THE BEST OF THE 2023

LEADERSHIP
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
CONFERENCE

www.LeadershipinHigherEducationConference.com

MAGNA

Learn. Lead. Connect.

Learn innovative strategies from nationally recognized experts, and network with peers who are passionate about creating positive change in higher education.

LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

October 10-12, 2024 • Orlando, Florida

REGISTER TODAY

Table of Contents

Everybody's Business: Inclusive Excellence as a Prerequisite for Transformative Leadership in Higher Education

Heather Moore Roberson

Discussions about race, identity, and equity are often touted as the prerogative of people of color. Historically underrepresented groups are asked to lead and be responsible for all discourse on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)—especially at postsecondary institutions. For instance, DEI offices have held a storied history throughout higher education. Some institutions named the first spaces offices of multicultural affairs, which served diverse student populations at predominately white institutions decades after the controversial *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) Supreme Court decision. Other colleges or universities created these offices (or even just a senior diversity officer position) in response to recent national calls for justice for people of color (e.g., after the extrajudicial killings of Trayvon Martin and George Floyd). DEI should not be the sole responsibility of one person or office. Instead, as diversity officers maintain, all people must be committed to the pursuit of inclusive excellence—that is, an explicit commitment to DEI and equity mindedness. It is core to an institution's function and is part of administrative structures and practices; recruitment, admissions, and hiring; and colleges' and universities' curricula and co-curricula (Williams et al., 2005, p. iii).

The active pursuit of inclusive excellence was one of several areas of focus in my workshop at the 2023 Leadership in Higher Education Conference. The workshop, "Ubuntu: Building Communities of Belonging inside Academic and Student Affairs," asked participants to (1) consider ways that they can initiate structural and cultural shifts at their institutions, (2) act as change agents who both shape the campus culture and function as individuals who can infuse DEI into the curricular and cocurricular aspects of the institution, and (3) consider a new strategic framework that elevates DEI into the existing fabric of an institution. The usage of the word *Ubuntu* was intentional; it means "I am because we are." As part of my facilitation, I openly questioned whether our campus environments were authentic spaces where we could build a strong sense of belonging for all students and employees. I also asked participants how they would define the institutional culture of their campuses and what taglines or slogans could be used to *really* define the essence of their colleges and universities.

To fully support historically underrepresented communities, academic leaders must be willing to actively participate in constructive dialogue about institutional culture and core institutional values. I asked each attendee to construct a project that would support the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, or students. But to identify and implement a successful initiative, I asked participants to select three different key constituents on their campuses who either provide access or create barriers to institutional progress. They listed the influential decision makers on their campuses, the individuals tasked with protecting power, and the people responsible for keeping the institution afloat. The identification of these individuals allowed participants to determine how to implement a thoughtful, fortified initiative that would cultivate a stronger sense of belonging for students and employees who are regularly pushed to the margins.

A commitment to inclusive excellence cultivates a constructive and transformative leadership environment that embraces progressive change at the institutional level. All leaders should be prepared to discuss the ways that inclusive excellence appears in their departments. At the end of my presentation, I provided recommendations to leaders in academic and student affairs on how to build communities of belonging in strategic and intentional ways.

1. **Individuals with privilege must be comfortable with discomfort in their reflective leadership practices.** Specifically, to aspire to allyship to support historically underrepresented groups, they have to be willing to participate in some unlearning on a multitude of levels. For example, I host regular training and professional development sessions with staff and faculty who regularly interface with students. Last spring, I led an eight-week staff training session, guided by the work of Dr. Terrell Strayhorn, on cultivating belonging among historically underrepresented students on our campus. This group of staff spoke at length about different initiatives that are necessary to support students and employees of color at my institution.

2. **It is important to create positions and opportunities that help leaders to regularly analyze institutional culture.** For example, earlier this year, I wrestled with one of the core challenges at predominately white colleges and universities: retention of students of color, first-generation college students, and low-income students. As a result, I created a retention specialist position that works primarily with domestic students of color and first-generation students on our predominately white, small liberal arts campus. With support of senior administrators, we created this position in the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as it provides holistic (but primarily academic support) to historically underrepresented students. Furthermore, this position helps to expose the "hidden curriculum" of institutions, which creates barriers to access on our campuses.

3. **Leaders must prioritize inclusive excellence while amplifying the voices of historically underrepresented groups.** Every campus should explore the presence of and their commitment to inclusive excellence. For instance, leaders can measure inclusive excellence on your campus by conducting a diversity audit or creating diversity scorecards to track institutional progress on campus-wide DEI goals.

A few years ago, while interviewing for an appointment as a senior diversity officer, I mentioned that a commitment to DEI should be "everybody's business." Over the past three years, nationwide investment in DEI has diminished, and many states and public university systems are eliminating entire DEI offices. In part, the eradication of these important spaces is in response to political divisiveness

and widespread untruths about DEI and critical race theory. For true progress, colleges and universities must embody an unwavering commitment to inclusive excellence. Put differently, an institution's future success depends on its unyielding commitment to inclusive excellence. It is not the sole responsibility of diversity workers to implement programs and strategic initiatives that benefit historically underrepresented students and employees. Rather, a commitment to inclusive excellence should be ingrained in the culture and core values of all postsecondary institutions.

Reference

Williams, D. A., Berger, J. B., & McClendon, S. A. (2005). *Toward a model of inclusive excellence and change in postsecondary institutions*. Association of American Colleges and Universities.

What Counts: Retention Work's Multiple Methods

Gill Hunter

"Retention" rarely appears on those lists of higher ed jargon to avoid. While college students can identify countless unwelcoming phrases and acronyms, employees in higher education have no trouble agreeing on retention's definition: keeping enrolled students enrolled. But when university leaders call retention the responsibility of every faculty and staff member, confusion may follow. When those same university leaders prioritize retention efforts, both strategy and culture have to shift and align with the goal of helping students succeed.

All retention work points back to Vincent Tinto and his model of student attrition, which identified causes of student departure from higher ed and conditions necessary for supporting students' continued enrollment. A simplified version of the model Tinto introduced in 1975 and included in his 1987 work, *Leaving College,* is ubiquitous (Page 9, Figure 1).

In practice, retention is a percentage documenting the enrollment of one fall term's cohort of new students in the subsequent fall semester and, within that overall percentage, the enrollment of unique student groups, including underrepresented minority students, Pell-eligible students, and first-generation college students. While the adage "we measure what matters and what matters we measure" can

be true, tracking percentages is not retention work. Numbers monitored and reported describe retention outcomes and identify retention work to be done.

Retention work not only helps students stay in school but also keeps them committed, focused, engaged, and successful. Retention work is helping students commit to the institution, identify or clarify personal goals, and remain committed to those. We create conditions in which students can focus and succeed, give them opportunities to engage, surround them with models of success, and design and make available needed interventions. Patchwork efforts to keep students in school are too often reactive and transactional. Resulting retention increases are unsustainable and sacrifice student commitment as well as, eventually, alumni affinity.

