

Substance OVER STYLE

A FIELD GUIDE TO
LEADERSHIP
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

LESSONS, STORIES,
AND INSIGHTS

DONALD H. DEHAYES



WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Substance Over Style:

A Field Guide to Leadership in Higher Education

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Dedicated to Mom, Dad, Brady, and Betty
for your enduring love, inspiration, and patience

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A FRAMEWORK
for **ECOSYSTEM**
THINKING



Preface

There are many books about leadership in higher education. Here's why you should read this one! I have spent forty-five years working in academic institutions—twenty-six years in academic leadership positions and the remaining time engaged in teaching, research, and academic and professional service as a faculty member. As I reflect on those experiences, I am convinced that effective leaders understand and care about the culture and working surface of the academy, value the ideas and experiences of others, and possess the leadership qualities, collaborative spirit, and self-awareness to grapple with challenges and create opportunities every day in complex academic ecosystems. After all, that is the purpose of these jobs.

This book offers an informed and distinctive hands-on examination of the nuance, complexity, and peculiarities of leadership substance in higher education rather than a scholarly focus on leadership styles and theories often featured elsewhere. It is a deep dive into the inner workings of universities replete with stories and examples, including distinct challenges from and responses to the COVID-19 crisis and areas where leaders become embroiled in conflicts that lessen their effectiveness. This how-to guide aims to cultivate higher education leadership and inform, inspire, and nurture the next generation of faculty, staff, student, and administrative leaders by sharing experiences, strategies, and lessons learned.

The Genesis of This Field Guide

This field guide emanated from a leadership seminar for faculty and professional staff that I codeveloped and delivered during the 2019-20 academic year. The seminar consisted of six sessions ranging from two to four hours and included readings, interactive discussions, group problem-solving, and informal presentations focused on self-reflection, personnel management, strategic thinking, decision-making, fostering innovation, governance, budgeting, and more. Because it was our first offering, we planned on accommodating approximately twelve individuals; we had thirty-two requests from faculty and professional staff, even though all volunteered their time without being released from other responsibilities. We invited sixteen individuals, and thirteen of them now occupy leadership positions as chairs, associate deans, deans, vice provosts, or vice presidents. There was genuine interest among faculty and staff in professional leadership development and a desire and need for a practical guide to stimulate their interest and address critical topics. *Substance Over Style: A Field Guide to Leadership in Higher Education* was born in that moment to foster leadership development across higher education today.

Leadership at the Working Surface

Most higher education leadership books are written through the lens of corporate leaders, faculty scholars, or former presidents. The latter typically offer a mostly high-level overview of the academy. Such books often address leadership styles, principles, theories, or the importance of strategic or servant leadership. Conspicuously, few, if any, leadership books reflect the experienced-based perspectives of provosts, who as “chief academic officers” work every day across the entire university to navigate the challenges and opportunities in advancing the academic mission and the institution. This practical field guide, in contrast, is informed by my many years as provost, dean, and faculty member as well as a trustee, accreditation commissioner, and president of a national organization, and extensive experience navigating the ups and downs of the working surface of universities. Almost everything within universities interfaces directly or indirectly with the academic mission and the Office of the Provost. The provost has a ground-level view and hands on all the levers that impact the day-to-day operations, activities, and problems

of universities whether related to people (e.g., students, staff, faculty, administrators), teaching and learning, research, community outreach, budgets, fundraising, grievances, business operations, capital projects, etc. This comprehensive overview of the working surface of the entire academic ecosystem provides unique hands-on learning about what works and what doesn't in academic leadership as well as an engaging platform to inform aspiring leaders.

An Academic Ecosystem Framework

Just as natural ecosystems are complex, dynamic entities that respond to ever-changing internal and external forces, so too are academic ecosystems. The parallels are real and important. While sunlight is the primary energy source that flows through natural ecosystems, money is the key energy driver in academic institutions along with morale, creativity, and productivity—crucial intangibles that influence learning and discovery at every institution.

