

Book Reviews

John H. Schuh, ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Governance in the Twenty-First Century University: Approaches to Effective Leadership and Strategic Management

Dennis John Gayle, Bhoendradatt Tewarie,
and A. Quinton White, Jr.

San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, ASHE Higher
Education Report, Volume 30, Number 1,
2003, 160 pages, \$26 (softcover)

Reviewed by Richard J. Herdlein
Buffalo State—The State University of New York

Governance in the Twenty-First Century University is important reading for all of those concerned about the future of American higher education. The book is well researched and documented and covers many of the critical topics facing the academy.

The authors take an objective look at traditional forms of shared governance and recent attempts to incorporate the university governance system. The major question posed is whether either approach is appropriate to meeting the needs of the modern American college and university and the challenges of today's environment. The fundamental premise in the analysis is that governance structures should be evaluated from the perspective of their contribution to teaching and learning, leadership and management, use of technology, and budgeting.

The book is organized into seven sections including the results of litigation, surveys, and case studies pursued over the past six years. A fundamental conclusion is that faculty, administrators, and trustees view governance differently as evidenced by empirical data and pronouncements by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the Association of Governing Boards (AGB). Issues of academic freedom, control of the curriculum,

promotion and tenure, faculty workload, admissions criteria, accountability, quality, and access are major focal points of the discussion. The authors emphasize the importance of organizational culture in the process and structure of decision-making. Does the system of "shared meaning" held by members of an academic community emphasize teaching and learning or take on a more commercial approach that reflects interest in customers (students), labor force (faculty), profits, net income, and productivity?

It is also noted that a consensus exists that governance models fall short of expectations in the view of faculty, administrators, and trustees. Faculty tend to maintain a strong belief in shared governance and their essential role in the decision-making process. Administrators express concern about the lack of flexibility and time required to respond to necessary change while trustees tend to view their role as the "ultimate responsibility center" in all areas of governance and that "commonly accepted business standards should inform academic management."

The authors display insights into potential innovations in collegiate teaching and learning methodologies by attempting to bridge the gap between theory and practice. They refer to active learning as a "low risk, high return activity" and discuss how the curriculum, teaching methods and assessment, campus climate, and the broader institutional environment are all critical components that influence student learning and understanding. Organizational culture and governance of the university are viewed as determining the extent to which these approaches can engage students in a better way to equip them to function in a complex, interdependent world. The critical

variable is not institutional size, student profiles, or range of programs but whether universities and colleges are viewed from the top as academic corporations or institutions intended to foster innovative teaching and learning.

The impact of information technology, distance learning, needs of the adult learner for education and training, and for-profit and corporate delivery systems are discussed in relation to potentially new models of governance, administration, and management. In terms of decision-making, the authors feel that administrative process needs to be delegated downward to the most appropriate level such as the department or program and budgetary systems must reflect this responsibility-centered management.

Governance in the Twenty-First Century University is more than a book about decision-making in contemporary higher education. It covers a wide range of topics dealing with important issues that impact on faculty, administrators, trustees, students, politicians, as well as the public good.

Discussing how our colleges and universities function in a changing environment is an important exercise for individuals having a significant stake in the quality of the American college and university. Although the work builds on past research by Balderson (1995), Baldrige (1986), Birnbaum (1988) and others, it takes a more comprehensive approach to the question of governance while offering potentially controversial prognostications regarding the future of our current system of higher education, faculty tenure and sovereignty, entrepreneurship, course delivery, institutional transformation, technology, and budgeting.

Gayle, Tewarie, and White also provide a perspective that includes information drawn from areas beyond the continental United

States. This adds a certain richness to the analysis by internationalizing the discussion and informing the reader of developments from a more global perspective. The authors also attempt to point out that future challenges can be modified by dialogue between all of the major stakeholders in higher education and that the attitudes, values, and expectations of constituent groups will be critical to managing change in a way that enhances the major goal of pursuing excellence in teaching and learning.

One of the constituent groups that must not exist as a "silent stakeholder" is student affairs since many of the issues raised by the authors have a direct relationship to the future of the profession. How can student affairs participate in constructive change to meet the needs of the 21st century student and university? Do management structures in student affairs represent traditional top down models or are decision-making and budgetary responsibilities delegated "to the level closest to the immediate consequence?" Are decisions education-based and influenced by the need to enhance student learning and does student affairs partner with other groups in strengthening the learning culture on campus? Practitioners must be part of the dialogue or left out of a discussion that impacts co-curricular programs and services. It is even important to assume a leadership role in molding multiple perspectives into a shared vision of the future!

Governance in the Twenty First Century University raises many issues important to senior student affairs officers and implies numerous suggestions to embrace. For example, the implication that student affairs as well as other constituents must ensure that attitudes, values, and practices are consistent with the needs and demands of the 21st century. Whether the issue involves capi-

talizing on the emphasis on active learning, creating value added dimensions to distance learning, developing innovative ways to apply technology, or carefully articulating the critical role of student development and learning in organizational culture, student affairs needs to reflect creativity, accountability, flexibility and purposeful change. As higher education increasingly considers and adapts business models to management structures and processes, student affairs has the opportunity to play a major role in encouraging that ethical considerations and historic values be added to discussions that will decide on the future composition and character of the academy. The treatment of contemporary governance issues in this short treatise provides insights into how student affairs can manage change in an increasingly complex environment.

REFERENCES

- Balderson, E. E. (1995). *Managing today's universities: Strategies for viability, change, and excellence*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Baldrige, J. V., Curtis, D. V., Ecker, G. P., & Riley, G. L. (1986). Alternative model of governance in higher education. In M. W. Peterson (Ed.), *ASHE reader on organization and governance in higher education*. Lexington, MA: Ginn Press.
- Birnbaum, R. (1988). *How colleges work: The cybernetics of academic organization and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



Dreams, Nightmares and Pursuing the Passion: Personal Perspectives on College and University Leadership

Shannon E. Ellis

Washington, DC: NASPA, 2003, 86 pages,
\$24.95 NASPA members, \$34.95 NASPA
non-members (softcover)

Reviewed by Doris Ching
University of Hawai'i

The aspiring student affairs educator uses

Shannon Ellis's *Dreams, Nightmares and Pursuing the Passion* as a sacred text to be read repeatedly—in one sitting, with intrigue and excitement, the first time; pored through carefully, with highlighter to accentuate the implications and advice, the second time; re-read, with pen in hand to jot down important tips, the third time; and, thereafter, to note the fine subtleties that were missed on earlier readings. The seasoned senior student affairs officer, on the other hand, reads the book with alternating sighs, smiles, laughter, an occasional bit of anxiety, and frequent nods of agreement. Ellis' personal perspectives freshen warm memories and—simultaneously—awaken suppressed horrors and intensities of those early years as a vice president for student affairs. While the book is written for new vice presidents and promising, upwardly-mobile student affairs professionals, it appeals to any individual—within and outside of the profession—who has an affinity for college students and careers. Moreover, the advice is useful for an executive in any organization where one works with people, problems and politics; and where one cares about pride of achievement, helping others succeed, and making a positive difference in others' lives and the environment.

Ellis' intent is to share wisdom gained as a new vice president. Having been mentored by predecessors who were successful and respected in the field, Ellis' inferences, for the most part, are derived from personal observations sprinkled with influence of mentors who helped shape her executive style and values. Ellis offers an abundance of hints on the work of the vice president. The advice is mostly practical, and there are generous servings of it on nearly every page. The combination of personal revelations with hints of theory, as in her discussion of "thinking strategically," uplifts the reader with a refreshing new way of defining a familiar