

Contemporary Expectations for Entrepreneurship: Lessons to be Learned from a Case About the Shift in Canadian Decanal Responsibilities

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Abstract

This paper presents a case narrative of a university dean who is charged with instituting change within her faculty in order to resolve the faculty's financial issues. The case narrative explores academic conceptualizations of entrepreneurship and describes the dean's context in terms of: her executive leadership team, the financial issues she was facing, the financial contentions in instituting change, legal complexities, programmatic and marketing dimensions, poor academic cultures, and work intensification implications. The teaching notes present five leadership development activities that span these issues and encourage students to engage in a brainstorming, a mind-mapping, a placemat, a jigsaw, and a leadership reflection activities.

Keywords: deans, university leaders, entrepreneurship, finance, quality, marketing, programs, academic cultures, work intensification, teaching activities

The Case Narrative

The Underpinning Evidence and Purpose of the Case Narrative

This case was developed from the insights shared by 21 senior university leaders (including the top-ranked research intensive and comprehensive universities) across Canada in in-depth interviews. This narrative is not drawn directly from one cited senior leader, rather it represents an aggregation of many themes, garnered through iterative thematic coding, that emerged from these interviews for the purposes of developing an engaging but realistic teaching case. The purpose of this case narrative is to provide an interesting and controversial case that students (many of whom are either aspiring or current leaders within post-secondary contexts) in leadership development programs can explore both the literature and the complexities of leading in contemporary universities in Canada. The case narrative is purposefully open-ended to develop students' critical and creative thinking capacities with the view to offering potential solutions and engagement with many of the contentious issues that they may or do encounter in their own leadership situations. At the conclusion of the case narrative, a series of teaching notes and activities are provided which are designed to be a resource for instructors to stimulate students' in-depth exploration of the case narrative, the trends and issues in the context of leading in higher education, and the literature in the field of higher education leadership. With an express purpose to offer opportunities for students to explore the literature, we have included citations within the case narrative that link various papers to a current theme in the narrative.

Introduction

Monica Destrier is a full professor with an impressive research history, having engaged in large and small research projects, and has been successful in obtaining competitive grants from both government granting agencies and private funded research organizations. She has been a full professor for over a decade and recently moved into administration where she held the role of head of a small department for two years in a large research-intensive university. She enjoyed administration and felt she was effective in managing people and working to support her faculty. In her role as department head, she had eight faculty members who directly reported to her and supported over 50 sessional faculty as they worked in the department's programs. Monica had rarely had a problem with her academic staff members, as most were easy going and she had been very successful in managing all the paperwork that had the potential to interfere with her academics' teaching and research activities. Thus, she perceived her leadership to be one of supporting her colleagues, navigating the necessary administrative duties that helped the department operate, facilitating meetings and programs, and mediating and negotiating solutions for students. With her past leadership success and having managed to maintain her research activities while in her leadership role, Monica wanted a new challenge and so she applied for the deanship of a large research-intensive university in Canada. She was delighted when she was the successful decanal applicant and looked forward to her initial term (three years in duration). The provost indicated that her exemplary research profile had distinguished her from the competition. In her first meeting with the provost, she was informed that the faculty she was "inheriting" was large, complex, and in dire financial straits. The provost emphasized that Monica had to demonstrate an "entrepreneurial spirit ... and to get the faculty back 'into the black again' within a year." He stated that "the faculty had stagnated both programmatically and financially," and now "you, Monica, are charged with introducing change and to balance the budget which must be done within the year" (*refer to Hodson, 2010, to explore the leadership issues of fundraising*). He continued his summary of the issues with the faculty: "There have been problems with your faculty with so many traipsing off to the union with complaints about the previous dean and executive leadership team," and "you need to build bridges with this problematic bunch of people in order to ease tensions and increase productivity." As an exemplary researcher Monica set about understanding what entrepreneurship in education meant and what she was being expected to do. She wondered, "How can I develop a positive relationship within what appears to be a negative culture with an apparently disenfranchised faculty?"

Entrepreneurship in Educational Settings

In her search, Monica found that most references to "entrepreneurship" emerged from the business domain. Indeed, there were many definitions offered and most related to engaging in enterprises and innovative activities with the view to ensure profits for the organization or business:

The capacity and willingness to develop, organize and manage a business venture along with any of its risks in order to make a profit. ... In economics, entrepreneurship combined with land, labor, natural resources and capital can produce profit. Entrepreneurial spirit is characterized by innovation and risk-taking, and is an essential part of a nation's ability to succeed in an ever changing and increasingly competitive global marketplace. (WebFinance Inc., 2018, n.p.)

