

Hi, I'm Dr. Robert Hicks, Director of the Organizational Behavior, Coaching, and Consulting Program here at UT Dallas. I'd like to talk for a minute about why we developed a Master of Science degree in Leadership and Organizational Development.

It's well-documented that there has been an explosion in the study and application of leadership principles in organizations. In fact, developing leaders has become a billion-dollar industry ---- and it doesn't show any signs of slowing down. You can easily see this for yourself if you examine the growing size of the leadership book sections, both online and in brick and mortar book stores...and, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, management-level employment will continue to grow by almost 25% in the next decade. For most management positions, a master's degree is considered the terminal degree and so earning a master's that emphasizes leadership provides an immediate career edge – especially when it's combined with organizational development.

Organizational development is the study of the systematic process of implementing change at all levels of an organization. Winston Churchill once said, ***“To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often.”*** So, it's not disputed in the literature that organizational change is a given because of the need for companies and institutions to become and remain competitive in today's marketplace. Nor is it disputed that the pace of change is increasing. You may have noticed this yourself. Robert and Ryan Quinn, wrote an article for the *Harvard Business Review* entitled, “Change Management and Leadership Development Have to Mesh.” In it, they correctly point out that a major reason for the struggles of organizations is that they treat leadership and change management as separate rather than interrelated activities. After all, leaders of organizations, departments, divisions, and teams are all entrusted with the responsibility of guiding people through a variety of change

processes that are ongoing and inherently complex. Therefore, their article could very well have been entitled, “Organizational Development and Leadership Development Have to Mesh.”

So, knowledge of organizational development is critical for anyone who has responsibility for leading or facilitating organizational change – or for advising and coaching those who do.

It’s no surprise then that Organizational Development in and of itself is a valued function in many organizations. The OD function usually reports to a senior Human Resources executive. But, in some organizations, this function reports directly to the Senior Leadership Team. The role of the OD professional is to act as a business partner and help senior leaders deal with issues of impending change that impact both business strategy and organizational culture. And because of the critical nature of this role, the demand for OD professionals in organizations is growing. The projected growth of people employed in this field is 13% by 2022....and this doesn’t even include OD consultants external to organizations.

To summarize, a master’s degree in Leadership and Organizational Development is attractive to all industry sectors and a variety of professionals because it gives recipients the knowledge and competencies needed to lead and/or assist organizations in achieving their strategic and cultural change goals. All indicators point to an increased demand for degrees that combine these two subjects.