

Grassroots Leadership

Making the Invisible Visible



Janine is a biologist who has watched students struggle in her classes for years—particularly those who cannot overcome math deficiencies. Few institutional supports exist, and she has no place to send students for additional academic assistance. After talking to several other colleagues, she realizes the issue is prevalent in other science majors. Janine discovers some helpful teaching techniques and new texts she can use with students, and she begins to offer an informal math support skills group that gains great popularity. Students tell her she is fundamentally changing their understanding of math. Yet this effort begins to create a great deal of additional work. She speaks with her department chair about getting a course release to offer the support group, but he feels that his hands are tied because of tight finances and refuses. Janine organizes several colleagues to contact the chair to discuss the importance of the support group. After a few months of communication by colleagues and students, the chair accedes and temporarily allows her a course release. In the meantime, Janine sets out to get broader campus support for math support skills. She collects data (pre- and posttests related to performance) in her support group to demonstrate the impact of her tutoring efforts. She presents these data to the academic senate and administration. Within the year, a math support center opens. Although resources are temporary, if the center demonstrates outcomes similar to her support group, campus administrators agree to provide ongoing funds. Over the next two years, Janine works with the center director to set up an advisory board of faculty and to gain campus support, and she collects data on the efficacy of the center. Many faculty and staff talk about Janine's work with pride—she identified a real need and developed a change that made students more successful. While this problem had existed for years on campus, it had never been addressed and maybe never would have been without Janine's efforts. This book is about people like Janine—bottom-up leaders who make important changes that often go largely unnoticed, unacknowledged, and often unsupported. Greater understanding of people like Janine may lead to more support for bottom-up changes on college campuses that can improve student learning and college completion.

Leadership remains one of the most important topics across a range of fields because studies continuously demonstrate that the success and well-being of any institution or society depend on the functionality, effectiveness, and promotion of leaders and leadership (Conger & Benjamin, 1999). Traditionally, leadership research has focused on individuals in positions of power, such as presidents and CEOs, and has seen leadership as an individual attribute (Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006a).¹ But, in the last twenty years, a variety of scholars have proposed that leadership is not synonymous with authority and have examined the role of other individuals within the organization and their contributions to institutional operations and change (Astin & Leland, 1991; Kanter, 1983; Meyerson, 2003; Pearce & Conger, 2003). These newer definitions of leadership also attempt to distinguish the work of managers and leaders because often the work of managers (budgeting, hiring, decision making) has become synonymous with leadership (Bass, 2009). Instead, the nonhierarchical views of leadership have defined and understood leadership to be distinctive from management (although the two are not mutually exclusive) and involved creating change (Astin & Leland, 1991; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Komives & Wagner, 2009; Pearce & Conger, 2003). Furthermore, leadership has expanded to be considered a process that involves groups and is not executed only by individuals. Over time, departing from traditional, hierarchical, and authority-based models, new models of leadership have emerged, such as team-based, shared, and distributed leadership (Astin & Leland, 1991; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Komives & Wagner, 2009; Pearce & Conger, 2003). Team and shared models identify and examine the role of individuals outside authority in leadership and consider leadership a collective process that is working to create change (Pearce & Conger, 2003). In our research, we defined *leadership* as an effort by groups or individuals to create change, drawing on these newer definitions of leadership that distinguished management from leadership and did not assume that authority was synonymous with leadership.

The business and nonprofit literatures are replete with texts that describe ways to improve team-based forms of leadership and create more ownership among employees and further innovation within organizations (Bass, 2009; Pearce & Conger, 2003). Within shared leadership, leadership is broadly distributed among a set of individuals and decentralized to groups of leaders who act in the role traditionally reserved for supervisors or managers (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Senge, 1990). Also, leadership may be viewed as bidirectional between what have traditionally been called leaders and followers. Both downward and upward hierarchical influence is examined. Traditional models of leadership focus

only on the downward influence of leaders on subordinates and also focus on a single individual in authority who plays a leadership role.

