

# Workshop for Chief Academic Officers in Their 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Year of Service

 The Council of  
Independent Colleges

Academic Leadership  
**NOW&NEXT**

2024 Institute for Chief Academic Officers and Their Teams // November 1–4, 2024  
Hilton Portland Downtown // Portland, Oregon

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# Presenters

**Sarah Ferguson**, Vice President for Academic Affairs,  
Texas Lutheran University

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Wisconsin Lutheran College

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# Higher Education Today

*A Time of Transition and Opportunity For Leaders*



# Session 1

- Current Realities in the Higher Education Landscape
  - Societal
  - Financial
  - Academic
  - Demographic



**OVERVIEW**

# Societal Realities



# Societal Realities

- Just in Case v. Just in Time
- Value of College in Question
- Purpose of College in Question
- Corporate v. Collegial Mindset
- Understanding and Belief in the Liberal Arts.



# Financial Realities



# Financial Realities

- Discount Rates
- Rising Operating Costs
- Compensation
- Deferred Maintenance
- Rising Student Needs



# Academic Realities



# Academic Realities

- Changing Nature of the Student
  - Academic Preparedness
    - COVID
  - Academic Delivery Expectations
- Changing Nature of Knowledge
  - Accessed rather than Acquired
  - Assessed rather than Obtained
- Competition



