
Does Mission Matter in Senior University Leadership Effectivity – A Study of Religious and Secular University Presidents

Dr. Richard Savior

Associate Professor, School of Business, State University of New York, USA

Abstract: *Colleges and universities in the United States face a set of significant and progressive challenges requiring exemplary senior leadership. The purpose of this study was to measure and analyze the senior leadership practices at private/secular and private/religious affiliated colleges and universities to identify differences in leadership practices as they relate to the personal and institutional demographics of the respondents to improve organizational effectiveness. The study focused on five predictive variables of exemplary leadership: behaviors that clarify values, behaviors that envision the future for an organization, behaviors that seek opportunities for change, behaviors that foster collaboration and sharing of power, and behaviors that recognize the contributions of others through rewards. The findings for this study were derived from a survey distributed to 200 university presidents. The study found that while institutional affiliation had little bearing on the specific leadership practices, sense of job satisfaction and efficacy of the respondents, those respondents from religious institutions reported a higher commitment to institutional mission and values. Experience as president was highly correlated to job satisfaction and effectiveness, while certain specific leadership practices were found to be highly correlated to gender.*

KeyWords: *behavior, culture, effectiveness, leadership, mission*

I. Introduction

The pursuit of higher education has historically been fundamental to the overall success of our nation, through the production and dissemination of knowledge, and the engagement of colleges and universities in addressing societal needs. Colleges and universities in the United States perform an essential role in serving the greater good by educating students, elevating citizen's standard of living and by furthering the advancement of important theoretical and applied research and development (Ferguson & Roofe, 2020).

Today, U.S. colleges and universities face significant challenges in the areas of economics, demographics, and global competition. Issues of access, affordability, quality, and accountability have accelerated in recent years, all of which underscores the importance of effective stewardship and leadership in the country's senior higher education ranks. These issues relate as well to the sustainability of higher education institutions as they consider their goals and mission.

Leaders of colleges and universities need to continually assess the contributions their institutions are (or are not) making towards the economic, scientific and social components of the communities that they serve. Regular governmental support from state and federal agencies are long over, and the days of accountability and assessment, globalization, and competition are here to stay, providing new pressures for colleges and universities (Leal Filho, Pallant, Enete, Richter & Brandli, 2018).

By better understanding the role that university presidents play in effectively fostering organizational development, institutions and their senior leaders may be better equipped in meeting and overcoming the challenges and opportunities facing American higher education.

II. The Study

The purpose of this study was to measure and analyze the senior leadership practices at private/secular and private/religious-affiliated colleges and universities to identify differences in leadership practices as they relate to the personal and institutional demographics of the respondents to improve organizational effectiveness. The study focused on five predictive variables of exemplary leadership according to the research of Kouzes and Posner (Kouzes & Posner, 2022): Model the Way; Inspire a Shared Vision; Challenge the Process; Enable Others to Act; and Encourage the Heart, and the personal and institutional demographics of the respondents to identify any significant relationships between the variables.

The target population for this study was the presidents of 100 private/secular and 100 private/religious-affiliated colleges and universities. The institutional targets were equally divided based upon affiliation. All the colleges and universities were four-year private institutions with 1,000+ student enrollments. The private/religious affiliated institutions were identified from the 2022 Association of Catholic College and Universities Directory (Association of Catholic Colleges & Universities, 2022) and the private/secular counterpart institutions from the 2022 National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities Directory (National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities, 2022).

III. Challenges Facing U.S. Higher Education

Colleges and universities face significant and progressive challenges as American society continues to evolve, yet many colleges and universities remain mired in traditional organizational models. America is becoming a more diverse nation with growing divides socially, economically, and politically. A 2006 commission, sponsored by then U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spelling, questioned the job that U.S. colleges and universities were doing in preparing students for the 21st century and raised concerns about access, affordability, quality, and accountability. Although somewhat dated, the Commission's analysis, findings and recommendations continue to resonate today. The Commission's report stated that:

The future of our country's colleges and universities is threatened by global competitive pressures, powerful technological developments, restraints on public finance, and serious structural limitations that cry out for reform. Our report has recommended strategic actions designed to make higher education more accessible, more affordable, and more accountable, while maintaining world-class quality. Our colleges and universities must become more transparent, faster to respond to rapidly changing circumstances and increasingly productive in order to deal effectively with the powerful forces of change they now face (U.S. Department of Education, 2006).

