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# Guns on College Campuses – Not A Good Idea!

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# ACADEMIC Leader

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THE NEWSLETTER FOR ACADEMIC DEANS AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

## A Recommencement Address

*Jennifer Patterson Lorenzetti, MS*

**D**eans, department chairs, and academic leaders of all levels of responsibility:

I stand before you (metaphorically) today to celebrate the end of another academic year and the moving forward of another class of graduates from our esteemed institutions. As you pulled your academic robes out of the back of the closet, and dusted off your hood, you likely thought of those eager faces that would be listening to the words of wisdom dispensed by the speaker at your ceremony.

However, commencement addresses are wasted on the young. To be blunt, there is no one on earth less in need of a rousing “go change the world” address than a fresh-faced graduate clutching a diploma on which the ink is barely dry. It is those of us at mid-career or later, a little tired, a bit battle-hardened, maybe even slightly jaded, who could use a touch of inspiration. With that in mind, I offer the following pieces of support:

### **You are doing better than you think**

When you sat among those rows of graduates, you probably had your life all planned out. You expected to achieve certain career and personal goals by specific points in your life, and the path to achieving this seemed clear and straight.

I’m virtually certain that things didn’t work out this way for any of us.

Instead, we all learned that life is less of a straight path and more of a confusing meander through uncertain

and rocky terrain. We have endured unplanned setbacks, achieved victories we didn’t expect, and likely are now sitting at a place we didn’t wholly anticipate being.

That’s OK. In spite of the rosy posts we all make to social media, none of us are certain of ourselves. Imposter syndrome is real, but questioning your own competence just means that you have progressed along the Dunning-Kruger curve, actually gaining competence as you become aware of your own limitations. Celebrate this as a measure of success. You are doing better than you think.

### **You can still change the world**

There’s a reason that Pinterest is filled with pithy quotes about late successes and the desire to learn in one’s golden years. Most of us still nourish the hope that our dreams are in reach even if we haven’t met our self-imposed milestones that we set in our youth. “Life would be so wonderful if we only knew what to do with it,” Greta Garbo once said.

Now, however, you are a lot closer to knowing what to do with life than you were when you were 20. Having more perspective and greater experience in life allows you to make much better decisions about what you can do to make an impact. Sure, this experience also means that you are more aware of the potential pitfalls and more aware of the complexities of life, but that knowledge is necessary for success. What would you like to do to change the world?

### **It’s time to learn something new**

One of the reasons new graduates are so enthused is that they have just completed a program of study that has equipped them with knowledge they are eager to try out, adapt, and make their own. Somehow, amidst the dedication to educating others, academic leaders forget to keep educating themselves.

Many of us become buried deep within our academic silos. It is a natural consequence of being part of the academy and rising to a leadership role. First, one drills down into the discipline to amass publications and presentations as part of the promotion and tenure process, then, as a department chair or dean, the world becomes made of discipline-specific tasks and controversies and administrative chores. It is easy to forget the desire to

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# A Tough Future: Higher Education Faces a Fiscally Challenging Environment

*Henry W. Smorynski, PhD*

Few appreciate how fundamentally different the fiscal future of colleges and universities in the United States will become. The 2017 tax law changes will increase pressures on higher education to deliver better outcomes for students and families, while simultaneously reducing available federal funds, families' abilities to leverage rising home values to finance higher education, and state support for higher education due to the costs of underfunded pension programs and continued rising health care costs. Colleges and universities continue to accelerate their expenditures for enhanced facilities, athletic programs, and student affairs support programs to aid in the retention of lesser prepared, less healthy, and increasingly mental health-challenged students.

The combination of these factors calls for a dedicated and focused financial survival and stabilization program created and led by college and university administrators. What might such a plan look like in its outlines?

