

Successful administration is marked by curiosity, imagination and the love of experimentation. The life of an academic administrator is marked by teaching and scholarship not bureaucratic mastery. It is the determination to maintain a refreshing perspective and an optimistic perspective that best asserts the importance of the leadership role. The administrative role demands the willingness by those in leadership positions to adjust to every situation. It requires the openness to good ideas from many sources and it requires the willingness to try and try again.

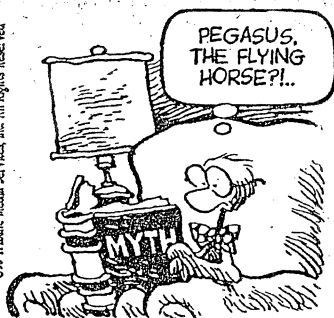
Lessons from Reflective Administration

Closing Thoughts

Shoe



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Lessons from Reflective Administration

Closing Thoughts

Just after I was appointed to my present position a Harvard alumnus asked me to spend a bit of time talking to an elderly gentleman of his acquaintance. Apparently this gentleman had acquired a reputation in business circles for being unusually wise in the ways of large organizations and how they could be governed effectively. By now the details of our conversation have grown dim in my mind – except for one unforgettable observation. “Remember this,” said my venerable adviser: “your most creative ideas about the future will come in the next few months before you take office and get embroiled in your official duties.” (Derek Bok)

You must find ways to disconnect to remain relevant and fresh with ideas. You must make reflection a priority.
(Malecha)

Workshop Agenda:

Making Reflection a Priority
Imagination, Dreams and the Shining City on the Hill
Continual Recommitment
A Sense of Joy and a Sense of Accomplishment

Relevant Articles:

The Reflective Administrator is a Multiplier
Marvin J. Malecha
What Your Team Wants Most from You
Robert A. Sevier
Ruminations on University Presidency
A. Bartlett Giamatti

APPOINT YOURSELF



CHIEF

FREEDOM

OFFICER.

The Reflective Administrator is a Multiplier

Marvin J. Malecha

Each day of academic leadership is a day of learning. Every day begins with a new turn and new challenges. Even after more than twenty years of experience the learning curve remains steep. This has the effect of continual renewal and association with incredibly bright people as well as the disappointment that accompanies uninspired or disruptive behavior by even the most senior professor. Yet the aspect of the position that is most moving is the opportunity to celebrate and enhance the careers of others. It is the ability to make connections among people, opportunities, and ideas. It is a life filled with the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others. It is a life that connects dreams with outcomes. It is the role of the dean to connect the incredible abilities of an academic community with the needs of the university, the profession and society. It is the dean who carries this message to individuals who might otherwise be consumed by personal interests and talents. The academic leader is a multiplier of talent and resources. It is this ability that separates success from failure. It is this ability that is the best demonstration of the value of an academic experience.

The articulation of ideas is everything. The academic leader is expected to articulate a clear belief system that is founded on fairness and open to scrutiny. Everyone in an academic community must know what the dean/director/chair believes. This belief system provides the foundation for the many complex interactions required of an academic leader.

The ability to form a shared vision is powerful. The fostering of a shared vision is among the most important responsibilities of an academic leader. The fostering of shared interests is dependent on the ability of an individual who leads the community to formulate goals and objectives that will focus resources and energy. It is the ability to listen that begins the process of assimilation necessary to evolve a shared vision.

Rejoicing in the accomplishments of others is taking joy from tedium. The academic leadership position is founded on the delight in the accomplishment of others. Commencement is the most visible symbol of this celebration. A successful leader takes pride in facilitating the success of others. This may require both gentle and forceful interventions to stimulate this success. An academic leader sets the stage for the success of faculty, staff and students.

The ability to manage assets is the foundation of trust. The role of an academic leader begins with the ability to manage every form of assets. The credibility of leadership is founded on fiduciary responsibilities. This seemingly least important aspect of the higher calling of leadership has been the undoing of many brilliant individuals. Begin here as the benchmark and proceed on to the higher calling but never neglect this responsibility. Balance the budget each and every year unless directives are presented otherwise in writing by the provost or chancellor. Of course there are many other forms of assets including facilities and people that must be managed with the greatest care.