In a subsequent study, former Harvard president Derek Bok provides an updated analysis of the current condition of this nation's colleges and universities. Bok's assessment centered around concerns over the quality of undergraduate curriculum, rising college costs, the rise of for-profit institutions, the stagnating levels of college graduation, the problems of university governance, the strengths and weaknesses of graduate and professional education, the environment for research, and the benefits and drawbacks of the pervasive competition among American colleges and universities. While this balanced analysis addresses what the American higher education sector is doing right and what it needs to do better, the net result is that significant issues remain from the seminal 2006 Spelling Commission findings (Bok, 2015).

Given the seemingly inexorable growth in the cost of a higher education degree, the issue of affordability is relevant irrespective of the current macroeconomic conditions but is particularly vexing during periods of economic downturn and uncertainty as students and other stakeholders weigh the value of foundational and advanced degrees. At the same time, employers are increasingly looking beyond the degree itself with a greater focus on applied skills and trainability factors, lessening the long-standing imperative that the only pathway to economic and social mobility was through the attainment of a conventional college degree. Studies have found

that students and parents are questioning the return on their educational investment and the preparedness of today's graduates who enter an increasingly challenging and competitive global economy (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2019).

IV. Issues Specific to U.S. Religious Higher Education

From a historical perspective, through much of the nineteenth century, U.S. universities were mostly private, and many had some sort of religious affiliation (Mayrl & Oeur, 2009) with public institutions only beginning to emerge from the mid-19th century on. Beginning in the colonial period, many settlers believed a faith-based education was essential with various religious groups providing an impetus for the creation of a number of religious affiliated colleges. The mid-nineteenth century saw the emergence of a range of other special interest institutions for advanced study such as agricultural colleges, proprietary medical schools, freestanding law schools, engineering schools, and scientific colleges. With the advent of public land grant institutions, the U.S. higher education system has seen an overall decrease in the influence of religion to mission, governance, and institutional culture (Burtchaell, 1998). Of the approximately 1,500 private colleges and universities in existence today, approximately 30% have some sort of religious affiliation (Association of Catholic Colleges & Universities, 2022).

Religiously affiliated colleges and universities typically reflect core curricula that give priority to philosophical and theological study, with emphasis to an inquiry of human values (McQuillan, James & Muldoon, 2018). Batugal and Tindowen found that many religiously affiliated institutions, in particular Catholic institutions, give focus to the liberal arts, which are seen as essential to an educational philosophy centered on educating the whole person in training students' minds and hearts for addressing societal challenges (Batugal & Tindowen, 2019). According to Gleason (Gleason, 2017), religious affiliated institutions seek to inspire faith and values related to the betterment of human development and incorporate a commitment of service to others and to the meaning and purpose of life itself. By doing so, they aspire to be transformational in guiding students on how to live their lives in moral and ethical ways that will enable them to navigate life's challenges.

In their research, Batugal and Tindowen observed that religiously affiliated institutions frequently aspire to encourage their students to be civic-minded, socially just, committed to service to one's community and to have a less individually oriented perspective (Batugal & Tindowen, 2019). Perhaps not surprisingly, numerous studies have found that students attending religiously affiliated institutions have stronger religious beliefs and ties (Mayrl & Oeur, 2009). According to Carey (Carey, 2014), U.S. religious affiliated institutions face a number of significant and compelling emerging trends in the coming years: a modest yet steady student demand for religious higher education; increasing competition from public, private, and international institutions; and declining government aid appropriations.

