We wrote the book on institutional thriving for higher education...
And a book on institutional change in higher education...
Both of these books informed and evolved our Thriving Framework for Colleges and Universities.
Learning-Focused Environments

Proven Value Propositions

Net Revenue & Strategic Finance

Highly-Valued People & Community

Student Learning & Success

WHERE thriving institutions focus their energy

The Thriving Framework (2.0)

HOW thriving institutions do their work

Compelling Vision

Culture of Planning & Strategic Risk

Courageous & Collaborative Leadership

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Leadership does not exist in a vacuum:
And the landscape of higher education is complex and challenging.

- Talent War
- Shifting Workforce Demands
- National Ideological Divide
- Business Model Challenges
- Cost & Affordability
- Rising Discount Rates
- Student Mental Health
- Declining TUG Enrollment
- Changing Demographics
- Pace/Volume of Change
- Leadership Turnover
- Demand for Inclusive Leadership
- Challenge to Value Proposition
- Unbundling
- Micro-credentials
- Competency-Based Education

- Shared Governance
- Drop in National Retention Averages
- Pandemic Impact on Student Learning & Readiness
- Ransomware Attacks
- Link to Career Readiness
- Regulatory Uncertainty
- Accreditation Demands
- Global Exhaustion
So we’re wondering…

- How does presidential leadership impact institutional and student success?

- As the average presidential tenure continues to drop, what helps leaders stay?

- What factors contribute most significantly to thriving for college and university presidents?
Through our daily work with campuses and deep partnerships with university presidents, Credo has been thinking more and more about the role of sustained leadership in institutional and student success. With average presidential tenure continuing to drop, colleges and universities around the country are grappling with the impact of frequent leadership changes that often negatively impact institutional alignment, execution of vision, and ability to undertake transformational change, and result in cultural stagnation and flagging student outcomes. To underpin the focus of this book, Credo is undertaking a qualitative research project to explore the factors that contribute most significantly to leadership longevity and institutional thriving. This research will consider such issues as the symbiotic relationship between president and institutional culture, the alignment of their own leadership passion and energy with an individual college or university context, and the critical components of the board’s relationship to the president in nurturing longevity.
## [Some] Factors Contributing to Leadership Sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President + Board</th>
<th>President + Personhood</th>
<th>President + Culture</th>
<th>President + Cabinet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determining institutional fit</td>
<td>Personal support systems</td>
<td>Power dynamics</td>
<td>Ability to shape the team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onboarding</td>
<td>Leadership style awareness</td>
<td>Shared governance</td>
<td>Willingness to fire fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A clear charge</td>
<td>Energy management</td>
<td>Institutional trust</td>
<td>Strong seconds in each functional area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equitable compensation</td>
<td>Health &amp; Stamina</td>
<td>Risk &amp; change tolerance</td>
<td>Leaders beyond silos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board structure</td>
<td>Clear “why”</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>“Team A” mentality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board engagement</td>
<td>Alignment of personal identity with institutional values and culture</td>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>Conflict tolerant, change ready</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board development</td>
<td>Presidential support</td>
<td>Constituent engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Board Chair relationship</td>
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President + Board

- Determining institutional fit
- Onboarding
- A clear charge
- Equitable compensation
- Board structure
- Board engagement
- Board development
- Presidential support
- Board Chair relationship

- Is THIS leader right for THIS institution in THIS period of time?
- Did the Board shape a rich and effective onboarding program for the new leader?
- Was the charge to the president clear and transparent? Does the board know where the skeletons in the closets are, and were they shared with the leader?
- Is the board structured for appropriate action and contribution, engaged in effective execution of their role, and continuously developed to understand the higher education landscape?
- Does the board stand in full support of the leader it hired?
- Is the relationship between the Board Chair and President positive and open?
[Some] Factors Contributing to Leadership Sustainability

- What personal support systems does the president have?
- Does the president understand their leadership style and consider what gaps their cabinet needs to fill?
- How does the leader manage their energy, time, health, and stamina?
- Does the leader have a clear and present “why” that anchors their work through challenge?
- How closely does the leader’s personal identity align with institutional values and culture?
Some Factors Contributing to Leadership Sustainability

- Are power and influence exercised responsibly by the president, cabinet, board, and faculty leadership?
- Does the campus community have trust in leadership?
- Is there a willingness to take risks and experiment with change within the campus community?
- Does the president have a healthy mix of accessibility to constituents and visibility across the community?
- Are all key constituents engaged effectively in the strategic direction of the institution?
[Some] Factors Contributing to Leadership Sustainability

**President + Cabinet**

- Does the president have the ability, both with the strength of their own assessment of team members’ performance and with the support of the Board, to shape their team in the best interest of institutional needs?
- Is the president willing to have hard conversations in the shaping of that team?
- Can each cabinet member serve strategically because they are supported by a strong second carrying the translation of strategy to operations?
- Does the cabinet serve as campuswide leaders, recognizing that their first accountability is to their cabinet team and second to their functional area?
- Can the cabinet navigate conflict in healthy ways, and are they intentionally developing their capacity for change leadership?