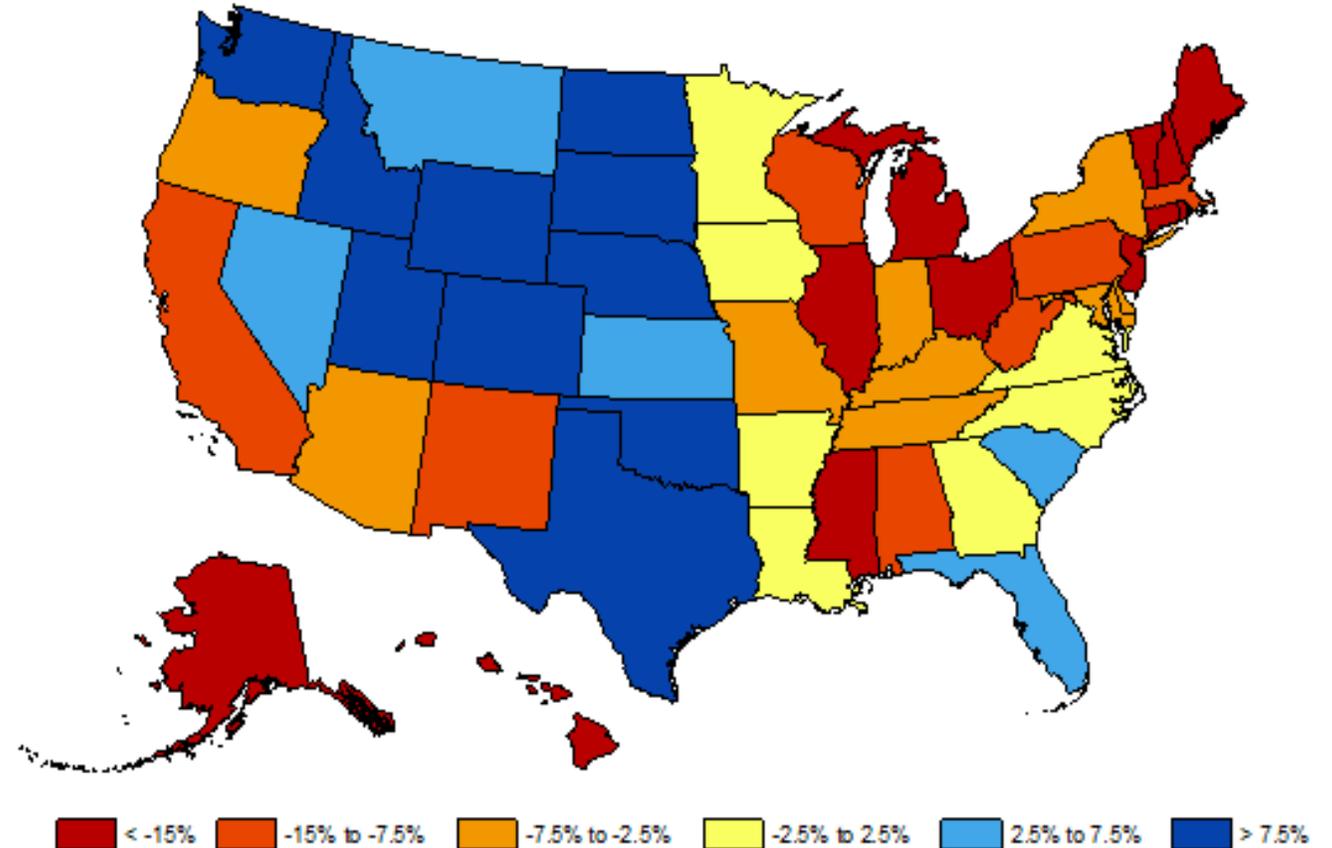
# Demographic Realities



# Demographic Realities

- Demographic Cliff
- Students with Varying Preparedness for College
- Students with Additional Needs - Academic and Mental Health
- Adult Learners

College Age Graduating Seniors  
Projection (Grawe, Capture Higher Ed)



# What Reality Looks Like



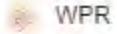
# College Closures/Changes 2023 (Inside Higher Education; Dec. 2023)

- Presentation College
- Finlandia
- Iowa Wesleyan University
- Medaille University
- Cardinal Stritch University
- Cabrini University
- Alliance University
- The King's College
- Hodges University
- Alderson Broaddus University
- Cox College
- Lincoln Christian University
- University of Wisconsin – Platteville Richland
- Magdalen College
- The College of Saint Rose
- Valley College
- B.H. Carrol Theological Institute
- Salus University
- Compass College of Film and Media
- St. Augustine College – Chicago
- Maryland University of Integrative Health
- Multnomah University

## Financial report advises UW-Green Bay leaders to 'act with urgency'

EDUCATION

### St. Norbert College lays off 12 faculty as it shores up \$5 million budget deficit



## UW-Green Bay ending in-person classes in Marinette County

## UW Oshkosh lays off 140 as 76 take voluntary retirement and more positions will go unfilled

The moves are expected to save about \$14.7M, the university said.

EDUCATION

## UW to close Washington County, Fond du Lac campuses due to declining enrollment

Universities of Wisconsin President Jay Rothman announced the UW-Milwaukee Washington County and UW-Oshkosh Fond du Lac campuses are closing, with in-person instruction ending by June 2024.

## Northland College says it will close at end of school year if \$12M isn't raised by April 3

Northland College in Ashland to stay open under refocused model

By WDIO

HIGHER EDUCATION, NEWS

## Concordia University to lay off 24 employees amid fiscal challenges

Layoffs at Mequon campus will begin May 31

## UW Oshkosh, facing deficit, undergoes academic restructuring to save \$1.5M annually

UWO will have three primary colleges: College of Business, Media & Communication; the College of Culture, Society & Education; and the College of Nursing, Health Professionals & STEM.

NEWS

## 'Sad situation': Manitowoc mayor, college leaders react to Holy Family College closing

EDUCATION, HIGHER EDUCATION, NEWS

## UW-Milwaukee announces closure of Waukesha campus in 2025, citing declining enrollment

The closure will impact more than 100 employees and require layoffs of staff and faculty

Education & Workforce Development

## Marquette to cut annual budget by \$31 million by 2031

EDUCATION, HIGHER EDUCATION

## After 85 years, Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee is closing in May

President Dan Scholz calls closure 'devastating' but unavoidable in 'no-win' situation

Education & Workforce Development

## Alverno College plans layoffs, program changes

# Table Discussion

Realities and Opportunities?



# Sources

Levine, Arthur, and Scott J. Van Pelt, The Great Upheaval. JHU Press, 2021.

Statista - <https://www.statista.com/statistics/871513/worldwide-data-created/>

Venit, Ed. The Pandemic Ripple Effect <https://pages.eab.com/PandemicRippleEffect-WP-Form.html>

# Q&A



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# The CAO as Cultural Architect: Opportunities in Leadership

# Consider Organizational Culture



Culture: The way we do things around here.

# Quick Cultural Assessment:

- Success - How is success defined?
- Values – Important in words and actions?
- Norms – What are unstated yet established expectations?
- Celebrations, Heroes/Heroines?
- Song?



Is there alignment between you and others in your institution in regards to:

- Definitions of Success?
- Common values of what is important?



