

Becoming an Academic Administrator: Dancing in the Dark or Highway to Hell?

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In this manuscript, the perils and pitfalls of academic administration are discussed. The move to the “dark side” of academe is one that many choose not to take, and many who do take it do so with little understanding of the opportunities and challenges that await them. The author uses his career progression from faculty member to vice provost as a case study.

Bruce Springsteen is nicknamed “The Boss” in reference to his collecting the money for his band’s early gigs and distributing the payments to his fellow band members. He was not hired as the boss, he simply took the lead to make sure that everyone was paid. In many ways, Bruce was acting as the department chair—simply making sure that everyone was appropriately remunerated for their efforts. For those of us who have entered academic administration, many of us—borrowing from one of Bruce’s song titles—were likely “Dancing in the Dark” and stumbling our way through various processes, activities, meetings, and unwelcomed situations. Or, borrowing from ACDC, some might have perceived the administrative journey as a “Highway to Hell.”

Individuals’ perspectives certainly will determine their decisions to choose an administrative path in higher education. My own perspective has changed over time. Having served as a graduate program director, chief department advisor, department chair at three universities, and a vice provost, sometimes I truly did feel like I was on the dark side. Other times, I felt like I was tripping over myself in a dark room, making ever slight progress nonetheless. In this article, I address reasons that individuals go into academic administration, types of academic administrators, obstacles that you might confront in your own efforts to become an administrator, obstacles unique to criminal justice, strategies for overcoming these obstacles, and suggestions for a successful transition into the administration. Throughout the discussion, I borrow some criminal justice and sociological principles to demonstrate how leadership decisions and actions are grounded in very basic fundamental aspects of social behavior.

Deciding to Become an Academic Administrator: Don't Try Suicide

Emile Durkheim (1897) described four types of suicide which were characterized by the common driving forces behind suicide. In some ways, with some liberal interpretation of these concepts, this same typology can be used to understand why faculty members would move into academic administration. Durkheim described four types of suicide: fatalistic suicide, altruistic suicide, egoistic suicide, and anomic suicide. Please note that I am not suggesting that becoming an administrator results in one's demise (at least most of the time, it will not). Still, the parallels between this more than a century-old typology and decisions to become an administrator are striking. Indeed, from my perspective, academics become administrators for fatalistic, altruistic, egoistic, and anomic reasons.

Many of us have made certain decisions because we felt like we had no other choice. In other words, fatalistic factors drove these decisions. Consider a situation where nobody wants to be department chair in a criminal justice department and the dean threatens to place the department in receivership and bring in a mean associate dean to run the department. Most of the time, but not always, someone will step in and offer to serve as chair. Or, consider a situation where a specific faculty member does not want to be chair, but does not want any of his or her colleagues to be chair either. Faced with this option, some people step into the administrative role out of a belief that the "pain" from being chair will be less than the "pain" from having one of their colleagues serve as chair.

In terms of altruistic justifications for entering academic administration, some higher education leaders chose their path either because they value shared governance or because they saw administration as a way to help various groups. Students, fellow faculty members, the community at large, and the broader discipline are all served well by successful academic administrators—from the chair to the university president. My decision to become chair at Old Dominion University was guided by a desire to serve my wonderful colleagues and students. I could not have asked for a better group to work with and I enjoyed serving them.

Some individuals might become chairs for egoistic reasons in that they are seeking either economic gains or a specific personal challenge. In terms of economic gains, in some situations, faculty members might be able to secure a salary increase for serving as chair. In terms of personal challenges, some individuals seek chair appointments for the personal challenge.

My decision to leave Old Dominion University and become chair at Georgia State University was guided by this latter type of egoistic reason (e.g., the personal challenge). In particular, I was driven by the challenge (and my own ego) to see if I could succeed as chair with a different group of colleagues and students in a completely different environment. While I welcomed the opportunity to embrace service ideals, I was also looking for a challenge. And trust

me, I got one. One of my ODU colleagues once told me that his friend thought she was a good mother after her first child was born. Then, she had her second child and realized that perhaps that it was not that she was a good mother, but that her first kid was easier to raise. I remembered this story after becoming chair at George State. I was challenged, but together we did great things. From moving the department into the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies to creating a high-quality Phd program, our department came together and helped me to grow as an academic leader. I am indebted to them for toughening me up—though I did tap out after six years.

