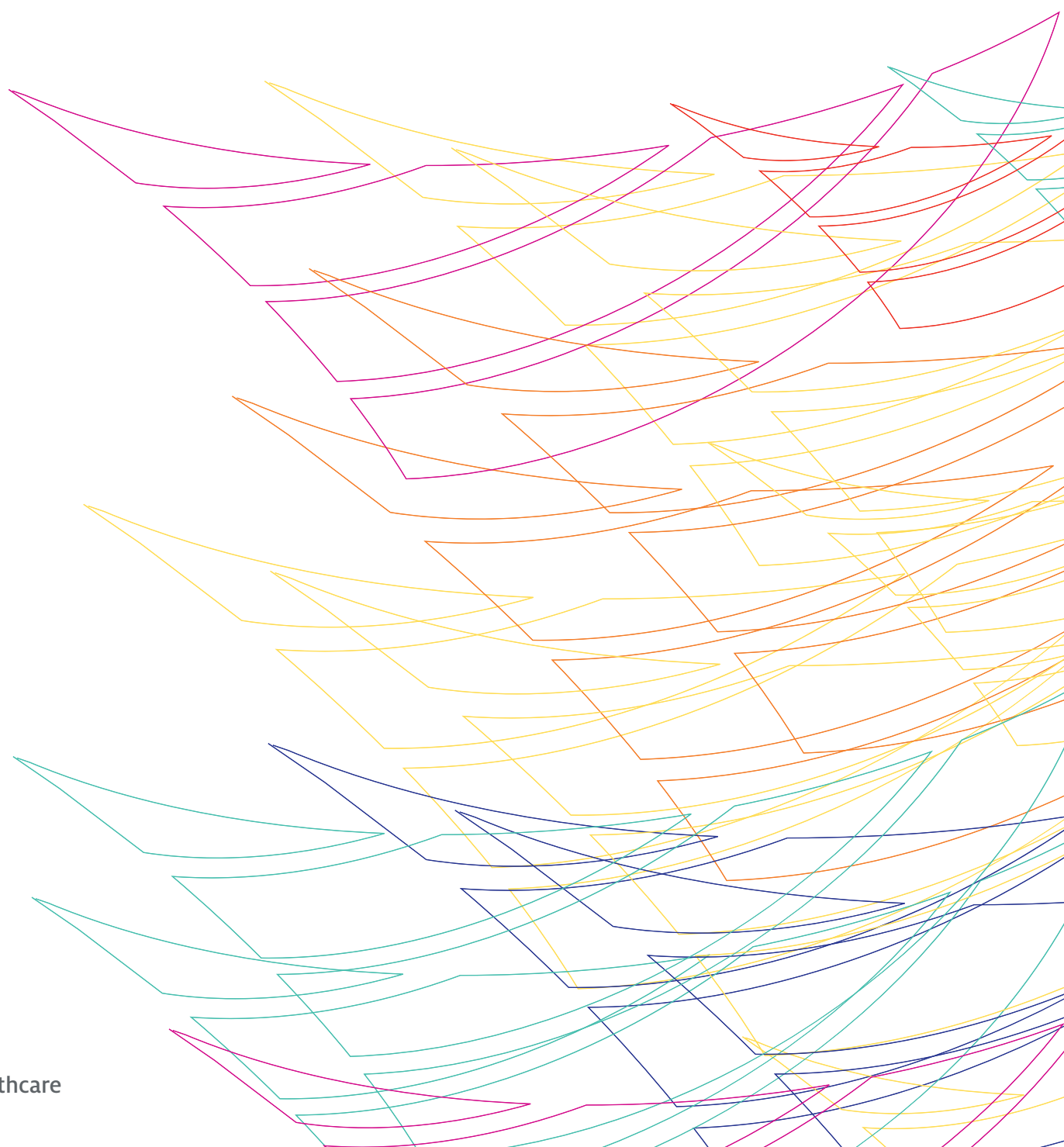
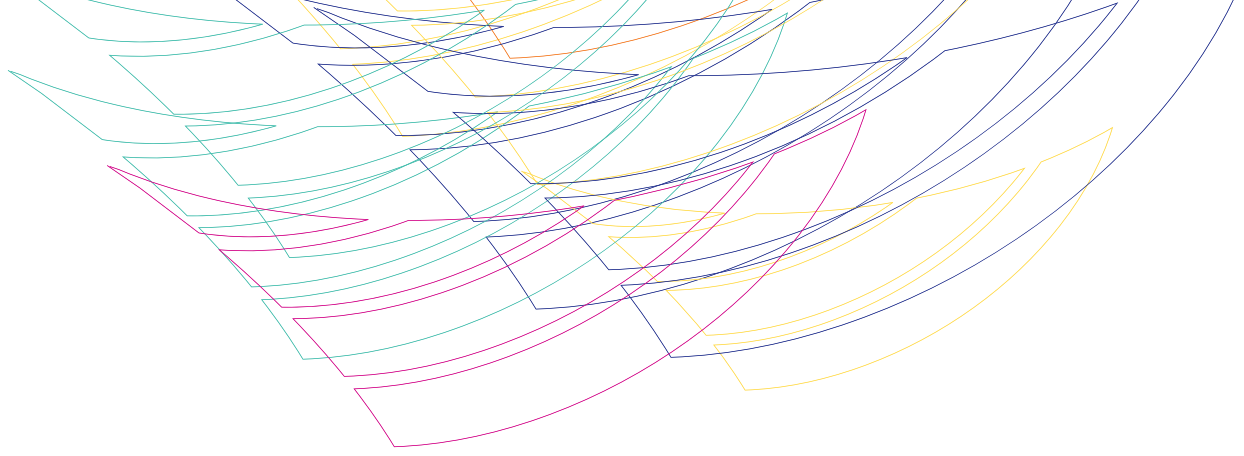


