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ABSTRACT

This paper examines personal challenges that academic leaders face, attributes that institutional leaders should possess to succeed in transforming the university, how institutions of higher education can build the capacity for preparing new leaders, and how universities can respond to the leadership crisis in this time of transformation. Personal challenges academic leaders face include the need for leadership training, lack of administrative experience, role conflict and ambiguity, and lack of recognition of metamorphic changes and of the cost to scholarship of leadership. For many academic leaders, work becomes their entire life. Research shows that academic leaders must manage trade-offs between professional and personal pressures in their lives, though it can be difficult to manage such trade-offs and find balance. The main feature people look for and admire in their leaders is credibility. Six key roles of academic leaders are faculty developer, manager, leader, scholar, boundary spanner, and problem developer. Leadership talent on the global scene is scarce, and the need for effective leadership to transform universities is great. Possible agenda focuses for building leadership capacity include studying leadership skills, attributes, and roles critical to effective reform and creating case studies on institutional successes and failures. (Contains 23 references.) (SM)

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Where Have All the Leaders Gone?

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Around the world scholars and administrators alike speak about a great leadership crisis in higher education. Blue ribbon commissions and executive reports call for bolder and better college and university leadership. Innovations and transformation of universities will not become a reality unless we build the leadership capacity. The search for solutions to the leadership dilemma leads us to thousands of leadership studies, most of which are contradictory and inconclusive. Leaders: are born, not made--made not born; possess distinctive traits--no special traits at all; emerge from the ranks of faculty--must be trained and developed; or must use power and influence--merely manage symbols and the academic culture. In response, this paper seeks to explore four questions:

1. In an era of institutional change and reform what are the **personal challenges** academic leaders face?
2. What **attributes** should institutional leaders possess to be successful in transforming the university?
3. How can institutions of higher education **build the capacity** for preparing these new leaders?
4. What can universities do to **respond** to the leadership crisis in this time of transformation?

While the corporate world complains that they have simply progressed from the Bronze Age of leadership to the Iron Age, we fear that in higher education we may still be in the Dark Ages. It is hoped that this paper will shed some light that will lead us into the Building Age of university transformation.

The Search for Leaders

Rarely do we study or even discuss these questions which impede our ability to attract and prepare academic leaders. Institutional searches for academic leaders are failing more often now than in the past. Many of these are going into their second, third or even fourth cycles. When positions go unfilled bad things happen -- institutions suffer from lack of leadership, colleges suffer from lack of representation, faculty suffer from lack of a strong voice of advocacy, states suffer from lack of connection and communication, and the profession suffers from the void that is at best temporarily created (Andersen, 2002).

Historically, academic leaders appear to have undergone a transformation from chief academic officer to chief executive officer with more emphasis placed on extramural funding, personnel decision making, and alumni relations. Increasingly, the vision of an academic leader (e.g. lead faculty member, department chair, dean, provost, rector and president) as a quiet, scholarly leader has been overtaken by this executive image of one who is politically astute and economically savvy. Some view the role of academic leader as a **dove** of peace intervening among warring factions causing destructive turbulence in the college, a **dragon** driving away internal or external forces that threaten the college, and a **diplomat** guiding, inspiring and encouraging people who live and work in the college (Tucker & Bryan, 1988). No matter what the view, today's leader in the academy resembles an academic species with an imperiled existence.

What is going on? Some conclude that colleges are almost impossible to manage well and academics who are trying to run or repair them are getting "burned out and eased out with astonishing speed." Edward Lawler, an organizational effectiveness scholar, comments: "Most deans now seem to fail. It is a terribly difficult balancing act." This paper discusses the challenges, search for balance, leadership attributes, and how to build the capacity to transform universities.

The Academic Leadership Challenge

Academic leaders typically come to their positions without leadership training; without prior executive experience; without a clear understanding of the ambiguity and complexity of their roles; without recognition of the metamorphic changes that occur as one transforms from an academic to an academic leader; and without an awareness of the cost to their academic and personal lives (Gmelch, 2000). The search for solutions to this leadership void leads us to realize that the academic leaders may be the least studied and most misunderstood management position anywhere in the world. The transformation to academic leadership takes time and dedication, and not all faculty make the complete transition to leadership. The first part of this paper addresses the question of personal challenges academic leaders face and how they find balance in order to successfully make the transition to leadership.

