

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In *The courage to teach*, sociologist and educational lecturer Parker Palmer (1998, pp. 173–174) describes a typical incident on his lecture tour:

When my opening talk is over, someone will come up to me and confide, “I agree with everything you say about teaching—but I am the only person on campus who feels this way.” At the end of the second session, three or four more people will approach me, one by one to share the same secret. By the time I leave, I have met ten or fifteen people who share a common vision for education—each of whom is certain that he or she is alone on this campus.

Paralleling Palmer’s observations, survey data of research university faculty indicate that there are curious discrepancies in the value that faculty assign to teaching and the worth they believe their colleagues and organizations attribute to instructional activities. A study of faculty in eleven research and doctoral institutions in 1991 and 1996 found that faculty felt they attributed more importance to teaching than did their departmental colleagues, chairs, deans and central administrators (Diamond & Adam, 1997). A 1980 study of faculty at a large public university reported that 98 percent of faculty attach considerable or great importance to teaching, and 83 percent would rate their own teaching above average or superior. However, when it came to assessment of colleagues, 73 percent thought their colleagues gave much weight to teaching, and only 52 percent rated their colleagues’ teaching highly (Blackburn et al., 1980). Recent qualitative research points to similar incongruities (Lindholm, 2003; Wood & Des Jarlais, 2006).

Why is the presence of the fit between an individual’s own values and perceptions of organizational priorities important? Research indicates that compared to other professionals, faculty are more likely to experience fulfillment when there is an alignment between their own and organizational

values—and strain when there is a mismatch (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). As a result, congruence is associated with outcomes that every faculty member and academic administrator wishes upon his or her organization: increased job satisfaction, lower attrition, better job performance, and a strengthened commitment to the organization (Chatman, 1991; Chatman & Barsade, 1995; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991; Verquer, Beeher, & Wagner, 2002). In the university context, faculty who perceive themselves to be at odds with their department or institution's organizational climate indicate higher levels of job-related stress, report less overall satisfaction with their positions, and spend less time on teaching (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Fairweather & Rhoads, 1995; Olsen, Maple, & Stage, 1995; Peters & Mayfield, 1982).

However, person-organization misfit in regard to instructional beliefs, or the pattern of rating one's own value of teaching above peers', is not found among faculty in other institutional types, such as in two-year colleges or master's institutions (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). Uniquely, faculty in research universities tend to hold views about teaching that they feel are incongruent with those of their peers, supervisors, and institution.

What is it about a research university that would produce lack of agreement between the individual's values and perceptions of organizational leaders' views? Within one research university, why might some departments' responses run counter to this trend, indicating a consensus about the value of teaching? In this book, I explore research university departments in which there is *instructional congruence*, or a culture in which individuals perceive that their beliefs about teaching align with their institution. These department members have constructed shared understandings of effective teaching and the value they place on instruction.¹ I also examine academic units that have a culture of incongruence, in which members feel that they disagree with the organization's and their colleagues' stance(s) on teaching.

In this book, I address the following questions: What is it about a research university that would produce lack of agreement between the individual's and the institution's values? Within one research university, why might some departments' responses run counter to this trend, indicating a consensus about the value of teaching? Finally, what can chairs, faculty, and faculty developers who wish to create a congruent teaching culture do?

In the chapters that follow, I offer four general prerequisites for a culture of congruence: (1) the presence of interpretive structures, or shared instantiation of teaching guidelines, which arise because of (2) clear and transparent formal instructional policies that promote interaction around teaching, (3) practices that facilitate widespread faculty instructional networks, and (4) communication between faculty and chairs. Each of these dynamics forms the basis of a chapter.

This approach is based on both an interactionist and an interactive view of organizations, generally, and of academic departments, specifically

(Moran & Volkwein, 1992).² It sees congruence as arising from a relationship between “objective” structures, such as policies that govern teaching, and “subjective” interpretations of those policies, which develop from social interaction, or opportunities to talk about teaching.

Congruence entails a shared value of the worth of teaching in faculty work, but it is important to state that congruence does not imply uniformity. Congruent departments need not be comprised of instructional clones, who all teach alike. However, for congruence, or alignment about the value of teaching, to exist in a department, faculty will have a *repertoire* of shared understandings about what constitutes effective teaching and how to assess it.

Although the book focuses on instructional congruence, readers also may find applications to other institutional settings, such as liberal arts college departments where there are discussions about the value of research (Krebs, 2005), parts of a campus that would like others to value public scholarship (Cantor & Lavine, 2006), or departments that are divided by disagreements about other values. Across institutions, faculty’s sense of community and satisfaction with administration is on the decline, and this book focuses on possible influences on these trends (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Additionally, this work also will hold implications for those seeking to enhance *research* productivity in their departments, as many of the organizational structures and informal practices that I highlight are shared by scholarship that examines building blocks of effective research cultures (Bilmeria & Jordan, 2005; Bland, Weber-Main, Lund, & Finstad, 2005).

RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

In 1970, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Commission on Higher Education first constructed its classification of postsecondary institutions. As commission chair Clark Kerr explained: “We sought to identify categories of colleges and universities that would be relatively homogeneous with respect to the functions of the institutions as well as with respect to characteristics of students and faculty members” (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973). Five institutional categories emerged from subsequent Carnegie classifications—doctoral/research universities, master’s colleges and universities, baccalaureate colleges, associate’s colleges, and specialized institutions—based on degrees offered, federal support dollars, and the specialized mission of the institution. (More recently, the classification has been modified to add additional dimensions—such as community engagement and an enrollment profile—but the “basic classification” remains similar: doctorate-granting universities, master’s institutions, baccalaureate colleges, associate’s colleges, and special focus institutions.) Over the years it has been in existence, the Carnegie classification has come to signal selectivity, stringency of tenure requirements, research focus, and prestige, with doctoral/research universities at the pinnacle of this system. (“Doctoral/

research universities” and “doctorate-granting universities” are henceforth called “research universities.”)

However, when it comes to teaching—a factor not yet measured by the Carnegie classification—research universities popularly are placed near the bottom of the scale. The widely read *U.S. News and World Report* rankings issue headlined, “Research Universities *Are Working* to Put Undergraduates First” (italics added), indicating that they are not yet quite there (Marcus, 1999). A recent college guidebook steers prospective applicants to small, lesser known liberal arts colleges, advising, “Since research and publishing are where all the rewards are, the top faculty at leading universities do little, if any, teaching, leaving that chore to graduate assistants and part-time faculty. In short, the university cheats the undergraduate” (Pope, 1996, p. 3).

Despite these indicators that research institutions may not prioritize student learning, in surveys that ask research university professors if they value teaching, most say that they do (Blackburn et al., 1980; Diamond & Adam, 1997). Additionally, in recent decades, many research universities have moved to enhance the value placed on teaching, even if they do not concurrently decrease the emphasis allocated to research and service (Wright, Howery, Assar, McKinney, Kain, Glass, Kramer, & Atkinson, 2004). Finally, most surveys of research faculty’s use of their time still find a greater proportion is spent on teaching than on research activities (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Therefore, what may be most unique about a research university is not the value it or its faculty place on teaching, but the incongruent views held about instruction, a misalignment that hinders faculty professional development and departmental growth.

However, research on individual disciplines hints that these institutional-level patterns may conceal important exceptions within a university, with some fields tending to agree more about teaching matters than others. There is more disciplinary variation on the value of teaching as a promotion criterion within a research university than in any other institutional type (Leslie, 2002). As a result, studies that focus only on the institutional level may mask important variations in faculty beliefs. For example, disciplines in which faculty tend to agree on research-oriented questions—e.g., appropriate research methods, research questions, and theoretical scaffoldings—also tend to show higher levels of agreement about instructional matters, such as appropriate course content and teaching expectations (Braxton & Berger, 1999; Braxton & Hargens, 1996; Lattuca & Stark, 1995).

However, what these studies do not indicate is why these variations arise. Are they attributable to unique aspects of disciplinary cultures? Common organizational structures that facilitate attitudinal agreement? Socialization patterns? For example, agreement may result from a discipline’s tendency simply to see eye to eye about research and instructional techniques, due to common socialization, or it may stem from a pattern of instructional arrangements that overlaps significantly with faculty’s research

responsibilities, or from other influences. This book examines the particular nature of the factors that produce agreement about teaching matters in some departments and disagreement in others. It puts particular emphasis on the important role the academic department plays, an important space where faculty work gets done, but one that is often overlooked in university reform efforts (Edwards, 1999).

AMBIGUITY

In their classic 1958 study, Caplow and McGee (pp. 135–136) documented that the absence of requirements for instructional effectiveness creates a climate in which the only standard for teaching is attainment of the doctorate:

Where men [and women] are hired to teach only on the basis of their research productivity, what happens to teaching? With the exception of some humanities departments and a few atypical natural science and social science departments, the answer to this query takes two general forms: (1) Teaching doesn't matter—it isn't important; and (2) There's nothing to worry about—any Ph.D. can teach.

Unlike research activities, with their well-structured public forums of peer review, conference presentations, funding decisions, and yearly reports, there are few common references for research faculty to evaluate pedagogy.

Today, teaching still largely remains a “private affair” (Seldin, 1990, p.5). Because of this lack of collective engagement around teaching, ideas about what constitutes “adequate” teaching—and even definitions of the activity (e.g., Is teaching: work in classrooms? one-on-one work with students on a research project? advising?)—contribute to an environment where instructional standards are opaque and often contradictory. Although increasingly more attention is being given to teaching in research universities, they continue to present more ambiguity over institutional messages about teaching expectations and norms than other types of institutions (Braxton, Bayer, & Finkelstein, 1992; Braxton & Berger, 1999; Quinn, 1994; Woods, 1999). Studies of how research university professors define “effective teaching” indicate that there is a wide variety of meanings attributed to the work, including lecturing, keeping abreast of disciplinary content, being enthusiastic, improving students' higher-order thinking, facilitating student learning, and conveying facts (Blackburn, Boberg, O'Connell, & Pellino, 1980; Boice, 1991, 1992; Fink, 1984; Goodwin & Stevens, 1993; Mann, 1970). Methods for evaluating teaching have been called idiosyncratic and unsystematic (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996).

