

## Hot Topics Paper

# THE DEATH OF LEADING AND SERVING IN THE PROFESSORATE

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## INTRODUCTION

Baldwin & Chronister, 2002; Birnbaum, 2000; Horowitz, 2007; Lewis, 2006; Rourke & Brooks, 1966; Tighe, 2003; Donoghue, 2008; Ginsberg, 2011; Lewis, 2007 have written on the power of university administrations, and the resultant effect on teaching and learning in the university.

These authors chronicle the direct implications of administrative power on the professorate:

1. University faculties are populated by 70% non-tenured track faculty (adjunct professors or clinical professors) (Ginsberg, 2011; Baldwin & Chronister, 2002).
2. Universities are pseudo-corporations and managed by those who have little knowledge of teaching and research (Ginsberg, 2011).
3. The price of education has skyrocketed and is linked to administrative salaries and costs (Ehrenberg, 2002).
4. Students pay heavily for a mediocre education; the only quality education is limited to elite institutions, which still maintain an active professoriate<sup>1</sup>.
5. The last professors who teach, research and serve, will soon be retired, leaving a university that is basically there to serve administrators and staffers (Donoghue, 2008).

While these texts are focused on the overall university, we, the present authors, believe there is a concomitant effect on Kinesiology – a practical, people-centered profession and discipline. The paper will: (1) discuss and highlight the effect of the administrative university on Kinesiology, (2) provide strategies to foster people-centered leading and serving in the Kinesiology professoriate, and (3) offer a real life story of the administrative effect on a new hire.

Universities are to inspire research, expand knowledge, and question all there is and was. The people who are the heart and soul of these institutions, the professoriate (Donoghue, 2008), should agree with the goals of teaching, learning, serving, and researching and view them as

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<sup>1</sup> Though their professors are also complaining of poor teaching and exclusive environments (Lewis, 2007; Karabel, 2005).

interrelated: Research serves teaching; service supports teaching; and teaching reflects service and research.

We personally have watched a change in climate (the behavior and attitudes of the university professoriate) and the culture (the values and beliefs of the university) under the administrative university<sup>2</sup>. Young faculty, who are fortunate enough to be hired into tenure track lines, have been acclimated to a very different culture (Donoghue, 2008). The present culture, for lack of a better term, is a “me” perspective environment where faculty expect more benefits, less responsibilities, and no burdens associated with teaching or service. The culture then affects the climate of teaching, the teacher – student interaction, and even the building climate where the professorate resides.

### **The Indoctrination Process of the “Me Philosophy” Begins**

Donoghue (2008) argues that the Administrative University is lead by administrators with bottom-line calculations of business executives, not intellectual ideals of scholars. Traditional professors are viewed as costly anachronisms and are easily replaced by low-pay adjunct instructors. Ginsberg (2011) offers a detailed analyses of how administrators have taken over the University and how the university has become a tool to benefit administrators. He virtually attacks everyone from overpaid presidents and provosts, communications specialists, human-resource staffers, and the worst of the lot are the “deanlets” (assistant and associate deans and department chairs) who have direct control over the faculty. This management model establishes a culture that new hires’ primary worth is in their research productivity and grant money earned (Aronowitz, 2000)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> We are using the terms climate and culture in a very general and native perspective. Culture represents the values, beliefs, myths, traditions and norms of an organization. Climate describes the dimensions of the environment that can be measured with relative precision. Leadership, organizational structure, historical forces, standards of accountability, standards of behavior, communication, reward, trust, and commitment are variables within the climate (The Kennedy Group, 2005). However, with that being said, we must agree with Denison’s (1996, p. 645) oft quoted study about difference between climate and culture, “...these two research traditions should be viewed as differences in interpretation rather than differences in the phenomenon.” Thus as we, the authors, interpret climate and culture (Sims, 2000), we understand that where culture ends and climate begins, may be the same point.

<sup>3</sup> Some young professionals realize the problem and have opted out (June, 2015); they want no part of the present system.

