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BEING #1 IN THE #2 BUSINESS

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Harry Carter, who long served as provost at Georgia Southern University and the Citadel, loved to mention the septic tank company that posted a large billboard greeting drivers as they entered Augusta, Georgia, along Highway 25: "We're #1 in the #2 Business."

There are all kinds of ways in which university provosts and academic deans can feel as though they're in the #2 business. Many of the issues they have to deal with may make them feel as though they're wading into the academic equivalent of a septic tank. But even more important, they're always #2 to someone else who's #1: the person who serves as the visible face and symbol of the institution. Larry Nielsen even devotes an entire chapter to the topic of "Being Number Two" in his book *Provost* (2013). And so although they're often lumped together with other members of "the upper administration" by students, faculty members, and even at times department chairs, the nature of the position held by the provost or dean is intended to be middle management. While provosts and deans may have a great deal of independence in certain areas, they ultimately report to someone—a specific person who serves as their supervisor—rather than to a governing board, as presidents and chancellors do. At the same time, they are themselves supervisors, evaluating the performance of others, recommending appropriate salary adjustments, and trying to unite them all into a single academic team.

Hundreds of books have been written about the principles of leadership or how to get things done from the top. There's also an expanding literature on how to serve most effectively as an employee, mastering the techniques of *followership*, a term coined by Robert E. Kelley (1992) and elaborated on in more comprehensive studies by Kellerman (2008), Riggio, Chaleff, and Lipman-Blumen (2008), and Bligh and Kohles (2012). But how can provosts and deans be expected to lead from the middle? How can they become #1 in the #2 business?

As a way of answering these questions, it might be useful to begin with recognizing that no one is ever #1—not really. They may think they are, or the organization chart may say they are, but shared governance in higher education means that no one person has authority over every aspect of what goes on at a college or university. As one way of viewing this idea, the first essential principle in this book is perhaps the most important one you'll encounter when it comes to academic administration:

All leadership entails leadership from the middle. When you understand how organizations really work, you realize that everybody reports to somebody.

Standard organizational charts, adapted as they are from military and corporate environments where they often make more sense, tend to distort this issue. On paper, faculty members report to chairs. Department chairs in turn report to you, if you're a dean, or to your deans, if you're a provost. Either way, you eventually report to the president, directly or through the chief academic officer. The president reports to a board. The board is subject to bylaws and other applicable regulations. You can never climb to the top of this chart and be in charge of it all.

Climbing to the pinnacle of each organizational pyramid simply takes you to the base of the next pyramid.

Moreover, authority is decentralized in higher education in a way that's not practical in other organizational cultures. The faculty is ultimately responsible for the curriculum. The president and governing board are ultimately responsible for the budget. When people overlook that longstanding division of power, problems start to arise. And yet the system usually works. Decisions are made. Policies are developed. New initiatives get under way. But those initiatives don't always come from the top. We've all known a provost, dean, department chair, or faculty member whose energy, insight, or personal charm completely transformed a school. Institutional leadership can arise from any level of the hierarchy. You don't have to be in charge to be influential.

That's a good thing, because provosts and deans have always had a view from the middle. The English word *provost* is ultimately derived from two Latin roots, *pro-* ("in front of") and *positus* (the perfect-passive

participle of the verb *ponere*, "to put." Provosts were thus originally officers who were "put in front of" other people in ecclesiastical, academic, or political life. But they didn't occupy the highest rung on the organizational ladder. In a church, the provost might be the minister of the largest church in a town. At a university, the provost might be the head of a particular college or school. And in government, the provost might be something like a mayor. In each case, the provost's position, while important, did not possess ultimate authority and always reported to someone else whose powers and responsibilities were considerably greater.

In a similar way, our word *dean* comes to English from Norman French via the Latin word *decanus,* meaning an officer in charge of ten people (from the Latin *decem* or the Greek *deka*, "ten"). A dean thus had far less authority, in etymological terms at least, than a centurion, who was in charge of one hundred people. At the same time, the dean had far more responsibility than any of the ten subordinates. During the Middle Ages, deans ceased to have a military connection, and the term became adopted by the church to describe the priest who supervised ten monks in a monastery, the head of a chapter in a cathedral church, or a member of the religious hierarchy through whom clerics reported to an archbishop. Given the religious origins of universities like Oxford and Cambridge, the word required only a slight shift in emphasis as it moved from ecclesiastical to academic circles. The dean thus became the administrator in charge of the behavior and academic progress of students in a college. As the organizational structures of colleges and universities became more complex, deans became elected members of the faculty who provided administrative guidance, management, and vision to their institutions. By the twentieth century, deans in the United States were already being viewed more as administrators than teachers. They almost always had academic backgrounds, but they were appointed (and less frequently elected) because they demonstrated potential for making their colleges and schools run effectively.

