Meaning makers: The role of culture change work in sustainability-oriented culture change

Friday, September 23, 2016 from 12:00-1:30 PM in David Strong Building, room C116

ABSTRACT
We investigate the culture change work of internal change agents and the impact of that work on an organization’s efforts to integrate sustainability into its culture. Drawing on interviews, observations, and archival documents from a two-year inductive study of a global manufacturing company’s sustainability-oriented culture change initiative, we identify two types of culture change work – broad meaning-making work and tailored meaning-making work – and investigate the effects of these types of work on the meanings employees associated with sustainability and on their engagement in workplace pro-sustainability behaviors. We identify two broad pathways of meaning-making work (broad or tailored) that lead to different changes in meanings associated with sustainability (organizational or job-related) and different workplace pro-sustainability behaviors (peripheral or core). Our findings lend new insights on the microfoundations of corporate sustainability, workplace pro-sustainability behaviors, and organizational culture change.