Attention to detail is attention to what matters most to people. If an individual is to lead details must not be delegated. It is through the details of budget and assignments that a leader builds confidence. The academic leader must never delegate details at the expense of knowing the issues of the program in the greatest intimacy.

Maintaining the posture of a teacher to build credence as an academic leader. The academic leader is first a teacher and then an administrator. The effective administrator and academic leader is a teacher of teachers, support staff and students. It is the responsibility of the academic leader to guide the processes and vision of a program in much the same way a studio master guides students through a complex design program. The clarity of the message must be communicated in a manner that promotes the discourse within the academic community.

Academic leadership is personal. Academic leadership requires a personal commitment to the position. It demands that a life of the mind be joined to a life of action. This demands of the individual that is at peace in his or her personal life. It is essential that an individual who aspires to leadership never make decisions in an atmosphere unbalanced by the need for revenge or to exact just desert. This personal commitment to leadership must be matched by unbridled enthusiasm for the position and for the community associated with the program. It is a fact of leadership that important moments are generally those times when the rules must be suspended or exceptions to the rules invoked. An academic leader is chosen after all for his or her ability to make reasoned and humane judgements on the margins of the life of a community.

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(email newsletter)**

Insights into Research, Strategic Planning, and Integrated Marketing for Colleges and Universities by Dr. Robert A. Sevier, Senior Vice President at Stamats
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WHAT YOUR TEAM WANTS MOST FROM YOU

With all the pressure to create more effective teams, I wanted to spend just a minute on a roundup of what team members expect most from their leader. The research, presented in the August 2003 issue of *Team Management Briefings* examined 11 leadership characteristics and asked people to rank them in order of importance:

- Competent
- Forward-looking
- Inspiring
- Intelligent
- Fair-minded
- Broad-minded
- Courageous
- Honest
- Straightforward
- Imaginative
- Dependable

Guess which characteristics ranked first: If you chose “honest” you nailed it. When asked to name three characteristics they valued from their leaders, team members chose:

- Telling the truth
- Knowing the business
- Anticipating change

We also discovered that effective leaders:

- Stand by their team
- Cultivate relationships
- Acknowledge jobs well done
- Think and talk in terms of “we”
- Kill the grapevine
- Go slow to go fast (take the time to make sure people understand the “why” before you move ahead)
- Use humor on a daily basis
- Fix problems as they occur and don’t let them accumulate
- Stick to things that work
- Are more visible and available

»» *Ruminations* *on University* *Presidency* ««

Being president of a university is no way for an adult to make a living. Which is why so few adults actually attempt to do it. It is to hold a mid-nineteenth-century ecclesiastical position on top of a late-twentieth-century corporation. But there are those lucid moments, those crystalline experiences, those Joycean epiphanies, that reveal the numinous beyond and lay bare the essence of it all. I have had those moments. They were all moments of profound and brilliant failure—but string those glistening moments of defeat into a strand and you have the pearls of an administrative career.

In the six months between being named president of Yale University in December of 1977 and taking office in July of 1978, I had ample opportunity to receive advice. I listened to many people. I learned about the corporate world. I learned that because the corporate world is interested only in quarterly results, it talks a great deal about long-range planning. It was clear to me that Yale needed

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some of that, too. We needed a corporate strategy; we needed a policy. I, of course, had no policies. I had a mortgage and one suit, but no policies. I cast about. I solicited data and forecasts and projections and models. I did comparative studies, longitudinal studies; I made a flowchart and convened a task force. I hired and fired management consultants. I went in search of a policy. What was it that Yale needed most, wanted most, and would most contribute to solving our deficit, enhancing our quality, and making me a Manager?

