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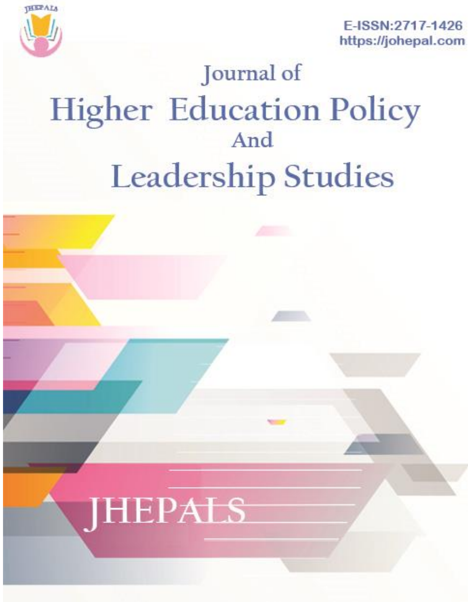

Guiding Principles for Academic Leadership: Clichés, Proverbs, and Sayings Applicable to Academic Leadership

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Abstract

Effective academic leadership is essential for the success of our colleges and universities and, unfortunately, in many cases, for their survival. Mandates to those in leadership positions to achieve efficiencies and to improve performance metrics are considerably more intense now than in recent memory. Further, many institutions, both public and private, also are subject to increasing political pressures. Together, these influences make academic leadership positions at all levels significantly more challenging. Those with experience in sound leadership practices have provided guidance for academic leaders by describing best practices in optimal leadership styles, effective strategies, and modern quantitative practices. Here, in this reflection, we take an approach to suggest principles to describe and develop critical "soft skill" areas of leadership using familiar sayings that allow leaders to prevent and deal with issues in accord with their personal values. Topics include leader values and their relationship to personal behavior, personnel management, finance, conflict resolution, and change management.

Keywords: Academic Leadership; Values; Behavior; Personnel, Finance; Conflict Resolution; Change Management

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Introduction

In this reflection article, we review ideas that arose during our careers in roles such as department chair, associate dean, dean, associate vice provost, and provost. We do not mean to convey that we always applied all of these approaches most effectively; on reflection, we wish that we had sometimes used them more. Sound and consistent academic leadership at all institutional levels is a requirement at our colleges and universities for their continued success and, in some cases, their survival. A serious misstep at any level from department chair to president can spell disaster for an institution that is already challenged. As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, many of our institutions are fiscally struggling and will continue to do so. In addition, political changes can place additional requirements on our campuses. This pressure placed on our institutions and their leadership has resulted in a flurry of high-profile resignations and diminished interest in academic leadership positions.

Those in the business of supporting individuals who are in or aspire to administration have responded with conferences and other materials to foster good practices. Most of the materials approach the position from a perspective of the responsibilities of the position or the strategic and competency leadership style of the individual (e.g. Mobley, 2022). The reflection article here breaks down leadership into encounters as represented by familiar sayings that encompass the "soft skill" areas of leader responsibility and allow us to deal with issues in accord with our personal values. Effective academic leadership depends on an underpinning of sound guiding principles that provide a foundation for wise and ethical decision making. It is important for academic leaders to establish their own "principles" based on their personal values and to understand the "advantages" of applying them in their administrative roles. Here, we review some of our guiding principles in the context of academic administration.

Positive Guiding Principles

"Take Pride in the Success of Others"

In our opinion, pride in the success of others should be the primary driving trait of academic leaders. Academic institutions such as universities are synergistic communities of students, staff, and faculty. The career and performance success of each of these constituencies (and the resulting positive impact on the local region and beyond) should be the core goal of academic leaders, even at the expense of their personal careers, when necessary.

This principle will require a change of mindset for the academic administrator. Faculty would typically report accomplishments as follows: "I was able to obtain funding for…", "The students nominated me for…", and "My contribution was to change this section of the policy in order to…" In their own reports; a thoughtful chair would change the pronoun usage from "I, me, and my" to "we, us, and our". This would also be the case for deans and provosts whose reporting units would include departments and schools/colleges, respectively.