# Duke University School of Nursing

Leveraging Networks for Change





# Duke University School of Nursing (DUSON) is educating the next generation of transformational leaders in nursing.

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Fueled by a diverse community of scholars and clinicians, the School offers masters, PhD, and doctor of nursing practice degrees, as well as an accelerated bachelor of science in nursing degree to students who have previously graduated from college.

With a solid history, an impressive brand, and top-caliber teaching, research, and clinical faculty and staff, the School has many strengths and much to offer. Even so, the institution aims to be THE premier school of nursing in the United States—a goal that would require engaging a representative group of leaders, at all levels, in collaborative change.

The School, under the leadership of Dean Marion E. Broome, partnered with the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®) to engage in a process of discovery to identify ways to better focus people, structure, and processes for greater impact. A key element conducted by CCL was an organizational network analysis (ONA), involving all faculty and staff, to measure and map the informal structure and relationships that would support, or inhibit, change.

Data from the ONA were used to help faculty and staff understand whether their current network structure supports the desired future for the school, and how they could most effectively implement change using their network to accelerate the process.

The data were also utilized to identify individuals who play key roles (both formal and informal) in providing leadership within the school. Those individuals occupy central positions in the DUSON network and represent important constituency groups. They were recommended for membership on the School's new steering committee, a group that initially was charged with making recommendations for a new faculty structure.



Dean Marion E. Broome addressing the faculty and staff of the Duke University School of Nursing.

