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Leading Faculty: Understanding the Connection between Goals and Values

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Academic Leadership Journal

Faculty can never do enough. We need them to teach, write, advise, mentor, network, and conduct groundbreaking research. And when we are faced with extremely limited budgets, hiring freezes, and increased pressure to bring in research funds, university faculty are counted on to pick up the fallen pieces. Academic leaders find themselves asking faculty to give more time and effort to assist in advancing their institutions, but at what price? Typically, as leaders demand more of the faculty, morale tends to decrease and grumbling skyrockets. In actuality, it is like that in any organization. However, it is no secret that leader-subordinate relationships in academic settings are not quite the same as those in business and commerce. Academic leaders do not have the same managerial dynamic with their faculty as a vice president of a manufacturing company would with his or her employees. The power and authority those professionals use to motivate their employees is not the best way to engage faculty in higher education.

As academic leaders, we can't expect faculty to solve all our problems. And we surely can't motivate them through end of year bonuses and the threat of termination. What is needed in times like these is a more inspirational, collaborative, and empowering approach. We need to understand the individuals or groups, and their values. We need to give their responsibilities meaning. We need to show interest in their development, both personally and professionally. We need to stimulate instead of motivate. Academic leaders need to transform: transform their institutions, their goals, and the mindset of their faculty.

Transformational Leadership

It is the groundbreaking work of James McGregor Burns (1978) that sparked the movement towards understanding leadership through the concepts of shared and communicated values, moralities, and ethics. Burns' book on political leadership examines leadership and motivation through the contrasting actions of transforming and transacting. Burns conceptualizes transforming leadership as being grounded in the ability of the leader to appeal to the moral values of his or her followers in an attempt to motivate and galvanize them to reform the status quo. He describes it as a process in which "the transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower" (1978, p. 3). Transforming leaders are able to charismatically raise the awareness and consciousness of their followers regarding important issues of social and moral values and direct them towards desired outcomes. Transforming leaders are also able to motivate their followers to transcend their own self-interests in order to assist in the cause.

Transacting leadership, on the other hand, is grounded in the path-goal theory of exchanges and rewards for desired actions. According to Burns, "The relations of most leaders and followers are transactional – leaders approach followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another: jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions. Such transactions comprise the bulk of the relationships among leaders and followers, especially in groups, legislatures, and parties" (1978, p. 3). In the private sector, transacting leaders can motivate subordinates to accomplish tasks through pay increases and promotions. However, there needs to be more than an exchange of rewards in order to

increase job satisfaction and effort (Burns, 1978).

Based on Burns' work, Bernard M. Bass (1985) began empirically analyzing the theories of transformational and transactional leadership. Bass' concept of transformational and transactional leadership differs from Burns' in two significant ways. First, while Burns sees transformation as "one that was necessarily elevating, furthering what was good rather than evil" (Bass, 1985, p. 20), Bass puts "the emphasis on the observed change in followers and [argues] that the same dynamics of the leaders' behavior can be of short- or long-term benefit or cost to the followers" (1985, p. 21). In other words, Bass allows for evil or destructive transformations as well as good or elevating ones.

Burns also makes the differencing distinction that transformational and transactional leadership styles are mutually exclusive in each leader. Bass, conversely, conceptualizes the continuum of the "full range of leadership styles" where effective leaders use a combination of both types of leadership behavior. Bass shows that transformational leaders utilize some aspect of transactional behaviors, and are able to augment those behaviors with transformational behaviors.

Utilizing the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) in both military and business settings, Bass concludes that transformational leadership behaviors show high correlations with follower satisfaction and extra effort, as well as perceived leadership effectiveness. Bass also empirically shows that effective leaders possess and utilize both transformational and transactional leadership behaviors.

