


# EXCELLENCE *in* ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

*By the National Center for Principled Leadership & Research Ethics  
at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

*based on the work of C. K. Gunsalus*


photos: Jeremy Thomas design: Aaron Robinson

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Mark, the department head, discusses department matters with Bruce, a prominent member of faculty.


*And, the promised questions...*

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**Define Leadership**

- 1 Think of a time you were impressed by an act of leadership. Write a few private sentences about that interaction.
- 2 Create a working definition of leadership for yourself.

*Save your definition in your journal—  
you will need it as we go along*

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# Academic Environment

*"...their special position in society, from which no man is exempt, imposes an obligation as to the exercise of their... In the exercise of this obligation, the professor should observe appropriate respect for the opinions of others..."*

AAUP  
Policy Statements  
and Resolutions

AAUP Statement of Principles, 1940


# Academic Environment



*"Well, sure it's sleazy and unacceptable, but it's not misconduct."*

# Long-Term Relationships



# Collegiality







Illustration

"Is that really any of my business?"



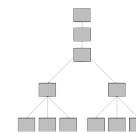
Winner of the "Not My Job" Award

Arizona Department of Transportation, Litchfield Park, Arizona

## Purpose



Mission



Role



Constituencies



Why?

# Why are you doing this job?

## Becoming an Authority Figure



As An  
Authority  
Figure

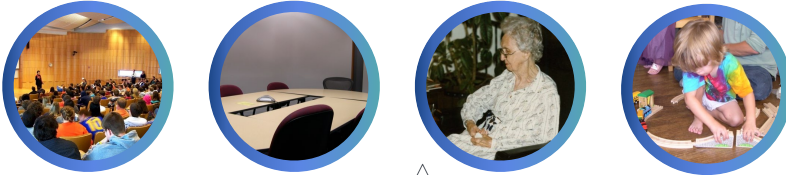
- 🛡️ Academia's general ambivalence about authority
- 🛡️ Real vs. perceived power
- 🛡️ Amplifying effects
- 🛡️ Decentralization
- 🛡️ Bifurcated constituencies
- 🛡️ Ambiguities in environment, policies, practice, etc.



As An  
Authority  
Figure

- 👤 Changed relationships
- 🗨️ Being an authority figure
- 🕒 The persona pendulum
- 🛡️ Donning a leadership persona

## Thinking About Personas



Which **you** do you need to be, and **when**?

A note:

"Nature abhors a vacuum"



*Aristotle*

If the leader does not step into the role,  
someone else will.

When you're responsible  
for the good of the whole,  
it isn't about you:

It's about the *role*, the *institution*,  
and the *mission*.

Boundaries



*Better living through  
better boundaries.*

## Outer Boundaries

- ⊘ Lying Institutionally conferred
- ⊘ Abuse of power or position
- ⊘ Impeding or diminishing the productivity of others
- ⊘ Causing fear









**It's easy to misplace your boundaries  
and roles in the decentralized  
academic environment.**



**You can train people to be  
bullies or to abuse the system.**

## 6 Elements

Decision-Making Framework

-  *What are the issues?*
-  *What policies or rules apply?*
-  *What questions do you have or data do you need?*
-  *Who, what are your resources?*
-  *What are your options?  
Who is affected by each?*
-  *What will you do?  
What (exact) words will you use?*

## Short Case







# 30: Irregular Hours

An assistant professor, Thomas Santo, is known to work irregular hours. Some nights, he comes back in and works until midnight and may not come into the office until noon. His colleagues say he is very hard working and is likely to make significant breakthroughs in his research. However, his undergraduate students complain that he is often late for class and sometimes is not prepared.

*What should you do?*

## 6 Elements

Decision-Making Framework

-  *What are the issues?*
-  *What policies or rules apply?*
-  *What questions do you have or data do you need?*
-  *Who, what are your resources?*
-  *What are your options?  
Who is affected by each?*
-  *What will you do?  
What (exact) words will you use?*

## LC Quick Tips

### Becoming an Authority Figure

1. It's about the institution and the mission.
2. Develop good boundaries.
3. Listen. Listen. Listen.
4. Build relationships and trust.
5. Learn to apologize, when needed, and mean it.



### NCPRE Leadership Collection

Collection of resources for developing yourself, motivating, and leading strategically

**Focal Areas**

1. Developing Yourself
2. Leading and Managing a Unit
3. Leading Beyond the Unit

**Collections**

- Just-in-time (now!)
- Deep Dive (deep knowledge)

**Updates**

The Leadership Collection is regularly updated with new resources

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## Questions or concerns?

## Key takeaways?

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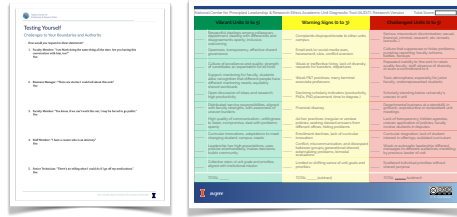
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Homework

1. Identify at least two Quick Tips or videos from the Leadership Collection; be prepared to share your review of them with colleagues at our next session.
2. Read all the *Testing Yourself* prompts; write out answers.
3. Fill out the AUDiT for your unit.



ncpre National Center for Principled Leadership & Research Ethics Academic Unit Diagnostic Tool (AUDiT): Edition B

Total Score

Vibrant Units (0 to 5)	Warning Signs (0 to 3)	Challenged Units (0 to 5)
Respectful dealings among colleagues, department, consistently high student feedback, inclusive, welcoming	Complaints disproportionate to other units, campus	Serious misconduct, discrimination, sexual, financial, criminal, etc. (arrests, lawsuits.)
Openness, transparency, shared governance	Email and/or social media wars, harassment, silos, conflict aversion	Culture that suppresses or hides problems; punishes reporting; faculty schisms, battles, flareups
Culture of excellence and quality, strong candidates	Weak or ineffective hiring, lack of diversity, requests for transfers, departures	Repeated inability to hire, retain quality faculty, staff; absence of diversity, or even a commitment to it.
Support and mentoring for faculty and students alike, recognition that different people have different mentoring needs, equitably shared workloads	Weak P&T practices, many terminal associate professors	Toxic atmosphere, especially for junior faculty, underrepresented groups, students
Open discussion of ideas and research; high productivity; excellent teaching modeled and rewarded	Declining scholarly indicators (productivity, PhDs, PhD placement, time to degree, few curricular innovations, little sharing of research on learning)	Scholarly/teaching standing below institution's; uneven in unit
Distributed service responsibilities, aligned with faculty strengths with awareness of uneven burdens	Financial disarray	Departmental business at a standstill; in gridlock
High level of communication—willingness to listen, compromise, problems addressed, not submerged	Ad hoc practices; forum-shopping; seeking desired answers from different offices; hiding problems	Lack of transparency, hidden agendas, uneven application of policies; faculty involve students in disputes
Curricular innovations, adaptations to meet changing student, campus, needs	Enrollment declines, lack of curricular innovation; cancelled or missing classes regular occurrence	Curricular stagnation, lack of student interest in offerings; outdated curriculum
Leadership has high expectations, uses policies evenhandedly, makes decisions, builds community	Bimodal evaluations; generational discord; externalizing problems, miscommunication, and disrespect between groups	Weak or autocratic leadership; different messages to different audiences; meddling by previous leader of unit
Collective vision of goals and priorities aligned with institutional mission	Poor student progress to program completion/graduation/degree	Many individual priorities without shared purpose
TOTAL _____	TOTAL _____ (subtract)	TOTAL _____ (subtract)

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See you next time!