to maintain continuity across the audiences. Messages about change should always address the following: What is changing? Why are we changing? What is the timeline? What resources are/will be available and where? Whom do I contact with questions and/or feedback?

In addition to logistical questions, the student work stream should focus messages (especially internally) that acknowledge sacrifices, appreciate value, and show hope. It is important to continue to humanize the process and recognize the efforts by all involved. The student work stream has focused a lot on delivering messages about “wins” in the process, but it is also important to show where the project is faltering and how we are learning from mistakes.

The biggest factor, and one that has been overlooked in the opinion of the author, is context. Messages must be created with the appropriate context for the audience that is receiving the message. Greater care needs to be taken to develop messages that are in tune with the audience receiving the message and providing the appropriate amount of background information to allow the message to resonate with the particular audience.

## **6. Install clear and available feedback channels.**

As realized through the survey, the feedback channels for ESUP and the student work stream are not particularly clear. In order to create two-way symmetrical communication and deliver on a University collaborative, feedback channels need to be clear and available. All messages regarding ESUP must clearly convey the feedback channels that are available. In addition to providing clear channels, informal channels must also be managed in order to provide consistent messaging to constituents.

## **7. Optimize multiple media and create targeted channels.**

Since change is such an individual process, different audiences will need different modes of communication. Much of the current communication strategy is through online channels, which provides the greatest reach to multiple audiences, but is not a rich enough medium to deliver messages about change. Additionally, many of the online channels are growing muddled with regards to the audience makeup. It is recommended that the student work stream review the current channels and streamline the audience makeup to ensure that targeted messages are being conveyed to the appropriate audience. For example, there should be a dedicated channel for internal communications and a dedicated channel for external communications broken up by audience.

ESUP cannot continue to rely solely on the current in-person channels (i.e., RAC, CAG, town halls). The current channels, especially the town hall sessions, include a variety of stakeholders, which makes it difficult to deliver a targeted

message. Town halls have proven to be effective, but in order to optimize this medium it is recommended that smaller, focused town halls be held and target specific audiences. While this will require more resources (i.e., staff time), focused conversations will allow the communications team to include the appropriate context and allow for better engagement and understanding. Time and money is a factor that needs to be considered when moving towards richer media, but the return on investment is worth it in regards to building goodwill maximizing opportunities for two-way symmetrical communication. Conversations must also be pointed so as not to mislead (and potentially alienate) important stakeholder populations.

#### **8. Evaluate and adapt.**

The evaluation process for the student work stream communications is currently unclear. It is recommended that the communications team conduct regular analysis of each of the communication channels focusing on attendance rates for in-person channels and click-through rates for online channels. Attendance rates should also look at the makeup of the participants to determine if it is internal or external end-users (or both) attending sessions. Attendance rates, and particularly the audience makeup, will help the ESUP communications team determine if external and internal messages are being delivered in a way that engages the different stakeholder populations. It will also allow the team to focus on particular stakeholder populations that may need more (or less) attention as change decisions are made.

The amount and type of feedback should also be categorized and evaluated to better understand the challenges that may arise when implementing the change itself. It is also an opportunity to understand where there may be fears about change, or more positively where users are excited about change. Based on that evaluation, the team can then adapt the messaging strategy as needed. For example, should changes to mid-term grading alerts be an area of great concern, the team can create additional training materials, sneak peek videos, or in-person sessions dedicated to a specific change decision to help quell any fears or provide clarity where it may have been lacking.

Overall, the student work stream is doing a good job of communicating to their vast and varied stakeholder population, but there are always opportunities for tweaks to make something better. It was the goal of this study to look at how the power of the human element can be harnessed through engagement and with that drive successful change. It is the hope of the author that this was accomplished and that the findings can be put to use to assist the student work stream with their communication strategy.

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**APPENDIX A**

**Table 1.5 Communication channel audit coding sheet**

<b>ESUP (student) Communication Channel Audit</b>				
	<b>Audience Type</b>		<b>Channel Type</b>	
	Code Time 1 - March	Code Time 2 - April	Code Time 1 - March	Code Time 2 - April
<b>Communication</b>				
<b>Student Record Town Hall (12)</b>				
2/22/13	1	1	3	3
3/8/13	1	1	3	3
4/12/13	1	1	3	3
4/26/13	1	1	3	3
5/10/13	1	1	3	3
6/14/13	1	1	3	3
7/26/13	1	1	3	3
8/9/13	1	1	3	3
9/13/13	1	1	3	3
9/27/13	1	1	3	3
10/11/13	1	1	3	3
11/8/13	1	1	3	3
<b>Registrar's Advisory Committee (20)</b>				
8/6/12	1	1	3	3
9/10/12	1	1	3	3
10/11/12	1	1	3	3
11/5/12	1	1	3	3
12/3/12	1	1	3	3
1/7/13	1	1	3	3
2/4/13	1	1	3	3
3/4/13	1	1	3	3
4/1/13	1	1	3	3
5/6/13	1	1	3	3
6/3/13	1	1	3	3
8/5/13	1	1	3	3
9/9/13	1	1	3	3
10/7/13	1	1	3	3

11/4/13	1	1	3	3
12/2/13	1	1	3	3
1/6/14	1	1	3	3
2/3/14	1	1	3	3
3/3/14	1	1	3	3
4/7/14		1		3
<b>College Advisory Group (5)</b>				
8/15/13	1	1	3	3
9/19/13	1	1	3	3
10/17/13	1	1	3	3
12/19/13	1	1	3	3
1/16/14	1	1	3	3
<b>ESUP blog (140)</b>				
9/6/12	1	1	4	4
9/21/12	1	1	4	4
21-Sep	1	1	4	4
9/26/12	1	1	4	4
10/1/12	1	1	4	4
10/8/12	1	1	4	4
10/8/12	1	1	4	4
10/22/12	1	1	4	4
10/22/12	1	1	4	4
10/22/12	1	1	4	4
10/29/12	1	1	4	4
11/5/12	1	1	4	4
11/9/12	1	1	4	4
11/12/12	1	1	4	4
11/19/12	1	1	4	4
11/26/12	1	1	4	4
12/3/12	1	1	4	4
12/10/12	1	1	4	4
12/17/12	1	1	4	4
12/18/12	1	1	4	4
12/20/12	1	1	4	4
12/21/12	1	1	4	4
1/7/13	1	1	4	4
1/10/13	1	1	4	4
1/14/13	1	1	4	4
1/18/13	1	1	4	4
1/22/13	1	1	4	4
1/28/13	1	1	4	4

1/31/13	1	1	4	4
2/4/13	1	1	4	4
2/11/13	1	1	4	4
2/18/13	1	1	4	4
2/25/13	1	1	4	4
3/4/13	1	1	4	4
3/11/13	1	1	4	4
3/18/13	1	1	4	4
3/25/13	1	1	4	4
4/1/13	1	1	4	4
4/8/13	1	1	4	4
4/15/13	1	1	4	4
4/22/13	1	1	4	4
4/29/13	1	1	4	4
5/6/13	1	1	4	4
5/13/13	1	1	4	4
5/20/13	1	1	4	4
6/4/13	1	1	4	4
6/12/13	1	1	4	4
6/14/13	1	1	4	4
6/17/13	1	1	4	4
6/18/13	1	1	4	4
6/25/13	1	1	4	4
6/27/13	1	1	4	4
7/1/13	1	1	4	4
7/1/13	1	1	4	4
7/9/13	1	1	4	4
7/15/13	1	1	4	4
7/18/13	1	1	4	4
7/24/13	1	1	4	4
7/25/13	1	1	4	4
7/26/13	1	1	4	4
7/29/13	1	1	4	4
7/30/13	1	1	4	4
8/1/13	1	1	4	4
8/6/13	1	1	4	4
8/8/13	1	1	4	4
8/12/13	1	1	4	4
8/14/13	1	1	4	4
8/21/13	1	1	4	4
8/22/13	1	1	4	4

8/26/13	1	1	4	4
8/28/13	1	1	4	4
9/5/13	1	1	4	4
9/6/13	1	1	4	4
9/9/13	1	1	4	4
9/11/13	1	1	4	4
9/16/13	1	1	4	4
9/17/13	1	1	4	4
9/18/13	1	1	4	4
9/19/13	1	1	4	4
9/23/13	1	1	4	4
9/24/13	1	1	4	4
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10/4/13	1	1	4	4
10/7/13	1	1	4	4
10/8/13	1	1	4	4
10/9/13	1	1	4	4
10/10/13	1	1	4	4
10/14/13	1	1	4	4
10/21/13	1	1	4	4
10/22/13	1	1	4	4
10/23/13	1	1	4	4
10/29/13	1	1	4	4
10/31/13	1	1	4	4
11/1/13	1	1	4	4
11/6/13	1	1	4	4
11/14/13	1	1	4	4
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11/21/13	1	1	4	4
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11/26/13	1	1	4	4
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12/17/13	1	1	4	4
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1/16/14	1	1	4	4
1/22/14	1	1	4	4
1/23/14	1	1	4	4

1/27/14	1	1	4	4
1/28/14	1	1	4	4
1/29/14	1	1	4	4
1/30/14	1	1	4	4
2/6/14	1	1	4	4
2/7/14	1	1	4	4
2/12/14	1	1	4	4
2/13/14	1	1	4	4
2/19/14	1	1	4	4
2/20/14	1	1	4	4
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3/18/14	1	1	4	4
3/21/14	1	1	4	4
3/24/14	1	1	4	4
3/26/14	1	1	4	4
3/31/14	1	1	4	4
4/1/14		1		4
4/3/14		1		4
4/7/14		1		4
4/16/14		1		4
4/17/14		1		4
4/21/14		1		4
4/22/14		1		4
4/29/14		1		4
<b>PBED Digest (14)</b>				
2/15/13	1	1	4	4
2/22/13	1	1	4	4
4/19/13	1	1	4	4
6/28/13	1	1	4	4
8/23/13	1	1	4	4
9/6/13	1	1	4	4
9/20/13	1	1	4	4
12/6/13	1	1	4	4
1/17/14	1	1	4	4
1/31/14	1	1	4	4
2/14/14	1	1	4	4

2/28/14	1	1	4	4
3/14/14	1	1	4	4
4/11/14		1		4
<b>Graduate and Professional Update (3)</b>				
1/28/13	1	1	4	4
3/11/13	1	1	4	4
11/4/13	1	1	4	4
<b>The Upgrade (12)</b>				
11/7/13	1	1	4	4
11/21/13	1	1	4	4
12/5/13	1	1	4	4
12/19/13	1	1	4	4
1/16/14	1	1	4	4
1/30/14	1	1	4	4
2/13/14	1	1	4	4
2/27/14	1	1	4	4
3/13/14	1	1	4	4
3/27/14	1	1	4	4
4/10/14		1		4
4/24/14		1		4
<b>All-Student Meeting (3)</b>				
10/3/13	2	2	3	3
1/16/14	2	2	3	3
3/27/14	2	2	3	3
<b>News &amp; Notes (10)</b>				
10/4/12	2	2	4	4
2/21/13	2	2	4	4
5/16/13	2	2	4	4
6/27/13	2	2	4	4
8/22/13	2	2	4	4
10/17/13	2	2	4	4
12/5/13	2	2	4	4
12/19/13	2	2	4	4
2/13/14	2	2	4	4
3/13/14	2	2	4	4

## APPENDIX B

### Survey Recruitment Email

Good afternoon:

My name is Amber Cellotti and I am conducting research for my M.A. capstone in Strategic Communications at the University of Minnesota. You are invited to participate in this research study focusing on large-scale change initiatives in higher education and the impact that individual engagement has on our perception of and confidence in change. The primary focus of this survey is to measure general attitudes toward change and engagement as well as gather information related to the Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program. Results will be used for scholarly purposes, but will also inform a strategic communication and change management proposal for the student work stream of the University's [Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program](#) (ESUP).

You are being asked to participate in this study as you have been identified as faculty, collegiate, or departmental/program staff at the University of Minnesota who work with undergraduate and/or graduate student populations.

**Your participation is voluntary.** Study records will be kept confidential, and data will be analyzed anonymously. No individual identities will be used in any reports resulting from this study. Your information will be assigned a code number and when the study is completed, the list of subject IDs will be destroyed. You may wish to review the Qualtrics privacy statement for more information: <http://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement>.

**Please complete the survey by April 17th.** The survey is divided into four sections and should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. While you may access the survey on a mobile device, it is strongly recommended that you complete it on a computer. Please note that due to the anonymous format of this survey, it will not be possible to honor requests to revoke consent as I will not be able to match responses with individual participants.

