
Academic Leadership: Paths and Perspectives

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My Path(s)

- › Reseach group lead, 1991-1998
- › ECE Graduate Program Director, 1990-1996
- › Co-founder & Co-director/Director, EPICS (Engineering Projects in Community Service), 1995-2006
- › President, IEEE Signal Processing Society, 1998-99
- › ECE Interim Head, 2002
- › IEEE Vice-President for Technical Activities, 2003
- › Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, 2004-06
- › IEEE Vice-President for Publication Services & Products, 2005
- › Dean of Engineering, 2006-
- › IEEE President & CEO, 2007

Academic Administration & Leadership

- › Academic administration: Head, Dean, Provost, President, ...
- › Academic leadership:
 - Academic administration
 - Research leadership - e.g., program or center director
 - Leadership outside your institution - e.g., government agencies, professional societies, startup companies
- › The skills complement and transfer

Thinking about leadership

- › Clues that leadership might be in the cards
 - Successful chairing of committees, research leadership
 - Pleasure in big-picture planning & thinking
- › Models
 - VRE: Vision, Relationships, Execution
- › Attributes
 - Vision, Synthesis, Consensus-building, Decision-making, Communication, Teamwork
- › Enablers
 - Opportunities to grow into leadership roles
 - Mentors/counselors/supporters

Rewards

› Expected

- Creating something new: EPICS
- Effecting change: curriculum reform (Associate Dean), advancing new technologies (IEEE & Dean), fostering multidisciplinary collaborations (IEEE, EPICS, Dean), expanding the focus (IEEE), strategic planning (IEEE, EPICS, Dean)

› Unexpected

- Celebration of others' successes
- Development/advancement & alumni relations
- Stretching to solve unexpected problems

› Lots of opportunities for “free” meals, travel, and to meet people

Downside

- › Solving other peoples' problems, including inherited problems
- › Daily crises
- › No casual conversations
- › (Much) less time for research, teaching
 - Change your definition of success!
- › Too many opportunities for “free” lunches, travel, interactions with people not of your own choosing

Why do it?

- › It's a bigger playing field
- › Academia is about reinventing yourself
- › Initiate, guide, direct the conversation
- › Make a difference

Advice

- › Think broadly about leadership
- › Recognize and exercise opportunities to grow into leadership roles & positions
- › Look inward: assess, recognize, develop your leadership skills
- › Look outward: build a network of mentors/counselors/supporters
- › Let your (potential) interest be known
- › Stretch yourself
- › *Think impact*