The Call Without Leadership Training. To become an expert takes time. Studies of experts in the corporate world who attain international levels of performance point to the ten-year rule of preparation (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Romer, 1993). In the American university, seven years represents the threshold for faculty to attain the status of expert in order to achieve tenure and promotion at the associate professor level, and another seven years for full membership in the academy. If it takes seven to fourteen years to achieve expertise in our academic disciplines, why do we assume we can create an academic leader with a weekend seminar? Does the Ph.D. represent a terminal degree, almost like terminal illness? None of the participants in the Global Consortium symposium held in Amsterdam in 1999 (24 participants representing 14 countries) had systematic training for their academic leaders and of the over 2,000 academic leaders I have surveyed, only 3% have leadership development programs in their universities. As we all may now appreciate, we need

a radical change in our approach to leadership development in higher education if we are to transform universities.

The Call Without Administrative Experience. The time of amateur administration is over. Department chairs, for example, often see themselves as scholars who, out of a sense of duty, temporarily accept responsibility for administrative tasks so other professors can continue with their teaching and scholarly pursuits. Nearly 80,000 scholars in the United State currently serve as department chairs and almost one quarter will need to be replaced each year. Deans serve on the average six years and university presidents four years. We have already established that opportunities for individual skill development through training is woefully inadequate, but what are we doing to provide leadership experiences to prepare our next generation of academic leaders? Even if we had systematic skill development opportunities available, if you asked managers where they learned their leadership abilities, most will tell you from their job experiences. In fact, a poll of 1,450 managers from twelve corporations cited experience, not the classroom, as the best teacher for leadership (Ready, 1994). One should not draw the conclusion that formal training and education are of limited value as academic leadership training, in combination with experience and socialization, can heighten a faculty member's appreciation for leadership and strengthen their motivation to develop leadership capabilities.

The Call Without Understanding Role Conflict and Ambiguity. Caught between conflicting interests of faculty and administration, trying to look in two directions -- academic leaders often don't know which way to turn. They mediate the concerns of the university mission to faculty and, at the same time, they try to champion the values of their faculty. As a result they find themselves swiveling between their faculty colleagues and university administration. In essence, they are caught in the god-like role of "Janus", a Roman god with two faces looking in two

directions at the same time. While academic leaders don't have to worry about being deified, they find themselves in a unique position -- a leadership role which has no parallel in business or industry (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; 1995). To balance their roles they must learn to swivel without appearing dizzy, schizophrenic or "two-faced." They must employ a facilitative leadership style while working with faculty in the academic core and a more traditional line-authoritative style with the administrative core.

The Call Without Recognition of Metamorphic Changes. Faculty spend, on the average, 16 years in their discipline before venturing into academic leadership (Carroll, 1991). After all these years of socialization, how do faculty make the transition into academic leadership? A national study of beginning academic leaders (department chairs and college deans) in the United States identified salient patterns that characterize the "metamorphosis" from faculty-centered to leader-centered. A shift, from:

Solitary to Social--faculty typically work alone on research, preparing for teaching and other projects, while leaders must learn to work with others;

Focused to Fragmented--faculty have long, uninterrupted periods for scholarly pursuits, while the leader's position is characterized by brevity, variety, and fragmentation;

Autonomy to Accountability--faculty enjoy autonomy, while leaders become accountable to faculty in the department and to central administration;

Manuscripts to Memoranda--faculty carefully critique and review their manuscripts, while leaders must learn the art of writing succinct, clear memos in a short amount of time;

Private to Public--faculty may block out long periods of time for scholarly work, while leaders have an obligation to be accessible throughout the day to the many constituencies they serve;

Professing to Persuading--acting in the role of expert, faculty disseminate information, while leaders profess less and build consensus more;

Stability to Mobility--faculty inquire and grow professionally within the stability of their discipline and circle of professional acquaintances, while leaders must be more mobile, visible, and political;

Client to Custodian--faculty act as clients, requesting and expecting university resources, while the leader is a custodian and dispenser of resources; and

Austerity to Prosperity--while the difference in salary between faculty and administrator may be insignificant, the new experience of having control over resources may lead the academic leader to develop an illusion of considerable "prosperity." (Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999).