## Challenge

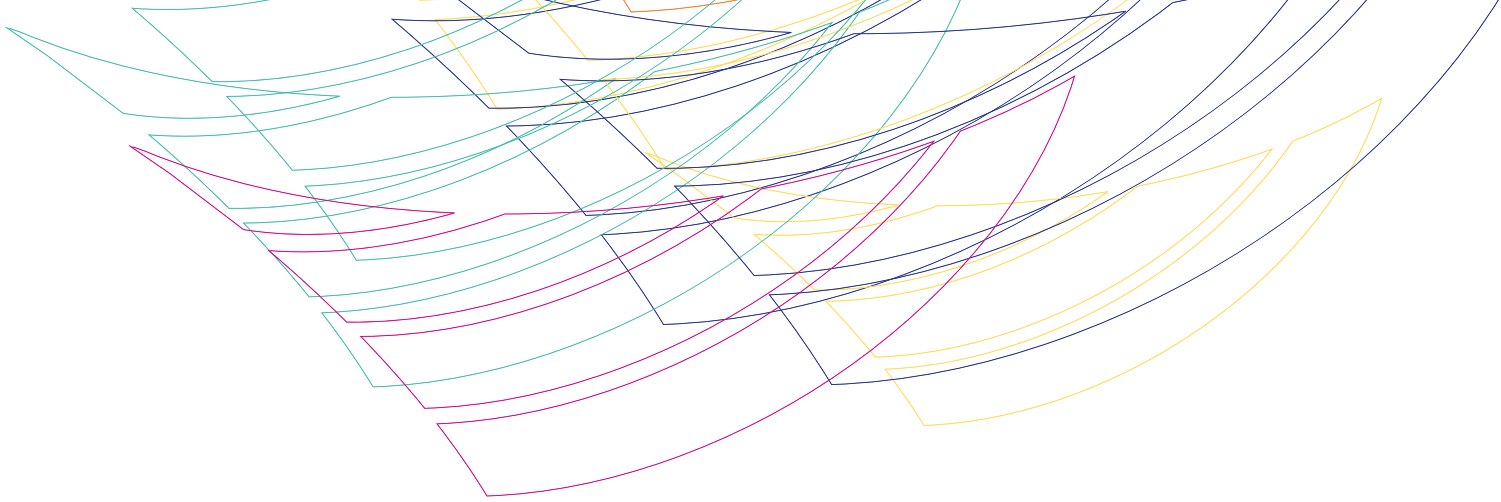
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Marion E. Broome was appointed dean of Duke University School of Nursing (DUSON) in August 2014, and it was clear that changes—both incremental and radical—would be needed to achieve the goal of becoming the premier nursing program in the country.

For DUSON, the business or operational strategies were considered one set of changes that would continue to be framed and created over time. Another set of changes would involve the human systems—structures for learning and leadership development and culture—that would fuel the future strategy.

The school had grown very fast in students and faculty, as well as degree programs, over the past 10 years. This resulted in a community where many faculty and staff appeared less well-connected to each other and/or the overall community than was ideal. Dean Broome and members of the DUSON executive team understood that to be successful, greater collaboration and integration would be needed among and across the School's faculty and staff. They also knew that setting direction and enacting change could not be a top-down approach, or one that would rely on just a small group of "the usual" decision makers.

With that in mind, Dean Broome sought to establish a steering committee whose first order of business would be a reorganization of faculty and staff that would support the continued success of DUSON. This new structure would also need to enhance the leadership and career development of faculty across specialties and career tracks over the long term.



## Solution

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CCL worked with the School of Nursing to create a multi-pronged discovery process, through which critical information about the current organizational structure and culture would be uncovered. With DUSON, discovery involved online surveys, feedback from town hall-style meetings, and, importantly, the organizational network analysis (ONA). Employees at all levels were given equal opportunity to engage in the efforts.

ONA is a process of mapping relationships within and across groups. It is used to understand the status quo and then determine whether the networks that currently exist are effective or not for achieving desired outcomes.

“Research has shown that different network structures and dynamics have different implications for the change process,” says CCL’s Kristin Cullen-Lester. “Knowing how information and influence flows in an organization—beyond the formal channels—can help leaders make better decisions about needed change and how change is implemented.”

For DUSON, the results of the ONA would give Dean Broome and the entire School insight into their current ways of working. This different kind of data would help faculty and staff to see whether their current network supports the desired future for the school, and how they could most effectively implement change using networks to accelerate the process.

The ONA involved 208 faculty and staff. Online surveys were designed to determine each person’s social connections. The ONA focused on who provides advice to solve work-related problems, who helps make sense of workplace changes, and who understands the direction of the School to align and energize their work to support the School’s mission. Participants also were asked questions about their readiness for the proposed change. The results were shared widely and openly with DUSON faculty and staff.

