Academic Leadership for Succession

Research and Implementation across the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities in Australia (LE10-1728)

The Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH)

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Outline

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Rationale

In the absence of any sector-wide succession planning, this project recognises the significance of ensuring leadership development to ensure that significant impending retirements do not impact adversely on the ASSH sector.
Purpose

To create a robust transformational succession strategy for university leadership of the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (ASSH) sector by:

✧ Consolidating and building upon the outcomes of previous tangentially related projects.

✧ Providing the first study of leadership challenges facing the ASSH sector in the 21st Century.

✧ Creating the first sector-wide succession planning strategy for transformational leadership.

✧ As the peak body for the ASSH sector, DASSH will report on the sector-wide, findings and make appropriate recommendations.
Methodology

**Stage 1: Secondary Data compilation:** Analyse the existing outcomes and successes of the 5 previously funded ALTC Leadership projects.

**Stage 2: Literature review:** Review, summarise and interrogate existing literature on the requirements and capacity for leadership succession planning in academia.

**Stage 3: Focus group discussions:** data derives from focus group discussions with the members of the DASSH Board, the Associate Deans of Learning & Teaching, and Associate Deans of Research.

**Stage 4: Online questionnaire:** gather data through the construction and use of an online survey seeking the views of PVCs, Deans, Associate Deans and Heads of Schools in the 44 DASSH member institutions.

**Stage 5: Data & literature review analysis:** triangulate the project data and literature review results to formulate a succession planning strategy.
Key Findings

- Few institutions have succession planning strategies.

- Over the next decade a large number of experienced academics retire from work, which will significantly reduce the output and productivity.

- No formal succession planning, limitation in human and financial resources have critically been the challenges for Australian higher educations.

- Many higher education institutions had inadequately defined administrative system, processes and positions, making effective leadership succession difficult.
Key Challenges from Literature Findings

**Personal** comes from individuals include individual ethics, values, level of self-esteem, flexibility, professional commitment and approach, and personal coping strategies.

**Professional and Organizational** challenges reveal that senior level of academics face brings out other of the tensions and dilemmas.
Key Challenges in HE from Literature Findings

(a) Social changes
(b) Technological advancements
(c) Economic conditions
(d) Political environments
(e) The increase of knowledge and information, and
(f) The changing demographics and workforce.
Focus Group Key Findings

Diagram illustrates description of the strategic leadership succession planning process

- Planning Leadership Succession
- Assessing Organizational Needs
- Gap Analysis
- Identifying Potential Leaders
- Evaluation of Succession Plan and Processes
  - Qualitative
  - Quantitative

Feedback to renew planning process
Academic Leadership Succession Planning

✧ Academic Leadership is defined as one component of the larger succession planning process

✧ The purpose of succession planning has remained focused on long-term institutional leadership sustainability.

✧ Academic leadership divided into the activities of developing a plan, assessing the organizations leadership needs, analysing and understanding potential or current leadership gaps, strategically responding to organizational leadership succession needs, and evaluating the succession planning process.
What is Succession Planning?

Succession planning is a strategic, systematic and deliberate activity to ensure an organisation's future capability to fill vacancies consistent with the merit principle. Specifically, it focuses on ensuring the availability and sustainability of a supply of capable staff that are ready to assume key or critical organisational roles as they become available. Succession planning strategies, which focus on developing employee capability, ultimately enable organisations to respond to change more effectively (UQT 2011).
Survey Findings

✧ The survey had a largest proportion of respondents from a humanities background (45.6%), followed by Social Sciences (34.4%) and then by same number of responded from Creative Arts and from Education (10.0%) background.

✧ Information was sought on respondents’ percentage of their activities over the course of the year that came up with following percentages.
Academic Leadership Role

The pattern shows the optimum focus for each academic leadership role of PVCs, Deans, Associate Deans and Heads of Schools. Mostly indicated that they have been in their current role for **1-3 years**.
The pattern shows that there is a rough correlation between age and seniority. Most respondents are between 56 and 65 years of age.
How much positive about having a formal succession plan for your institution
Do you have a formal succession plan within your institution

- Yes: 12.00%
- No: 88.00%
Do you believe succession planning in the higher educational sector requires a different approach than those used in corporations?
Benefits of Strategic Planning

Engaging in a strategic planning process benefits universities in a variety of ways. Strategic planning:

✧ Creates a framework for determining the direction a university should take to achieve its desired future;

✧ Provides a framework for achieving competitive advantage,

✧ Allows all university constituencies to participate and work together towards accomplishing goals, of the university

✧ Allows the university to set priorities.
Conclusion

All participants expressed the importance of succession planning for the sustainability and success of their institutions and indicated that the leadership development and succession planning that was occurring was described informal, often individually driven, ad hoc, and uncoordinated.
Conclusion

The research raise a series of questions to better understand

a) whether national and international education institutions were currently engaged in formal succession planning and if so, how this was being implemented;

b) to explore whether the culture structure of institutions influenced decisions around succession planning and finally

c) to uncover what strategies for succession planning might be best supported by academic institutions.
Questions or Comments
THANK YOU