

# Leadership Challenges Facing Academic Deans in the Post-pandemic Environment: Observations and Strategies

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## *Abstract*

*The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is being felt across all higher education institutions. Deans, central to institutional response and college/school repositioning, are being challenged to provide leadership that result in successful institutional response. This study illuminates the current understanding of three trends requiring critical attention by deans. These areas include students, programs, and finances. Utilizing the analysis of the dean's role from Coll, Ruch, et.al., (2019), and informal contacts with several sitting deans, leadership strategies across these three areas are identified. This informal analysis should inform current practice and invite future study and discussion.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, Post-pandemic, deans, Higher Education

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## **Leadership Challenges Facing Academic Deans in the Post-pandemic Environment: Observations and Strategies**

After two years of dealing with the immediate consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, individual colleges/schools and universities are now facing the long-term impact. A return to business as usual is no longer a viable strategy. Boards, presidents and stakeholders are now engaged in repositioning programs, services, finances (Coll & Ruch, 2021). Students are questioning current practices and expressing needs for new elements for the collegiate experience. Faculty are confronting new work patterns and needs to adapt to the new environment. Change, never welcomed by all, is at the fore. While the mission, history, location, and culture of each college or university will texture and dictate needed repositioning, effective leadership is required to facilitate needed changes.

Deans are being called upon to play a central role in institutional change and are essential to aligning their college with environmental pressures (Wepner, et al., 2015). The more traditional role for the academic dean with primary focus on internal matters is now confronted with additional challenges from the external environment. The dean's job is looking more like a CEO of the unit than a scholar/leader Coll, et al., (2019). New leadership strategies are called for to respond to this new environment. To better understand these new expectations a review of three of the most pressing external trends are presented followed by review of the evolving role of the deanship. Merging these threads will be illustrated by results of informal contacts with several sitting deans.

### **Critical Trends**

An analysis of current thinking and analysis of the post pandemic environment is presented. Three of the most pressing areas of review (Selingo, 2020; TIAA-EY Parthenon, 2020) are presented; (a) the impact of student enrollment patterns and expectations; (b) needed changes to both curriculum and pedagogy, and (c) the realities and necessity for changing fiscal models and expectations. While seemingly separate, these trends are interconnected. Marrying into coherent and impactful strategies is the new role for the academic dean.

### **Student Enrollment and Expectations.**

Changing student enrollment patterns across higher education were in evidence before the arrival of the pandemic. Fewer high school graduates, changing cohort demographics, increased competition and alternative programs, compounded by increased costs and growing student debt were influencing a decline in college enrollment. Over the decade preceding the pandemic enrollments dropped 13% (Conley & Massa, February 29, 2022).

***Shifting Enrollment.*** During the first two years of the pandemic (2019-2021), higher education experienced an even greater impact. The National Student Clearing House (NSC) reported that total undergraduate enrollment declined 6.6% over that period. Howell, et.al. (2021) analyzed enrollment and retention using data from CollegeBoard and NCS national samples. The community college sector experienced the largest shift of nearly 12% compared to

4.5% and 2.8% decline rates across the private and public four-year sectors, respectively. The two-year sector also experienced a larger retention impact. Retention rates at two-year colleges decreased by 4.6% while only 1.4% across private four-year institutions. Retention rates increase (1.2%) during the pandemic in the public four-year sector.

Important state and regional variations of the impact of the pandemic on enrollment and retention are documented in the CollegeBoard analysis. They note “that variation does not appear to be closely linked to local health or economic conditions”. Furthermore, the combined health and economic crisis of the pandemic appears to have ‘disrupted the long-standing countercyclical relationship between college enrollment and economic growth.’ (Howell, et. al., p. 8).

Projections for future enrollments suggest a continuing enrollment challenges for institutions. The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) issued *Knocking in the College Door* (10<sup>th</sup> edition) in December 2020, A slowing decline in the number of U.S. high school graduates for graduating classes 2026-2036 is projected. These high school cohorts document the growing diversification of the population. Projected declines are not uniform across region, state, or years. The impact of the COVID pandemic, at its peak during the issue of these projections, was unknown (Bransberger, et. al., December 2020). WICHE issued a follow-up analysis in July 2021, reporting that “the pandemic appears to have had a limited effect on the immediate potential number of high school graduates” (Bransberger, July 2021, p. 1). However, long-term effects of the pandemic on future high school graduation rates remains unclear.