From their origin, therefore, provosts and deans have always had responsibilities that draw them in two directions simultaneously: they are advocates for and supervisors of the people over whom they have authority; they report to and serve as the representatives of some higher administrative level that sets the limits within which they themselves can operate. Performing both responsibilities effectively is one of the perennial challenges facing provosts and deans. Few other aspects of their role are as important as the ability to see the needs of the institution from the middle and to address those needs adequately. So how do you

do that? Here are nine basic principles to keep in mind as you begin developing your own approach to providing leadership from the middle.

Principle 1: Develop Collegial Candor

As an academic leader, you want your own supervisor to treat you with respect, give your views a fair hearing even if they're not ultimately accepted, and share information with you freely, particularly when having that information is essential for you to do your job. Is it unreasonable, therefore, to assume that those who report to you are looking for the same considerations from your office? Your method of interacting with department chairs, division directors, and the faculty members at your institution should be a reflection of the role you wish to play in the larger institutional structure. In fact, how you treat others may even help shape that role.

Developing an atmosphere of collegial candor means taking steps to create a working environment where individuals feel safe to provide their perspectives on various issues, understand that you'll agree or disagree with these views on the basis of their arguments' merits and not the individual advancing them, and recognize that the overall mission of the institution is the guiding principle behind all deliberations, not the personal convenience of a particular administrator. You therefore have an obligation to apply this philosophy to all your discussions with your president, governing body, and members of the community. You have no less of an obligation to adhere to these same principles when dealing with the members of your school or college.

The people who report to you rely on you as a sounding board for their ideas and insights, even if their behavior doesn't always suggest that they themselves are open to other perspectives. Disagreement with one's boss shouldn't be confrontational, and it's rarely the case that job security results from blindly accepting every suggestion your superior makes. Phrased in a collegial manner—"Now, that might be true, but another way of looking at it could be . . . " or, "Perhaps, though, we should also consider whether . . . "—disagreements can broaden a discussion and help decision makers avoid a serious mistake. Certainly administrators can be frustrated when those who report to them constantly and inconsiderately disagree with every idea they propose, every suggestion they make, or every improvement they consider. But it can also be frustrating when people see it as their responsibility to agree merely for the sake of agreement, avoiding any serious attempt to explore whether the merits of a proposal are offset by any disadvantages. Effective provosts and deans tend to be

those who speak freely when it's important to do so but also understand how to provide alternatives in a constructive, consensus-building manner. It's not hypocritical to refrain from expressing a strong opinion on every subject; sometimes that's just the most diplomatic and beneficial strategy to pursue. It's a technique sometimes called *strategic nonengagement*.

Creating an open atmosphere in a college means making it clear that department chairs and faculty members are free to express points of view that are different from yours, even in open meetings, as long as the discussion remains civil and focused on substantive issues, not personalities, private disputes, or "ancient history." No one should tolerate grandstanding or outright insubordination; your supervisor wouldn't tolerate such behavior from you, and you can't be expected to tolerate it from a chair or faculty member. But it's important to promote an open exchange of ideas with those both above you and below you in the institutional hierarchy. Only in this way are you likely to learn what you need in order to perform your job effectively. Open channels of communication are also the only way for the institution to avoid embarking on disastrous courses of activity because no one felt free to say that the ideas being discussed were unsound.

Principle 2: Clarify Your Vision

The president and governing board of your institution are likely to have articulated a vision for the future direction of your college or university; perhaps these ideas are contained in a formal strategic plan or in a vision statement. Your faculty members also have a vision of how they would like their academic areas to develop, their students to learn, and their research to progress. None of those visions can be realized, however, without your view from the middle. The president will need assistance in determining how his or her overarching goals for the institution are best realized and measured in academic units. The faculty will need assistance in seeing how their individual goals stand in the larger priorities of your institution and how they can play a significant role in making the strategic plan a reality.