All ecosystems, including academic ones, comprise numerous interconnected and interacting components that trigger synergistic or antagonistic responses to changing conditions. That is, changes in any one factor, whether a planned intervention or an unintended perturbation, send repercussions throughout the ecosystem in response to an initial trigger and subsequent secondary responses. For instance, a breakdown in campus maintenance may negatively impact the yield of new students, leading to enrollment declines, budget shortfalls, reduced pay increases, and low morale for faculty and staff. Everything is connected in academic ecosystems, and even subtle changes can have large impacts. Leaders must understand such interconnections.

Natural ecosystems are shaped by the interaction of abiotic and biotic factors. Academic ecosystems comprise myriad disciplines, administrative and business functions, investment strategies, financial aid challenges and opportunities, technological and physical infrastructure, legal matters, and all sorts of internal and external political machinations and outside forces at local, national, and global scales. All of this is superimposed on a diverse array of constituents, including students, parents, faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, alumni, donors, legislators, and many others, each with their own expectations, needs, and desires. Indeed, the world of higher education is a complex web of interconnected

relationships and moving parts where every action, policy, or decision shapes the institution for better or worse in predictable and unpredictable ways.

To be clear, academic leaders don't need to be steeped in ecology. *Leadership substance*, however, entails the capacity to “think like an ecosystem.” That is the ability to visualize interconnections, extract clarity from complexity, and recognize the short- and long-term implications of proposed actions, decisions, and policies. Good ecosystem thinkers anticipate potential problems, thereby turning challenges into opportunities. Higher education needs authentic leaders who can think and act strategically—true ecosystem thinkers—with the knowledge, skills, and values to lead with their hearts and minds to ensure our institutions are confronting challenges and constantly evolving. This field guide provides a unique academic ecosystem framework and compilation of observations, insights, and lessons learned for aspiring higher education leaders.

Preparing a New Generation of Leaders

Whether you are faculty, staff, a graduate student pondering leadership for the first time, or a trustee or experienced administrator exploring new leadership roles, this field guide will inform and shape your evolution as a leader. The aim is to imbue your experience with a deep understanding of nuanced interconnections across the academic enterprise, highlighting not only the academic mission as the primary purpose but also the major revenue stream for institutions. Filled with reflections from the day-to-day navigation of the perils of budget shortfalls, pandemics, enrollment declines, delicate and often divisive personnel conflicts, student protests, and political battles, *Substance Over Style* serves as a compass for your transformative leadership journey. Read and digest the content of this book and join a new generation of higher education leaders ready and able to address the looming challenges on the horizon.

Acknowledgments

I have been extraordinarily fortunate throughout my career. I have worked with insightful, hard-working, experienced colleagues whose passion for higher education is contagious. Simply being in their presence has been inspirational. My colleagues in the Provost Office at URI and The Rubenstein School at UVM are especially notable. Thank you to my faculty, staff, and administrator colleagues at URI, UVM, NAUFRP, UCAR, and NECHE and to the thousands of students who taught me to listen, learn, overcome struggles, and strive for meaning and purpose in education and life.

Writing a book is a wonderful opportunity for reflection and, for me, has been an engaging and joyful process. Reviewing drafts of a book written by someone else, on the other hand, is a chore—it takes time, attention to detail, and a bold willingness to offer candid reactions and suggestions for improvement. I am enormously grateful to numerous reviewers who read drafts of the entire manuscript or specific chapters aligned with their interests and expertise. Ann Morrissey served as the manuscript's first reader, offered superb advice, commentary, and encouragement, and helped shape the book's organization. Through her lens of academic planning and professional development, she patiently read and reread chapters and helped hone key messages. Laura Beauvais dug deeply into the manuscript and offered insightful critiques and numerous thoughtful suggestions, all of which I incorporated. Her expertise in organizational behavior, management, and faculty affairs provided a necessary and valuable perspective. Cliff Katz plowed through the manuscript while on a ski trip, offering insightful comments while navigating glades and avoiding avalanches. His extensive knowledge and commentary about university budgets and finances were especially helpful. Dave Dooley volunteered to read the manuscript out of interest. His deep insights about higher education and leadership experiences as a president, provost, department head, and faculty member informed

wonderful suggestions, which are woven throughout the book. Thank you all for your input, ideas, and efforts.

