



Three-Year Strategic Review February 2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – STATE OF THE DIVISION

In its last strategic report in 2019, the Organization Development & Change Division (ODC) was acknowledged for the following strengths: (1) the division operated as a “bridging division” linking scholarship and practice; (2) the division had a strategic framework to guide actions; and (3) the division commitment to communicating with members. These strengths remain given the recent survey of members. Regarding the challenges from the 2019 report, two remain: (1) declining membership (-20.9% over five years) and (2) low membership engagement outside of the annual meeting when judged by survey completion (12.9%) and participation in annual elections (9.0% in 2023). The third challenge – member satisfaction with the division’s activities and operations – is now a strength with 82.4% of responding members satisfied, very satisfied or extremely satisfied (compared to 77.5% in 2019). The percentage of respondents who indicated being “very” and “extremely satisfied” increased from 35.8% (in 2019) to 45.3% (in 2023). The survey response rates by membership type closely aligned with the division’s current membership percentages, thus ensuring one membership type did not dominate the results.

ODC can be described as an “eclectic” division based on its bridging function within AOM. This eclecticism, however, creates challenges for the division within AOM which is foremost a scholarly organization. Recently, we have discussed broadening our member descriptors from the dichotomous scholar-practitioner to a “quintet” reflected by scholar, educator, practitioner or consultant, manager, and student. Data supports this reframing:

- Survey Question: Why do you belong to the ODC Division? The top two responses were (1) gain and share information relevant to research (4.47 weighted average), and (2) gain and share information relevant to training/management practice (4.02 weighted average).
- Survey Question: What is your career stage? “Other” was the second most popular response (23.4%) to that of professor (27.2%) as “other” respondents referred to themselves as master’s student, executive, practitioner, consultant, manager, or retired.
- AOM Website (02/02/24): Executive members. ODC has the largest number of Executive members at 231 (14.5% of members) as compared to OB (193, 3.3%), STR (184, 3.6%), and MC (172, 20.8%).

The richness of the ODC membership is represented by the use of hyphens. Thus, the quintet provides multiple member descriptors: scholars-educators, student-scholars, practitioner-educators, etc. We have chosen to embrace the hyphen in defining a division that respects rigor-relevance, OD-change, qualitative-quantitative methods, empirical-applied research, and the micro-meso-macro levels. *Addressing the interests of our membership diversity that don’t fit within the scholar-practitioner dichotomy will continue to drive the division’s strategy.*

These distinct audiences help us better understand the transient nature of our membership. It is true that membership is down (-20.9%) over the past five years. Academic (-19.3%) and Executive (-36.1%) account for the largest demographic declines. International Executive members declined by 50.3% over the past five years. Still, our average annual new membership percentage over the last five years is 21.0% (as compared to AOM’s -3.8%). That is 706 new members, with 238 in 2023. *Addressing the interests of our diverse membership – including new members – reflects an opportunity to retain members to sustain and grow our membership.*

Finally, as outlined in the next section, the division has been busy given the following initiatives: 50th Year Celebration (53.5%), ODC Hive (68.97%), Rigor-Relevance Award (63.0%), and ODC Division Reorganization (45.1%). Unfortunately, the numbers in parentheses reflect the percentage of members not familiar with these initiatives. *Addressing the interests of diverse membership requires better marketing and an expanded communication strategy.*

STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

In 2017 and 2018, the division developed a Strategic Plan that was to be a living document. The vision and plan set out then still inform the division today, as the ideas, initiatives, and innovations discussed below were informed by that vision and plan. The pandemic provided the division an opportunity to experiment and sustain momentum on specific actions – notably the revision to the division’s by-laws and the launch of the Hive. The Hive is designed to forge relationships, build community, and generate resources to explore the research and practices that support healthy, vibrant and humane organizations and communities.

This three-year review is opportune as we revisit and update the Strategic Plan with an emphasis on the three italicized sentences in the Executive Summary. This section is divided into two: (1) Action Areas and (2) Working with AoM and the DIGs.

Action Areas

The three action areas highlighted below are connected, allowing the division to focus on program development, member retention and development, infrastructure to support innovation, partnering and outreach, and facilitating the interaction of research and practice. These action areas reflect the division’s commitment to *addressing the interests of our membership diversity that don’t adequately fit within the scholar-practitioner dichotomy*.