A variety of research studies support the need to expand leadership from the hands of a few leaders to a broader group of stakeholders in organizations (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Pearce & Conger, 2003). In fact, Pearce and Conger demonstrate that studies over the past 100 years have pointed in this direction but that the overwhelming bias toward heroic, individual, hierarchical leaders prevented scholars and practitioners from conceptualizing and adopting the outcomes of these numerous studies. In other words, the efficacy of involving multiple individuals outside positions of authority and working in collectives kept emerging in studies as related to important leadership outcomes such as problem solving, change, innovation, and strategic decision making. Outcomes supported by shared leadership include increased problem-solving abilities, greater creativity, organizational effectiveness, effectiveness of groups, more motivation and dedication by member of leadership groups, satisfaction with decision making, greater social integration and more positive relationships within organizations, and collective efficacy (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Most team-based, shared, and distributed leadership models expand who is considered a leader but still connect the team-based leadership to the agenda and direction established by those in positions of authority. For example, people in positions of authority form teams for their purposes and goals. This book is rooted in definitions of and conceptions of shared leadership, which expand definitions of leadership to include a greater number of people, to conceptualize it as a collective, and to include those not in authority positions. This book also takes a significant departure from this tradition. We examine bottom-up leadership that can be largely independent of top-down efforts. We explain this departure from shared leadership later in this chapter.

While the corporate and nonprofit literature has shifted emphasis quite dramatically over the years, the educational literature, particularly in higher education, has been slow to move to team-based and non-authority-based models of leadership (Kezar et al., 2006a).² Academics may perceive that the tradition of shared governance³ reflects a shared leadership process on college campuses and that expanding notions of leadership is unnecessary (Birnbaum, 1992; Cohen & March, 1974). Yet, mostly a traditional authority-based notion and individual-focused notion of leadership are reflected in the higher education literature (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989; Kezar et al., 2006a). Higher education scholarship on leadership is geared toward enhancing the effectiveness of individuals in positions of authority: college presidents,

provosts, deans, and department chairs (samples include Birnbaum, 1992; Fisher & Koch, 1996, 2004; Fisher, Tack & Wheeler, 1988; Kerr & Gade, 1986; Lucas, 1994). A plethora of books and articles equates presidential leadership with the notion of leadership on campus. In fact, Cohen and March's book *Leadership and Ambiguity* (1974) questions the president's authority on campus as leader, and at the time it was published many considered it blasphemous. Twenty years of debate followed the book's publication because it challenged this fundamental assumption (Bensimon et al., 1989; Kerr & Gade, 1986). In a similar, more subtle attempt to make a departure from the top-down approaches to leadership, Birnbaum's (1992) book on academic leadership focuses on the prominent role of presidents who should recognize other campus stakeholders to be successful leaders.

It is surprising that the leadership literature is focused on those in positions of authority given that the organizational literature in higher education documents faculty, as professionals, having autonomy in the workplace, defining much of their own working environment, and developing mechanisms such as shared governance to have a voice (and presumably play a leadership role) within the institution (Baldrige et al., 1977; Birnbaum, 1988; Clark, 1983; Duryea, 1973). For example, Clark's extensive study of college and university organization notes that there are dual authority structures, with administrators having hierarchical and faculty having professional and expert-based power and authority. Also, the overriding emphasis in the leadership literature on the power of presidents and boards seems problematic given the many constraints and limitations on their power over faculty- and professional-based power, the influence of departments that have delegated decision making on many campuses, collective bargaining, and even external groups such as accreditators or state policy makers (Birnbaum, 1988; Clark, 1983; Cohen & March, 1974).⁴

In a review of the leadership literature, Bensimon, Neumann, and Birnbaum (1989) call attention to the lack of connection between the organizational and leadership literatures in higher education. They argue that leadership plays out differently than is often presented because of these distinctive characteristics of higher education—faculty autonomy and professional status, academic freedom, dual authority structures, and the like. The argument made by Bensimon and her coauthors (1989) builds off Cohen and March's (1974) leadership research that found presidents to be constrained in their authority by the structure and organizational context of higher education, particularly within the research university context, where faculty have more power than in other sectors. Cohen and March document the issues of faculty autonomy, departmental delegated authority, shared governance structures such as committees

and senates, and even the roles of boards and external constituencies who can assert their power. Given these multiple influences and sources of authority, individuals such as presidents are constrained. Cohen and March also point to the ambiguity of goals within higher education pursuing teaching, research and service missions, and the complex web or structure of universities with the proliferation of divisions without a simple bureaucracy but instead a professional bureaucracy that makes lines of authority diffuse and unclear and somewhat chaotic. Cohen and March labeled these various characteristics and constraints as an organized anarchy.