## The ONA had two key implications for change.

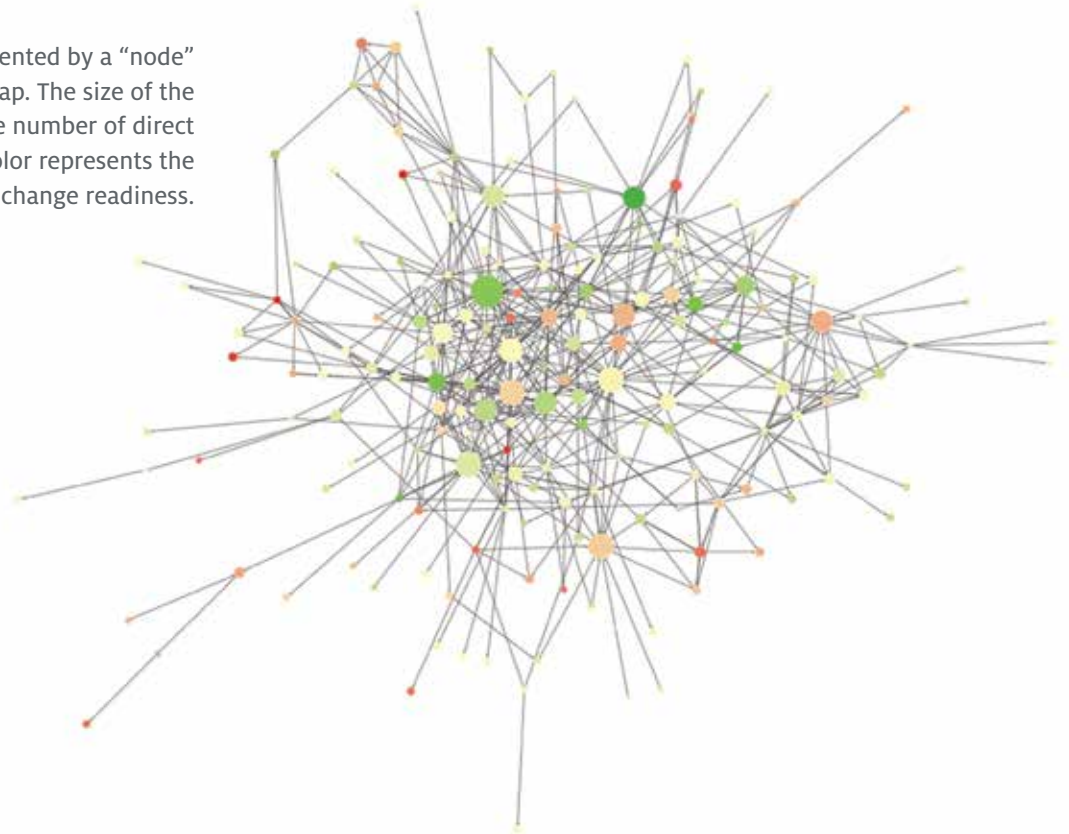
**Change readiness scores ranged from good to apathetic.** There were very few individuals who were resistant to the School's new direction, rather many people were unsure of the benefit of the change. Faculty were slightly more receptive to the proposed change than staff and within the staff, supervisors were also more ready for change.

**DUSON operated as a network of individual contributors.** Mapping the relationships and ties among people in the School, we found a "diffuse" network. In diffuse networks, the range in the number of connections individuals have is not large, and overall, there is a fairly low level of connectivity in the network. A sparsely connected network does not have tight clusters based on groups or functions. DUSON faculty and staff showed little clustering based on program, function, or role. This reflected a culture of independence and autonomy.

### Characteristics of a Diffuse Network

- Each person is fairly evenly connected to non-connected others.
- Individuals have access to different knowledge across the network.
- This network is conducive to achieving incremental change.

Each person is represented by a "node" on this network map. The size of the node represents the number of direct connections. The color represents the relative change readiness.