### Program review as central to fiscal stability

While academic program review has been in place for decades, it has been weak in implementation and achieving fiscally meaningful outcomes. It has often centered too much on identification of academic programs for further increased investment or the closure of small programs in terms of enrollments or revenues. Clarity regarding the centrality of specific academic programs to any college's overall mission and its publicly communicated brand has been weak. Additionally, these review systems have

not done a good job of examining costs and benefits of non-academic programs as administrative positions have grown more rapidly than faculty lines for decades, and student development units have grown dramatically. Only recently, with few exceptions, have there been closures or reductions in athletic programs to reallocate budgeted funds to academic programs and student learning initiatives.

A strong program review system covering all major financial expenditure units of colleges and universities is the first critical step toward a responsible approach to fiscal survival and financial stabilization. Robert C. Dickeson, in *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services: Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance* (2010), anticipates the most likely source of needed resources for the future for institutions will come from reallocation of existing and currently budgeted resources. He argues that strong leadership by top administrators in academic affairs and student development will be necessary. No other action will make up for a weak program review system in ensuring the future vitality of colleges and universities. Informing the program review system with management theories like, Management by Objectives, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOTS), and zero-based budgeting will provide best chances for success.

### Refine students served as a revenue enhancing necessity

Students expect a strong return on their investment of time and deferred

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## Interim Administrative Appointments in Higher Education: An Institutional Perspective

*N. Douglas Lees, PhD, and  
David J. Malik, PhD*

**A**lthough not the result of any formal survey research, the prevalence of interim appointments in administrative positions from department chair level and higher seems to be on the rise. In recent years this has been the case at our home institution, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and at other IU campuses. While it is difficult to ascertain the explicit motivation in every interim appointment situation, we have identified some benefits by closely examining the circumstances of individual cases. In this article, we will discuss the motivations for making interim appointments and the benefits derived from them by the institution, as well as the roles for an interim in the context of the needs of the campus and local unit. The impetus and value for an *individual* to seek and secure an interim appointment will be the subject of a subsequent article.

Interim positions often arise when an unexpected vacancy occurs or when there is insufficient time available for a full search. Even when an administrator announces months earlier an intention to leave the post, unsuccessful searches can necessitate an interim appointment. Events that commonly lead to sudden vacancies include resignations for personal reasons or the inability to meet the demands of the position (illness, accident, etc.), acceptance of a new position on campus or elsewhere, or the administration makes a late decision that a replacement is needed. Also, there are those occasions when everyone gets an email stating that a particular administrator has resigned and left campus with no announced reason.

### **Fiscal considerations**

The campus might choose to delay seeking a permanent replacement due to fiscal realities associated with a new external appointment. A resignation where the administrator remains with the university in some capacity, including as a faculty member, means that hiring an external replacement would add a new line with its associated costs. Furthermore, at some institutions, it is expected that newly hired administrators come with a “package” that may include additional new lines, renovated space, major instrumentation, etc. If an interim is internally available, it is not surprising that institutions might delay a search while they reassess their needs and accumulate/free-up the resources required.

### **Internal interim appointments**

Some institutions routinely promote internal individuals to interim positions in order to thoughtfully evaluate them for administrative potential. Using delayed searches or extended interim appointments is an opportunity to explore the internal candidate’s potential for the permanent position. This approach is essentially a “live” and extended interview. The candidate is aware of the situation, gains invaluable in-depth experience, and can decide whether or not administration remains an aspirational career goal. A positive performance will place the individual in an advantageous position in an open search or could result in a successful petition to forego a search and be directly appointed to the position.

### **Natural succession in appointments**

In many situations, the interim position is filled by the second in command. For a provost, it would be

an associate provost who advances to the interim role, while for a dean it might be the executive associate dean or an associate dean. For an interim chair, faculty members are the obvious choice. Not all second-in-command individuals are suited for or even interested in an interim role. Associate deans do not uniformly have upward administrative aspirations since many of them are focused on faculty-oriented or student-oriented projects (student affairs, finance, graduate education) that align better with personal interests than global responsibility.