While later scholars have debated the relevance of this characterization for other institutional types beyond research universities (Birnbaum, 1988; Kerr & Gade, 1986), the work is significant for relating organizational context and structure to the process of leadership, which had largely been decontextualized. Bensimon and her coauthors (1989) argue that top-down leadership models used within corporations were not a strong fit for higher education with its unique organizational structure. While much of the leadership literature that followed did not accept the challenge posed by Bensimon and her colleagues to reconceive leadership in higher education as distinctive from corporate, top-down models and to contextualize leadership research within our best knowledge about organizations (ambiguous goal, professional bureaucracy, dual authority structures), Birnbaum and Neumann, writing individually and together, created works that were embedded within this new perspective on studying leadership (Kezar et al., 2006a). A recent review of the leadership literature in higher education by Kezar and her coauthors documents that the literature remains mostly devoid of the organizational context, maintains the top-down authority-based view of leadership, and sees leadership as an individual, not collective, process or phenomenon. We point out these important pieces that deviate from the overarching trends in the literature as we are building on this tradition of departing from a top-down view of leadership and authority and conceptualizing leadership as shaped by higher education organizational theory and research.

Another book that takes a significant departure and has examined team-based forms of leadership on college campus is Bensimon and Neumann's (1993) *Redesigning Collegiate Leadership*. While the research focuses on presidential cabinets and still connects leadership to authority, the book focuses on how higher education leadership should be more collective and team based given the organization of higher education with professional staff, shared governance, and the need to draw on expertise throughout the organization. Yet, Bensimon and Neumann's book is important as it was the first in higher education to consider

leadership to be a collective process. In recent years, a few studies in higher education have begun to examine leadership from beyond the perspective of those in positions of authority. Helen Astin and Carol Leland's (1991) study of leaders in the women's movement examined faculty who created major changes on college campuses. Their research challenged conventional notions of leadership—leadership as the use of power by authority figures to create a change defined by executives—and reframed leadership as a process of collective action by individuals throughout an organization who use unique strategies such as empowerment and consciousness raising to facilitate change. Astin and Leland demonstrate how women who were not in positions of power created significant change on college campuses and played important leadership roles.

More recently, Lynn Safarik (2003) and Jeni Hart (2005, 2007) have demonstrated how women's studies or centers for women have played leadership roles from their "marginal" status outside the circles of power on campus: transforming the curriculum, diversifying faculty and staff, and changing the climate of college campuses. Also, a recent National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) publication (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2004) focused on the leadership role student affairs staff played in facilitating civil rights movements on college campuses. Finally, Wergin's (2007) edited book on "leadership in place" argues for the importance of faculty leadership outside formal positions such as senate president or department chair. Collectively, all of these studies suggest that important leadership does happen among faculty and staff and outside those in positions of authority on campus. However, we know very little about this leadership beyond these few historical or single-campus case studies. *What we are lacking is a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, role, strategies, and practices of bottom-up or grassroots leaders in educational settings. We also know very little about how bottom-up and top-down efforts work in concert.*

Grassroots leaders are individuals who do not have formal positions of authority, are operating from the bottom up, and are interested in and pursue organizational changes that often challenge the status quo of the institution. Grassroots leadership is defined in social movement literature as the stimulation of social change or the challenge of the status quo by those who lack formal authority, delegated power, or "institutionalized methods for doing so" (Wilson, 1973, p. 32). Grassroots leadership is a nonhierarchical and often collective and noninstitutionalized process. Leaders are typically volunteers and not hired or employed to lead efforts. Grassroots leaders are distinctive from those in positions of authority who tend to have a structure in place to enact leadership through rewards, establishing formal positions and responsibilities, and delegating

authority. Those in positions of authority also have a formal network of people who are conducting the same work. Grassroots leaders typically have to create their own structure, network, and support systems.

What does this type of leadership look like? Similar to Janine in the opening vignette, grassroots leaders might be a set of chemistry professors, who after realizing that students are graduating without an understanding of environmental problems come together to devise and advocate for fundamental changes in undergraduate education. Another example might be two staff members who recognize that gay and lesbian students are not safe on campus and then develop a resource center to help those students be successful and feel included. A grassroots leader can also be the assistant professor who decides to create awareness and develop solutions for helping custodial staff after he learns that their recently reduced benefits program compromises their rights, as well as campus service. These are all examples of changes occurring on college campuses that are not well documented. We do not have an appreciation of the various change initiatives and agendas of bottom-up leaders, strategies of grassroots leaders, obstacles that they face, or ways they maintain resiliency. In the spirit of Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* (2003), which describes everyday people; those without power and authority in U.S. history, this book will make visible a different set of activities that are largely invisible to many. By being brought to light, these activities can be recognized, explored, and fostered. Also, some may wonder why this activity is considered grassroots leadership and not just doing their job. But, as these examples demonstrate, the work that these individuals take up is above and beyond their normal positions. They have a personal commitment and passion to help create a change that is often not part of their normal activities, and, in the rare situation where activity was part of their duties, they fulfilled it in a way that went beyond a normal person's sense of obligation or duty.