# *Mission and Vision*

in Culture Building Leadership

What do Colleagues expect from you as a leader?



# Two Categories of the CAO's Work

- Technical Roles
- Symbolic Roles
  - Emotion/Attitude/Feeling
  - Make the Most Impact



# Technical Roles



# Technical Roles

- Budget Development
- Conflict Resolution
- Communication
- Planning
- Professional Development





# Symbolic Roles

# Ambassador



*What borders do you need to cross to maximize your role?*

# Detective



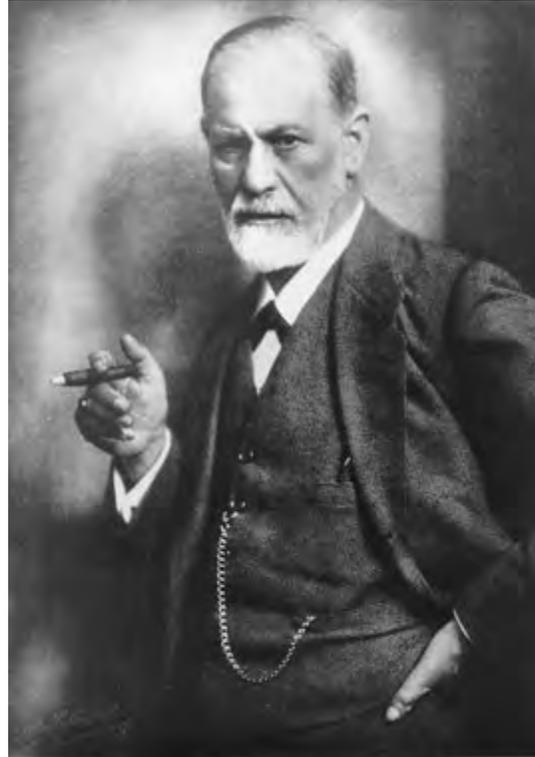
*What unsolved mystery needs investigating at your institution?*

# Actor



*What role have you played when it was really necessary?*

# Psychiatrist



*Who have you talked off the ledge recently?*

# Poet



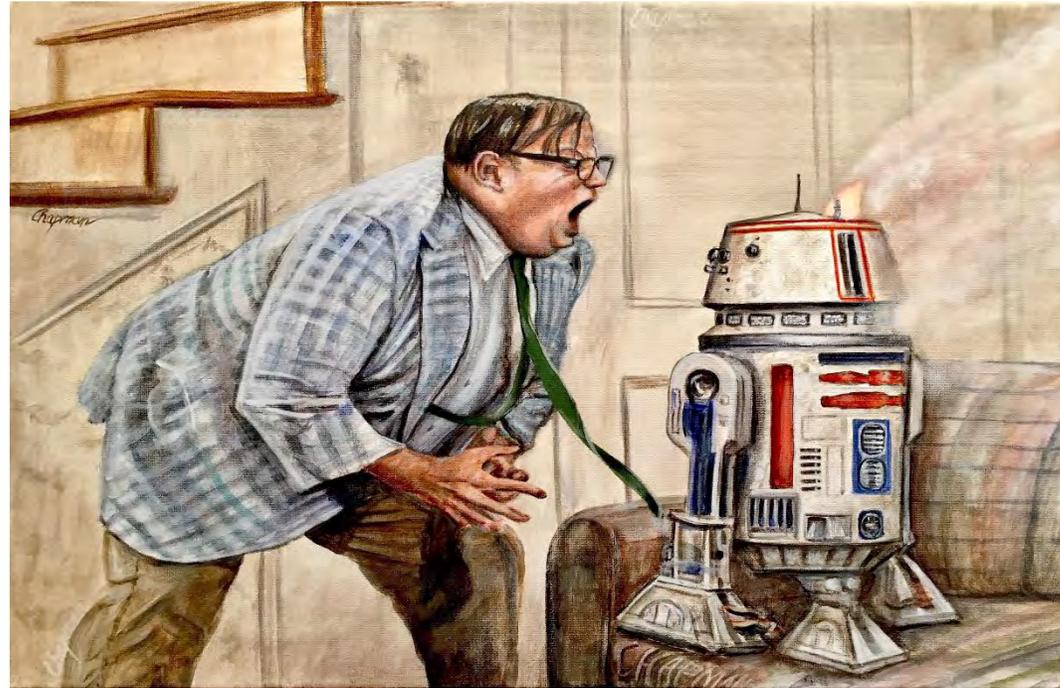
*It's not always what you say, but how you say it.*

# Maestro



*Seeking all to perform in perfect harmony!*

# Motivator



*Carrot or Stick?*

# Agent (Negotiator)



*What do you need to obtain for your folks, that only you can obtain?*

# Event Planner



*What can or should be celebrated that is not being celebrated?*

# Jurist



*What rulings need to be made by “the judge”?*

# Potter



# Potter



*What aspect of your culture needs to be shaped?*





Fullan, M. (2001) *Leading in a culture of change*.