Some individuals might make decisions to enter administration for anomic reasons. Consider instances where faculty members feel that their own personal goals have been met and their passion for learning moves from the classroom to the boardroom. Staying in the traditional faculty role may not be satisfying for those faculty. Hence, experiencing disconnect between their goals and their daily behaviors, rather than change their goals, they decide to become a department chair or some other administrator. In some ways, my decision to return to ODU as vice provost was driven by these reasons. I felt like we had accomplished everything that we could at GSU under my chair leadership and I was ready for new goals and new activities. I was fortunate to be able to return home for these new goals and activities.

Types of Academic Administrators: I'm a Little Bit Country, and I'm a Little Bit Rock and Roll

An axiom in our criminal justice literature is that typologies matter. There are different types of crimes, different types of criminals, different types of laws, different types of victims, and so on. In the same way, I think it is useful to consider different types of academic administrators. Focusing on varieties of administrators will help to demonstrate how an administrator's goals and routines are connected. Building on the anomic discussion above, we can borrow from Robert Merton's classic "Social Structure and Anomie" and consider five types of academic administrators: the conformist, the innovator, the ritualist, the retreatist, and the rebel.

Borrowing from Merton, one can likely think of academic administrators who are conformists: they have accepted the goals of the department, college, and university, and they have engaged in those behaviors that are proscribed as appropriate by the university. Consider department chairs who use the institution's strategic plan to lead their department. In these situations, the department will make some institutional progress, but their progress in the discipline might be limited. As well, given that many other fellow chairs at the same institution will be following the same procedures, in comparison to the other programs at the institution, the progress or growth may not be substantial.

In this context, the innovator academic administrator would include those who accept the institutional goals but identify new strategies (as opposed to

proscribed institutional strategies) to meet those goals. While Merton was focusing on deviant activities by innovative offenders, in academic land, there are many innovative department chairs who find new ways to lead their academic departments within the institutional rulebook. I remember reading about one criminal justice chair, for instance, who convinced local restaurants to donate a portion of their profits to a criminal justice scholarship honoring a police officer. Creating new programs, identifying new revenue streams, and building stronger relationships with the community are just a few activities performed by these administrators.

The ritualist academic administrator refers to the academic administrator who does what is expected of them but does not really try to move the program or institution forward. These administrators might be good managers, but they will not be good leaders. They don't cause any problems or do anything wrong, but their lack of progress may potentially harm the academic unit. After all, if others move forward and your own program stays where it is, at some point your program would be behind others.

The retreatist academic administrator describes the administrator who does not do what they are asked to do and they make no effort to move the academic unit forward. In some cases, this may be an administrator placed into a position they should not have been placed in, or it may reflect an administrator who has burned out from several years of service. Typically, the retreatist administrator will not hold their position for a long period of time (unless their institutional culture is accepting of those behaviors).

The rebel academic administrator does not accept the institution's goals or prescribed behaviors and they create their own goals and behaviors. I remember hearing about one dean who was frustrated by a pending university decision. The dean gathered the forces, got the support of the college faculty and staff, and then met with the president. The dean told the president that his college was vehemently opposed to the pending decision. The president fired the dean on the spot. The university did not eventually make that pending decision. Serving as a rebel in academic leadership positions may fail for the administrator and succeed for the academic unit.

One caveat is worth noting: academic leaders might change their roles depending on situations. I would like to think that while I generally lean towards being an innovative academic leader, I have filled each of these roles at different times. I have tried to rile the troops up and rebel a few times and I have spent an occasional meeting or two simply going through the motions (as a ritualist). Also, I have hid from an angry colleague once or twice (as a retreatist). Fortunately, those meetings and disappearing acts have been exceedingly rare! Still, there are many times when academic leaders will face obstacles. From my perspective, some of these challenges surface for all academic leaders, while some of the others might be specific to criminal justice.

