



## University leaders require certain skills

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Being a leader in today's complex, fast-paced global economy requires a vast array of knowledge and skills.

I believe most of the senior managers I have worked with in the private sector over the last 30 years would affirm this as relatively self-evident. I am also convinced that many of my colleagues in academia do not have the capacity to grasp such a simple concept.

Before rising to the ranks of even mid-management, those aspiring to lead others in business and industry are expected to have extensive training and professional development, in addition to several years of supervisory experience encompassing progressively higher levels of responsibility.

In higher education, however, we continue to cling to this antiquated notion that anyone can assume a key leadership position simply by having been in the classroom for a few semesters and/or attending an abbreviated "boot camp" designed to get them up-to-speed.

After all, a degree in cardio-herpetology obviously qualifies you to run a modern university, right?

The reality is it doesn't. Bogus arguments about how academic culture is qualitatively "different" than other types of organizational environments notwithstanding, a primary reason college and universities are experiencing such immense difficulties these days is because we have too many leaders who have no clue what they are doing.

College administration is the one profession where anyone with a degree in virtually anything thinks he or she is imminently capable of meeting the requirements of the job. Moreover, these same folks routinely denigrate those who have made the systematic study of administration the focus of their educational and career aspirations.

Running a university requires competencies most faculty simply do not possess. It's high time we stopped romanticizing about a bygone era and started demanding that our leaders have degrees related to the responsibilities they are being asked to assume.

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