

CIC Workshop for Deans and AVPs

Guide to Making Tough Decisions

Case Study: Stuck in the Middle

You are a new dean at Typical CIC University (TCU), hired from another university. While you are a little anxious stepping into a new administrative role at a new university, you see it as an opportunity to make a positive impact and build your professional development trajectory.

As part of the university's strategic plan, the university has decided to develop new fully online undergraduate programs in an accelerated, eight-week course format. The President and Provost would like for faculty in your college or school to develop online general education courses. Many faculty are resistant to this idea, believing that courses in an eight-week format and an online modality would compromise the rigor of the course. This group of resistant faculty also claim that such a course is not in keeping with the university's mission.

The President and Provost have shared that these programs are important given declining enrollment and revenue, and the inability to develop an online program may result in future cuts in personnel. The President has also shared that developing fully online programs is one of the board's top priorities. Privately, you have mixed feelings about developing eight-week, online courses.

1. Who are the significant stakeholders to consider as you plan to implement this initiative?
2. Do you share your own concerns about this initiative with the Provost? Why or why not? If you do share your concerns, how might you go about sharing them?
3. What might be some examples of ways that you can help faculty understand the upper administration's perspective on why this initiative is important for the university?
4. What might be some examples of ways that you can advocate for faculty to the upper administration?
5. How might you address outright faculty resistance to this initiative?