An example of this principle would be a science department that has hired a new chair who is expected to lead the unit to greater success in research and scholarship. Upon arriving, the new chair immediately convenes a retreat with all faculty that is designed to identify steps that would lead to improvement. What emerged was a consensus that what was holding them back was a lack of funding to support their work. To address this the faculty pledged that each one of them would submit a proposal for funding to support a project in their area of interest in the coming year.

It is now nine months later and the chair is due to present the accomplishments of the department at a major school event. He could just report the grant success of the unit, which includes three major awards, one of which is the largest grant (the PI is the chair!) ever received by the college. Instead, he reports the fact that, to date, 84% of the faculty submitted proposals compared to 28% the prior year and then gives the total funding received. His report is very much a “we and us” report.

Applying this principle in an academic environment also means that the leader, when appropriate, should be an ardent advocate for the students, faculty, and staff members of the unit. This might be providing support for campus awards, advancement in positions, and other aspects of individual career success and recognition. For example, support of an outstanding person for a promotion to a campus level leadership or administrative position might be interpreted as a “loss” for the unit, but leaders should take the higher road and support the aspirations of the individual and the general good.

“Manners Maketh Man”

Studies have suggested that students form a relatively fixed (and perhaps fairly accurate) opinion about the motivation and instructional effectiveness of teachers by observing the non-verbal behavior of the teacher within the starting few minutes at the first meeting of a class (e.g. Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993; Lane et al., 2021). These instincts are not restricted to our students. Faculty and staff also rapidly recognize whether an administrator respects them and has a shared sense of belonging in the institution. Academic leaders who treat all members of the community with high respect and interact with them in a friendly and polite manner will often see the same traits reciprocated, strengthening the cohesion of the unit.

There are circumstances when exhibiting polite behavior will be challenging. When an administrator (a chair or dean) is called to their boss’s office to “discuss a matter of great concern”, would be an example. If the boss is known as an emotional individual who can become volatile an alternate tact may be important to consider. The administrator might approach the meeting with a steeled determination to not exhibit any emotional traits (no raised voices or return accusations) during the meeting. The individual can remain firm in holding their position, even when the boss goes off, but refrains from doing anything that stokes emotional behavior. If the issue remains unresolved at the end of the meeting, promise to look into it further. Any subsequent meetings will likely be more civil from the outset.

The classic examples in higher education that can lead to problematic rhetoric are disputes between faculty and students. They often arise in public places and not in private offices. If other students are present the faculty member is immediately placed at a disadvantage because of the “power differential”. Some cases will be appealed to the chair. In both instances, university personnel should treat the student with respect (calm voice, no accusations, etc.) as they review the case and the decision. Because the chair was not present at the outset, the case should be separately vetted by the chair with the faculty member, the student, and any witnesses. All relevant institutional policies should be assembled for the meetings with both the faculty member and the student. Professional behavior is expected of university personnel throughout the process.

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"Walk the Walk"

In our opinion, effective academic leaders optimally will have had positive experiences in the core roles on which they must judge the performance of colleagues. A leader who has been an impactful teacher, a valued mentor, a productive researcher or creative artist, and who has contributed significantly in service, will be able to speak to the unit from a position of knowledge and experience. Furthermore, their ideas for improvement will be taken seriously. Obviously, there are limits to this idea, especially in the staff realm. We cannot expect academic leaders to all be experts on IT, marketing, student health, etc., but they should be able to understand and value the critical roles of these expert areas in executing the core missions of the institution. None of us are expert at every aspect of academic life and it can sometimes be argued that leaders who are "Jacks of all trades, masters of none" may make good administrators because they have a broad understanding of their constituencies. A compelling case can also be made that leaders who establish effective communication and trust with the area experts that manage departments, units, and specific academic domains, can be similarly effective.

An example from our primary guiding principle would be a faculty member who has never written a proposal and doesn't know where to start. The chair could guide this faculty member or use his knowledge and expertise to identify another faculty member with whom the individual could collaborate on a proposal.

