

Springboards to Reflection: Higher Education Administrators Share Experiences Volume II

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Abstract

This is the second in a series of anthologies. The purpose of this compilation is to provide a learning experience by encouraging the audience to reflect on the real life experiences of successful administrators. This work can be used as a supplement for courses in education, educational leadership, public administration, and management. Instructors can use the participants' experiences for classroom discussions and case studies.

Keywords: Public Administration, Professional Higher Education Administration, Higher Education Leadership, Student Affairs Administration, Student Activities, Student Development, Student Services, Management, Organizational Behavior, and Human Resources Management, Case Studies

1. Introduction

This second compilation is similar to the first, that is, *Springboards to Reflection: Higher Education Administrators Share Experiences Volume I* (Synnott, 2011a). Presidents, and other administrators serving in our colleges and universities contributed to this work by providing personal experiences regarding to their work in higher education. Some participants shared humorous stories while others shared stories of a somewhat serious nature. The audience consists of university and college undergraduate and graduate students studying Higher Education Leadership, Professional Higher Education Administration, Student Affairs Administration, Student Activities, Student Development, Student Services, Public Administration, and a numerous managers and administrators in other fields.

2. Suggested Methods for Instruction

Many stories, that is, springboards relate to more than one topic. Instructors can use the participants' experiences for classroom discussions and or case studies. Reflection prompts are action statements that act as catalysts for classroom discussions and for case analyses. Space is provided for instructors to develop applicable reflection prompts based on their instruction.

3. Case Studies

Springboard 1 If it was always this simple*

Harold H. Damato
Senior Vice President
Academic and Student Affairs
Sussex County Community College
Newton, NJ

Working at a college situated in a residential community I was perpetually challenged to maintain good relationships with neighbors adjacent to the residence halls.

Turkeys at Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets went a long way in promoting those relationships, but the issues could be substantive. A perennial problem reported to me was the offense taken by neighbors at the sight of partially dissected cats hanging out of dorm windows. Students will work at length to create provocative events, but this was not the case with the dissections. These were serious students attempting to complete their lab assignments and understandably completing the work in their rooms they didn't want to spend the night with the desiccated cat. There are complicated problems with complicated solutions, but on occasion we miss the obvious. A quick call to housekeeping to deliver a carton of opaque black bags to the lab to replace the clear plastic bags used for years put an end to the controversy. We experienced few complaints thereafter; if only it was always that simple.

Reflection Prompt: _____

Springboard 2 Reflections of a New President*

Thomas A. Isekenegbe, Ph.D.
President
Cumberland County College
Vineland, NJ

I assumed the Presidency of Cumberland County College on March 1, 2010, after serving for about eight months in an Interim role. Prior to serving as the Interim, I served for eight years as Vice President for Academic Affairs & Enrollment Services at the same Institution.

As Vice President, I was focused on Academic programs, Faculty and other related issues. I had lofty ideas and always worked at them within the context of Academics, Faculty and Students. I always made arguments why X or Y needs to be done as it relates to Faculty or Students while sometimes missing the big College picture. All these changed with the ascension to the office of the President. Instead of just looking to the benefits of Faculty, Academic programs and Students, I am forced to take a more global view of the Institution and the Community as a whole. As the President, I find myself now asking questions about the overall implications of X on not just Faculty, Academic programs but the entire College's Internal and External Stakeholders.

As a new President, I am finding out that this position and role is significantly different from the Academic Vice-President's. As the President, I am now the face and representation of my College. I meet people at various places in town who want to talk about the College or tell me about issues. I also find the role a 24/7 one. As Vice President for Academic Affairs, I used to believe that my work was done when I left the College for the day.

This 24/7 role is important to know for those thinking about pursuing a College Presidency or higher level Administrative positions in the near future. Despite all the meetings off and on campus, I relish the role of President because at the end of the day you can truly make a difference on campus.

Reflection Prompt: _____

Springboard 3 Deferred Contingent Compensation

Alan D. Marble, Ph.D.
President
Crowder College
Neosho, MO .

A few years ago when I served as Business Manager of a small, rural, community college we found ourselves again faced with a very difficult budget year. Tuition revenue was flat, property tax collections were flat, and we were operating under the threat of a mid-year "withholding" of state appropriations. But, we were also entering the year with one of the lowest faculty salary schedules in the state and the fear of losing great instructors to other institutions was a very real concern. We wanted to give raises but the budget was just too uncertain to make the commitment.