There are many reasons why the research university creates such an ambiguous institutional context around the issue of teaching. Researchers name several characteristics of ambiguous and changing situations, all of

which are represented in the research university context (March & Olsen, 1976; McCaskey, 1982).

First, there exist inconsistent and ill-defined objectives about teaching. Most research universities establish and maintain few clear, shared criteria for good teaching (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). When asked, "How important are observations of your teaching by colleagues and/or administrators for granting tenure in your department?," compared to faculty in all institutional types, those in research universities were least likely to find it important (Boyer, 1990). In their sample of tenure and promotion policies at representative colleges and universities nationwide, the Harvard Project on Faculty Appointments found no Research I institutions that required a classroom observation (O'Meara, 2000).³ These findings indicate that faculty and administrators in research universities lack or reject opportunities to gather direct evidence on teaching standards and approaches. This information would assist faculty in establishing shared understandings of the constituents of effective teaching.

Second, goals and responsibilities in ambiguous scenarios are unclear or multiple and conflicting. New faculty frequently express frustration in the unstated expectations of the teaching role, often because research universities already assume that they know how to teach (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993; Whitt, 1991). What "causes" one to get tenure or why others in the department were denied is not easily understood. Faculty report that assessment of teaching for tenure is "based on individual and particularistic notions that reveal more about the idiosyncrasies of the evaluator than about a communal agreement as to what constitutes good teaching" (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996, p. 65).

Social psychologists have long understood that ambiguous criteria for judgment and limited communication lead individuals to misgauge their beliefs in relation to others', whether through self-serving appraisals (Alicke et al., 1985; Dunning et al., 1989; Van Lange, 1991), uniqueness effects (Campbell, 1986; Goethals, 1986; Marks & Miller, 1987), or pluralistic ignorance (Hofer & Brown, 1992; Miller & McFarland, 1987; Miller & Prentice, 1996). Each of these concepts indicates that if faculty are not exposed to clear standards for teaching and do not engage in further discussion about what those standards would mean for the particular department, faculty can be expected to believe that their values differ from peers and supervisors.

Imagine a busy pedestrian walkway: some people are moving along on bicycles, others with skates, still others on foot. Everyone is going someplace; this much is evident. However, who is going where? Who is using the most effective mode of transportation? Who spends most time and effort getting to his or her destination? What is the *best* way to get from point A to B? Each traveler's answer to this question is different. However, at selected times, driven by traffic patterns or clear directions from strategically placed

signposts, even busy pedestrians may be directed to come together and proceed along effective pathways.

In a manner similar to this hectic avenue, each faculty member in a research university travels on a particular instructional pathway, some with “vehicles” (e.g., techniques, expertise, commitments) that are more efficient than others. In most cases, each professor travels in isolation, relying upon his/her own ideas and guesses about what works in the classroom and how much priority should be allocated to teaching. However, in selected contexts, shaped by opportunities for social interaction and understandings about instructional policies, faculty can develop a sense that the value they accord to teaching and the ways “good teaching” is defined are congruent with their postsecondary institution.

THIS STUDY

The study takes place at a large research university, classified as a “Research University—Extensive” in the Carnegie typology. Indeed, the institution could be termed the archetypical research university, as at the time of the study it was among the top postsecondary institutions in the United States in terms of money spent on research and scholarly work. To select departments within the university, I utilized results from a 1996 survey of faculty on work-life issues that was conducted by an on-campus administrative unit. The survey was sent to 2,624 individuals in January 1996; its population consisted of all faculty who held at least half-time instructional appointments, who had been at the university for at least a year, and who were in tenured, tenure-track, advanced clinical, or lecturer positions. There was a response rate of 44 percent, with a fairly even representation of academic divisions.

Twelve of the university’s academic units were selected through a “congruence index,” which measured alignment about teaching-related issues among faculty in a given unit. This index was comprised of two components: the first focused on preferences for work allocation and the second on standards for effective teaching. As a measure of agreement about the value placed on teaching by faculty and their perceptions of administrative policies, the percentage of time respondents preferred to spend with students (on teaching and advising) was compared with the percentage of time they thought their units wanted them to allocate. Second, to measure the alignment between individual and group definitions of teaching effectiveness, for each department the percentage of faculty that said effective teaching was somewhat or highly characteristic of valued colleagues was subtracted from the percentage of faculty that indicated that effective teaching was somewhat or highly characteristic of them personally.⁴ To create the congruence index, the absolute value of both of these percentages (time and effective teaching) was taken, and they were summed. A value of zero indicated that survey

respondents perceived an alignment between their own and departmental decision makers' desired emphasis on instruction, while a large positive percentage signaled that individuals perceive different priorities.

Six departments with the lowest sums (ranging from 1.7 percent to 4.7 percent) were selected as possible congruent cases, and six departments with the highest sums (from 54.1 percent to 80.0 percent) were chosen as possible incongruent cases; all of the resulting units were in the sciences or health sciences.⁵ This quantitative approach to case selection was supplemented with a qualitative screening, to focus on four departments that were roughly matched by size and emphasis on undergraduate or graduate/professional instruction.

