Management and Organizational Behavior

Organizational culture is one of those high-level things that affects individuals within the system in many ways, but over which they have little personal control.  As we noted in the introduction, different levels within a company may have different cultures, as may different units at the same level.  And to make things more complicated, different people may experience, describe, and interpret the same cultural phenomena in different ways.  All that said, there's no doubt that there IS such a thing as organizational culture, and it shapes and interacts with machine phenomena, organic phenomena, and brain phenomena in many ways.

A good place to begin to learn about the cultural approach to organizations is here:

Richman, T. (1999) The Culture Wars. Inc. Magazine. Retrieved May 16, 2010, from <http://www.inc.com/magazine/19990515/4702.html>

You can learn more about the Deal and Kennedy culture model at:

Changing Minds.Org (N.D.) Deal and Kennedy's Cultural Model.  Retrieved May 16, 2010, from <http://changingminds.org/explanations/culture/deal_kennedy_culture.htm>

Another culture model that is of considerable interest due to its connection to sociotechnical systems thinking is described here:

Changing Minds.Org (N.D.) The Competing Values Framework.  <http://changingminds.org/explanations/culture/competing_values.htm>

But the corporate culture model that TUIU recently selected for its owen internal survey of administrators, staff, and faculty is that of Denison:

Denison Consulting Inc. (ND) The Denison Model.  Retrieved February 20, 2009, from <http://www.denisonconsulting.com/dc/Research/DenisonModel/tabid/29/Default.aspx>

**Case Assignment**

Read these articles on organizational culture, supplemented if you wish with material from the optional readings and perhaps the supplementary background as well, and even other outside reading you might find by yourself to be useful.  Then write a short paper describing ***your assessment of why TUIU decided that the Denison culture model would be more useful in understanding TUIU as a corporate culture than any of the other three you have read about.***

**Case Assignment Expectations**

Your paper should be short (4-6 pages, not including cover sheet and references) and to the point.  It's important to note that there is *no one uniquely correct answer to this question*; you aren't being asked to try to reproduce TUIU's own management decisions, but rather to comment on the value of the Denison model given what you know about TUIU from having participated in it for however long you have.

You are expected to deal with the issues in an integrated fashion, rather than treating them as a series of individual questions to be answered one by one and left at that.   To help guide your thinking, however, you will need to consider issues such as:

* What things about organizations are considered to be parts of organizational culture, and what things are excluded from that category, in terms of the different models
* Ways in which cultures change, and why (drawing on what you have observed about TUIU for examples if possible)
* The degree to which culture can be deliberately reshaped in certain directions -- by whom, when, under what conditions, and with what effects
* Why one model might be more effective in helping TUIU to underatand its own functioning than another, at this point in time
* What, if anything, that thinking about an "organization as a culture" adds to what we have learned by thinking about an "organization as a machine", an "organization as an organism", and an "organization as a brain".

**You will be particularly assessed on:**

* Your ability to see what the module is all about -- the "big picture" is the culture-like aspects of organizations-- and structure your paper accordingly.
* Your informed commentary and analysis -- this is as important as your summary of the material in the article -- simply repeating what the article says does not constitute an adequate paper.
* Your ability to apply the professional language and terminology of the underlying model -- in this case, organizational culture – correctly and helpfully.  **However interesting your paper about change, it's not going to be complete unless you also show that you can write about it in cultural terms.**
* Your ability to apply the language of the culture metaphor effectively.
* Your effective and appropriate use of in-text citations to the assigned readings and other source material to support your arguments.