Within religiously affiliated colleges and universities, a number of key trends have emerged that represent unique challenges to their sustainability and growth. First, while there remains a reliable segment of the student market that seeks a religious affiliation in their postsecondary education, these same institutions are facing increased competition from other private, public, and international colleges and universities. To put that in further context, even amongst those students who strongly affiliate with their respective religion seek that association in their higher education. Second, reductions in government funding affect religiously affiliated institutions, particularly those with financial worries or facing more precarious financial exigency, just as they do secular institutions. Third, given the varying state of the U.S. economic cycle, many students and parents are beginning to question the return on investment of the decidedly non-career specific liberal arts-oriented curriculum traditionally offered at many religiously affiliated institutions (Carey, 2014).

Another concern lies in the loss of religious identity that many religious affiliated colleges and universities are experiencing to varying degrees. Paradoxically, as religiously oriented institutions have become more academically focused with less emphasis on their faith-based identity, a segment of students have become less committed to pursuing a faith-centric college experience (Batugal & Tindowen, 2019). For religious institutions, a major contributing factor to this evolving loss of religious identity is structural in nature. Lay persons have assumed the majority of leadership roles in most religious colleges and universities, and it is reasonable to presume that these individuals may lack the breadth and depth of religious formation and

educational foundation of the nuns, brothers and priests that formerly held many of these posts. This difference in background may contribute to a lessened connectivity with more religiously oriented students. Given the decline in Americans committed to a life of service in these capacities to religious institutions, it is entirely reasonable to project that these institutions may have reason for concern that they can attract and recruit lay persons with sufficient religious commitment and knowledge to sustain their institution's culture and support their development going forward (Gribble, 2011).

V. Importance of Effective Leadership

While largely collaborative in their organizational culture, colleges and universities are often places of highly distributed opinions where change is frequently resisted and where authority cannot be universally assumed. These factors contribute to an environment with unique challenges and opportunities for American higher education leadership (Niedlich, Kummer, Bauer, Rieckmann & Bormann, 2020). According to Bush (Bush, 2020), the senior leadership at colleges and universities play a critical role in advancing the mission and values of their respective institutions and are expected to influence and enable a diverse set of internal and external stakeholders to enhance their institution's mission inclusive of student learning, knowledge generation, and service to the community. The needs and priorities of students, faculty, parents, and administrators can be quite divergent, thus requiring leadership that seeks and reinforces commonality of mission.

Senior leaders in higher education in general and presidents are in particular, also charged with effecting positive organizational change by developing a vision and strategy for the future of the institution, communicating that vision, and then motivating, and inspiring the institution's employees to attaining the vision (Yukl, Mahsud, Prussia & Hassan, 2019). Mead-Fox found that colleges and universities require senior leaders who provide clear vision, imbue a sense of collaboration and trust, motivate and encourage others to act, achieve that which sometimes seems unreachable, and are adept at introducing an entrepreneurial spirit and effecting needed change (Mead-Fox, 2009). Mead-Fox also noted that executive leadership is perhaps the single most essential competency needed to move colleges and universities forward.

VI. Purpose of the Study

Colleges and universities play an essential role in contributing to the public good by educating students and by advancing the institutional aspirations of a broad range of government agencies, industry, foundations, and other sectors of society through their policies and best practices (Culver, Harper & Kezar, 2021). Given the significant and increasingly progressive challenges facing U.S. higher education, colleges and universities urgently require senior leaders who are effective in defining and communicating a vision for their institutions, setting clear examples in terms of values and ethical behavior, enabling others to make meaningful contributions, and effecting innovation and transformative change. By better understanding the role that institutional culture, mission, and values play in developing and supporting effective leadership, institutions and their senior leaders may benefit in refining and enhancing their leadership philosophies and practices.