Challenges Academic Leaders Face: Take this Job and Shove It

Academic leaders face many challenges in the course of performing their daily routines. In my effort to discuss these obstacles, I hope that it does not seem like I am complaining about being an academic leader or complaining that the job is too hard. Growing up in a blue-collar family, I have seen my parents engage in a lifetime of hard work in their respective careers (and I am proud to have had summer employment for four subsequent summers in the bottle factory where my dad worked). Those work days were hard work! Serving as an academic leader is challenging, but I intentionally resist the inclination to define this career as hard work. Discussing the challenges is meant to illustrate the kinds of issues that academic administrators might expect to confront.

Having established that being an academic leader is challenging work (but not hard work), here is a list of common challenges that many academic leaders will confront: (1) identity crises, (2) isolation, (3) unrealistic expectations, (4) dealing with difficult situations, (5) dealing with conflict, (5) issues with funding, (6) loss of independence, (7) lack of training, and (8) strain. With regard to identity crisis, most academic leaders have some change of identity—both in terms of how they see themselves and how their colleagues see them—when they transition from a faculty member to an administrator. This transition might be easy for some and more problematic for others. For those who are internal chairs, their identity changes from colleague (or even friend) to supervisor. The very nature of daily interactions is influenced by being labeled “chair.” One colleague from another discipline shared the following with me recently:

When I was a department chair, my colleagues seemed to hang on every word I would say to them. If I said hello to them, they would interpret the way I said hello or didn’t talk long to them in a certain way. All I was doing was trying to say hello. Now, I am no longer chair. When my current chair says hello to me, I now read into how she says hello to me!

Talking to an academic leader changes the nature of communication between the parties. Goffman’s (1959) treatise building on Shakespeare’s line is illustrative: “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players” (Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act 2. Scene 7). The stage changes, and your identity changes, when you enter academic administration. People will communicate with you differently and you will communicate with them differently because of your new role.

Isolation is a related facet of the academic leader’s experiences. Department leaders dealing with contentious issues in a department will typically be unable to share their thoughts and perceptions with their department colleagues. This is especially the case with personnel issues. Department chairs will inevitably be at the center of heated disputes that they cannot talk about

with their colleagues. These issues undoubtedly leave academic leaders isolated in their academic unit.

Contributing to this isolation are unrealistic expectations that a small group of faculty members or administrators might have. This would vary across academic positions. My former provost used to tell department chairs in group meetings that being a department chair was the worst administrative position on campus. I often wondered if this provost went into a room full of deans and proclaimed that being a dean was the worst administrative position on campus. Now that my chair days are over—I am more accepting of my former provost's assertion about the role of department chairs. Chairs often have virtually no power but their colleagues might expect them to be able to do things that cannot be done.

Academic leaders also face challenges that involve difficult situations arising from interactions with faculty, staff, and students alike. I remember reading a few years ago about an economics professor who was fired because he took his pants off in class. My first thought when I read the story was about the department chair—I was certain it was the department chair who was called upon to deal with this situation. These situations happen all of the time (not the exact type obviously, but difficult situations do arise regularly for academic leaders). Most of the time, they do not end up in the news because department chairs and other academic leaders intervened in the same way that crisis intervention specialists might intervene.

A similar challenge that academic leaders must confront is conflict. At any given moment, conflict can arise involving any combination of faculty, administrators, staff, and students. Some have argued that academic leaders must be experts in conflict resolution. In my first year as chair at Georgia State, I attended a statewide conference for new department chairs. In one of the sessions, a presenter stressed a point that I found to be incredibly salient: department chairs will fail if they try to *resolve* conflict; they will succeed if they find a way to *manage* conflict. The trick is to identify strategies so that conflict between different parties can be used in a way to move the department, college, and institution forward. It's not easy to do. But, it's not impossible.