While the cases for this project were selected quantitatively, the main research data for this study were qualitative. This study was organized in two waves: in the first section, junior faculty were interviewed. The purpose of these interviews was to map whom respondents talked to about teaching, recheck departments' levels of congruence/incongruence, and understand what structures, policies, and/or practices might be influencing the presence of congruence/incongruence. (See Appendix A for the interview instrument.) Junior faculty were the primary focus because they are the rank most likely to be new to the organization, and therefore would have a fresh perspective on its environment. Through the process of entry into the position, new faculty's socialization experiences can highlight the values, beliefs, norms for practice, and expectations of the department, or, as one scholar of organizational culture succinctly puts it, "How we do things and what matters around here" (Louis, 1980, p. 232). Because assistant professors have not yet been through the tenure decision, they face the most ambiguity over that process. This ambiguity is useful for uncovering respondents' tacit understandings of culture, because when faced with ambiguity, processes of sense making, interpretation, and reliance on preexisting cognitive frameworks are maximized (Sackmann, 1991).

In the first wave of the study, all junior faculty in the four departments were contacted, and more than 80 percent (N=17) took part in a forty-minute semi-structured interview. Based on these respondents' recommendations about whom they talk to about teaching, I gathered sixty-one other faculty names of faculty (including eleven assistant professor peers) and faculty-administrators.

In the second wave, I contacted at least one person from every assistant professor's list (if there was one) and every person who was named at least two times. Because I intended to analyze the data using a grounded theory approach, a tenet of which is to select interview subjects based on how they will contribute to conceptual frameworks, I also looked to fill in gaps, such as by rank, gender, race/ethnicity, or instructional emphasis. From these contacts, I interviewed twenty-nine associate, full, and emeritus professors. Many of them had been at the university for a longer time and had held

important administrative positions, and therefore, they were important sources of information about departmental histories and policies. Additionally, as more senior department members who had been referenced as important members of the assistant professors' instructional reference group, I looked to this second wave of interviews for an understanding of how they might influence the junior faculty's views on teaching.

These interviews, and all other data from assistant professors' interviews, were analyzed using grounded theory. Because of the paucity of empirically based theoretical frameworks regarding beliefs about teaching, an inductive methodology promised to elicit the most valuable insights (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Sackmann, 1991). Grounded theory was selected because it is one of the better established inductive methodological frameworks, useful for its established procedures for generating theory, hypotheses, and concepts from data (Charmaz, 1983; Glaser, 1987; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Interviews were transcribed and coded with NVivo, a qualitative analysis program, using an approach that falls somewhere between a line-by-line *in vivo* method (Chesler, 1987) and a very broad, conceptual lens (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser, 1987).

Finally, in the last wave of interviews, conducted near the end of the project, I spoke with lead administrators in all of the four departments. (See Appendix B for the interview instrument.) These interviews served as "member checks," soliciting feedback on major themes and findings developed in each of the case studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). (Findings were presented in the aggregate with deliberate care not to reveal identities of faculty respondents who participated in earlier phases of the study.) Additionally, because the role of the chair and other key administrators emerged as a theme in earlier interviews, I also solicited their perspective on how they understood and carried out their duties.

In total, I interviewed forty-six faculty and four lead administrators.⁶ In Table 1, the aggregate and departmentally specific numbers of *faculty* respondents is presented. I interviewed about a quarter of faculty in three departments; in the graduate congruent department, because of its small size, I was

Table 1. Faculty Respondents by Department (% of Department's Faculty)

	<i>Number of Faculty Respondents (Percent of Department's Full-Time Instructional Staff and Emeriti)</i>	
Graduate	Incongruent	8 (28%)
	Congruent	9 (64%)
Undergraduate	Incongruent	11 (22%)
	Congruent	18 (24%)

able to interview more than half. For each department, I made sure I achieved saturation before ending the interview process.

Table Two illustrates the breakdown by rank, indicating the number of faculty interviewed and the percentage of the department's faculty by each rank that this number comprises. Because this study focuses on the perspectives of junior faculty, more attention was devoted to recruitment of assistant and clinical assistant professors. Therefore, the proportion of junior faculty in each department ranges from 75 to 100 percent, while a lesser percentage of tenured professors was interviewed.

Overall, most of the respondents were white (80 percent) and male (83 percent). Although this was not a very diverse sample, it does resemble the populations of the departments in this study. At the time of this study, 82 percent of tenured, tenure-track, and regular clinical instructional faculty at the university were identified as nonminorities, so the sample here mirrors the departments' demographics. Very few women (17 percent of all respondents) were interviewed, but the proportion in my study actually is an overrepresentation of the proportion of women in many of the departments, which ranges from 5 percent to 30 percent. (See table 8 in chapter 4 for more information on the gender composition of these departments.)

