Getting Started, Getting Organized:

What to do before a change initiative really begins.



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June 9, 2026

A bit about me . . .

The plan for today . . .

Part I: the people on your team
Part II: skills and knowledge
Part III: the view from outside

Method:

- Observation and examples
- Time for journaling
- Group conversation
- Rise and repeat

A sad story about cooking



The Chapman Family Protein Wedge™

Pro Tip 1: Prep in advance



Pro Tip 2: Read



Lesson learned

- Success happens (or doesn’t) long before the stove is turned on

Pro Tip 3: Practice Restraint

???

Part I: who are your people?

Working assumption

Authentic assessment takes a village

. . . but it starts with a committee

Who is in the kitchen?



Who is in the kitchen? (Example 1)

UAB's first, significant general education reform in 40 (!) years

- Appointed faculty
- Elected faculty
- Student Affairs
- Enrollment Management
- Staff Council / alum
- Parent / community member / business owner
- Additions:
  - Institutional Effectiveness
  - Librarian
  - Advisor
  - Registrar
  - Departmental Liaisons

Who is in the kitchen? (Example 2)

University-wide Policies and Procedures Committee

--implementing new legislative mandate for post-tenure-review

- Faculty Senators
- Provost's rep
- President's rep
- Risk and Compliance
- Office of Counsel
- HR
- Ombuds

Time for Reflection

The meaningful (even enjoyable) committee

The foundational task

Create a committee identity



Committee identity

- There are rewards for the work, even if only immaterial
- Everyone knows each other; there is trust and respect
- The work feels important to the mission and no one else is doing it

Material rewards

UAB Gen Ed Reform

- Kick-off retreat (thank you, Kate McConnell!)
- Food, food, food
- AAC&U institutes
- Second year on-campus retreat (thank you Kate McConnell and Ashley Finley!)
- Professional development stipends for all staff and faculty
- Student account contribution for students
- Equivalent gift baskets for parent and community member

UAB Policies and Procedures / Post-Tenure Review

- None

Non-material rewards

UAB Gen Ed Reform

- Monthly upbeat emails with resources, reminders, updates
- Public acknowledgments, website acknowledgments
- Handwritten note from the Provost
- Letters to supervisors

UAB Policies and Procedures / Post-Tenure Review

- Public acknowledgments

There is trust and respect at the table

UAB Gen Ed Reform

- Built-in time for conversation
- Icebreakers at meetings
- Case studies and group work
- Conferences and institutes

UAB Policies and Procedures / Post-Tenure Review

- Confidentiality
- Mutual expertise
- Efficiency, time-management

Everyone gets the importance of the work

UAB Gen Ed Reform

- “This is so cool”
- A clear and pressing problem
- Case studies from other universities
- Voices of students
- Tuition figures
- Frequent (!) reminders of the larger picture

UAB Policies and Procedures / Post-Tenure Review

- Communication with other schools (in-state and out-of-state)

Time for Reflection

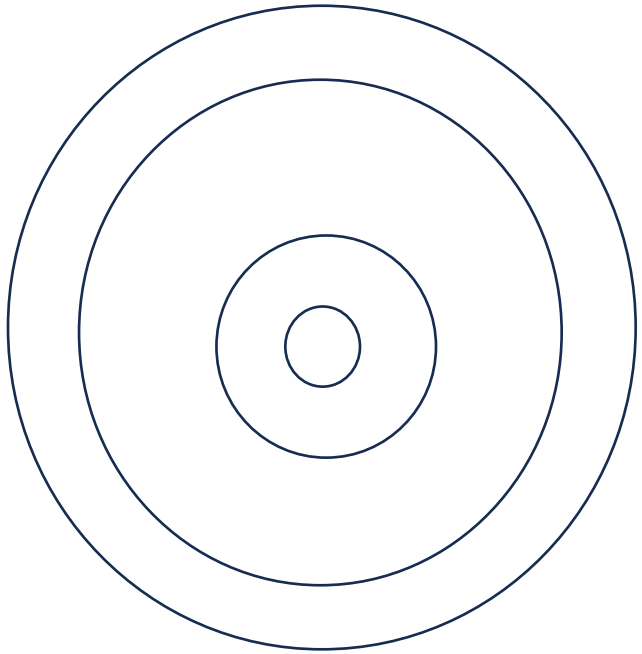
Creating a committee identity along three axes:

- There are rewards
- There is trust and respect
- Everyone gets the importance of the work

Part II: skills and knowledge

Widening the circle

Successful change initiatives involve a widening understanding of context



Widening the circle

Example 1

UAB Gen Ed reform

- The task at hand, or so we thought:
  - Develop a 36-hour self-contained curriculum
- Q: what about curriculums on “either side”?
  - Learning the majors
  - Learning about freshman orientation / Student Life / Residence life

Widening the circle

Example 1

UAB Gen Ed reform

- Q: How did this affect incoming students?
    - Learning about first-time freshmen
        - AP credit, dual enrollment
        - Secondary ed curriculum
        - Admissions and recruitment
    - Learning about transfer students
        - Articulation agreements
    - Learning about the costs of college
        - Tuition and retention data
        - Financial aid and scholarships

Widening the circle

Example 1

UAB Gen Ed reform

- Q: How do our plans compare?
    - Learning what other AL schools were doing
        - Board of Trustees
        - Case studies from sister schools
    - Learning what peer and aspirant schools were doing
- Q: How does this fit with the research?
    - Learning the national research on gen ed
    - Learning the research on effective teaching
    - Learning what employers and grad schools are saying

Widening the circle

Example 2

UAB Policies and Procedures / Post-tenure review

- The task at hand: write a policy for tenured faculty that complies with state law
    - What about administrators who also hold tenure?
    - How does this interface with HR rules on termination for cause?
    - How does it compare with other schools in our system? In our state?
    - How does it compare with universities in other states (and what do their state bills say)?
    - How does this sit with accreditors, AAUP guidelines, etc.?

Time for Reflection

How might you/your team usefully widen the circle?

Institutional

- Other programs, practices, curriculums, outcomes, student demographics, school policies, data on student outcomes, etc.

Intramural

- peer institutions, state or consortium guidelines, laws and regulations, accrediting bodies, data on peer outcomes, etc

National

- The state of the research, national trends, data on national/international outcomes

Part III: the larger landscape

What's the view from outside?

- You build a great team that has all the right elements (trust and respect, efficiency, a sense of mission)
- You and your team have all the right skills and knowledge

BUT

- How does the campus community understand your work?

Outside requirements

The change group must be seen as:

- Visible /recognizable
- Capable / trustworthy
- Solving a real problem

It’s all about the communication

Example 1

UAB Gen Ed reform

Were we visible / recognizable?

- Not at first. Later, yes

Were we capable / trustworthy?

- Yes

Were we solving a real problem?

- No

It’s all about the communication

Example 2

UAB Policies and Procedures / Post-tenure-review

Were we visible /recognizable?

- Yes. Yawn.

Were we capable / trustworthy?

- No

Were we solving a real problem?

- Yes

Time for Reflection

Thoughts for making your initiative seem more:

- Visible /recognizable
- Trustworthy
- Solving a real problem

Epilogue: Our Results

UAB Gen Ed reform

- First new gen ed in 40 years, themed around civic/local engagement
- Unanimous Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees approval in 2 years
- $1.4M institutional grant in support of The Blazer Core
- Blazer Core director
  - Reports through provost's office
  - Sits on the Faculty Senate's Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
- Gen ed committee established on permanent basis

UAB Policies and Procedures / Post-tenure-review

- As of Tuesday, June 8 at 8:32am CST . . . .