Those who stay in academia know that tenure and promotion will be won only if they focus on the culture of productivity measured in grant dollars. The bottom line for the new hires is to amass publications, write grants, and procure money. The result is disengaged young faculty who neither lead nor serve. The acculturation to the “me culture” begins from the moment the new hire signs the contract.

### **The “Me” Journey**

Today each new tenure track faculty member hired is granted a “startup” cost to support his/her line of research. These costs somehow magically appear from the general academic program funds. No explanation is offered the “resident” (hired before 2005) faculty, why each new hire deserves startup costs, or what the startup costs should produce for the greater good of the faculty, the students, or the university. Rather, each new faculty member is given carte blanche to use his/her discretionary funds. Not once in our experience has any of the new hires taken the time to inform the resident faculty how the “startup costs” were spent or for what benefit.

Some colleges leave positions open to capture salary savings for startup, others have to borrow from the general fund, or the departmental funds to pay for the start-up costs (Pendegraft, 2015). In one of our departments, the chair did a sweep of all non-used funds in one year and used those funds for start-ups. The amount was sizable. A bitter ethics discussion resulted in a loss of credibility for the department chair.

Each new hire has a reduced teaching load to “work” on his/her research. To be fair the new faculty members are usually highly talented, well prepared, knowledgeable, and published in their specific discipline area. Each however, is “silo-ed” (Kretchmar, 2008) outside their specific area. The silo perspective meshes into every discussion with the new hires. Conversation is usually about “my research and my field”. Not one of the new hires has ever queried us about our research.

The “me” perspective also floods into the new hire’s view of service. Both our universities employed professional counselors to advise students on course selection and oversee student progress toward graduation. Unfortunately, the system has flaws. In midterm, the staff was terminated. With advising looming, we, the faculty, were asked to advise students until a replacement could be found. The response from the resident faculty was ‘yes’. The response from the new hires was an unequivocal no. “I can’t possibly do that. Hire someone else. The students will figure it out.” When informed that faculty should be concerned about the advising process, the response was, “It’s not in my position description”.

New hires have an attitude that their time is sacrosanct. New hires have little time for office hours. Most really are not physically there for office hours, rather they have cyberspace office hours. In the “Me World” office hours are interpreted to mean being available on email at the designated office hour time. Of course, the new hires are explicitly told not to waste time – cyber hours are quite acceptable. This climate or attitude about not being there is also manifested in actually answering emails or telephone calls. Days or weeks may pass before an email is answered

### **Effect on Climate on Learning in the Classroom**

New hires are tutored to not waste time actually teaching or grading papers. They are told that “a productive faculty member is one who writes and gets grants; a productive faculty member is one who travels.” They are told that their graduate students should do most of the teaching and should grade assignments. Unfortunately, the graduate students often lack many skills to do so – but that is not a consideration either because if “they can’t, they need to figure out how to do the work” with no guidance from the faculty.

New hires are taught that reading student work is lost productivity time, which should be spent on writing grants. New hires then make the intellectual jump and morally justify that student work is not important or worthy of their time and effort.

### **Suggestions to Overcome the Silo – To Lead and Serve**

Ginsberg (2011) offers various solutions that could possibly de-rail what we, as resident faculty, are experiencing presently. However, our concerns voiced in this paper has to do with changing a silo-ed culture and thus a climate for new hires so that they can be inspired to lead and serve which is one of our most sacred trusts as faculty members.

### **Un-Silo-ing Suggestion 1: A Functional Philosophy of Teaching**

A dialogue needs to be started, continued, and maintained about the role and philosophy of teaching within the unit. What is the purpose of teaching? Is the purpose limited to dissemination of knowledge? Or is the purpose about learning to learn? This philosophy needs to be an institution-wide conversation about the role and purpose of teaching in the institution.

Even the most hardened researcher who seldom steps foot in a classroom must understand that his/her job position exists because of undergraduate education. Research is highly valued and vital to the institution, but so is teaching. They will move forward together (Bernardo, 2014).

