Clark, B. R. The Organizational Sage in Higher Education

* An organizational saga is a collective understanding of unique accomplishments in a formally established group.
* Organizational saga refers to a unified set of publicly expressed beliefs about the formal group that is (a) rooted in history (b) claims unique accomplishment and (c) is held with sentiment by the group.
* The story helps rationalize for the individual his commitment of time and energy for years, perhaps for a lifetime, to a particular enterprise.
* Organizational sagas show high durability when built slowly in structures social context.
* When the saga is firmly developed, it is embodied in many components of the organization, affecting the definition and performance of the organization and finding protection in the webbing of the institutional parts.
* Two stages can be distinguished in the development of an organization, initiation and fulfillment.
* The saga is initially a strong purpose, conceived and enunciates by a single man or small cadre whose first task is to find a setting that is open to a special effort. Reed College started this way with nonconformity as its principle.
* Initiation can also come for an established organization in a crisis of decay. This was the case at Antioch College, reformed by a new president that radically transformed the college.
* Initiation can also occur in organizations ready for evolutionary change. This is true for Swarthmore College
* Fulfillment centers on personnel, the program, the external social base, the student subculture and the imagery of the saga.
* When senior faculty are devoted to a new idea, a saga is probable. Such faculty cadres were developed at all three colleges.
* The program becomes a set of communal symbols and rituals invested with meaning. Swartmore had special seminars and other practices in the honors program. Antioch had a work study program, GERs, community government and community involvement. Reed had special freshmen lecture and seminar courses, junior qualifying examination.
* The saga also becomes fixed in the minds of outside believers devoted to the organization usually the alumni.
* Liberal alumni seek to conserve what they believe to be a unique liberal institution and protect it from conservative forces of society that might change it.
* The student body is the third group of believers. To remain a saga a change must be supported by the student subculture. This was true at all 3 colleges.
* The saga is more widely expressed as a generalized tradition in statues and ceremonies, written histories and current catalogies.
* An organizational saga is a powerful means of unity in an organization.