Transformational Leadership in Higher Education

Victor Vroom (1983) studied leadership in higher education and found that the leader-subordinate relationships in academic settings are not similar to those of the private sector. He examined distinguishing characteristics of universities and how they affect leadership. In his findings, Vroom states that, "a careful examination... will reveal that each of these differences [in the leader-subordinate relationship] would lead to the prescription of more frequent participative leadership styles in academic environments" (1983, p. 383). Vroom concludes that, "the complex, nonroutine and challenging tasks which, we have argued, abound in academe, call for a high level of initiating structure, i.e., coaching, guiding and deadline setting" (1983, p. 383). The words "coaching" and "guiding" are extremely important. They can be conceptually linked to the transformational factor of individualized consideration: the understanding of those that follow you, and the interest in their development.

Vroom also analyses the impact leaders in higher education have on members of the academic community who do not directly report to them. He even cites Burns (1978) in the process:

"In the academic world, as one moves from department chairs, to deans, to university presidents, it would appear that leaders increasingly exhibit patterns of behavior that have a marked influence on organizational effectiveness but are not mediated through subordinates.... Leaders, particularly those in positions of higher responsibility... present their ideas and programs to organization members.... James McGregor Burns (1978) refers to transforming leadership in which the leader shapes the values of members around the importance of [the] organization's product or service or mission.... Such organizations possess, either currently or early in their history a leader who served to create a sense of institutional purpose which continued to lend meaning and direction to the activities of organization members" (1983, p. 384).

Fisher et al. (1996) point out, "There is no question that the president is the one person who has the greatest opportunity to influence the course of his or her institution, to ensure the imminence of higher education in this country, and to see that higher education continues to make lasting societal contribution. When meeting the demands of various constituent groups, it is clearly the president who makes the difference" (1996, p. 2). One of those constituent groups is the faculty of the institution itself.

In a literature review on the facilitation of change in higher education, Kezar (2001) finds that leaders need a distinctive approach to organizational change in academe. He surmises that presidents, deans, and department chairs need to be mindful of several unique organizational features in higher education, including a relatively independent environment, the unique culture of academe, value-driven faculty, multiple power and authority structures, organized decision-making structures, shared governance, employee committees, and tenure. In Kesar's opinion, "The shared governance system, organized anarchy, conflicting administrative and professional values, and ambiguous, competing goals also point to a need for the interpretive power of political models" (2001, p. 2). As academic leaders, our problem often lies in our attempts to motivate "value-driven faculty" with "conflicting administrative and professional values." Unless the values and associated goals are congruent, we will ultimately struggle.

Keup et al. (2001) also conducted a literature review of transformation in higher education. Their review focuses on the effects of organizational culture on institutional change. They find that resistance to change – especially by the faculty – severely affects the transformation process.

"Historically, the greatest clash has occurred between administrators – often the initiators and leaders of campus transformation efforts – and the faculty – the body frequently charged with implementing educational changes.... Because faculty members' average tenure with a university far outlasts that of most presidents and administrators, faculty are often the gatekeepers of culture and traditions on the campus. When long-held cultural beliefs are challenged by change efforts faculty naturally perceive the change initiative as threatening. Thus, unless these cultural elements are directly addressed, resistance will be the usual response to any transformation effort" (2001, p. 2).

In other words, effective change is most likely to occur when leaders are able to tie institutional goals to faculty values (or "long-held cultural beliefs").

Grosso (2008) examined transformational and transactional leadership factors and found empirical evidence which showed that university faculty were more likely to exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction and extra effort if they perceived the president as having transformational leadership characteristics and behaviors. His research shows that by appealing to the values of the faculty, inspiring and supporting developmental needs of faculty, communicating their vision effectively, and encouraging new approaches toward problem solving, presidents may witness increases in faculty job satisfaction and what Bass (1985) considers extra effort: performance beyond the expectations of the job.

These studies support the use of transformational leadership in higher education. They outline the culture and dynamics unique in higher education, and show the effectiveness of leaders that coach and guide faculty, shape organizational issues around faculty values, and give meaning and direction to new initiatives. They build the case for leaders to consider how to engage the individuals instead of relying solely on what their responsibilities should be. However, can these insights produce the desired outcome of increased faculty satisfaction and effort? Or do these outcomes also depend upon the motivators within individual faculty?