According to Kouzes and Posner (Kouzes & Posner, 2022), leadership is a set of behaviors that can be measured and tested. Kouzes and Posner analyzed those behaviors and determined that these behaviors could be summarized through five major leadership practices:

1. **Model the Way:** Leadership behaviors that clarify values and that enable one to find and use their own voice to lead, and to set an example for others.
2. **Inspire a Shared Vision:** Leadership behaviors that envision the future for an organization, convey a sense of excitement about the future, and are able to enlist others to shared or common aspirations.
3. **Challenge the Process:** Leadership behaviors that seek opportunities for change, innovation, and growth, as the leader experiments and take risks to advance change, all the while displaying conviction in his or her beliefs.
4. **Enable Others to Act:** Leadership behaviors that foster collaboration by promoting and encouraging cooperative goals, building trust, and sharing of power.

5. Encourage the Heart: Leadership behaviors that show appreciation and recognize the contributions of others through rewards and by imbuing a sense and spirit of community.

The purpose of this study was to measure and analyze the senior leadership practices at private/secular and private/religious affiliated colleges and universities to identify differences in leadership practices as they relate to the personal and institutional demographics of the respondents utilizing an assessment instrument developed by Kouzes and Posner. Conclusions drawn from this study provide institutions and individuals with empirical data as to effective leadership behaviors and practices and ways that they can improve their personal and organizational effectiveness.

VII. Research Questions

This study focused on recent and relevant research on the current state of higher education in the United States, the primary challenges facing colleges and universities, the importance of effective leadership in higher education, and relevant theories of leadership. The significant challenges that face higher education leadership demonstrate the need for further research on the best practices being applied at institutions of higher education that may enable college and university leaders to improve their own effectiveness.

The following research questions were examined in this study, based on Kouzes and Posner's five leadership practices (Kouzes & Posner, 2022) as a means for assessing leadership effectiveness:

1. What are the differences in demographic (i.e., gender, age), experiential (i.e., position, experience, career path), and type of institutional affiliation on leadership practices?
2. What are the differences in private/secular versus private/religious affiliated respondents on leadership practices?
3. What is the relationship between leadership practices, as outlined by Kouzes and Posner, and the job satisfaction, job efficacy, and commitment to institutional mission and values of the respondents?

These research questions were addressed through an analysis of the quantitative data derived from responses to a survey that captured personal and institutional demographic information, and which incorporated Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory. The survey provided a measure for the differences in leadership practices based upon the individual respondent's personal and professional background and type of higher educational institution. The broad question that this study considered is whether senior leaders at private/religious affiliated colleges and universities are more likely to exhibit effective leadership practices and behaviors than their counterparts at comparable private/secular institutions.

VIII. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was derived from Kouzes and Posner's leadership model, *The Leadership Challenge* (Kouzes & Posner, 2022). Supported by 35 years of original research and data from over 5 million leader respondents, Kouzes and Posner approached leadership as a measurable, learnable, and teachable set of behaviors. The Leadership Practices Inventory was developed through a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research methods and studies. In-depth interviews and written case studies from personal best leadership experiences generated the conceptual framework, which consists of five distinct leadership practices that leaders use to affect employees' and organizational performance, as discussed below.

Challenging the process involves leadership that seeks out and excels at managing change, growth, and innovation. These leaders seek out opportunities to improve their organizations, are willing to take risks, and see mistakes as learning opportunities. Inspiring a shared vision involves leaders who are focused on and believe in the possibilities of the future. These leaders motivate their followers by appealing to their values, interests, hopes, and dreams.

Enabling others to act involves leadership that fosters the development of collaborative teams, along with the instillation of a sense of partnership, mutual trust, and respect. These leaders empower their followers by providing choice, developing competence, assigning critical tasks, and giving visible support. Modeling the way entails leadership that sets an example of consistently living the values, philosophies, and principles that the leaders espouse. These leaders reflect a high degree of personal integrity. Encouraging the heart reflects

leadership that seeks out ways to recognize and celebrate the contributions and accomplishments of individuals and teams. These leaders recognize the successes of their followers and regularly celebrate their accomplishments.

