The Council of Independent Colleges

Creating **Tomorrow's Institutions,** Together

2026 Institute for Chief Academic Officers with Chief Advancement, Enrollment, Financial, and Marketing Communication Officers

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Same Team/Different Positions: Leveraging the Strength of the Provost-Faculty Relationship

Presented by



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Collaborative Culture as a High-Value Approach

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Before we begin...



Write down one reason you became a Chief Academic Officer.

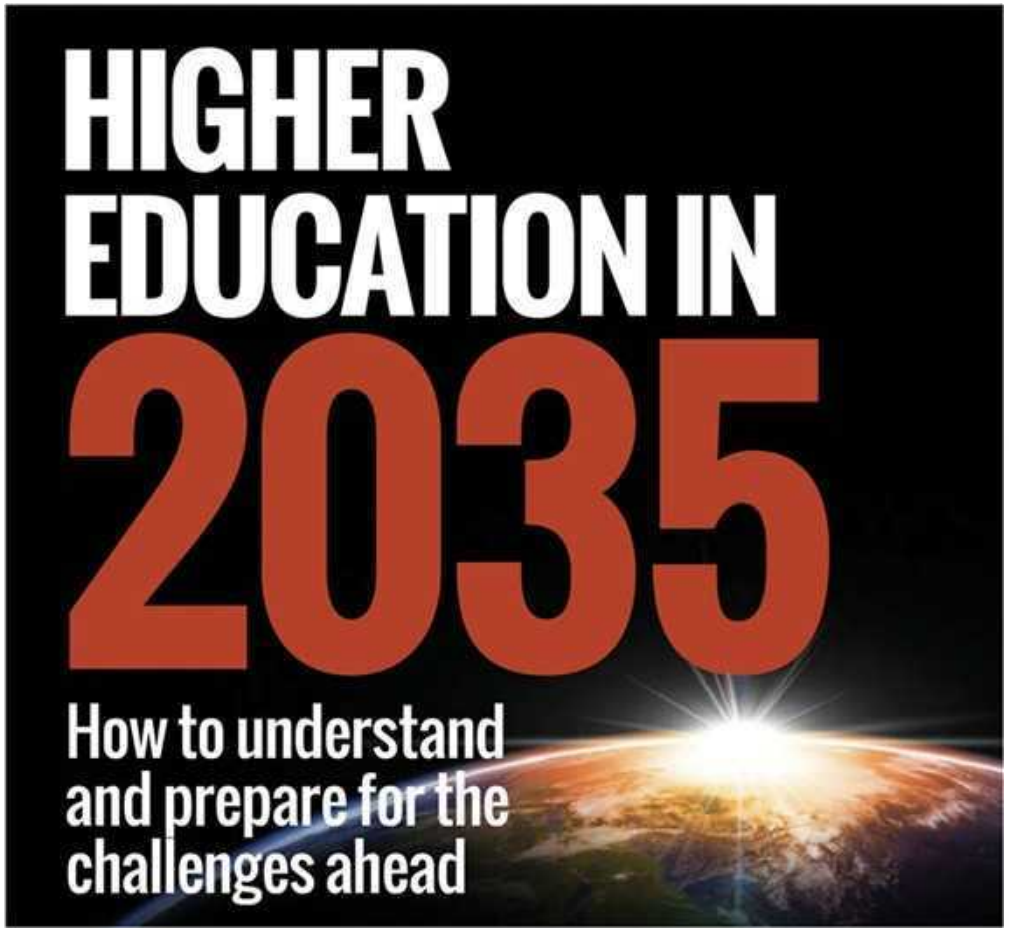
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What kind of a culture are you fostering?

Between faculty and administration

Among the faculty

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"[Effective leaders will] shift their mind-sets from competition to collaboration. Sounds simple, but as [Denis] Jones notes, historically, 'that's not in the DNA of higher ed.'"

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What is at stake strategically? Collaboration vs. Competition



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General Education Reform



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Our role as cultivators

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Addressing and Engaging Tensions Directly

Lynda Szymanski
Provost
William Peace University



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Identify a moment of tension when a faculty member voiced a concern, disagreement, or strong negative opinion.