My wife Betty, an accomplished author and scholar, offered constant encouragement and exquisite commentary on some of the most complex chapters. She consistently reminded me that every word matters and challenged me to keep the reader rather than myself in the forefront. I hope I was able to step up to that challenge. Despite being one of the busiest people on campus, Matt Bodah took the time to review several chapters; his insights and expertise added substance and relevance. As non-academics with close ties to and knowledge about universities and the business world, Kent and Diane Fannon were wonderfully patient and thoughtful sounding boards as I too often shared my ideas about the book. They also reviewed several chapters and provided helpful suggestions. I am also indebted to John Peterson for his creative input, thoughtful advice, photographic contributions, and great promotional ideas.

I am grateful to the team at BRG Scientific, especially Ted Grand and Pete August, who welcomed me and my ideas for this book into the BRG Scientific family. BRG Scientific's mission, commitment to quality, and desire to be "pleasing to the eye and soul" immediately captured my attention and interest. It has been wonderful working with the team. I hope *Substance Over Style* ascends to the standards Ted and Pete have established. I am immensely grateful to my editor, Melissa Stevens of Purple Ninja Editorial, for her patience, persistence, and attention to detail and for improving the manuscript while maintaining my voice and story. Becky Bayne of Becky's Graphic Design somehow took my assemblage of words and phrases and creatively and imaginatively transformed them into a beautiful book. Thank you, Melissa and Becky, for the opportunity to work with and learn from you.

I am indebted to the late Dr. Hugo John, the inaugural Director and Dean of the School of Natural Resources at UVM. When I was a newly minted PhD at the tender age of twenty-five, Hugo hired me as an assistant professor and mentored and inspired me throughout my academic career. He believed in me and guided me forward, which was no small task. Thank you, Hugo, I am forever grateful.

Finally, I graciously acknowledge support from URI Cooperative Extension and resonate with their commitment to provide learning opportunities and apply practical knowledge to improve the lives of people. Hopefully, *Substance Over Style* contributes to that mission.



PART I

CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING

Broadening Perceptions and Expectations

We are shaped by our experiences, including cultural, historical, social, and environmental influences. Such context impacts our behavior, understanding, actions, and decisions. The complexity of the natural world and the landscape of higher education can seem overwhelming as we grapple with the divergent and synergistic forces that shape natural and academic ecosystems. Understanding context, ourselves, and each other helps shape our perceptions and expectations from observations, patterns, and disruptions, and enlightens a sense of purpose for our actions. Indeed, context is everything!



CHAPTER ONE

A Field Guide to What, for Whom, and for What Purpose?

In the context of the world in 2023, there is a need for a new generation of authentic leaders with the understanding, skills, values, and courage to navigate the increasingly complex landscape of expanding higher education challenges and opportunities. The polarization of society, especially the politicization of higher education, has created almost daily attacks by certain segments of society, including some governing boards, legislatures, and governors, on course content and curriculum, pedagogy, academic freedom and tenure, and the value of a college education. Challenges associated with declining enrollment, evolving roles for faculty, rapidly advancing technologies, myriad impacts of COVID-19, rising costs and student debt, growing mental health problems, and greater presence and awareness of racial injustice on our campuses and in society seem daunting. These same issues, however, also represent opportunities and mandates for strategic re-engagement, problem-solving, and institutional evolution. Indeed, this is an important time for impactful and principled higher education leadership grounded in ethics and compassion for the human condition. The next generation of leaders will need to address these and other challenges and, at the same time, inspire an engaging path forward to re-establish the clear and critical value and importance of learning and education to individual quality of life and sustaining an informed society and democracy. There is much to do. It is both an exciting and exasperating time for existing and aspiring leaders of our colleges and universities.