One night in early April 1978, crouched in my garage, as I was trying to memorize the Trustees' names, particularly the ones I had met, it came to me, and I wrote, right there, between the lawnmower and the snow tires, a memo. On July 1, 1978, my first day in office, I issued this memo to an absent and indifferent University. It read,

To the members of the University Community:

In order to repair what Milton called the ruin of our grand parents, I wish to announce that henceforth, as a matter of University policy, evil is abolished and paradise is restored.

I trust all of us will do whatever possible to achieve this policy objective.

The reaction was quite something.

Four young members of the faculty in Comparative Literature wrote an open letter to the *New York Review of Books* proving that Milton was talking not about evil in *Paradise Lost* but about irony and the patriarchal abuse of power. A junior in Yale College, spending the summer doing a leveraged buyout of a Tasee-Freez in Easthampton,

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wrote me a gracious letter. She recognized the pressure one was under to have a business plan, but she hoped that I would wait until she had graduated before changing things very much. An alumnus in New York, on Yale Club stationery, wondered why the hell we always had to get so far out in front.

In September, the *Yale Daily News* wrote the first editorial about my memo. Its opening sentences were these:

Giamatti's administration is off to a miserable start. Rather than giving us control over our lives, or at least addressing concerns of students such as the crying need for a student center so we can make friends or any of the myriad of other injustices that riddle the fabric of the quality of life here, the new administration is insensitive and repressive and the future bodes awful.

Though one of the best-written of the *News* editorials, it was, be fair, also the first.

Since the students were back and the *Daily News* was publishing, the major media outlets now had a source for news. Student stringers went to work, and my memo achieved National Visibility. In a small article bylined "Special to The New York Times," the country's newspaper of record misspelled my name and said a Harvard professor had found a letter from Milton to his parents in the Yale Library. The *Washington Post* ran a picture of the memo in the Style section and wrote a sidebar in a box, quoting an FDA lawyer as asserting that evil had been abolished three years earlier, that the regulations had been printed in the *Federal Register*, and that nobody he knew believed evil was bad for you in any case. The *Wall Street Journal*

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wrote a pithy editorial pointing out that fat, liberal, effete, Marxist-oriented Eastern universities, and Stanford, too, were all in a plot to undermine the Republic, free enterprise, and greenmail as we know it today. "What we need," said the *Journal*, "is not more talk about evil, but some decent courses in risk arbitrage." George Will wrote a column citing Montesquieu, Thomas Aquinas, Locke, and Ernie Banks; William Buckley said Milton is "all very well, but it is typical of president Giamatti and his ilk to cite a secular authority on evil as if, of course, those who have passed any time down in the agora or out on the Rialto needed an authority to know the palpability of evil in all its camaraderie and liberal camouflages." In the *New Yorker's* Talk of the Town, there was a long account about the birthday party given in a secret, nuclear-free place for Daniel Berrigan by David Dellinger; the correspondent noted in passing the nonexistence of evil in New Haven, but added that all at the party agreed that when *they* awoke that morning on Central Park West, there was certainly evil still rampant everywhere *they* could see, and their doormen had confirmed it when asked.

As you know, a university president has responsibility not only for the internal workings of the institution but also for external representation and relations as well. Of all the moments I remember—speaking to alumni, visiting foundations and corporations, mayors and governors and private individuals; going to high schools and boardrooms and newspapers and dinners and receptions—the moment I remember best is the morning I saw Congressman Phlange, from the third district of a state we will call Grace.

The Congressman's office is a series of dark paneled warrens, each leading to the other. As I enter, I see two

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reception desks piled high with brochures for bus tours of Arlington. On the wall is a framed poster of the last major Arts Festival held in the district—on August 17, 1937. There are two chairs, a table with copies of the *Machinists International Newsletter* and *Collier's*, and a telephone that cannot call anything. There is no ashtray.

The first receptionist is reading her high school yearbook and drinking a Diet Sprite, so I approach the other receptionist, who is less busy.

"Mr. Giamatti to see the Congressman, please," I say. She is wearing a button that says *I am a Phlangist*. She looks up and says, "He's either in the District or on the floor. They're not sure."