If you agree to participate in this online survey, please click the link below to get started.

**Follow this link to the Survey:** [Take the Survey](#)

Follow this link to opt out of future emails: [Click here to unsubscribe](#)

If you have questions about the research, you may contact me directly at [knap0071@umn.edu](mailto:knap0071@umn.edu). Your participation is greatly appreciated.

## APPENDIX C

### Survey Questionnaire



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
Driven to Discover™

My name is Amber Cellotti and I am conducting research for my M.A. capstone in Strategic Communication at the University of Minnesota. You are invited to participate in this research study focusing on large-scale change initiatives in higher education and the impact that individual engagement has on our perception of and confidence in change. The primary focus of this survey is to measure general attitudes toward change and engagement. Results will be used for scholarly purposes, but will also inform a strategic communication and change management proposal for the student work stream of the University's [Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program](#) (ESUP).

**Your participation is voluntary.** Study records will be kept confidential, and data will be analyzed anonymously. No individual identities will be used in any reports resulting from this study. Your information will be assigned a code number and when the study is completed, the list of subject IDs will be destroyed. You may wish to review the Qualtrics privacy statement for more information: <http://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement>.

**Please complete the survey by April 17th.** The survey is divided into four sections and should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Please note that due to the anonymous format of this survey, it will not be possible to honor requests to revoke consent as I will not be able to match responses with individual participants.

Continuing on to the survey indicates that:

- you have read the above information
- you voluntarily agree to participate

>>

### Section 1: Attitude Toward Change

The following set of questions seek to measure attitude towards change and self-efficacy. Please answer the following statements based on the extent to which you disagree/agree. When answering, think about your experiences with change at work over the last 10 years. If you have not experienced change at work over the last 10 years, please think about your experiences with change in general.

I am confident that I can deal efficiently with unexpected events.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I generally consider changes to be positive.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

When someone asks me to change something, I tend to be hesitant even if I think the change may ultimately benefit me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If I were to be informed that there's going to be a significant change regarding the way things are done at work, I would probably feel stressed.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

>>

## Section 2: Engagement & Message Delivery

The following set of questions seeks to measure engagement and message delivery preferences. Please answer the following statements based on the extent to which you disagree/agree with each statement.

When confronted with change(s), I actively seek out information to better understand the change(s).

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Somewhat Disagree  Neither Agree nor Disagree  Somewhat Agree  Agree  Strongly Agree

If given the opportunity to provide feedback, I often do.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Somewhat Disagree  Neither Agree nor Disagree  Somewhat Agree  Agree  Strongly Agree

I only care about changes if they impact me (my work) directly.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Somewhat Disagree  Neither Agree nor Disagree  Somewhat Agree  Agree  Strongly Agree

When faced with messages regarding change, I am most likely to pay attention to the changes that affect me directly.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Somewhat Disagree  Neither Agree nor Disagree  Somewhat Agree  Agree  Strongly Agree

When important information regarding changes to my work is relayed to me, I prefer to be told:

- In person directly
- By email
- Through a blog post
- During a presentation
- Other

### Section 3: Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program

This section will focus on questions related directly to the [Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program \(ESUP\)](#). Please answer the following statements based on the extent to which you disagree/agree with each statement.

I am familiar with the Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program (ESUP).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I believe that ESUP will lead to long-term benefits for the University of Minnesota.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Changes implemented with ESUP will be positive.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I actively seek out information related to ESUP.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If I have feedback or questions for the ESUP team, I know whom to contact.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I am satisfied with the amount of information I have received regarding ESUP.

Strongly Disagree (there is too much information)	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree (there is just the right amount of information)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I am satisfied with the manner in which I have received information.

Strongly  
Disagree



Disagree



Somewhat  
Disagree



Neither Agree  
nor Disagree



Somewhat  
Agree



Agree



Strongly Agree



How frequently do you participate in in-person sessions (e.g., town hall meetings, Registrar's Advisory Committee, College Advisory Group) related to ESUP?

- I have never participated
- I participate on occasion
- I participate whenever sessions are held

How much do you read online communication (e.g., e-newsletters, blog posts, ESUP website) related to ESUP?

- I don't read any communication related to ESUP
- I read some communication related to ESUP
- I only read communication I deem relevant to me
- I read all communication related to ESUP



>>

#### Section 4: Demographics

What position best describes your role at the University of Minnesota a majority of the time?

- Undergraduate faculty
- Graduate faculty
- College staff
- Program/departmental staff
- Other

What campus are you associated with a majority of the time?

- Crookston
- Duluth
- Morris
- Rochester
- Twin Cities

How long have you been employed at the University of Minnesota?

- 0-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- 15-20 years
- 20+ years

Please select the highest level of education you have completed.

- High school diploma or GED
- Some college
- College graduate
- Some graduate work
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree
- Other

Please select your age amongst the ranges given below.

- 20-25
- 25-30
- 35-40
- 40-45
- 45-50
- 50+

Please select your gender.

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Other



>>

## APPENDIX D

### Complete Survey Results

<b>1. I am confident that I can deal efficiently with unexpected events.</b>				
#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		0	0%
2	Disagree		5	2%
3	Somewhat Disagree		7	3%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree		11	4%
5	Somewhat Agree		40	15%
6	Agree		147	54%
7	Strongly Agree		63	23%
	Total		273	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	7
Mean	5.85
Variance	1.04
Standard Deviation	1.02
Total Responses	273

**2. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		0	0%
2	Disagree		0	0%
3	Somewhat Disagree		4	1%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree		9	3%
5	Somewhat Agree		37	14%
6	Agree		159	58%
7	Strongly Agree		64	23%
	Total		273	100%

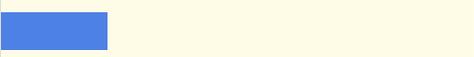
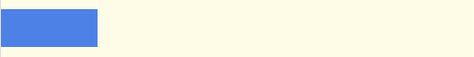
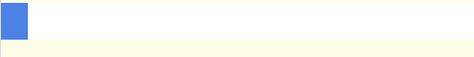
Statistic	Value
Min Value	3
Max Value	7
Mean	5.99
Variance	0.64
Standard Deviation	0.80
Total Responses	273

### 3. I generally consider changes to be positive.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree	2	1%
2	Disagree	4	1%
3	Somewhat Disagree	6	2%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree	56	21%
5	Somewhat Agree	85	31%
6	Agree	100	37%
7	Strongly Agree	20	7%
	Total	273	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	5.19
Variance	1.17
Standard Deviation	1.08
Total Responses	273

**4. When someone asks me to change something, I tend to be hesitant even if I think the change may ultimately benefit me.**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		18	7%
2	Disagree		86	32%
3	Somewhat Disagree		62	23%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree		33	12%
5	Somewhat Agree		56	21%
6	Agree		16	6%
7	Strongly Agree		2	1%
	Total		273	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	3.29
Variance	2.09
Standard Deviation	1.45
Total Responses	273

**5. If I were to be informed that there's going to be a significant change regarding the way things are done at work, I would probably feel stressed.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree	3	1%
2	Disagree	36	13%
3	Somewhat Disagree	31	11%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree	38	14%
5	Somewhat Agree	96	35%
6	Agree	58	21%
7	Strongly Agree	11	4%
	Total	273	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	4.49
Variance	2.07
Standard Deviation	1.44
Total Responses	273

**6. When confronted with change(s), I actively seek out information to better understand the change(s).**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
2	Disagree	0	0%
3	Somewhat Disagree	5	2%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree	13	5%
5	Somewhat Agree	51	19%
6	Agree	127	47%
7	Strongly Agree	74	27%
	Total	270	100%

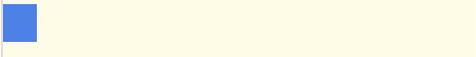
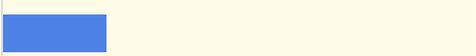
Statistic	Value
Min Value	3
Max Value	7
Mean	5.93
Variance	0.82
Standard Deviation	0.91
Total Responses	270

**7. If given the opportunity to provide feedback, I often do.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
2	Disagree	3	1%
3	Somewhat Disagree	9	3%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree	14	5%
5	Somewhat Agree	66	24%
6	Agree	121	45%
7	Strongly Agree	57	21%
	Total	270	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	7
Mean	5.72
Variance	1.07
Standard Deviation	1.03
Total Responses	270

**8. I only care about changes if they impact me (my work) directly.**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		20	7%
2	Disagree		71	26%
3	Somewhat Disagree		60	22%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree		26	10%
5	Somewhat Agree		66	24%
6	Agree		23	9%
7	Strongly Agree		4	1%
	Total		270	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	3.49
Variance	2.41
Standard Deviation	1.55
Total Responses	270

**9. When faced with messages regarding change, I am most likely to pay attention to the changes that affect me directly.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree	2	1%
2	Disagree	8	3%
3	Somewhat Disagree	14	5%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree	14	5%
5	Somewhat Agree	79	29%
6	Agree	109	40%
7	Strongly Agree	44	16%
	Total	270	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	5.46
Variance	1.50
Standard Deviation	1.22
Total Responses	270

**10. When important information regarding changes to my work is relayed to me, I prefer to be told:**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	In person directly	139	51%
2	By email	69	26%
3	Through a blog post	1	0%
4	During a presentation	35	13%
5	Other	26	10%
	Total	270	100%

Other
any of the above
this obviously depends on the degree of the change!
"Alerts" or "notification" of upcoming changes (via email or verbally in department meetings); information that I need to implement the change (via presentation, in person directly, during a presentation)
by email followed shortly by individual in person discussion
depends on the change
depends on the nature of the change
Depends on what it is!
depends, all could be useful
person and email
I am open to different methods, but allowing a chance to ask questions is what is most important to me
it depends on the type of change; i may prefer several methods. If significant change - then presentation format is helpful - for q&a, although, with email - I have record of the information always accessible to me.
all of the above, more ways the better to get above regular noise at work
all of the above; multiple message mediums over time seem most effective
An email from central and in person by college or department staff
It's important to have an email with changes spelled out in writing as well as an opportunity to ask questions, which is often best in person or via a presentations questions. But it is EXTREMELY important to have the changes in writing for referring back to.
Either in person or in a presentation
situation dependent
a combination of approaches is desirable for a significant change
Email or in person, depending on the degree of the change.
all of the above
both in person and in writing
dept meeting
Written documentation of how tasks/responsibilities will be reorganized
both by person and through email
depends a lot on what it involves
by e-mail, presentation or in person

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.04
Variance	1.91
Standard Deviation	1.38
Total Responses	270

**11. I am familiar with the Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program (ESUP).**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree	41	16%
2	Disagree	45	17%
3	Somewhat Disagree	14	5%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree	21	8%
5	Somewhat Agree	66	25%
6	Agree	59	23%
7	Strongly Agree	16	6%
	Total	262	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	4.02
Variance	3.87
Standard Deviation	1.97
Total Responses	262

**12. I believe that ESUP will lead to long-term benefits for the University of Minnesota.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
2	Disagree	5	2%
3	Somewhat Disagree	4	2%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree	153	58%
5	Somewhat Agree	30	11%
6	Agree	60	23%
7	Strongly Agree	10	4%
	Total	262	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	7
Mean	4.63
Variance	1.07
Standard Deviation	1.03
Total Responses	262

**13. Changes implemented with ESUP will be positive.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree	1	0%
2	Disagree	4	2%
3	Somewhat Disagree	5	2%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree	147	56%
5	Somewhat Agree	44	17%
6	Agree	56	21%
7	Strongly Agree	5	2%
	Total	262	100%

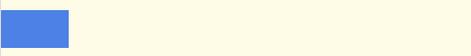
Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	4.59
Variance	0.96
Standard Deviation	0.98
Total Responses	262

**14. I actively seek out information related to ESUP.**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		26	10%
2	Disagree		66	25%
3	Somewhat Disagree		40	15%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree		55	21%
5	Somewhat Agree		42	16%
6	Agree		27	10%
7	Strongly Agree		6	2%
	Total		262	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	3.48
Variance	2.57
Standard Deviation	1.60
Total Responses	262

**15. If I have feedback or questions for the ESUP team, I know whom to contact.**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree		38	15%
2	Disagree		62	24%
3	Somewhat Disagree		33	13%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree		43	16%
5	Somewhat Agree		27	10%
6	Agree		48	18%
7	Strongly Agree		11	4%
	Total		262	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	3.56
Variance	3.41
Standard Deviation	1.85
Total Responses	262