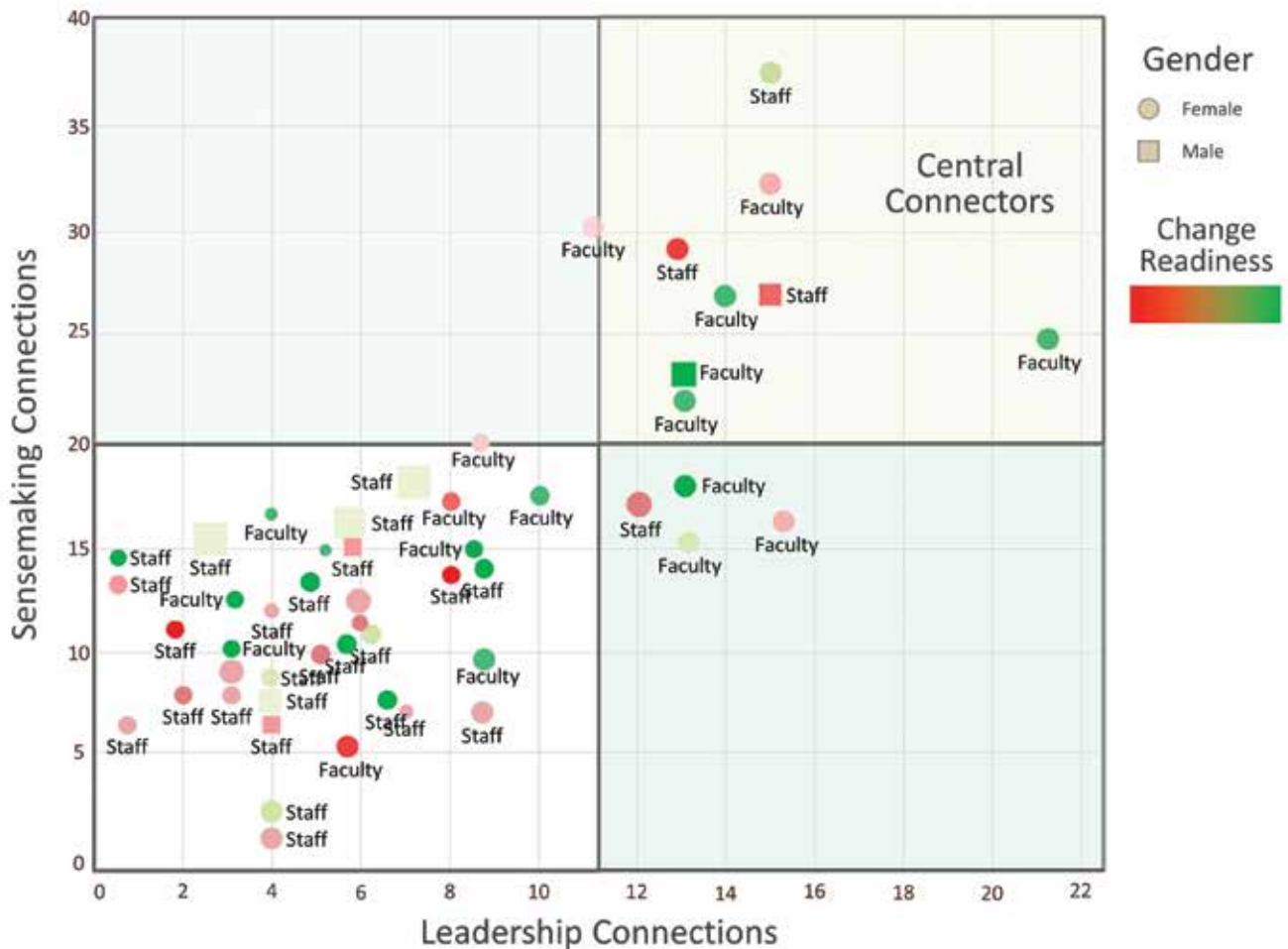


“DUSON’s diffuse network structure promoted autonomy and individual creativity,” explains CCL’s Henry Browning. “But it also posed challenges to change and creating a common direction, aligning resources, and achieving commitment toward a shared vision.”

In a diffuse network, a change (or vision or idea) needs to be perceived as clearly superior to be quickly adopted. Adoption occurs largely through broad awareness of the need for change and requires engaging the whole network, not simply a few key influencers. For DUSON, this meant faculty and staff would need to be engaged and aligned as individuals, rather than as “same” groups or clusters of people.