To make matters worse, the state retirement system banned salary adjustments that appeared to be "bonuses" because it was a defined benefit system that could be manipulated by late career salary hikes that accrued to the retirees benefit at the expense of current workers. So, a mid-year bonus was out of the question even if the state withholdings didn't occur as threatened. Then the solution occurred to me... let's wait until mid-year and see what happens. If the state withholdings occurred then no compensation change could occur, but if the state decided to pay in full then we could implement raises through a vehicle I called "Deferred Contingent Compensation." As it turned out, the state did not withhold money and we triggered the Deferred Contingent Compensation program and it held up even under great scrutiny from the retirement system. Sometimes you just have to be creative.

Reflection Prompt: _____

Springboard 4 Crisis Management*

Bryon Grigsby
Senior Vice President and
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Shenandoah University
Winchester, VA

When you are the Provost, getting a call from your president at any time is rarely a good thing. Getting a call from him at 8pm on a Friday night can never be good. This happened to me when I was working as the Provost and Chief Operating Officer at Centenary College in New Jersey. My family and I had just finished up dinner and cleared the table when my Blackberry rang with the president's name, Ken Hoyt. I answered fearing the worst about our school and the students. Ken said, "I have just been informed that one of our staff members has lost a payroll disk and they have known about this for three months before they reported it to us. On the payroll disk are all the employees' social security numbers. I need you to learn everything you can about identify theft by Monday at 8am. You need to present to me a plan of action that we are going to implement by 9am that day that will mitigate our exposure. See you on Monday. Have a good weekend." Now, when you go into university administration, you think back to those days when you were a student or a faculty member and say things like, "When I was writing my little book report (my dissertation) on Chaucer, I'd never thought I'd have to learn about identity theft." However, you have refined incredibly useful skills for this kind of work—the ability to research, to synthesize, and to offer a theory or a plan. Early on Saturday morning, I started researching...I began by logging onto Educause and learning everything I could from their white papers on identify theft and what other colleges and universities did. I read lots of newspaper and journal articles about types of identity thefts and what one could do to mitigate further damage. I was essentially back in graduate school researching—I was just researching a somewhat strange topic—at least to an academic.

After two days of straight research, I was ready to start formulating my plan to the president. I decide that at 9am we would call together the entire university community. Fortunately, classes had not begun but faculty and staff were expected to be on campus that day. We would hold the meeting in the chapel as a symbolic gesture as we were a Methodist Institution and should feel hope and resolve in that space. I had prepared the president's speech that gave the facts about the disk, did not ascribe blame to the office that lost it, but did not try to cover over the gravity of the situation. The president also announced the resolution that the College would take responsibility for the potential identity theft by paying for a year for a company to monitor all the employees social security numbers. If we had a documented case, the College would provide a second year of coverage at no charge to the employees. The president's speech went for about 15 minutes with a short question and answer period. During the question and answer period, we introduced the chair of the Criminal Justice Program, Dr. Joseph Linsky, who was a former police chief, to talk about how common this is and ways to protect you from further threats. The faculty asked him lots of questions and you could see that they felt more calm and appreciative of the time. The president then announced that all the vice presidents would be in individual classrooms and would be there to answer any questions anyone had privately and that we would stay in those classroom through lunch if people wanted to come back and receive further counseling.

At the end of the year, we did not have a documented complaint, and believed that this disk was actually in a landfill somewhere. The vice presidents felt good that they had taken on a crisis and come out stronger in the eyes of the faculty and staff. I was given the final task of making sure it didn't happen again which allowed us to take advantage of some new technology for moving that information over secured servers rather than disks.

I learned that the skills that enabled you to get your Ph.D. are highly useful skills for administration—the ability to thoroughly research, integrate ideas into a concise report and then offer a plan of action—are highly valuable and sought after skills in a crisis. I also learned that you need to be ready to take responsibility on behalf of the institution, but not never blame others. You need to also be ready with a solution that protects the people who rely on you. Don't overlook your internal experts, as they can be more valuable in times of crisis than outside consultants. A college or university is FILLED with experts; use them. Faculty appreciate when they are being talked to by other faculty, and even subconsciously can see themselves being called into the limelight if their expertise is warranted. Finally, don't overestimate the value of having lots of human interaction with people who are just learning about a crisis. The time all the Vice Presidents spent talking to individuals who were concerned was as valuable to the health of the institution as was the paying for a monitoring program for all employees. They truly got the sense that we care and we are doing everything we can to minimize any affect.