All academic leaders will also face issues with funding. Funding constraints have increased over time and these constraints particularly problematic in public institutions. States have cut back the amount of funding they provide to support higher education institutions. Colleges and universities are not able to pass along the entire cost differential to students. In fact, by 2012, for the first time ever funds from tuition revenue were covering more higher education costs than state funds were in public institutions (Government Accounting Office, 2014). Academic leaders must be prepared to make difficult decisions about how to most effectively and efficiently utilize scarce resources.

Another challenge that academic leaders will confront has to do with a loss of independence, particularly when transitioning from faculty to chair, and even more so when transitioning from chair to dean or above. Upon entering the chair role, faculty members go from having a great deal of

freedom—particularly regarding their disciplinary pursuits—to having virtually no freedom in this area. One study found that department chairs spend 70% of their time (or 3.5 of the 5 work days) dealing with issues that have nothing to do with their discipline (Hancock, 2007). I remember being so delighted when my dean offered to provide me a cell phone at no cost. Then, I realized that I had to give her my number and that she could call me any time! As faculty members, we have a great deal of control over our time. For many faculty members, the only time they have formally scheduled is the 6 to 15 hours a week they are in class and the couple of hours they have set for office hours. The rest of the time is set aside for research, service, or other activities the faculty member chooses to do. This independence goes away the further up one goes in the higher education institution. Occasionally, I even receive emails from myself inviting me to a meeting. These are meetings set by my office administrator. I often don't even have control over when my own meetings are set!

This relates to another issue that academic leaders will likely confront: stress. Higher education experts point to the loss of independence and faculty conflict as being among the strongest stressors for department chairs (Gmelch & Miskin, 2011). Closer to our own discipline, a quick review of Agnew's (1992) general strain theory might help us to understand the potential sources of strain for department chairs. Agnew points to three sources of strain: (1) the failure to achieve positively valued goals, (2) the removal or expected removal of positively valued stimuli, and (3) the exposure to and anticipated exposure to negative stimuli. Being an academic administrator makes it harder to conduct research and work with students, eviscerates the faculty member's free time, and exposes the faculty member to all sorts of potential conflict and difficult situations. It's no wonder that being a department chair is stressful!

Another problem new academic leaders will confront is the dearth of leadership training. When I first became chair at one of my institutions, a former department chair waited about a week before asking me a "chair question" that they didn't know the answer to. Yet, somehow, they thought I would know the answer. Frequently, faculty members are placed into leadership positions with virtually no leadership or chair training. As one author team notes, "To be a good chair takes practice—in fact deliberate practice" (Thomas & Schuh, 2004, p. 12). Over time, much of the practice will stem from direct experiences. Other times, forward thinking institutional leaders will provide the chair access to evidence-based chair leadership programs either at the institution or through a national program.

An interesting experience that happened to me early on as a department chair comes to mind. I attended a national chair workshop hosted by the American Council of Education. During breakfast one morning, the academic chairs had informal discussions over breakfast and we were asked to talk about the types of challenges we confronted. One theme that jumped out to me was clear: across all disciplines, academic chairs face a similar set of challenges that seem to cut across all academic departments. Finding that other

department chairs loathed certain aspects of their jobs just as I did was somehow comforting. At the same time, I also recognized that criminal justice academic leaders confront issues that are contextually influenced by the nature of our discipline.

Challenges Stemming from Criminal Justice Issues: You Can't Always Get What you Want

Criminal justice academic leaders may confront issues that are unique to our discipline or similar disciplines. These challenges include (1) confusion about criminal justice, (2) challenges leading multi-disciplinary departments, (3) a higher ratio of students to faculty than other departments, (4) dealing with different student issues than might arise in other academic units, and (5) challenges seeking higher academic leadership roles.

With regard to confusion about criminal justice, academic leaders in criminal justice will need to spend much of their time communicating about the nature of criminal justice. What exactly is criminal justice? What is the difference between criminal justice and criminology? How is it that your discipline is a science? Academic leaders of criminal justice programs will be peppered with these sorts of questions. I once had a university president tell me that he expected criminal justice faculty to come to meetings with guns in a holster. He was only half kidding. We remain a discipline that is not generally well understood across higher education institutions or well-respected in all places.