IX. Significance of the Study

Effective senior leadership at the top of U.S. colleges and universities is critical to the sustainability and growth of this nation's higher educational system and is important to a broad set of stakeholders including students, faculty, administrators, college trustees, unions, and education policy makers (Kolodny & Breitborde, 2022). Capturing the full suite of critical competencies of effective leadership in a university's senior executive can be challenging. Heifetz (Heifetz, 1998) stated that leaders who are adept at innovating, problem solving, who inspire without being authoritative, and who possess a clear sense of values are hard to come by.

Senior leadership at colleges and universities plays a critical role in advancing the mission and values of their respective institutions, be they secular or religious (Rumsey, 2012). Literature on the relationship between the effectiveness of senior leadership behaviors and practices, and the religious affiliation of the leaders' respective institutions, is limited. Additional research is required on the effects of institutional religious affiliation, mission, and values, as these qualities influence or direct specific leadership practices and behaviors.

X. Findings

As reflected in Table 1, of the 200 presidents who received invitations to participate in the study, 115 (57.5%) responded. Of the respondents, approximately 40% came from secular institutions, while 60% were affiliated with religious institutions. This disparity may be due to a higher level of interest in the role of university religious affiliation as it pertains to institutional mission on leadership issues among the religiously affiliated institutions. An analysis of those responses resulted in the following demographic profile of these university leaders.

Most of the respondents were male (70%). A significant majority (85%) were 50 years of age or older, which is not surprising given the fact that the study focused on the most-senior position within the higher education industry and one that understandably requires significant preparatory experience. It is important to note that none of the respondents was under the age of 40. Breaking down that age 50+ majority (85%) a bit further, while 41.7% of the respondents were between the ages of 50 to 59, 43.5% were 60 years of age or older. In support of this finding, according to a recent survey, approximately six in ten university presidents are age 60 or older, a proportion that has increased in recent years (American Council on Education, 2022).

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 115)

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	80	67.0
Female	35	33.0
Total	115	100.0
Age		
20-29	0	0.0
30-39	0	0.0

40-49	17	14.8
50-59	48	41.7
60+	50	43.5

Employment at one's institution was also addressed as reflected in Table 2. Years employed at the respondents' current institution were roughly evenly distributed, with 30.4% reporting that they had been with their current institutions 1–4 years, 27.8%, 5–9 years, and 18.3%, 10–14 years. On a combined basis of 1–15 years employed at their current institutions, 76.5% of the presidents reported that they had been employed at their current institutions fewer than 15 years, while only 11.3% of the respondents reported that they have been at their institutions at least 20 years.

Years in the position showed that 63.5% of the respondents had been president for fewer than 10 years. When correlated to the number of years that the respondents had been with their current institutions (58.2% were employed at their current college or university fewer than 10 years), the findings can be understood to mean that the turnover rate for university presidents is somewhere fewer than 10 years. This interpretation is in keeping with Martin's research that indicates that the average university president serves just seven years (Martin, 2021).

Table 2
Experience of Respondents (n = 115)

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Current Position		
President	115	100.0
Years at Institution		
1–4	35	30.4
5–9	32	27.8
10–14	21	18.3
15–19	14	12.2
20+	13	11.3
Years at Current Position		
1–4	42	36.5
5–9	31	27.0
10–14	20	17.4

15–19	12	10.4
20+	10	8.7

Career path and institutional affiliation were also assessed as variable (Table 3). Most (63.1%) of the respondents followed an academic route to the top position, either thorough academic administration (47.9%) or through the faculty (19.1%). Finance and Administration came in at 11.3%. Other career paths such as Advancement Student Affairs were represented, but each reflected less than 10% of the total responses. This finding is again consistent with Martin’s aforementioned research that indicated that nearly one-third of university presidents have never been faculty members and that 20% come from outside academia. Given these trends, search committees may have little choice but to give additional consideration to presidential candidates who come from a more diverse set of non-traditional backgrounds.