Reflection Prompt: _____

Springboard 5 Leading Change*

Bryon Grigsby
Senior Vice President and
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Shenandoah University
Winchester, VA

I came to Shenandoah University in the summer of 2008 as the Senior Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Prior to this I was the Provost and Chief Operating Officer at Centenary College in New Jersey, where I had helped the college to become the first wireless laptop campus in the state. When I got to Shenandoah, I noticed that while its mission statement state that the University “incorporates...sophisticated technologies,” I saw little to justify that statement. Moreover, I choose to set an example with the faculty my first semester by teaching a First Year Composition class. Having come from a ubiquitous laptop campus and having gotten used to teaching with those tools, I was immediately struck by an inability to do my best teaching because I now lacked the tools I was used to having. I started talking to faculty leaders on campus and there seemed to be some interest in the campus moving to a ubiquitous platform.

My first problem was that Shenandoah had a rich and vibrant Conservatory and I knew that I couldn't shove an IBM down their throats and survive—they would want Macs. My second problem was that the Business School had tried a laptop program and believed strongly that the program was what was causing their enrollments to dip. I had just the opposite experience with enrollments, so all imagine was that only by doing one school made it impossible to use the laptop effectively in integrated courses because not all the students had them. This led to growing student resentment of why do we have to have these computers if we are not going to use them in class. I also knew I wasn't going to be able to shove a Mac down the business school's throat.

So, I planned on two platforms—a Mac platform for the Conservatory students and faculty and an IBM platform for everyone else. I recognized that this plan would be a nightmare for Instructional Technology to maintain two different systems, but what is best for the students needed to override what is best for the staff.

Since I was very comfortable with IBM and their platform, I chose to bring Apple in first to see how this would work. In the meeting with Apple Sales Person, Bob Jennings identified that they were coming out with a MacBook that was completely environmentally friendly. Since Shenandoah's strategic plan identified an initiative to become more environmentally friendly, this was a plus in Apple's favor. Then Bob brought up that it could now run both a Windows and a Mac OS platform on the new dual processor. So we could have one machine serving both needs. I knew that this was the answer to my IT problem of dual platforms.

Finally, Bob said, “Why don’t you try one for three weeks and see what you think?” Three days after using the Mac, I walked my IBM down to IT and said I was converting over to Mac. We also chose at that meeting that students needed a common connection device—either an iPod Touch or an iPhone.

Dr. Barry Adams, a teaching and technology specialist for Apple, presented these devices to the Academic Cabinet. All but the dean of the business school seemed initially supportive. As he said in the meeting, if I go back to my school and say we are going to have another laptop program, you are going to here the explosion all the way over here. I decided that the best course of action was to give their most tech-savvy faculty member a MacBook with Windows loaded on it to give me a report about how it performed. His evaluation was glowing about the computer’s speed, graphics, storage, etc. But I still had to sell the faculty in the business school that this wouldn’t further damage their enrollments.

I asked the dean if I could meet with them to explain my vision for the program. He agreed but said I needed to be read for a war. I went in and explained why I didn’t think their program worked—that it wasn’t ubiquitous and it wasn’t their fault—that University needed to embrace technology across the campus as the mission statement said. I explained to them that none of the businesses we are prepare student for runs by asking its workers to bring in their home computers and connecting them to the internet...why do we think colleges and universities can work that way? Without a common platform, it is impossible to work effectively and efficiently. I also explained that many students can’t afford the best laptop or computer, but that by making it part of tuition, we can guarantee that each students has what we believe they need. And I finally explained that the MacBook and the iPod Touch/iPhone are simply tools—teaching tools like the white board or the overhead projector and by denying them, they were denying their fellow colleagues from having access to all the tools they might want to effect learning in the classroom. Eventually, I won over the business school and the agreed to adopt the program.

It was then the president said to me that I needed to sell this program the same way to each campus constituent. I had not done this at my previous job—the president just mandated it and there was lots of grumbling because of this. So I took my show on the road, and I got unanimous votes from the Academic Cabinet, Student Senate, Faculty Senate, University Cabinet, and the Board of Trustees. Just before heading to the meeting with Faculty Senate, I had called the president and asked if she wanted a vote from the Senate. She said, “Are you sure the vote will be for it?” I said, “No.” “Then I don’t want a vote,” she replied. However, the meeting was going so well, the vice president and business school faculty member said, “I make a motion that we enthusiastically support the recommendation to become a Apple campus.” The vote was unanimous.