Another dilemma for an internal interim candidate is the challenge of effective leadership; is there a willingness by the candidate to solve problems or change operations that could negatively impact them upon returning to their previous roles? Potential retribution from other members of the unit or embarrassment from attempted fixes that failed might damage their future prospects for securing a permanent administrative position.

### **Internal vs. external interim appointments**

When there is no identifiable or suitable internal choice, a candidate might emerge from outside, typically from another college, school, or campus. An external interim is more common in those cases in which the previous administrator was pressured to resign (or was removed) due to performance problems. Removal may have resulted from direct dissatisfaction by their appointing supervisor or emerged from complaints within the administrator’s own unit.

The former could be the result of unit dysfunction, failure to advance

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## Three Critical Time-Management Tips for Higher Education Professionals

Kelley Wyant

Let's face it, the life of a higher education pro is not for those without a lot of get up and go. It takes a singular mix of dedication, initiative, and creativity to balance a schedule that at any particular time can include faculty management, budgeting requirements, a research load, departmental responsibilities, and—most importantly—student development. As a result, academic professionals work an average of 61 hours per week, often running the risk of burning the candle at both ends and ending up with diminishing returns.

Not only does the constant flood of emails, meetings, academic responsibilities, and side projects add up to a crushing workload, but educators are also called on to wear more hats than the average office worker. If you're in higher ed, you're likely overly familiar with juggling administrative tasks, research, fundraising, and teaching, all in the face of shrinking budgets.

The problem isn't that higher education professionals are getting distracted from their work, but rather that *other work* is keeping them from the *work they need to do right now*. The pace of incoming requests, information, and responsibilities can be so overwhelming that those in academia often find themselves feeling frantic about their calendars.

### How to get control of your time (and your sanity)

Outdated time-management techniques aren't going to cut it in today's academic world. Try some of these modern time-management tricks instead:

**1. Conduct a time audit.** The key to solving a time-management problem

is determining the root cause. Begin by finding out where your hours actually go throughout the week. There is often a significant, measurable difference between where you think your resources are invested and where they're really going. An audit can enlighten you to the areas where busywork has usurped productive tasks.

There are many apps and tools available for time tracking, including Toggl, DeskTime, or Everhour. Download and analyze your data, identify areas that need improvement, and create a time-management system.

**2. Create a better time-management system.** Where's the worst possible place to keep your to-do list? Your email inbox. Why? Because a constant stream of new messages of variable importance is a distraction that cannot be effectively prioritized. Stay away from this noise. Instead, use a simple calendar tool to keep track of important to-dos and deadlines, batch similar tasks, or block out personal time.

Want something a little more tech-savvy? Try Trello, Wunderlist, or Clear for elegant project management and to-do list applications. Most importantly, develop a system you can stick to and update regularly. Consider adding automated functions that can do some of this work for you.

Tools like Microsoft Flow or IFTTT can block time on your calendar, set a task reminder with the click of a button, or automatically download email attachments into a filing system. If the back-and-forth of booking time on your calendar causes frustration, online appointment scheduling tools allow you to provide students and colleagues with a booking link. Your constituents can self-schedule meetings with you during open time slots, and all confirmations, calendar invites, and reminders are automated on your behalf.

**3. Design digital habits that make space for intentional thinking.** Being productive doesn't always mean busy. The greatest ideas often flow when we allow ourselves time to think, research, and solve. This kind of sustained thinking is a critical element of the academic profession and shouldn't be taken lightly. Prioritize time for these kinds of activities, and you'll find yourself contributing at a much higher level as an expert in your discipline.

To find space in your busy schedule for this reflection time, monitor your Internet, social media, email, and instant messaging usage. Set aside "dark" time away from technology to focus on a single task without distraction.

Conducting online research? Set screen time limits for yourself so that you don't find yourself falling into a time-sink. Optimize your email operations by batching the time you spend reading, responding, and converting notes to tasks. If you're worried about the volume of emails on your plate, it helps to set expectations for colleagues and students of how often you check your inbox.