Table 3
Career Path and Institutional Affiliation of Respondents

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Career Path		
Academic Affairs	55	47.9
Advancement	10	8.7
Faculty	22	19.1
Finance	13	11.3
Student Affairs	5	4.3
Other	10	8.7
Institutional Affiliation		
Secular	46	40.0
Religious	69	60.0

Next, the study looked at how the respondents viewed their leadership practices (Table 4). In general, the respondents viewed themselves as effective in their leadership, based on the five practices of exemplary leadership incorporated within the Leadership Practices Inventory. That Model the Way was the highest rated practice, suggests that the respondents saw their role as leaders to set an example in establishing overarching principles to guide their organizations as to how people should behave and be treated; to develop and communicate goals for their organizations and for how those goals should be addressed; and to set and live standards of performance and behavior that encourage others to follow them.

The next highest rated leadership practice was Inspire a Shared Vision, which suggests that the respondents saw themselves as leaders who are focused on and believe in the possibilities of the future. These leaders motivate their followers by appealing to their values, interests, hopes, and dreams. When this practice is combined with the highest rated practice, Model the Way, these leaders are effective through the establishment

of strong interpersonal relationships and an ongoing exchange based upon an appreciation for and an understanding of the needs and interests of others (Delle & Searle, 2022). The third highest rated leadership practice, Encourage the Heart, ties into this concept of personal engagement in that it is centered on leaders who imbue a sense and spirit of purposeful community to their followers and to their organization.

Table 4

Rankings by Mean Scores for the Predictive Variables

Rank	Leadership Practice	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>k</i>
1	Model the Way	8.5	1.4	.83	6
2	Inspire a Shared Vision	8.5	1.6	.93	6
3	Encourage the Heart	8.4	1.6	.93	6
4	Challenge the Process	8.3	1.6	.88	6
5	Enable Others to Act	7.2	1.2	.90	6

Note. *k* = Number of questions.

T-tests were then used to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of two groups and how they are related (Table 5). The means of three of the five leadership practices (Inspire a Shared Vision, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart) were higher for the female respondents, while the means of two of the leadership practices (Model the Way and Challenge the Process) were higher for the male respondents. Loosely following general male-female stereotypes, the leadership practices rated higher by the female presidents share a motivational, supportive, inspirational theme, while the leadership practices rated higher by the male presidents share more action-oriented, change management themes (Butler-Henderson, Percy & Kelder, 2021).

Table 5

Results of t Tests: Leadership Practices by Gender

Leadership Practice	Male (<i>n</i> = 80)		Female (<i>n</i> = 35)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>df</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Model the Way	8.6	1.0	8.5	1.1	.49	.63	101
Inspire a Shared Vision	8.5	1.3	8.5	1.5	-.07	.95	101
Challenge the Process	8.3	1.1	8.2	1.6	.54	.59	101
Enable Others to Act	8.5	1.3	8.8	1.0	-.80	.42	101
Encourage the Heart	8.3	1.4	8.6	1.2	-.75	.46	101

Table 6 reflects the results of t-tests to assess the influence of institutional affiliation on certain job outlook measures. The respondents reported high levels of job satisfaction and efficacy in how they felt that

they were carrying out the responsibilities of their positions. Job satisfaction and efficacy were highly correlated, as was the number of years the respondents had spent in their current positions, which suggests that that experience in each position can serve to breed satisfaction and effectiveness. Finally, the respondents reported a positive relationship between their personal values and beliefs as well as a commitment to the mission and values of their institutions. This finding suggests that the personal faith and values of individuals may predispose a constructive relationship to organizational mission and values, and/or that certain institution's missions and values may have a consonant relationship to encouraging a greater sense of personal faith and values in certain individuals.