Individual Motivation

There are many theories regarding motivation, and the definition varies among researchers. However, we are focused on how leadership behavior motivates and inspires followers. For that, a review of self-concept and self-concordance motivation can provide an understanding of this relationship.

Self-concept based motivation theory (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993) conceptually links charismatic leadership theory and self-efficacy motivation theory. The theory is grounded in the framework that charismatic leadership is effective when the leader strikes a chord with the follower's values and moral purpose. Shamir, House & Arthur examine how charismatic leaders are able to motivate followers and change their values, goals, and aspirations. Shamir et al. recognize that there is a relationship between leadership behavior and the motivation of the follower. As they note in their study, "we need to supplement current theories of charismatic leadership with a motivation theory that will be able to better explain the relationships between leader behaviors and effects on followers, and account for the transformational effects of charismatic leaders" (1993, p. 579).

With this in mind, Shamir et al. outline five processes by which charismatic leaders motivate followers. They include: 1) increasing the intrinsic valence of effort, 2) increasing effort-accomplishment expectancies, 3) increasing the intrinsic valence of goal accomplishment, 4) instilling faith in a better future, and 5) creating personal commitment. According to the authors, these effects on the self-concept represent "three common processes of psychological attachment: personal identification, social identification, and value internalization" (1993, p. 586). Personal identification is when the follower attempts to be like the leader. Social identification is when individuals simply identify with the leader of the group. Value internalization is when followers begin to view their work as congruent with their own personally-held values (Bono & Judge, 2003).

The theory suggests that the more leaders utilize the specified behaviors, the more the followers will demonstrate 1) a personal commitment to the leader and the mission 2) a willingness to make sacrifices for the collective mission 3) meaningfulness in the work and in their lives, 4) organizational citizenship behavior (Shamir et al., 1993, p. 587).

Sheldon and Elliot's (1999) self-concordance motivational model empirically links personal core values, effort, and goal attainment. The model outlines the effects that satisfaction and well-being have on motivation and goal attainment. Sheldon and Elliot define self-concordance as the "degree to which stated goals express enduring interests and values" (1999, p. 482). The results indicate that individuals who pursue self-concordant goals put more sustained effort into achieving those goals and are thus more likely to attain them. Those same individuals have increased sense of well-being because of their goal attainment.

Bono and Judge (2003) expanded upon Sheldon and Elliot's self-concordance model by linking it directly to the motivational effects of transformational leaders. Their study shows that, "when transformational leaders present their words in terms of ideology and values endorsed by most followers (higher order values (Burns, 1978) that transcend individual interests), followers see their work as more meaningful and self-expressive and thus perceive work-related activities as more self-concordant. These perceptions lead to increased motivation, effort, performance, and satisfaction" (2003, p. 557).

Bono and Judge's findings showed small but positive relationships between transformational leadership and follower self-concordance. They also demonstrated that self-concordance partially mediates the relationship between leader behaviors and follower behaviors and attitudes as represented by job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

These studies are significant in establishing the theoretical framework of transformational leadership and motivation. However, none of them provides an understanding on how motivation pertains to higher education.

Faculty Motivation in Higher Education

The motivation literature is limited in its focus on faculty in higher education, mostly discussing the merits of tenure. However, in support of the self-concordance motivation model, several studies show that faculty are motivated to accomplish various goals or expend extra effort because of the connection between the tasks and the individual's personal goals and values. The prospects of tenure status, increased salary or stipends, or formal recognition, are not viewed as important motivating factors in the literature.

Wallin (2003) studied the perceptions of community college presidents on the needs of faculty development and examined it in the context of motivational theory. Although Wallin concedes that faculty development could be either intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, she views faculty development intrinsically.