One aspect of your job as an academic leader is thus to serve as a catalyst in clarifying or crystallizing these visions. For example, if one of the president's strategic goals is to develop more undergraduate research at the same time that students improve their understanding of global issues, how can these two issues be combined in your programs' curricula? Can you lead your programs toward the adoption of a new capstone experience for students that will include a substantial component of original

research? Can you spearhead a review of all course curricula to strengthen international perspectives wherever possible? Can you suggest alternative requirements for majors so that students who study abroad are less likely to be delayed in their progress toward graduation? As a provost or dean, you understand the individual needs, methods, and philosophies of your disciplines far better than do many members of your governing board or legislature. As a result, you are in a unique position to crystallize the institution's larger vision into a plan that fits the ways in which disciplines actually work in your area.

Similarly, faculty members at your school may be interested in greater flexibility in workload, revisions to evaluation procedures that will suit their jobs more adequately, better compensation, or improved facilities. You have an opportunity to serve as an advocate for these needs—when you, in your professional judgment, see them as valid—by clarifying how they might serve to advance the institution's strategic plan. So if improved student advisement, enhanced civic engagement, and collaborative endeavors between academic affairs and the office of student life are institutional goals, how are initiatives in these areas being rewarded in your current faculty evaluation system? As Bob Cipriano, the author of *Facilitating a Collegial Department in Higher Education: Strategies for Success* (2011), is fond of saying:

> What gets rewarded gets repeated.

You'll get more of anything you specifically measure, recognize, and compensate people for. As a result, you can help bridge the middle ground between upper administration and faculty by finding points of overlap where strategic goals (what the president wants) can be used to advance the aims of the faculty (what professors want). If you implement a reward structure in which promotions, tenure, and annual increases are based at least in part on advancing the institution's strategic goals, you're more likely to see those goals achieved in a timely manner. I have a lot more to say about clarifying or crystalizing an academic vision in chapter 4.

Principle 3: Be Neither a Lackey nor a Shop Steward

You may be asked, "Whose representative are you: the board's or the faculty's?" This question really poses a false dichotomy. It's usually asked by someone who's either trying to bait you (to see if your response will end up on the wrong side of his or her personal litmus test) or who's not

particularly knowledgeable about how colleges and universities actually work. Your most important duty as provost or dean is to *serve as the advocate for the academic programs you supervise*. At times, this advocacy will consist of making the case for certain programs or individuals who report to you as forcefully and eloquently as you can. At other times, the best advocacy you can provide your unit is to clarify for your department chairs and faculty members why certain perceived needs can't or shouldn't be addressed. Good academic leaders sometimes have to say no. They're neither the lackeys of the president, legislature, or governing board (i.e., serving merely as a conduit that conveys to the faculty the decisions made by those at the top of the organization chart) nor the shop stewards of their faculty (pressing for the adoption of every request, demand, and desire they receive). Your view from the middle requires you to be both your own person and responsive to the perspectives of those above and below you. It's a demonstration of good judgment to know when one of these must take precedence over the other.

Principle 4: Be Consistent without Becoming Inflexible

Both your supervisor and your faculty want to know what you stand for. They want to know your core beliefs, the things that are nonnegotiable for you, and your sense of vision for your programs. In most cases, people actually feel more comfortable when they believe that an area is headed in the wrong direction than when they believe it's not headed in any direction. For this reason, you'll be expected to speak regularly about your values and vision. Be reasonably consistent in responding to these requests; academic leaders who seem enamored of every new trend that arises seem as aimless as those who can't find any particular cause to get behind. In most cases, both your president and department chairs want to know that they can predict the general thrust of your thinking on a subject. They'll feel there's a greater sense of purpose in your school if you convey a clear sense of your priorities and proceed to act on them in a consistent manner.

> Being firm isn't the same as being rigid, and being authoritative isn't the same as being authoritarian. Provosts and deans need backbone, but the most valuable part of a backbone is that it's strong enough to stiffen when necessary and flexible enough to bend a little when compromise is required.

In striving to be reasonably consistent, remember that it's important to be reasonable as well as consistent. Administrators who never change their minds can be as destructive to institutions as deans who change their minds whenever they're presented with an alternative point of view. Reliability shouldn't be synonymous with stubbornness. People will excuse an occasional change of direction or the rescinding of a decision as long as they know the reasons for the change and you're candid about the process that led to the new decision. Avoid giving the impression that you simply caved in to pressure or that someone "got to you." Be clear about why the new course is necessary and how it still fits in with your overall plan for your unit. The only proviso is that if you find yourself having to explain these changes too often, it's time to reconsider how sound your original plan for your area may have been.