She was interested in how Daft (2018) linked entrepreneurship to the increasing pace of change and the demand to remain competitive, which drew direct linkages between the world of business and Western nations' higher education sector. Indeed, the economic principles associated with neoliberalism, which involves increased privatization, the demand for marketable programs, research products and services, and increased managerialism within universities, have resulted in many institutions operating as corporate entities rather than traditional educational institutions functioning as an essential service for a public good and this appeared to be a factor in her university situation (*for more on the principles and definitions of neoliberalism refer to Apple, 2006, 2016; Rigas & Kuchapski, 2016; Thorsen, 2010; Thorsen & Lie, 2012*).

Thus, with an overt economic focus in neoliberalism, Monica was not surprised to find pervasive business and commerce terminology within her institution's descriptions of her leadership responsibilities, such as: marketing, finances, budgets, management, performance reviews, quality audits, etc. She found that Blackmore and Sawers (2015), who drew upon the work of Marginson and others, noted that through-

out the 1980–1990s government regulation altered Australian universities to:

become multinational corporations ... [and] education has increasingly been treated as an individual positional good, as an export earner and source of revenue to fund domestic expansion, and to be increasingly funded by individuals not governments. ... The entrepreneurial university is marked by its changing relationship with business. ... The nation state now expects universities to be a source of innovation to develop globalised knowledge-based economies through application in industry or the health sector. (p. 321)

Along a similar vein, Monica noted that in the U.S., which held some similarities with Canada in terms of its higher education sector, Cleverley-Thompson (2016) highlighted a direct linkage between academic deans and the need to demonstrate entrepreneurship. Cleverley-Thompson linked decanal entrepreneurship to the financial constraint universities were experiencing due to “the dynamic and competitive environment of higher education today” (p. 76). This encompassed: the reduction in government funding, increased competition with the burgeoning market of universities and colleges, increased implementation of information communication technologies, and changing student demographics from the “elite” to more general, or even academically weak, students. Cleverley-Thompson (2016) and Fusilier and Munro (2014) linked entrepreneurship with the need for university leaders to be agile and innovative change agents. Likewise, Daft (2018) stated: “An entrepreneur recognizes a viable idea for a business product or service and carries it out by finding and assembling the necessary resources – money, people, machinery, location – to undertake the business venture” (p. 55) and this was almost word for word the provost’s sentiments. Additionally, entrepreneurs demonstrated additional characteristics to other leaders, such as “strong drive, enthusiasm, and future vision ... they tend to be persistent, independent, and action oriented,” driven and not adverse to risk (Daft, 2018, p. 55). Ultimately, entrepreneurs welcome new opportunities, are more focused on “innovation,” change, “creativity,” and creating new processes, rather than “maintaining the status quo” (p. 55). But, Monica wondered, “Is entrepreneurship only about financial profitability?” Even though for many educators, entrepreneurship is a “dirty word” due to its overtones from business economics and neoliberalism, some, however, have embraced the dimensions of innovation, change, and boundary breaking opportunities within entrepreneurship even in education faculties (*for more about entrepreneurial leadership refer to* Webber, 2016). For example, Monica was intrigued with the stance taken by Webber and Scott (2008; Scott & Webber, 2013), where they explored entrepreneurial activities in both university and K-12 educational contexts. These authors created a framework to promote entrepreneurship and posited that the dimensions and attributes of entrepreneurship encompassed: *innovative behaviour* which required the generation of knowledge and skills; *networking* which enabled information acquisition and adaptation to dynamic conditions; *time-space communication frameworks* including synchronous and asynchronous communication as well as local, national, and international learning across space and through time; *local-global perspectives* that encompass cultural literacies in order to effectively operate locally-nationally-globally and which promote the development of principled, socially responsible, reflective, and engaged citizens, as well as multidimensional perspectives; perceiving *educational organizations as knowledge centers* so that students, faculty, and support staff can continue their learning, and the institution can be the sites of essential learning but where leaders pay attention to ensuring access, resourcing, and community needs; and facilitating *integrated face-to-face and internet based learning* to create strategic alliances to remain competitive (Webber & Scott, 2008, n.p.). So even though Webber and Scott’s work did have a financial dimension—that is, financial stability and revenue streams—their “entrepreneurial” focus was broader.