It is important to note how grassroots leadership differs from two other related phenomena, social movements and faculty and staff activism. In Chapter Two, we define other key terms and concepts important to the study. In this introductory chapter, we focus on developing an understanding of grassroots leadership and related terms. Social movements are mass mobilization around an issue that has gained public attention. In contrast, grassroots leadership is local and community based, typically with little visibility. Social movements and grassroots leadership are highly related, but social movements tend to have large-scale constituent groups and often have a central source of organization or power (Wittig, 1996). A social movement often originates out of grassroots leadership efforts, and grassroots efforts can turn into

broader social movements. Therefore, they share many of the same concepts. Yet, in the literature, these are distinctive phenomena. Graduate student unionization is an example of an issue that has moved from grassroots organizing to a social movement that operates beyond local boundaries. Currently, graduate student unionization is being considered on several college campuses and is regularly covered in the higher education news. Several scholars have studied social movements in higher education like graduate student unionization—notably Rhoades and Rhoads (2005)—yet grassroots leadership has received much less attention, although it is a much more prevalent phenomenon.

Faculty and staff activism heavily overlaps with grassroots leadership, and the terms are quite synonymous (Astin & Leland, 1991; Hart, 2007). Activism is typically differentiated from leadership in using noninstitutionalized practices and “outside channels” to make change, while leadership tends to use institutionalized and inside channels. The minor difference between activism and grassroots leadership, we offer, is that faculty and staff activists are often willing to lose their jobs and use more confrontational tactics; meanwhile, our study focuses on individuals who typically would not characterize themselves as activists (although a small number did use the term *activists*). Also, much of the activism that has occurred over the last twenty years has focused on faculty or staff rights and is captured more under the umbrella of faculty unionization (Rhoades, 1998). Unionization is a form of leadership and can work to alter institutional conditions and create change. However, our study looked more broadly at grassroots leadership than at unionization efforts.

We do not see leadership and activism as necessarily distinctive and separate processes and follow the definition offered by Astin and Leland (1991). Their definition of *leadership* connects and makes the case for activism and grassroots efforts (typically not seen as leadership) to be conceptualized as leadership. In doing so, they attempt to legitimize grassroots efforts and activism and to question traditional notions of leadership tied to authority. However, this effort can also cause confusion as terms seen as antithetical in some circles—*leadership* and *activism*—are now seen as overlapping. We believe that excluding leadership efforts merely because they emerge outside formal authority and placing a different name on it—activism—can be marginalizing. In this book, we use *activism* and *grassroots leadership* interchangeably to demonstrate that we see these as similar terms, not as distinctive from one another. In fact, in our study, the distinction between activism and leadership was not as helpful for separating grassroots leadership and activism as faculty and staff used both inside and outside channels and institutionalized and noninstitutionalized practices. Yet the one minor

distinction we did find is that faculty and staff were more tempered and felt the term *activist* fit better for an individual willing to risk his or her job for the change.

This book fills this gap in understanding by presenting the results of a three-year case study involving interviews with hundreds of faculty and staff grassroots leaders across almost every sector of higher education. Using the methodology described in Chapter Three, the research team identified five typical campuses of varying type (liberal arts college, community college, research university, public regional college, and technical college) and followed different change initiatives ranging from diversity to innovative pedagogies (like active, problem-based, and service learning), environmentalism, staff equity, child care centers, wellness, student success, campus and community partnerships, anti-capitalist movements, immigration status, and democratic governance initiatives. While this book focuses on postsecondary educational leadership, the study has implications for the general study of leadership and organizations. Certainly, we acknowledge that grassroots leadership is not new and that this type of activity has been taking place within organizations since they began. However, we are suggesting that this leadership goes undocumented, and, like Zinn (2003), we hope to make this leadership more visible. However, we do not want to seem ahistorical in highlighting this activity now as if it is new and has not been part of organizational life.

WHY GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP NOW?