"If faculty professional development is to be a growth-enhancing experience, it needs to be driven by an internal search for meaning, improved self-esteem and performance, and more satisfying relationships. Administrators can provide the setting that frees faculty to seek higher meaning and development, but they cannot force improvement, at least not lasting improvement" (2003, p. 320).

In fact, as part of his definition of faculty development, she includes the need to address faculty well-being: a key concept of self-concordance. She concludes that faculty need to be directly involved in the decision-making process when planning faculty development initiatives. This empowerment allows faculty the ability to control their work and professional growth, and in the context of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, move beyond the safety and security needs of motivation. Wallin also states that by gaining some control of the direction of their own professional development, faculty are, "able to work independently toward goals, moving individuals to higher levels of satisfaction and [to] meet higher level needs" (2003, p. 330). From a leadership standpoint, Wallin also connected her findings with basic concepts of transformational leadership by stressing the need for leaders to empower their faculty and foster an environment of shared values, consensus building and open communication of their vision.

As noted, academic tenure plays a predominate role in the discussion of faculty motivation. Thus, in order to understand the qualities of presidential leadership and faculty motivation, and their effect on faculty behaviors, it is necessary not only to review the relationship between tenure and motivation, but also to examine how tenure affects faculty behavior.

Critics of tenure believe it affects faculty behaviors negatively by altering their work goals while they are junior faculty, and by fostering lethargic behavior in senior faculty. Supporters of tenure, on the other hand, feel that the status has no concrete effect on faculty motivation and behaviors due to its intrinsic

nature. When studying faculty behaviors of job satisfaction and effort, tenure and its impact have to be addressed.

A review of the literature shows that the critics of the tenure system believe that tenure affects faculty behavior in a negative way (Gilliland, 1997; Yarmolinsky, 1996). According to Gilliland:

“Indeed, [tenure] is viewed by many as the single biggest impediment to change in universities. The tenure system is regularly blamed for many of the perceived ills of the university, including 1) the inability of universities to dismiss unproductive faculty, 2) the inability of universities to reorganize, 3) an undue focus on research at the expense of teaching, 4) faculty loyalty toward professional organizations at the expense of their institutions, 5) a prevalence of individual fiefdoms, and 6) the high cost of higher education. The level of job security enjoyed by faculty, further, is said to be unjustified relative to that of other sectors of the economy” (1997, p. 31).

This view asserts that tenure-track faculty are only concerned with achieving the coveted status and thus focus most of their time fulfilling standard criteria of research and publishing (Yarmolinsky, 1996). Although these may be strong viewpoints, the majority of the literature shows that motivational theorists and supporters of tenure find no significant correlation between tenure and job satisfaction and performance (Bess, 1997; Theall & Franklin, 1999).

Jellicorse and Tilley (1985) finds that faculty performance and productivity decreases after tenure only when faculty is not given clear goals from the administration. They state that faculty job satisfaction comes from participation in institutional and departmental decisions. This concept is reiterated throughout the literature. Jellicorse and Tilley also find that faculty exert extra effort when there is a commitment to the goals that the university leaders outline.

They explain, “existence needs can be satisfied by pay, fringe benefits, and working conditions. Relatedness needs can be met by mutual sharing of thoughts and feelings with significant others. In contrast to existence needs, these relatedness needs must be met by cooperative communication processes. Growth needs involve the individual in interaction with the environment in order to develop creative abilities and capabilities” (1985, p. 67). The authors show that the best approach for motivating faculty after tenure is for the leader to focus on developing faculty careers, paying close attention to the individual needs and aspirations of each faculty member.

Bess (1997) argues that tenure does not motivate (or take away motivation from) faculty. According to Bess, “Tenure ensures that basic security needs are satisfied; it alone does not offer incentives (or disincentives) for performance. These are provided elsewhere.... Tenure is a ‘hygiene.’ It only prevents dissatisfaction. It is not a ‘motivator.’ Motivators are extrinsic and intrinsic stimuli in the work environment and individual that answer basic human needs for achievement, responsibility, recognition, status, competency, personal growth and satisfaction from the work itself. If these stimuli are not present in the educational system, then faculty will not be motivated, regardless of whether tenure exists or not. Only if the security of tenure is in place, however, can these other motivators become operative” (1997, p. 17).