One aspect that really appealed to Monica was that Webber and Scott’s entrepreneurship framework had a strong social justice orientation in ensuring that leaders’ entrepreneurial activities: *serves* their internal and external communities, *provides* increased access to capacity building programs and learning for marginalized or remote stakeholders, and *preserves* and expands the learning focus of educational institutions—these were aspects that Monica could envision for her faculty while not contrary to the objectives outlined by her provost. Monica pondered about what leadership capacities were required to be successful as an educational entrepreneur, “Do I have what it takes to pull this off?” She noted an alignment with Daft’s (2018) list of essential characteristics, indeed, Scott and Webber (2013) identified social and political acumen as essential qualities for entrepreneurial leaders:

They must be able to understand and respond to social nuances and navigate organizational politics. This is essential to the success of innovative initiatives. This does not mean that entre-

preneurs need to aim to be popular and, in fact, the tenacity required to establish new projects may mean that innovators must weather more conflict than if they had been satisfied with the status quo. (p. 128)

Monica's review of the literature surrounding educational entrepreneurship certainly gave her "food for thought" and "strategic direction" for her own leadership approach. She knew that she had been charged with finding solutions to her faculty's financial woes, but the entrepreneurial framework presented in Webber and Scott's research resonated with her desire to be an innovative change agent and to explore the greater opportunities alongside her excellent academic colleagues.

The Context

Dr. Destrier's faculty was large with 75 full time academics, 50 professional staff members, a constantly changing sessional faculty (anywhere between 700-900 sessional faculty), approximately 1000 undergraduate students spread across numerous bachelor programs and 4000 graduate students in Master's and Doctoral programs. Monica's leadership portfolio included a wide array of departments: Education, Psychology, a Centre for Inclusive Education (special education unit), Centre for Indigenous Studies, Graduate Studies, Continuing Education, and the university's Teaching and Learning Centre. Each of the departments had a head of department who had oversight of the department's budget, activities, programs, staff, and/or services, but unlike Dr. Destrier's previous administrative role, authority over academic performance and associated matters was solely the dean's purview. Monica set about engaging in a fact-finding mission to find out more about faculty budget and operations, people, and programs in order to better understand the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities within her new faculty.

The initial three months of Monica's deanship was incredibly busy where she held town hall meetings, focus groups, and individual meetings within her faculty and staff, to learn from their insights about what was working well and where problems lay. She also engaged with the wider educational community as she was not familiar with her new community, having moved to this role from out-of-province. She worked with central university administrators, human resources, and the faculty manager to explore and learn about the faculty budgets, cost centres, revenue streams, research funding, and general financial health of the faculty. Unfortunately, Monica's prior administrative experience as department head had not really prepared her for the size, scale, complexities, and ambiguities involved in the fiscal management and operations of this large faculty. Monica mused to herself:

What am I doing here? Am I up to this challenge and nothing has prepared me for the scale of all this? Why are there no accountants or dedicated financial managers in my faculty? How did Jason (the previous dean) manage without this kind of expert advice? I just wish I had more experience with managing large budgets!

Monica's first request to the provost was to obtain support from Financial Services which was immediately granted, wherein a fulltime financial officer was allocated to the faculty in the short term to support the new dean. She also had to get to know her executive team of heads of department. From her "fact-finding mission," she identified a number of key dimensions in her leadership context that presented significant complexity, ambiguities, and conundrums. She categorized these as: the executive leadership team; financial issues; finances and change; legal complexities; marketing issues; and poor academic cultures.

Executive Leadership Team

Dr. Destrier was familiar with the literature on authentic leadership and desired to develop in her leadership approach the characteristics of credibility, trusting relationships, and transparency that promoted positive cultures and open communication (*for more about authentic leadership refer to* Agote, Aramburu, & Lines, 2015; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011). These authentic leadership characteristics and approaches were particularly pertinent in Monica's leadership strategy as she knew she was going to have to be a change agent (*refer to* Dudar, Scott, & Scott, 2017; Kouzes & Posner, 2017 *to explore rapid change leadership and transformational leadership, respectively*). Thus, she mused,

I have to gather information quickly and to start to build positive relationships with my heads of departments as well as my entire faculty, and, more importantly, how do I forge positive

relationships with my students? How do I do all this and get faculty and staff input on a viable time-sensitive vision for change so all feel there has been genuine consultation so I can get buy-in from them?

She felt that communication was key to not only information gathering but also creating psychologically-safe environments where her staff would feel comfortable to share their thoughts and views about the past and future opportunities (*for more about psychologically-safety in the workplace refer to Pacheco, Damião de Serpa Arruda Moniz, & Caldeira, 2015*).