Principle 5: Try to See Issues from the Perspectives of Others

Everyone at your institution has a different perspective based on his or her individual role. Thus the president wants you to see how your programs fit into the big picture. Your faculty members want you to see things in terms of their workloads and career paths. Deans often see the university as a pie: if someone gets a bigger slice, someone else's slice has to be smaller. The key to being a successful academic leader is the ability to see all these points of view simultaneously and then to move forward with the best possible judgment. No issue can ever be solely about the university; there are times when your individual school or college is going to have to come first in the decision that's being made. But your perspective can't always be limited to your individual unit either; sometimes your students will be better served if another dean receives a new faculty line or a major new facility. Being a team player means knowing the right moment to claim the glory and the right moment to share it.

Principle 6: Become Known for Something

Peter Northouse, author of one of the most widely used textbooks in leadership studies, distinguishes two types of leadership: assigned leadership, which people hold because of their titles and job descriptions, and emergent leadership, which people are granted by others because their views are respected due to what they know and how they act. (See, for example, Northouse, 2013. For more on Northouse's views on leadership, see chapter 8 in this book.) One of the secrets to leading from the middle is developing your stock of emergent leadership by being known

as *the* expert in some area. Exactly what you're known for will depend a great deal on your own background and interests. But you might consider developing a distinctive reputation at your institution by selecting at least one of the following three areas: expertise, values, or vision. While there's a great deal of overlap among these categories, they're useful for providing a starting point in our analysis of ways in which you can develop your own niche of proficiency.

Being known for your expertise

This involves reaching a level of knowledge or skill in an area that distinguishes you from your peers. Because you know more about some particular area, you become the go-to person whenever advice or insight in that area is needed. For instance, every institution needs gurus in various areas of technology, assessment, faculty development, course evaluation, fundraising, program review, the intricacies of budgeting, and so on. By developing expertise in one of these areas, you establish your reputation not just as an effective advocate for your disciplinary area, but also as someone who works on behalf of the institution as a whole. "Oh, well," people will say, "if your question involves distance learning, you really ought to talk to Dr. [Name]; she's the expert when it comes to anything involving online education." Moreover, by developing an area of expertise that transcends your own college, you'll have a platform that allows you to speak quite broadly on a host of institutional issues. As a result, you'll begin to function—and to be seen—as a leader beyond the boundaries of your college.

Being known for your values

This means establishing a clear identity because of the principles and practices you advocate. Some academic leaders are known as "the conscience of the institution," framing each discussion within its moral or ethical implications. Perhaps the values you believe in most are protecting the environment, looking out for the underrepresented, promoting professionalism, representing the interests of the faculty (or student body or staff), supporting collegiality throughout the institution, or exploring creative new solutions to perennial problems.

Perhaps your values take you in a different direction, establishing your identity as an early adopter of new technology or institutional initiatives, the person who always remembers other people's birthdays or sends congratulatory notes when good things happen in their lives, or the advocate

for typographical and grammatical perfection in every public document. Whatever values most resonate with you can become the basis for a identity as the institutional specialist in that area.

Being known for your vision

This identity entails the ability to see beyond what is and imagine what could be. As the campus visionary, you would be the person who always thinks in terms of larger possibilities and future directions. Good vision is, of course, not wholly divorced from practicality, so you'll need to amass a certain amount of evidence in support of the vision you promote. For instance, based on the demographics of your region or enrollment trends at peer institutions, you could be the person who begins to position your institution in such a way as to be ahead of the curve when new developments arise. Student populations change over time in terms of their need for specific student services, their likelihood to gravitate toward particular majors, and their relationships with both the institution and their parents. As a visionary leader, you might be the person who's aware of how each new generation of students will differ from its predecessors and can help guide your institution in preparing for those changes. (See Watson, 2013, and Williams and Drew, 2012.)

Principle 7: Radiate Positive Energy

Some of the best administrative advice any academic leader can hear comes from what most people would regard as an unusual source—the actor Cary Grant: "I think that being relaxed at all times, and I mean relaxed, not collapsed, can add to the happiness and duration of one's life and looks. And relaxed people are fun to be around" (Nelson, 2003, 25).