(Enthusiasm *and* Energy *and* Hope)

+

(Moral Purpose and Knowledge)

+

Commitment =

**More good things happening than bad things  
happening!**



# Presentation Resources and Further Reading

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# Q&A



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# Managing Down, Across, and Up: Working Across Multiple and Complex Systems



# Overview

Influence

Teamwork

Relationships



# Influence and Teamwork

## Influence

- A thoughtful way to persuade people to perform tasks or behave in a certain way. (indeed website)
- A critical skill for the insitution to meet and maintain their strategic plan.
- A way to build, align, energize and guide colleagues (Barta and Barwise, 2017, McKinsey report)

## Teamwork

- Influence that is open to adjustment
- Letting go of one approach to solution and open to others perspectives.
- Helping others let go of their one approach to see other approaches (working with presidents)

All about building relationships on communication and trust



# Who do you need to influence?

Director reports

- Deans

- AVPs

- Directors

- Others

Colleagues – other VP's

The President

Faculty

Boards and other Constituents



# The Intricacies of Influence – Direct Reports

Supervisor – can direct their work

Rather than directive, create shared understanding of goals and allow them to create their own strategy

Consistent feedback loop

Trust

No surprises from you or from them

Cannot always tell them everything but can keep them apprised of overall context



# The Intricacies of Influence – Faculty

Trickier given the relationship of faculty with administration and the nature of the shared governance relationship.

If a strong shared governance, need to ensure that almost every point of influence is through faculty governance.

Identify allies

Continuous communication to allow individuals to question rationale for the change you want to see

What challenges are you solving with this approach

Be willing to listen to pushback

Do not get pulled into fruitless arguments



# Table Discussion

Realities and Opportunities



# The Intricacies of Influence – Colleagues, other VPs

What are their challenges and their constraints?

Help them understand your constraints, i.e.. Faculty Governance.

How do I come to them with a solution to both of our problems?

Timing, do not surprise them

Bill with changes to funding for instructional technology



# Table Discussion

Realities and Opportunities



# The Intricacies of Influence – The President

How do you solve their problems in a way that they can support publicly

If you want to challenge their approach, come with answers to the questions they will get

Public Health degree

Never surprise them but be thoughtful about timing

Early in my role I often grabbed the president for a quick chat when her mind was clearly elsewhere. Not the best approach.

Another president may be okay with this. Learn to read their communication style



# Table Discussion

Realities and Opportunities



# The Intricacies of Influence – Boards and other Constituents

With Boards, never interact without the clear approval from the President

Build strong relationship with the Board. They can be a critical network.

Other constituents – outside community members. Build relationships but be sure not to promise things you cannot deliver.



# Table Discussion

Realities and Opportunities



# Q&A



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# Vision, Program Planning, and Strategy: Managing Change



# Overview

Setting strategy and distinctives to drive decision making and resource allocation

Case Example: University Program Planning Process

Participants

Mission, Market, Margins, and Student Outcomes

Academic programs and other revenue generating initiatives

Small group discussion



# What we need clarity on to face the changes in higher education.

Institutional Mission and Vision

Strategic Plan

Distinctives

Clarity on what you do well and what you are known for.

Must be more than student centered and relational.

Academic Program offerings and the mix of those offerings (Atkins)

Other revenue-generating initiatives



# Distinctives

How are you supporting your community?

Does your community need you to add a particular program

Example of Seguin

Growing manufacturing

We cannot help with the skills for that work but how can we assist with upscaling?  
Skills such as management, accounting, coding, and critical thinking.