We argue that the most important teaching philosophy is to inspire students to “learn how to learn”. Yes information is important, but the curriculum should be more than memorizing

information that is assessed through a “Scantron” or multiple choice examination. If learning is the relatively permanent change in behavior not due to maturation, motivation, or training that is the result of experience, (Sage, 1984; Magill & Anderson, 2013) then we, as teachers, should focus on the experience that is most fruitful for students: learning how to learn. We recommend a dialogue about the importance of teaching for learning rather than teaching for information transmittal. As Delabanco (2012) said,

...if it's a cliché to say, 'my teaching enhances my scholarship' or 'my scholarship makes me a better teacher,' that because both statements are often true. Passion for learning lies at the heart of scholarly and scientific investigation and great practitioners have what one scientist called 'radium of the soul' by which their students are inspired to push further, to revise or reject or extend the mentor' work....at best, in other words, research is a form of teaching, and teaching is a form of research (par. 2706).

Teaching comes from the heart and not from the head – teaching has a soul (Lewis, 2006). These important points help to move teaching from the head, the objective process, to teaching from the heart, where inspiration begins.

We recommend good teachers should mentor the young hires through discussion of teaching philosophy, assessment practices, and teaching personality. A new young hire should already have a well-developed understanding of curriculum for they are usually subject matter specialists, however, teaching philosophy, assessment techniques and teaching personality are seldom if ever taught through a Ph.D. program.

### Assessment Techniques

Assessment techniques are critical to successful teaching. Several components are essential to develop good, sound assessments. What is a good assessment? A good assessment provides “truthful” information of what students have learned. Students who have learned the material will demonstrate what we have taught and will do well on the assessments; students who have not learned the material will not do well on the assessments. There must be clear objectives for the course. Make assignments and tests crystal clear so that students can consistently interpret and understand what you are asking relative to the objectives.

Develop a grading rubric (see Figure 1) that helps students understand how each component that is assessed contributes to the overall course grade. Providing weekly updates either in class or through the university learning platform will help students keep track. Score

work consistently and fairly – the evaluation should be fair from the view of the students. Have a frank discussion with the new hires about what it means to have a fair assessment strategy for grading. Students should know what is expected of them, and how each expectation is graded and by what criteria. Ideal assessments reflect different levels of learning and thinking. Assessment should be daily and it should be very clear to the students how they can improve on their work.

Paper turned in on time ___/5		Name_____		
Line spacing double ___/5				
Font Standard ___/5				
	(3 points)	(5 points)	(7 points)	(10 points)
<b>Purpose</b>	No purpose statement listed	Word, unclear purpose statement	Rough but understandable purpose statement	Clearly articulated purpose statement with who, what, where and how.
<b>Organization</b>	Appears to have spent little time thinking about or organizing the paper	Paper has barest semblance of organization	Paper has an introduction, body, and conclusion	Paper shows an obvious developmental plan with introduction clearly leading to body and conclusion. Evidence of paper protocol followed.
<b>Grammar, spelling, and word usage</b>	Relied on spellcheck however sometimes picked incorrect words. Evidence of no proof reading.	Spell checker picked incorrect words, word tenses used incorrectly, incomplete sentences	Spelling errors few and far between. Uses of tenses improved. No incomplete sentences.	No spelling errors and use of tenses and words correct.
<b>Thesis</b>	Opportunities to build the paper were squandered. Ideas were not developed and went nowhere.	Ideas partially developed but not supported. No connection between paragraphs and no use of transitions.	Thesis is clear and supported throughout the paper. Use of some transitions.	Thesis is clearly stated, supported throughout the paper with research.
<b>Introduction and conclusion</b>	Introduction is vague. No clear path set up for paper. Conclusion missing or undeveloped	Introduction sets a tone but is not carried out. Conclusion does not adequately close the paper.	Introduction lays out what will happen in the paper. Conclusion summarizes the paper.	Introduction is a creative hook and engages the reader. Conclusion robustly closes the paper with a final summary and the subject.
<b>References</b>	Few if any references listed. No APA format	References incomplete between paper and reference list and/or more than 3 format errors.	References complete between paper and reference list. APA format errors.	References complete between paper and reference list; less than 3 APA errors.