Theall and Franklin (1999) find that the presence of faculty support from department chairs and other leaders, and the participation in faculty development lead to such positive outcomes as increased competence, empowerment, and an expectancy of success. According to the authors, these outcomes

can likely result in increased meaning and value within faculty work. They go on to note that, “inclusions in a coherent community can raise awareness and enhance positive attitudes, that these benefits can bring meaning and value to academic and workplace situations, that the effort expended by those who perceive meaning will result in greater success and heightened levels of competence and confidence, and that a great deal of intrinsic satisfaction will result” (1999, p. 107).

Grosso (2008) studied the relationship between presidential leadership behaviors and faculty behaviors of satisfaction and extra effort and found that they were not significantly influenced by the faculty's individual motivation. Instead, his study shows that the president's leadership behavior is what influence faculty satisfaction and effort, not the individual motivation of the faculty.

He also examined how tenure status affected faculty behavior. The results show that there is no relationship between the tenure status of the faculty and their satisfaction and effort. Thus, the faculty's individual motivation, whether it is intrinsic (heartfelt commitments to teaching students or academic scholarship in their field) or extrinsic (tenure status, promotion, or increased salary), has no significant influence on the level of effort produced or the satisfaction each faculty member has regarding the president and the institution. It is the leader that has the most influence on the behaviors of the faculty.

Conclusion

Transformational leaders, with their charismatic qualities, motivate followers through such behaviors as heightening awareness of social issues, projecting self-confidence, challenging creativity, and understanding and addressing their followers' personal needs and values (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Although research in leadership and motivation is limited in the field of higher education, the literature shows that transformational leadership has the foundation to be successful in the academic setting by increasing satisfaction and performance when faculty values are aligned with those instilled in the organization by the leader. In those cases, faculty see work as more meaningful and self-expressive, and that leads to increased effort, performance, and satisfaction.

Herein lies the difference between leadership in higher education and that of the private sector. In higher education, it is not a matter of *motivation*, but one of *stimulation*. Motivating faculty as if they are stock brokers is just not effective. Most times – especially the difficult economic times we find ourselves in – financial rewards are limited and other motivators such as peer recognition and reduced loads can only take you so far. In addition, those motivators only last so long. Soon, more is needed and desired. The contentment just doesn't last. However, our *values* change much less frequently. People don't tire of their core beliefs that easily. Stimulating faculty by tying initiatives and goals to what they value most will have a larger, more enduring impact than trying to motivate them through tangible means.

When leaders are able to look at what their faculty value, it is obvious that the connection of goals, values and ideas is what moves them to act. By understanding what is important to them, making a connection between institutional goals and their values, and empowering them to assist in the process, academic leaders can provide a deeper meaning to the work of the faculty and stimulate their personal and professional growth.

Taken practically, one could reason that the work environment of faculty makes a difference. Regardless of whether faculty are motivated by status, salary, or their contributions to society and the

community, their ultimate satisfaction and effort most likely comes from their perceptions of the institution and its management. The answer lies not *within* them as individuals, but rather, how they are engaged as individuals. If the environment is one of consideration, trust, participation, openness, and shared values, they may be more satisfied and willing to contribute to the common cause. If, on the other hand, the environment is closed, negatively focused, and one that encompasses less meaning and value to the faculty, they may harbor ill will and not effectively contribute to the goals of the institution.

Institutions of higher education cannot be managed like Fortune 500 companies. Most faculty are not “at will” employees, and many of them will not see big bonuses for increasing productivity and profit margins. Leaders of academic institutions should take a more collaborative, inspirational, and empowering approach in stimulating their faculty to assist them in moving the institution forward.

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