Another challenge that arises for criminal justices is that many criminal justice programs are housed in multidisciplinary programs. Such an arrangement presents issues both for administrators in these departments and for faculty in the various disciplines housed in the department. A recent review of ACJS members found more than 60 different names for our academic units and roughly three-fourths of these academic units were multidisciplinary (Payne, 2015). One issue that arises for academic leaders is that they will essentially be serving as "mini-deans" who are expected to be familiar with each discipline. Another issue may surface if the disciplines do not get along well. For faculty in these units, a potential issue that arises is that the academic leader's lack of familiarity with the discipline may ultimately harm the criminal justice programs. Despite these concerns, limited funding for supporting these programs means that multi-disciplinary programs are necessary. Successful academic leaders will be able to overcome these challenges and identify ways to promote interdisciplinary efforts.

On many college campuses, criminal justice programs are among the largest academic majors. This, too, can present challenges. Typically, there is a higher ratio of students to faculty in criminal justice programs than in many other academic programs. This inflated ratio may be particularly frustrating in multidisciplinary departments. In academic units combining Social Work and Criminal Justice, for example, the ratio in the Social Work program will be

determined by that field's accreditation standards. In Criminal justice, the ratio will be determined by student demand. Academic leaders will need to engage in efforts to appropriately resource their units while maintaining faculty and staff morale. At the same time, they should empathetically advise faculty that the higher ratios are both necessary and appreciated in the current budgetary environment.

Criminal justice academic leaders also face different types of student issues than others might face. On one hand, the higher number of majors equates to a higher number of potential issues. On the other hand, the nature of our students and our course material may result in different challenges for criminal justice academic leaders. In terms of students, I don't believe that our students are better or worse than other students, but I do think they are different in some ways. My own experience has been that many criminal justice students (1) are first generation students, (2) have financial issues, and (3) expect to be taught how to work in criminal justice (rather than being taught the science of criminal justice). These differences will present different issues for criminal justice leaders. With regard to the nature of our material, the topics we discuss in our courses are controversial and may lead to difficult situations requiring the chair to intervene. A recent study found that teaching about violence is tied to disclosures of violence on surveys (Mummert, Policastro, & Payne, 2014). With changes in Title IX, academic leaders of criminal justice programs will need to be familiar with the federal requirements that now exist regarding the reporting of sexual violence.

A final challenge that arises for criminal justice academic leaders (and leaders of comparable programs) is that it may be harder to move up in the academic ranks for those who want to "move further into the dark side." Such a barrier stems, in part, from a lack of understanding about criminal justice. I have often heard colleagues say that provosts should come from the education or the sciences so they can understand the entire university. Recent estimates suggest that more than 40 percent of presidents have degrees in education or higher education (Freeman & Kochan, 2012) and 42 percent of provosts of public doctoral granting universities have academic backgrounds in the STEM fields (Hartley and Godin, 2010). This is not to say that criminal justice leaders cannot move up in higher education. Indeed, effective leaders have done so. In fact, at least three former ACJS presidents are currently provosts: Todd Clear (Rutgers), Laura Moriarty (Monmouth), and Jim Marquardt (Lamar). Also, other criminologists who have risen to a chief academic officer/provost or president role include, but are not limited to, Tim Flanagan (Framingham and Illinois State), Velmer Burton (University of Minnesota-Twin Cities), Don Gottfredson (Oregon), Michael Gottfredson (Virginia Commonwealth), and Jeremy Travis (John Jay). These are clear examples of successful leaders who overcame challenges academic leaders face.