I sit in the corner by the phone. Suddenly the inner door opens and a middle-aged person with eyeglasses hung on a green cord around her neck and carrying an appointment book, a clipboard, a stack of letters, a cup of coffee, and a Snoopy lunch box comes up to me, says, "He'll see you now, please follow me," and takes me out the door, down the hall to the right, and through the first door we come to. We go past a word processor on an empty desk, down a short corridor filled with overflowing wastebaskets, then a sharp right, past a young man methodically shredding what looks like mail, and into the Congressman's office.

The Congressman is reading behind a huge desk, surrounded by plaques, awards, trophies, pictures, laminated scrolls, and autographed footballs. There are four easy chairs, a chocolate-colored wastebasket, an American flag, and a mother-of-pearl paperweight the size of a softball with *Republic of China* in blue letters across the base.

"Doctor, how are you. It's a pleasure. Please sit down.

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Can we get you some coffee. What brings you to Washington.” He has not yet looked up. “I’d like to get a picture of us together. I’ll find the photographer.” And suddenly he is gone, vanished out the door.

Then he is back, with a wizened photographer whose complexion reminds me of a legal pad. And a tall, slim woman, about thirty, in slacks, a blue work shirt, a denim vest, boots, her dark hair pulled back in a bun. “Doctor, this is Ms. Incomparable Worth, my legislative assistant for education. She’ll sit in. Now, if you’ll stand here, Doctor, we’ll get a picture. I’ll want several so you can write on one and I can write on one. There.” A flash has gone off. The photographer leaves.

Ms. Worth speaks. “We think the NIH cuts should go through. We’re not impressed with your fatuous argument that we can’t change the rules halfway through the game. We believe student aid benefits only the rich and the poor; rather than stopping abuse, we’d rather do away with everything. We are for cutting out charitable deductions, for instituting the 2 percent floor, and for forbidding gifts of appreciated assets. We do not believe in a federal science facilities fund or in the nonprofit postal subsidy; we think it would be the height of fraud and abuse to fund the Humanities. We intend to uncap retirement, cap technology transfer, cut the NEA and NSF, get rid of the Library of Congress, and slash the Health Manpower Act. We want to get this country moving again.”

The Congressman beams. “Doctor, let me tell you it is an honor having you here. We have a college in the district; they do a wonderful job. Education is a wonderful thing. Made the country what it is today. Look what we’ve got—a huge deficit, unbalanced trade, weak dollar, corruption

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in church and state—separated, of course. Anything I can do, tell me. Great to see you.”

I went back, past the young man, shredding, past the wastebaskets, past the silent word processor, into the hall. Though I had not said a word, I had done what I came to do. I had had my picture taken, seen a staffer, met a congressman, heard all the issues touched definitively. Our system is working. The visit remains in the mind as a pearl.

There is only one other moment that stands out: a brief, but glistening, half hour, not long before I left, with a university-wide, community-based, self-selected group called the Standing Committee on Special Interests. This committee is the special-interest group that convenes to pursue a special interest if there is no preexistent special-interest group empowered to pursue that special interest. It monitors public utterances to see who might be offended, and then it takes offense if no one else has the time or inclination; it watches power structures; it petitions for redress; it rallies, gathers, assemblies, queries, blockades, and even assaults sincerely in good causes. It is an extraordinarily hardworking group, never at rest, always vigilant. Recently, the Standing Committee had taken up the cause of the inequality of income distribution in North America, the preservation of all stained-glass windows at Yale, women’s volleyball, structural unemployment in the Northeast, word processing terminals in the Law School, and World Hunger.

I was summoned to meet the Standing Committee. I said I would meet them in the Trustee Room, near where I had my office. They said they were not sure they could all fit in the room. I said they could send delegates; they

said they did not trust each other enough to delegate any of their number. I said it was up to them. They canceled. Some clergy in town petitioned on their behalf. We agreed to meet. When they finally arrived, there were only seven of them. I asked what I could do. A long silence. "What is the issue?" I was baffled. Finally, the spokesperson said, "We are sorry to come to you like this, but we are very deeply concerned that no one in the administration is paying any attention to the most pressing problem of our time. The problem of evil and the restoration of Paradise." "But," I said, "we tried to solve that. I sent a memo on that years ago." "We weren't here years ago," said the spokesperson. "We are here now. What can we do to make it better?" We talked long into the night.