OTHER SOURCES OF DATA: DOCUMENTS, ARCHIVAL RECORDS,
OBSERVATION, AND PHYSICAL ARTIFACTS

Because triangulation between multiple sources of data promises to verify findings, I utilized a number of other types of evidence for my study (Denzin, 1978). These included:

- *Documents*: I used a number of official documents in this research, including tenure and promotion policies, faculty directories, committee reports, course listings, and news articles from departments, division, or university sources. Many of these were accessible on the Web; some were fortuitously

Table 2. Number of Faculty Respondents by Rank (% of Department's Faculty in Rank)

		Rank				
		Asst.	Assoc.	Full	Clinical	Emeritus
Grad. Departments	Incongruent	2 (75%)	0 (0%)	5 (28%)	N/A	1 (25%)
	Congruent	3 (100%)	0 (100%)	3 (75%)	3 (100%)	0 (0%)
Undergrad. Departments	Incongruent	6 (75%)	3 (38%)	2 (6%)	N/A	0 (0%)
	Congruent	6 (100%)	2 (15%)	9 (21%)	N/A	1 (7%)
Total Respondents		17	5	19	3	2

gained because of the flurry of working committee reports released for the university's most recent accreditation.

- *Archival Records*: Many of the records that might have been useful for this study, such as recent personnel records, will be sealed for decades to come. However, the university archive did have some useful documents pertaining to the history of the four departments, such as records of external review reports. Additionally, in the case of the incongruent undergraduate department, I was able to use published histories of instructional decisions written by members of the unit and external researchers.

- *Observation*: I used this technique infrequently, but it did elicit interesting data. For example, I observed the activities and participants in some of the incongruent undergraduate department pedagogical seminars, and I gathered information during my "recruiting mission" at the congruent undergraduate unit's faculty meeting. Because I did not recognize many of the faculty at these gatherings, sometimes observations necessitated an "informant," who could identify participants for me.

- *Physical Artifacts*: Physical space played a more important role in this study than I originally had anticipated. The location of faculty's offices often played a key role in their opportunities to interact with peers on instructional matters. As a result, I made maps of hallways or took notes on office size or location so as to highlight the impact of physical structure on congruence and isolation.

A note about writing: As a condition of entry, departments were promised that I would not reveal details about their organizations that would directly identify them. As a result, many of the documents and archival records used cannot be specifically cited, as they are references that would identify the units. When this occurs, I try to give additional sources (e.g., quotes from respondents) to increase verification of the information.

DESCRIPTION OF DEPARTMENTS

To select the four cases, I sought to match a congruent unit with an incongruent unit. To ensure that these units could be appropriately compared, I paired departments by their undergraduate or postbaccalureate focus and their size.⁷ The distinction between instructional emphases is important because of the qualitative differences between instruction at these two levels. While much of undergraduate teaching takes place in the classroom, graduate instruction often blurs research and teaching, in contexts such as a research laboratory or clinic setting. Size was also significant for this study on congruence, because an increased number of staff in a unit can lead to a less close-knit social structure (Friedkin, 1978).

In the case studies that follow in this book, the departments are labeled by meaningful identifiers, originating from respondents' descriptors of their departments (Table 3). One pair contains the incongruent "Star Department," named because there were star-shaped instructional networks, and the congruent "Universe Department," which offered more universal opportunities for interactions around instruction. Both were large (between fifty and seventy-five full-time instructional staff and emerti) science units that had significant undergraduate components. The other pair included the congruent unit, described by respondents as a well-functioning "Team Department," and the incongruent "Divided Department," which contained an interactional schism because of divisions in the type of teaching performed in the department. The Divided and Team Departments were two small health science departments (between fourteen and twenty-nine full-time instructional staff and emerti) that primarily offered postbaccalaureate education.

Departments' governance structures also were similar among the pairs. The larger science department chairs' decision-making capabilities often were delegated to assistant or associate chairs and were limited by executive committees with voting powers. These chairs conceptualized their role as democratic coordinators. In contrast, the heads of the much smaller health sciences units worked with advisory teams that had no voting powers. Although these units had section heads or directors, they did not have an assistant/associate chair structure to delegate responsibilities.

These four departments resided in three different meso-administrative units (analogous to a division, school, or college; henceforth, called colleges). Each department characterized their relationship with their respective college differently, and the units' policies (e.g., tenure and promotion) varied somewhat. However, the university is highly decentralized, and therefore each department shared a degree of autonomy from its college.

A traditional measure of good research is generalizability, but many qualitative research scholars find that more appropriate standards for case study research are applicability or transferability. This criterion asks the researcher to present rich detail about a case so that others can judge the fit of data/interpretations to their own contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ragin, Nagel, & White, 2004). Therefore, in the remainder of this chapter, I offer an overview of each department's history, which serves as an important background for the chapters that follow. Chapter 3 goes into more detail about the official policies

Table 3. Code Names of Departments in the Study

	<i>Congruent</i>	<i>Incongruent</i>
Large, Undergraduate Focus	Universe Department	Star Department
Small, Postbaccalaureate Focus	Team Department	Divided Department

that are in place for evaluating teaching (and how faculty interpret them). Chapter 4 more extensively describes the teaching networks present in each unit, and it also depicts differing instructional arrangements.

Undergraduate Incongruent: Star Department

The Star Department scored as one of the more incongruent departments in the university. Founded in the mid-nineteenth century, it is one of the university's oldest and largest academic units on campus. This staffing level is matched by the number of students enrolled in the program, with the department awarding a large number of bachelor's degrees.