The opportunity is to influence retention in ways Tinto identifies from students' first interactions with campus through graduation. Students who arrive on campus well prepared are more likely to succeed academically and stay enrolled from one semester or year to the next. Populations historically underserved by higher education are the first to be labeled underprepared. Retention work seeks to close gaps, such as in literacy and math, early in students' first semester or year. The corresponding and

equally meaningful gap is between secondary education pedagogy and prevailing higher education practices and expectations. Colleges and universities expect an automatic shift from high school student to college student over a summer, with students applying *on their own* behaviors that helped them succeed in high school to the unfamiliar context of higher ed. Most students don't know how to adjust. Many are shocked they have to.

Colleges demonstrate commitment to students by meeting them where they are, taking steps to "become a student-ready college," as Tia Brown McNair and her coauthors (2022) call it, instead of using questionable admission standards and gatekeeper courses to decide whether students are college worthy. Student-ready colleges acknowledge that students increasingly see higher education *only* as career preparation, a perspective that requires a unique combination of internal and external goal commitments. An institution becomes student ready by broadening its mission from access to success, which students see as a promise kept. An institution remains student ready by asking students how things are going and then providing individuals and student groups with needed support. Taking student feedback seriously requires a willingness to apply customer experience criteria to questions of student belonging and engagement, and a refusal to blame students for misinterpreting their experiences, such as on course evaluations or in roommate disagreements or when they end a semester on probation and don't return.

A colleague of mine recently said that there are five or six reasons why a student chooses a college and a thousand reasons why they leave. Retention work is identifying reasons students leave, knowing that reasons change over time and manifest differently in individual students, and removing barriers to persistence. Those thousand or so reasons fall under a small handful of headings, whether academic, financial, or social-emotional. High-impact academic practices engage students in classroom and extracurricular work. Practices like high-quality advising, supplemental instruction, study groups, and tutoring model success and give students chances to connect available support to their own goal commitment. Such stable supports, which tend to include implicit or explicit mentoring, especially benefit students at risk of probation, on probation, or returning from suspension, when they might be inclined to wonder whether higher education is for them.

Just-in-time financial support, such as targeted, last-dollar-in retention grants that enable a student to register for an upcoming term, demonstrates to students an institution's commitment and offsets questions of value. For many students, a deficit of even $100 is impossible to overcome, making the return on investment from small-dollar scholarships

Figure 1. Tinto's model of student attrition

mutually beneficial.

Helping students engage with campus and community life—through student organizations, intramurals, student government, Greek organizations, living learning communities, academic programs, and more—reinforces and transcends positive in-class experiences. My institution recently documented that the retention of students employed on campus parallels that of other highly engaged populations, like student athletes and Honors students. A campus job, like other ways of connecting and belonging, helps students acclimate, surrounds them with a support network of expert referrers, builds accountability, forces time management, and contextualizes career development skills introduced through coursework. And students see how they matter to others.

Many students don't require much retention work. Most students go to class, do homework, study, get good grades, meet with their advisor(s), pay their tuition, register for classes, and so on as expected. Retention work is disproportionately directed at students who fall behind or struggle. Early alerts can catch such students while they still have time to change practices or behaviors. Successful interventions from mentors, advisors, or instructors personalize outreach when students struggle. Such intervention requires faculty, support staff, and students to collaborate in working toward the same goal—not retention, which is an outcome rather than a goal, but growth, progress, and success.

Retention work must be dynamic, flexible, and forward-looking. Students change, needs change, institutional and cultural circumstances change. Students want—need—to be known individually, rendering broad-based solutions irrelevant. We know now that trauma-informed student support is essential in and out of class; *Inside Higher Ed*'s 2023 Student Voice survey shows that students see instructors, among others, as responsible for supporting their mental health (Flaherty, 2023). AI and other technology advances also must be acknowledged; classroom pedagogies and institutional academic integrity policies must adapt. So, too, should outdated and increasingly meaningless grading practices. What has been derided as a biased sorting mechanism now risks being seen as a rubber stamp (Gorelick, 2023; Guskey & Brookhart, 2019). There are better ways of engaging students in the process of learning—more inclusive and meaningful ways of promoting and recording achievement. Such adaptation is retention work for everyone on campus. Gone are the days of taking student enrollment for granted. Now we must commit to helping all students get where they tell us they want to go.

References

Flaherty, C. (2023, June 2). Students expect professors to help ease their stress, mental health struggles. *Inside Higher Ed*. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/student-success/health-wellness/2023/06/02/are-professors-responsible-easing-student-stress

Gorelick, E. (2023, November 30). Faculty report reveals average Yale College GPA, grade distributions by subject. *Yale Daily News*. https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2023/11/30/faculty-report-reveals-average-yale-college-gpa-grade-distributions-by-subject

Guskey, T. R., & Brookhart, S. M. (2019). *What we know about grading: What works, what doesn't, and what's next*. ASCD.

McNair, T. B., Albertine, S., McDonald, N., Major, T., Jr., & Cooper, M. A. (2022). *Becoming a student-ready college: A new culture of leadership for student success* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. University of Chicago Press.

Women Stepping Up to Lead: Three Different Perspectives

Kim Grainger, Diane Chapman, and Maria Gallardo-Williams

What divides us pales in comparison to what unites us.

—Edward Kennedy

The transition from faculty to administration in higher education is a multifaceted journey influenced by individual backgrounds, experiences, academic disciplines, politics, and relationships. This essay explores the nuanced experiences of three female university leaders—representing the fields of law, education, and science—as they share insights, challenges, and best practices in navigating this pivotal transition. Given the underrepresentation of women and historically excluded groups in higher education leadership positions (Ford, 2016; Morley, 2013), this work seeks to contribute to the limited body of knowledge surrounding effective strategies for supporting and promoting diversity in academic leadership roles.

The authors, whose experiences derive from diverse institutional backgrounds that include doctorate-granting universities, HBCUs, and community colleges, offer a broad spectrum of perspectives. Their varied experiences shed light on the unique challenges that university faculty face when making the transition into administrative roles, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and accommodating the diversity within academic disciplines and institutional types.

Acknowledging the prevailing lack of information on supporting women and historically excluded groups in leadership positions (Vancour, 2023), we aim to bridge this gap by using autoethnography to present each of our experiences. Beyond personal narratives, the essay explores the professional development perspective, addressing the need for tailored strategies to foster diversity throughout one's academic career. As universities increasingly recruit individuals from historically excluded groups, the lack of adequate resources and mechanisms to support their professional progression remains a critical issue. We aim to offer practical insights and recommendations to address this imbalance, ensuring that the next generation of leaders reflects the rich diversity of our population.

In what follows, we delve into the unique lenses of our respective disciplines, races, and gender orientations, providing (1) a comprehensive exploration of the diverse pathways individuals traverse when transitioning into leadership roles in higher education, (2) strategies for navigating the administrative landscape, and (3) insights into transferable skills essential for success in higher education administration. We conclude with a discussion of the issues and offer strategies for both women faculty who are looking to move into academic leadership and institutions that want to more inclusively facilitate women's advancement.