TOTAL: \_\_\_/75

**Figure 1.** Writing Grading Rubric Example

The second most important part of an assessment is that the students actually believe the instructor cares about their learning. This only occurs if the faculty is directly involved in the grading and assessment process. Good instruction should have continual assessment practices throughout the semester and the instructor of record should have an active hand in that process.

## Teaching Personality

The single most important factor in teaching is teacher personality. It is the outward manifestation of the “radium of the soul” (Delbanco, 2012). There is no specific formula for teacher personality that guarantees success, however, the teacher personality must communicate to the student that the teacher cares, the teacher knows, and the teacher has a plan for how learning will transpire.

How does the new hire communicate that they care about the students and about the learning process? Showing care can be fostered in numerous ways. Obviously, most people who teach, care about imparting knowledge to students but good teachers also care about the relational aspect of teaching. Jerry Gill (1993) in his provocative text on “Toward a Philosophy of Education”, gives some pertinent advice that might be helpful in a discussion of how to show care, if one truly cares about students. His most powerful advice is to respect students as people.

Respect for students as persons also demands student participation in many different modalities in the classroom. Examples of participation may be verbal participation through discussion and free flow of ideas from professor to student and students to students. Participation also occurs in the written assignments that the student accomplishes for the class as well as the response from the professor. Professors who care, read every word that their students write – and the professors write back to the students, continuing the dialogue, on their papers.

Writing is essential to the participation and discussion between all parties, and writing should be expected to be done well. No one learns to communicate well without being able to write well.

## **Dissolving the Silo Suggestion 2: Become a Community**

Most of us grew up in sport and athletics, well hopefully, we did. We learned that the team was only as good as the weakest player, and we had to learn to work together. How was that done? How did the coach move us from individuals to a group mentality? As former athletes and former coaches, we know that the coach sets the most important tone of the team. Some coaches are authoritarian, some are servant leaders, and some may be transformational, and some just will it to be. What we have experienced lately are unit administrators who are not a part of our team, instead they are a part of the University team. In several faculty meetings, we have heard resident faculty members ask the unit administrator, “Do you serve us or the university?” The response was always a hearty “I serve you.” But the fact that the question is asked, argues the opposite is true.

Therefore, how do we inspire unit leaders to be “the leader of the unit and serve the best interests of the unit”? .

### Leading by Serving

Be careful in hiring a unit administrator. Evaluate carefully the goals, philosophy, and initiative of the prospective hire.

1. Why is this individual seeking the position? Hopefully the answer is about serving and leading. Avoid people who are self-serving, e.g., I always wanted to be a department chair, is not a response of an individual who wants to serve. Greenleaf said, the “...leader is servant first, it begins with a natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first, as opposed to, wanting power, influence, fame or wealth (1977, 1991, 2002, p. p. 352).
2. Do goals clearly serve the faculty? The hire should have definite goals of what is to be accomplished under their tenure as the leader. “...the leader always knows what it [the goal] is and can articulate it for any who are unsure.... [the goal] is something presently out of reach; it is something to strive for, to move toward, to become (Greenleaf, 1977, 1991, 2002, p. 29).
3. Ask pointed questions of the candidate, “What is their philosophy of leading?” “How does the faculty grow through their leadership?” Pay attention closely to how the candidate answers and responds. Do they listen intently (Greenleaf, 1977, 1991, 2002, p. 31)? Does the candidate focus on the speaker? Does the candidate wish to understand, or wish to be understood – these are radically different points of view as a leader.
4. What role does the administrator have in leading and serving? A true leader has initiative. A goal is clear. A good administrator listens, learns and leads. A true leader in their demeanor and actions says, “I will go, come with me! ...I will go; follow me!” (Greenleaf, 1977, 1991, 2002, p. 29)