**16. I am satisfied with the amount of information I have received regarding ESUP.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree (there is too much information)	5	2%
2	Disagree	34	13%
3	Somewhat Disagree	30	11%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree	98	37%
5	Somewhat Agree	41	16%
6	Agree	45	17%
7	Strongly Agree (there is just the right amount of information)	9	3%
	Total	262	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	4.17
Variance	1.94
Standard Deviation	1.39
Total Responses	262

**17. I am satisfied with the manner in which I have received information.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Disagree	8	3%
2	Disagree	29	11%
3	Somewhat Disagree	23	9%
4	Neither Agree nor Disagree	104	40%
5	Somewhat Agree	33	13%
6	Agree	55	21%
7	Strongly Agree	10	4%
	Total	262	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	4.26
Variance	2.05
Standard Deviation	1.43
Total Responses	262

**18. How frequently do you participate in in-person sessions (e.g., town hall meetings, Registrar's Advisory Committee, College Advisory Group) related to ESUP?**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	I have never participated	138	53%
2	I participate on occasion	99	38%
3	I participate whenever sessions are held	25	10%
	Total	262	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.57
Variance	0.44
Standard Deviation	0.66
Total Responses	262

**19. How much do you read online communication (e.g., e-newsletters, blog posts, ESUP website) related to ESUP?**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	I don't read any communication related to ESUP	80	31%
2	I read some communication related to ESUP	115	44%
3	I only read communication I deem relevant to me	30	11%
4	I read all communication related to ESUP	37	14%
	Total	262	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	2.09
Variance	0.98
Standard Deviation	0.99
Total Responses	262

**20. What position best describes your role at the University of Minnesota a majority of the time?**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Undergraduate faculty	70	27%
2	Graduate faculty	48	18%
3	College staff	42	16%
4	Program/departmental staff	83	32%
5	Other	18	7%
	Total	261	100%

**Other**

Administration  
 long retired, no idea why I received this  
 50% Grad/Undergrad  
 administration  
 administration  
 undergrad & grad faculty; dept head  
 administrator  
 Department Head  
 both grad and undergrad  
 retired Professor  
 Faculty  
 Retired faculty  
 extension educator  
 retired  
 both undergrad/grad faculty  
 Emeritus faculty

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.74
Variance	1.79
Standard Deviation	1.34
Total Responses	261

21. What campus are you associated with a majority of the time?				
#	Answer		Response	%
1	Crookston		15	6%
2	Duluth		54	21%
3	Morris		14	5%
4	Rochester		2	1%
5	Twin Cities		176	67%
	Total		261	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	4.03
Variance	2.08
Standard Deviation	1.44
Total Responses	261

22. How long have you been employed at the University of Minnesota?				
#	Answer		Response	%
1	0-5 years		40	15%
2	5-10 years		53	20%
3	10-15 years		45	17%
4	15-20 years		27	10%
5	20+ years		96	37%
	Total		261	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	3.33
Variance	2.29
Standard Deviation	1.51
Total Responses	261

**23. Please select the highest level of education you have completed.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	High school diploma or GED	1	0%
2	Some college	13	5%
3	College graduate	28	11%
4	Some graduate work	8	3%
5	Master's degree	72	28%
6	Doctoral degree	133	51%
7	Other	6	2%
	Total	261	100%

Other
Artist Diploma
Doctoral
JD
Technical School Graduate
Associate of Liberal Arts degree
MFA terminal art degree

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	5.15
Variance	1.56
Standard Deviation	1.25
Total Responses	261

**24. Please select your age amongst the ranges given below.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	20-25	2	1%
2	25-30	16	6%
3	35-40	37	14%
4	40-45	32	12%
5	45-50	29	11%
6	50+	145	56%
	Total	261	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	6
Mean	4.93
Variance	1.92
Standard Deviation	1.39
Total Responses	261

**25. Please select your gender.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Male	93	36%
2	Female	165	63%
3	Transgender	1	0%
4	Other	2	1%
	Total	261	100%

Other
nyb

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	1.66
Variance	0.28
Standard Deviation	0.53
Total Responses	261

## APPENDIX E

### In-depth Interview Recruitment Email

My name is Amber Cellotti and I am conducting research for my M.A. capstone in Strategic Communications at the University of Minnesota. I am also an employee of Academic Support Resources. You are invited to participate in this research study focusing on large-scale change initiatives in higher education and the impact that individual engagement has on our perception of and confidence in change. Results will be used for scholarly purposes, but will also inform a strategic communication and change management proposal for the University's [Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program](#) (ESUP).

I will be conducting in-depth interviews the **week of May 5<sup>th</sup>\*\*** focusing on the impact that Participative Decision-Making (PDM) has on perceptions of change and feelings of self-efficacy. You do not need prior knowledge of the PDM concept to participate.

Interviews will take approximately one hour and will be recorded (not video-taped). Participants will be asked to sign a consent form prior to the interview. All responses will be kept confidential. Google hangout will be used for those needing to participate remotely.

If you are interested in participating, please email me directly at [knap0071@umn.edu](mailto:knap0071@umn.edu) no later than **Thursday, May 1<sup>st</sup>** and I will schedule a time. I am looking for **8-10** participants and will schedule on a first-come, first-serve basis. Once capacity is reached, those wishing to participate will be put on a "wait list" and spots will be filled based on availability.

\*\*If you are not available the week of May 5<sup>th</sup>, but wish to participate, please let me know and we can find an alternative time.

If you know someone who may be interested, please forward this on keeping in mind that eligible participants must meet all of the following criteria:

- ASR or ESUP employee
- Working knowledge of the Student Records (SR) work stream
- Have participated in SR IDP sessions or have contributed feedback to business decisions related to the SR work stream

Very best,

Amber Cellotti

## **APPENDIX F**

### **In-depth Interview Consent Form**

#### **Participant Consent Form**

You are invited to participate in a research study examining the impact of engagement on the perceptions of and confidence in change. You were selected as a possible participant because you are familiar with the Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program and have been part of (or contributed feedback to) the decision-making process regarding system and business process changes. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Amber Cellotti (M.A. student), School of Journalism & Mass Communication, University of Minnesota

#### **Background Information:**

The main objective of this study is to determine if there is a relationship between the individual level of engagement and that individual's perceptions of change initiatives and feelings of self-efficacy toward that change. The in-depth interview is examining a particular engagement process – participative decision-making – to determine if too much engagement coupled with expectations about the outcome of decisions will yield a different result.

#### **Procedures:**

Interviews will be held in person or through Google hangout and will last approximately 1 hour. All interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed later.

#### **Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:**

There are no physical or psychological risks associated with participating in this study. As a participant in this study, you will receive no significant benefits for your participation.

#### **Confidentiality:**

All responses will be kept confidential and participants will be assigned a number (i.e., participant 1, participant 2); individual names will not be reported. The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher conducting this study is Amber Cellotti. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact me at: [knap0071@umn.edu](mailto:knap0071@umn.edu).

*You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX G

### In-depth Interview Questions

#### Introduction

##### Protocol

- Introduce yourself
- Discuss the purpose of the study
  - Explain the participative decision-making model
- Provide consent form; obtain signatures
- Provide structure of the interview
- Ask if they have any questions

#### Background Information

1. Please describe your role in ASR and as it pertains to ESUP.

#### Participation

1. In your opinion, do you believe that the ESUP program has provided a participative decision-making climate for individuals at all levels? How so?
2. How would you categorize your level of involvement in the decision-making process (low, moderate, high)?
3. In your opinion, do you think engaging “boots on the ground” employees in the decision-making process is an effective strategy in large-scale changes? How so?

#### Expectations/Outcomes

1. Please describe the expectations that you had when providing feedback or engaging in the decision-making process?
  - a. Overall, would you say those expectations were met? (PROMPT)
  - b. Did that impact your perception of the change decision? How so? (PROMPT)
2. How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your perception of ESUP and the changes that will be implemented in the student work stream?
3. How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your feelings of self-efficacy? Do you feel more or less prepared? Neutral?

## **Role of Communication**

1. In your opinion, what role does communication serve in change management programs like ESUP?
2. Do you think that employees view communication as an important factor in organizational changes? How so?
3. In your opinion, what is the best way to engage employees in the changes that are happening?

## APPENDIX H

### In-depth Interview Transcripts

#### PARTICIPANT 1

##### Participation

**In your opinion, do you believe that the ESUP program has provided a participative decision-making climate for individuals at all levels? How so?**

I wouldn't necessarily say at all levels. Similar to how we do political governance in the country, there are certain things that not everyone is going to be engaged in and won't have the information to make good, informed decisions that would be constructive. I certainly think they've done a good job of engaging business experts and to some extent staff who have more direct interaction with the University body at large who are used to answering questions and so forth; doing a lot of the actual work.

I don't know how much it's gone out to actually, for example, really engaging students about understanding their needs. We focus a lot on the transactional stuff that students do (e.g., registering for classes, pay their bill, get financial aid), but I don't know that there has been, aside from some preliminary design sessions about a year ago, but since that has transitioned onto who would be delivering the technical solution, I don't think they've been engaged.

I think we're making a lot of decisions about what students want based off of what we've done to support students in the past to get their business done as well as relying on our One Stop staff that answer a lot of questions that students have to get an idea of what confuses them and what they want. As far as an overall experience, I don't think we've done the greatest job of reaching out to students.

In terms of staff and management I think we've done a good job of determining who is going to represent particular stakeholder groups and their needs and I think to some extent, I suspect there is a disconnect between the working teams in ESUP and the Executive Oversight Committee (EOC). So I have no idea how much people between those layers (e.g., associate deans, assistant deans) really know what's going on because there is such a huge organizational leap between the steering committee and the EOC. Not much in between that and need to make sure they know what's going on.

**How would you categorize your level of involvement in the decision-making process (low, moderate, high)?**

I am probably – I used to say I have all the responsibility, but none of the authority – so I would say low to middle in decision-making. I feel confident that I can make technical decisions as to when we’re going to identify or pull a specific bit of data or determining the rules for when specific data will be showed versus when it wouldn’t. But in terms of if a design should be carried out a certain way or if we should structure you know communication, I feel like I have a much stronger role in facilitating the process of gathering everything together and then helping people walk through. And at some level I can provide a nudge in the right direction if I see them going down a route to maintain something long-term. In terms of being able to say that we’re going to go down a specific route, I really have no authority in that and struggle with that because we have so many committees that provide oversight and it’s difficult to know who gets to make the final decision one way or the other sometimes.

**Interviewer:** Would you say, going off of that, that you have a clear understanding of the chain of command as far as decision-making process or is that unclear?

It is unclear in the [redacted] world. I understand the different bodies that kind of have a say in the governance decisions, but there really hasn’t been a concerted effort to say here is the order of operations – this group can say this – there are spaces where it gets murky as to who makes the final decision. And I think the University struggles in that we have this drive to always get census on every decision and I don’t find that is necessarily the purpose of teams. I think there is a lot of room for constructive conflict in actually getting the decisions. Sometimes they will come to census, but there needs to be someone that calls out and says we’re going to spend this time and have these conversations and I’ll be making the final decision no matter what. It might be the same decision that the group comes up with, but there is one person to make the final call. We get stuck in a maelstrom of hashing things out over and over again trying to budge the last two holdouts to join the flock and they never will – need to take a different approach.

**In your opinion, do you think engaging “boots on the ground” employees in the decision-making process is an effective strategy in large-scale changes? How so?**

I would say, yes. Certainly from the perspective that they’ll actually know how they’re doing a process or supporting a subset of the population more so than, I think, management ever will. They’re the ones who have to deal with all of the rudimentary questions and the crazy ones too. Having that understanding of what people really ask about and what really happens and understanding the deviations from the norm of how things should go is very important to have. I think if you’re going to engage them it’s important to have them understand what their engagement is going to lead to. Don’t want to approach it as lip service to

engagement – taking from them, but they see nothing come out of it that makes them understand that their input was heard and utilized. Even if you're unable to adopt certain things that they say you really should do, at least being able to document that you heard it and have a clear response as to why it wasn't done and try to include at least some of what they told you in the design and hopefully quite a bit can be done with what they told you.

**Interviewer:** Do you think we're doing a good job of that right now?

Um, I think in some areas, yes; certainly not everywhere. What I've seen is that the technology that we're adopting is driving a lot of change to business process, which is new for me. I've always thought that technology shouldn't drive how we work, but I understand the compromise that comes out of it because if you adopt a particular technical solution that is more cost-effective to maintain long-term that there is some sacrifice in how you do business and experiences that people would have using the system, but I think that there seems to be a very heavy focus now that it's all about using a delivered functionality and the business world will just have to adapt because it will save the University money long-term.

