

Preface

Higher education institutions are, more so than other organizations, deeply complex, and present a unique challenge to their leaders and administrators. Those charged with governance in higher education must deal with a great diversity of stakeholders ranging from students and oftentimes their parents, through to community members, accrediting bodies, research bodies, and political leaders at local, state and national level. Adding to the vast array of stakeholders is the turbulence of economic uncertainty, globalization, competitive pressures and rapid social change. Even the most competent of leaders and administrators are likely taken aback by the enormity and difficulty of higher education leadership.

To complicate matters further, higher education is, at present, in its most tumultuous state. It is under extreme pressure to evolve away from long standing rigid structures and rules. Leaders and administrators, at all levels, if they are to successfully lead higher education, must not be merely reactive but rather must be proactive, visionary, and flexible.

There is no room for less than competent leaders or those who abuse their power and undermine trust. Yet, governance in higher education remains problematic. Commonly, meritorious faculty members ascend to position of power, but their ascension is based on accomplishment outside of leadership thus, despite considerable expert knowledge, may lack in the capabilities required for successful administration in higher education settings.

Shared governance is at the very core of the academy, but the reality is that, all too often, the polarization of power to administrative roles leads to decision making which is removed some distance from researchers and educators. Increased collaboration, open communication and the closer integration of theory and practice are positive moves for the future of higher education leadership and administration. The unique complexities of higher education call for governance founded on thoughtful consideration of leadership practices, theory and styles, and consideration of how these impact on organizational behavior. Embedded in a rapidly changing society, the future of higher education leadership and administration is necessarily dynamic and demands ongoing discussion to fuel continuous improvement.

Whilst it is important to bring forward leadership and administration of higher education to discussion, it cannot be done so without simultaneously bringing to the fore a discussion of ethics, and in particular of the ethical challenges in higher education. Ethics and higher education are inextricable. Ethics permeate every aspect of higher education, from research, engagement with community and industry, learning and teaching and the activities of students themselves. Ethics are at the very foundation of the academy's long-standing goal of knowledge production for the good of society. Furthermore, leadership cannot be fully discussed without also addressing ethics.

A brief survey of news reports and literature around ethics in higher education paints an increasingly grim view of ethics in higher education. Ethical ‘infringements’ by various leaders in higher education are in the news much more often than would be desirable. There is talk of how competition and struggle for institutional survival is changing the nature of higher education, with phrases like ‘holy dollar’ and ‘cash cows’ appearing much too frequently in news related to what appear to be less than ethical practices in universities. But the mission of this book is not to paint a grim picture of higher education nor of ethics in higher education. Rather, it is a call to bring ethics to the fore. It is a call to engage in productive reflection, and discussion around the ethical nature of leadership and administration in higher education. It is a call to bring ethics in higher education out of the shadows into the limelight and to view the present and future form of higher education from the vantage point of ethics. Much of what leaders and administrators ‘do’ in higher education is based on their own personal beliefs and values, and given that what leaders do casts so much influence on others, overt awareness of the ethical implications of their actions is critical (Trent & Pollard, 2019). The purpose of this volume is to provide a foundation of multiple perspectives on the nature of ethical challenges in higher education and to provide the basis for the development of frameworks of understanding of ethics in higher education.

The very purpose and value of higher education is coming under scrutiny, often as part of the discourse surrounding the definition of quality in higher education, and often linked to government policies around higher education. There is some argument that ethics and moral values must be viewed as ‘virtues of quality’ in higher education (Narushima, 2011; Prisacariu & Shah, 2016). All too often, the struggle for institutional survival overshadows the deeper challenge of ethical behaviour in difficult economic times. In the company of other authors such as De Russey and Langbert (2005), we call for an ethical revival in higher education. We propose that ethics must necessarily permeate all of the business of higher education from research to community involvement through to learning and teaching. Ethics must be explicitly acknowledged, and embraced, as a philosophy throughout higher education, across stakeholders, including staff, students, community, government policy makers, and industry partners, at all levels. As to how this might be achieved, a definitive or simple solution remains questionable. It is a problem-solving exercise which demands much introspection and discussion founded on experiences and existing theoretical frameworks.

Ethics do have a presence in higher education. With regards to research, universities have ethics committee whose primary and obvious function is to ensure ethical standards in all research. Universities also have policies around academic integrity for both staff and students and issues of unethical behaviour such as cheating, plagiarism by students are dealt with through assessment related policies. Institutional leaders (including teaching academics, who are in a position of leadership in learning) must of course behave ethically in picking up on infringements and upholding ‘standards’. However, in the learning and teaching domain there is also the need to integrate the teaching of ethics with coursework. If universities are to maintain their role of contributing to social good, then it is important to include, as part of students learning, the knowledge and attitudes required for students to engage in ethical behaviour once they are in the workplace. Many of those with a university education will go on to take leadership positions in society, and thus will themselves need to be practicing ethical leadership, and play a key role to contributing to an ethical society that supports the well-being and good of others. As part of the overarching philosophy of ethics in universities, there is a need for students to develop a “life-long learning of ethical analysis” (Safatly, Itani, El-Haji, & Salem, 2017).