Besides verbal buy-in to the program, we also had financial. While working with the CFO Richard Shickle, I explained to him some of my lessoned learned from previously trying to implement a program like this. One, I wanted the faculty to be have the laptops and mobile devices at the end of spring semester giving them the entire summer to become accustom to it. I also wanted paid training for the faculty who were going to be teaching First Year Seminar or any other traditional first year enrolled courses as we were rolling this out with the entering first year class. So we were planning on training 60 of the 200 faculty in the first year. Richard said that if I wanted to do that, I needed to come up with \$150K of seed money to support the faculty laptops and training prior to revenue coming in from tuition in the fall. I went to Academic Cabinet and said that I was willing to take the \$50K of my budget for technology and apply it to this program for this year. Were they willing to give of their operating budget. The Deans of Arts and Science, Conservatory, Business, Health Professions and Pharmacy all contributed \$10K. The president and I went to a donor who was very technology interested and asked for a 100K contribution—of which, he agreed to \$50K. Consequently we had the \$150,000, but we also had great buy in because every major academic entity had contributed, and the president and I also got donor support for the project.

In the Spring of 2009, we handed out 80 MacBooks and iPod Touches or iPhones to the faculty and had training sessions for all of them. In the Fall of 2009, we handed out over 800 MacBooks and iPod Touches or iPhones to all incoming students—undergraduate and graduate. We have continued to phase the program in year after year until we will be full ubiquitous by 2012. The program has gone better than I could have ever dreamed for a variety of reasons. First, I knew what some of the mistakes I had made in the past were and wanted to avoid them. Much of that dealt with getting faculty trained by outside experts and getting the new equipment in their hands well before they were expected to use it.

I learned how to build consensus and that it is really important to spend the time to work with all the stakeholders of a new project. Each group I met with refined the idea a bit more and made the program better. They also felt that they were heard and had some buy in. I also learned that it doesn't hurt to have people actually contribute money so they have greater buy in. Most importantly, I think the program has to come out of your mission and your strategic plan, and that is where you will get your greatest buy in.

Reflection Prompt: _____

Springboard 6 Tough Decisions Will Get Results

Richard B Artman, President
Viterbo University
900 Viterbo Drive
La Crosse, WI

"Perhaps the best professional advice given to me in preparation for assuming my first presidential position came during the New President's Institute offered by the Council of Independent Colleges in 2006-2007. I am currently in my 18 year as a university president and this counsel still rings true; and I repeat it when making presentations to new presidents. The speaker, President Robert Vogel of Wartburg College (Iowa), told our group of new presidents that "we are not paid to do our best." That bromide certainly caught our attention. Bob went on to say that our boards of trustees have hired us to get results. He said if we are unable to raise funds, unable to build positive relationships with the faculty, unable to hire and retain an effective senior management team, unable to handle the financial challenges that face us (etc.), then the trustees will inevitably find someone else who can. This is true at all levels of executive leadership. I often recall Bob's advice when faced with a difficult decision. I eat a few courage cookies and make the tough decisions that will get results."

Reflection Prompt: _____

Springboard 7 The Accreditation Challenge

Roslyn Clark Artis, J.D., Ed.D
Executive Vice President - Beckley Campus
Mountain State University
Beckley, WV

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."
~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

There is no greater test of academic leadership than an accreditation challenge. Generally, academia is a stimulating, curious, and fulfilling vocation. However, in the unfortunate event that the quality and credibility of an academic program is questioned by an accrediting body, the role of the Chief Academic Officer in transformed. He/she becomes almost singularly focused on corrective action. Often this can mean difficult personnel decisions. Further, and perhaps more important, the Chief Academic Officer must simultaneously lead, guide, direct, nurture, develop and inspire faculty, staff and even students whose confidence may have been shaken. I have unfortunately faced this challenge, and while certainly not an uplifting experience, I can say with certainty that I am better for having had it. Those who are scholars of human anatomy, or simply fitness enthusiasts, recognize that strength training is painful and exhausting. However, for most, the result of the process is a stronger and often more attractive physical appearance. The same is true in higher education. Accrediting bodies exist to ensure the quality of higher education. While criticism and/or sanction is painful, even grueling, those who embrace the process as an opportunity to improve are better as a result.