### How does a faculty become a community?

A community does not just happen. Communities need to be developed, but to do so, depends on the character of the faculty members (Hauerwas, 1986, p. 113). “What is significant about us morally is not what we do or do not do, but how we do what we do” (p.113). . Just because an individual has credentials, studied with a well-known academic, and wants to work in your institution, does not always mean that individual is the right one for the community (Sutton, 2007). A successful community needs to have character and virtue. Communities are developed by individuals who value the philosophy of the community.

## **Our Professional and Personal Duty**

What is our philosophy within the department? Who are we? New hires cannot be expected to be a part of a professional community unless we the resident faculty make a “stab” at improving the culture and climate (Tighe, 2003). Much depends on us, the resident faculty, to make a difference in this administrative university that we now find ourselves. Young faculty need us to lend a hand and to be involved in their lives.

We asked a junior faculty member what his take was on the current climate and culture, and his response is an interesting read.

### **Response by a young faculty**

**Teaching.** I chose a career in higher education because I admire the professionals who positively impacted my life. As a sophomore in high school, and not a very dedicated student, my English teacher challenged. Our initial encounter was awkward and unique. He wanted to assess my knowledge, not in an invasive way, but in a manner where he could learn about me personally as well as help me grow academically. At first, I did not believe that a teacher could care this much. I also questioned if this effort could be sustained for an entire year, let alone one semester. His effort was no act; his personal interest motivated me to invest in his class, and uncover an academic thirst that I did not believe was possible. Much of my class experience hit a spectrum of emotions from positive embarrassment to self-fulfillment; it was sublime. We still remain in contact, and I am always quick to remind him that his personality mixed with pedagogical style permitted me to realize that I wanted to pursue a similar career. I also realized the power a good teacher can have on molding minds, inspiring, and challenging predispositions that could have remained untouched through other educational endeavors.

In college, I was fortunate that a handful of instructors and professors stimulated me in a similar manner. I gained a deep appreciation for the knowledge they imparted, which had a lasting impact. The college experience reinforced my desire to pursue a career in higher education, where I could emulate some of these inspired educators and ultimately have a positive effect on students.

My entire experience as an undergraduate experience was not always positive. I recall some faculty members who never had the time, and were more focused on their research agenda than building skill development and interpersonal relationships with undergraduate students. I also remember feeling intimidated, and kept my questions brief when I would approach these faculty members. Though these surly faculty members were part of my higher education learning

experience, I still desired my current career knowing that I might be forced to work with other “me first” professors.

I am presently in my dream job as a tenure track assistant professor. This career has permitted me to teach a wide range of students. The relationships I have cultivated while pursuing tenure are ones that I will nurture for the rest of my life. Teaching has been everything I imagined and more. Countless days I leave my office feeling blessed and fortunate for a career that does not feel like a job. More importantly, multiple students have left positive impressions upon me as my English teacher had. Obviously this time, the roles have been reversed. I now understand why my high school English teacher cared so much. Additionally, I believe this relationship has been reciprocated with several of my students as I have watched them grow and accomplish unfathomable things. I could not be more satisfied with the teaching aspect of my career.

**Research.** Nonetheless, when I reflect upon my undergraduate experience, I did not fully understand the research responsibility and requirements of faculty members. I thought research was a choice and not a requirement. I believe that to be progressive in my field, research and continuing education are valuable and necessary. I think somewhere along the way though, our higher education model became backwards. Bennis and O’Toole (2005) claim the current system does not measure itself on the competence of their graduates, or by how well its students perform, instead, the model measures itself almost solely by the rigor of a faculty member’s research.

In my third-year review portfolio, I highlighted accepted peer-reviewed papers more than strong teaching evaluations. As a colleague said, “Publish or perish.” Though I am on track for tenure, the pressure to keep an active research agenda outweighs the pressure to excel at teaching. More important, the victim of this pressure is the student.