Overcoming the Challenges: We are the Champions

Several suggestions can be offered to address the challenges confronting academic leaders. Those that have been most beneficial to me are (1) having a mentor, (2) communicating openly, (3) advocating for your colleagues, (4) developing trust, (5) developing your sense of humor, (6) remaining active as a teacher and scholar, and (7) identifying ways that disciplinary knowledge can support leadership efforts. The importance of having a mentor (or mentors) is well accepted. Given that academic leaders receive relatively little professional development, having a mentor serves many purposes. Our leadership mentors might come from other disciplines. Today, my mentor is Chandra de Silva, a historian and my former dean and current interim provost. Watching Chandra in action as a dean and provost, I have learned a great deal about how to lead, how to manage, how to plan, how to use humor, and perhaps most importantly, the importance of open communication.

Open communication with colleagues is critical for successful academic leadership. Clearly, there are personnel issues that cannot be discussed in an open forum. But planning for a unit's academic changes must be discussed in a transparent manner. If a leader wants his or her faculty to follow, the leader must tell them where they are going. At the same time, the importance of listening to faculty, staff, and students needs to be stressed. All too often, individuals think of communication as a one-way street. Communicating is not just talking; it is also listening and acting on what we hear from our faculty, staff, and students.

Listening relates to another suggestion for being a successful leader: advocate for your colleagues. Academic leaders should promote the strengths of their departments and individual faculty. At times, academic leaders may have to dig their heels in and confront other academic leaders. These confrontations do not have to result battles or fights, but faculty and staff do expect the academic leader to advocate on their behalf.

The importance of earning your colleagues' trust cannot be understated. Trust is something that individuals give to others based upon their behaviors, interactions, and specific roles (See Friedrichs, 2009). From my perspective, trust is a necessary condition that must be present for administrators to be successful. Fellow faculty members will not automatically trust administrators, particularly those administrators who are hired from the outside. Over time, it is possible to earn their trust as long as interactions are open, fair, and transparent. Even the slightest misstep might have dramatic effects on the amount of trust that faculty and staff have for administrators.

One way to build trust is to avoid influencing faculty for personal reasons. This may seem like an obvious suggestion, but occasionally I hear about a department chair, dean, or other academic leader who used their positions for a personal gain. Consider textbook selections. A department chair should not require his or her faculty, for example, to require a textbook written by the

chair. The chair could publicize the book to the faculty. In a similar way, I could tell my direct reports that I recently co-authored a book titled *Introduction to Criminal Justice: A Balanced Approach* (2015) with my co-authors Will Oliver and Nancy Marion. But it would be inappropriate for me to require my direct reports to use my book for their classes.

Another suggestion I have for being a successful administrator is to develop your sense of humor and use it when appropriate. (I hope that readers recognize that plugging my book was an attempt at humor!) Serving as department chair, dean, or provost can be an incredibly stressful experience. Research shows that humor helps to cope with stressful experiences (Vivona, 2014). As well, I find that jokes are a good way to reduce tension in particularly contentious meetings. Here are a few of my favorite academic administrator jokes:

- How can you tell if your dean is mad at you? Answer: Who cares?
- Why does the provost give deans control over the budget? Answer: So faculty will talk to them.
- How many deans does it take to solve problems? Answer: None, that's the chair's job.
- What's the difference between a chair and a vice provost? Answer: Chairs earn their paychecks.
- How many department chairs does it take to push a vice provost down the stairs? Answer: None, he fell.
- What would you call your vice provost to get him to come to your office? Answer: Why would you want the vice provost in your office?

I need to stress that these are just jokes: they do not reflect my beliefs at all. I hope that I didn't create additional tension by sharing these.

Remaining active as a teacher and scholar also helps to become a successful academic leader. Did I mention that I recently co-authored *Introduction to Criminal Justice: A Balanced Approach* (Sage)? But seriously, maintaining our roots in our discipline helps to deal with the isolation and loss of independence that academic administrators might confront. I am not required to teach in my current role, but I do so because I enjoy it and going to class reminds me why I chose this career path to begin with.