Kim Grainger

I started my academic career as a visiting assistant professor and then transitioned to a tenure-track position. As a lawyer with a science background, I was different from most of my colleagues. I remember feeling out of place when I first attended conferences. As a Black female from an HBCU law school, I experienced times when other law professors saw me or my name tag and chose to forgo conversation and connection with me. Fortunately, I was able to become more integrated into the legal academic community through my research and participation in various projects with other universities. Serving as a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Fellow connected me with other health law professors, among whom I found my professional community.

An additional challenge early in my career was my age. The law school where I taught had an evening program, so many students were part-time, second career professionals who were older than me. To combat perceptions that my age makes me inferior, I have always been highly formal, which is natural to my personality but sometimes comes across as cold or haughty, which doesn't help with my connection to other colleagues. Over time, I've softened the formality, and these issues are no longer as prevalent. I'm now happily married with two children, but I am an older mom because I waited until I earned tenure to have children.

After hitting the academic career milestones of promotion and tenure and serving as faculty senate chair and associate dean, I knew I was ready for a university-level position, and I had to move to another institution to get it. The next university did not have a law school, and nearly all the faculty and administrators had PhDs. I was one of a bare few minorities, and my credentials were not the same as everyone else's. My status as a unicorn was even clearer. But I forged ahead.

Today, nearly 20 years into this career, I'm still finding my place. My path and experiences have grounded me, but also drive me to continue to climb the administrative ladder, so that I can be the mentor and role model that I wish I had.

Diane Chapman

Like Kim, I came to academia as a second career, completing my doctoral degree when I was 40 with the goal of having the option to teach upon retirement. I soon took an academic position, however, and, because of my nontraditional path, was totally unprepared for understanding what academic life entailed, such as the career pathways available within and the political and social aspects of higher education. I am a white lesbian. My initial faculty position was that of a non-tenure-track (NTT) visiting assistant professor in a college of education.

As the only NTT faculty member in my department, I was told that I could not go up for promotion. I soon learned that was not true, but no one in my college had ever been promoted off the tenure track. Finding this out gave me my academic mission: to achieve full professor. My NTT status also meant that there was a lack of mentors as I was the first to take this path. I modeled my work to what others valued as much as possible, although this meant doing more work as research was not allowed to count as a part of my workload, and many of my mentors had much less responsibility for administrative work than I. I also took on leadership roles whenever they came my way, such as on college, university, and professional organization committees. I eventually was promoted to associate teaching professor, a first in our college. It was about this time that a half-time position as the teaching and learning center director opened at my university; I applied for it and got it. As the center director, my campus connections swelled. Soon the vice provost, to whom I reported, suggested it was time to consider going up for promotion to full professor on the teaching track. My role at the center had expanded to the point that

at about four years after my promotion to full professor, I was able to work full time leading faculty development at the university. This also meant a promotion to associate vice provost.

My journey into leadership in higher education was not direct. There are definitely things I would do differently, but I am also proud of overcoming so many obstacles. One of the first things I worked on upon becoming a campus leader was the climate for NTT faculty. This included making changes in the way we are evaluated, in our contracts, and, most visibly, in what we are called: professional-track faculty. I learned a lot along the way, such as how important mentors are, especially those who have traveled the road you want to travel. I also learned that getting out of one's department, college, and university can be beneficial for obtaining leadership experience, mentorship, and growth opportunities. We also need to be our own advocates—seeking out opportunities and not being afraid to lead the way. We also have to accept the things we cannot change and focus our energy to bring change to those we can.

Maria Gallardo-Williams

I am a Latina, first-generation college graduate who immigrated to the United States from Venezuela as an adult to pursue a PhD in chemistry. English is my second language. I am married and the mother of three children. In my academic career, I started as a professional faculty member in a science department (teaching track) and was able to progress through the ranks until I became a full teaching professor. I then transitioned to administration, first as a senior faculty development specialist and more recently as the associate director of faculty development.

Due to my status as teaching faculty, my scholarly efforts have focused on the scholarship of teaching and learning and on discipline-based educational research. Although it was difficult to get my supervisors to appreciate my chosen fields, it was deeply rewarding and beneficial when I decided to seek a position in faculty development, since there is a demand for such expertise—mostly driven by the increasing number of professional faculty entering academia.

Throughout my career journey, I have navigated a nontraditional path that distinctly differs from the paths of my male colleagues. The challenges I've encountered have been multifaceted, with two prominent hurdles standing out. First, the lack of established networks posed a significant obstacle, requiring me to forge connections and build relationships from the ground up. This aspect of my career trajectory has demanded resilience and proactive networking. Second, challenging service obligations have shaped my professional narrative, demanding adept time management and strategic prioritization. Despite these hurdles, I have embraced the opportunities for growth embedded within my nontraditional journey, developing a strength of spirit that has become integral to my professional identity.

Some helpful strategies

As women faculty aspire to ascend into administrative roles, several strategic approaches can enhance their journey. Navigating the complex administrative landscape requires a nuanced understanding of the system, and therefore, cultivating strategies for success is paramount.

One crucial aspect involves recognizing and leveraging transferable skills that are essential for success in higher education administration. These skills often include effective communication, team collaboration, problem solving, and visionary leadership. Emphasizing the importance of these skills can empower women faculty to articulate their unique qualifications for administrative positions and bridge the gap between academic expertise and administrative proficiency.

For faculty seeking to transition into academic leadership, targeted strategies are invaluable. Building a robust network within and beyond their home institutions provides access to mentors, peers, and role models, fostering a supportive community. Formal leadership programming tailored to women faculty, including workshops and mentorship initiatives, can offer structured guidance on navigating the complexities of administrative roles.

Institutions, in turn, play a pivotal role in fostering inclusivity and supporting the advancement of women faculty. Implementing policies that prioritize gender equity, providing purposeful recognition for achievements, and consistently updating policies to reflect evolving societal norms contribute to a more inclusive environment. Support and training initiatives geared toward women faculty can further expand the pool of capable leaders.

Network building remains a cornerstone for success, and institutions should actively facilitate opportunities for women faculty to connect with mentors and peers. Formal leadership programming, such as workshops and seminars, can provide targeted guidance on administrative skills and career development. Regular policy updates ensure that institutional frameworks align with contemporary notions of diversity and inclusion, creating an environment conducive to women's advancement.

An inclusive and supportive approach to advancing women faculty into administrative positions involves a combination of strategic planning, skill recognition, network building, and institutional commitment. By providing the necessary support and resources, higher education institutions can create an environment that encourages women faculty to assume leadership roles and contribute meaningfully to academic administration.