I think that's kind of a big deviation from how the University has operated for a long time. For better or worse, it is what it is. I think people oftentimes think that they are prepared and are engaged with the problems they see. Even small technical changes that deviate from the base product that could potentially improve usability ten-fold, they're not necessarily being adopted because they're considered the dreaded word for "mod" that can't be; from when you talk to staff, as analysts, there are things they use every day that right now a box being checked is defaulted, but with now it's not and could be potentially problematic longer-term. We're seeing a paradigm shift where the system is driving what the process will be.

## **Expectations/Outcomes**

**Please describe the expectations that you had when providing feedback or engaging in the decision-making process?**

I have a couple of different parties engaging me. One is very amenable to change and to my ideas so I get to put forth a lot of my ideas on how we get to do something. They're very much like "go for it" and check back with us when you have things you want us to react to. Another group wants to be extremely prescriptive about how things are to be done and I'm supposed to carry it out and provide the technical answers when they have questions even though I see the direction the second group is going down to be probably not good for a lot of reasons. I think it's not good for students and I think it's also not good for the University's image, even. They are trying to adopt for something and there is a large amount of what I perceive as

ignorance to the functionality and also fear driving the decision to go down the particular road that they are. For me this is very frustrating because I have what I feel is a pretty good idea of what students expect and how they do things from working with student systems for many years. I'm frustrated by the lack of reception to ideas, but also the long-term damage that it could come down to and it goes back to the idea that there is no real clear governance as to who gets to make the final decision. There seems to be competing camps and I get stuck in the middle where I try to advocate for one approach and am receiving significant pushback on one side and then being told that my group can't make the decision, but then I have no one else to go to who can make the final decision. Feeling stuck.

Personally, I feel significantly engaged and committed to the actual outcome that is adopted because a good solution reflects well on me and a bad solution reflects poorly on me even if it wasn't my decision that led to the solution at that particular point in time. So I think no matter what, my level of engagement is high, but it is frustrating and you start to feel like the tendrils of why don't you just go with the flow and do the minimum amount possible as opposed to being more creative and engaged. So far I've fought it off, but with such a large project it can get tiring and worn down. You get paid the same no matter what you do so why put so much of yourself into it?

**Interviewer:** You've kind of talked a little bit about this, but as far as the expectations you've had regarding feedback and direction that you've been trying to push that particular project. When those expectations aren't met, does that impact your overall perception of that decision at all?

Um, my expectations...I think certainly that the initial reaction is feeling quite frustrated and depending on the scope of the expectation I might have a faster recovery to want to hopefully understand why that particular decision was made and hopefully get perspective. Sometimes it might not resonate and I want to determine if it's logical or if there are cost implications, etc. behind the decision. When you hear the explanations they may not come across as well thought out and seem to be "knee-jerk" or they didn't have enough time to consider it and just chose the easiest route or the route they knew as opposed to thinking. Any enterprise-level project under a timeline often times they come up more quickly. I don't have time to think about it because I have many other things that I need decisions on. You feel like there is a lot more lip service given as to why expectations weren't met rather than thought out or committed response that feels genuine. Being here long enough, sometimes experience can work in your favor or against you because your expectations might be higher. If you're more open to ideas you can later process why you thought that a decision was made and what you can do to make the best out of the situation and decision that was made. I'm pretty pragmatic so if I see that a decision is made, I try to figure out how to make it work the best way possible, but this isn't the reaction that many people have.

**How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your perception of ESUP and the changes that will be implemented in the student work stream?**

I feel like my involvement isn't as much as it has been in the past as we have a different approach to this upgrade, which differs from how we've approached projects in the past. In terms of...ESUP as a whole is kind of murky and I don't have a lot of time to think about it because I'm too busy moving on to the next thing that is waiting for me to do. I spend a lot of time just focusing on getting the work done as opposed to, um, how much I really feel engaged in the overall success of the project. Maybe that in itself is demonstrating engagement in that I haven't given up on anything so I keep moving on to the next thing so I can see how that particular piece fits into the bigger picture of the upgrade so I understand the importance of the components of the upgrade. I mean, I wish I had more time to stop and think about it. After hearing about the implementation of the Enterprise Financial System (EFS) and how that was bogged down with many failures and costly overruns, I feel from the student side that we don't want to repeat that; we want to be the one that was successful and that drives me and other people to make sure that doesn't happen. There is a lot riding on us and that's difficult to communicate out to people. So much is riding on it that we can't get bogged down in the weeds or when we run into brick walls – I feel stuck because I can't get a decision out of someone. I have to consult with different stakeholder groups about something and they won't all agree. So in terms of overall level, I understand the importance of doing it and engaged with the overall success and pushing for my pieces to be even better given the framework we're in.

**How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your feelings of self-efficacy? Do you feel more or less prepared? Neutral?**

At this current point in time I feel less prepared just because of the continued roadblocks I've been hitting over the last few months in certain areas. I also...it's also so much about timing, because in a few months I might have a completely different opinion as I'll have more information about how my part in particular works, which would make me feel more prepared. I think I have an idea in the back of my head that I will understand it and I will feel prepared as time goes on, but in the near-term, there's so much kind of coming at people every day that it's hard to feel like I'm in control of my faculties and feel like I can answer any sort of question or I'll know how I'm going to carry something out because so much is unknown and undefined. I'm okay with it, but it's not a simple answer to come to when not everyone has the same information and when you're asked about it, it's hard to appear competent and help someone through a process to understand it. I feel like I'm better situated to do so because of my role. Coming from a technical, business

process background it's more...it's not the place I'd prefer to be with the upgrade to eloquently communicate how things are going to be done. My role is kind of convoluted as sometimes I hear the information like everyone else, but other times I'm pulled in to like leadership groups where I hear things before everyone else and have more direct input. It's a bit "rollercoaster-y" if that's a term.

## **Role of Communication**

### **In your opinion, what role does communication serve in change management programs like ESUP?**

I think what they would look to for the group is a single point of contact to communicate out and maintain a repository of things that are changing so that you don't have to go to many different audiences to understand what is changing with the upgrade. There is one group that is dedicated to keeping track of those changes and capturing the nuances in a single place. Different audiences will have different questions regarding changes based on their role. I also think communications plays a role in providing regular updates as to what is going on so people know that things are moving forward and have a sense of confidence that things are going to be okay so they don't feel like things are getting lost vs. sporadic updates tends to breed cynicism that things aren't going to work out because I haven't heard anything or no one is driving the ship. I also think it's up to communications to be mindful of the fact that they need to be careful with the amount of information they put out or it just becomes an overload and people are already focused on day-to-day plus their role on the project and other changes and when you're getting pummeled by broader updates they may tune out entirely.

### **Do you think that employees view communication as an important factor in organizational changes? How so?**

I believe so, yes. When internally, when I used to sit on the staff employee satisfaction survey within ASR, communication was always kind of lacking and there is a need for transparency in terms of the upgrade. Really, it's tell me what I need to know and do it quickly so I can process it in my mind and move on to the next thing. I don't need a pages and pages of email to highlight everything. People here want to know what's pertinent to me right now, but then also feel like someone else knows and is in charge and is guiding us through so I don't have to worry about it. Not communicating would be a horrible approach – you'd have a lot of cynicism then! To drop change without any warning is bad. The approach we've taken with sneak peeks has been helpful to show people how it will work and show how it used to be done and how it will be done after the changes.

**In your opinion, what is the best way to engage employees in the changes that are happening?**

This is hard. Truly the best way I find is more one on one engagement, but no one has the time to do that. Small group things can be done but you have to lay out expectations of what will be done. Audiences are going to vary as some want no human interaction and just want resources that they can use...depending on the level of work that needs to be done with the change, sometimes mandatory training is good (even with grumbling!) in order to get experience with the new product. I guess what I would like to see is being able to communicate a real genuine message about how changes will impact you and how you might be feeling about that and if you're working on the upgrade, how much you're valued. This is a really hard thing and something I think leaders struggle with if they're not the best communicators so the messages come off as being on the surface rather than understanding that you're working 50 hour weeks and coming in on the weekends and recognizing that that sucks and is affecting your life. Recognizing how critical the players are to the success of the project. Even having one-off conversations can be more monumental. Broader engagement → being able to sound genuine and understand where people are coming from and what they're afraid of and how much they feel worn out and exhausted; show them hope.

**Interviewer:** So, we'll need an "it gets better" campaign? Laughs.

I don't think anyone has figured out the magic for this at all. I think continually trying is the important thing and understanding that communications and leadership needs to be given the time to do a really good job with that. Technical upgrades are not about the code or servers that can ruin a project, it's really about the people. You could do it and they don't adopt it and then you've spent so many hours and money to change and they still won't adopt or support it. Recognize that the system is only as good as the people who are using it and the people who are supporting it. So, in order for them to really be engaged as to why we're doing this and here are the pros and the setbacks we've had. Be able to wrap it all into a nice package with a 100% adoption rate. Laughs.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

I don't think so. I think it's great work and what I study and know about large technical projects, I know that this is where we fail is the engagement and communication aspect. We get so wrapped up in the actual doing in making the system work and fighting over what line of text is placed here and what data is pulled there that they don't think about taking a step back and realizing that people actually have to use the system. You can do all that great work on the systems side and then not do well on the people side.

## PARTICIPANT 2

### Participation

**In your opinion, do you believe that the ESUP program has provided a participative decision-making climate for individuals at all levels? How so?**

Yes and No.

The reasons I say yes is because there is a functional steering committee and we have a lot of representation from end-users within that committee in making the decisions.

Why I say no → sometimes, there is not always time to take information back to talk to the stakeholders that are important to me so they can feel like they're a part of the decision and giving me input that I can bring back. Can't have too many cooks in the kitchen though, I guess. So, timing and the speed of things have been really fast, but that's not necessarily a bad thing because if we were to wait it could take an eternity for this upgrade to happen.

I think where I've seen some top-down decisions is with the delegated access, or parent-guest access, where at one point end-users were exploring all options with the portal and PeopleSoft and then all of a sudden a decision was made and I wasn't told who made the decision. I'm assuming it was an executive decision due to finances. As someone who is invested in that change, it still hangs with me on how and why and who made that decision.

**How would you categorize your level of involvement in the decision-making process (low, moderate, high)?**

Probably moderate to moderate-high if there is an in between. Sometimes I feel like there is a lot of pressure to make decisions. I feel as if I'm representing all of the One Stops, not even just the Twin Cities, but on all of the campuses because they don't have the time and resources to send someone to all of those meetings. It's a lot of responsibility that I feel, but being on a functional steering committee we do make decisions on a weekly basis so that's why I would say my involvement is moderate or steady.

**Interviewer:** Would you say those decisions are major decisions, minor decisions, a mixture of both?

I would say all of the above. Sometimes it's just deciding how something appears on the screen (i.e., design feature) and it doesn't really matter and sometimes it's who

has access to what role and that's a big decision or whether things are in scope or out of scope. So they're across the board.

**In your opinion, do you think engaging “boots on the ground” employees in the decision-making process is an effective strategy in large-scale changes? How so?**

Yes, to a degree. It's a fine balance between keeping the boat afloat and engaging everyone in the process. I think what I've seen specifically with my unit is that there are some people who just don't care, and by that I don't mean that they don't care about the students. They know that decisions that need to be made and they don't want to be the decision makers or have a say in it because they know that someone else will come up with it and that's fine. I know there are a lot of folks within the staff that I work with that want the opportunities to make decisions or have a say or they have a lot of opinions because they are the end-users and they have experience with students and they know what impacts them directly and that opinion is valuable, but if we were to have all of them involved it could be a really large scale process and we already have enough committees at the University.

### **Expectations/Outcomes**

**Please describe the expectations that you had when providing feedback or engaging in the decision-making process?**

Hmm...I've never really thought about it. Feeling validated and heard. That's it. It's really simple from a front line staff perspective. There's an understanding of the balance between the finances of making a decision versus business processes versus customer service. I think customer service gets cut because it's the easiest to get cut. As long as I feel like I've said what I need to say and stood up for what is right for the student, there's not much more that I can do, but work on my persuasive skills.  
Laughs.

**Interviewer:** Thinking about that and the decision making process you've engaged in, overall would you say that the expectations you've had (e.g., feeling validated, heard), do you feel like those were met? You can answer or not.

For the most part. That will be my answer. For the most part.