The race to excellence in higher education is paved with ever-growing demands and distractions. While it's easy to fall into a time-management sinkhole, these three simple strategies can help you organize, automate, and control your time in search of a comfortable work-life balance.

*Kelley Wyant is the director of content and creative at AppointmentPlus, where she leads a team in producing content that is engaging and helpful. A three-time winner of the American Marketing Association's Spectrum award, Kelley is HubSpot Inbound Certified and is a member of the Arizona Technology Council and the National Association of Professional Women. ▼*



# Guns On College Campuses: Not A Good Idea!

Robert W. Hill, EdD

It is hard to believe that the Columbine High School shooting was 19 years ago. The actions of the two suburban Colorado high school seniors who went on a shooting spree killing 13 people and wounding over 20 others before taking their own lives should have been a clarion call for common sense gun control. Sadly, the nation would hear the same refrain in 2012 in the bucolic Connecticut town of Newtown at the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre, where the gunman shot and killed 20 six- and seven-year-old children and six adult staff members before killing himself.

Since 2012, other mass shootings have taken place; most recently, the tragic shooting at Marjory Stoneham Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, on Valentine's Day. This time there is a sense that things are different and that "Enough is Enough." The #NeverAgain movement started by the Parkland teenage survivors has garnered international attention culminating in a "March for Our Lives" rally on March 24th with 800,000 taking to the Washington, D.C. streets (with sibling marches and rallies in other cities around the globe) putting politicians on notice that action is demanded.

Similarly, higher education has not been immune to senseless gun violence on campus. The Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) shooting on April 16, 2007 that killed 32 people was its Columbine moment. That "bloody Monday" in Blacksburg at the hands of an automatic weapon was the worst mass shooting in US history at the time, but sadly not the last. In fact, just two weeks after the Parkland school shooting there was another tragic incident at Central Michigan University's campus in Mount Pleasant where a college sophomore shot and killed both of his parents in the

dormitory as they came to pick him up for Spring Break.

Even as long as 51 years ago there was a shooting incident at the campus of the University of Texas in Austin that was ranked at the time as one of the deadliest mass shootings in our country's history. Yet many young people were virtually unaware of sniper Charles Whitman's 90-minute shooting spree from atop the landmark clock tower on August 1, 1966 until August 1, 2016 when the university hosted a ceremony and unveiled a memorial on the 50th anniversary. Ironically, that long-overdue memorial coincided with the inception of Texas' "campus carry" law, which allows concealed handgun license holders to carry weapons into public university buildings, classrooms, and dorms.

The "only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun" trope is certainly catching on with increasingly popular "campus carry" laws that, if passed, allow states the flexibility in implementation at public colleges and universities. Although backed by the gun lobby, these laws are opposed by many campus law enforcement groups, as well by many students, faculty, and college presidents. Ten states have already passed laws permitting the carrying of concealed guns on college campuses (e.g., AR, CO, GA, ID, KS, MS, OR, TX, UT, and WI) and similar campus carry bills are now being considered in over a dozen other states.

College is an increasingly stressful time for students due to academic pressure, financial stress, parental expectations, etc. There is vast research suggesting an increasing mental health problem (see the National Institute of Mental Health studies) and it is not just a college student crisis. However, student depression and anxiety are realities for many (see the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors) and student suicide

(see the JED Foundation) is the second-leading cause of death among college students. If one factors in underage and binge drinking statistics (see the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism), and increased drug usage (see the National Institute on Drug Abuse data), it is clear that allowing easy access to guns is not such a good idea.

Since the Parkland shooting, we have heard a lot about the prospect of arming teachers. The school superintendent of the Blue Mountain School District in northeast Pennsylvania recently came up with his own novel idea for dealing with an active shooter on a school campus—arming the teachers and students with buckets of rocks to throw at a classroom intruder. Each classroom there now has a five-gallon bucket of river rocks inexplicably kept in the closet to stone an armed assailant.