Another example would be a department in which the chair and a faculty member have been working to improve a large enrollment class for non-majors. The class has had poor student outcomes and low student satisfaction in recent years in spite of their efforts to improve it. The chair, whose previous teaching experience has been at the graduate level, has come to realize that she must go outside the department to get help with this. Working with campus colleagues, she identifies a faculty member in another department who has had great success working with non-majors in large classes. She then sets a meeting with the faculty member and his chair where she seeks to arrange mentoring for her faculty member. To make this attractive to the mentor and his department she offers funds for a course buy-out. She does the same for her faculty member.

"The Best Thing Is the People and the Worst Thing Is the People"

In academia, dealing with the "problem cases": the typically low percentage of students, faculty, and staff with issues to be addressed, can take up a disproportionate amount of an administrator's time. This can lead to leaders operating mostly in a reactive manner to "put out the fires". Academic leaders need to be aware of this trap and be as proactive as possible. They should make clear policies through shared governance procedures and communicate these regularly to remind the academic community of the shared values by which all have agreed to operate. They should be consistent (and as transparent as possible) in administering these policies, the reasons for the policies, and the consequences for non-compliance. Similarly, they should make sure that they are paying appropriate attention to the majority of their colleagues who are performing well: publicly celebrating and rewarding their successes and ensuring that each of the constituencies (students, faculty, staff, local community) and each of the departments/divisions of the unit receive appropriate time and consideration.

Guiding Principles for Academic Leadership

The actions taken by academic leaders should, of course, be policy and data driven, rather than emotionally driven. That said, good and valued people make mistakes, and leaders need to understand the context of the situation in which the error was made. Any sanctions should be appropriate to the situation with the goal of both restoring the optimal trajectory of the person's career and what is best for the future health of the unit. In addition, after the case has been dealt with, if there are no further incidents or patterns of inappropriate behavior, then the incident should be considered closed. Administrators who hold grudges or seek extended vengeance are poor fits for leadership roles.

This principle is illustrated by the following story: It is Faculty Honors & Awards Day and Professor Rogers, the department chair, is looking forward to celebrating the accomplishments of three of his faculty members. One award recipient is Dr. Mann, a 4th year tenure-track faculty member who has won a regional award for outstanding undergraduate teaching. Rogers is thinking that, coupled with his research record, this award cements his case for tenure. The other two recipients are Associate Professors, one-in the 8th year and one in the 12th year of appointment. Rogers is gratified by this because the department has several Associate Professors who are not making progress to full rank. Perhaps these two will establish a new trend. Dr. Milque (12th year) has a good research record - but not good enough to leverage full rank. Recently, he won election to a national committee that will review and revise the undergraduate curriculum in the discipline. This effort will impact all of higher education. The final award recipient is Dr. Majeck. She has made shambles of the department's rigorous criteria for tenure and promotion. Her record after just 3 years in rank more than meets the measure for promotion to full rank. Rogers is now very comfortable bringing her case forward based on recent events. Six weeks earlier she was surprised to learn that her disciplinary colleagues from across the country had been successful in getting her elected to the level of Research Fellow of a National Society. Almost lost in the excitement over this was the announcement that she was the recipient of a $3M grant for her groundbreaking research.

One can tell that Professor Rogers is proud of his three faculty members. His time in recent weeks has been dominated by his work on a state-wide task force that has been meeting 100 miles away. He was aware of accomplishments of the three but has not had the time or opportunity to offer congratulations except by phone or e-mail. Hence, he is anxious about today's ceremony.

There is a bustle of excitement on the morning of the ceremony with faculty, staff and students trying to get their work done before the 1 p.m. start. Rogers notices that Dr. Wine, a member of the faculty, has cruised by his office several times. Dr. Wine is one of the "stuck" Associate Professors. He has a habit of coming by for a "minute" and leaving hours later. Topics of conversation are his plight in the department, asking what he must do to get promoted, complaining that the criteria are always changing, stating how much better he is than Prof. X, asking why Prof. Y is paid more than he is, and so forth. Rogers is determined not to let him ruin the celebration of the awardees. At 12:45, Dr. Wine knocks on the chair's door, walks in, sits down, and says "We need to talk!"