Reflection Prompt: _____

Springboard 8 Expect the Unexpected

Ms.) J. Leeanne Johnson, B.A., M.S., SEVIS PDSO & RO, Director
Office of International Student Services (OISS)
Regent University
Virginia Beach, VA

Our Spring, 2012 International Student Orientation had just ended and we were waiting for one new student in front of her Residence Hall for the Bowling Social my office (Office of International Student Services) had planned for the new students' first weekend in the United States! After waiting for quite a while, I went to check on another pick-up group, then I returned to check on this one student. I was delighted to see her standing in front of her Residence Hall this time, but she had a worried and puzzled look on her face. She indicated that she was not going to be able to go bowling because of "too much homework" (Law student). Then, she quickly began to ask me if she could use "regular" dish suds in the dishwasher. I explained that dishwashers require a special kind of soap for "automatic" machines. She began to laugh, quite a bit, while covering her mouth in typical Asian fashion, and explained that the reason she was so late for the pick-up was because she had to spend "a half hour" cleaning up all the dish suds from her new apartment after using regular soap in her dishwasher!!! We both had quite a nice long laugh, and I still can't help but laugh aloud every time I envision this!

Here are my "Lessons Learned":

- Be sure to check-up on new international students during the Orientation Shopping Trips, even if they have lived in the U.S. before and have told you they do not need any help with product selection!
- Make sure several international students review any special resource guides created by certain offices, like Student Housing!
- Realize that even though you might have been practicing in Student Services for over 20 years you should still expect the unexpected!

Reflection Prompt: _____

Springboard 9 Integrity

Kevin E. Drumm, PhD
President
Broome Community College
Binghamton, NY

I cannot emphasize enough the words of General Norman Schwarzkopf who when asked what were the top three traits of a good leader, replied: "Integrity! Integrity! And integrity!" If you are willing to compromise your integrity, you cannot be an effective college or university administrator. At least in my opinion. And I mean integrity in its broadest sense, including not only your own but that of your college's academic integrity. I have made decisions that I felt maintained my integrity while being entirely prepared to lose my job as a result. While enrollment pays most of the bills for my current college these days, I will not make decisions that undermine high academic standards just to grow enrollments. And when as a college president I felt that to continue in the role successfully I was going to have to compromise my own integrity to an unacceptable extent, I left in spite of the overall job itself and the day-to-day circumstances going very very well. In order for me to accomplish the next major strategic goal of that college, I was going to have to make too much compromise with a major outside private donor to get it done and so I left. This was in spite of the fact that my board was just fine with the compromises I would have needed to make. I wasn't!

The other piece of advice I would give you is to pick your battles wisely, whether with your faculty, outside constituencies, or your board or boss. You cannot win them all, but you should win the ones you pick if you pick wisely! You don't have the time to take them all on, so prioritize and pick your battles wisely. In today's highly politically charged environment you just cannot afford to lose any of the major battles you pick...

But you must be in one almost all the time to be successful in this politically charged and economically lean environment. No college is perfect and “all” consequential change comes hard fought in our line of work. If it doesn’t come hard for the big initiatives, you’re not picking the right things to focus on.

So, while integrity is the single most important personal trait you should bring to your job, picking your battles and then winning them is the single most important skill I suggest you bring to college administration.

Reflection Prompt: _____

Springboard 10

Administrative Influence: Power without Position*

Ed Klonoski, President
Charter Oak State College
New Britain, CT

There are two different sources of managerial influence. The most common comes from position. Team Leaders, Deans, Presidents are all assigned influence that is associated with their positions. But I have found that for most of my career I wielded influence that was larger than that associated with my position. In other words, I was able to drive the organization’s agenda while sitting in an administrative seat that offered little direct power.

The idea of managing through influence is a critical concept for both young administrators and senior ones. For the latter, it is important to make full use of your idea leaders. For the former, it is important not to miss the opportunities that leading through influence offer. It is a mistake to wait for organizational position to bestow power before exerting influence; such a position is only likely to arrive if you have first learned how to be influential.