References

Ford, L. E. (2016). Two steps forward, one step back? Strengthening the foundations of women's leadership in higher education. *Politics, Groups & Identities, 4*(3), 499–512. https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2016.1170705

Morley, L. (2013). The rules of the game: Women and the leaderist turn in higher education. *Gender and Education, 25*(1), 116–131. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2012.740888

Vancour, M. L. (2023). Career trajectories of women faculty who became academic administrators. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal, 42*, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.21423/awlj-v42.a341

Managing Conflict: A Leader's Guide to Handling Challenging Situations

Sara Melita

When a room overflows for a session on conflict management, it's clear we've hit on a critical topic that leaders in academia cannot afford to ignore. In fact, avoiding conflict often leads to diminished trust, stalled progress, and exacerbated issues. Engaging in and facilitating productive, healthy conflict is essential.

Consider two contrasting scenarios: In one university department, a significant disagreement was left unresolved, leading to criticism of the chair for their inaction. This avoidance created a negative atmosphere, eroded trust, and led to the loss of a valuable staff member. At another institution, a chair actively engaged with faculty and staff to address a difficult situation. Although their efforts were challenging and time consuming, they ultimately resulted in a far better solution to a long-standing problem. These examples demonstrate that ignoring conflict can be detrimental while effectively managing it can foster new ideas and innovative ways of doing things.

If you are ready to invest in developing effective conflict management skills for yourself and others, read on.

Redefining conflict and its constructive potential: Glass half full

Where to start? Begin by shifting your perception of conflict. Rather than thinking it as an obstacle, envision it as a foundation for innovation and collective growth. Skillfully managing conflict means recognizing its potential benefits—from bringing to light diverse perspectives to fostering breakthrough solutions and new ideas. When leaders embrace conflict, they can facilitate engagement in ways that create an environment where challenges become opportunities.

Decoding the five styles of conflict management: Versatility is key

When it comes to conflict management, one size does not fit all. Effective leaders need to be versatile regardless of their comfort and preferences. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) outlines five styles—avoiding, accommodating, compromising, collaborating, and competing—each with its own place and time (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

Leaders have natural inclinations toward certain conflict styles when faced with disputes. Recognizing their default approach, leaders can effectively manage conflicts while considering relationship dynamics, time constraints, and issue significance. A leader's ability to discern which style to deploy in each situation is key to navigating conflicts successfully.

Building on the TKI framework, the United States Institute of Peace offers a free online Conflict Styles Assessment. It helps leaders understand more about the five styles, their preferences, and when each style makes the most sense. Some examples:

- **Avoiding:** Optimal for leaders in situations where intervention may escalate minor conflicts unnecessarily
- **Accommodating:** Appropriate for leaders prioritizing team cohesion over differing opinions on how to approach a situation or project
- **Compromising:** Useful for leaders mediating between parties with conflicting but important goals, seeking a balanced solution
- **Collaborating:** Essential for leaders managing complex situations that allow for the time to engage in cooperative inclusive problem solving
- **Competing:** Effective for leaders who need to act as the experts in urgent scenarios where immediate decision making is crucial

Effective conflict management requires leaders to acknowledge that various situations demand different approaches. It's crucial to understand your default conflict style and to cultivate the ability to adapt to diverse scenarios—so that you are fostering the best outcomes for all parties involved.

Preparing for conflict: A guide to setting context

To turn conflict into an opportunity for growth and trust building, leaders need to engage thoughtfully, whether they're directly involved in a dispute or advising others. The following planning guidance is key to fostering productive, healthy conflict and getting everyone on the same page.

- **Assess involvement:** Reflect on whether you need to be involved and in what capacity—as participant, mediator, or decision maker.
- **Describe the situation:** Focus on the issue, problem, or disagreement and avoid making it personal.
- **Identify the source(s):** Ensure all parties have the same information. Assess whether the disagreements are based on different facts, methods for working, competing resources, misaligned goals, personal values, or power dynamics.
- **Downsize the conflict:** Find common ground early and often. Shift the focus from differences to determine what everyone can agree upon and what concessions might be made.
- **Decide on logistics:** Choose an environment (time and place) for discussions and ensure that there is enough time to thoroughly address the issues.
- **Prepare for engagement:** Gather necessary information for a positive outcome, establish what you need from others, and decide which aspects are nonnegotiable. Plan for ways to avoid snap decisions or to agree to disagree if needed.
- **Be ready to interrupt bias:** Identify and interrupt biases because they can affect perceptions and decision making. Consider how different biases may be at play. For example, with confirmation bias, leaders need to actively seek out and consider opposing evidence. To deepen your understanding

of biases in conflict resolution and uncover strategies to mitigate their impact, explore the chapter "Judgmental Biases in Conflict Resolution and How to Overcome Them" (Thompson et al, 2000). This work provides a thorough examination of cognitive biases that obstruct effective conflict management, along with practical guidance for navigating and resolving these challenges.

Engaging in productive, healthy conflict: Four key steps

Leaders, whether directly mediating conflict or assisting others in navigating their own difficult situations, can follow these four steps once they are prepared:

1. **Set the tone.**
   - Prepare for the conflict (see previous section).
   - Confirm logistics with all involved.
   - Establish a setting that encourages constructive dialogue.
   - Take care to prepare all participants to engage.

2. **Share perspectives.**
   - Articulate your viewpoint (or, if mediating, facilitate the conversation).
   - Strive to comprehend all other perspectives.
   - Summarize each person's understanding of what the conflict really is.
   - Review and explore the source(s) of the conflict.
   - Find and highlight areas of agreement.

3. **Seek resolution.**
   - Agree on the core issue to address.
   - Explore possible solutions.
   - Identify potential compromises.
   - Reassess and affirm the shared goals.
   - Address and clarify nonnegotiable elements.

4. **Agree on the path forward.**
   - Assign action items and responsible persons.
   - Establish consensus on communication methods for decisions.
   - Decide on the need for escalation or mediation.
   - Set a timeline for subsequent actions (if applicable).

Getting help just in time: Navigating conflict for leaders

During conflict, leaders have an opportunity to adopt and hone techniques that can become instinctual over time. As part of its core curriculum, the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity provides academic leaders with a just-in-time module titled Engaging in Healthy Conflict. This resource serves as a dual tool: it empowers leaders with conflict management strategies and acts as a self-help guide for faculty. When a leader should not intervene directly, they can guide faculty to this course, enabling them to independently navigate and resolve conflicts.

Keeping it real: In closing

Before closing out, remember that the journey of getting good at conflict management is ongoing and nuanced. It requires you to quit taking things personally—for many leaders, much easier said than done. Focus on approaching each situation with a growth mindset and the willingness to engage in the planning necessary for positive outcomes.

In conclusion, managing conflict effectively is both an art and a science, and it improves with practice and experience. Each conflict, with its diversity of opinions and perspectives, is an opportunity to gain new insights and foster innovative thinking. The more you engage in these challenging situations, the better you become at navigating them.

References

Thomas, K. W., & Kilmann, R. H. (1974). *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)* [Database record]. APA PsycTests. **https://doi.org/10.1037/t02326-000**

Thompson, L., Nadler, J., & Lount, R. B., Jr. (2000). Judgmental biases in conflict resolution and how to overcome them. In M. Deutsch & P. T. Coleman (Eds.), *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice* (pp. 213–235). Jossey-Bass.