Despite what some may believe, academic leaders are not simply born into these important and complex roles. Experience matters. Leadership must be cultivated, nurtured, and inspired. Those who have navigated the ups and downs of leadership in the trenches can contribute to cultivating the next generation of thoughtful academic leaders by sharing their experiences and lessons learned. My hope is that this book fulfills that niche.

Why a Field Guide?

Although I have spent most of the past twenty-six years in academic leadership positions, I had a very rewarding teaching and research career as a faculty member with expertise, interests, and passion in forest biology and ecosystem ecology. During my years as a graduate student and then as a faculty member, my colleagues and I frequently talked about fieldwork, the importance of knowledge rooted in field experience, gaining credibility in the field, and ground-truthing our laboratory or theoretical research in the real world of natural and disrupted ecosystems. None of us would ever acknowledge an ecologist or natural historian of any kind who had no or only limited field experience. For me, the academy has become my real-world ecosystem, and my various roles as faculty, associate dean, dean, provost, accreditation commissioner, trustee, and president of a national professional organization represent the “fieldwork” that I have always loved to do and that I have been doing in one form or another for my forty-five years on university campuses. My intention is to capture and share much of this hands-on learning, or field experience, about the substance of leadership in this field guide.

To cultivate effective leaders, we must first identify the key distinguishing and necessary attributes, characteristics, and requirements associated with successful leadership in colleges and universities. Field guides are designed to do exactly that—to identify distinguishing characteristics between or among individuals who may otherwise appear to be similar. Field guides not only focus on specific features that are reliable for identification but also highlight the variability and diversity that exists and assist the reader in understanding and appreciating their distinctive features. Finally, field guides assist newcomers in gathering critical information and, hopefully, communicating it clearly so it can be understood and utilized in practice.

There are many elements to leading effectively and navigating the complex world of academic ecosystems, including the myriad

interconnected parts. Each college and university is different, and even the disciplines represented may vary from one institution to the next. But, just as with fieldwork, we can reliably identify common features and approaches that consistently exist across multiple ecosystems and at different scales, which is true in relation to leadership in higher education as well. It all begins with the hard work of truly understanding yourself—who you are, what you and your institution care deeply about, and what truly matters in the world. Without clear answers to these questions, aspiring leaders run the risk of espousing directions without support, flailing their arms, and getting in the way of others and real progress. Leaders who don't inspire followership are an obstacle rather than an asset.

Leadership Substance

If there is anything I have learned in my forty-five years in higher education, it is that authentic leadership matters immensely. This is true at the level of departments, schools, colleges, and entire universities and may be more essential today than ever before. Effective leadership is essential for programs and institutions to evolve, remain relevant and viable, and improve their reputation as well as to build community spirit on campus and create and sustain a meaningful experience for students, faculty, alumni, and other constituents. Furthermore, leadership, especially transformative leadership, is hard work and is not meant for those with a casual interest. Most faculty do amazing work teaching students, conducting cutting-edge research and scholarship, and exercising their governance responsibilities to shape the academic core mission. Without effective leadership, however, such efforts are invariably splintered, resulting in waning resources, struggling programs, dwindling morale, and the departure of some of the most talented faculty and staff. Indeed, dedicated faculty are essential, but not sufficient to create and sustain excellent programs and institutions. Simply put, leadership matters!

Many higher education leaders have been asked hundreds of times to describe or discuss their leadership style. Perhaps such inquiries seek to understand effective or characteristic leadership behaviors or the manner or style in which we conduct ourselves and carry out the responsibilities of our positions. It seems rather simplistic, however, to attempt to define and catalog certain styles of leadership. I don't believe there is or should be a preferred style of leadership for all situations; effective

leaders need to be inherently adaptable and nimble as they respond to challenges. As such, I have typically tried to dodge the question of leadership style because I am convinced that there is something much deeper and more complex to effective and transformative leadership than *style*. Following years of experience and reflection, I am convinced that the critical questions and issues relate to understanding leadership *substance* because it takes much more than style to be an effective leader in complex higher education institutions. This book, I hope, captures the nuance, complexity, and peculiarities of *leadership substance* in higher education ecosystems.

