



HEAD OF SCHOOL RICK BRANSON EARNS DOCTORATE

The Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that our Head of School, Rick Branson, has completed all requirements for the degree of Doctor in Education from Nova Southeastern University. His accomplishment comes at the end of four years of study.



Rick's dissertation entitled Measuring the Organizational Learning Capacity of an International School was recently accepted capping off his sixty-six hours of online and face-to-face course work taken in Kuala Lumpur while head of Hokkaido International School. He finished the final details of his dissertation as he settled in as the new head of Indian Creek.

Majoring in organizational leadership, Rick followed a long-standing career interest in how organizations learn. Nova requires that research have a strong theoretical base with direct applicability to a candidate's current position. His dissertation research done at Hokkaido with its faculty members applied a research instrument and methods in organizational learning capacity.

In his research he looked at processes that help people learn as a team. Previous literature indicated an eight step process, which he replicated with a small group. He used a measurement instrument developed by researchers in North Carolina that helped gauge an organization's capacity to learn.

His experimental treatment using both an experimental group and a control group was condensed to three months to avoid diffusion in his school's close knit community. While his findings were not dramatic, his research supported the concept that organizations can increase their capacity to learn.

His experience as a student in this mixed environment of online and face-to-face course work gives him a personal and intellectual foundation in the educational modalities that Indian Creek students will encounter as they move through their educational activities. The implications for our own program range from educational standards to the selection and allocation of resources as well as the professional development and recruitment of personnel, facilities management and design, and program opportunities.

Working with his learning cohort in classes and online and conducting research led him to a number of observations and conclusions in the areas of leading change, strategic planning, and conflict resolution to name a few. Going forward Rick realizes the need to harness the energy that comes with the characteristics of a learning organization: team learning, personal mastery, shared vision, mental models, and system thinking.

His leadership comes at an opportune moment in time. Indian Creek is involved in a thorough self-study for re-accreditation by AIMS. This process will become the basis for the ongoing activities of development, implementation, and evaluation. As our new head he brings these strategies and methods to Indian Creek's future as a vibrant and forward-reaching school.