The ONA also provided a way to identify potential change agents. While across the network, many people had a similar amount of sparse connectivity, some people did have close direct connections to many of their colleagues. They were a primary source of sensemaking, leadership, and advice for others. Involving people who were central connectors in the network would help the whole network engage in the change and accelerate the change process.

This graph depicts an example of one tool that was used to help identify individuals who were central in both the sensemaking and leadership network. The majority of individuals fell into the bottom left quadrant, indicating that fewer of their colleagues turned to them for sensemaking and leadership. Individuals in the upper right quadrant were central connectors—primary sources of sensemaking and leadership for their colleagues.

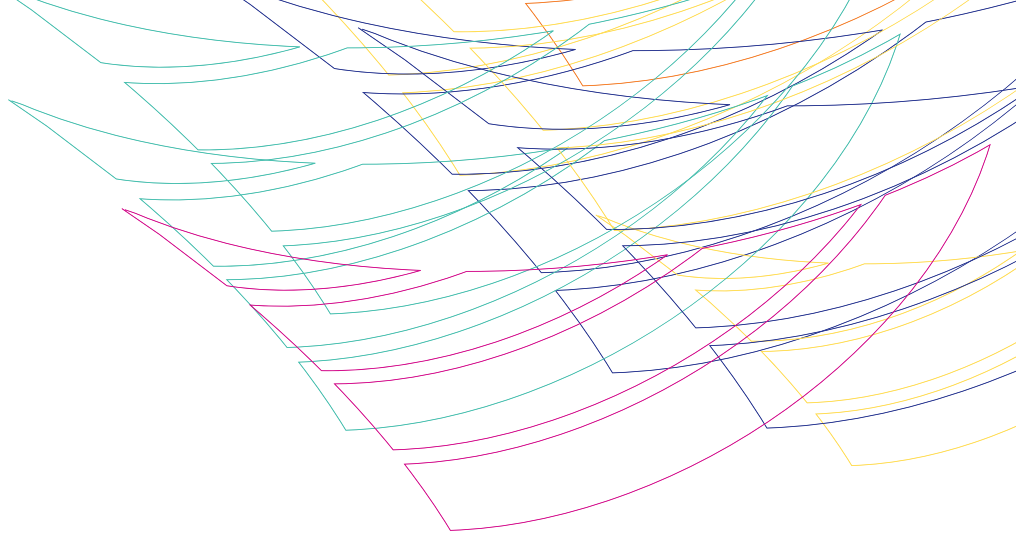




Ann King (left), preceptor at the WATCH Medical Unit in Goldsboro, NC, assists Duke MSN student Chan Wu.

Understanding the roles and patterns within the DUSON network illuminated some of the challenges the School has had in adapting to change in the past—and opportunities to approach change differently moving forward.

To begin, the ONA was used to identify candidates for the steering committee. Change readiness and network role were considered when creating a diverse and representative group of faculty and staff. In February 2015, the new steering committee was in place and ready to tackle the restructuring.



## Impact

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CCL's work with DUSON has proved valuable, allowing a major change to be planned and implemented in a tight timeframe (new divisions were completed in August 2015 and full staff reassignments were completed in October) and with much support among faculty and staff.

The entire change initiative—creating the steering committee, the approach they took, and the restructuring outcomes—would not have been as successful without doing the network analysis first, agree Dean Broome and members of the DUSON executive team.



DUSON Associate Professor Karin Reuter-Rice (left) works with a student in the laboratory.





**Network analysis provided a new lens for understanding the structure of the organization.**

Understanding the patterns of interactions helped senior leadership—including the new dean—address the dynamics within the organization. It also solidified the priority to reorganize effectively to better address needs and goals moving forward.

“The network analysis validated my impressions that we were an unconnected organization of ‘independent contractors’ for the most part. A new dean’s impressions do not mean much, so the ONA was really helpful for me—and for everyone else.”