In a nutshell, effective leaders identify and address key institutional challenges and mobilize the community to pursue bold aspirations. As such, dynamic and substantive leadership is critical and inspires a cascade of advances in myriad ways, such as:

- inspiring a new vision and collaborative efforts to chart a strategic path forward;
- exhibiting behavior that is respectful, supportive, and engaging;
- building trust through transparency, inclusiveness, consistency, and honesty;
- encouraging and modeling collaboration by building effective teams;
- challenging the *status quo* and welcoming new ideas and innovation;
- addressing existing problems within the institution;
- creating open lines of communication by both sharing information and carefully listening without judging; and
- advancing a culture of achievement, pride, and community.

Leadership substance forges an institution's vibrancy, engagement, and capacity to instill pride and confidence in the university community. I have observed academic units, and even entire universities, move from a struggling place of low morale, insufficient resources, stagnation, and increasingly irrelevant programs and curricula to thriving programs in high demand under new inspirational leadership. I have also seen the exact opposite happen—programs or institutions quickly spiraling downward after appointing new leaders who seemed paralyzed and who

did not have the skills, attributes, or commitment needed to move the institution forward. Why and how can such scenarios happen so often? Effective institutional leadership, or the lack thereof, is the answer; but what is effective institutional leadership? What does it look like? How can we cultivate a new generation of leaders who can and will advance the academy, especially during these times of deep polarization in society? See “Inspirational and Transformational Leadership during a Troubled Time” for an unlikely example.

Inspirational and Transformational Leadership during a Troubled Time

Context: In 2000, the University of Vermont (UVM) community was divided and highly factionalized, and the university was facing difficult financial challenges. An athletic scandal involving hockey—a near religion in Vermont—further exacerbated the difficulties. Faculty were organizing to unionize. The tension between the board of trustees and the university leadership was palpable, and morale was at an all-time low within the community. The board abruptly fired the president—the first and only female president at UVM—who was admired by many on campus, which created further angst and dissension. Various factions immediately began lobbying for their favorite interim candidates, who would be expected to support their agenda, likely only furthering the divide on campus.

Interim President: The board of trustees surprised everyone and appointed Edwin Colodny, an attorney, former CEO and chair of the board of US Airways for sixteen years, and an unlikely and unknown choice for interim president. Given his nonacademic background, many were wary of his appointment. Colodny, a Burlington native, had just returned to Vermont after retiring from his roles at US Airways. He was handed a deeply divided and struggling institution and immediately understood his role was to right the ship, rebuild morale, and position the institution to attract and hire a high-quality permanent president. In one year, he did exactly that.

Colodny was a bright, experienced, humble man with an understated personality and the unique ability to communicate clearly and connect

with all people, ranging from the grounds department staff, faculty, deans, vice presidents, donors, and alumni. Despite being new to campus, he immediately understood exactly what was needed and spent his time creating goodwill, sprucing up the campus to improve morale, employing his savvy financial management skills to clean up budgets, and building relationships across the institution. He was consistent, led with his values, and was very comfortable asking questions and acknowledging what he did *not* know or understand about higher education institutions. He exuded trust, placed confidence in others, and quickly earned the respect of the community. Simply put, Ed Colodny was an amazing leader who transformed the mood, appearance, and vitality of a very complex institution in one year.

As a dean trying to close a major gift just prior to Colodny's arrival, I had the unique opportunity to work closely with him, learn from him, and watch with awe as he engaged people and confronted complex problems directly in a quiet, yet effective, manner. Indeed, Ed Colodny personified the substance of leadership and demonstrated that leadership matters. Following his success at UVM, he was immediately appointed interim president of Fletcher Allen Health Care, which was also plagued with challenges at that time.

