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Chapter XV

Discussion Questions for the Case Studies

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The case studies presented offer several perspectives from which to better understand knowledge management in higher education. The questions provided below may be used with any of the case studies, or the chapters contained in this book. When asking students to answer the questions, it may be helpful for them to consider similar issues in their own institutions.

1.   From a knowledge management perspective, what kinds of issues were presented in the case? Were the issues resolved effectively? If so, how? If not, why?

2.   What "problem" is discussed in the case study? Who identified this problem? Could there have been alternative perspectives that were not considered?

3.   What are the knowledge assets presented in the case? Who owns or has jurisdiction over those assets?

4.   How does the case illustrate the unique characteristics of higher education organizations?

5. What economic, political, or social factors contributed to the situations presented in the case?

6. Would these factors be barriers to KM implementation? If so, how might these factors be addressed?

7. Who were the key players in the case? What role did each individual play?

8. What subgroups are presented in the case, and what are their roles?

9. Are there tensions between subgroups? How would relations between groups affect KM projects in that organization?

10. Who was not "at the table," and would their contributions affect the outcome if they had been involved?

Teaching Strategies

1. **Problem-based learning:** Divide students into groups. Assign each group to use one of the case studies. Each group will act as a consulting company that has been asked to develop a knowledge management or information systems proposal for their particular case study institution. The proposal should address the main issues presented in the case, but permit the students to elaborate on the case if necessary. Depending on the nature of the course you are teaching, the proposals can be technical in nature or come from an organizational consulting perspective. Have each group present their proposals to the class.

2. **Research paper:** Using the case studies as examples, assign a research paper in which each student identifies an economic, social, or political barrier to KM implementation that is occurring or has occurred on his or her campus. Students should approach the problem from a theoretical perspective, using a framework from one of the case studies or chapters in this book or another you have presented in class. Research for the papers may include interviewing individuals on campus, examining documents, statistical analysis, or other appropriate methods.

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