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Leadership Notes: Editorial

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Leadership Notes: Editorial

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The relationship between higher education and society is under significant review. The value and demand for learning is escalating, individuals need opportunities for accessible, quality education for life, and new technology and pedagogy allows education to reach learners previously excluded. For Amirault and Visser (2009),

> today's technological revolution, with its order of magnitude advances that have left little of common life unchanged, presents an open challenge to the University to once again 'reinvent' itself. Indeed, it could be argued that the pressure for change placed on the University today is greater than any it has faced in any previous historical epoch. (p. 64)

Acknowledging the need for change in higher education, former American president Barack Obama touted that, "we will transform our schools, our colleges, our universities to meet the demands of a new age" (Obama, 2009). Those who study and work within higher education are guiding and directing this transformation. It will meet its current and future challenges, not by holding steady the organizational and pedagogical sacred cows of earlier times, but by recognizing and responding to these changing circumstances. As part of the solution, the integration of distributed, open, technology-enhanced learning will come from sound planning and thoughtfully-crafted, dedicated leadership.

Dedicated leaders are those who embody sound leadership traits and can execute the planning and implementation needed to move in new directions. As higher education undergoes significant reform in response to new requirements as identified above, successful organizations will be the ones with leadership able and willing to respond to the society in which their institution exist.

Balter's discussion of leadership identifies the need to foster collaborative engagement among faculty and staff to deal effectively with new pedagogy and the use of technology. He argues that an Appreciative Leadership approach has the capacity to foster cross-disciplinary cooperation between: (a) faculty who are subject-matter experts, (b) IT professionals, and (c) pedagogical developers; a cooperation critical to successful implementation of complex technology-enhanced learning.

Khan's discussion identifies a similar context and shares the view that carefully applied leadership approaches are required. A comparison of the more widespread Transactional Leadership with the newer Adaptive Leadership concludes cautiously; there may be a need for using both approaches throughout the current reformation in higher education. However, Adaptive Leadership, like Appreciative Leadership, operates outside behaviorist views of follower motivation. Beyond carrots and sticks, it allows for more consideration of multiple influences and more individualized, flexible relations during and after the reform process in higher education.

References

Amirault, R. J., & Visser, Y. L. (2009). The university in periods of technological change: A historically grounded perspective. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education, 21*(1), 62-79.

Obama, B. (2009). *Inaugural address.* Retrieved from https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/01/21/president-barack-obamas-inaugural-address

Leadership Notes publishes articles that review the implementation of distributed, open, and online education and the leadership needed to do so. Although open to all, many pieces published here come from students, who themselves are studying and preparing to offer leadership in a changing education landscape.