**Interviewer:** Going a little further on that, having your expectations for the most part met, did that impact your perception of the change decision?

I don't know if there was really a change in my perception that I can think of. Maybe my perception of people, but not of the change. I think that making decisions shows people's true characters. That's more of an aside.

**How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your perception of ESUP and the changes that will be implemented in the student work stream?**

I would say pretty positively. The one thing that I am taking away from being involved in this experience is the University's decision to take time to do this change. If that makes any ounce of sense. To be able to evaluate and talk about what we're talking about and making that a priority is something I view positively with my experiences and I think working as a system is very challenging so I can't give a polarized positive or negative answers as it's complicated. It's unexplainable in a sense because at times it's difficult and makes changes that should be easy almost seem impossible, but then it also helps highlight some of the things that you've never thought about changing and it's done differently on another campus. We're starting to bring those things to the surface so, really, I can't just say positive or negative; it's a very educational process – being involved and learning all of the different ways that we do things. We do the same thing in five different ways.

**How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your feelings of self-efficacy? Do you feel more or less prepared? Neutral?**

Totally prepared. Because I'm involved I have a clear understanding of the changes that are happening and some of the business processes that I wouldn't normally have to understand in my role, but what the University supports as a broader whole. I'm learning more about the University system and not just what is directly applied to my role. Even though it's not directly something that is required of me in my role it is something that helps me down the line and I see that as a positive thing.

**Role of Communication**

**In your opinion, what role does communication serve in change management programs like ESUP?**

Everything. Laughs. The reason I chuckle at that is because I've already been working with the communications team and figuring out how we're going to work with our students and getting prepared for that. The reason I say everything is that you have to think about everything while still being strategic about it. Whether it's choosing to do something or not with the information you hold. I think it's a big piece in the engagement process and not having folks be surprised. Change is always

going to be something – for good or bad – that is a mixed bag; there will be things that people like and things they don't. As long as the communication is the foundation for the change and people aren't surprised by it, I think it will be a smooth transition no matter what it is.

**Do you think that employees view communication as an important factor in organizational changes? How so?**

Yes. I do. I think email is important, but can't be the only way. I think seeing things is also – at least when I think about who my stakeholders are – there is this idea that you want to see what's changing; the visual aspects of change rather than just hearing about it. Sometimes just hearing about it, there is still a lack of understanding or a piece that is missing from the puzzle. Maybe the visual aspects make it not as alarming of a change. If I'm just going to explain that waitlists are changing and students are going to be auto-enrolled, me saying that is a lot different than showing the process and how the change is actually going to look.

**In your opinion, what is the best way to engage employees in the changes that are happening?**

Definitely getting them involved as much as possible in the actual decision-making or providing feedback. I think another piece is listening to ideas, concerns, and issues and then communicating what is going to happen. I also think that getting involved and playing around with the system as much as possible whether that's testing or usability or whatever the means of that playing is, I think getting them involved in the doing before change actually happens is both beneficial in getting feedback (if necessary), but also with the training and transition period of change.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Timing is a huge issue. Understanding when things are important to people is something I've been trying to wrap my head around with change processes and engagement. When do people actually want to be engaged is a question I've been trying to figure out and I think it's all relative to the work we do. As a University, we have a different view of higher education and a different student cycle and that impacts the understanding of when people start to care.

I think that our training manual highlights the student life cycle and understanding who the audience is – trying to target messages to students, it's important to know when things are important to them, but how do you translate to that to staff and how do you know when the timing is right?

## PARTICIPANT 3

### Participation

**In your opinion, do you believe that the ESUP program has provided a participative decision-making climate for individuals at all levels? How so?**

Yes and no. That's the short answer. So, the long answer is that I think the model that they chose to use – the CCI model – the methodology that they chose to use is designed so that people who are subject matter experts could give feedback in the IDP sessions about whether or not a modification would be manageable when someone's job is changing; when they're talking about reducing modifications. Um, so I think it was designed to give that sort of feedback, but I think as with any major project like this sometimes top-down decisions have to be made and I feel like there were a lot of emotions. I mean, I came in towards the end, basically after the IDP process, so I was still sort of going through my orientation phase when they were finishing the IDP sessions so I think I maybe sat in on one, but the way I understand it, there have been and there are still a lot of emotions around some of the decisions that were made to remove modifications or not roll forward modifications that we already made. I feel like in some ways certain people are going to feel like they've been left out of the decision-making process when it comes to how those modifications affected their job.

**How would you categorize your level of involvement in the decision-making process (low, moderate, high)?**

I think it depends on what kind of decisions we're talking about. I feel like if it's related to the training plan, I would say it's high and if it's overall ESUP student decision-making, I would say it's low to medium because that's kind of where I fit into things. I think that leadership relies on trusting their staff and their leads that they've put in charge to make sound decisions, but again there are some decisions that kind of have to be made from the top down. So when it comes to those sorts of decisions, I have very little pull.

**In your opinion, do you think engaging “boots on the ground” employees in the decision-making process is an effective strategy in large-scale changes? How so?**

In large-scale changes it's tough to say because in an ideal world I feel like we would have sort of a “power user” or subject matter expert in each functional area that could speak for their group confidently and I feel like we've kind of banked on that through ESUP. The more I get to know our audiences and the PeopleSoft student users, the more I understand that there's no uniform “role” for one person or for one job – an adviser here may do something totally differently than an adviser

somewhere else. The difficulty in that is that we may be leaving behind some important voices that need to be heard; however, if it's a large-scale change it would take us years to go through the IDP process if we brought in every single staff member and had them test things out in the beginning. We would be going through that feedback process even longer than we already have and that was already a long process. So in an ideal world I think it would be really nice if you could, but it's kind of impractical and not feasible to think you're going to include every staff member that might be impacted. I think the strategy you have to take is trying to get to those power users or the supervisors who understand what staff do on a daily basis to the table. They can then act as advocates for them in that decision-making process.

**Interviewer:** In your opinion, do you think that's happening?

As far as I can tell. The hard part is that I don't have a lot of legacy here at the University and I'm just starting to get to know the complexity in terms of the different audiences that are here and I've seen a couple examples of changes that happened in the IDP process that, um, that happened more because we more concerned about our "mod currency" than we were about making the right decision. And that's with reference to keeping a modification and rolling that forward in order to save someone's time and efforts eventually. I think these are the things people are referring to when they say that's a mod that's going to go right back on after go-live. So, we've taken it off and it's going to go right back on – we'll probably see a few of those, but I don't think that's the majority. That could change though once we start to do preview sessions and really start talking to audiences. I've been to maybe 9 or 10 sessions going out to users and demoing the new functionality and, um, I would say the vast majority are excited about the changes we've shown them, but they're big, sweeping changes, not the level of detail they're getting into on a daily basis. So we'll see.

**Interviewer:** What venues or channels have you been using to communicate?

Sometimes. Okay, there are a couple of different formats that the CCT team has used to start communicating about change. The first is through those demo sessions and those we get to in one of two ways – either we get a request from someone outside who asks us to come talk to their group about x/y/z and then we do or we identify a need with an audience. The Law School is a good example of that because they have a lot of concerns about – not necessarily negative concerns – just they have expressed concerns about the way that things are changing. They're a delicate group and I say delicate because I know that they operate so differently from most other colleges within the University and I think that's true of most of the professional schools. We've had demos and sneak peek videos that are almost like a short infomercial just demonstrating some of the wins in the new functionality for staff. Um, we also have a communication plan which is coming through Kate's channel in the CCT group so from a training perspective – I technically work on ASR's training

and support team – so, I align more closely with training than change management and communications and from a training perspective everything starts to happen when we start to offer preview sessions and start training our users which we haven't done yet. So, the majority of our work related to the change hasn't happened yet so we're in those planning phases and building out training and building out help functions in PeopleSoft – like UPK – so when they click on the help button it will actually be helpful.

## **Expectations/Outcomes**

### **Please describe the expectations that you had when providing feedback or engaging in the decision-making process?**

I think my expectation is largely grounded in the fact that I'm a new employee and a new team member and what I've experienced so far is that if you've been here for less than five years, you're still pretty new. Being a new staff person kind of frames that expectation that there will be times that I won't understand what's being said or what's going on and it's not beneficial for the team to try to catch me up so my expectation is that if I have a question that – if I have a question about content – that it will be answered, but not necessarily right away. Someone may have to catch me up at some point about decisions that were made before I started. I think I also in general have really high expectations about people that I work with and so my expectation is that we'll work until it's finished and um, and that if something is not working, that we have to talk about it and fix it right away so that we can continue to do our jobs.

Other expectations are that I'll have some semblance of a role or task defined for me at some point, but that the nature of my job makes that really nebulous. No two days look the same to me so I also have to have the expectation that my supervisors trust me to do my job and do it well and to ask them when I have questions or need guidance or prioritization, but that for the most part I work pretty independently with a little, little bit of push in one direction or the other.

**Interviewer:** So, thinking about if someone is soliciting your feedback, do you have expectations about how that feedback will be used?

Um, depending on who is soliciting the feedback that could change. If it's a supervisor, I understand that my feedback is valuable as a member of the team, but may not always be honored for reasons that may not be able to be explained to me right away or that I may not have the full picture and therefore my feedback might not be super valid in light of other information. On the contrary, I think if I serve on a team, my expectation is that I have equal say in how that team is run and what outcomes we produce. If I give feedback where I don't think this represents what we

originally set out to create or I think we're behind schedule, I would hope that it would be honored by the group.

**Interviewer:** So, have you had any particular instances where you had that set of expectations and they weren't met?

Um, working on the CCT team is difficult because what came to light eventually is that all of the parties who are involved in that team come from very, very different viewpoints. I think we all start using a totally different magnifying glass on the picture of what we're actually looking at so it is different from everyone's lens. I think it's a process to try to stay on top of making sure that everyone's needs are being met while the team is still working towards its ultimate goal and even keeping and agreeing on a goal has been a difficult task for that group. I think part of it is because the methodology you use when you're a communicator is different from what you use when you're a trainer. Even the words can get muddled so we might use, for example, the word "outcome" to mean totally different things. In the training world an outcome is something that you might put on a course syllabus or something that you measure using an assessment once training is finished. An outcome in communication or even change management may be something totally different. It might be a reaction or a behavior or an email was sent – that could be an outcome. So, it took us a while to get to that point where we could start to understand that we were all working from a different lens.

**Interviewer:** So, thinking about decision points you've been a part of or feedback that has been solicited, um, if your expectations were not met, did that impact your perception of the change overall?

Let me talk about one specific example so I can give you some background. I don't make decisions that necessarily impact the project or even student as a whole, but working on the CCT team means that I have sort of an equal vote in the way that we do our work and the way that we plan for communicating, training, and managing change. Working on that team hasn't always had really distinct roles defined and outcomes defined from the very beginning and so bringing that up is still a process. Like I said before, I'm the kind of person if there is a conflict or if something isn't working the way that we hoped it would, it's my style to just bring it up – to have constructive conflict to get that out of the way so we can deal with it and move on. That hasn't been easy because that's not the style of the rest of the team. That's a work in progress. If that's too vague, let me know.

**Interviewer:** So would you say that it negatively impacted your perception or...?

Oh yeah. I would say that – it makes me question the necessity to bring all three members of that team or those representative groups – it makes me question those roles and how they work together on a project like this and whether we can or

cannot meet the desired outcomes that we set from the beginning or the expectations that were given before we even formed.

**Interviewer:** Do you think in general looking at organizational change that having those three components – do they work well together or is that something that should be siloed?

I don't think it should be siloed. In an ideal world I think that they would work together even more closely than they are on the student side of this project and it seems like, actually, that the other work streams don't really have that format at all really. At least in terms of their collaboration; however, I think the personalities and the work styles of those team members have to match well enough to get the work done because if they don't, then it becomes counterproductive. You have to not only find people who are experts in those arenas, you have to find people who are experts inside your institution and they have to work well together. One thing I've learned about that process is that there has to be a leader in that group – a really defined leader for that group.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that's lacking currently?

Yeah. Someone who isn't necessarily aggressive, but someone who is assertive in taking the role of, "okay this is the charge that we were given, this is the way we're going to go about it. If it doesn't work, that's fine, but we have to stay on task and we have to deliver this to this, that, or the other person."