The studies by Grawe (2018) examined the looming impact of demographic trends on future college and university enrollments. He developed a Higher Education Demand Index (HEDI) drawing on WICHE and CollegeBoard data with census data, fertility rates, student migration patterns, college going rates and other factors that influence student admission decisions. He updated his analysis to include anticipated COVID 19 effects, possible immigration impact, international student enrollment patterns and expanded the time frame to 2036 (Grawe, 2020). In sum, Grawe’s work suggests a volatile and differential impact on future student enrollment across geographic and institutional type. Changes in labor force needs will further impact enrollment planning at the college level. In a three-article series, Harvey (July-September 2021, October-December 2021, & January-March 2022) identified needed institutional planning and response to this projected long-term decline in college and university enrollment environment.

While the pandemic is winding down, evidence that students, particularly those of color and from lower-income backgrounds, have been significantly impacted is emerging. These impacts are of significance to current students, but also portend a difference set of expectations for future cohorts of college going students. While a plethora of impacts are documented, several are of importance. These include mental health, financial, social disengagement, and relevance (Major, 2020).

***Student Mental Health.*** The increase in mental health concerns among college students is well documented (INSIDE Higher Education/timelyMD, 2021, Seligo, 2021, West, 2022). The conditions of the pandemic exacerbated and hastened these concerns to crisis level. The 2021 national survey of college and university presidents rated mental health issues for students, faculty and staff as their most pressing pandemic concern (Jaschik & Lederman, 2022).

The 2020 Active Minds survey reported that over two thirds of student indicated that their mental health concerns worsened. Eighteen (18%) reported a significant worsening. (ActiveMinds, 2021) The 2020 Gallup and Lumina Foundation poll reported that more than three-quarters of four-year undergraduate students who considered stopping out cited emotional stress as the reason (The State of Higher Education 2022 Report, 2022). Many of the contributing factors to student mental health issues continue.

***Student Financial Concerns.*** Financial stress increased greatly during the pandemic. American College Health Association and Health Minds Network study reported that between March and May 2020, two-thirds of students reported their financial situation had gotten worse. The 2020 Gallup and Lumina Foundation pool found one third cited pandemic and attendance costs impacting their ability to remain enrolled. They further reported that more than half of all unenrolled adults reported the cost of a college degree as a very important reason for not continuing (Spitainiak, April 20, 2022).

The cost of a college education increased during the pandemic. Potential debt from student loans is a major factor in student attendance and institutional selection. Student financial aid including support for housing, food crisis, childcare, and transportation are of critical importance to recruit and retain students.

***Student Engagement.*** Student engagement is clearly linked to student retention. The Inside Higher Ed/College Plus survey conducted in March 2021 found 73% of the respondents noted ‘friends and social life’ as their most ‘missed’ element of their pandemic collegiate experience. While students report a desire for greater engagement than experienced during ‘shutdowns’ and shifts to ‘hybrid’ campus, they also report a desire for increased flexibility across all aspects of their collegiate life (Ezarik, March 21,2022).

***Relevance- the Value of College.*** An additional outcome of the pandemic is a growing question regarding the necessity of a four-year collegiate experience. Daugherty (August 5, 2022) summarizes factors suggesting that alternative post-secondary models will continue to emerge. Costs are increasing. Employers are welcoming certificates and short courses, especially if tied directly to workplace expectations. Three-year baccalaureate is under consideration at some institutions. Across all higher education the fundamental structure and purpose of a university experience are under critique (Abdrasheva, et. al. Winter 2022, Cawood & Vasques, EY, 2022).

*In summary, the challenge to Academic Deans* is to recognize that the student pool will be smaller, expecting flexibility, in need of critical human and academic support services, cost conscious and focused on clear ties between college activities and post college aspirations.

## **Curriculum and Pedagogy: Impact on Academic Programs.**

The two years of the pandemic forced institutions to shift to ‘emergency’ or short-term modes of offerings and delivery. Going forward, institutions are now planning for a future which captures the best of both their past and the learnings from the pandemic years. Colleges, under the leadership of the dean, are in the process of reposition both modes of delivery and curricular content.

Faculty have also been impacted by the pandemic. Remote instruction, working from home, rapidly changing schedules, adjusting to communication by technology characterized a changing faculty role. Several aspects of these circumstances are now welcome by faculty and staff. The dean will need to understand and include these changes in faculty and staff as the lead in the repositioning of programs and curriculum. (Anft, 2022, Seligo, n.d.).