—Dean Broome

**Network analysis gave members of the steering committee strength and legitimacy.**

By identifying influencers and appointing them to the steering committee, the process of restructuring the faculty into three divisions was seen as credible and the process was trusted. Decisions, even if not agreed with, were understood and seen as legitimate.

“Faculty and staff knew I didn’t just choose a group of people that I liked or who were the obvious choices for the steering committee. That made all the difference in the world.”

—Dean Broome

**Resistance to the restructuring was minimal and healthy.**

Network analysis guided steering committee members in their work processes and in their communication with the faculty and staff in the change.

Steering committee members knew they needed to speak to individuals and their interests, ideas, and concerns. They held town hall meetings to solicit feedback and communicated their process openly and consistently. Faculty and staff were involved in developing the restructuring plan, which allowed the implementation to go smoothly.

Emotions and anxiety around the changes were present, but not consuming. Dissonance and challenges are being addressed as they arise—both by formal leaders and the change agents.

“It’s unrealistic to think 100 percent of people are going to be happy and accepting of a change. We tried to create as much involvement as possible . . . It’s hard to change people and places, but there was a lot of work that went into this initiative by many in the organization and I think everyone knows that.”

—Dean Broome

*“I have no doubt that the network analysis helped the process of change tremendously.”*

## A Network Perspective on Change

A top-down hierarchy-driven change process is often inefficient and ineffective. In contrast, by taking a network perspective, organizations gain access to information and insight that can better shape the course of change and the achievement of desired outcomes.

CCL takes the following approach with organizations interested in using network knowledge to drive and support change:

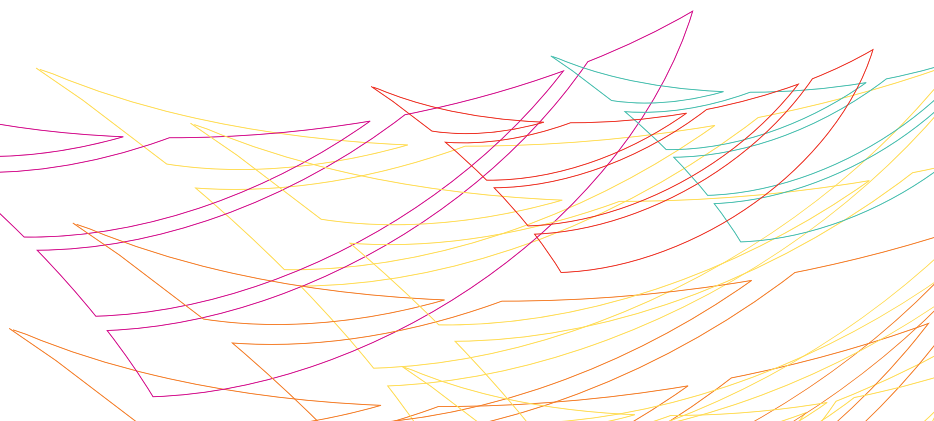
- 1. Map the natural occurring patterns of work and social interaction using advanced analytics.**
- 2. Match those patterns to the change initiatives organizations are trying to implement.**
- 3. Maximize success by developing targeted solutions that fit the organization's natural pattern of work and catalyze the network to spur change.**