Learning Leadership in the Trenches

For the most part, academic leaders have had little or no formal training or preparation for the leadership positions and responsibilities that they have either stumbled into or purposely chosen to pursue. Regardless of how they got there, most end up learning or not learning on the job—no doubt stubbing their toes along the way. Certainly, some have had the opportunity to attend something akin to a half-day workshop for new department chairs; a few have had the good fortune to attend an extensive, and typically expensive, weekend or longer leadership seminar or perhaps even a semester or yearlong leadership fellowship sponsored by a higher education organization, such as the American Council on Education. These are likely valuable experiences but require a significant commitment from participants, many of whom are reluctant to transition

into the leadership role that they either volunteered for in a weak moment (maybe because no one else would do it) or entered to try something new. So, maybe it is not surprising that many leaders are not able to mobilize the forces to advance programs and institutions as they simply don't have the knowledge, skills, experience, or wherewithal to do so.

Most of the major books and published articles on leadership, including those specific to universities, are written by successful corporate leaders, academic management and leadership scholars, professors of educational leadership, executive educators, and leadership coaches and consultants. While these individuals bring valuable scholarly perspectives or experiences from a different context than higher education, most have not been embedded in the trenches of the academy every day navigating the demands, disputes, and decisions of academic leadership positions. Reflections from addressing the potential perils of budget reductions, pandemics, enrollment declines, delicate and often divisive personnel management and conflicts, protests, politics, grievances, and fundraising—often within the media spotlight—provide hands-on, experience-based information directly beneficial to aspiring leaders.

My intention is to bring my years of hands-on experience across multiple institutions and sectors to the dialogue about leadership in higher education. Reflecting upon and understanding my roles, responsibilities, accomplishments, and even my shortcomings have been key elements of any success I may have had. I acknowledge that these experiences were shaped by the possibilities and privileges of my personal circumstance as a white male navigating faculty and leadership roles within and across mostly public flagship research universities, including my role as president of a national organization. These experiences were broadened through my role as a trustee for the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research, which provides oversight of the National Center for Atmospheric Research for the National Science Foundation. I also benefited from my time as a commissioner on the New England Commission on Higher Education, which is responsible for the accreditation of all public and private, two- and four-year, nonprofit and for-profit higher education institutions in New England. Grounded in these experiences, this field guide offers observations, insights, and lessons about what works and, equally important, what doesn't work in leading a change agenda in higher education institutions. And, yes, it is a change agenda that is needed. Keeping the trains running does not require leadership or

instill confidence. It simply maintains the *status quo* in an ever-evolving world of education, research, and opportunity.

Indeed, I have had the good fortune to learn firsthand about the joys and pitfalls of leadership in the trenches working side by side with faculty and staff colleagues and many presidents, provosts, deans, and other academic leaders. In so doing, I have grappled with ever-changing challenges, pursued tangible opportunities, and engaged in the hard, but very rewarding, work of implementing new programs, initiatives, and ideas to advance our colleges and universities. This book captures those moments and struggles and provides a much-needed roadmap for future leaders.

During my many years in academic leadership positions, I worked closely with and had an opportunity to observe numerous presidents, provosts, vice presidents, deans, directors, and chairs. Some were very effective leaders and mentors, and some were not. I learned a ton from individuals in both groups. Although well-intentioned, some were both highly confident and highly ineffective, a particularly dangerous combination, which creates more chaos and confusion than progress. Along the way, I think I learned what works and what doesn't and the critical attributes of effective leadership. So, in many ways, this book is a grass-roots compilation of observations, missteps, and insights derived from learning by doing.

For Whom?