Additional resources

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Conflict Research Consortium Staff. (2000). *Summary of "Judgmental biases in conflict resolution and how to overcome them."* Beyond Intractability. **https://www.beyondintractability.org/artsum/thompson-judgmental**

Griffith, D. B. (2016, April 18). *The leader's role in coaching employees through conflict*. HigherEdJobs. **https://www.higheredjobs.com/articles/articleDisplay.cfm?ID = 882**

Griffith, D. B. (2018, July 23). *Managing our fears when engaging in difficult conversations*. HigherEdJobs. **https://www.higheredjobs.com/Articles/articleDisplay.cfm?ID = 1690**

Patterson, K., Grenny, J., McMillan, R., & Switzler, A. (2012). *Crucial conversations: Tools for talking when stakes are high.* McGraw-Hill.

Stone, D., Patton, B., & Heen, S. (2010). *Difficult conversations: How to discuss what matters most.* Penguin Books.

COURSES

Debow, N. (2023). *Conflict resolution skills.* Coursera. **https://www.coursera.org/learn/conflict-resolution-skills**

LinkedIn Learning. (2023). *Develop conflict management skills.* **https://www.linkedin.com/learning/paths/develop-conflict-management-skills**

National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity. (2022). *Engaging in healthy conflict.* Note: This course is part of the *NCFDD Core Curriculum* and is available to NCFDD members only.

TOOLS

MindTools. (n.d.). *Conflict resolution—Career skills.* **https://www.mindtools.com/ahcpfn4/conflict-resolution**

National Center for Professional & Research Ethics. (n.d.). *Conflict and dispute—Quick tips.* **https://ws.engr.illinois.edu/sitemanager/getfile.asp?id = 4305**

Price, P. L., & Newman, S. (2015, February 19). The conflict management tool kit. *Inside Higher Ed.* **https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/02/20/advice-department-chairs-managing-conflict-essay**

Thomas, K. W., & Kilmann, R. H. (1974). *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument.* **https://www.themyersbriggs.com/en-US/**

United States Institute of Peace. (n.d.). *Conflict styles assessment.* **https://www.usip.org/public-education-new/conflict-styles-assessment**

Stay or Go? Thinking about Your Place in Higher Education

Gretchen Oltman and Vicki Bautista

Working in academia has long been a dream role for many scholars, practitioners, and working professionals (Larsson & Alvinius, 2019). We asked a group of leaders from institutions of higher education what compelled them to work in a college or university setting. Their responses included seeking to recreate the transformational experience they had as students, to emulate the professors they learned from in the classroom, and "to make a difference." After all, the typical college setting has historically had an aura of prestige: it's been a place with community recognition where academic freedom is protected, new ideas emerge, and the next generation of critically thinking students are molded into thoughtful participants within society.

Today, however, the glitter of institutional prestige is diminishing, as those working within higher education recognize. Budget woes, enrollment challenges, and post-pandemic learning needs are reshaping both traditional and nontraditional roles in higher education. Add to this the shrinking availability of tenure-track positions and the shift to an ever more adjunct-heavy workforce, and higher education looks much different than in years past. The results have created challenging work conditions, lack of long-term job security, and work conditions that promote burnout.

While these realities make it tempting to jump the higher education ship, leaving can lead to an identity crisis of sorts. Academics who trained to spend a lifetime among faculty offices and classrooms are suddenly left wondering what's next. Self-doubt creeps in: Will the "real" working world accept an academic? Will a career change be perceived as less ambitious if shifting into industry? Is all our training to exist, collaborate, and function within the ivory tower transferrable outside its gates? Whether to stay or leave is an immensely difficult decision.

We have worked in higher education for a combined two decades in various roles: associate professor, assistant professor, program director, program coordinator, and instructional designer. We have recently begun to see a shift in the quality and quantity of our colleagues who are (a) dissatisfied with their jobs or (b) willing to leave what was once their dream profession altogether. Our talented peers are facing mental health challenges, frustration with constantly shifting workloads, and insecurities about their futures in higher education. We, of course, understand their concerns and recognize the stress of the demands that have been placed on

them (and us). So we became curious and wondered, What about higher education has changed so drastically that an academic career is no longer one to aspire to? And how does one determine that working in higher education is no longer worth the stress or challenges one must endure to succeed?

Is working in higher education really that hard?

The statistics surrounding employment, burnout, retention, and workload in higher education are startling:

- More than half of college employees report that they are likely to leave their jobs in the next year due to low pay, limited opportunities to work remotely, and a lack of flexible hours.
- An overwhelming majority of college presidents say burnout is a major cause in faculty and staff turnover (Jaschik & Lederman, 2023).
- Only 60 percent of us know what is expected of us in our jobs.
- Approximately 67 percent of college and university staff are working more than full time. Since the start of the pandemic, two-thirds have taken on the additional responsibilities of staff who have left. Seventy-three percent have absorbed additional duties from roles vacated by other staff during and after the pandemic (CUPA-HR, 2022).
- Only 1 percent of college employees work less than full-time (that is, most employees exceed 40 hours per week) (Bichsel et al., 2022).

Furthermore, in the actual day-to-day work of employees at colleges and universities, five themes emerged:

- **Ongoing lack of trust in leadership.** Employees need to feel like they can trust their leaders to invest fully in their jobs. In higher education, this might feel like leaders are inaccessible or hiding information. Additionally, leaders making difficult decisions in an all-or-nothing manner lose support from their workforce.
- **Unmanageable workloads.** As budgets have tightened and hiring freezes have become more common, employees in higher education have absorbed or been assigned tasks beyond their original job duties. Originally thought to be a temporary condition after pandemic shifts, it is now common for employees to do the work of more than one position, most times without an increase in compensation.
- **Absence of role clarity.** As positions have gone unfilled or changed, those who have remained in higher education have tried to be flexible and engage in shared responsibilities. As a result, employees are left not only doing more than one job but in a state of ambiguity about where to place their priorities.
- **Unclear communications.** If you have been in higher education long enough, you have seen the evolution of strategic plans, political shifts in college leadership decisions, and an influx of other changes. For many working in higher education, communication resembles the old game of telephone—where the messages sent barely resemble the messages received.
- **Unreasonable expectations.** It is more than the fact that jobs change and institutions evolve. Work hours, even for those working remotely, are expanding beyond the 40-hour week. Additionally, digital technology allows for quick access to employees beyond their work hours, making it a challenge for employees to prioritize their personal lest they appear lazy or disconnected to leaders working around the clock.

Importantly, all these reasons are root causes of burnout (Gallup, 2020). According to the World Health Organization (2019), burnout is a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It has three key charac-

teristics: feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and reduced professional efficacy. While working in higher education may be rewarding and intellectually challenging, the significant workload and lack of clarity can detract from job satisfaction.

What can leaders do to keep the dream alive?

