**Introduction**

Organizational Culture is the collection of values, beliefs, and norms that shape organizational behavior. VCUHS chaplains provide pastoral care within a range of service line units. As a result of the complex, specialized, and interrelated nature of health services, different units often reflect unique unit organizational cultures. Effective pastoral care practice is sensitive to these unique needs and settings.

**Study Significance**

Understanding unit organizational culture can help chaplains tailor their activities accordingly. Using common dimensions to understand and communicate unit culture promotes smooth transitions between service lines. Additionally, this information may be helpful in addressing changes in acute care facilities that are prompted by the Affordable Care Act.

This project was initiated for quality improvement, based on evidence gained using research methods. Residents completed Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) required for human subjects research and are concluding research coursework in the Patient Counseling MS Program.

**What Chaplains Learned Conceptually**

Organizational Culture is a critical component in understanding organizational effectiveness (references available upon request). It is learned by the transmission of shared values and experiences. It is transgenerational and passed among participants. It influences perceptions and shapes behaviors. It also impacts adaptability by shaping perceptions of the value and capacity to change. Although there is no dominant conceptualization or measurement, recurring dimensions include:

- Affiliation, Teamwork, Participation
- Risk-taking, Innovation, Change
- Bureaucracy, Rules
- Efficiency
- Achievement

**What Chaplains Gained From The Process**

The research process prompted increased dialogue between residents and staff. This offered opportunities for residents to provide a clearer understanding of hospital chaplaincy professionalism, to clarify chaplains’ responsibilities, and to emphasize the training required to assume this role.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUR RESULTS</th>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
<th>Organizational Culture Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey responses were reported using a 5-point scale (1, Strongly Disagree; 5 Strongly Agree). Survey questions were grouped into five thematic categories and averaged to create a category index. The chart below depicts the results for the overall sample.</td>
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<tr>
<th>TABLE 2</th>
<th>Chaplains, Charting, and Care Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey questions appear below right. Survey responses were reported using a 5-point scale (1, Strongly Disagree; 5 Strongly Agree). The average response to these questions appears on the left.</td>
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</table>

| 3.49 | In our unit the chaplain chart the spiritual needs assessment in the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) |
| 3.74 | In our unit the chaplain chart the spiritual outcomes in the EMR |
| 3.16 | In our unit the care team focuses the chaplains’ assessment into their goals of care |

**Research Methods**

The study used a non-experimental design. Dimensions of organizational culture were measured using a modification of a 37-item survey developed by Shortell et al. (2002). The survey also included questions about the integration of chaplains into the units. Recruitment was conducted by residents, who introduced the project to unit managers. All staff were invited to participate. Surveys were available for completion on-line and in paper form in Spring 2013.

**Survey Results**

Surveys were completed by 102 VCUHS staff, a 41% response rate. The majority were female; nurses; working > 40 hours per week. The majority reported work shift consistency, with 51% working day shifts. The average respondent age was 26-40, with 3-5 years in the unit and 5-10 years in the current profession. The average tenure at VCUHS was > 5 years.

An index of organizational culture dimensions was developed by averaging the responses of thematically similar survey items. Index scores range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Table 1 displays the organizational culture profile for the overall sample. Teamwork and innovation are highly valued, closely followed by achievement. Although not shown here, the data can be stratified and a specific unit’s organizational culture be compared with the overall VCUHS sample. These comparisons allow chaplains to identify areas of difference between units and tailor their practice accordingly. Table 2 offers perceptions of chaplains’ charting and how this information is used by the care team. This suggests that while the chaplains’ charting is valued, there are opportunities for increased contributions to overall care plans.

**What Chaplains Can Incorporate In Their Practice**

The findings provide hospital chaplains a profile of unit organizational culture as a foundation for tailoring their activities in different areas. The findings suggest opportunities for strengthening the integration of chaplains in interdisciplinary care teams in the delivery of evidence-based patient care.

This project also demonstrates the residents’ mastery of research methods. Hands-on experience reinforced the challenges of survey research and its potential response biases. The research skills used here may be helpful in future ministries- in and out of hospital chaplaincy- as well as in fulfillment of board certification requirements.