In recent years, the department faced a number of changes. First, the department has grown significantly, often through aggressive recruitment and retention of junior faculty. Second, beginning in the mid-1980s, the department was heavily involved in enhancing its undergraduate and graduate curriculum. According to one faculty-administrator, these reforms were prompted by enrollment concerns, or seeing "good talents going to other professions."

The process began in the mid-1980s with a four-year assessment and self-examination led by three faculty. After these first steps, the department held a retreat where faculty were asked to identify with one of the following positions:

- I believe that curricular change is necessary and I am willing to be involved in the process.
- I believe that curricular change is necessary, but I am unwilling to put any effort toward the process.
- I believe that curricular change is unnecessary.

Only about one-third chose active involvement, but administrators felt that there were sufficient numbers in the active reform camp to proceed with curricular change. Much of the actual work ended up being spearheaded by three faculty members: two have since retired while another continues to work for the university. The unit has been nationally recognized for this work.

In this book, this unit is titled the "Star Department," because work on these reforms and other teaching issues has been led by this remaining key unit member. I do not use the term *star* facetiously, but to reflect the "gravitational pull" that instructional activities have in reference to this key actor and the high visibility this person has both within and outside of the local university context. Additionally, the department's map of teaching interactions (chapter 4) approximates a star pattern, where there is centralization of information around one key actor (Moreno, 1934). It would be overstating the case to say that *all* activity around instructional issues is directed by "the star"; for example, one respondent was involved in an undergraduate course reform, and some others did significant work with graduate students. However,

all of these people mentioned that they often consulted the “star” or worked under the auspices of the star’s programs.

Overview of Teaching in the Star Department

In terms of the most traditional understanding of instructional work—classroom teaching—the standard full-time load for faculty with a research agenda was one course per term. In addition to this work in the classroom, the Star Department had a research requirement for undergraduates, in which they worked on a project under a faculty supervisor, often in a group with several graduate students and post-docs.

The largest enrollments took place in the introductory courses, and as one faculty member explained, “We see ourselves as being a sort of service department. . . . At any time, more than half the students, especially the [introductory]-level courses, aren’t going to be [Star Department] majors.” Each of these large courses had a faculty coordinator, and laboratory sections often were filled by teaching assistants or post-docs. While there was some guest lecturing, especially in the graduate courses, in most cases faculty respondents did not indicate that a large degree of functional interaction occurred around teaching responsibilities.

Undergraduate Congruent: Universe Department

In the survey used to select departments, the Universe Department scored as one of the more congruent departments in the university. The mission of the unit intertwined teaching, research, and, as one respondent reported, “an obligation to communicate the excitement of scientific discovery to others.” With a great number of instructional and research staff and several large facilities, the Universe Department had a large presence on campus. This stature also is fueled by grant money: the department brought in a great deal of the university’s awards. However, this unit has faced a complex series of challenges over the past two decades, mirroring trends in the nationwide disciplinary community. Like the Star Department, the Universe Department also has undergone curricular revisions but was spurred on by very different forces.

In the 1930s, this department was world-renowned. By the 1980s, Associated Research Council rankings placed the program below twentieth among doctoral programs of its type nationwide, while ten of the university’s social science and humanities departments ranked in the top ten. In the mid-eighties, a new chair was recruited to improve the prestige of the department. As this chair described in a letter to the college dean, “We are a moderately large, good department that is attempting to become an outstanding department. At least this is how we understand our charge to be—and that is what we want to become. This cannot occur without a surge of new hires.”

To increase its status, the department sought to mobilize a number of resources from the university: new faculty lines, equipment, a new building to replace its pre-World War II structure. However, what cost would the department pay for the university's "largesse"? Memos between the chair and the college dean around this period indicate that the college administration sought justification that such staffing could be matched by enrollment, particularly at the undergraduate level. One memo to the dean treated the "concern about the 'small' number of [discipline] majors being trained." (Small is in quotations because the chair disputed the registrar's numbers.) As one full professor pointed out to me and a number of faculty echoed in their comments, "The existence of this department, as big and as well-supported as it is, depends on the teaching load."

However, across the country, the number of majors in this discipline was markedly declining. Nationwide, the percentage of bachelor degrees awarded in the area declined by 75 percent from 1960 to 1996. Even taking this climate into consideration, the department was not among the top twenty-five U.S. departments that awarded BS degrees, an important statistic given the great size of the university in which this unit is located.

The department's responses to these challenges have contributed to its congruence in two significant ways. First, through widespread curricular reforms the department has developed a "universe" of activity around instructional issues. Although estimates of exactly when vary, sometime in the 1990s or early 2000s, the department began to pay more attention to its undergraduate courses. Much of the shift has involved, according to one faculty member, "a number of experiments going on in the department . . . to try to figure out how best to present the materials to the students, how to run the course so the students actually learn, and also how to go about assessing whether or not they are learning."

Several faculty felt that the influx of new faculty that took place during this period was the key factor in changing the department's mission. Ironically, the large number of new hires brought in to increase the department's research prestige instead may have been a major force for instructional change. According to another faculty-administrator, "We have made a number of hires in this department. So we have young people coming in, and they seem to be people who really tend to care about teaching."