Considering Monica's need to engage her executive team, she established individual and group meetings, wherein she found she had a diverse and interesting executive team who had been appointed by her predecessor. She had six heads of department: Professor Joe Trundell (Preservice Education which also included the Centre for Inclusive Education and Special Needs Services Unit); Associate Professor Jaimie Snell (Psychology); Assistant Professor Nell Eaglefeather (Centre for Indigenous Studies); Associate Professor Olivia Merryweather (Graduate Studies); Assistant Professor Mason Williams (Continuing Education); and Dr. Dan Ferrar (Senior Instructor and head of the university's Teaching and Learning Centre). The executive team ranged in experience between three and 20+ years, and while they enjoyed their leadership roles, many of them appeared to be overwhelmed and struggling with their vast portfolios. Monica also had some concerns with Drs. Trundell, Merryweather, and Snell's interpersonal skills as her conversations with these heads, with the union, and human resources (HR) had indicated that all three had had a number of complaints and grievances levelled against them from faculty, staff, and students, which had required external mediation. In addition to these tensions with faculty members, the executive team meetings had appeared to be somewhat contentious, with an unhealthy competition being demonstrated by the heads. Monica was dismayed to ascertain that most of her heads had signed longer-term contracts. She consulted HR and was told: "You cannot change the team until their contracts are completed, but you could performance manage them out of the role, I suppose." Monica knew she had to consult university legal services to find out what the legalities were related to her authority over these contracts and the collective agreement. In her discussions of her vision for the faculty, Monica identified that some on her team were keen for a positive, innovative vision while others were reticent or outright hostile to making changes. Another worrying tension appeared to be arising between some in the team and Dr. Eaglefeather. Monica wondered, "Is this tension racially motivated or is there some other underlying historical conflict to blame. I really need to look into this tension, find the root cause and sort this out as soon as possible, as this is not acceptable!" (*for more about indigenous leadership refer to Ottmann, 2009; Ragoonaden, Cherkowski, Baptiste, & Despres, 2009*).

Financial and Quality Issues

Dr. Destrier's financial scan included what programs, departments, budgets, donors, student markets, and research funds were in place and where the potential for growth or development existed. She examined which programs were viable and programmatic quality implications, those that were required by government but not sufficiently funded; current and/or potential cost recovery (CR) programs or markets for CR programs; fee-for-service programs and initiatives; departmental operation expenditures and incomes; and staffing ratios.

What she found was that there were a number of "lighthouse" programs, that is, those that were accredited and/or highly sought after, which drew students from national and international settings to the faculty due to their superior quality. Monica felt there was a market for expanding and developing new cost recovery programs; however, she mused, "I need faculty engagement to identify and source where these markets might be because I don't know everything about these different disciplines and I have so much expertise on my faculty, I must rely on their judgement!" For example, the Psychology masters and Leadership doctoral programs (both EdD and PhD) were highly sought after by local and international students. However, while there was a market for these, faculty feedback indicated there were issues with the number of academics with appropriate specializations to teach and supervise in these areas, which raised concerns with the quality of teaching expertise. Additionally, there was a steadily increasing interest in their Indigenous programs but there was a lack of qualified faculty and there appeared to be concerns with money wastage in the administration of these programs.

Another worrying trend that Monica identified was that many programs were running with very low student numbers, which meant the faculty was not breaking even on its operating costs. Faculty members

stated, “There hasn’t been a systematic or in-depth programmatic review done in over a decade, so maybe the loss of students might be because we need to update the program—it is a bit long in the tooth.” An additional issue was that the faculty had many “legacy programs” on their books; that is, programs over which a core group of academics held significant ownership and defended, even though these programs were out-of-date or fiscally non-viable.

An additional concern Monica had was about the quality of teaching, care of students, and how to promote quality teaching as aligned with the university’s strategic vision; however, this was a complex issue that entailed other complexities. She pondered,

Many of the faculty are older profs who are at the end of their careers and are unwilling or unable to deal with a large teaching load. Some are so dismissive of the quality teaching focus, which was a priority in the university! I wonder if this lack of a teaching focus is why many of the programs have low enrolments and poor student ratings. I will have to consider what to do about these ones. I wonder what recourse I have through retirement counselling or the collective agreement. Note to self, have a conversation with HR and university legal.

There were also some fee-for-service initiatives and services available in some departments. For example, there were a number of psychological testing, counselling, and special needs assessment services available, but their market value had not been reviewed for many years, and Monica suspected that many were no longer breaking even with the rising costs of staff/faculty and resources.

She found there had been few donations made to the faculty in over a decade and most were for student bursaries, which prompted her to think, “There was an opportunity here because there is a strong alumnus and a great deal of respect for the faculty in the community.” Even though there was a list of alumni, there were no additional support structures or pursuit of alumni for fundraising, and Monica concluded that “this was a lost opportunity!”