Annual Meeting Engagement

Attendance at the annual meeting remains down from 2019 levels: US Academic 133 (2023) versus 249 (2019); US Executive 28 versus 46; and US Student 73 versus 106. Non-US numbers remain mostly flat, except for non-US Executive: 20 versus 90. A question we will need to ask in the next survey is what other conferences members attend and prioritize over AOM, and the modalities and costs of these conferences in comparison to the AOM meetings. Scholarly papers and symposia submitted (and accepted) in 2023 are at or above pre-pandemic levels and exceed the five-year percent change of AOM overall. Those trends are not reflected with respect to PDWs, which are down 33.3% (14 in 2023, 21 in 2019). This decrease, which is concerning but not unknown to the division board, could be attributed to the decrease in executive members. Additional effort can be directed to curate PDWs associated with change and OD, especially PDWs that would interest executive members.

Building a supportive community – during and between AOM meetings – is an expectation among ODC members. Regarding survey question #10 (please rate your satisfaction with the following 17 items), all but five had weighted average scores of 3.2 or higher. Of note, the three lowest scores were: (1) encouragement from division leaders to form network communities for members like me (3.01); (2) opportunities outside of the annual meeting to network/collaborate with peers (2.99); and (3) opportunities for members like me to receive mentoring (2.98).

The board will consider via the Hive (discussed next) how best to establish and support self-organizing “regional chapters” in Asia and Southeast Asian, Latin and South America, the Middle East, and Africa. In November, we launched a submission workshop and mentoring program to provide our division members with developing high-quality submissions to the ODC program. We paired 37 mentees with 21 mentors, and the comments from participants have been overwhelmingly positive. We will continue to offer this workshop.

With the support of INSEAD, the first Rigor-Relevance Award was presented at the 2023 AOM meetings to Donald Hambrick and Henry Mintzberg. The awardees took part in a PDW session called “In Conversation with” where they shared their experience in the pursuit of both rigor and ODC Division – Three-Year Strategic Review

relevance in their research. The inaugural event was hugely successful. We underestimated the interest and 40-plus conference attendees were turned away from the session because of fire code limits. This award and the PDW will continue. Kathleen Eisenhardt and Jane Dutton are the 2024 recipients.

Launch of ODC Hive

We approached the 50th anniversary as a division in 2021 as “A Year of Engagement” to launch a collaborative community space to dialogue in playful and inclusive ways and better connect the “quintet” to sustain the ODC field. Over nine months during the pandemic, we held four virtual events that engaged more than 250 participants and generated several “big ideas” or initiatives. Participants helped inform the development of the Hive, including choosing its name. The participants endorsed reframing the division beyond organization change via the exploration of both research and practice of healthy, vibrant and humane organizations *and* communities. In other words, the division should be engaged with the wicked problems of our times.

To support the Hive, the division continues overhauling its [website](#), which now includes a link to the [Hive](#) (initiatives, events, and past events) and to relevant [resources](#) (journals, teaching ODC, learning ODC, researching ODC, videos and podcasts, and inspiring/useful websites). Clearly, the Hive is a key activity in marketing the work of the division and the recruitment and retention of members. It also draws interest from related initiatives to the ODC division that seek division sponsorship and visibility. The OD&C Doctoral Education Global Initiative is one example of a grassroots effort that has approached the division for such sponsorship and visibility. The purpose of this initiative is to craft an overall strategy for the future of doctoral education in support of accessible content (multiple forms) and relevant knowledge and training (academic, professional, and translation audiences).

Growth

Key to any discussion about growth is how “growth” is defined. Is it merely increasing membership numbers with a focus on retention? Is it visibility within AOM that drives participation? Based on survey comments, we have members who wish the division to be more scholarly (as one respondent noted, the ODC division is viewed as less scholarly), and we have members who desire more practitioner-focused opportunities. This is the tension within which the division exists; it is a tension that the division actively needs to leverage.

Responses varied when members were asked: (1) what strategic issues should occupy the division and (2) what could the division do to radically increase its effectiveness. The responses included establishing regional chapters; focusing on digital transformation or grand challenges; adding more workshops; engaging younger scholars; and having a stronger online presence. These responses are not surprising, and in most cases, we are already addressing these requests. However, at the heart of the scholar-practitioner tension and the division’s success is ensuring credibility for all audiences represented by the aforementioned quintet. Academic credibility is critical if we are to “[reach] organization change scholars who do not affiliate with the division” and “[expand] the benefits of ODC to other divisions.” As one survey respondent put it, the division’s focus should be on “developing a higher profile in the Academy as THE division on change and changing as THE dynamic force in the world.”

If ODC is to be the “go-to” division for all things change, it will require creating a reputation that connects rigorous and relevant scholarship *and* practice across the micro-meso-macro levels. Unfortunately, ODC is listed as a “micro” division on the AOM website. Such a classification doesn’t adequately reflect the division’s mission and future actions. By correcting this, which is a

goal of the ODC board, we see an opportunity to enhance the impact and relevance of the Academy as a whole.