No job worth doing is without stress and demands, but when you add the element of what was once considered a dream job being less than ideal, one must evaluate the weight and influence of working in a system that is undergoing significant shifts in culture and climate. Can it still a dream job? Maybe. If leaders commit to playing an active role in leading through change instead of demanding immediate compliance from their colleagues. Leaders play a critical role in helping alleviate some of the challenges. Consider these five steps that any higher education leader can take to improve their employees' work lives:

- **Establish a consistent, predictable, and clear channel of communication with all employees and stick to it.** It might be weekly emails or a Monday morning Zoom call, but put yourself in front of your team in a safe and open place to discuss ongoing changes, decisions being weighed by campus leaders, and recognition of accomplishments. Be present in those sessions not to share a list of agenda items, but rather to let others ask questions of you. Share your insights in plain language, not in administrative jargon or campus-speak.
- **Create an astute awareness of job bleed—those who have absorbed the roles of others or who are taking on new tasks beyond their original workloads.** Recognize that when jobs go unfilled or vacant, roles and responsibilities naturally shift, maybe even

without mention or complaint. Check in with your colleagues frequently. Seek out ways to create efficiencies and operational stability. Build processes that provide support should someone need to step away from their responsibilities to mitigate job bleed.

- **Advocate for resources to protect role clarity.** Redesign job descriptions; find resources to secure additional help in part-time, temporary, or remote working roles to help alleviate job overload; and allow decision-making authority where the action happens. When money is a challenge, explore ways to use the strengths of your team. Identify who is the best person for a job, and allow their strengths to flourish.
- **Initiate conversations about realistic expectations and deadlines and a meaningful work-life balance.** Instead of projecting estimated time to completion for projects and tasks, ask key employees for their input about the reasonableness of anticipated project due dates and known conflicts of time. Stop apologizing for ignoring boundaries and set the expectation of clarity and a fair output of energy and effort. Be a role model advocating for time away from the job as a means of mental refreshment and clarity.
- **Commit time to supporting employee well-being.** Build flexible workspaces that promote movement, frequent breaks, and healthy work habits during the day. Model maintaining a well-balanced life, including dealing with mental health needs, physical challenges, and work-life challenges.

Working within higher education *can* still be a rewarding, fulfilling, and lifelong career, but we must let go of the ivory tower of the past to embrace the excitement of the academy of today. What has not changed is the need for skilled educators, engaged leaders, and caring campus personnel—the people who make the campus a home away from

home for so many people. Staying or leaving is possible in any arena, but it is time to make meaningful change so that staying is an attractive option for many who might choose to leave.

References

Bichsel, J., Fuesting, M., Schneider, J., & Tubbs, D. (2022). *The CUPA-HR 2022 higher education employee retention survey: Initial results*. College and University Professional Association for Human Resources. **https://www.cupahr.org/surveys/research-briefs/higher-ed-employee-retention-survey-findings-july-2022**

Gallup. (2020). *Gallup's perspective on employee burnout: Causes and cures.* **https://www.gallup.com/workplace/282659/employee-burnout-perspective-paper.aspx**

Jaschik, S., & Lederman, D. (2023). *2023 survey of college and university presidents: A survey by Inside Higher Ed and Hanover Research*. Inside Higher Ed. **https://www.insidehighered.com/news/governance/executive-leadership/2023/04/11/survey-college-presidents-upbeat-despite**

Larsson, G., & Alvinius, A. (2019). "An undisturbed afternoon of writing": A qualitative study of professors' job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education, 11*(4), 719–732. **https://doi.org/10.1108/JARHE-10-2018-0216**

World Health Organization. (2019, May 28). *Burnout an "occupational phenomenon": International Classification of Diseases.* **https://www.who.int/news/item/28-05-2019-burn-out-an-occupational-phenomenon-international-classification-of-diseases**

Women in Leadership in Higher Education

Alyson Eagle

> For women who aspire to top leadership, routes exist but are full of twists and turns, both unexpected and expected . . . the metaphor acknowledges obstacles but is not ultimately discouraging.
>
> —Alice Eagly and Linda Carli (2007)

Although women have made substantial progress in attaining leadership positions, women remain underrepresented in all sectors—including higher education. While women attain more doctoral and master's degrees than their male counterparts, they continue to earn less money than men. Furthermore, women are underrepresented in holding presidential positions at all types of higher education institutions. Regardless of their demonstrated educational success and qualifications, fully equipped and credentialed women professionals have been viewed as less capable of fulfilling leadership roles due to descriptive gender stereotypes reducing their access to leadership roles.

The differences in pay between genders remain significant. In 2019, women who were full-time employees in the United States earned 82 cents to every dollar that men earned, which was a minimal improvement over the 78 cents gender pay gap in 2007 (Catalyst, 2021). The gender pay gap is also prevalent in higher education. Men make more money than women at every rank in each institutional type except two-year private institutions. Men outearn women by $13,616 across all public institutions and $17,843 over all private institutions (Johnson, 2017). Johnson explained, "Men make more than women at every rank, in every discipline, and in every institution type except two-year private institutions," where women make slightly more than their male counterparts, earning $44,769 compared to $44,234. Thus, men reap the benefits of higher wages and quicker routes to professional advancement, especially in higher education.

Disparities remain, and movement toward equality continues to happen slowly. Overall, 30.1

Table 1. Female-to-male earnings ratio, median earning of full-time workers, by percentage

Year	1980	2007	2018	2019
Earnings Ratio	0.602	0.778	0.816	0.823

Note. Data taken from Catalyst: Women's Pay Gap.

Table 2. Percentage of presidencies in higher education held by women, by institution type

	2001	**2006**	**2011**	**2016**
Public	23.9	26.5	29.4	32.8
Private Not-for-Profit	17.9	18.7	21.9	27.2
All	21.1	23.0	26.4	30.1

Note. The statistics from this table are from the American Council of Education's *Pipelines, Pathways, and Institutional Leadership: An Update on the Status of Women in Higher Education* in 2017.

percent of presidencies are held by women at all institution types and levels in the United States, and women are disproportionately more likely to lead smaller colleges or women-only universities. Women hold 32.8 percent of presidencies at public universities and 27.2 percent at private not-for-profit institutions (Johnson). The question remains: Will the number of women presidents continue to grow, remain static, or decline?

Academic researchers ignored issues related to gender and leadership until the 1970s. Since then, there has been no shortage of metaphorical hurdles that women must overcome in the workforce. In 1986, journalists Carol Hymowitz and Timothy Schellhardt introduced the term "glass ceiling" to represent how women were no longer excluded from all positions in the workforce—just positions at higher levels. Women have made substantial progress in the workforce, resulting in Eagly and Carli's proposed "labyrinth of leadership," a visual metaphor used to represent women's challenges in their professional endeavors. While the labyrinth metaphor represents women's challenges and obstacles in climbing the leadership ladder, it also provides encouragement for aspiring women leaders.