Table 6
Results of t-Tests: Job Outlook by Institutional Religious Affiliation

	Secular (n = 46)		(n Religious = 69)		t	p	df
	M	SD	M	SD			
Job Outlook							
Job Efficacy	4.3	0.8	4.3	0.8	.14	.89	101
Job Satisfaction	4.4	0.8	4.5	0.7	-.86	.39	101
Commitment to Mission & Values*	4.6	0.7	4.8	0.5	-2.07	.04	51

Note. *Variances were statistically significant based on Levene's test for equality of variances

XI. Implications

The study found that while institutional affiliation had little bearing on the specific leadership practices, sense of job satisfaction and efficacy of the respondents, those respondents from religious institutions generally reported higher levels of commitment to institutional mission and values. Experience as president was highly correlated to job satisfaction and effectiveness, which suggests that time in the job matters. Additionally, gender differences were found for specific leadership practices related to motivational, supportive, inspirational and change management themes.

Some demographics appear to relate the assessed leadership practices and job outlook-related measures. Tenure as president was highly correlated to job satisfaction and effectiveness, suggesting that time in the job matters. The implication to university presidents and their boards of trustees may be that patience and experience pays off in the long run or at least once the individual settles into the position. Female presidents rated themselves higher than did their male counterparts in motivational, supportive, inspirational-focused practices, while the leadership practices rated higher by the male presidents shared more action-oriented, change management themes. Depending on the specific issues facing an institution, the implication may be that gender-related leadership strengths may influence the style and impact of the selected leader.

Finally, faith and personal values had a positive and strong correlation to presidential commitment to institutional mission and values. This suggests that the personal faith and values of individuals may predispose a constructive relationship to organizational mission and values, and/or that certain institution's mission and values may have a consonant relationship to encouraging a greater sense of personal faith and values.

XII. Conclusion

The U.S. higher education sector may be entering a period of reflection in addressing a range of questions and challenges to what the very tenets of the purpose of have historically been pursuing higher

education. Is pursuing a higher education degree achievable, affordable and a good return on investment? Will the attainment of a degree be perceived positively by the employment marketplace? Is the institution being considered for one's education viable, sustainable, and well led? These very conditions underscore the critical need for exemplary senior educational leaders who can ensure positive student outcomes, guide the investment of resources that will serve to enhance and protect the viability of the institution, and provide the necessary leadership to succeed in an ever increasing competitive and global environment.

The role of the university president is complex; presidents raise money, build campuses, woo star faculty, fund raise, plot online and sometimes global strategies, enhance the institutional profile, and forge strategic and business alliances within and outside the higher education space. Further, they need to lead while respecting the traditions of their college or university inclusive of sharing the governance of the institution. The job of university president has turned into one that is largely focused on serving external constituencies, as presidents have increasingly turned to their provosts to serve as the internal, day-to-day manager of the academics of the institution. In addressing the challenges facing higher education today, presidents need to balance their attention by spending more time on campus, applying personal leadership, and better connecting to those who are beginning to question the value of a college degree. Stakeholders need to know their presidents, what their vision is for the institution, and what they personally stand for.

Religious institutions of higher education specifically face a wide range of challenges to their ongoing sustainability and growth, including increased competition, reduced funding, and questions about the relevance of both traditional religious and liberal arts-oriented curricula and outcomes. In the face of these challenges, senior religious institution leaders who possess a strong sense of personal faith and values may be better aligned to their institution's mission and values in meeting these challenges. It is hoped that conclusions drawn from this study will provide institutions and individuals with empirical data as to effective leadership behaviors and practices and ways that they can improve their personal and organizational effectiveness.