The American college campus is one of the few places on earth where people from so many diverse backgrounds come together for a common purpose. Our college campuses have become increasingly divided politically and basic free speech is being challenged daily. We have also seen an uptick in sexual assault and other violent crimes as our campus police strive to provide safe environments. Clearly, allowing students to keep guns in their dormitories, carry them into classrooms, to college parties, or to sporting events only exacerbates matters for all and is not a sound solution. Our college campuses should be safe havens for teaching and learning where exposure to diverse views is encouraged, discovery is valued, and families do not have to worry about sending their loved ones.

*Be part of the conversation at*  
<https://bit.ly/2Hi48cj>

*Robert W. Hill, EdD, is professor emeritus at Nova Southeastern University. ▼*

## PROMOTION

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institutional goals, failure to support and mentor new faculty, insufficiency to address student academic needs, poor performance in research or expected scholarship, etc. In the latter case, faculty may have offered sufficient cause and justification to create a clear path for action or, more problematically, they may have an unjustified vendetta against the administrator for past actions. It is important that the upper administration avoid the perception that it is “rewarding the dissidents” by not appointing an internal interim. In these cases, an internal interim appointment may also be risky from the perspective of knowing whether a given individual is part of the problem or a potential solution. In addition, this problematic environment requires a proven, experienced leader to address the challenges.

### Finding experienced administrators

Candidates for appointment should meet some general experiential objectives: previous successful experience in a similar position, personnel management and budgetary skills, knowledge of institutional operations and goals, and others defined by the role. Why would an experienced former administrator take on one of these roles? Assuming they possess the skills for this position, they also should understand what institutional service means and how important it can be to model that behavior. Although not in a current administrative role or perhaps retired, the candidate may have since recharged their enthusiasm to the point where they miss the action of leadership. Candidates from multi-campus systems are good options when available. Another possibility is to appoint a highly skilled existing administrator to the interim role as an additional responsibility. This option works best if the interim’s primary unit

has a sufficiently strong infrastructure to continue high-level functioning without full-time leadership.

### Multiple vacancies in chain-of-command create special needs

Longer than average interim appointment terms may occur when there are “stacked” vacancies in the chain of command. This takes place when there are vertical and/or simultaneous administrative openings, involving direct report lines. Chair-dean and dean-provost combinations are examples. One strategy is to delay a junior position search in order to provide the new senior hire the opportunity to participate in the selection process. It is an important consideration to allow the new senior administrator to assemble the best team. In other words, the junior position becomes a part of the “package” for the senior hire.

### Creating the charge for the interim appointment

The charge for an interim appointment by the appointing administrator is a very important message to the unit from the perspective of the unit’s future expectations. Whether the interim is internal or external, the hiring administrator needs to establish clear goals for the candidate. Responsibilities evolve quickly in higher education, and identifying a “caretaker role” for interim is not in the interest of either campus or unit.

Bringing in an external interim in order to get a unit with problems back on track typically affects the timing of identifying a suitable, permanent replacement. Most vacancies result in searches that are launched within a few months of the vacancy or at the next hiring cycle. Depending on the nature of the unit’s dysfunction and how long it has been underperforming, the experienced interim may require additional time to get it moving in a positive direction. To open a search to fill the leadership position of a troubled

unit is far less likely to be successful than it would if the unit functioned well. Furthermore, upper administration would not want to publicly reveal issues like this and thus would move to fix them before moving on with seeking new leadership.

### Summary

Colleges and universities are all faced with the reality of identifying individuals from within their ranks to temporarily fill administrative vacancies that result from an unplanned departure or from a search that did not recruit a suitable candidate. In order to make the decision as to who should be placed into the interim leadership role, several factors should be considered. Among them are the expected length of service, the availability of competent and respected junior leadership, and the condition (smooth running and highly functioning versus problematic) of the unit. For ordinary circumstances, interims chosen from the previous leadership team would be appropriate except for perhaps problematic units. For those, it may be best to appoint an experienced and successful present or former administrator to serve as interim.