Finances and Change

One of the key issues for Monica was that while she had been charged with being a change agent and to institute innovation, these changes needed to be not only cost effective but, in effect, she knew that “they have to cost little or nothing as there are no funds available with the faculty finances in deficit!” She reminded herself, that as Davies and Thomas (2010) indicated, financial success was key for the success of the dean, so there was no room for error, and she concluded, “I have to become a ‘fiscal expert’ in order to resolve the issues with my faculty finances or else!” (*for a more in-depth exploration of the changing nature of the deanship refer to Wolverson, Gmelch, Montez, & Nies, 2001*). Consequently, she decided economies needed to be made on all fronts without endangering essential operations, teaching quality, and essential or profitable services, while also exploring opportunities to generate income and new revenue streams (*refer to Eastman, 2006 for an exploration of revenue generation and organizational change*). While there were opportunities to develop new and cutting-edge programs, she discovered there was no funding for new hires. Monica faced a conundrum and wondered, “Do I hire more full-time academics who could support other service initiatives and program development, or do I hire ‘cheaper’ sessional academics who would simply undertake teaching but no service?” However, she remembered the advice from the literature that expanding the sessional workforce also introduced its own tensions and disadvantages (*for more detail on the casualization of academic workforces refer to Crawford & Germov, 2015; Gottschalk & McEachern, 2010; Mysyk, 2001*). She realized there were insufficient academics in the disciplines that were profitable and too many in programmatic or service areas that were not breaking even, were no longer current or marketable, and/or who were operating at a loss. She sighed to herself and thought that she needed to go home to a nice glass of chilled wine!

Even though around one third of the faculty numbers were research professors, most did not have funded research. Some had gone a decade or more since their last research grant, which was damaging the faculty profile as a research-intensive unit. Unfortunately, to exacerbate this issue, there were no support staff or research structures in the faculty to assist researchers in their pursuit of research funding, but these structures were likely to require funds which in the initial term was simply not available. Thus, Monica identified that her initial changes had to be to reduce expenditure, trim excesses and wastage, and to do more with less until funding from revenue streams started to materialize. Yes, that glass of wine was looking better and better!

Legal Complexities

The provost reminded Monica: “A dean must have an understanding of the legal and policy frameworks in which she works. This knowledge is crucial in order to avoid conflicts with human resources, unions or associations, and legal authorities” (*refer to Skolnik, 2010; Wickens, 2008 to further explore quality assurance trends and issues and union implications*).

One issue that Monica identified as a cause for concern was that her faculty had too many professional staff for the operational demands. Upon investigation, she determined, “Many had been hired for past programs and initiatives that had long since terminated, but they are still here. How did this happen? What do I do about it?” Thus, Monica set about undertaking a review of the distribution of professional staff to identify who were “essential” and who were “dead weight,” so she could make some hard decisions. Fortunately, there were years of performance reports which highlighted poor performing staff, so this provided her with some direction as to where to focus her streamlining efforts. She realized she was not going to be popular, but there appeared to be no choice.

In addition to surplus professional staff, she had also noted that the performance reviews of many of her full professors were less than optimal: “Just what were they doing?” Many had poor research outputs, no funded research programs, and were no longer drawing superior graduate students to their research. The majority were approaching, or in, their 80s and had achieved eminence in their field a decade or more ago but were no longer highly productive. She sat and mused,

The real concern is that ‘coasting’ professors are my most expensive faculty drawing significantly higher wages than my industrious, pre-tenure academics and they are doing so little in comparison, but I must tread carefully to avoid a union or human rights complaint! I must get advice about how to approach them. But also, I need to consider how to address this issue, so I am respectful of these older professors’ contributions over the years and to create a dignified and courteous exit strategy for them—that is only right when you consider their long service!