**Modes of Delivery.** Emerging from the pandemic are multiple futures for higher education. As individual colleges and universities chart their future most analyses and studies suggest the dominance of both enhanced use of technology and changed consumer demands for flexibility delivery. These findings were reported in the 2020-2021 UNESCO based on a series of focus groups of students and faculty across an international sample. The ‘transformation of the campus experience by technology, and links between higher education and the labor market’ were found to be influencing factors. (Abdrasheva, et.al., Winter 2022, p11). The sales/force.org Connected Student Report, a survey of over 2000 students and staff across international settings reported similar findings. (Anft, 2021). The 2022 EDUCAUSE Horizon Report: Teaching and Learning Edition expands on these findings, reporting a plethora of technology trends that will drive higher education reposition. (Pelletier, et.al. 2022).

Some form of hybrid delivery driven by student demands for flexibility and choice are driving forces of the post pandemic environment. Many faculty are also championing increased flexibility. Colleges will be expected to offer courses and programs across face-to-face, hybrid, and total on-line platforms. (Busteed, May 2, 2021, Graves, 2018 & 2021, Levine & Van Pelt, 2021, Selingo, n.d., Selingo & Clark, October 8, 2021).

**Curricular Content.** Student demands for a closer link between curricular experiences and future career plans are becoming a significant reason for institutional selection and retention. Employer needs for skilled workers are challenging pre pandemic curricular models and content. The ongoing Public Viewpoint research sponsored by Strada and the Education Network, conducted several national surveys of over 50,000 adults over the course of the pandemic The pandemic has increased student skepticism in the value of their education resulting in a redefinition. Both enrolled, stop outs, and future students reported a heightened view of the return on investment (ROI) for their collegiate experience. An interest in nondegree programs including micro credentials, certificates, certifications and skill training is on the ascendency. Absent higher education interest, corporations, non-profits, and professional associations are entering the market (De Lillis, n.d.).

*In summary, the challenge for Academic Deans* is guiding the faculty, staff and students to rebuild the course/offerings, methods of delivery, and opportunities for interaction and support consistent with new expectations.

## **Changing Fiscal Models: Impact on Institutional Finances**

The two years of the pandemic created a significant impact on college and university finances. Forced to ‘shut-down,’ enrollments dropped effecting state support, revenues declined from losses in auxiliary enterprises, and expenses increased, especially in technology, staff training, additional student support, and health related activities. Increases from robust increases in institutional endowment accounts did not find their way to annual budgets. While the infusion of federal support through the CARES Act helped to minimize these impacts, it is short term.

The financial impact beyond the two years of the pandemic is a matter of considerable speculation and mixed assessment. In Chronicle of Higher Education essays, Smith (January 11, 2020) outlined a long and uneven route to financial recovery, while Kelchen (February 8, 2022) discusses the uneven impact of the financial recovery.

An analysis by the Federal Reserve of Philadelphia found a differential impact across differing sectors of higher education. Textured by a plethora of assumptions they project a “modest cumulative loss of revenue (no loss, loss < 25% of 2019 revenue) for most public colleges, private nonprofit colleges and rural colleges, while cumulative revenue losses will be most sever (< 50% of 2019 revenue) among institutions with fewer that 1,000 students, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and certain for-profit colleges (Kelchen, Ritter, & Webber, May 2021, p. 1).

Both Moody’s and S&P rating services project a more stable 2022 outlook, with the caveats of the impact of inflation and labor shortage (Moody’s Investors Service, December 7, 2021, Seltzer, January 26, 2022). State support is projected to increase (Seltzer, February 1, 2022). While endowments have grown, their impact on annual expenditures has remained constant (Hogan, October 25, 2021). The AAUP report cites the first decline in academic salaries in a decade and cites increased debt as an issue of concern (AAUP, 2022).

As institutions grapple with their financial future, different viewpoints and strategies are emerging. Ramlo (June 21, 2021) studied the views about how to address the financial impact on their school across different stakeholder groups. Using a mixed method, Q methodology, the participants produced three distinct viewpoints: 1) Focus on teaching mission and students, 2) University as a Business, and 3) University as Community.

University faculty dominated view #1 & #3 while non-faculty, including administrators and staff promoted #2. However, consensus across the stakeholders rejected the strategy of laying off faculty or closing programs to balance budgets.

Going forward, every college and university will examine their business model and its projected financial impact. Finley (2021) surveyed a sample of 700 campus stakeholders.