Finally, interim administrators are critical to institutional continuity and improvement. Institutional leadership should regularly review lists of potential interim candidates for any significant academic position. This will save time in identifying and vetting individuals for interim posts and other vacancies if and when they occur.

*N. Douglas Lees, PhD is associate dean for planning and finance, professor, and former chair of biology at IUPUI.*

*David J. Malik, PhD is chancellor’s professor emeritus of chemistry and chemical biology, IUPUI. Previous roles include chief academic officer, dean, and chair. Some appointments included an interim status that later evolved to the full administrative role. ▼*

## RECOMMENCEMENT

From Page 1

learn that brought many of us to the academic life.

I challenge you to take some time in the coming months to learn something new that is outside your discipline. Take a class in another department and revisit what it is like to be a student. Check out the programming at your local parks and recreation organizations. Try out a craft or sport you've always wanted to learn but never allowed yourself the time. Flexing your intellectual (and perhaps physical) muscles will help you recharge for the challenges ahead.

## Take some time for yourself

As the semester ends and the new grads process out of their commencement ceremony to start their journeys, I encourage you to find some time this summer to relax. Sure, there are still budgets to approve, faculty to hire, courses to develop, and all of the tasks of academic life that we promise ourselves we will get done when there are fewer students to work with.

But your academic career is a marathon, not a sprint. One thing that is often overlooked in the optimistic commencement speeches is that burnout is real, and the only cure is rest.

Carve out some time this summer to read a book, see a play, sit on a beach, or hike a wooded trail. Do whatever you need to do to recharge your batteries so that you are prepared to start again.

After all, as that great sage Ferris Bueller once said, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."

*Jennifer Patterson Lorenzetti is the editor of Academic Leader and the chair of the Leadership in Higher Education Conference. She is the author of Lecture is Not Dead: Ten Tips for Delivering Dynamic Lectures in the College Classroom and The Care and Motivation of the Adjunct Professor. ▼*

## BUDGETS

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compensation. Administrators should recruit and admit students only where they can prove the market value of their degrees and services. This is necessary to diminish unnecessary remedial coursework, reduce semesters to degree completion, and avoid disruptive classroom learning due to underprepared and unmotivated students. One strategy in this regard is to build productive alliances with neighboring community colleges to provide remediation and to accept transfer credits at the lower community college rates for general education.

## Build alliances with other institutions and businesses

Other educational institutions, including high schools and community colleges are important allies. Another best practice is aligning effectively for field experiences with businesses and health care institutions in the regional service area of the college or university. Paid internships and access to field experiences for degree programs can save money on facilities as well as better serve institutional marketing

and provide better post-graduation employment benefits for graduates.

## Reduce labor costs and focus on classroom excellence

Most higher education institutions have reduced their tenured and tenure track staff. Unfortunately, they have often done so while using underpaid adjuncts serving multiple institutions. It is time to improve teaching evaluation systems and invest in a well-defined faculty portfolio blending tenured and adjunct faculty based on classroom teaching excellence. This strategy will improve student retention and learning. It will assure better long-term relations with alumni and potentially improve alumni gifts to the institution.

## Use online learning resources within degree programs

Every degree program should require one or more courses delivered online to reduce teaching expenditures. Additionally, institutions should identify potential courses available online that are free and can count within specified degree programs to accelerate degree completion and reduce student debt.

## Fine tune alumni fundraising campaigns

More effort should be put into major gifts acquisition than general campaigns focused on the percentage of alumni participating or small gifts. This source of funds will be more productive under the recently passed tax reforms which will negatively affect middle class taxpayer incentives to make contributions.

## Increase investment in market research

Since not all degree programs return significant value to graduates, it is critical that each institution defend with statistical data the likely returns on investment students can expect as graduates. This marketing data set will enhance enrollments and retention to graduation.