In some ways, this conversation and my parodies of all the others are variations upon that serious and splendid conversation that is any great college or university, anywhere in the country. The university today is very different from the one twenty-five years ago, or fifty or one hundred or two hundred and fifty years ago, and yet it is not different. It is still a constant conversation between young and old, between students, among faculty; between faculty and students; a conversation between past and present, a conversation the culture has with itself, on behalf of the country. The university lives through all its voices—and the conversation does not stop there, nor does our conversation with what we took away stop.

Perhaps it is the sound of all those voices, over centuries overlapping, giving and taking, that is finally the music of civilization, the sound of human beings shaping and sharing, mooring ideals to reality, making the world, for

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all its pain, work. The university is the place where the seeds of speech first grow and where most of us first began to find a voice. It is neither a paradise nor the worst spot we have ever been in; it is a good place that continues to want to make her children better.

Its essence is that give-and-take, that civil conversation in its innumerable forms. When that conversation, the to-and-fro of ideas, is stymied or foreclosed or frozen, when the questing for truth is told that it must cease because there is only one Truth and it is Complete, then the institution in its essence is chilled and its life threatened. Of all the threats to the institution, the most dangerous come from within. Not the least among them is the smugness that believes the institution's value is so self-evident that it no longer needs explication, its mission so manifest that it no longer requires definition and articulation.

Without constant attempts to redefine and reassert publicly their nature and purpose, universities become frozen in internal mythology, in a complacent self-perpetuation. Universities are profoundly conservative institutions, meant to transmit the past, built to remember (despite a tendency within themselves to amnesia). When they are not challenged within themselves to justify themselves, to themselves as well as to the society they serve; when they are not held accountable by themselves and are not constantly urged to examine their presuppositions, their processes and acts, they stiffen up and lose their evolving complementarity to other American institutions.

I believe, for reasons set forth in this volume, that since the end of World War II and the Korean War, America's colleges and universities have failed in these terms. They have failed to reexamine their norms, natures, and roles

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in a period of immense change. As a result, they have failed to reeducate the public, whose goodwill and support are crucial to higher education's very existence, as to the nature of higher education—what it is for, where it fits the country's historical and current needs, what it alone cannot do.

This failure to redefine and reassert itself, to be accountable or even appear to be accountable—either because of smugness or of a failure of nerve or, as I suggest in “The Academic Mission,” of a desire to mimic government or the for-profit corporation—has had two results. The first is that a vacuum of definition and public education about the nature of higher education has occurred for a generation. And into that vacuum left by higher education's leaders have rushed all manner of fatuous or reactionary critical accounts of higher education's mission, explanations whose surface plausibility and essential wrongheadedness have found a willing and eager national audience, hungry to know what has been going on. The critiques, rarely encountering an institutionally generated countervailing point of view, colonize the vacuum created and maintained by higher education about itself.

A parent who hungers to know, for instance, why a child's college experience has cost so much or, worse, has seemed so unsatisfactory or pointless or lacking in connectedness with anything in the past will have heard very little from higher education about its issues or its problems. Certainly, that parent will not hear a voice like that of a Conant or a Hutchins or a Griswold against which to test one's ideas, to argue, with which to agree. Small wonder that Allan Bloom's book is a best-seller. There is no impudence in the atmosphere; no one to assert how higher

education in fact serves a democracy not by re-creating a class of micro-mandarins, strenuously emulating Socrates, but rather by maintaining faith with a national history that at its best aches for equality as well as quality, for accessibility as well as excellence.