The metamorphosis from professor to academic leader takes time and dedication. Not all make the complete transition and, in fact, few department chairs become fully socialized into leadership.

The Call Without an Awareness of the Cost to Scholarship. Academic leaders try to retain their identity as scholars while serving in administration. Not surprising with 16 years of socialization in their discipline before entering administration, most academic leaders feel most comfortable and competent in their scholar role. In fact, 65% of department chairs return to faculty status after serving in their administrative capacity, and therefore are wise to protect their scholarly interests. They express frustration at their inability to spend much time pursuing academic agendas. "Having insufficient time to remain current in my discipline" causes the greatest stress for department chairs and ranks third for deans (Gmelch & Burns, 1994). Most deans and department chairs would spend more time on their own academic endeavors if they could but find it virtually

impossible because of the demands of leadership duties. If we are to build a sustained leadership capacity within our universities we must address the issue of balance in the academic leader's life.

The Academic Leader's Search for Balance

In today's world many of us dream of balance and serenity -- if not in our professions, at least in our personal life. Academic leaders are no exception. For many, work becomes their entire life. One of the prices they pay when they accept a leadership position is an incredible time commitment -- and the pressure to find balance in their lives. Their role brings with it an identity and self-concept that often dictates who they socialize with, where they live, how long they retain their position, and what lifestyle they lead. Obviously being in a leadership capacity is an important part of their lives and provides them with pleasures as well as pressures.

Pressures over the past two decades have begun to transform the once unquestioning academic administrator into an individual struggling to find balance between total academic immersion and the balance of a fulfilled private life. Psychologists suggest that one cannot be unhealthy or ineffective in private life and still be an effective professional.

Academic leaders' ability to develop a balanced life-style depends on how well they can make trade-offs between leadership and personal interests. Do they believe their private life is in balance with their professional? Eighty percent testified that the lack of balance caused them moderate to severe stress. What price do department chairs, deans, and presidents pay for their venture into college leadership? Where will it lead? What are the benefits? What are the costs? What changes have occurred in their personal lives and are they satisfied with these changes? Can they find balance?

Trade-offs: The Leader's Balancing Act

What does research lead us to believe about academic leaders' ability to balance their lives effectively and what price do they pay for their venture into leadership? The price depends on their ability to manage trade-offs between professional and personal pressures. A trade-off is defined as an exchange of one interest for another; especially, a giving up of something desirable (Greiff & Munter, 1980). What does research tell us about the ability to manage trade-offs effectively? This section of the report combines the results of three research studies of 1,700 deans and 2,000 department chairs in America and Australia (Gmelch, et al. 1997; Gmelch & Miskin, 1995; Gmelch & Sarros, 1996).

Properties of Trade-offs

1. *Trade-offs from both professorial and private interests vie for the same resource--time.*

Time pressures dominate leadership -- meetings, heavy workload, deadlines, after work activities, excessive demands, and insufficient academic time head the list of top stresses. While many complain that faculty are incessantly seeking financial resources, the real limited resource for leaders appears to be time. This problem exist because time is a resource in limited supply:

- Time is inelastic;
- Time is irreplaceable;
- Everything requires time;
- Every leader has the same amount of time;
- Everyone wants part of the their time; and
- Most leaders are ill-equipped to manage time effectively.

2. *Trade-offs act much like a ledger, you cannot debit one side without crediting the other.*

The relationship between professorial and personal time resembles a "zero-sum" game--all deans and department chairs have 24 hours in a day. Forty-four percent of the deans experience excessive stress from trying to balance their personal and professional lives.