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*Henry W. Smorynski, PhD, is a Midland University leadership fellow. ▼*



## Seven Big Ideas for Academic Leaders

*Laurie Elish-Piper, PhD*

**D**uring my time as a dean, I've learned a lot about budgets, fundraising, strategy, recruitment, retention, and personnel matters, but I've also discovered seven big ideas about how my outlook and approach influence my leadership.

### **Big Idea 1: Optimism matters.**

It's easy to feel frustrated about the expectation to always "do more with less." Therefore, it's essential to be an optimistic leader.

- Find silver linings in your challenges, and give your faculty reasons to work hard to navigate toward better times.
- Be a cheerleader for your college—internally and externally. Show your college spirit, highlight positive accomplishments, and help others see the college in a positive light.

### **Big Idea 2: Kindness and care**

**matter.** In the high-pressure world of higher education, kindness can make a huge difference.

- Appreciate what faculty and staff do. Thank them for their efforts and contributions.
- Take time to get to know your faculty, staff, and students. If you know and care about the people you are leading, it makes your work more meaningful, compelling, urgent, and rewarding.
- Celebrate often. Celebrate birthdays, homecoming, awards, work anniversaries, student success, and promotions to show that you care about those you lead.

### **Big Idea 3: Communication**

**matters.** Communication is a daily priority and opportunity for you to improve your leadership.

- Develop open lines of communication with your direct reports so they come to you with issues before they become catastrophes.
- Stop by offices to say hello. Visit classrooms to offer words of

appreciation. Be visible and accessible so you can hear things that will help you be a better leader.

- Seek input. Create a climate where faculty, staff, students, and alumni offer suggestions, innovative ideas, and honest feedback.

### **Big Idea 4: Intentionality matters.**

Making data-based decisions is important; however, data alone may not tell the whole story.

- Don't rush just to get an issue resolved. Take time to understand the situation so you can make the most informed and strategic decision.
- Take notes so you don't forget, and review your notes at the end of each day to make sure you follow up on those things that require further attention.
- Truly engage, participate, and advocate during meetings. Don't get distracted by checking emails or working on other tasks.

### **Big Idea 5: Relationships matter.**

Being an academic leader is "people work." Whether you are interacting with faculty, staff, students, alumni, community partners, or prospective students and their families, strive to build positive, productive relationships.

- Get to know your faculty, staff, and students and let them get to know you. If you have to address a challenging matter, it will be more effective (and possibly easier) if you already have a relationship with the people involved.
- Devote time to engage with alumni and donors. They can provide helpful insights as well as important support such as recruitment, student mentoring, advice, donations, and student internships.

### **Big Idea 6: Collaboration matters.**

Because leadership in higher education is relatively flat, academic leaders must rely on consensus building.

- Build a shared leadership team that meets frequently. Seek input from this

team to hear multiple perspectives to inform your decisions on challenging issues and to leverage promising opportunities.

- Build collaborative relationships with key players who influence your college including senior campus leaders, other deans and chairs, legislators, and accrediting boards. Such collaborations can help you navigate challenges and give you a chance to offer input before important decisions are made.

### **Big Idea 7: Inspiration matters.**

While it's easy to get caught up in the transactional nature of being an academic leader, strive to be the kind of leader that others want to follow.

- Once you have determined your college's vision, mission, values, and strategic priorities, keep focused on those so everyone understands the direction you are all heading. Within that framework, praise hard work, set audacious goals, embrace innovative ideas, and create a context where people come to work excited to be part of something bigger than themselves.
- Be a builder. Build support, donations, and programs. Build your unit's reputation, student support services, and scholarship opportunities. Build enthusiasm and a sense of pride for your college.

## **Final thoughts**

That's quite a list, but as I'm reminded daily, being an academic leader is a huge responsibility. And I have one final big idea to share—remember to breathe, smile, and take care of yourself so you can get up tomorrow and do it again!

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