There are a lot of opportunities to grow the membership and the visibility of the ODC division. We can't do everything. Still, the division will need to increase its social media presence (leveraging the website redesign), fundraising through sponsors, and taking advantage of generation and location shifts. Actions include:

- Social Media. Instead of trying to maintain a presence on multiple platforms, the decision was made to focus on LinkedIn via an “ODC Thought Leadership Page”. Coupled with the Hive, this will be an added platform for sharing insights, trends, best practices, and facilitating meaningful discussions with a focus on content strategy, time-sensitive content, case studies, thought-provoking inquiries, guest contributions, interactive features (e.g., Q&A sessions, webinars, polls).
- Fundraising. We will leverage our new structure (discussed in “Innovations and Best Practices”) to sustain ongoing (rather than fits-and-starts) fundraising for events, the Hive, etc. We also plan to reach out to other divisions to learn of best practices. (It should be noted that the division finances are currently sound.)
- Generation and Location Shifts. Attracting and retaining emerging change and OD scholars that are becoming more international. The past two Novembers we have hosted community meetings for current and recently-minted PhD students. Each meeting had a topic, for example, reviewing for the AOM meetings and navigating the academic job market.

Working with AOM and DIGs

One initiative that we believe will increase the division's (as well as AOM's) membership and visibility is the creation of a practice-focused conference-within-a-conference, similar to the Teaching & Learning Conference. Such an innovation would speak to the specific interests of managers and consultants/practitioners, individuals who may not fully engage nor attend regularly the AOM meetings. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the AOM leadership and interested DIGs (notably, MC and SAP) to create a practice-focused conference-within-a-conference.

Finally, based on the membership survey, the division is also interested in addressing other concerns that are shared by other divisions. These concerns include the willingness to review and the quality of reviews; attendance at scholarly paper sessions; the ever-present scheduling conflicts where one needs to be in two or more places at the same time across the expansive footprint of the meetings; and funding to attend the conference (which is the number one reason why someone doesn't attend the conference). One last topic for discussion is the potential to adjust the mix of PDWs, symposia, and paper sessions based on the quality of submissions annually.

INNOVATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

Division Structure

In 2022, the division completed a revision to its [by-laws](#). The revision included the creation of the “Companion Document to ODC Division Bylaws: Elective Officers and Appointed Officers Duties and Responsibilities”. The creation of the [companion document](#) simplifies the bylaws and provides flexibility for updating the duties and responsibilities of any given appointed position based on the division’s need without the need to revise the bylaws. Such a structure allows the division to include anyone who wants to contribute while allowing the programmatic chairs to focus on conference planning.

Central to the revision was the creation of a new position, the Division Operating Officer (DOO), who oversees the non-conference division operations and, more importantly, ensures year-to-year progress on strategic initiatives. Among other things, having a dedicated operating officer is necessary to achieve our goal of making the division a “hive” of activity. To date, the DOO has created a Google drive that houses key division documents (including standard operating procedures, templates, and process flows), and has standardized the meeting schedule for the operations team (which includes the division’s communication officer, community engagement officer, social media officer, and treasurer); monthly meetings between the DOO, the division chair, and division chair-elect; and bi-monthly division board meetings. Future activities for the DOO include relaunching the division newsletter – which had been overseen by one individual for 30 years – into a curated, online version, and hiring a gig worker to track and reach out to new members.

Hive

As already noted, the Hive increases the opportunities for all who have an interest in and passion for change and organization development to more actively engage and share content with one another outside the annual AOM meetings. Participants during the “year of engagement” helped inform the development of the Hive over four virtual events. (It should be noted that two of the sessions were offered twice to accommodate participants from all time zones. All sessions were recorded.) The participants endorsed reframing the division beyond organization change via the exploration via research and practice of healthy, vibrant and humane organizations *and* communities to better engage with the wicked problems of our time.

Quintet Representation / Surviving and Thriving on the Hyphen / “In Conversation With” and Rigor-Relevance Award

The discussions surrounding the quintet resulted in the creation of a new panel – Surviving and Thriving on the Hyphen – introduced at last year’s doctoral and junior faculty consortia. Starting at AOM 2024, the Surviving and Thriving panel will be open to the entire AOM and will have a unique theme annually. It will be paired with the Rigor-Relevance Award and the “In Conversation With” session on Saturday afternoon. It is our hope these innovations open up the annual meetings to attendees who do not naturally see themselves as just a scholar or practitioner.