A variety of conditions make a study of faculty and staff grassroots leadership particularly timely. To begin, various scholars argue that campus management and operations have become increasingly influenced by business and corporate strategies in recent years (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Some refer to this trend as “new managerialism,” and others talk about the growing neoliberal philosophy on campuses and resultant academic capitalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Neoliberalism is the ideology that privatization (being run by corporations and business) of public operations that have traditionally been run by government, such as medicine or prisons, better serves the public interest (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Neoliberalism leads to new managerialism, where more corporate or business practices are adopted by nonprofit and governmental organizations and academic capitalism where campuses focus on revenue generation, marketing, branding, and other business practices.⁵ The term *academic capitalism* is defined as “institutional and professorial market or market-like efforts to secure

external moneys” (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997, p. 8). Thus, based on the more businesslike principles brought to higher education, personnel at the university are praised and rewarded for bringing in external money. Slaughter and Rhoades demonstrate how academic capitalism flourished in the 1980s and 1990s as government support for education declined, as corporate interest in new products and processes coincided with the university’s search for increased funding, and as the government sought to enhance national competitiveness by linking postsecondary education to business innovation. New managerialism and academic capitalism are happening across all institutions of higher education, although academic capitalism is intensified within the research university sector, specifically through capitalizing on research patents, grants, and new technologies. Other higher education sectors are engaging in academic capitalism albeit in different ways. Community colleges, for example, are raising external funds by creating training and programs for corporations (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

While the terms scholars use to describe the changes in higher education vary from *academic capitalism* to *managerialism* and *neoliberalism*, the patterns are the same and suggest that trustees, presidents, and other administrators are increasingly centralizing decisions (away from input from faculty and staff—part of shared governance) and more unilaterally managing higher education institutions as corporations. This pattern away from shared governance has been documented in national data and discussed in the book *The American Faculty*. Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) found that, in the last ten years, faculty report less involvement in campuswide governance and decision making, that the range of areas they have input on has declined (for example, little or no input on budget or strategy), and that they have less influence—in general—on campus. Faculty report the least satisfaction since data started being collected forty years ago (with input into decisions and influence). Faculty work appears to have changed in recent years; faculty have become excluded from campuswide governance structures such as committees and ad hoc task forces, and fewer decisions are being delegated to departments at most institutional types (Benjamin & Carroll, 1998; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). While administrators (and others) may still discuss the importance of shared governance, the trend data and research demonstrate that it has declined on campuses in recent years. Faculty find themselves with fewer avenues for having a substantive voice in campus decision making and a narrower range of topics (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006).⁶ What scholars document is not just a decline in formal authority structures like faculty senates but that the varied mechanisms of shared governance from committees, departments, and even individual autonomy to make decisions about one’s institution are being

altered, diminishing their role in leadership (Rhoades, 1998; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). The trend away from faculty participation in governance is happening across all sectors of higher education but is more pronounced in less prestigious universities (Rhoades, 1998; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Given the potential breakdown of shared governance suggested by these trend data (including faculty senates but also committees and departmental decision-making structures), we need to examine other forms of leadership and change occurring on campuses.

In addition to a more managerial work environment, Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) argue that academic capitalism has also changed the nature of staff and faculty roles. To increase revenues, campuses are encouraging faculty and staff to seek grants, contracts, partnerships with industry, endowment funds, and spin-off companies (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). For faculty, some research suggests that the focus on marketlike behaviors has resulted in an erosion of the focus on teaching and service work (Fairweather, 1996). Given that the nature of faculty and staff work is arguably fundamentally changing—particularly at research universities—it is important to examine the potential for employees to play a leadership role in other ways. Does academic capitalism hinder leadership due to its focus on external grants and revenue-seeking behavior, or can it be used to foster leadership? Faculty and staff who are successful in obtaining grants and outside funding have greater autonomy and managerial discretion. Could this be a source of leadership? Does this differ by institutional type? We hoped that our study could capture the ways that faculty and staff practice leadership within this new academic capitalist environment. Most studies have focused on leadership exclusively as part of shared governance processes; the shifting academic environment provides an opportunity to examine leadership among faculty and staff in a new way.