'Financial Constraints' was the top challenge, of 74% of the respondents. Many institutions will need to change their approach and strategy to match the current and anticipated future (Rose & Large, 2021). Changes certainly will be uneven across sectors and by mission, history, and geography. The 'elites,' institutions with national reputation and strong endowments, will be relatively untouched. Those dependent on enrollment and state support and/or with small endowments will be challenged.

New business plans may include such strategies as limiting program/course offerings focusing on areas of acknowledged excellence, build 'stackable' certificates, micro credentials, a three-year baccalaureate, expanding distance learning programs, differential tuition/fees by curriculum, 'unbundling' student fees. Employing an internal budgeting model such as Responsibility Centered Management (Whalen, 1991) or a campus wide 'entrepreneurship' model (Darden, 2021) would move revenue acquisition expectations from university wide to include individual colleges/schools therein. Expanding grant funding, corporate giving, and philanthropy will be under consideration. The impact of a revised institutional business model will have a direct impact at the college/school level.

*In summary, the challenge for the Academic Dean is to both master these new elements of the institutional business plan and reposition the college to respond.*

## **Evolving Role of the Academic Dean**

The early role for the academic dean emphasized the internal focus of the position (Tucker & Bryan, 1987). Deans were scholar-leaders. Incumbents were selected by colleagues. In many cases the deanship was viewed as either a culmination of a successful professorial career, or as a platform for continued scholarship. Maintenance or expansion of the unit was the primary goal. June (2014) documented the evolution of the deanship over the decades of 1994-2014. Over that period the deans become responsible for larger units, often required administrative experience and fundraising skills, and were responsible for maintaining external relationships as well as managing internal affairs. Smethers (May 2020) study found a substantial expansion of management roles for deans across 4-year institutions of higher education. Expectations for financial affairs (both budget management and fundraising), maintaining relations and representing the institution, as well as the college to external stakeholders, and providing student support describe the growing complexity of the deanship.

The evolving role of the academic dean has resulted in a variety of models and primary expectations of the deanship. Dean as academic leader is reflected in the work of Bright & Richards, (2001), Manager versus leader is a model which has received attention in the literature (for example Arntzen, 2016, Bier & Giedegebuurem 2009, Montez, et. al., 2002). An entrepreneur leadership style is discussed by Cleverley-Thompson (August 12, 2015) while Coll & Ruch (2021) suggest a CEO model for the modern dean. The importance of fund raising (Bradford, 2010, Hunsaker & Bergerson, 2018, Masterson, June 4, 2017) and an expanded role in leading innovative change (Chisolm-Burns, October 7, 2021, Harris, 2020) illustrate the growing set of expectations.

## Emerging Strategies

Pre pandemic the academic deanship was marked by challenges and needed adjustment in leadership strategies. The post pandemic era has both accelerated these needed changes while introducing additional, more complex obstacles. To begin an understanding of the continuing evolution of this critical academic leadership position, we briefly review previous learnings and apply these to conversations with current sitting deans. Our goal is to illuminate the state of the deanship and suggest ongoing concerns and solutions.

### Anecdotal Queries

Brief, exploratory, zoom interviews were conducted with 10 deans that one of the authors was in touch with and who represented ten (10) academic deans representing, respectively, seven public, land-grant research institutions as well as a three small, private liberal arts colleges, who readily and informally shared their perspectives on the three major challenges presented, as well as the strategies they have enacted to hopefully enable their individual colleges/schools and institutions to be successful in the current higher-ed landscape. Table 1 describes the challenges and strategies.

These queries were anecdotal to the findings presented in this paper and were not part of a systematic study. As we, the authors, thought about the assertions presented, we realized that what could be helpful was some insights from sitting deans that would help us better understand the issues presented. Thus, the queries were conducted in a very informal, casual way as to provide us the needed insights to help us better understand and thus in part contextualize what the professional literature was positing. We believe that presenting the information within the context of the discussion section makes sense and is the best place for it since it provides insights and context for the discussion of our assertions. Anecdotal queries were informally analyzed simply by summarizing comments written down by one of the authors. Although certainly not representative, the upshot of the anecdotal discussions are generally consistent with this paper's assertions.

The following is a summary of cautions and tips for being successful in the Dean's job and a synthesis of their perspectives on the three major challenges presented, as well as the strategies they have enacted to hopefully enable their individual colleges/schools and institutions to be successful in the current higher-ed landscape.