Emmert and Rollman (1997) in a national study on tenure and promotion standards within the discipline of Communication Arts and Sciences concluded that scholarship, in the form of publications and presentations, is significantly more important for promotion and tenure than teaching. Similarly, Bennis and O’Toole (2005) found junior faculty members were urged to avoid too much work as practitioners and so they can concentrate on research.

**Evaluation.** After my first year, I realized that my yearly evaluation is a “cover your ass” document for administrators. My issue with the evaluation process is that few incentives exist for me to participate in the university environment outside my position description because the experience will not be scored in my annual review. Professors could be doing outstanding work

that brings positive recognition to their students, community, and university; however, if the faculty fails to meet the research standard, the additional accomplishments do not matter.

The evaluation process has informed me why some professors become embedded in their research, and sacrifice quality instruction and good class preparation. If I chose to focus more on research than teaching, administrative opposition would be minimal as long as I maintained a strong record of publications. Pavel, Legier and Ruiz's (2012) posited that scholarship is perceived as the most important pillar for tenure. Teaching is a distant second, followed by service, the least important of the three pillars.

I enjoy research; however, I conduct research so I can teach and be a part of the student journey. The current model is reversed, which attracts professionals who teach so they can research. This paradigm often cheats students from quality instruction, which is not fair with the rising cost of college attendance. I struggle with the value of a peer-reviewed article. Do not get me wrong, publications are important, but what has more effect on the university, a peer reviewed journal article from a tier one journal, or pushing a student to study abroad, participate in an alternative service break, or land an internship? Bennis and O'Toole found that the number of citations of articles written is dramatically lower now than it was a decade ago, suggesting that researchers scholarly production does not matter as much as we think, even to their peers in the field. However, Bennis and O'Toole (2005) also claim that a professor with an extensive research record is still considered a star, even if teaching suffers.

**Service.** My position description requires that I serve on university committees and participate in other forms of service. I have participated in matters of broader concern than my discipline including student recruitment and retention, assessment, accreditation, fundraising, alumni relations and invited guest speakers from Twitter, advertising agencies and other universities. Recently I returned from an alternative service break trip with undergraduate students in Central America. When I returned, I asked a colleague, "What's going to be better in the long-run for the university, a service trip that changed the lives of 12 students who will possibly be future alumni donors and great assets in recruiting prospective students, or a peer reviewed article that a few individuals in my field will read?"

I believe the answer lies not in the publication, but in the prospective and current students, as well as future alumni who will be affected more by an alternative service experience that produced a valuable video highlighting our contribution to impoverished people. Then again, the

university does not grade on that scale – and I feel my experience will have little meaning in my third year review.

## CONCLUSION

And thus the story from our young faculty member mimics our concern about the administrative university's effect on teaching and serving. If we resident faculty members want to make a change, it will be up to us to meet the challenge and become a part of the solution. If leading and serving is not dead, it definitely is quite ill and resuscitation is needed<sup>4</sup>. Those of us who are resident and senior have an obligation to resuscitate, and those of us who are the new hires need to reevaluate our role at the administrative university. However, the largest burden lies with administrators to return our beloved discipline and practice to one of serving and leading. If Bernardo (2014) is correct in stating that teaching as serving is the lifeblood of the university and is imperative, then teaching should be valued. An obligation exists that this message is integrated into annual performance reviews by department chairs and deans. It is one thing to say one values teaching and serving, it is wholly another to actually implement a model whereby faculty can freely engage in the teaching, serving, and research roles to impact students and the discipline alike.

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<sup>4</sup> National Association for Kinesiology in Higher Education has planned its 2016 Annual Conference around the theme: Mentoring Stewards for Our Profession. They note, "...stewardship is passed on to future generations through mentors who graciously accept it as part of the price of leadership." The implication is the problem exists and we professions need to be involved to make a difference.

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