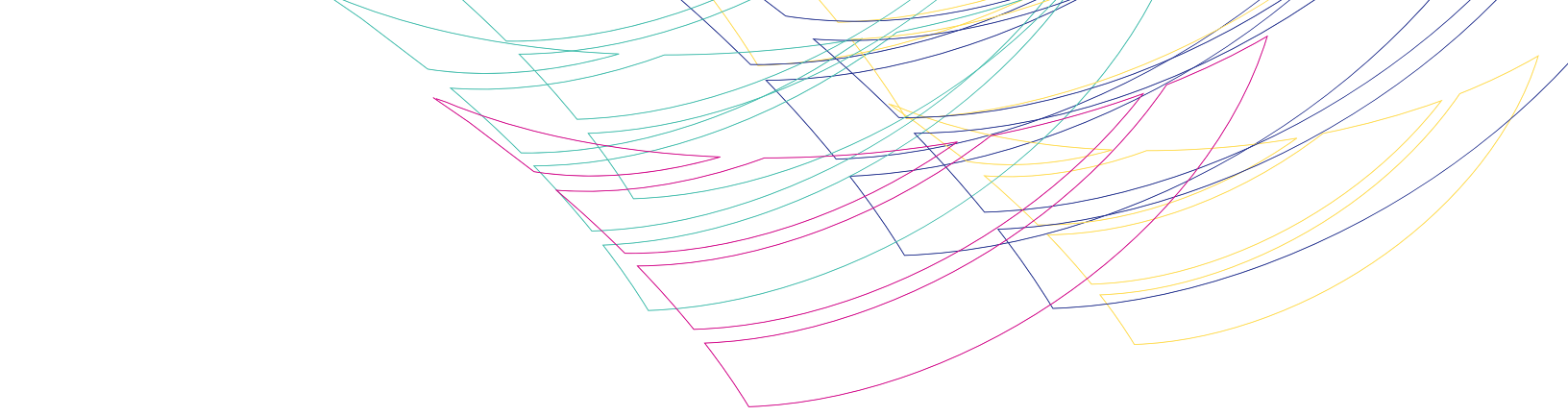
Learn more about how CCL applies analytics, including network analysis, to accelerate the spread of organizational change. Please read the white paper *Analytics for Change: How Networks and Data Science Will Revolutionize Organizational Change*.

Contact CCL's network scientists:

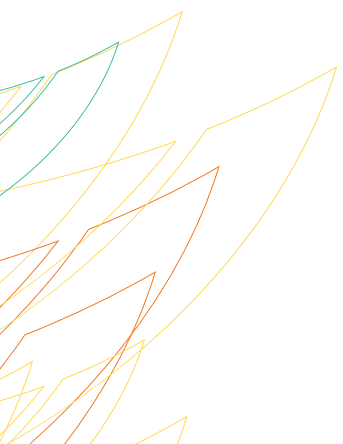
Kristin Cullen-Lester, PhD  
Senior Research Faculty  
Center for Creative Leadership  
cullenk@ccl.org  
336-286-4468

Phil Willburn  
Senior Faculty  
Center for Creative Leadership  
willburnp@ccl.org  
719-633-7859





Michael Reif (left), DUSON's associate professor and associate dean for Global and Community Health, converses with a colleague.





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#### CCL - Americas

[www.ccl.org](http://www.ccl.org)

+1 800 780 1031 (US or Canada)

+1 336 545 2810 (Worldwide)

[info@ccl.org](mailto:info@ccl.org)

#### Greensboro, North Carolina

+1 336 545 2810

#### Colorado Springs, Colorado

+1 719 633 3891

#### San Diego, California

+1 858 638 8000

#### CCL - Europe, Middle East, Africa

[www.ccl.org/emea](http://www.ccl.org/emea)

#### Brussels, Belgium

+32 (0) 2 679 09 10

[ccl.emea@ccl.org](mailto:ccl.emea@ccl.org)

#### Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

+251 118 957086

[LBB.Africa@ccl.org](mailto:LBB.Africa@ccl.org)

#### Johannesburg, South Africa

+27 (11) 783 4963

[southafrica.office@ccl.org](mailto:southafrica.office@ccl.org)

#### Moscow, Russia

+7 495 662 31 39

[ccl.cis@ccl.org](mailto:ccl.cis@ccl.org)

#### CCL - Asia Pacific

[www.ccl.org/apac](http://www.ccl.org/apac)

#### Singapore

+65 6854 6000

[ccl.apac@ccl.org](mailto:ccl.apac@ccl.org)

#### Gurgaon, India

+91 124 676 9200

[cclindia@ccl.org](mailto:cclindia@ccl.org)

#### Shanghai, China

+86 21 6881 6683

[ccl.china@ccl.org](mailto:ccl.china@ccl.org)

**Affiliate Locations:** Seattle, Washington • Seoul, Korea • College Park, Maryland • Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
Ft. Belvoir, Virginia • Kettering, Ohio • Huntsville, Alabama • San Diego, California • St. Petersburg, Florida  
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