Certainly no one can deny it's often very stressful to serve as a provost or dean. There are times in which the implications of the decisions we make, the intensity of the criticism we receive, and the pressure we're under to succeed on a wide variety of fronts can shake our confidence, resulting in a high level of anxiety. In addition, some academic leaders (like many others in positions of authority) believe that they *should* feel constantly harried, always rushing off from one important meeting to the next. After all, if their positions weren't stressful, anyone could succeed at the job, and then how could you justify the higher salary that comes with administrative assignments?

What deans and provosts need to realize is that by conveying a sense of anxiety, tension, or frenzy from excessive work, they can undermine

their position as a campus leader. As Cary Grant suggested, people naturally gravitate toward others who are relaxed, confident, and self-assured. When their leaders have a relaxed demeanor, they give faculty, students, and staff a sense that even if matters are difficult now, everything will work out in the end. People thus acquire the confidence that they need in order to make matters actually work out in the end. Administrators who function in crisis mode all the time give the impression that they can't distinguish between truly serious matters—an imminent threat to the life or safety of a member of the campus community or a situation of financial exigency so dire that it threatens either the entire institution—and the more routine challenges that colleges and universities face every day.

Leadership from the middle therefore sometimes begins with nothing more than maintaining an attitude of calm and confidence when everyone else appears to be on the verge of panic. The pressures of the academic year create these periods of Sturm und Drang on a schedule we can almost predict. As each semester draws to a close and nerves are frayed from the pressure of final exams, grades that are due, reports that must be completed, and dozens of deadlines that must all be met at once, the mood on campus changes dramatically. Tempers flare. Despair sets in. What seemed insignificant before suddenly seems insurmountable. It's at times like these that leadership needs to be demonstrated through quiet confidence, an attitude that "we can do this, and the result will be fantastic," and a gentle optimism that today's momentary frustrations are worthwhile because they'll result in something wonderful.

Being #1 in the #2 business requires a high level of confidence. Rather than stoking the fires of anxiety, effective leaders approach difficulties as simply part of the job and convey an attitude that solving problems provides an opportunity to engage their creativity. If you follow this principle, you'll notice that people throughout the entire institution will begin to view you as a confident, reliable leader. This type of positive energy doesn't have to be limited to your president, chancellor, or chair of the governing board. In fact, if your CEO tends not to project a positive and confident demeanor, it's even more important for you do so. It's this type of leadership that you as a dean or provost can quite effectively demonstrate from your position in the middle of the hierarchy (See Buller, 2013).

Collins (2001) notes that the highest caliber of "leaders embody a paradoxical mix of personal humility and professional will" (39). In this way, another essential ingredient in leading from the middle is discovering a way to combine an invigorating attitude of confidence that obstacles will be overcome with an ability to be unassuming, humble, even

self-deprecating about your own accomplishments. Strong academics are usually very serious about fulfilling their college's mission, but they rarely take themselves too seriously. Confidence that comes across as arrogance or pretentiousness alienates others; it doesn't make them more eager to follow the direction the dean or provost has charted. Academic leaders who insist too often that they must stand on their dignity can end up with very little dignity left as they become mere caricatures of the supercilious dean we're familiar with from television and movies. Everyone's personality is different, of course, but most deans discover that allowing themselves to be seen having a good time on occasion, even if the humor is sometimes at their own expense, enhances rather than diminishes their authority.

Principle 8: Unite Your Own Dreams and Vision with Those of Others

Leadership isn't synonymous with power. Power is the ability to get what you want. Leadership is the act of helping others achieve what they need. Weak and ineffective leaders insist on moving only in the direction they regard as important; they may seem successful in the short term because power can cause things to appear as though they're changing, but these leaders are unlikely to remain effective for very long. The best leaders help others develop and attain their own shared visions of a better future. Those leaders may be the catalyst for creating the image of an exciting future, and they may contribute to certain aspects of it, but they don't view themselves as the only source of good ideas. Effective leaders recognize that part of their job is to build a culture that is optimistic about the future, regardless of whether the leaders will receive credit for that vision themselves. As administrators who lead from the middle, those of us in the #2 business have to look for ways to achieve the goals of our programs with the overall strategic goals of the institution.

