



Lessons from the Field: Learning from Challenge

April 29, 2026

OVERALL THEME

This XXXXX be CRAZY!

What is not a surprise to you

- Search world has changed pretty dramatically
 - President and provosts pools remain deep and broad
 - Most other cabinet search pools have decreased
- Almost all candidates are looking for greener pastures.
- Everyone wants a successful search or engagement.
 - Boards, faculty, staff, students, and alumni all have a stake in the search
 - A gap exists between intention and outcome

Searches Are More Complicated

- Everyone wants a search done yesterday.
- Committee dysfunction is one of the biggest challenges.
- Outside forces are intervening, even in private sector searches.

Transition Planning

- Having time to plan a transition is a privilege.
- Board/hiring authority preparedness to support what they just hired is a challenge.
- Transition planning has to be up and down the leadership pipeline, not just starting at the top.

Removing the Farm Teams

- Positions are gone and not coming back.
- They were not just support, but future leaders.
- Where do you find well rounded leaders when sector and prestige bias plays into decision making?

Clearing the Deck

- People are searching for new people to make the tough calls.
- We are not supporting new leaders when their first act is a big challenge to tackle.
- People are leaving leadership and the churn and getting out of higher education all together.

Simply Not Seeing Clarity

- There is a value incongruence between what search committees recommend and hiring authorities need.
- We signed up for shared governance, challenges the clarity needed in evaluating future leadership.
- Issues aren't with as much with pools and candidates as they are with what the committee is looking for in the first place.

Where Does That Leave Us?

- People need people.
- Mission and fit matter almost, more than experience.
- Time is a luxury no one has, but we have to slow down.
- This XXXXX is crazy.



THANK YOU!

Shawn M. Hartman, Ed.D.

Shawn.Hartman@academicsearch.org