"Vote with Your Feet"

This idiom, taken literally, often means to indicate an opinion or strong interest in a topic by being present when that subject is discussed. To us, in academic leadership this means

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several extensions of that principle. First, this can mean that it is a good practice for academic leaders to sometimes get out of their offices and visit faculty and staff colleagues for meetings in their offices and working spaces. When faculty or staff are "called" to a provost's or dean's or chair's office, there is a power advantage for the administrator right from the start. This situation was wonderfully parodied by the great comedian Andy Kaufman who sat at a desk raised many feet above the level of a person being interviewed (Kaufman, 1984). There is an improved psychology, a leveling of the playing field, in a friendly meeting between a dean and a faculty member that takes place in the faculty member's office or laboratory, for example. It shows that the administrator wants to learn more about the faculty member and has taken the time to visit her/his space. This can often lead to more open and productive conversations and a better long-term understanding between the participants. The staff or faculty member can show off their workspace (such as a studio or laboratory) and both sides can better understand each other's roles, needs and challenges. Of course, there are some occasions where the administrator's office is the more appropriate setting for a meeting.

The meetings between administrators and faculty can be scheduled or impromptu and can be planned with a specific purpose or be agenda-less. Initially, a dean might schedule the first meeting with an agenda that is non-threatening (or benign) and can easily transition to other subjects. Perhaps "acquainting you with the campus support services for faculty" or expressing an interest in the faulty member's research would work for new faculty. During these conversations personal items (family - spouse or partner, children, hobbies, other interests, etc.) will be revealed by both people. The dean should take note of those items that can serve as a segue to further conversations in the future.

Similarly, the department chair or dean who "votes with their feet" and attends as many activities and performances by the students, faculty, and staff, in her/his unit as possible will demonstrate their commitment to actively support the success of all of the members of the unit. This is one way of putting into practice is the related saying "*be a leader and a cheerleader*".

Relatedly, we have found it an effective practice to select faculty and staff for roles based on their enthusiasm and motivation for the task, rather than always using the "obvious candidate". For example, we remember one situation where a school/college at a university was forming committees to develop action items for a new strategic plan. To the surprise of some of the faculty, a staff member volunteered to chair one of these groups, and she proved to be a very effective leader, innovator, and drove consensus building. In another example, during a wholesale rebuild of an entire curriculum, a seemingly intractable class scheduling problem arose. During a group discussion of this challenge, we noticed that one junior faculty member was quiet and seemed to be doodling grids on a piece of paper. When asked privately about their ideas, he said that he saw the schedule as an interesting intellectual challenge. He was invited to tackle it and present it to the group. One week later, the problem was solved.

"Show Me the Money!" (…with no side deals)

The line "*Show me the money!*" was written by Cameron Crowe for the movie "*Jerry Maguire*" (Crowe, 1996). The availability of funding is almost always a key rate limiting step in building and maintaining academic programs. In our opinion, the more transparent, and made for consistent reasons, budget decisions are, the better. When faculty and staff can see how allocations are made, consistent with discussed policies, it is clear that they will accept decisions more readily, even if they disagree with them, and will work towards common goals. The tying of budget decisions to strategic plans can also be powerful in academic communities so that the community can see that the plan that they created is driving critical resource decisions.

It is our observation that financial transparency diminishes as one looks higher in academic structures (e.g., department finances are often easier to examine than a college or provost office budget). This is not just a matter of scale or complexity. We realize that deans, provosts, and presidents need some flex in their budgets in order to adapt to changing environments and to respond to situations that arise. However, we contend that staff and faculty understand this is important and as much transparency as possible is still merited.

Many faculty and staff misunderstandings, and therefore complaints, about budgets simply arise from their lack of access to and understanding of the structure of a unit's budget. We therefore recommend making it clear that the administration has an "open door" policy on budget discussions. You can hold workshops or office hours where faculty and staff can attend to learn about the budget and ask questions. Don't be surprised if few faculty and staff will attend. Obviously, there are some budget details that may be restricted for privacy reasons (although these are low in number, especially at state institutions).