### Contextual challenges and strategic tools needed for this work

***Avoid burnout.*** Academic deans now tend to have relatively shorter tenures [4-6 years from 10-12 years] than in the past and typically have little formal leadership preparation (Bennett, 2015; Coll, et al., 2019; Wasicsko & Balch, 2015). They must also oftentimes address challenges emanating from long-tenured disgruntled faculty (Krebs, 2015; Vaillancourt, 2015), uncivil internal climates (Vaillancourt, 2015), and low empathy from others concerning the challenges inherent to this work (Matos, 2015; Monaghan, 2108). External stressors come from

employers that hire the graduates, policymakers at all levels, and think-tanks, both supportive and critical of higher education (English & Kramer, 2017).

Cumulatively, these factors can add up to considerable stress (Ammons, 2010) and is at least in part attributed to an increasing shortage of professionals willing to step forward to serve in the position (Halonen & Dunn, 2017; Krebs, 2014; Harvey, Shaw, McPhail & Erickson, 2013).

Support from the provost [or your direct boss] is key to avoiding burnout. Coll and Ruch (2019) note that without it, Deans face a fast road to burnout. Deans need to keep in mind the provost's main objective, which is to set key academic priorities for the university as a whole and aid dean under their supervision in accomplishing these goals (Enrich, 1997). Some deans make the mistake of thinking the provost should support their agenda even if it is not part of or even counter to their goals for the institution. Deans need to understand that typically provosts may not be aware of key aspects of their specific roles, instead focusing on whichever aspects of the dean's role is important for the overall institution's success (Fagin, 1997; Monaghan, 2018). Deans should be strategic and intentional about keeping the provost informed about their new initiatives and emerging challenges and how that fits into the overall goals of the institution. Although the provost's office may desire to give all the help each dean needs, their bandwidth is only enough for them to focus on the most important aspects of their role. Developing a positive and trusted relationship with the provost is essential for deans to not only avoid burnout but to be successful in their own goals.

Deans reported that awareness of the hazards of the job is important, as is self-care. They also indicated that deans need to a sense that this is a relatively short-term gig so - "make hay while the sun shines".

***Engage in [much] more leading than managing.*** As outlined by (Heifetz & Laurie, 2011), the work of leadership now requires addressing adaptive challenges not problem solving day-to-day issues. Adaptive challenges are described by (Heifetz & Laurie, 2011) as follows; "adaptive challenges are murky systemic problems with no easy answers. Perhaps even more vexing, the solutions to adaptive challenges reside in the involvement of people throughout your organization" (p. 36). Tools for successful and more sustainable change include regulating distress within the organization, maintaining disciplined attention to the adaptive challenge and promoting leadership voices from below. Adaptive challenges differ from routine challenges in the following manner; adaptive challenges frame key question and issues vs. defining a concrete problem and providing a solution, letting the organization feel external pressures vs. shielding the organization from external threats, challenging current roles and resist pressure to define new roles quickly vs. clarifying roles and responsibilities, exposing conflict vs. restoring order, and challenging unproductive norms vs. maintaining norms. Sitting deans recommend comprehensive and ongoing dean training such as that provided from Deans for Impact (deansforimpact.org). Including the 2022 cohort, Deans for Impact has now brought together

115 Deans of Education leaders since the first cohort in 2016. The year-long programming includes collaborative learning sessions, case studies, and personalized coaching.

For example, Deans suggest that one key adaptive challenge now needs to revolve around searching for and generating new revenue generating initiatives. Academic deans now need to urgently stimulate revenue generating instructional initiatives (e.g., pricing differentials per program of study, financial partnering arrangements with third parties, hybrid training programs). These initiatives require adaptive challenge thinking and the responsibility for these efforts typically falls squarely on the academic dean. Sitting deans suggest developing a strong relationship with vice-presidents of advancement, and collaboration with other deans.

***Be goal directed and have a clear innovative vision for academic majors.*** Academic deans are now expected to approach their roles with explicit and innovative ideas about how to move the academic curriculum forward. One major caution is to not get caught in the minutia involved in managing the day-to-day operations thereby leaving little time or energy for accomplishing the important goals for success. Deans suggest identifying important pockets of support within the college/school (e.g., departments, members of the dean leadership team, influential faculty members) when creating and implementing a new vision for the school and/or departments. Working on making the vision a collective one rather than solely the dean's increases the probability of the vision being successful.

***Directly address that significant change is here.*** The tension of creating timely change while dealing with the often-plodding hierarchal model of higher education is a particularly difficult challenge for deans. Deans report the most challenging roadblocks to promoting change are dealing with long standing internal conflicts and incivility.