Most of the voices one hears tend to be those announcing the Apocalypse. Few are the assertions for the public at large of the ideals to which higher education must aspire, few are the assertions of the shape an institution of higher education must attain and why, and few are the consistent visions of the purpose of an undergraduate education. In the last generation, the field has been, with few exceptions, left to the promoters of a political system or of lament. When those who know best the realities and the ideals of higher education fall silent, for whatever reason, or believe themselves only managers, not leaders, then the public is denied access to higher education in a fundamental sense, access to its thinking about what is going on and what it is for.

The other result of a generation of silence concerning the principles and purposes of higher education has been the absence of any examination of a college's or a university's necessary complementarity with the other institutions in our society. We all know that the basic institution in society—the family—has changed its shape; we know that the legal system, and the services it absorbs or spawns, has undergone great change because of a different set of demands placed upon it. We know that institutions for worship have adapted to new technologies, new populations with differing needs, and new imperatives; that cultural institutions, and institutions for leisure, have changed to meet a population whose patterns of work, play, and

retirement are different from what they were before 1950. And we know there is even a portion of the population that does not believe in the traditional institution, and its authority, at all; for these people, all traditional institutions are sexist plots or capitalist instruments designed to deny Rights and Freedoms. Such people are found (among other places) in the student bodies and faculties of many colleges and universities. While their essentially redistributionist and leveling impulses, vaguely compounded of New Left, Old Left, and narcissistic postures, hardly represent more than a fraction of any campus, hardly more than a special flavor to various Special Interests, they do—paradoxically—impede the process of institutional redefinition by baying so stridently for radical change that they spark counterreforms that invariably go back to the recoverable past for their counterproposals.

The net effect since the Second World War is that institutions of higher education have lost vital connections to their surrounding institutions. Universities and colleges have tended to lurch into new structures and programs, with no thought of consequences, and then spasmodically reinstitute what had been jettisoned in a new, watered-down form. Educational institutions are out of phase with themselves as well, because there are few voices reminding them of how many times they have been through this cycle and, more important, redefining and remembering for each generation the enduring principles and purposes of the place. Only by those affirmations can the change that is essential to the institution within occur; and only by such change within does the university remain in phase, in a complementary relationship, with the changing institutions around it.

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When the university lurches spasmodically rather than changes in a patient, inefficient, but purposeful way, a larger society that hears nothing about the principles and purposes of higher education from clear voices within higher education also sees the whole class of institutions as floundering, as growing more expensive when costs supposedly are going down; as abdicating the role of *in loco parentis* just when the family is under increasing stress; as asking more and more of government (while wishing to be independent) just when government, at the federal level in particular, is arguing for a New Federalism and a less intrusive (and supportive) federal role; as seemingly indifferent to drugs or drinking just when the public grows in awareness of the evils of substance abuse.

A clear instance: the central cry, heard on all sides, is, Why don't our colleges teach "moral values"? The cry is cried out constantly, and not only from outside the Academy. And here we come full circle. Without anyone clearly and forthrightly telling students and their parents (and everyone else) that a college or university teaches "moral values" by its *acts as an institution*, by its institutional behavior, and not by causing some dogma or doctrine to be propounded exclusively in its classrooms, there is no education of the public, or the academic world, regarding the nature of the modern, nonsectarian American college or university. Silence does not make the point that families are where moral values (or immoral values) are first and longest implanted; that churches or synagogues or other houses of worship are where moral values are supposed to be taught; and that the classroom, or the academic part of the university, is where values of all kinds are meant to collide, to contest, to be tested, debated, disagreed

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about—freely, openly, civilly (as opposed to coercively). Silence does not assert that institutional behavior—how the university or college treats the people within it, invests its money, admits students, promotes faculty, comports itself vis-à-vis other social institutions—is every day, in a thousand different forms, how the college or university teaches. The place teaches by example. In this fashion, it is a model for ethical or moral behavior or it is not, but however it acts, people—within and without—draw lessons.

Silence about the nature and purpose of higher education will never remind those who have forgotten or inform those who never knew. Nor will silence from higher education convince any member of the public at large that colleges and universities understand their necessary and complementary relationship to other institutions in the society.