In financial crises, tough decisions that can include job losses sometimes have to be made. This is a situation where clear communication is critically important and profoundly valued. Explaining the rationale for a decision like this helps acceptance of the outcome. Downsizing should always involve input from all administrative levels down to the level of the position affected.

New academic leaders can often inherit "side deals" that their predecessors have made. By "side deals" we mean agreements that are made outside of the usual decision-making policies and would perhaps not be well accepted if broadly known. It can be challenging to work with these deals, especially if they do not fit well with the values of the new leadership. We first recommend making it very clear, with frequent communication to many audiences, that the new leadership will not make any such side deals on their watch. This can often lead to light being shone on the past side deals and, once they are publicly known, and to their modification for the better general good. Second, we recommend actively managing inherited side deals, including to establish end points, always seeking to move towards conditions that are most fair for the whole academic community.

"Communication Prevents Most Problems and Helps Solve Almost All the Others"

There are many pieces of advice concerning parenting: for example, "*you have to tell kids something 5 (or 10?) times for it to sink in*" and "*you should say 'Yes' five times more than you say 'No'*". In academia, communication is no less important. In conveying important information about policies faculty often complain that they receive a significant volume of e-mail about compliance and other "bureaucratic" issues. Whether five times is the magic number or not, it is clear that more than a few times are appropriate. For routine but critical policies, a written reminder might be sent at the start of each academic term to all instructors, including (and critically) adjunct instructors.

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Excellent communication between the layers of administration is essential for a smooth-running organization. Important information that is spread verbally should be backed up in writing or with an e-mail. In this way the recipient has a physical reminder of the issue that contains some of the detail that might have been forgotten and the sender has evidence that the information was sent and when.

Serious complaints are a special category of information that should swiftly move up the chain of command. Most commonly these are disputes between faculty and students. Some of these will go beyond and involve the chair and on rare occasions go to the Dean and can involve parents and attorneys. This calls for the "heads-up" communication between the chair and the dean. The chair should inform the dean of the relevant details of the situation even if there appears to be a resolution at the department level. The complainants can change their minds and appeal to the dean. The dean's familiarity with the case will save time for everyone. If there is no appeal, you have at least demonstrated your problem-solving prowess and your attentiveness to preparing the boss.

There is a balance to be achieved between targeted and broad communications. It is often useful for a leader to send out general reminders of policies (and consequences), when the leader becomes aware of a few individuals committing minor infractions of a policy. In this way the behavior will likely be corrected without the need to target those individuals. As always, the details are important here: are those individuals frequent trouble makers and is a direct communication merited? Would a general notice be useful to remind the community of an important policy or would the message be seen as yet more bureaucratic noise? Policies that are frequently questioned or violated should be reviewed by the relevant faculty committee and discussed with the entire faculty. Clarity, relevance, and equity are the variables to consider.

Effective opportunities for communication facilitate the transfer of information and will prevent issues arising. Department faculty meetings, deans meeting one-on-one with chairs, college and institution-wide faculty and staff meetings with clear opportunities for all attendees to be heard in a "safe" environment are all good examples of this.

"A Joy that is Shared is a Joy Made Double" – Share Good News

There's a Swedish proverb: "*Shared joy is double joy; Shared sorrow is half a sorrow.*" Good news should move swiftly in both directions ("upward" and "downward" at all levels). These are occasions that makes the first part ("A joy that is shared is a joy made double") of the Swedish proverb come to life. Our recommendation is to have each department (or other unit) decide their markers for success; for example, for a department, it might be securing funding for their work. As items were accumulating for the agenda for the monthly faculty meeting, all faculty successes can be listed as item 1. Everything from a $2 million grant from the NIH to a course improvement grant from a campus program would be there. At the meeting, the list is read and recipients can answer questions from the faculty. Including the contributions of all faculty re-enforces the importance of bringing dollars into the department and encourages additional grant writing.