Briefly note the context and what the faculty member said.

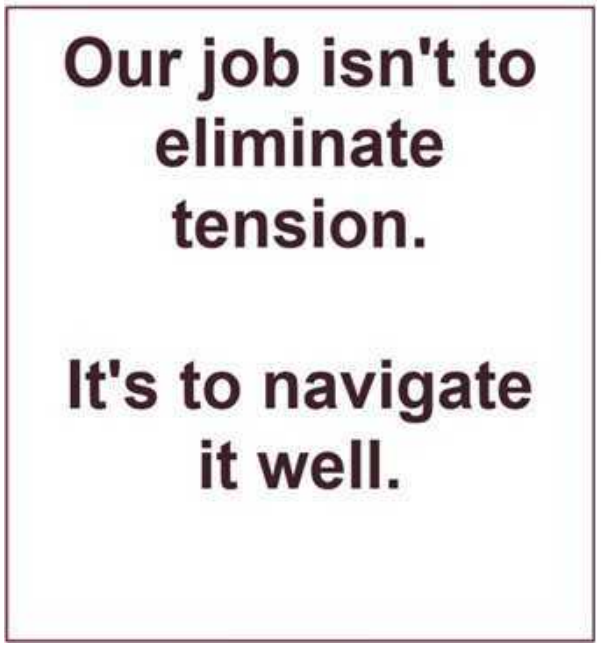
Tension is information

Managed well, tension can…

- surface what faculty care about
- improve decisions
- build trust

Avoided or mishandled, tension can…

- fester into conflict
- harden into “us versus them”
- erode trust and relationships



A Framework for Navigating Tension



Recognize your reaction so you can respond productively.

Begin with curiosity rather than defensiveness.

Model how to have direct, productive conversations.

An example: Moment of Tension

Context

Faculty had been identifying their own development needs and providing professional development in-house. I announced a restructure that included a new Director of Faculty Development position.

Faculty Response

"We do not need this position. It's more administrative bloat. Use the money to increase faculty salaries."

Apply the Framework

My example

Notice

What is my reaction?

What am I feeling
What am I tempted to do?
Am I avoiding?

Explore

What might be underneath this?

What don't I know?
How can I find out more?

Respond

What's next?

What needs to be named?
What's decided?
What's open?
How will I follow through?

Apply the Framework

With a partner, take one of your moments through the three steps.

Notice

What is my reaction?

What am I feeling
What am I tempted to do?
Am I avoiding?

Explore

What might be underneath this?

What don't I know?
How can I find out more?