References

- [1.] Altbach, P. G., Reisberg, L., & Rumbley, L. E. (2019). *Trends in global higher education: Tracking an academic revolution*. Brill.
- [2.] American Council on Education. (2022). American College President Study. Retrieved from <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/.aspx>
- [3.] Association of Catholic Colleges & Universities. (2022). *About the ACCU*. Retrieved from <http://www.accunet.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3330>
- [4.] Batugal, M. L. C., & Tindowen, D. J. C. (2019). Influence of organizational culture on teachers' organizational commitment and job satisfaction. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 7(11), 2432-2443.
- [5.] Bok, D. (2015). Higher education in America. In *Higher Education in America*. Princeton University Press.
- [6.] Burtchaell, J. T. (1998). *The dying of the light: The disengagement of colleges and universities from their Christian churches*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; Mardsen, G. M. (1994). *The soul of the American university: From Protestant establishment to established nonbelief*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; Sloan, D. (1994). *Faith and knowledge: Mainline Protestantism and American higher education*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- [7.] Bush, T. (2020). Theories of educational leadership and management. *Theories of Educational Leadership and Management*, 1-208.
- [8.] Butler-Henderson, K., Percy, A., & Kelder, J. A. (2021). Editorial 18: 3 Celebrating women in higher education on International Women's Day. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 18(3), 01.
- [9.] Carey, A. B. (2014). On the edge: A study of small private colleges that have made a successful financial turnaround. *Christian Higher Education*, 13(5), 306-316.
- [10.] Culver, K. C., Harper, J., & Kezar, A. (2021). Design for Equity in Higher Education. *Pullias Center for Higher Education*.

- [11.] Delle, E., & Searle, B. (2022). Career adaptability: The role of developmental leadership and career optimism. *Journal of Career Development, 49*(2), 269-281.
- [12.] Ferguson, T., & Roofe, C. G. (2020). SDG 4 in higher education: Challenges and opportunities. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education, 21*(5), 959-975.
- [13.] Gleason, P. (2017). American Catholic higher education: A historical perspective. In *Enlightening the Next Generation* (pp. 182-220). Routledge.
- [14.] Gribble, R. (2011). The challenge of religious life in the United States today. *American Catholic Studies, 122*(1), 33–53.
- [15.] Heifetz, R. (1998). *Leadership without easy answers*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- [16.] Kolodny, K., & Breitborde, M. L. (2022). The Nation Expands and the Teaching Profession Grows. In *Teacher Preparation in the United States* (pp. 59-89). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- [17.] Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2022). *The leadership challenge* (6th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- [18.] Leal Filho, W., Pallant, E., Enete, A., Richter, B., & Brandli, L. L. (2018). Planning and implementing sustainability in higher education institutions: An overview of the difficulties and potentials. *International journal of sustainable development & world ecology, 25*(8), 713-721.
- [19.] Martin, Q. (2021). The Aspiring College President: A Critical Review. *Journal of Research on the College President, 5*(1), 8.
- [20.] Mayrl, D., & Oeur, F. (2009). Religion and higher education: Current knowledge and directions for future research. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 48*(2), 260-275.
- [21.] McQuillan, P., James, M. J., & Muldoon, T. P. (2018). A Vision for Catholic Higher Education in the 21st Century: Reflecting on the Boston College Roundtable. *Journal of Catholic Education, 21*(2), n2.
- [22.] Mead-Fox, D. (2009, April). Tackling the leadership scarcity. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/Tackling-the-Leadership-Sca/44809/>
- [23.] National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities. (2022). *About the NAICU*. Retrieved from <http://www.naicu.edu/about/>
- [24.] Niedlich, S., Kummer, B., Bauer, M., Rieckmann, M., & Bormann, I. (2020). Cultures of sustainability governance in higher education institutions: A multi-case study of dimensions and implications. *Higher Education Quarterly, 74*(4), 373-390.
- [25.] Rumsey, M. (2012). *The Oxford handbook of leadership*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- [26.] U.S. Department of Education. (2006). *A test of leadership: Charting the future of U.S. higher education*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/reports/final-report.pdf>
- [27.] Yukl, G., Mahsud, R., Prussia, G., & Hassan, S. (2019). Effectiveness of broad and specific leadership behaviors. *Personnel Review*.