Finally, and on a related point, it is helpful if academic leaders identify ways to use their disciplinary knowledge to address departmental, college, and university-wide issues. This is fairly straightforward at the department level, though some missed opportunities may pass us by. For example, academic leaders should explore opportunities to connect their programs to other academic units through interdisciplinary research and teaching. Elsewhere, I have noted that opportunities for interdisciplinarity exist in areas such as biology and crime and cybercrime. Integrating biological research into our criminal justice research has appeal both because such efforts should help solidify our research as a science and there is a growing body of research that shows a link

between biological factors and criminal behavior (see Armstrong & Boutwell, 2012; Wright, Tibbetts, & Daigle, 2008; Wright et al., 2008). With regard to cybercrime, this is a growing area of concern for businesses and policy makers alike. Criminal justice academic leaders should ensure that their departments are involved in these discussions (see Holt & Bossler, 2014).

Criminal justice academic leaders can also use their academic leadership positions to contribute to various discussions occurring at the institutional level. Areas that come to mind are campus policing, campus judicial proceedings, and recent changes in Title IX. In terms of campus policing, criminal justice leaders have the disciplinary knowledge that can be used to promote effective campus policing strategies. It was no accident that the University of Cincinnati called upon ACJS member Robin Engel to serve as the vice president for safety and reform in the wake of the killing of an unarmed citizen by a campus police officer.

With regard to campus judicial proceedings, issues related to rule enforcement, due process and fairness are central to our discipline. At one of my former universities, we had more of our criminal justice majors referred to judicial proceedings for academic dishonesty than any other major. Was it because our students cheated more? Absolutely not! Our faculty believed in enforcing rules and supporting a fair process to apply those rules. As the academic leader of the department, I fully agreed with those beliefs.

Criminal justice leaders can also use their disciplinary knowledge to contribute to discussions about recent changes in Title IX. These changes require everyone at a university (except those identified as holding confidential status) to report cases of sexual and domestic violence to the Title IX coordinator at the institution. Criminal justice leaders familiar with these topics are in a prime position to help communicate these changes to the broader college community.

Paths to Leadership: Welcome to the Jungle

Sometimes I am asked how one might enter academic leadership. I have a few suggestions that may help. For most of us, leadership begins in our home department. If we want to one day be the leader of the academic unit, the way we treat our colleagues will go a long ways towards earning their trust. Being kind to your colleagues and students sends a message that you would not make everyone miserable if you were the chair. Serving your department and participating in department activities shows that you are willing to set aside your own interests for the good of the department. In addition, I believe that serving the discipline helps to build your leadership skills. Having served the Southern Criminal Justice Association for eight years (as editor for four years and up through the vice president/president ranks) was an invaluable experience. It prepared me for many interactions I had as a department chair. Serving ACJS through the vice president/president ranks has been an equally

valuable experience. In this role, I had the opportunity to travel to each regional association and meet the leaders of those associations. I could not have been more impressed with the individuals I met in these associations and on the ACJS executive board. Our discipline is certainly in good hands! If you have not already served ACJS or the regional associations, please consider doing so.

If you are absolutely certain that you do not want to enter academic administration and you are concerned that your colleagues might someday nominate you as department chair, there are things you can do to protect you against such a nomination. Here are a few failsafe suggestions:

- (1) Criticize your colleagues every chance you have.
- (2) Show up late for faculty meetings and insist that the department revisit items they had already discussed.
- (3) Throw unnecessary wrenches into faculty searches.
- (4) Whenever someone makes a motion in a meeting, slam your hand on the table and yell "I object."
- (5) Give your colleagues nicknames such as "Buster," "Trixie," or "Moonchild."

If you engage in these behaviors, I assure you that none of your colleagues will nominate you for an academic leadership position. Indeed, they may end up nominating themselves for fatalistic reasons.

In closing, I began in my first assistant professor position 23 years ago. For 17 of those years, I have served in some form of academic administration. I do this because I enjoy it. I am often asked how long I will serve as a vice provost and my current answer is simple: "as long as they will let me." I have no aspirations to move to another position. I am in no hurry to try anything different at this time. Returning to the ACDC reference, "it's a long way to the top (if you want to rock and roll)." In the meantime, I'll continue dancing in the dark.

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Notes on Contributor

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