This collection of observations, insights, and lessons represents a “how-to” guide aimed largely at faculty, professional staff, and graduate students who aspire to educational leadership positions or simply find themselves in a leadership position whether they sought it out or not. No doubt, the focus relates to aspiring leaders who care about and understand the academic core mission of colleges and universities and, to that end, may be perceived as especially aimed at faculty, department chairs, directors, deans, vice provosts, provosts, and presidents. We certainly need more faculty interested in academic leadership and ways to support their development. The academic ecosystem, however, also includes interconnections with administrative, business, and student support services and relies on informed colleagues who contribute their expertise and understand the academic enterprise.

Higher education institutions need to do a better job of developing students as future leaders. Graduate students, especially those enrolled

in educational leadership, college student personnel, and higher education student affairs programs, will benefit directly and abundantly from courses and programs emphasizing experienced-based learning focused on the nuances of higher education leadership, which is the purpose of this field guide. Furthermore, today's PhD students, postdoctoral fellows, and new faculty across all disciplines preparing to enter the university as educators, research scholars, departmental colleagues, future committee and task force members, or leaders of research teams will benefit from an understanding of leadership competencies to enhance their career readiness and potential to contribute.

In essence, for those just starting out, this field guide will help demystify the work of academic leaders and provide a better understanding of the inner workings of the academic ecosystem, which may help them be more effective in their faculty roles. Graduate schools are increasingly offering noncredit, micro-credential (e.g., badges) professional development programs on important topics to inform emerging scholars and better position them in the highly competitive higher education employment sector. In a recent article, Jessica Hutchins makes a compelling case for formal leadership training programs aimed at graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to develop self-awareness, leadership approaches, and leadership skill-building.¹ This book nicely fills that niche and adds value for graduate student learning and professional development for new and emerging scholars.

The observations and insights compiled here also connect with professional staff in largely nonacademic roles within universities, such as those in facilities, finance, enrollment management, human resources, student affairs, communication and marketing, and other critically important areas of higher education leadership. Rather than competition among the internal divisions within higher education institutions, all parties need to recognize the primacy of the academic core mission as the reason the institutions exist in the first place. I have learned through the years that this is a hard pill for some to swallow and is often interpreted by some as an indication that their nonacademic work is viewed as less important. In fact, that work is *very* important. By understanding and even celebrating the academic mission, with all the nuances and complications associated with it, all professionals within the university community will be more effective at designing and delivering services that support and enhance the academic mission and student experience

and, as such, the institution. We can all take pride in our collective efforts and achievements that elevate the institution.

Members of governing boards, who often come from private and nonacademic sectors, will also benefit from this deep dive into the world of academic leadership and learning about the inner workings of the institutions that they are entrusted to govern. Because of their fiduciary and governance roles and their responsibility for hiring university presidents and chancellors, trustees should value this inside look at distinctive elements of leadership in institutions of higher education. Similarly, members of university and college advisory councils will also find relevant information that can provide important context for their advisory efforts.

While most of the observations, insights, and lessons here are focused on higher education institutions, there is an abundance of transferable knowledge and skills relevant to other sectors, especially nonprofits, government agencies, and policy institutes. As such, students from many majors who are preparing for careers in these sectors will benefit by developing an understanding of leadership with its many implications for success. Whoever might choose to give this a read, whether student, staff, faculty, academic leader, or board member, I hope you find it helpful in informing and inspiring your leadership development and pursuit of a life and career with purpose and meaning.



PART II

LEADERSHIP SUBSTANCE IN COMPLEX ACADEMIC ECOSYSTEMS

Everything Is Connected

Higher education ecosystems are dynamic entities consisting of numerous constantly interacting component parts. Changes in any component have repercussions that flow throughout the system in response to the initial trigger and secondary multi-layered interactive impacts. Leadership in higher education ecosystems is likewise complex and entails understanding its myriad properties, including internal and external factors, a vast array of constituents, and many extant and evolving academic disciplines. Leadership substance involves the ability and willingness to synthesize observations and inputs and adapt so that the unity and dynamic nature of academic ecosystems is evident and sustained. Indeed, the substance of leadership matters!