A second example of joyous news that deserves dissemination is the human-interest story. These stories frequently involve the achievements of, or heart-warming stories about, our students. The story of a student from an impoverished area who wins a Goldwater scholarship or the saga of veteran medic of the Iraq war who gains admission medical school might be this type of story. These stories will sometimes find their way into reports and speeches given by high campus administrators or into narratives for campus marketing.

"One Mouth But Two Ears"

Listening is a critical skill in communication. It provides the administrator with information beyond the facts. Whether the administrator is new to campus or will have important new roles on the same campus, good listening skills will increase the effectiveness and decrease the ramp-up time of the new administrator. We have observed new administrators who spend some initial time in their new roles attending meetings as observers in order to gain insight on how the group works, the types of arguments that are successful, and knowledge of the people with real effectiveness.

Effective listening is also critical when mediating disputes between individuals or groups, when carrying information to others, and in engaging in complex negotiations. Administrators who are careful listeners typically avoid making disputes more contentious, passing on misinformation, and slowing down negotiations.

"The Hill to Die On"

In professional team sports, the tenure of a head coach is often not long; most coaches know that at some point they will be fired or asked to step down. They are somewhat buffered from these sudden transitions by the protection of their contracts which are typically paid out following the firing. We suggest that it would be healthy for higher education if more academic leaders approached their jobs with this mindset. Although academic administrators do not often have the high dollar contracts of sports managers, they typically are tenured faculty (or should be: see "Walk the walk") and have those positions to return to. Academic leaders should have a set of principles that define "*the hills they are prepared to die on*". These should be entirely disconnected from the personal success of the administrator; rather they should be derived from the core beliefs and motivations of the leader; especially their pride in the success of others. It is not always possible to predefine all scenarios and situations may be complicated: judging what is best for the general good over the needs of an individual within the administrator's unit, for example. Nevertheless, the administrators should be prepared to bow out of their roles if the direction of the initiative is staunchly opposed to their values and all efforts at negotiation have been exhausted. The "honor resignation" appears to be less common these days, both in academia and in politics.

An example of this might be when a dean of a college strongly suggests to the new dean of a college that a specific department might fit better in his college rather than hers. To further intensify the situation, the dean also insinuates that the university president would approve of this change. The new dean does not answer the question and quickly ends the conversation. She rapidly consults with the chair of the department who tells her that he has anticipated this and has confidentially consulted with all of his faculty. The department faculty are united in opposition to the move and many indicate that they would look to leave in this circumstance. Further, the faculty believe that such a change would not be in the best interests of the students in the department. The new dean calls the dean of the other college and tells him that she strongly opposes this idea and if the university

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administration forced such a move it would lead to her resignation and likely the loss of many of the department faculty.

"There Are Two Sides to All Stories"

The English musician Howard Jones wrote in "*New Song*", "*Don't crack up; Bend your brain; See both sides*" (Jones, 1983). Academic leaders often have to resolve conflicts between individuals and mediate other difficult situations, such as accusations of policy infringements as discussed earlier. These issues often involve power differentials between the parties involved (such as a chair and a faculty member, or a faculty member and a student, for example) while respecting their roles and responsibilities. We have found that it is always best to listen carefully to both sides and to investigate thoroughly before making any statements or taking actions. It can be damaging to jump to a conclusion and make a judgement early in the process. Unless it is an emergency situation that requires a rapid decision, saying "We will investigate this immediately" should let all parties know that you are going to examine the case quickly and fairly. During this investigation, both sides of the story will be revealed and the administrator will have the opportunity to "get their ducks in a row" as the response is formulated.

We experienced one situation where a conflict occurred between faculty members who had dramatically different accounts of a shared experience. If we had reacted based on the first party's description, we likely would have lost a great deal of credibility and responded poorly. It is important to understand the context and the motivations of all parties before making assumptions or judging. It could be that both sets have partially valid perceptions and your role as a leader will be to help them navigate that.