A qualitative, phenomenological study was recently conducted with 20 women who currently held a provost and/or vice president of academic affairs position at a public, four-year doctoral university with high or very high research activity (R1 and R2 institutions) (Eagle, 2023). Four overarching themes emerged: the professional journey, barriers and challenging experiences, motivation to overcome barriers, and hope and encouragement. The remainder of this article designates some key barriers identified in this research and offers strategies for higher education institutions to bring women to the table.

Barrier: Department chair position. For a newly appointed department chair, the transition from holding a faculty position teaching courses to possessing a position with authority over their colleagues is rapid. Suddenly, they are expected to have managerial skills that no one helped them develop. Women described the instant shift from having colleagues to immediately evaluating peers within this role as a pinch point. They considered department chair a "forced" position for leadership in academia. Experiences while holding the position were deemed influential on the decision to continue to pursue leadership roles. The position of department chair warrants further evaluation across the higher education industry.

Suggested strategy: Leadership development for aspiring leaders. Higher education institutions must create mentoring and leadership development programming for those aspiring to leadership roles. It is imperative that this programming focuses on developing the skills necessary to be a supervisor, particularly in the department chair role. Participants repeatedly stated that this was the "worst job on any campus," thus demonstrating the necessity of evaluating the intricacies of the role. Higher education institutions could be losing top talent simply because of the lack of development opportunities for ambitious leaders.

Table 3. Gender differences in degrees attained in higher education

Doctoral Degrees Awarded, by Sex (in Thousands)

Year	1977	1991	2000	2010	2015	2022
Men	72	64	64	76	84	87
Women	19	41	53	81	93	116

Master's Degrees Awarded, by Sex (in Thousands)

Year	1977	1991	2000	2010	2015	2022
Men	173	160	196	275	306	328
Women	149	182	267	417	452	551

Note. The statistics from this table are from the US Department of Education's *Digest of Education Statistics* in 2022.

Barrier: The leaky pipeline. The leaky pipeline is the argument that many women are qualified (i.e., because of educational degrees attained) for leadership positions but are underrepresented in senior faculty and administrative positions. The pipeline is leaking for a variety of reasons, thus resulting in fewer women in candidate pools for senior-level roles. For one, the culture of higher education does not prioritize hiring and promoting women to leadership roles. Another reason could be the length of time men remain in their current positions, which prevents women from continuing to climb the ladder. Further, male-dominated boards of regents and trustees ultimately approve presidential hires, and they tend to favor male candidates. Lastly, the most common avenues to the president position are through the provost role and industries that continue to be highly male-dominated, such as politics, business, law, and government.

Suggested strategy: Pipeline programming. Higher education needs to implement more programs to allow for women to grow and advance in the way that men historically have. Pipeline programming is vital across the sector but specifically at research institutions (R1 and R2 universities) and in STEM fields. Research clearly demonstrates that women in leadership positions can lead true, effective change for higher education institutions.

Therefore, colleges and universities must prioritize the advancement of women, who do not have the wealth of encouragement to pursue leadership that their male counterparts do.

Conclusion

Eagly and Carly write, "Ideally, there would be no labyrinth, and women and men would have the same paths to leadership. But currently, the male path is more direct, and the female one more labyrinthine" (p. 161). The constant battle women face may leave them exhausted, burnt out, and defeated, which ultimately contributes to their leaving higher education. On occasion, the challenges women face will make them stronger leaders; however, more often these experiences wear women out from the pursuit of leadership. Barriers are a constant reminder that a woman's path will not be as easy or direct as her male counterpart's. While there are abundant difficulties for women to lead in this patriarchal society, strategies for navigating career advancement hurdles, along with lessons in leadership, can offer hope and encouragement along with lessons in leadership for women aspiring to top-level leadership positions (Eagle).

References

Catalyst: Workplaces That Work for Women. (2021, March 23). *Women's earnings: The pay gap (quick take).* https://www.catalyst.org/research/womens-earnings-the-pay-gap

Eagle, A. N. (2023). *Women navigating leadership in higher education: A phenomenological study* (Publication No. 30691189) [Doctoral dissertation, Gannon University]. ProQuest. https://www.proquest.com/docview/2881624587

Eagly, A. H, & Carli, L. L. (2007). *Through the labyrinth: The truth about how women become leaders.* Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation.

Johnson, H. L. (2017, April). *Pipelines, pathways, and institutional leadership: An update on the status of women in higher education.* American Council on Education. https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/HES-Pipelines-Pathways-and-Institutional-Leadership-2017.pdf

US Department of Education. (n.d.). List of current digest tables. *Digest of education statistics* (postsecondary education). https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current_tables.asp

Seven Essential Practices for Leading Change Effectively

Stephanie Delaney and Margo Keys

As an executive coaches with Carnegie Math Pathways at WestEd, we've been part of a team that delved into the practices of leaders who effectively managed change required to scale a successful pilot like a Math Pathways implementation. Over a six-year period, supported by a National Science Foundation grant, we studied institutions and their approaches to change, including the unprecedented disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this article, we share seven practices we observed among leaders who successfully implemented change and actionable ways to incorporate these practices into your leadership toolbox.

Practice 1: Change management

What is change management? The American Society for Quality (n.d.) defines it as the methods by and manners in which an institution describes and implements change. These include preparing and supporting employees, establishing the necessary steps for change, and monitoring pre- and post-activities to ensure successful implementation.

Observations: Training in change management makes a difference. At one institution, two areas approached change in different ways. One did a good job of preparing and supporting employees with the necessary steps for change. Unfortunately, the other, which also needed to make the change, was not included in the preparation. When the latter area learned about the change and was asked to adapt at the last minute with little preparation or explanation, change leaders met great resistance. The change failed shortly after it launched.

Takeaway: Effective change leaders seek out training in change management and apply its principles contextually within their institutions.

Practice 2: Personal and institutional relationships

What is the importance of personal and institutional relationships for leaders? Successful change requires a collective, coordinated institutional effort, also known as *distributed authority*. Leadership occurs at all levels and champions exist in all spheres—the leader cannot do it alone.

Observations: At one institution, two faculty leaders attempted to scale a successful pilot program. But their limited understanding of the institutional context and lack of relationships beyond their own faculty sphere hindered their ability to establish collaborators and champions across various levels of the institution. Consequently, the change initiative failed to gain traction and was unsuccessful even before its launch.

Takeaway: Successful change leaders have relationships across the institution and leverage distrib-

uted authority and empowerment to build capacity to lead change.

Practice 3: Dynamic stability, monitoring, and tracking

What is dynamic stability? Successful change leaders use tracking to constantly adjust, scanning the horizon to attend to the various phases of a change initiative, such as planning, networking, exploring, and organizing.

Observations: One institution included a group of midlevel leaders who had multiple roles and responsibilities and a common interest in this change initiative. One leader tracked individual reactions and was able to adjust the approach as necessary for different audiences. The leader also networked to align the change initiative with personal agendas and department cultures and monitored what features were important to different individuals. These behaviors allowed the leader to track the circle of engagement, gauge the depth of interest in the initiative, and adjust their narrative when necessary.