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At the grass roots, ethics in higher education is evidently important because of the impact of unethical behaviour on the well-being of individuals and groups both within and outside of the university. At an initial glance, it may appear that ethical behaviours might be somewhat at odds with the business-related activities of universities. Much of the discussion in literature and news around unethical behaviour of higher education leaders occurs in the context of sourcing much needed funding for universities. For example, the issues such as partnering with industry partners who themselves have questionable ethics for the sake of income, lowering academic standards for the sake of student retention, recruiting international students ill-equipped to succeed in the foreign university for the sake of income etc. However, financial pursuits of universities need not be at odds with ethical behaviours. In fact, it can be argued that sound ethical practices within higher education institutions are important to meeting economic objectives of both universities and the nation. Fierce competition and difficult economic times mean that student and staff loyalty, as well trust of the institution by wider society are extremely important to the survival and success of the organization (Dziminska, Fijalkowska, & Sulkowski, 2018). Ethics and trust go hand in hand. To foster trust in an institution, its leaders must be seen to behave ethically beyond any fault.

While internal to universities there are policies around ethics in research, learning and teaching, working towards an overall philosophy of ethics in higher education requires a much broader approach. The stakeholders external to universities such as industry partners, accrediting bodies, and professional associations, also have a crucial role to play in advancing what Gallant and Kalichman (2011) describe as ‘the ethical academy’. In their conceptualisation of the ethical academy, Gallant and Kalichman (2011) acknowledge the ethics as being contextually embedded, and hence advocate for a ‘systems approach’ to ethics in higher education. From this perspective, stakeholders both internal and external have a role to play in producing the ethical academy. Drinan (2011) discusses “expanding the radius of trust to external stakeholders” (p. 183). External stakeholders play an important role in creating a discourse around values because, according to Drinan (2011), the values of external stakeholders permeate higher education institutions and, by virtue of creating dialogue, can assist with ethical decision making even when there are conflicting values. The presence of external stakeholders helps deal with conflicting values by “1) balancing values; 2) privileging one value over others in a given time period; and (3) supporting the addition of organizational layers to represent and create interests associated with a value” (Drinan, 2011, p. 185).

It is apparent that the emerging paradigm for the ethical revival of universities is a system thinking approach leading to the development of an ethical character to all activities within higher education. One aim of the present volume is to advance towards the ideal of a strong ethical character to higher education by raising awareness of the ethical challenges faced in the various facets of higher education. Hence, various chapters in the volume are written with the objective of making explicit the kinds of ethical challenges faced in the various contexts of higher education, while in other chapters the authors identify frameworks useful to the practice of ethical leadership and administration in higher education.

The chapters in this volume provide an understanding of the ethical challenges in higher education and multiple perspectives on frameworks and thinking useful of tackling ethical challenges of higher education leadership and administration.

The first three chapters of the volume provide an informing background. In Chapter 1, the changing context of higher education is brought into focus. Universities have been around for a long time, but they are now challenged by the disruption of the 21st century. The massification and marketisation of higher education is exerting considerable pressures on universities, and the nature of the institution is becoming more complex. The intricate network of stakeholders often means that decision-making is fraught with ethical ‘dangers’. The first chapter of this volume sets the scene for discussion of ethics in higher education leadership by bringing to the fore current themes and trends in higher education.

The discussion of challenges of leadership ethics in higher education is taken up in Chapter 2. Linda Ellington and Victor Wang position universities as ‘vulnerable to an ethical slippery slide into the unethical abyss no matter the size of the institution’. Ellington and Wang call for stewardship by ethical architects, and the focus is on the ethical dilemmas that are intrinsic to the professional role.

Leslie Hitch, in Chapter 3 asks the question of ‘are there ethics in higher education’ or is it just moral alchemy? The question is examined considering the history of higher education and the likely future.

Ethical concerns and considerations in faculty socialization and tenure are the topic of Chapter 4. Olszewski and Hansman discuss the process of acculturation, and the interpersonal interactions which affect the tenure process, raising that ethical concerns must be considered as part of the acculturation process. Christian Jimenez brings Foucault to bear on the issue of ethics in higher education leadership, concluding that universities can embrace Foucault’s utopianism and embrace free speech for the purpose of making students into thinking subjects. “The Emperor’s Weavers: S.M.A.R.T. Objectives and the Ethical Hazard of Doing Bad Philosophy” brings to the fore the role of philosophy. Taylor maintains that the ‘infatuation’ with quantitative measurement and ‘uncritical’ acceptance of S.M.A.R.T objectives is to the detriment of higher education. Taylor calls for engagement with philosophy across the curriculum in higher education.

Developing a healthy work ethic is the topic of the chapter entitled “Work Ethic, Leadership Influence, and Higher Education.” Here Wang and Johnson present a valid and reliable instrument for institutional use, Wang’s Theory X and Theory Y. Howard Doughty places emphasis on the administrative ethics of the corporate college and brings to the fore the many paradoxes, dilemmas and contradictions that arise as a result of transformation due to the massification and globalization of institutions. The compromise of academic values is core to the discussion. The aim of the chapter is to espouse a critique of higher education as an important process to understand and therefore act on the current ethical challenges.