Programmatic and Marketing Dimensions

Monica reflected on her literature review related to teaching and learning. She agreed that the core business of most faculties is the provision of programs. However, an important dimension of programs was to ensure that these were: current and up-to-date; relevant to the field in order to promote the employability of graduates; cost effective; and educationally strong, that is, students can enjoy quality learning and teaching (*for more about how to include student feedback in enhancing teaching and learning refer to Scott, Issa, & Issa, 2008*). One of the key problems that Monica identified was that there had not been a rigorous review of faculty programs in over five years. Student feedback from some programs indicated that these were no longer relevant or current, and students were dissatisfied with the quality of their educational experience and their inability to secure a career post completion. Monica considered the programs: “We lack differentiation in the market! How can we distinguish ourselves within this competitive market? No one seems to be able to tell me where the faculty’s specialties lie!” (*refer to Cudmore, 2005; Eastman, 2006 for more about recruitment of globalization and internationalization as well as international students and revenue generation*). Additionally, the faculty appeared to be continuing with programs that were clearly no longer viable simply, she concluded, “because it is what we have always done,” as a core group of powerful academics held considerable ownership over these “limping” programs. Monica growled to herself, “We just don’t seem to be learning from the lessons of other universities who also had failing programs! We can’t afford to continue this blind approach.” Monica decided that a market scan and a review of programs were crucial to provide some direction regarding the strengths and weakness of their current offerings, and also to identify where programmatic opportunities were awaiting the faculty for new cost recovery streams and fee-for-service initiatives, for, as she asserted, “There was to be no throwing out the baby with the bathwater on her watch!” (*for more about academic entrepreneurship see Webber, 2016*). Indeed, in her initial discussions with some of the smaller departments and units, there were some excellent academics engaging in community programs and initiatives that had the potential to morph into fee-for-service ventures.

Poor Academic Cultures

One unexpected outcome of Monica’s meetings with her faculty was that there appeared to be significant

problems with “toxic” academic culture (*for an in-depth discussion about toxic cultures in academia see Smyth, 2017*). Workload concerns, stress, mental health issues, conflict and tension, unhealthy competition, and potential racism, appeared to be very real issues that Monica encountered in discussions with the faculty (*for a discussion about the implications of performance management and workplace motivation refer to Kairuz, Andriés, Nickloes, & Truter, 2016; Kallio & Kallio, 2014*).

In Monica’s everyday conversations with faculty in the hallways, workload was a significant concern (mainly for a number of departments where there was considerable demand for their programs), but the staffing ratios had not altered with the growth in student demand. In her review, she found other programs had large numbers of faculty but low student numbers which resulted in tensions between departments as some perceived themselves as the unappreciated “workhorses” of the faculty: “We are keeping you all afloat!” Additionally, most of the faculty were tenured, so this tended to tie a dean’s hands regarding hiring and firing but it did raise important questions around performance reviews. Similarly, the pre-tenured faculty were overperforming but also overwhelmed with their workloads and there appeared to be an unhealthy fear of being terminated at their tenure reviews. The workload was a worrying issue for Monica as she did not have sufficient ongoing revenue to hire more productive academics, so she was faced with a large group of largely unproductive faculty and a smaller group of overworked and resentful faculty. She reflected, “I will have to have the wisdom of Solomon to navigate this mess!”

Another worrying factor regarding the toxic culture was the poor student culture. Within a short time of assuming her leadership role, the student association and delegations of students had made their concerns known regarding the “poor quality of teaching and supervision” that was happening in the faculty. In addition to concerns raised about classroom interactions, there were issues with the “poor research culture” where students were not included or “invited” into the academic culture.

Upon consideration, she decided there were many factors influencing the toxic culture (*refer to Erkutlu, Chafra, & Bumin, 2011; Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007 to explore destructive leadership*). These factors included but were not limited to: negative legacies from the previous dean’s leadership approach which was laissez-faire at best, and punitive, at worst (*for more about destructive leadership and its implications refer to Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007*); uneven distribution of workloads; perceptions of favouritism and punishment; a lack of communication; and a poor culture of care for students. Monica was overwhelmed: “It is clear that something had to be done, but where do I start?”

Work Intensification Implications

Since starting in her role as dean, Monica discovered that her previous role as head of department had not prepared her for the intensity of decanal leadership, and she caught herself thinking, “What have I got myself into? Can I do this? How did I not know or encounter this before?” (*explore the following for more about the role of academic leaders Gmelch, 2009; Wolverson, Ackerman, & Holt, 2007*). She was working twelve or more hours a day, and still the list of tasks continued to pile up. Her open-door policy, which she had instituted with the express intent to open lines of communication and to establish more trusting cultures, resulted in a steady stream of people wanting to talk to her and this consumed valuable time in her day. She had an endless schedule of meetings where frequently little was achieved which caused frustration; a constant stream of emails that demanded her attention, decisions, and response; she found herself addressing emails before and after her long work day; and she crawled into bed each day mentally and physically exhausted bemoaning her work-life balance. The provost had made it clear that she needed to maintain her research profile because her tenure as dean was a three-year term and she needed to have a current research agenda in order to move back into the faculty at the end of it if she was not renewed, but she simply did not know how to find the time for research. Upon reflection she identified the irony that, while many in her faculty were suffering workload overload and burn out, and many reported health and mental wellbeing issues, she too was suffering bouts of ill health, anxiety, tiredness, and constant feelings of overwhelming stress from the many and pressing issues she was facing in her leadership (*explore the following discussions of cultivating effective leadership DeZure, Shaw, & Rojewski, 2014; Kinsler, 2014; Preston & Floyd, 2016*). She thought,