Respond

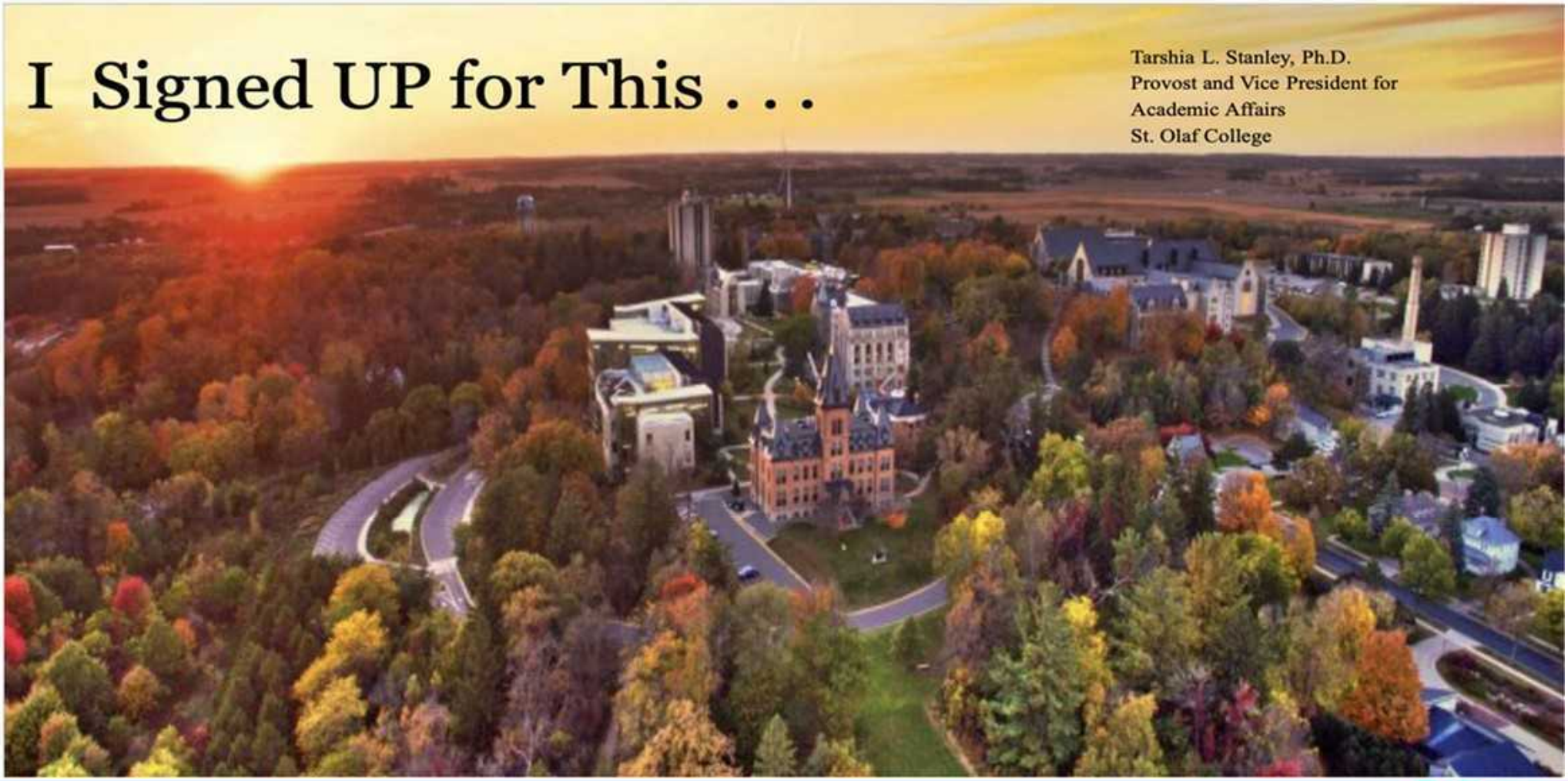
What's next?

What needs to be named?
What's decided?
What's open?
How will I follow through?

PEACE

I Signed UP for This . . .

Tarshia L. Stanley, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President for
Academic Affairs
St. Olaf College



I Did Not Sign Up 4 This!



What Were the Reasons You Became a Provost?

Was it the next step?

Was it to bridge a gap or fill a hole or play a role?

Was it because you might as well get paid for the headache?

Was it because you wanted to make a difference?



The Role of the Provost Has Changed

01

Just when I became a Provost

02

The local climate is reflective of the general climate

03

Your experiences often depend on your President

04

Your experiences depend on who came before

05

The skill sets a Provost needs have shifted

I Keep Forgetting . . .

RECONNECT

It's important in the day to day of our work to constantly reconnect to your why.

SHARE

Share some Whys–

REFLECT

Does your institution's mission reflect your why?

Tool Injection

- ❑ Calendar Tools
- ❑ People Tools
- ❑ Project Tools

What's After This Role?

calculate

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Is this a numbers game?

Day care, college, mortgage, elder care, retirement?

emoji_events

IDENTITY & STATUS

Are you on the self-esteem team?

Driven by titles, status, validation, or personal prestige tied to the title?

explore

DIRECTION & PURPOSE

Do you not know what else to do?

Unclear on your next move or feeling stuck in your current career trajectory?

What Will You Leave Behind?

What Will You Leave Behind?



Q&A



Thank you for attending this session!