# Resource Allocation

Strategic Budgets that are sustainable

Marketing allocation

- How do you determine

- How do we prioritize a limited resource

Enrollment Projections

- Realistic and achievable enrollment goals

- Setting and achieving – work of the department chair

Operating Budgets



# Table Discussion

Realities and Opportunities



# University Program Planning Process

Continuous program prioritization

Participants

All areas involved – ensure that you are all moving in the same direction – everyone is on the same boat and rowing together to meet the strategic goals and mission

Faculty representation

*Cross section*

*Vote or appoint*

*Faculty governance*

Start, Stop, or Grow? (Atkins)

- Market
- Margins
- Mission
- Academic Standards



# Small Group Discussion

## Groups of 2 – 3

Share with each other your institution is using vision, strategy, and distinctives to inform resource allocation.

What might not be working? What do you want to do differently?

What are the challenges from the following and how might you address them?

Faculty

Board

Other VP's

Alumni

Students

External Community



# Big Takeaways

Big takeaways from your discussion that you want to share with the larger group?



# Q&A



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“It’s Alright”:  
Finding Fulfillment as a CAO

Council for Independent Colleges

*Workshop for CAO’s in Their Third or Fourth Year of Service*

Portland, OR

November 1, 2024

What are the greatest joys in your role as  
CAO?



# Fulfillment will increase as a CAO's.....

1. Embark on a developmental journey
2. Accept that the journey is the challenge
3. Embrace a sense of calling and lead with soul
4. Consider Legacy



# Embark on a Developmental Journey

*“There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow man; true nobility is being superior to your former self.”*

*Ernest Hemingway*

# Continual Growth in the Role of CAO

- Professional Organizations (Local/State/National)
  - Not Only What..... but WHO!
- Current Events of Higher Education
- Accreditation Expertise (Continuous Improvement)
- Self-Learning
- Get out of your “comfort zone”

What aspect of today made an impact on the way you view your role as a CAO?





# Accept the Journey is the Challenge

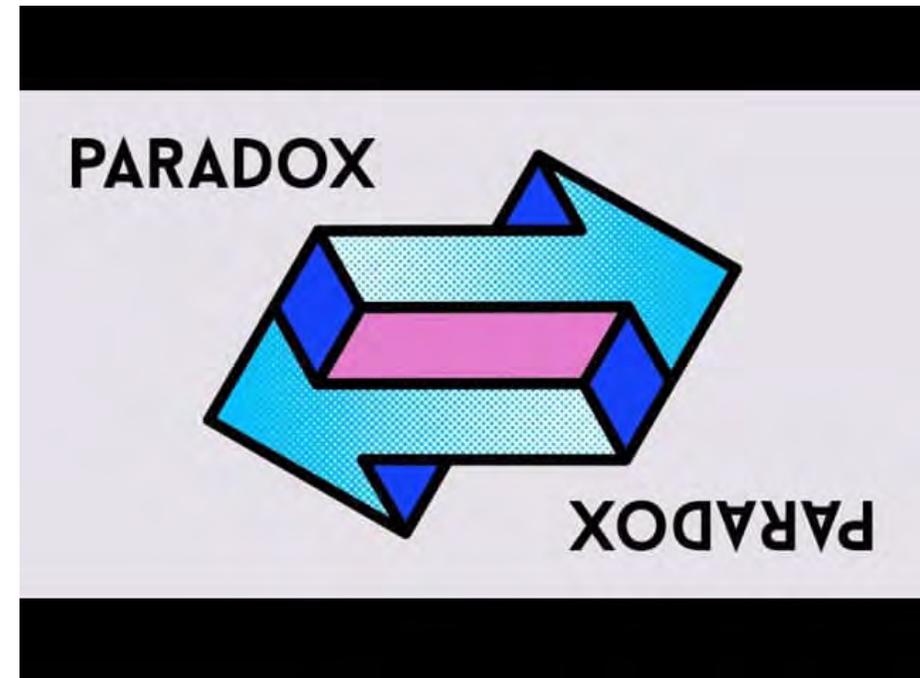
*“Leadership always looks easier when viewed from the outside.”*

*Lee Bolman*

# Leadership Paradox

*Great Leaders Possess.....*

- Flexible Consistency
- Confident Humility
- Interdependent Autonomy
- Cautioned Risk Taking
- Invisible Visibility