3. *Too many trade-offs in one direction creates excessive time pressures and lead to stress.*

What percent of the stress in a dean's life results from the deanship? This question was asked of 1,700 deans across America and Australia. The result--60% of the stress in their lives came from their jobs. When asked about the nature of their stress, deans identified "imposing excessively high self-expectations" as the most significant time trap. This item proved to be the most predictive indicator of excessive stress for deans as well as department chairs.

4. *Trade-offs often change with roles professors assume in the academy.* Most deans perceive themselves to be both faculty and administrator (62%), however, a sizable portion (33%) view themselves solely as administrators and only 6% perceive themselves as primarily faculty. This is in sharp contrast to recent studies of department chairs who primarily see themselves as faculty (44%) or both faculty and administrator (52%). Only 4% of the chairs perceived themselves as primarily administrators (Gmelch & Burns, 1994). Therefore, as deans move from department to college administration they drastically shift their self-identity to being primarily an administrator (4% to 33%). It appears that the more forcefully deans row toward the shores of administration, the more distant they become to their initial identity as a faculty member. Chairs, on the other hand, tend to retain their academic identity. In fact, most chairs return to faculty status (65%) after serving as department chair (Carroll, 1991). In this study only 17% of the deans plan to return to faculty status. What is the pattern for presidents and rectors? (see Moore, et al, 1983)

5. *Academic leaders find they have to trade their scholarship for their administrative duties.*

Although deans characterized scholarship as a low pay-off activity many deans maintain their scholarship while serving as deans (Imig, 1997). The results of our study indicate that 60% of the deans rate their scholarly activity as lower than prior to becoming dean. Eighty-eight percent of the department chairs had less time for their scholarly activities and the same proportion were dissatisfied with their reduction in scholarly productivity.

Academic Leader Characteristics and Roles

What do people look for and admire in their leaders? The answer, according to Kouzes and Posner (1993), is **credibility**. The results of their surveys of thousands of managers over the last decade are strikingly consistent. In addition, our research of academic leaders in Australia and America comes up with the same results. We admire credible leaders -- those who are honest (truthful, trustworthy and ethical), forward-looking (decisive and provide direction), inspiring (dynamic, uplifting, enthusiastic, positive, and optimistic), and competent (capable, productive, and efficient) (Gmelch & Sarros, 1996).

But what do academic leaders do? Virtually every managerial book written lists and exalts the tasks, duties, roles and responsibilities of administrators. Lists specific to department chair duties, for example, range from the exhaustive listing of 97 activities revealed by a University of Nebraska research team (Creswell, et al., 1990), to the 54 varieties of tasks and duties cited in Allan Tucker's classic book *Chairing the Academic Department* (1992), to the 40 functions forwarded in a study of Australian department chairs (Moses & Roe, 1990). In our research, chairs identified four key roles--faculty developer, manager, leader and scholar--and deans added two others-- boundary spanner and program developer (Gmelch & Miskin, 1995; Wolverson & Gmelch, 1999).

Building the Leadership Capacity: An Agenda for Action

The paper concludes with the realization that leadership talent on the global scene is scarce. The need for effective leadership to transform universities has never been greater. As a result, it is hoped we will turn our attention and discussion to ways we can develop an agenda to build leadership capacity within institutions of higher education. Possible agenda items might be:

- (1) Study leadership skills, attributes and roles critical for effective reform.
- (2) Develop leadership education materials for administrators, faculty and students alike.
- (3) Develop an international clearinghouse of programs on every continent engaged in developing leaders in higher education (see Green & McDade, 1994).
- (4) Create case studies on institutional successes and failures -- analyzing institutions that transformed themselves and ones that missed opportunities (see Keller, 1983).
- (5) Develop a web site to engage in more a continuing dialogue on issues of leadership development.

From the corporate sector we realize that there are three principal approaches to leadership education: individual skill development, socialization of leaders values and visions, and strategic interventions that promote collective vision (Conger & Benjamin, 1999). In higher education, leadership development is at a critical juncture. While the corporate world complains that they have simply progressed from the Bronze Age of leadership to the Iron Age, we fear that in higher education may still be in the Dark Ages. It is our hope that this dialogue will lead us into the Enlightenment Age of leadership.

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