Of course, there are instances where a response must be taken immediately (sometimes before further investigation) to potentially protect the safety of one or more of the individuals involved. Often, these cases are not solely in the domain of the academic leader but also can involve law enforcement and other experts. In these situations, academic administrators, in partnership with expert colleagues, should ensure immediate compliance with all policies and laws but can nevertheless retain an open mind, protect the reputations of those involved and render a decision only after a thorough investigation.

Leading Change

"Change is Difficult for Everyone"

There is a universal expectation that all new administrators will bring change. In essentially all job searches, candidates are expected to provide a "vision" for the department, school, or campus. It would be lame if someone were to say "we will continue on in all aspects in exactly the same way as before". In many cases the search has been initiated to recruit someone to effect change that the unit could not accomplish on its own. Thus, the new administrator should arrive with a solid plan to start the change process.

The saying here ("*change is difficult for everyone*") is the first of three that we will use to discuss this critically important topic. Individuals (and some academic cultures) have varying tolerances for change and everyone has their limits beyond which it is very difficult to recruit them to the new agenda.

The change process should be initiated only after thorough framing[7]. Framing allows the change agent to identify all the people and entities that will be impacted by the change,

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gauge their level of support or resistance, and develop strategies to gain additional support. Thorough framing would consider structural barriers (institutional policies, procedures, and practices, legal aspects), the people to be impacted, the institutional politics (who the power brokers are), and institutional culture and tradition. After framing, the change agent will have to work or negotiate with some constituents to avoid opposition to the change process while checking on the continued support of those on-board at the outset. Ultimately, all identified constituencies should be engaged in the discussion, planning, and the implementation of the changes so that there is broad community ownership of the changes and shared investment in their successful implementation.

"Not All Change Is Good"
Change that is ill-conceived or poorly executed or done simply for the sake of change are examples of this principle (Bolman & Gallos, 2011). When confronted with a mandate from trustees or legislatures for change that is deemed to be bad for the unit or the institution, the change agents will find themselves in a difficult position. Strategies to deal with situations like this include finding a different way to get the desired outcome or listing the consequences suffered by others who have gone down the same path. External mandates for change promise to increase in the near future and they are not likely to be satisfied by clever substitutions.

"Change Will Evoke Resistance"
Resistance to change is a trait commonly assigned to faculty although our experience tells us that it exists in administrative ranks to about the same degree (Lees, 2012a). Some of the types of resistance can be illustrated by department level change examples where a second faculty member in a subdiscipline is to be recruited and a move to include graduate programming (Lees, 2016). In the first example, a Chemistry Department wants to hire a second analytical chemist, a move prompted by the development of an interdisciplinary degree in Forensic Sciences. The current analytical chemist, a 14-year veteran, is opposed to the hire, saying that she can do the teaching in the forensics program. The real reasons for her opposition are concerns she will have to share teaching analytical chemistry courses and to develop or teach a new course, she will have to share graduate students and extra income from analyzing samples for outside constituents, and she is uncomfortable about the new person who is adept at using instrumentation that she has only read about.

In a second case, a move to develop graduate programming (such as research and non-research Master's degrees) in a department might engender resistance from some of the senior faculty who have spent many years teaching undergraduates only. They may not feel adequate to work at the graduate level and, if graduate level research is added to the palate of faculty work used for merit, they may feel that they would lose out on salary considerations. In both cases, the chair as the change agent would be responsible for moving the agenda ahead while convincing the reluctant faculty (most of them at least) to support the change.

These two examples of resistance have many root causes. Both faculty members express concerns about their personal adequacy to do the new work. There is fear of the loss of stature and income and having to compete for graduate students (self-interest). The

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change agent (the chair) can generate a teaching schedule for the analytical chemistry course offerings and indicate a role for the faculty member to teach part of a forensic course if she wishes. The chair can point out that the forensics program would bring in additional graduate students and would generate more consulting work for faculty. The senior faculty member in the second example might be offered a role team teaching a course in the new program or in advising students in the non-research Master's degree programs as ways to lessen the feeling of inadequacy; a thoughtful chair will find a role for everyone in the new world order (Lees, 2012b).