A good place to start is to look for ways of building partnerships between departments, colleges, and divisions of the institution. Since resources are limited, presidents and boards look favorably on proposals that benefit more than one area. Moreover, the traditional organization of universities into departments, schools, colleges, and divisions tends to fragment institutions. Your cooperative efforts can help reverse this silo mentality and foster a new culture of cooperation. Mandating that type of programming from the top down rarely works; chancellors and presidents are often far less effective in doing so than are visionary

provosts and deans. For this reason, building bridges between areas is a perfect way to establish yourself as a university leader who's conscious of fiscal realities.

The type of collaborative effort that you propose is likely to be determined by the individual needs of your institution. Nevertheless, a large number of themes can be used to initiate such an effort. For instance, you might propose a new initiative in creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship that draws together the arts, sciences, engineering, and business under a single umbrella to explore how people discover what is truly original and expose others to the importance of this discovery (Buller, 2011).

An initiative in the area of leadership could combine the theoretical and historical study of major leaders, managers, and visionaries with practical experience in leading on-campus organizations, small start-up businesses, and committees within the university's own hierarchy. Indeed, certain important developments in scholarship fall between the lines where traditional departments begin and end: bioengineering draws on expertise in both biology and engineering; digital publication incorporates studio art, computer information systems, design, printing, and marketing; and neuroscience spans psychology, biology, medicine, and philosophy. These interdisciplinary endeavors can lead to the exploration of entirely new forms of intercollegiate cooperation. Moreover, the very type of collaborative endeavor you propose with other colleges could assume a unique shape. It could range from something as simple as a lecture series or single team-taught course to something as ambitious as a new center, program, or endowed professorship. Whatever you propose, it's probably best to simply ask yourself what visions of the future you already share with other units at your institution and then think creatively about how you can work together to pursue these common interests.

Principle 9: Give More Than You Receive

An old saying goes:

> If you give more than you receive, eventually you'll receive more than you give.

That maxim, which is frequently interpreted as, "If you work harder than you're paid, eventually you'll be paid more than you work," is actually true for more than just the salary a person earns. Provosts and deans can demonstrate effective leadership from the middle by focusing on the

true nature of all leadership: working on behalf of their stakeholders, not simply reaping the benefits of their positions. Truly effective leaders are always motivated by a desire to do what's in the best interest of those for whom they're responsible. Once academic leaders start viewing their programs as personal fiefdoms, they begin to lose their effectiveness as leaders. To be #1 in the #2 business, you need to think broadly in terms of servant leadership and the way you can benefit your institution as a whole (Wheeler, 2012). For instance, if you discover that students are doing well in their courses but not developing the personal skills they need to succeed, you have a number of choices. You can view the situation as just a student affairs problem, or you can do something to help. An initiative that broadens the definition of what constitutes student success, a peer mentoring group that addresses issues both within and outside the classroom, a task force that explores ways in which academic affairs and student affairs can better partner together, or simply a constructive conversation with other campus leaders about what can be done to improve the student experience at your institution all demonstrate true leadership. Leaders reach out to others to address their needs, and that practice can start anywhere in an institutional hierarchy, not merely with the person who's #1.

Conclusion

Provost and deans need to be able to consider both the good of the whole and the good of each individual part simultaneously. Just as every issue can't be about the entire institution, not every decision you make can be only about what benefits a particular professor, department, or college. An excess of equality may end up not being equitable at all. There will be times when one of your programs—or even one individual in your program—is going to have to receive more space, equipment, or resources simply because there's a need for more. That's not favoritism; that's just good academic leadership. It's not regarded as inequitable in a hospital if patients in the intensive care unit receive more resources than do outpatients; at that particular moment, the greater needs of the seriously ill call for greater care. The same principle is true of academic programs: needs will at times be greater for one college, department, or person than they are for others. It'll be a test of your judgment as an academic leader to recognize when those occasions arise.

Serving as the #2 at most universities, provosts and deans have many opportunities that are unique to their roles. Within their own spheres

of authority, they are perfectly positioned to communicate the mission and vision of their disciplines. With their fellow administrators, they can act as mentors and examples. With the president and board, they can demonstrate leadership by knowing when to advocate for the needs of their stakeholders and when to put the needs of the whole institution first. Being at the middle of a hierarchy does not, in other words, restrict opportunities for leadership. To the contrary, it multiplies the number of directions in which you can demonstrate your leadership.

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