So what does managing through influence look like? For me, it began by being dramatically more efficient and organized than my peers in small matters. Initially, I took pleasure in seeing how rapidly I could process administrative requests for information. When I was complimented (or teased) for my efficiency, I always gave the credit to the technology I was deploying. So instead of being seen as a toady, I was viewed as a technology guru. Second, I always volunteered to take the Minutes at any meeting I attended. This gave me control of the organization memory about whatever was “decided” at the meeting. Third, because I had good productivity software skills, I also volunteered to create spreadsheets, forms, web pages, etc. whenever such work needed to be accomplished. I continued producing these artifacts even when my administrative position had advanced. In these three ways, I gained influence beyond my status because I was the one doing the work that drove the agenda, and I was putting the decisions into language.

The key leaders were grateful for my support, and they often needed to talk to me about these various deliverables. And that was how I gained influence beyond my position.

Those follow-up conversations gave me one-on-one access and additional opportunities to make my arguments. Finally, I tried to bring organizational context to every conversation that I was invited to be part of. When everyone else was asking questions about how an action would affect them or how it could be deployed, I was asking questions about how it would advance our mission or help us achieve our goals. This approach cut both ways. Sometimes such questions helped push a leader’s agenda, but often they did just the opposite. Asking a question about how an action will serve the published goals of an organization forces the conversation in a productive direction, even if the leader resists. It is also the sort of question that ought to be asked by the boss, so over time the group begins to expect that you will bring a “leader’s” perspective to conversations. From here it is a much shorter jump to positional influence (i.e. promotion to a leadership chair).

Reflection Prompt: _____

Springboard 11

The Importance of Education

Carole A. McCoy, DPA
President, Jefferson Community College
Watertown, NY

When I headed off to college at the age of 18 I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. I was miserable on campus and hated living in the dorm. At the end of my first year I dropped out. I got a job as a directory assistance operator, got my own apartment, bought a brand new car, and thought I was set. I wanted independence and now I had it. However, it didn't take very long for me to realize that the \$98.50 I was making a week and more importantly the lack of challenge associated with looking up telephone numbers 8 hours a day were not a recipe for happiness. I couldn't picture doing what I was doing for the rest of my life. So I worked full-time and went back to school part-time flitting from school to school based upon where I was living and who I was dating at the time. I didn't have a degree plan but at least I realized I had to get an education. I took a variety of courses in a variety of programs at a variety of colleges which of course did not result in any credential. It did though result in a lot of learning and the opportunity to meet my husband.

After a few years of working I was extremely fortunate to be accepted into a computer programmer basic training program at Mountain Bell Telephone Company (pre AT&T divestiture). I had a good career as an information systems professional at Mountain Bell and then moved on to IT positions at several other organizations over the years. I rose through the ranks despite never having completed my bachelor's degree. But eventually I hit a wall and could not go any further without my degree. Again I realized that what I was doing was not a recipe for happiness. With lots of encouragement from my husband I finally got serious about completing my bachelor's degree and then decided I would get an MBA. Doing this while working full-time and having a spouse and child was tough. I can't tell you how many times I wanted to kick myself for not getting my education when I was young (and my parents were paying for it).

Once I finished my MBA I again thought I was set for life. Little did I know that I would accept a senior IT position at a community college and fall in love with the community college mission. For the first time in a long time I felt I was exactly where I belonged. My job responsibilities at the community college expanded far beyond IT and once again I felt I needed to get more education. I also started thinking about trying to be a community college president. I applied for and was accepted into a doctor of public administration program at the University of Baltimore. I completed the program and shortly afterward accepted a position as a community college president. I tell people all the time you never know where your life is going to go but that getting an education is imperative. Life is a winding road and I certainly couldn't see where mine was going to lead. My husband and I sometimes sit and reflect on the path we have taken during our 35 year marriage and ask ourselves did we ever picture where we would wind up. The answer every time is no. I try to picture my life had I completed my education right out of high school. I know it wouldn't be the same. I believe my life is richer because of the winding path I took and how much I came to value higher education. I still haven't stopped taking college classes. I'm back to taking the ones that appeal to me and look like fun. A couple of years ago I took Latin. This year I'm taking tax accounting. As I said, life is a winding road. Who knows where it will lead?

Reflection Prompt: _____

3. * Participants wrote the title. Other titles were developed from the contribution.

4. Note: Readers interested in other personal experiences written by successful administrators are referred to the following articles: (a) Springboards to Reflection: Higher Education Administrators Share Experiences Volume I (Synnott, 2011a) and (b) Real Life Lessons in Leadership Part 1 (Synnott (2011b).

5. References

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