Whatever the impetus, by the mid-1990s the department was engaged in a number of experiments and initiatives that focused particularly on reform of introductory courses. A new administrative position had been established to focus on the undergraduate program. The department eliminated some very specialized courses "that were getting enrollments of two students a year" and introduced new courses with a more general focus.

The widespread nature of reforms undertaken during the department's history is significant. Although the reforms are not as visible as those found in other departments across the nation, every respondent told me about their

involvement in or knowledge of at least one of the unit's initiatives, often quite proudly. The instructional activity in this department best can be described as like "a universe," where attention to instruction is probably less cutting-edge but more widely dispersed. This explanation aligned with one respondent's hypothesis for the unit's congruence levels: "Anyway, once you begin to implement a new value, then there's a kind of collective effect that takes place that you know your neighbor is worrying more about teaching. So you're inclined to do that [too]."

Overview of Teaching in the Universe Department

The standard load for faculty in the Universe Department is one course (as director) or three sections per term. Much of the department's enrollment is located in large introductory courses, and, accordingly, most of faculty's instructional time is spent in those courses as well. According to the chair, half of the department's "faculty capital" is devoted to staffing the introductory courses. One of the most commented upon features of the instructional structure is faculty-led discussion sections. Professors at all ranks mentioned the uniqueness of this particular arrangement when compared to other departments at this university and at other postsecondary institutions. According to one long-time faculty member, this practice began with very utilitarian motives: a previous chair "figured out that when they're handing out new positions, it's based upon what your credit hours are. He figured out that if he used faculty in recitations, you could have a lot more student credit hours for faculty and could use that to get more positions from the college."

In more contemporary times, the arrangement has been substantiated by claims of pedagogical best practice. As far back as the late 1980s, a visiting committee criticized the department because "the pattern of teaching assignments in the [department] seems unusual to us, in its emphasis on senior faculty teaching of recitation sections on a substantial scale." In a response to the college stimulated by the report, the department responded, "As we have noted in our report on the undergraduate program, the use of faculty to teach recitations has a long tradition in the [Universe] Department, and it brings to our undergraduate students the unique benefits, at an early age in their scientific careers, of contact with senior and experienced scientists." A similar sentiment is expressed by faculty today, one of whom noted, "A lot of other schools have them done by graduate students. We think there's a benefit to additional contact with faculty, in particular those environments where it's more personal."

Graduate Incongruent: Divided Department

Founded more than one hundred years ago, the Divided Department today is a well-respected graduate health science program, among the top quartile

in National Research Council (2001) and *Gourman Report* (1997) graduate school rankings. However, in the survey used to select departments, it scored as one of the more incongruent departments in the university.

Departmental records document that there was a significant amount of dissension and conflict over the past decade, much of which reached a level of acrimony that was unusual even for an academic organization. Although never raised by interviewees, three cases of significant dissension over racial and gender bias are noted in university records, involving both intradepartmental tension and conflict between the college and the department. Because these incidents occurred in the mid-1990s, they clearly could have an effect on the department's responses to the 1996 survey used to select this unit. With such tensions and conflict, the potential for divided responses on a range of beliefs about departmental activities is significant.

However, in my interviews, faculty described the current department quite positively, especially noting the chair's effectiveness and support. Although adjectives of this manner could stem from interviewees' desires to self-censor or paint a positive picture of the department, placing the current administration in historical context suggests that this was a comparatively peaceful time in the unit. Because there was a marked shift in descriptions of the unit's climate, a question arises about whether the Divided Department can still be labeled "incongruent." In this chapter, I argue that it can, particularly in the realm of teaching.

Some faculty indicated that the organization's stance toward teaching had changed for the better over the years, which possibly could construct a more congruent instructional climate. For example, one professor felt that the amount of attention devoted to instructional issues had increased: "I think things have changed considerably, in the last fifteen to sixteen years. . . . [It used to be that] really good quality teaching was paid lip service to. . . . And I think that my opinion actually is shared by most other members of the department." Actually, this opinion was not shared by other members. Another respondent felt that teaching was more highly valued by a former college administrative team, and yet another expressed, "I really worry about the teaching aspect of things. Life over here is so focused on success in research." While it is possible that today's faculty body may demonstrate more agreement on other matters of department operations, such as faculty-administrator relationships, it is clear that a marked split remains in beliefs about instructional matters.

Overview of Teaching in the Divided Department

Teaching responsibilities in the Divided Department were split between "service courses," taught to professional, graduate, and undergraduate students outside the department, and graduate instruction, or small seminars or research involving the unit's own doctoral students. Many of the courses in the

Divided Department were taught by multiple instructors. In large service classes, there could be “ten different faculty [who] participate in them.”

If the chair was the coach of this departmental group, there were two kinds of players on the team: the “pros,” who played high-stakes games that deliver funding and recognition to the group, and the “amateurs,” who brought dedication to the basic work needed to keep the team going. In the Divided Department, there was a clear division between graduate instruction, or small seminars and research conducted with the unit’s own doctoral students, and service teaching, or large classes taught to professional, graduate, and undergraduate students outside the department. While graduate instruction was highly valued, more appealing to faculty, and often practiced interactively, service teaching was heavily required of the department, yet undervalued, concentrated among a few faculty, and practiced without much communication between instructors.