I need to develop more effective coping and resilience strategies for myself and for my faculty or find ways to reduce the workload, or at least get some balance in my life where work does not consume my body and soul. Are there opportunities to work smarter and more efficiently? Can I distribute my leadership to make better use of my time? How do I groom aspiring lead-

ers in my faculty who might then be able to assume some of my workload?

Monica eventually became aware of an ever-present feeling of being inadequately prepared: “I need to engage in leadership development and to find an experienced mentor or coach who can give me good advice, suggestions, and ideas on how to manage my horrendous workload!” In this sentiment, she unconsciously resonated with much of the literature she had read previously related to the importance of leadership development (*for her reading list refer to DeFrank-Cole, Latimer, Reed, & Wheatly, 2014; Ruben, De Lisi, & Gigliotti, 2018*).

As advised by the provost, Monica clearly has a lot to consider in her leadership of her faculty. Some of these issues entailed how to be entrepreneurial within this dynamic context, how to generate revenue to ameliorate the financial constraints while also attending to programmatic quality, how to lead her executive team to bring about positive change, all while juggling her increasingly demanding role. There may be dimensions of this case narrative that resonate with you and some aspects that are new to you. We invite you to consider what solutions you might have that could address these concerns that Monica is facing. Additionally, we invite you to explore the assumptions that underpin much of the contextual elements in this case to posit what can be changed and maybe how. Additionally, what cannot be changed, or, at least, what cannot be changed without considerable political and economic influence? As previously stated at the outset, this case narrative can be used in leadership development programming to stimulate discussion, critical thinking, and problem solving as well as to delve more deeply into the literature emerging from the higher education leadership context. The following teaching notes provide five activities that an instructor can use or adapt for use in a leadership development classroom.

Teaching Notes

The following activities are designed for leadership development programs. All are designed to extend critical thinking about the case, to perceive the relationships between the various factors and aspects in the case narrative, to explore the literature cited that pertains to leadership trends and issues, and to engage learners in metacognition to reflect on their own understandings and beliefs about leadership in order to develop a plan for change. Using a frequent analogy that an innovation is “outside the box,” we have adopted and extended this “box” analogy for our activities.

The first activity invites aspiring or novice leaders to consider all of the stakeholders and dimensions outlined in the case and to consider where to go for accurate information that could inform action. The second activity encourages learners to develop an action plan by considering what were the most pressing issues, along with the pros and cons and the relationships between the issues. The third activity invites learners to engage in research to determine further implications that may not necessarily be obvious from the case narrative. They are encouraged to develop a mind map of the relationships/linkages and stakeholders who would be involved in this map. The fourth activity encourages the learners to place themselves into the dean’s situation and to reflect on how they would approach this case and what capacities they bring to the task. This activity invites the development of metacognitive capacities focused on what strengths and values the dean needs to have or to develop in order to be most effective in leading this faculty. The final activity encourages learners to develop a plan for the required changes but while also considering the multidimensional factors that can influence the change and the change implementers.

A range of papers are woven throughout the case narrative that span topics such as: the impact of neo-liberalism in higher education; entrepreneurship; authentic and destructive leadership; decanal leadership roles and expectations; organizational culture and psychological safety; financial management and fundraising; the casualization of the academic workforce; leadership development; and leadership and racism are some of the key dimensions you can draw upon for these activities.

Activity 1: Scoping the Box – What, Who, When, and Why?

This activity encourages learners to brainstorm the most pressing issues and to develop a priority list which can inform an action plan (in the next activity). This activity is recommended to be undertaken in groups of four to five individuals.

- Brainstorm a priority list of what are the most pressing issues the dean needs to resolve. Identify five to eight of the most pressing priorities and develop a rationale as to why these are pressing.
- Identify what information needs to be sought in order to proceed with your first five to eight

priorities.

- Who would you need to get advice from to ensure that you proceed within the legal and policy frameworks in the university context?
- Who, within the faculty, can provide the historical knowledge or can offer insights about ways forward? Who are your inside entrepreneurs?

Activity 2: Inside the Box

Use the *Placemat Strategy* found in Bennett and Rolheiser's (2002) work. Brief outlines of the Placemat Strategy can also be found freely available on the web. In groups of four, develop a "placemat" to consider your list of pressing priorities and outline a final set of points through discussion and consensus.