Undeniably, it is paramount for academic deans to expect resistance to change at times and to provide information and promote understanding for their faculty. In fact, studies show that an absence of a dean addressing inevitable conflict and resistance negatively effects the productivity and motivation of the faculty (Deluk, 2014 as cited in Elliot-Johns, 2015). Conversely the presence of a specific direction decreases the frequency and intensity of faculty resistance and conflict (Elliot-Johns, 2015). Deans need to watch out for and have strategies to alleviate dirty tricks as described by Vaillancourt (2020). She notes that deans should pay particular attention to resistance of change tactics such as slowing things down by such behavior like referring all matters to committees, focusing on the trivial, and nitpicking over phrasing. She also cautioned against reopening debate, and expressing concerns of 'avoiding haste'. Concerning academic leadership, Bryant (2009) reminds us that deans have to deal with people that disagree with them, the key is to not let it turn into enmity, but always work to try to eventually bring them around to being contributors. Pierson (2022) also prompts deans to not give in to incessant demands that [seemingly] require immediate reactions.

***Infuse DEI into any and every significant change.*** Suggestions were clear that given the clear emergence of gross inequities in treatment of historically oppressed groups, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) needs to be integral to any significant changes. Strong suggestions are

to hire and/or appoint a Director of DEI. Such a position should have the responsibilities of leading organizational change and culture development related providing guidance and support to identify and overcome barriers to DEI for staff and students. The Director of DEI should also be expected to play a critical role in curriculum reviews, with the expectation that such curriculum will include specific DEI strategies and produce clearly improved DEI outcomes for students and staff.

Within this context, Table 1 describes a sample the adaptive challenges and strategies a sample of deans are currently working on related to the previously described challenges of students, programs, and finances.

Table 1.

<b>Sample of Academic Deans' adaptive Challenges</b>	<b>Strategies utilized</b>
<b>The impact of student enrollment patterns and expectations.</b>	Increased advising and development of a referral network for addition support
	Fund raising specifically for student scholarships in high demand majors
	Create extended college/school focused orientations for new/transfer students
	Work closely with community college(s)
	Creating a clear student feedback loop re: balance of hybrid, on-line, face-to-face curriculum delivery
	Creating student support groups based on academic area
	Incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion values clearly into student engagement
	Create early warning system for MH referrals
	Train faculty in Trauma-informed interactions
<b>Needed changes to both curriculum and pedagogy</b>	Creating incentives for faculty to collaborate and develop curriculum directly related to ROI
	Articulating a new vision for majors or academic disciplines contingent on what is market-driven
	Promoting changes with strong administrative support from the provost office via community partnerships

	Reorganize the college/school to promote collaboration between academic disciplines
	Deal with resistance and conflict about change via ongoing and regular meetings laying out the vision
	Using internal funds to ‘award’ collaboration, innovation with program partnering, dual majors, etc.
	Tie faculty incentive to institutional mission and ROI value
	In-depth survey of students about what they want in terms of curriculum delivery by major
<b>The realities and necessity for changing fiscal models and expectations</b>	Use existing funds as “grant incentives” to develop/promote revenue generating programs
	Balancing financial resources so that funds flow to market-driven revenue producer programs
	Implementing a variation of the Responsibility Center Management (RCM) budgeting model (e.g., enrollment, revenue, retention, are factored in)

***Reported consequences of implementing adaptive challenges.*** Reported success of the aforementioned strategies has been positive, for example related to the impact of *student enrollment patterns and expectations*, higher retention rates have occurred with more faculty engagement, there were increased transfers from community colleges, and increased mental health referrals. There have also been some headwinds, in that some faculty have questioned these changes without proper resources, and have concerns about a changing faculty role.

For needed changes to both *curriculum and pedagogy*, successes occurred with re-design for more ‘clinical emphases’ and better partnerships with the local communities. Headwinds occurred with perceived reduced rigor from faculty, resistance to ‘University as corporate’, and magical thinking about some low enrolled majors coming back.

Concerning the *realities and necessity for changing fiscal models and expectations*... Successes stemmed from innovations based on broader collaborating- e.g., dual majors, more interdisciplinary curriculum, greater skill development for students. Headwinds were related to resentments from the academic programs not generating revenue.

## Conclusion

The focus of this paper can be concluded with three 'takeaways' 1) it is a new day for the academic deanship; the job has/is changing, 2) incumbents need to analyze these external changes; plan new strategies or consider moving on, 3) there are many supports available including Deans for Impact or similar disciplinary groups; training seminars [i.e. CASE workshop for Deans as fundraisers] and/or periodic conversations with fellow deans.

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