Along the vein of providing frameworks for reflection on ethical dilemmas in higher education, Torrisi-Steele turns to design thinking. Design thinking provides an empathetic lens on the ethical challenges of higher education and casts a positive light on the challenges – viewing challenges as opportunities for positive change. Furthermore, design thinking is a vehicle to facilitate critical reflection on one’s own values and action in the context of how these interact with the values and actions of those around. The premise of the chapter is that design thinking is a useful mindset to help move towards the ethical revival that is much needed in higher education.

Tying in with the idea of personal values and personal perceptions, Toker Gökçe and Durante discuss ‘whistle-blowers’ and organizational perceptions and personal values’ influence on the notion of wrongdoing. The aim of the chapter is to help leaders and managers to solve conflict issues within the sphere of influence.

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Circular leadership is explored by Harvin and Phillips as an architecture for the solution of ethical, organizational and stakeholder challenges within colleges and universities. Circular leadership, being about cohesive action and community is a powerful platform for truly shared governance and potentially a mechanism for reducing the polarization power, distrust and unity.

Any discussion of ethical challenges in higher education administration and leadership cannot take place without critical thinking. Hence, Brookfield details critical thinking as a social learning process and places emphasis too on the importance of modelling the process to others.

In “Emotional Intelligent Leadership and Its Imperative for Governing Developmental Universities in the 21st Century,” Tshishonga argues for the adoption of emotionally intelligent leadership as being critical to growing managerial and professionalism skills that are human centered. Emotionally intelligent leadership is seen as a way to gain positive benefits in the highly competitive, globalized higher education environment.

Plante, Kinzey, and Rennev turn attention to Ethics to Students. A significant number of students are participating in volunteering, creating a service year opportunity. The ethical dilemmas and best practices are discussed such that a strong connection between students and national service opportunities is established.

In Chapter 15, distance education is brought to the fore. Distance education is a rapidly growing mode of education, but yet there is little attention to the values implicit in the design of such programs. David Stein discusses how values of access, availability, affordability, continuity, connection, independence equity must be considered in the design and development of distance education programs.

Gabriele Strohschen returns to the themes of critical theory as absolutely essential to education, in particular in the context of non-traditional students. The chapter provokes thought on the emancipatory role of education for these students and is a call to engage in collaborative problem solving and contextually embedded design of education so as to align with the needs of the many stakeholders.

Chapter 16, “Leadership Dynamics in Higher Education Institutions in India,” brings attention to the structure and nature of higher education in India, focusing on the challenges of student mobility. The ethical challenges by leaders in this context are brought to attention.

John A. Henschke brings the andragogical perspective to bear on the issue ethics in higher education leadership. Ethics in higher education is explored through the framework of the six assumptions, eight elements and five organizational dimensions founded in andragogy. The Modified Instructional perspectives inventory is discussed as a tool for assessing Henschke’s scholarship and practice congruence. A powerful story of how ethical administration turns a prison system from brutal to humane concludes the chapter.

Habermas’ theory and the democratization of education is explored by Stephen Brookfield. The circle of voices, circular response and chalk talk techniques are discussed as effective means of foster inclusivity in the classroom, enabling many perspectives to emerge.

In the final chapter, “Prevalence of Campus Rape: Perspectives on Risk Management,” is a call to understand the heavy costs of sexual assault and rape on students’ ability to thrive in college, especially Title IX violations and benefits to colleges and universities from the Violence Against Women laws, and the Amended Clery Act. Proactive action and strategic planning for reducing occurrences on campus is imperative.

The word ‘ethics’ means ‘to do’ (Goodchild, 2011) and is a reminder that most every act has an ethical dimension to it. Formally defined, “ethics involves the use of reason to support or justify what particular decisions or actions are chosen in response as being good or right as opposed to being bad or wrong”. (Goodchild, 2011, p. 136). Evidently, the decision making about what is good or right is not clear cut. Conceivably, there are many situations in which argument can be found to justify each of the alternatives of actions available. The need for knowledge of ethical challenges, available frameworks and for encouraging discussion around ethics in higher education leadership and administration is obvious. We hope that the chapters in this volume provide a foundation for much rich discussion and debate around ethics in higher education leadership and administration.

OBJECTIVE OF THE BOOK

The Handbook of Research on Ethical Challenges in Higher Education Leadership and Administration features full length articles (8,000 to 12,000 words) authored by leading experts offering an in-depth description of concepts related to Ethical Challenges in Higher Education Leadership and Administration in this changing society. The book serves as a comprehensive best resource for leading teaching, learning, research and other applications in higher education. Offering a diversity of thought on Ethical Challenges in Higher Education Leadership and Administration, the book serves as a foundation for scholars and practitioners to generate knowledge in the field. The book is a milestone volume, attracting intellectual attention from around the globe. Every researcher’s horizon will be widened by using this book as a reference source as well as a textbook.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The book will be appropriate for graduate faculty and students, university libraries, dissertation libraries and national libraries from around the globe. Individual departments and colleges may also need to catalogue this book.

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