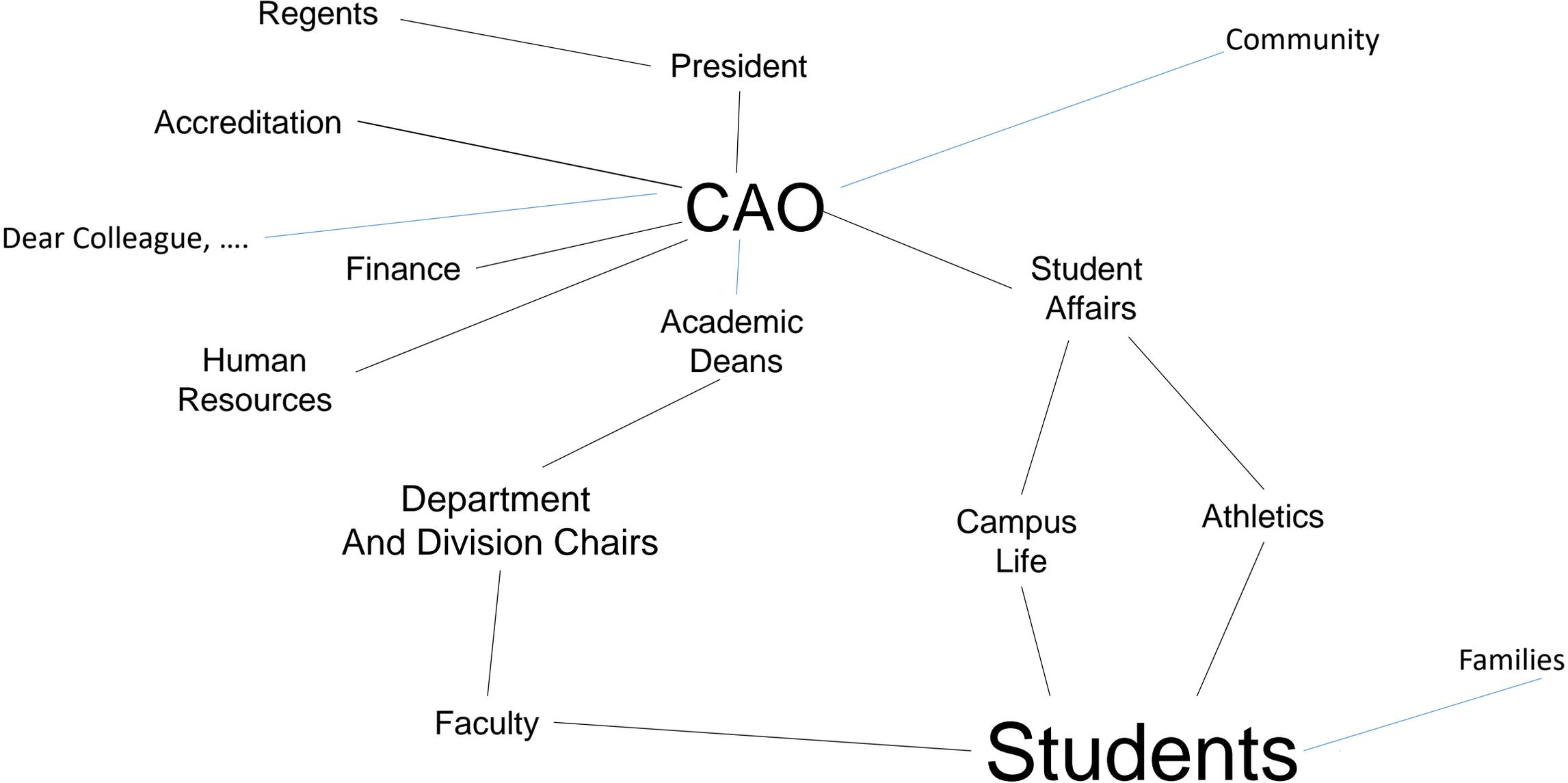




# Embrace a Sense of Calling and Lead with Soul

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.”  
Confucius





How are you as a CAO uniquely situated to make a difference?





# Consider Legacy

*"If you are going to live, leave a legacy. Make a mark on the world that cannot be erased."*

Maya Angelou

# Legacy

From John Maxwell's Leadership Bible

- Something YOU place IN others
- Permanently transforms them
- Lives on long after you are gone
- Your activity becomes the achievement
- Succession Planning is ongoing

*“It’s Alright”:*  
Finding Fulfillment as a CAO



# Presentation Resources

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# Q&A



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**Thank you for attending  
this session!**