1. In your section of the placemat, individually identify the priority areas that you feel should take precedence in solving the faculty issues (e.g., financial, quality teaching and learning, workload, culture, etc.). You can draw from Activity 1, but you can also add different points if you wish.
2. List, in your section, the pros and cons of your top three to five problems.
3. Share your first problem with the group highlighting your pros and cons for that point. Add additional pros and cons identified by the others through the discussion.
4. Once all members of the placemat group have shared their top points, develop, in the centre of your placemat, the group consensus for these problem priorities.
5. Share these points with the class and identify further complexities within these lists. Identify the relationships within the "solutions," highlighting any legal or policy issues that may derail these solutions.
6. Develop a staged action plan for the dean that represents your priority list. You need to consider what should be done first? What will influence other aspects? Who can do what? Will there be a cost involved in any solutions?

Activity 3: Framing an Appropriate Box

Elliot Aronson's Jigsaw is an efficient approach to learning within a team. You can locate an excellent outline at <https://www.jigsaw.org/>.

What other implications does the dean need to consider in proceeding with these key issues? What other implications are there in establishing solutions? For example, are there other implications such as: social justice, human rights, organizational culture, education context specificities, the collective agreement, workload and mental wellbeing? Sometimes a simple solution can have a ripple effect of other implications with many being undesirable and unintentional. Therefore, this activity is designed to consider other implications that may arise within simple solutions.

1. Form a different group to engage in a jigsaw research group.
2. Brainstorm further implications.
3. Each member of the jigsaw group is to take responsibility to research one aspect of further implication, for example, the collective agreement. Each member is to engage in research about his/her "implication" using research texts, scholarly papers, policies, or legal documentation, and return to the group as an expert with a summary of the key findings related to his/her "implication."
4. Each expert shares his/her findings with the group to educate the group members.
5. Develop a mind map that represents the linkages or relationships between the implications. You can also include the stakeholders or individuals that would most likely be affected associated with a particular implication.
6. Optional: The group can decide which implication has the greatest weight for the dean.

Activity 4: Outside the Transparent Box

If you were in Dean Destrier's shoes, what do you need to reflect upon to set yourself and your faculty up for success?

Keep in mind:

- As an authentic leader you need to "know oneself" in order to be credible and transparent;
- there is an issue with mental health and wellbeing amongst many (including you as dean); and
- there is a pervasive toxic culture.

Reflect on your knowledge, skills, and attitudes/values that are the strengths that you can bring to your decanal role and what aspects do you need to strengthen to be more effective?

Identify strategies for resilience that will enable you to be a successful entrepreneur and effective faculty leader. What strategies should be considered to address the toxic culture and to forge resilience for staff?

Some possible questions:

- In terms of your knowledge, skills, and/or attitude/values, where do you see your greatest areas of strength and what capacities do you need to develop? Why are those areas of development so important? Identify the relationships between these specific growth areas and the specifics of the case problems.
- What skills should you have or acquire in order to be more effective in leading the faculty through a significant, fast-paced change, given that the culture is toxic?
- What knowledge should you have or acquire in order to be more entrepreneurial?
- What attitudes and values do you have that will facilitate your success? Be specific.
- Who or where can you find support to develop your areas of growth?

Activity 5: Changing the Box

Leading change and becoming a change agent is frequently required in contemporary leadership. Indeed, change theorists indicate that to maintain the status quo means that an organization will fall behind because of the dynamic context, thus change is inevitable. In groups of four, draw upon the suggested texts, the previous list of priorities (Activity 1), implications mind map (Activity 2), and develop a plan for change. You will need to “defend” your group’s change plan in a presentation to the rest of the class. Your defence should include considerations of financial resources for the plan to be successful (i.e., where will the money come from?), that is:

- Is it staged? (does this mean financing will be dependent on the success of previous stages?)
- Are there expertise and peoplepower to undertake the change?
- What preparation would be needed to ready your staff to engage and how will you know if they are capable and prepared for the change?
- What plans and safeguards should be in place to ensure that the change does not destroy you or your change implementers?
- How do you plan to evaluate the change (Was it successful and how would you know)?

Present your plan for change and be prepared to defend criticism of the plan with reasonable (evidence-based) rationales for each course of action. The class will debate each plan and vote on the most reasonable, viable, cost effective, and least destructive (to the people in the faculty) plan of change.

Suggested readings about change

Burke, W. W. (2014). *Organization change: Theory and practice* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

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