**How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your perception of ESUP and the changes that will be implemented in the student work stream?**

It's gone back and forth over time, interestingly enough. There have been times when I'm just starting to learn the scope of the changes and the nature of the changes that are happening and I'm thinking, "oh my god, we're never going to be able to do this." Then there are other times when I think – I look back at the way that previous changes have been handled and previous implementations of upgrades and the little to no strategy that went behind training, change management, and communication behind those efforts. We literally moved from a paper-based system to a computer system and had no change management plan or communication plan. The trainers sent out a couple of emails saying, "hey remember this is happening soon so if you need help let us know" and it was fine, but then we've also had failings such as the EFS roll out. I'll be honest that one of the things that makes me really nervous about that is that I know that the person who was in charge of training for the EFS roll out is the person who is in charge of training for ESUP and that EFS roll out went really poorly due to the way that training was managed, or not managed.

So, I'm hoping against hope that lessons were learned and that we're doing things right this time.

I think it waxes and wanes depending on what little piece or moving target I'm looking at from week-to-week, you know? In general though, I feel the most risk when I know there's a group that should be working together isn't working together well just based on the personalities or work styles of that group and not necessarily the amount of work that needs to get done. Sometimes it's like a human factor – everything could go really, really well or really, really poorly based on how certain folks work together or don't.

**How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your feelings of self-efficacy? Do you feel more or less prepared? Neutral?**

Um, I would say that waxes and wanes too. Part of it is because the nature of my position has kind of waxed and waned too in terms of my level of involvement or level of responsibility or engagement. One thing that I worry about is that one of my initial charges was to help with user engagement and kind of engaging the training team and making the transition from instructor-led training to web-based or hybrid training and so I have a series of models I've created or standards or documentation. Also, things that I've done to train the trainers on those sorts of things and that has had to take a back seat to a lot of the daily task-y stuff that comes up with an upgrade like this. So, responding to things that come up on a daily basis often takes precedence over the long-view part and I think long-view part is that we need to make sure that the training team is prepared to present the materials in the way that we're planning to present them and so I feel like that relates to my self-efficacy – if I feel like the training team isn't prepared to do online training by the time we need to do online training, then I feel like I'm not doing my job well. Our charge is to help support the supporters and make sure that they're on board.

### **Role of Communication**

**In your opinion, what role does communication serve in change management programs like ESUP?**

All of it. I think change management, to me, is a strategy, but the strategy is not worth anything if you don't execute some sort of call to action or announcement or engagement with your audiences about it. I think that change management and communications kind of have to go hand-in-hand. Ideally, you'd have someone who is a change management expert also be working very closely with the folks who are doing the communicating or have the change management expert be the

communicator – being the person to help craft those messages and make sure they get out to the right audiences at the right time with the right message.

**Do you think that employees view communication as an important factor in organizational changes? How so?**

Not always. I think, um, I understand – because I work really closely with the communicators – how difficult it is to hit that sweet spot between too much or too little communication. Sometimes communications and communicators aren't valued because sometimes there are regular communications that have to come out and that can seem like busywork, but in their absence – people would notice their absence more than they would notice the communications themselves. I feel like communications is wrongly not valued.

**In your opinion, what is the best way to engage employees in the changes that are happening?**

So, I'm going to give you the nebulous answer first and that is to give them a chance to engage with the materials or with the change just in time and then have a plan to follow up. Here's your preview and the preview is the how and why behind the change – here's why your job is changing and we don't want to make it harder on you, but this had to happen because of x/y/z. Then they need the chance to interact, or just see sometimes – have a tangible thing to be able to recognize that this is going to change in my life soon and this is why and give them a chance to react to it. If they don't have a chance to react to it, they'll feel like they've been left out of the decision-making process, but left in the dust in terms of the actual change itself.

Maybe I would even preface that with before the change even happens, give the opportunity to provide feedback and input knowing that their feedback or input may not be the final decision, but was considered in the final decision. Then you have your preview sessions and then after that the change is about to happen or is happening at that point you engage your users through some sort of training and communications that reminds them that this is the actual change and then provide that in a way that is accessible. So, not limiting it to one face-to-face session – provide materials online or have multiple sessions that they can attend or if you have to do it in person, give them the opportunity to try it in sort of a sandbox – this is of course in an ideal world – so you give them a sandbox to play in and then when they have to deal with that change in their day-to-day, you have materials prepared that they can refer to. Sometimes that's going to be a really quick online tutorial or some screen shots on a page or a quick start guide – some sort of job aide. After that you have opportunities for them to refresh their knowledge at their own pace. In my ideal world, you're assessing that all the way through the process. So you're not just making a plan for something and then implementing and then say, "okay we had preview sessions and now we're doing training." No, you listen closely to the

feedback you get in those preview sessions and then tailor your next preview sessions or your training that you're about to do to match the needs that your users have.

Important to be strategic because audiences will hear messages over and over and over again and they need to understand what is changing because when we flip the switch, your job is going to change and you'll need to be able to do this, that, and the other thing. And even before the change, there will be things that we need certain audiences to do before we can even flip the switch.

**Interviewer:** Do you have concern that continuing to push the same message waters it down?

Yes and our plan is to not do that. So, basically we're starting in small bites. The messages that we gave them (department schedulers) are that here is, this is a new system, this is a new way of doing things. We weren't requesting their feedback or anything like that, but allowed them to ask their preliminary questions and they didn't seem too freaked out. Our response to that is that we have to be really careful about what we do in these upcoming sessions – what's going to happen in preview sessions and required training? Are we going to make them sit down and make them watch a PowerPoint on what's changing or are we going to give them a lab and say, "hey, here's what's changing" and give them a list and then have them sit at their desk and try to work it out. We need to make it something powerful and meaningful and give them the tools they need to do their job effectively.

The one thing you have to bear in mind in managing this level of change is to respect the prior knowledge of the person that you're talking to, or training, or communicating with. If you don't do that, it turns people off and if you talk to them like they're children or if you talk over their head and use a bunch of jargon and buzzwords, people will get turned off and they're not going to listen to you. If you really want them to hear that message, you have to meet them where they are and that can be difficult, but it can pay off. It's one of those things that it's not noticed if you're doing it right and so it's difficult to know if you're doing it right or not unless you're making mistakes and you don't really set out to make mistakes.

## PARTICIPANT 4

### Participation

**In your opinion, do you believe that the ESUP program has provided a participative decision-making climate for individuals at all levels? How so?**

I think that with ESUP there is a combo approach. There is some top down, specifically that these changes are happening and happening within this time frame. The go-live date being changed is an example where there wasn't any ground swelling and that was very top down. Other things, when thinking about functionality there was a lot of...I'm not sure about the bottom – depends on how you define the bottom – if your bottom is your stakeholders being students, faculty staff, etc. – I don't think that group pushed it as much. The middle group that was more representative brought things down to and pulled things up from them. I think in that case, when you start thinking about functionality in student records and portal, I would say that is true. I would say in regards to the Academic Advisement module, that is very top down and admissions is pretty much top down.

**How would you categorize your level of involvement in the decision-making process (low, moderate, high)?**

Very high.

**Interviewer:** Can you talk a little bit more about the types of decisions you've been involved in?

Lots of different kinds of decisions. I was involved in decision-making of the portal – were we going to work with a partner were we not going to work with a partner. On the functional steering committee, we were making a lot of final decisions, but we also made recommendations. In the student work stream, we made a huge number of decisions about functionality, security, functionality, services, etc. There are still a lot of decisions yet to be made about how things will be rolled out. In Academic Advisement we were really focused on how it was going to work and that is something that I would truly say that it was a top down decision and that our stakeholders were not really engaged at all. I get the sense that there has been some engagement on the other campus and more so there.

I was also involved in some of the consulting decisions and was able to weigh in on which consulting group or consultants were brought in. I really have been very involved.

**In your opinion, do you think engaging “boots on the ground” employees in the decision-making process is an effective strategy in large-scale changes? How so?**

Yes. I do. I think that previous leadership on the portal team and that group and from an information sharing, participatory, and feeling connected perspective has done the best job of that. While the implementation of that may have faltered, the leadership especially was key. The leadership has now changed and it is still good, but the initial portal push was the best launch of any of the work streams. It was the most effective for our users and community.

I think we've had some success in student records with the town halls and they definitely had key people from the collegiate units representing. Participation also depends on having the time to participate. Having worked at a large campus before and now being at a smaller campus, the staffing levels and time factors in. At the Twin Cities campus, there are people whose job it is to do just communications so they can go to meetings where elsewhere one person may be split between multiple jobs and don't have the resources to give up to go to meetings and participate.

That's the tricky part for this project and that if you only come at it from one campuses point of view, you only see it from staffing levels, etc. on that campus. It makes it difficult to assess the staffing levels and determine who can do what in order to engage and participate.

**Expectations/Outcomes**

**Please describe the expectations that you had when providing feedback or engaging in the decision-making process?**

Well, the expectation that if you ask participants for feedback, there is a trust issue that has to be there and needs to be respected. If you say you're going to have town hall meetings and you say you're going to have participation, the people in leadership have to be willing to move and act on that participation. In a couple of instances, I would say the University and this project vacillated between wanting to be participatory and wanting the power of a top down approach.

“Let me ask you and then you tell me, but I don't care.” That doesn't work. There are some things like that that we saw. There were cases where we did some surveys so we had some hard numbers to come into decision-making meetings with and the leadership committee may think something personally, but I have numbers from stakeholders here that show something else. In this model, if you're going to have participation, you have to have trust.

We had a couple of things that were quite participatory. For example, moving the go-live date – that’s a top down decision and a good one, but we set up the expectation of participatory – nobody asked at all if we had enough resources for staff (e.g., travel) or if we have enough personnel emphasis to keep going for another six months. So the expectation was set and wasn’t followed through, but then again you can’t follow through in all cases. Getting the balance right of when to say, “we need participation” and when to say, “thank you very much for playing, we just need to make the decision.” So, it comes down to ethical leadership and knowing when to make that call and being transparent. In ESUP, sometimes transparency has been there in the inner circle, but it didn’t feel like it was transparent across the entire University system.

I’ll give you one more example. I think there is some of this going on in the work pages and understanding – some of what that team and the portal team are doing with transforming self-service into a different format. We have functional steering committees that are deeply involved in many conversations, but then those conversations went off behind closed doors and we’ll tell you when we’re ready to have your input, which violated the base level of participation and I think people struggled with that.

**Interviewer:** You’ve kind of touched on this a bit, but if you could expand a little on the expectations that you had set of honesty and transparency and having that level of participation – if those expectations were not met, did that impact your perception of the change decision?

Um, well, I think you have to change your game, right? You have to figure out how you...you have to figure out your role as being a representative of a much larger community, which is what I was asked to be, right? Sometimes it’s for faculty, sometimes students, or staff and administration. You have to figure out how else do you make sure that that voice is heard. So, if the first attempt didn’t work, then how do you circle back around to get to that voice in a different way. What email do you write? Who else do you contact? When do you reach out to senior leadership to say, hey we have a problem?

It can’t help but shape perception. Projects evolve and thinking about the push and pull of communication because it is an interplay. We take this step and say this, but then where does that pop up elsewhere? If we aren’t transparent and participatory, then where might that pop up later down the road? And how does that flow out to the people and the communication that are involved? Under all of that there has to be a level of trust and I would say that in this project that has grown. The trust level that I came into with many of these groups is very different and is much higher but with that came some rough roads to navigate through in order to get there. If done well, you build trust. If done poorly, trust dissipates very quickly. This project has moved forward with building trust, at least in student records.

**How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your perception of ESUP and the changes that will be implemented in the student work stream?**

For the most part, in general, my perceptions have been pretty positive. The leadership team has worked really hard and have done an amazing job in building trust and listening across the system. There has been a shift between distinguishing between the Twin Cities campus and “coordinate campuses” to all of us being part of a system. Before, the division made some feel less important like the Twin Cities has a name and the rest have a label (i.e. coordinate campus). There was feedback that a number of people gave to move us to be all campuses of a system rather than a division. Fundamentally, it’s not the words that you’re using, but the fact that you’re labeling. One of the things I’ve seen over the project that has been positive for me is that there has been a knowledge at least in SR that we all are campuses of a system and that has really grown and has built trust and get over difficult things to weigh and wrestle with, but having that foundation of “we” not “I” or “me” and “the rest of you” positive growth can happen.

What I would say that this project has not done well that I’ve seen elsewhere in similar projects of similar or larger scale, is that the cross-module conversation has not been developed and has not necessarily been very positive. We’re seeing it play out in security right now. The fact that there is one admissions representative for all of graduate on the admissions team and there is no representative for non-degree admissions; there is a distinction between undergraduate admissions and there is some tension playing out because admission can’t be done through self-service and that wasn’t previously shared.