Furthermore, several decades of research document the changing nature of the professoriate to a more contingent faculty (see O'Meara, LaPointe Terosky, & Neumann, 2008, for a review). Nationally, only one-third of the faculty are currently in tenure track appointments, and three out of four new appointments or hires are now contingent faculty. Rhoades (1998) documented that the move to contingent faculty has also led to faculty becoming managed professionals. Previously, faculty contributed to decision making and had autonomy to make decisions about their work environment. Now Rhoades argues that faculty, as managed professionals, are not considered leaders on campus but are workers with professional expertise. The faculty are increasingly seeing policies and practices put in place that limit their flexibility and choices around work—increased number of courses, defined committee work, prohibitions against outside work or consulting, and much more strict

role definition, for example (Rhoades, 1998). As Rhoades notes, “Administrators’ contractual discretion to manage faculty is extensive and has grown over recent years” (p. 257). Due to the diminishing autonomy, Rhoades argues that faculty also contribute less to shaping their work conditions and are increasingly less involved in campus governance, even admissions or curricular decisions. For example, on-line courses are often packaged courses, so that faculty must deliver a standardized curriculum. Non-tenure track faculty often have the major responsibility for delivering this new on-line curriculum with no input in the process. Moreover, the rapid budget cuts that occurred due to the national (and some may argue international) economic crisis of 2008 forced colleges around the country to start laying off staff and contingent faculty and enacting furloughs of tenure track faculty to reduce overall expenses. We will describe the decline in shared governance, rise of academic capitalism, and changing nature of the faculty in more detail in Chapter Six.

All this research and data suggest that a shift has taken place where faculty are no often longer considered part of the formal leadership structure of many institutions. Are there other avenues for their input? We hoped that grassroots leadership might represent a counterforce to the diminishing autonomy that weakens shared governance and reduces faculty input. We also wanted to examine the leadership potential of contingent faculty. Often, because their contracts make contingents the least autonomous of the entire faculty, it is assumed that they cannot play a leadership role (and they are often actively excluded from departmental and campuswide decision making); they cannot voice their opinions openly. Yet, contingent faculty often have a wealth of experience outside academe. The contingent faculty vary tremendously in profile. Some have entered straight out of graduate school, but many enter after years of work in industry, corporations, nonprofits, and other professions, such as the arts. They often have a wealth of experience that could be a source of leadership on campuses. For example, contingent faculty may have more appropriate backgrounds (such as in community organizing, leading corporate boards, and managing large teams) for playing a role in campus leadership and governance. Rhoades (1998) suggests that campuses face a challenge that needs grassroots leadership:

The challenge faculty now face is whether they manage to work in concert as a collectivity to more proactively redirect the academy and whether they can reorganize themselves with other production workers who are currently at the margins or the organization (staff), before faculty themselves are increasingly reorganized to the margins of the academic enterprise. (p. 279)

At this key moment posed by Rhoades, will there be leadership to fill this void?⁷ We believe that faculty and staff grassroots leadership

could do so and is an example of what O'Meara and her coauthors (2008) call the "counternarrative" of individuals who have "agency to navigate institutional barriers and put effort, will, intent, and talent into their work" (p. 165). Faculty grassroots leadership illustrates the deep commitments of faculty and promotes a renewed sense of professionalism that emerges out of the changing nature of the professoriate. We agree with O'Meara and her colleagues that recent observations of the academic world construct faculty (and we would add staff) as having little or no agency and thus reinforce disempowerment. We hope that the stories we present provide agency and hope for faculty and staff who have found themselves increasingly without formal avenues for voice and leadership. We believe it is important that faculty and staff not give in to this new environment of being managed professionals with limited agency. We think that we are reaching a tipping point where we need to provide greater agency within the academic professions; otherwise talented individuals will seek other areas and leave the professoriate and professional academic careers. This is not to say, though, that some faculty, particularly tenured senior faculty, do not feel and have agency and voice on many campuses, but this is an increasingly small group. We do not mean to suggest that non-tenure track faculty cannot have voice or agency, but we acknowledge the potential constraints they face.

CONTRIBUTIONS OR BENEFITS OF FACULTY AND STAFF LEADERS ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Perhaps the most important question that we hope to address in this introductory chapter is why grassroots leadership efforts are important. Without an understanding of the contribution of grassroots leaders, it is unlikely that readers will feel compelled to read about their stories and experience and try to encourage more of this activity. In this section, we hope to demonstrate eight ways that faculty and staff grassroots leaders may fundamentally add to the campus community and its overall leadership efforts: providing balance to revenue and prestige seeking, acting as a conscience, creating needed changes, developing complementary leadership, building greater equity, improving relationships, advancing student learning, and modeling alternative forms of leadership.