Other strategies are effective when managing change. First, engaging all constituents is important. For example, if multiple departments are developing a common "umbrella" graduate program, a steering committee to develop the program with one faculty representative from each department (even if the departments vary in size) can allow all voices to be heard. Other relevant groups should also be engaged: the committee might also benefit from staff and student representatives. Secondly, positively empowering the loudest doubting voices can be a good strategy. For example, if a college is proposing the creation of a new strategic plan and a faculty member from a historically change resistant department expresses cynical doubts about the process, as a waste of time for example, one can invite that person to have a leading role in the process to ensure that time is well spent. We have used this strategy successfully many times. As long as one is sure that the person will have an open mind and is not determined to sabotage the process, this method can flip the doubters into contributors.

Negative or Mixed Sayings and Principles

These are sayings that appear during the change process that are usually considered sayings to avoid. ***"Because we've always done it that way"*** is a saying that one hears when a policy or practice is questioned. They are defended as policies when they are, in fact, frequently long-term practices. Practice changes that improve function can be implemented rapidly while official policy changes must go through multiple reviews.

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it" *is another* saying that expresses resistance to change but may be applicable to change that is not considered to be good. There are examples in higher education where the difference between good change and bad change is a matter of opinion. Let us use the undergraduate curriculum as an example. Let us also say that the discipline is one without a professional organization to provide a framework upon which degrees should be based. The curriculum has been in place for five years and all parameters seem to be favorable. The number of majors has increased each year, graduate and professional school placements remain high, employers continue to hire graduates and have expressed no concerns on preparation gaps, and it is known that faculty are upgrading their courses with the most recent information. Yet there are two faculty members calling for major curriculum revision, stating that the present curriculum is five years old and needs to be changed. Is this a case where the saying is appropriately used? Would the department be guilty of resistance to change, if it declined to restructure the curriculum?

"***Don't do it right; do it now***", is perhaps less of a saying that is spoken outright but sometimes a philosophy driven by academic leaders who are trying to institute rapid changes. We have observed that this philosophy is often tied to the drive by some academic leaders to build personal resumes as leaders of change. Their subsequent list of "accomplishments" is more important to them as leverage to achieve the next higher position than the consequences of the actions.

A final saying that is used in conjunction with change is ***"Perfection is the enemy of progress"***. This phrase is attributed to Winston Churchill. A similar aphorism, "*Perfect is the enemy of good,"* is another form of the same saying often attributed to Voltaire. This one warns the change agent not to delay initiating the change until every detail is known and every question is fully answered. The individuals implementing the initiative can make adjustments as they work, if necessary. Undue delays will lose the interest or attention of many!

"Pressure makes diamonds", this common saying used in many work arenas, especially the business world, is attributed to General George S. Patton, Jr. We contend that even though pressure indeed makes diamonds in the natural world, and pressure is an important driver in emergency situations such as wars, that incentive is a better driver to invigorate productivity and career success in the academic world.

Final Words

Quotes, clichés, proverbs, and aphorisms take broad and complex ideas and make them concise and easy to remember. This is why they are frequently repeated by adults to children to teach them good behaviors. As adults, many of us also use them as internal motivation devices to help ourselves, saying things like "*A penny saved is a penny earned*", or "*Measure twice, cut once*" or "A *job worth doing is worth doing well*" to ourselves in our heads as a way to optimize our behaviors. Academic leadership is highly complex and challenging. It also requires flexibility to know when to apply certain strategies. We chose our collection of sayings here as easily remembered guiding principles to illustrate some mostly soft skill approaches and behaviors that we have observed to be effective in academic leadership at multiple levels. However, we understand that these approaches will not be the best in all situations that you will encounter. But we also know that, if you are proactive enough to be reading articles such as this, you already know that "*The more you read, the more things you will know, the more you learn, the more places you'll go*" (attributed to Dr. Suess) and that "*The best way out is always through*" and you will face challenges head-on and find a productive path through them.

There is one final saying we will share here. It was used frequently after facing tough situations or completing challenging tasks. One of us would invariably ask *"Are we having fun yet?".*

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