I think that some of the other pieces (e.g., financial aid, student records) have a better collaborative relationship due to whom they report to. I think that’s an area that we have not yet, on this project, grown. I don’t think we’ve given much attention to it yet. From a user (e.g. faculty, students, staff) point of view, they don’t care which module built it, they just care if it works or not.

**How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your feelings of self-efficacy? Do you feel more or less prepared? Neutral?**

Good question. I am grateful for the ability to be so involved in this program and try to put a big picture together for the team. On the flip side to the coin, it is absolutely overwhelming to try to do the job of what seven other people are doing on another campus and trying to keep up on what’s all happening. I need to know when to step out of meetings and have other people come in and then I can look at it from a high level because I can’t – we have to scale way back. I feel more prepared in some areas

where I've been able to focus because the costs are very, very high. I feel less prepared and feel frustrated that I couldn't give my best in some of the areas, but I didn't have anybody else that was more prepared to pick it up. There was no one here to pick up Academic Advisement, for example. So, I've had a real range of feelings, but they're definitely not neutral.

I'll give you one more example that goes with the phases of projects. The CCT team has been doing a lot of effort and this summer will be the first time we'll have enough hours to shape change management and implementation for our campus. It's being done on other campuses already because there are enough people to do it. On some campuses you're single-threading it because there aren't enough people to book the meetings, make an agenda, get communication out, etc. From a stakeholder perspective, though, the audience concern is the same across the system. From an administrative perspective, there is more concern because one person could be doing multiple jobs (e.g., scheduling classes, finance, etc.). My user group has a more heightened concern and less ability to get involved early, but the risks are high.

It's all about the power of size. We're small enough and don't have a lot of resources, but if there are only a few of us we can all get in a room, go to lunch, etc. and really figure it out. May not have a lot of resources, but can wrap your arms around that group. Looking at the scheduler group it is significantly larger on some campuses, but on the other campuses the size is still significant enough that there isn't the support staff to manage – we're too big that I can't take them to lunch or fit them in a classroom. You have to have a big conversation for a medium-sized group. It's always what's that tipping point? You're too big to handle it off the cuff, but too small to have the resources to really do it well. This has been a communication challenge.

## **Role of Communication**

### **In your opinion, what role does communication serve in change management programs like ESUP?**

Oh, it's essential. It's essential for building trust. In a participatory program, it's still essential even if you're not doing a participatory program, right? You have to have really solid communication from the top down. If you say, "thou commandath" you still have to say it well. Either way communication is a foundation pillar and was built into each of the work streams, which is fine. What Santiago is trying to do is create foundational communication on a value of participation and transparency.

### **Do you think that employees view communication as an important factor in organizational changes? How so?**

Oh, absolutely! If you want organizational change that is lasting and effective, communication to all levels of employees (even student employees) is essential. Here has been my personal philosophy of communication. I have two things that I'll share. One, I think that learners, especially adult learners, need to hear something at a minimum four times. They need to hear something is coming, then they need to know yes it's coming and need to know some factors of how it affects them and why they should care, and then they need to know what are those key things that I have to know before go-live; what are the things I care about, and then I need to know what's my support communication if I have trouble after the event to then reach out and hook into the communication tools to get the information that I need and do my job. So, I think there's a minimum of four. There's probably many more levels to do it well, but without at least those four touch points, you're going to have a bigger hole of people going, "what? I didn't know I should care!"

I also have my own 80/20 rule. 10% of the people when you come into a major change like this won't need a lot of help and they'll figure it out on their own. You'll present the information to them and they'll get it depending on skill level and just figure it out. 10% will always need assistance and multiple assistance. The trick is what do you do with the 80% that only need one or two or three to learn the business process. That 10% of need communication, they have other human factor things going on – they need someone to love them, support them, and someone to talk to. The 80% is the tricky part and ESUP is trying to figure out how you get that 80% and spread it over time – time is your friend. Depending on the level of people needing to care about it as there are some staff where what's changing will affect them every single day and they need the longest period of time to wrap their brain around it. Other people need to know...just tell me what I need to know, when I need to know it right before I need to do it.

**In your opinion, what is the best way to engage employees in the changes that are happening?**

The tricky thing is that in some areas we have a decentralized, um, academic record functionality so when you say "registrar" on some campuses it's very central and on others there are people outside of a central office that are doing those kinds of functions. I'm going to think of employees in the broadest sense in that their life, every day is going to have some change because of this project.

The best way to engage employees...I go back to the four pieces. I have to tell them what's coming and then I need to tell them why they care. And what I try to do here is to define those things for administrative employees (and the same with faculty) – what is it that they care about. You have to know what their trigger point is. And then I wish I had more time to do more small group conversations and I've done that some with the faculty – associate deans and department chairs – and giving people the opportunity to ask questions versus let me throw stuff at you. Asking questions

though means a couple of things. I want more...I want a summary sheet that if I'm a faculty member, what's changing in summary format. Students and staff would have something different and for staff you could break it down by module. I'd like to be able to take that and walk into a room and go, "here's what I think you care about." I want to be able to when questions are asked, be able to answer them on the fly. If you fundamentally understand that people want communication about what is important to them, for example, someone saying, "great, thank you for the big story, but my question is this. How can you answer what I need to know?" "What's the name of the button?" "Do I have to go to portal first?" If you can't get beyond those small questions, they won't see the bigger picture. It's that human factor needs question, right? If I need housing and I'm hungry, I can't move up Maslow's law. If I have this question that's burning, I can't even hear what the big picture means in terms of other pieces.

I'll give another example. In the town halls we showed new functionality in 9.0 about permission to add and drop classes. We want to move on that to use in specific cases (e.g. PSEO, etc.) and it was discussed and decided upon. Somehow from that town hall it gets out to others on campus that all students will have to see a faculty member to drop classes – so, huge mixed message! This came up again at a faculty governance meeting until I was able to clarify what it really meant. Have you ever played the game of telephone? It was like that. By the time it came to this meeting it had completely transformed and was not the initial message at all. This meant they couldn't hear anything else about ESUP because they had burning questions based on this misinterpreted message.

The trick in ESUP, especially in a module set-up, is how do you have people with broad enough experience to answer questions, give presentation in summary, and enough people in the room and have enough experience to prevent them from being blinded by the larger message that needs to get through. That's really tricky. That's the million-dollar answer! If you can answer that. Laughs. I think as our culture gets more "I" focused and can get the answers to what they want when they want it (e.g., Siri and the iPhone), we'll only see more of that. We need to build opportunities for all levels of engagement and be sure that our messages are precise. The only thing worse than no message, is putting out a message that's wrong. Language is very powerful.

## PARTICIPANT 5

### Participation

**In your opinion, do you believe that the ESUP program has provided a participative decision-making climate for individuals at all levels? How so?**

No, I think there is the perception that the ESUP team is putting out there that they are trying to through town halls, etc.; however, most of that is not an actual town hall it's just talking to people in the room and mostly a presentation style, at least what I've attended. It seems like what is communicated are decisions that have already been made or a direction that is already underway, and that feedback normally isn't even given. People have perception that this is how it's going to be so I don't feel like...I feel like the higher ups have already made the decisions or are going to and that's that. They are trying to give the perception that input is wanted for everyone.

**How would you categorize your level of involvement in the decision-making process (low, moderate, high)?**

Low, mostly for the reasons stated in my previous answer. In fact, I don't feel on a personal level that I have any say in anything; I'm just being told what to say to other people.

**In your opinion, do you think engaging "boots on the ground" employees in the decision-making process is an effective strategy in large-scale changes? How so?**

I think engaging them is huge because then they will feel like they are part of the process and we won't be sitting in this situation that we're in now where it's more of a directive. It creates more of an inclusive environment if everyone has a chance to provide feedback and know that their feedback is being heard instead of just providing feedback and it getting sucked into some type of a vortex. I think it would be more beneficial – and this should have happened earlier, I don't know if it's too late to do it now – to bring people in. It would have helped, I feel.

### Expectations/Outcomes

**Please describe the expectations that you had when providing feedback or engaging in the decision-making process?**

I think there has been a lot of confusion regarding expectations. The content audit that we're doing for [redacted], we've met close to seven times and it took the first

two to three sessions to figure out what we were supposed to do. The actual directive wasn't clear as to what we were supposed to be doing as a group. So, I feel like we wasted some time just talking about the project as a whole. Some of the people in the group didn't have nearly as much information about ESUP in general, in fact they had little to none so we had to spend a lot of our time catching them up whereas that should have been done first. Now moving forward, we've been told that a lot of the decisions about the website have been made so I'm not sure even moving forward how many of our ideas will actually be put to fruition. I'm not really sure what we're spending our time on. I understand why we're doing it, but at the same time I'm not sure how it's going to benefit everyone if they've already made decisions. That I feel like that is the only section that I've been working on where I've been asked directly for input. Everything else that I've gone to is more like, "this is what's happening."

**Interviewer:** So, thinking about the expectations you've had, would you say that overall those expectations were met?

My expectations were low and muddled so in terms of that, they were met. It was consistent in that when I would ask questions about the change documents there were never solid answers and never a solid person to go ask. It's always, "this person might know, but they might not know." Not sure what you should be doing, but here's the project. Not a lot of direction. My expectation was that there wouldn't be [any direction] and that has maintained. It just seems confusing and that is what I expected.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Thinking again about your expectations and if they were or were not met, did that impact your perception of the change decision itself?

Hmm...not really. I mean, granted some of the stuff I wouldn't have known what to suggest so I trust those who made the decisions made the correct decisions. I don't know how to answer this.

**How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your perception of ESUP and the changes that will be implemented in the student work stream?**

Um, since I was never involved. I mean we had the opportunity to provide feedback, but I never felt like it mattered that my perception of ESUP is that it is a top-down initiative and that even though they're trying to say that it's a University collaborative and that everyone is working together, it really is a top-down decision and telling everyone what's going to happen.

**How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your feelings of self-efficacy? Do you feel more or less prepared? Neutral?**

Depends on the day. Sometimes I will leave meetings and feel like I completely understand what we're talking about and then sometimes I leave a meeting and have no idea what we've talked about is going to mean in the future. Obviously, I'm assuming that will get better in the coming months and things start to get finalized. For the most part I feel neutral. There is never a situation where I feel more prepared; it's either neutral or less.

### **Role of Communication**

**In your opinion, what role does communication serve in change management programs like ESUP?**

It plays a huge role. It's going to set the tone for how things are going to be moving forward and how well people will perceive what's going to be changing. It's all about perception with communication. And so, it's going to be important to communicate that while things are changing, the changes are for the better so that there aren't disgruntled staff or faculty, or students that are wondering why we're spending all of this time or money doing this. It will be very important to get the message out clearly and concisely so that people aren't confused. It's a huge role.

**Do you think that employees view communication as an important factor in organizational changes? How so?**

Some do and some don't. I don't have a straight answer for that. It depends on the group. Some people look at communication as a side afterthought like, "oh yeah, we probably should say something about this." Other people have it in the forefront of their minds and those who truly understand change management have it at the forefront whereas some people who aren't familiar with need to understand the University community when doing these things.

For the most part, yes. If we don't communicate, then we hear about it. People will say why didn't you tell me about this. Even if they don't think of it as, "this is communication"... even if they don't realize it, they will know when they don't receive any communication. So on a subconscious level they know it's important to have it and receive it because they want to be aware of what's changing.

**In your opinion, what is the best way to engage employees in the changes that are happening?**

I feel like when they did the town halls and things like that at the beginning, I feel like there wasn't any outcome or follow up from that. There weren't any key takeaways that were presented and letting people know how their feedback was received and how things would be addressed. That's why I think this is where the communication with "feet on the ground" people could have better. Not sure what the ESUP team did with the feedback or how much was even received. There isn't any indication of what is being done with feedback. It's always feedback from higher levels that is discussed rather than staff and employees and what they're saying about it. They're looking at it from a very high level when it affects the majority of administrative people; everyone. High-level people aren't going to be using PeopleSoft.

I applaud the efforts of the team and what they've been trying to do with the newsletters, stories, etc., but I'm not sure how effective they are and I don't think they've spent the time to realize how effective they are, they're just putting them out there. So this is something that needs to be done. I don't have an answer for how to determine that, but I don't think they're thinking about what's effective and just trying to get it out there, which is a tactic in and of itself. It's hard to tell what's working and what's not if you don't analyze it.

#### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

I've been frustrated with the whole process. I feel like I wasn't involved and would hear about it, but then all of a sudden you need to do xyz and there wasn't any lead in into that work and taking up a lot more of people's responsibilities, but the direction isn't clear due (even still for a lot of things) to decisions not being finalized; things change all the time, but it's hard to plan communication for when things are finalized and have to completely change communication.