Takeaway: Effective change leaders use tracking and monitoring to plan, network, explore, and organize while leading organizational change.

Practical 4: Political savvy

What does it mean to be politically savvy? Micropolitical literacy is an individual's ability to use strategies to navigate organizational processes and structures to serve their interests.

Observations: One institutional leader was an astute micropolitical negotiator. This leader was a collaborator and built strong relationships across the institution through regular networking by genuinely investing in personal and professional relationships. By leveraging these qualities, this leader gathered and built support for this change initiative, maintained the project as a high-priority initiative, honored individual contributions, and successfully

navigated tense challenges during this organizational change.

Takeaway: Effective change leaders use micropolitical literacy as they network while leading organizational change.

Practice 5: Effective communication

What does communication effectiveness entail? Successful change leaders develop their own communication skills and use institutional resources, such as communications and marketing departments, to convey important messages effectively.

Observations: At one institution, the absence of communication had significant consequences. A change in the math course sequence was treated as an internal matter and not communicated outside of the department. It was not until the change was implemented that the institution-wide ramifications were realized. Others within the institution were caught off guard, and unnecessary chaos and resentment ensued.

Takeaway: Successful change leaders use effective communication to surface potential problems before they happen and to build engagement and belief in the change.

Practice 6: Self-awareness

What is self-awareness for leaders? The self-aware leader understands their own character, feelings, motivations, and desires. They understand that in similar circumstances, other people may have much different feelings, motivations, and desires. They understand their positionality and act accordingly.

Observations: At one institution, a charismatic president commanded respect and admiration. Due to an unintentional power dynamic, however, people were hesitant to deviate from the president's lead. When we offered coaching, the president

declined, asserting self-sufficiency. When we suggested that their team could get the coaching instead, the leader offered them the choice. But the team also rejected the coaching, not because they didn't want it but because the leader unwittingly made it untenable for the team to receive it if the leader did not. This leader was unaware of their impact on the team. They believed they were giving the team a choice, but the team saw only one option—to follow the leader.

Takeaway: Self-aware change leaders understand and address what motivates people in adopting or rejecting change.

Practice 7: Using coaching

What is coaching? Coaching is performance-driven support that seeks to help individuals increase competence by learning new skills or knowledge to maximize their personal and professional potential. The focus is on concrete issues such as effectively managing change, engaging employees, or learning to think strategically.

Observations: Institutional leaders who are open and willing to try new strategies even in a crisis can learn and benefit from the experience. During the pandemic, when many institutions were barely keeping the doors open and narrowing their focus, one institution's leader kept the initiative on track by leveraging coaching to lead through the challenge. Through coaching and access to a network improvement community, this leader gained new information about how this innovation could help solve their course access challenge. Through coaching, the leader examined new concepts, such as change management, and methods to understand and engage key interested parties, all of which helped to maintain the momentum in scaling even through a pandemic.

Successful change leaders gain capacity through supports such as executive coaching.

Next steps

Reflect upon your own leadership practices and consider how you can implement each of the seven practices. Identify areas where support may be beneficial, and proactively seek out resources such as coaching to enhance your leadership capacity.

Reference

American Society for Quality. (n.d.). *What is change management?* https://asq.org/quality-resources/change-management

Additional resources

Buller, J. L. (2015). *Change leadership in higher education: A practical guide to academic transformation*. Jossey-Bass.

Kotter, J. (2012). *Leading change*. Harvard Business Review Press.

Kotter, J. (2013). *Change: What really leads to lasting personal transformation*. Oxford University Press.

Kotter, J., & Cohen, D. (2012). *The heart of change: Real-life stories of how people change their organizations*. Harvard Business School Publishing.

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2017). *The leadership challenge* (6th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

About the Contributors

Vicki Bautista, EdD, NBC-HWC, is an assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine in the School of Medicine at Creighton University. Prior to working at Creighton, she was employed in a variety of health promotion settings, including nonprofit, medical, government, and research.

Diane Chapman, EdD, is the associate vice provost for faculty development in the Office for Faculty Excellence at North Carolina State University. Her scholarship has involved career development of non-tenure-track faculty, program evaluation, and academic leadership. Her most recent work is focused on eliminating access barriers to faculty development and global learning.

Stephanie Delaney, JD, PhD, is the vice president of instruction at Renton Technical College.

Alyson Eagle, PhD, oversees employer relations at Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania. Dr. Eagle completed Gannon University's organizational learning and leadership doctorate program in May 2023; her dissertation, "Women Navigating Leadership in Higher Education: A Phenomenological Study," focused on women in leadership in higher education.

Maria Gallardo-Williams, PhD, is the associate director of faculty development in the Office for Faculty Excellence at North Carolina State University. Her current focus centers on the dynamic landscape of faculty development, where she is actively engaged in the creation and dissemination of open-access training materials and resources.

Kimberly Grainger, JD, MPH, is the associate vice provost for academic personnel and policy in the Office for Faculty Excellence at North Carolina State University. Her research involves organizational development focused on faculty recognition, faculty satisfaction, and training of university leaders.

Gill Hunter, PhD, is the assistant vice president of retention and graduation and an associate professor of English at Eastern Kentucky University.

Margo Keys, PhD, is an administrator coach at Carnegie Math Pathways and a certified executive coach.
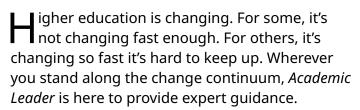
Sara Melita, an executive coach with over 25 years of experience, specializes in leadership and organizational development. Founder of Melita Consulting 2.0, she partners with leading institutions to improve performance; she also runs the Academic Leadership Academy at George Washington University.

Gretchen Oltman, JD, PhD, is an associate professor at Creighton University. Dr. Oltman is a teacher, attorney, and author with over 25 years working in the field of education. Her work focuses on the practical application of scholarship to real-life settings.

LEAD YOUR SCHOOL

WITH MORE CONFIDENCE AND PURPOSE

ACADEMIC Leader

Higher education is changing. For some, it's not changing fast enough. For others, it's changing so fast it's hard to keep up. Wherever you stand along the change continuum, *Academic Leader* is here to provide expert guidance.

Academic Leader covers the trends, challenges, and best practices today's academic decision-makers need to protect and enhance their institution's mission while meeting the evolving demands from internal and external stakeholders.

By becoming a member, you will gain access to the latest thinking in academic leadership and learn how peers at other institutions are solving problems, managing change, and setting direction. Here's your chance to truly leave an imprint on your school and shape the way your institution is perceived.

While the burden of expectations is especially heavy on those in charge, *Academic Leader* will ensure you are fully prepared to make informed, practical decisions on almost every challenge that you face. Become a member today!

Membership Benefits

- Articles that keep you in the know with everything today's academic leaders need to recognize and comprehend

- Case studies exploring strategies taken at a featured institution for you to model

- Q&As with notable academic leaders around the world

- Full access to a searchable library of archived articles and resources loaded with sage advice that will make your institution stand out

Join Today! www.Academic-Leader.com