First, grassroots faculty and staff leaders might balance the corporate, revenue- or prestige-seeking model of top-down leadership present on many campuses. In the last twenty years, campuses have become increasingly corporate in their governance and management styles (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). College presidents, once intellectual leaders on campus, are now focused more exclusively on fund-raising,

marketing and public relations, and government and external relationships (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Due to various increasing pressures, administrators tend to focus on the bottom line and may be less likely to help create dialogue around a quality teaching and learning environment. Instead, they are likely to focus on moving up in the rankings rather than on diversity, equity, or teaching innovations. Again, administrators are pressured by external forces and ideologies (like neoliberalism); we do not see them as necessarily embracing the revenue- and prestige-seeking model. As noted earlier, in the move toward a more corporate model of campus operations, shared governance—which once provided an opportunity for faculty and staff to participate in decision making and leadership—has increasingly been deemphasized on many campuses. This trend again suggests the limitation of shared leadership approaches and the need for alternative views for creating campus change. While some administrators are happy with this direction (the move away from shared governance) and like the expediency it provides, other leaders are concerned and have felt pressured by boards and trustees to centralize decision making and move away from shared governance. For these leaders, supporting faculty and staff grassroots leadership is a way to reinvigorate a sense of bottom-up input on campuses where shared governance has been diminished or no longer exists. While some boards and trustees no longer feel obligated to include faculty in decision making, presidents and other administrative leaders can balance the corporate and revenue model present on many campuses by fostering and supporting grassroots leadership. Chapter Twelve in this book will focus specifically on ways leaders in positions of power can support grassroots leadership efforts.

Second, grassroots leaders on campus may act as the conscience for the organization—often bringing up ethical issues. Many of the change initiatives championed by faculty and staff relate to underlying ethical dilemmas found broadly in society and campus life; for example, faculty and staff working to create rights and opportunities for campus custodial staff who receive inequitable treatment. In our society and within its institutions, we continue to wrestle with how to properly treat certain groups and provide them a living wage and basic privileges of employment. Grassroots leaders often champion particular ethical issues in society such as climate change, immigration rights, health care reform, and access to college. Most importantly, these grassroots leaders help to create dialogues so that people became more aware of ethical issues. Through the dialogues and conversation, grassroots leaders create an ethical voice and presence on campus. Increasingly, top-down leaders who once took a position on moral and ethical issues are not taking a

stand or giving voice to these issues on campus. One reason is that leaders may be skittish of jeopardizing important relationships with outside stakeholders who may be important to the institution's well-being, such as key policy makers or donors. As a result, many administrators in positions of power are hesitant to go on record with any moral or ethical position, or they may not have the time given the crush of demands. Furthermore, board members and trustees may come from an opposing point of view on an ethical position. Conflicts with those who have higher levels of authority (boards and trustees) and their direct reports may arise if leaders make their views public, such as on the value of affirmative action. This conflict is another reason that top-down leaders might support grassroots faculty and staff leaders. Grassroots leaders can articulate a moral and ethical stance that once characterized college campuses.

Third, grassroots leaders create important and needed changes, as noted in the opening vignette, which focused on the biology professor working to help students succeed. Campuses need to demonstrate that they are responsive to external mandates of policy makers for change. Many of the efforts of faculty and staff grassroots leaders respond to changes proposed by policy makers: developing greener and more sustainable campuses, becoming more student centered, using alternative pedagogies, and creating greater access to and success on college campuses for historically underrepresented groups. Therefore, it is important to highlight these important changes, which often go unrecognized because they are not part of campus strategic plans. Also, because the administration was not a part of these changes and the changes are not part of campus public relations, there is little notice or support for these efforts. An unfortunate mind-set exists where people praise administrators for their individual efforts but not for the leadership they create or foster in others on campus. The focus on individual efforts can create a more competitive or adversarial environment, which prevents the fostering of others' work. Also, formal leaders may not promote and make public important changes for which they are unable to take credit. Various external stakeholders would appreciate many of the grassroots changes, but grassroots efforts are largely unknown beyond campuses. We are not suggesting that administrators are egotistical and unwilling to share the praise. Instead, there is a system in place that is supported by trustees, legislators, and others; that system promotes the idea that heroic authority figures should be the ones to make change. If trustees and others could be encouraged to see leadership more collectively, this would allow senior leaders to act differently, acknowledging and supporting grassroots leaders on campus.