## PARTICIPANT 6

### Participation

**In your opinion, do you believe that the ESUP program has provided a participative decision-making climate for individuals at all levels? How so?**

I think I can only speak to it from a student records perspective as I have no idea what is happening with the other work streams and I don't know what's happening with the others in student records, I think they followed a similar model to ours. So, from a records perspective I do believe that it has been participative. I don't know to the extent that it is participative at all levels. Part of that stems from the fact that there are some decisions that the functional steering committee had to make that we knew we didn't even want to make, but we had to so there was no point in gathering feedback from end-users because they wouldn't have wanted us to make the decision we ultimately had to make and we didn't want to make it either. But when we had opportunities to really engage the end-users because we didn't have a decision we either had to make or we had already landed on as the right decisions for the institution, I think we did a really good job of engaging stakeholders through town halls and bringing it up at various meetings trying to reach out to particular constituents that it might impact directly to get their input on what decision would they make.

**How would you categorize your level of involvement in the decision-making process (low, moderate, high)?**

Pretty high.

**Interviewer:** You've already touched on this a bit, but what sorts of decisions were you involved in?

Basically, all of those from the records perspective. So, every fit-gap that we did where we looked at the difference from what was currently operational in 8.9 to what we were going to have in 9.0. All of those decisions were made at the functional steering committee level. So I was involved in all of those.

**In your opinion, do you think engaging "boots on the ground" employees in the decision-making process is an effective strategy in large-scale changes? How so?**

I think it depends on if the decision has already been made. If the decision has already been made and you know the direction you're going to go, it's just window dressing and there's no true engagement or it doesn't matter what folks are going to say and if the decisions already been made, it's been made. But, if it really is an open

question of which direction we are going to go then absolutely the more – at least we have found in the records world – the more we engage our “boots on the ground” people in coming up with solutions or socializing ideas, the more accepting they are of the change and the more they can serve as our champions in the areas where they work. I think people also resent if you’ve already made a decision and then yet you ask them for their opinion. It seems like, why did you even bother?

## **Expectations/Outcomes**

### **Please describe the expectations that you had when providing feedback or engaging in the decision-making process?**

I think my expectations going into it initially were that really all decisions and all options were on the table and then it became abundantly clear as we progressed through that even if we thought a current solution that we had that was a modification in 8.9, if there was a viable solution in 9.0 even if it meant doing more work or having a business process that was less, um, sleek and had extra steps that we would go that way. That was a little bit demoralizing for a lot of us. Once we understood that was our charge after bemoaning it a bit we moved forward with that mindset that it was a large goal of ours to remove as many modifications as possible even if it meant doing the work in a much less streamlined way.

**Interviewer:** To kind of follow on that, and you’ve sort of talked through it a bit already, the expectations that you had going in if those expectations weren’t met, did that impact your perception of the change decision and how so?

For me, yes it did change my perception of the change decision. It made me, for lack of a better set of words, a little bitter that we had to make decisions to meet an arbitrary goal set by someone else. Didn’t change the fact that I knew that’s what we needed to do and we were making those hard decisions, but it’s, um, it’s made it seem like some of our decisions were short-sighted because we needed to remove modifications.

### **How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your perception of ESUP and the changes that will be implemented in the student work stream?**

Since I’ve been so intimately involved in the decision-making, I feel like I understand what’s going on and understand that a lot of what’s changing is really minimal. But I also understand that there are some changes that will be pretty dramatic for us an office it’s probably going to seem fairly seamless to the end-user, but as the back office part there are going to be some pretty dramatic changes. I think it gets to my earlier point of being driven to go vanilla as much as possible even when doing so

was a step or a few steps backwards. It's...I don't want to say jaded because that's not the right word...it's definitely seemed to me that the goal is not necessarily efficiency, what's best for the student, what is going to stay as premier service that we've created in a delivered product by modifying it. It's made me look at it with that type of lens. I get and I believe in the idea of going vanilla and that it allows us to take advantage of a whole bunch of things that we haven't been able to in the past, but we at times I think felt the pressure to really remove modifications or pillar applications that were truly best in class and now are going to be having a lesser service than we have had in the past.

**How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your feelings of self-efficacy? Do you feel more or less prepared? Neutral?**

I feel very prepared. I think if I think of self-efficacy in a different light of fighting for what you think is right, I feel a little bit less fulfilled because we knew we had to retire things that were best in class. They worked the way we needed them to work because we built them. So, um, I feel very prepared. I think knowing a little bit more of what's going on behind the curtain has made me really think about how much or how many moving pieces there really are in a project of this scale. There are so many interdependencies that when any one of them is missed – not that it's forgotten, but if it's late – the domino effect on other things. So, that's where I'm feeling a little bit less self-efficacious. That's where I'm feeling a little bit concerned. We depend on particular mile-markers to be met and when they're not the next part of the work can't start. I'm thinking of the training team and building what we need to be building when development isn't done. It feels a little bit like we're getting scrunched. Not necessarily the same as self-efficacy, but I think that I've got the concept of I get what's going on and we're going to get there and have all of our people trained. For most of our end-users the world is not going to be that dramatically different. For us it is; how do we make sure we have all of the pieces ready for us to provide what we need to for our end-users.

### **Role of Communication**

**In your opinion, what role does communication serve in change management programs like ESUP?**

Oh, I think they're a double-edged sword. They're essential because – especially from a records perspective – since what we know and what we're proposing to change has a direct impact on a lot of I'm going to call them external users, they need to know what's going on, they need to know some things are changing, they need to know what they need to pay attention to and why they need to pay attention

to it and they're really our liaisons to other individuals in their area that may be totally checked out but still need to pay attention.

So I think communication is essential for that, but it's also for a big project like this, it's very easy to over communicate. It's very easy to spin things in a way that set up a particular expectation that may not be what you want. For example, from day one we've been saying, "change is coming, change is coming" but when you look at what our end-users are going to be seeing it's not that dramatically different. So if we phrase it as, "there are going to be some changes, but the vast majority of what you do and where you do it, how you navigate there is going to be exactly the same or almost exactly the same." That, to me, sets a totally different vibe than oh my god the world is going to be totally different. And I'm sure you've heard about "hypercare" and how we fought hard to change the name of it as hypercare in the words that are chosen, at least for those of us who do this work, sets a tone of we know it's going to suck or rotten when we go live and we have to be panicked and fixing things right away instead of saying we're going to do what we've always done which is we're going to be here to support you and we're going to get you the tools that you need and help you understand things once the system goes live.

So, I think we've done a good and a bad job with communication. I think part of it is we have so many people working on things that are a part of communication that don't always know what the other one is saying that there is some clean up effort afterwards. I think it can be your best friend as well as your worst enemy. There are some really great things that we have in place for communications, change management, and training and there are some things that always seem to be at odds with each other that one part of the CCT team is trying to clean up something that somebody else did and it was totally inadvertent, but it has long lasting staying power.

**Do you think that employees view communication as an important factor in organizational changes? How so?**

Yes. I think that if it's done right, it alerts them to the things that they need to pay attention to and it acknowledges that they may not have the either the resources or the ability to go get that information on their own and it solidifies our partnership with them that even if they can't necessarily be involved in the decision-making, we can do our best to make sure they know what's going on so they feel empowered and educated and it also allows them the opportunity to and gives us the opportunity to do a temperature check to see if they understand what we're talking about. We often get bogged down in the language that we're used to using, so they may say, "what in the world are you talking about" which allows us to realize that now we've gone into our own lexicon. It helps us make sure we're communicating in a way that is meaningful.

I think if we don't communicate with people they create their own stories and they create their own fears and rumors and things that we have to combat. If we just tell them outright it can at least undercut some of that. Sometimes those rumors or stories that folks have created takes a very, very long time to make that wrong idea go away.

**In your opinion, what is the best way to engage employees in the changes that are happening?**

I think it goes to my earlier question of if you don't have a set direction or decision already, then I think we engage them at the beginning. What would they like to see with this new thing, what's wrong with the current one? If you have made the decision already or the decision has been made somewhere else, then don't feign true involvement. Tell them that this is the way it's going to be and outline where their engagement can be. So, maybe it's the process around what happens or maybe it's the communication part of it; something so that it feels like their engagement is meaningful instead of window dressing to say, "check, we've done it."

## PARTICIPANT 7

### Participation

**In your opinion, do you believe that the ESUP program has provided a participative decision-making climate for individuals at all levels? How so?**

I want to say, yes and no.

Yes, but not at all levels; or different ways at different levels. A specific example is that it is brought up at staff meetings – how do you think things are going with ESUP? – and people may or may not know as much as other people. I think in terms of analysts and IT related gathering, there is more participation. I think people simply know more about what’s happening on the ground than the end-users might. At the upper level, I don’t really know. I think those participating the most are the analysts and they’re working to get stuff out there at RAC and CAG, but I don’t know how participatory that is. People give feedback, but I don’t know if they’re really participating beyond that.

**How would you categorize your level of involvement in the decision-making process (low, moderate, high)?**

I would say it’s low. I don’t think that I have a lot of say in how things end up in the final analysis. I think that my role is more to know what changes are coming down the road and how to make those happen. I’m not actively involved in making any of those decisions.

**In your opinion, do you think engaging “boots on the ground” employees in the decision-making process is an effective strategy in large-scale changes? How so?**

I don’t think I know the answer to that question. It could be a good strategy, but I don’t know that that’s actually what is happening. I think that it tends to – I could be wrong – unless people are actually involved in the upgrade they just want to know what’s going to happen and what it means to me; how will it affect me. I don’t think they’re too concerned beyond that.

### Expectations/Outcomes

**Please describe the expectations that you had when providing feedback or engaging in the decision-making process?**

I guess I would expect that I would – and I think I have been – asked for my opinion, which is great. But I don't ultimately feel like my feedback is necessarily going anywhere. I don't know that it is going to affect the outcome. My opinions have been solicited and I think a lot of peoples' opinions have been solicited, but I don't think they end up in the final decision-making hopper.

**Interviewer:** So, when you're...when you have been solicited for feedback, you expect that or hope that your feedback will be used. Would you say in the times that you have been solicited for feedback, that your expectations were met?

Um, yes. I would say so.

**Interviewer:** And did that impact your perception of the change or decision?

No.

**Interviewer:** Can you expand on that a bit?

I still sort of think that even if am involved in a discussion about a change and my feedback is solicited and considered, I don't know where it ultimately ends up. I don't know where that information goes.

**How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your perception of ESUP and the changes that will be implemented in the student work stream?**

That's a dicey question isn't it!

**Interviewer:** You don't have to answer if you don't want to.

I would say that they've been good about asking for feedback and asking for information from everybody, but I don't know that a lot of the...I think there's the perception that they're making decisions for everyone. There's still that perception out there that someone else or a group of people are making decisions for everyone and that not everyone's opinion is necessarily included in that. Whether or not that is the case, I don't know. I guess I've seen situations where we listen to your feedback BUT we can't do that or shouldn't because of X and then it ends up going in a different direction anyway. There is a lot of that that gets frustrating for a lot of people. Does that make sense?

**How has your involvement in the decision-making process (whether direct or through feedback) impacted your feelings of self-efficacy? Do you feel more or less prepared? Neutral?**

More, I feel more prepared. I think they're making an effort to get information out there. They're making an effort to communicate more about what's actually happening although...yeah, I don't know if it's more transparency necessarily...it's more communication and information, but on the other hand I don't know if that makes it more frustrating. I think definitely more prepared.

## **Role of Communication**

### **In your opinion, what role does communication serve in change management programs like ESUP?**

I think the role is to do information gathering and the delivery of information. Also, an important role is to not only explain the "how" and the "what", but I think people really want to know the "why."

### **Do you think that employees view communication as an important factor in organizational changes? How so?**

Yes. I think that people want to know what's going on. They want to know that things are not hidden from them. It makes people uncomfortable if they feel like information is hidden from them. It's important to keep sending out information so they feel like they know what's going on even if they aren't necessarily involved in the decision-making.

### **In your opinion, what is the best way to engage employees in the changes that are happening?**

That's a tough one. Best way to do that...um.

**Interviewer:** Maybe think of it this way. When changes are being made, what do you want? How do you want to be engaged?

I'm a very visual person so I like to have a visual of what is actually going to change. I need to actually see something in front of me – this is the old thing and this is what the new thing is going to look like. Something I can look at and comment on. That's what works for me.