Graduate Congruent: Team Department

Founded in the late 1980s from a merger of two departments, the Team Department showed the highest level of department-self congruence, both in terms of beliefs about instructional standards and value placed on teaching. Faculty unanimously reported that effective teaching is characteristic of both themselves and of valued colleagues. Additionally, there was a very small mean difference (4 percent) between the time faculty perceived their department wanted them to spend on teaching and the allocation they preferred.

The unit’s name arises from an athletic metaphor named by a respondent who was describing faculty dynamics in the department:

It’s kind of a little like managing a soccer team or something. You’ve got a lot of different personalities and they get in fights once in a while, but you have to be good at managing your own people and understanding them. Getting the most out of them.

The Team Department unit has an influential “coach,” or chair, whose centrality was shaped by both the historical development of the organization and by personal style.

Like the Divided Department, the Team Department had a conflict-ridden history. Today’s Team Department joins two units that originally were distinct. In the late 1980s, the dean decided to group many of the college’s departments together to create more efficiencies of scale. Two academic units were merged as part of this reorganization. Because the relationship between the heads of the two units was notoriously acrimonious, a new chair was selected for the combined department and “charged with bringing people together.” Faculty members present during the transition describe the original interaction between the two units as “good” and “cordial,” but with

little interaction between faculty in the units. It is astounding that in less than a decade, the department has moved from acrimony to bounded coexistence, to congruence.

Additionally, the department was undergoing another change, or a shift in mission, which also could have been divisive. In the early nineties, the past university president and college dean decided that the college's research base should be increased to improve research funds and institutional prestige. As a result, there was a shift in hiring emphasis, away from clinicians with professional expertise to doctorates with research agendas. In interviews, I paid particular attention to clinical faculty's perspectives to better understand if they felt devalued by this move, but their largely positive views of the department indicated that the mission shift did not have as much impact on congruence as one might expect.

Overview of Teaching in the Team Department

Like the Divided Department, instruction in the Team Department was of a dual nature: courses were offered for both professional students and the unit's own graduate students. Instruction took place in a wide variety of contexts, including patient care, graduate seminars, laboratories, continuing education, and rotating lectures. However, because of the nature of teaching in these contexts and the size of the unit, there was more of an overlap in professorial responsibilities than in the Divided Department.

While the bifurcated character of instructional settings (graduate and service courses) contributed to incongruence in the Divided Department, in the Team Department, the differing structure of these contexts supported a culture of congruence. Why was this the case? Chapters 3 to 5 offer some additional explanation, but one key reason was that many of the larger professional courses were team taught: several faculty supervised students who engaged in patient care or they rotated in their lectures. For example, describing the clinical instructional context, one faculty member reported that "usually, there are two or three faculty members on the floor at a time." Although smaller, the structure of graduate-level courses also facilitated interaction among faculty, as course directors often incorporated guest lectures.

Unlike the other three departments in this study, this congruent department employed a high number of clinical faculty. In contrast to tenured or tenure-track academic faculty, whose responsibilities include a significant research component, clinical faculty were largely devoted to patient care and instruction, in both practice-oriented and didactic settings. Clinical faculty engaged in a tenure-like promotion process, but the qualifications needed for appointment and promotion were less predicated on research accomplishments. While a tenure-track position usually requires the doctorate, clinical appointments more heavily stressed patient experience and some education beyond a professional degree. At the time

of this study, clinical, tenured, tenure-track, and emeritus staff in the Team Department numbered greater than fifty; however, only a small fraction of these were full-time academic faculty.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Studies of research university faculty show unique discrepancies between the value they accord to teaching and the worth they perceive their colleagues and administrators assign to the activity. This general pattern may be attributable to the ambiguity associated with instructional goals and objectives in a research university. However, research that focuses only on the institutional level conceals variations in levels of agreement, which differ significantly by department. Here, I examine the particular factors that give rise to differential levels of congruence, or faculty's perception that their beliefs about teaching align with their organization's, among four departments in a single research university.

This book explores how administrative actions and collegial interactions make it possible for colleagues to agree about the value and measurement of effective teaching. Conversely, where such informal networks are weak and policies are ill-communicated, faculty and administrators can hold strong individual opinions about the value of teaching, but their ideas and values seem to exist in isolation.

This work diverges from previous research on congruence levels in several ways. First, although educational literature shows that there can be important variations in levels of agreement about instructional beliefs among faculty by department, it does not precisely specify why these variations occur. Through case studies, this research examines the specific factors that give rise to departments' varying levels of congruence.

Second, it contributes to a body of organizational scholarship, or studies of person-organization fit, by specifying the relationship between organizational structures and congruence levels. Person-organization fit research has a limited view of organizational culture, and I adopt a more intersubjective view that looks beyond formally declared policies to how group members conceptualize and enact their understandings of organizational values in everyday practice.

Finally, the book offers research-based practical strategies for chairs, faculty, future faculty, and faculty developers, or all those in a university who wish to develop a culture of congruence. Most chapters start with a narrative from a popular educational source, such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, to illustrate the widespread resonances congruence issues have with faculty life, and they end with practical applications.