

The American College President: Challenges, Roles, and A New Frontier

Authors : Michael Miller, G. David Gearhart

Abstract : The role of the American college presidency continues to evolve, increasingly incorporating varied elements of responsibility of institutional management. Once primarily focused on the academic operation of an institution, the role has changed to incorporate all of the business-related and public agency operations of an institution. This means that the modern college president must be capable of persuasively talking to legislators and donors, as well as students taking classes and the faculty who teach them. In addition to these dimensions, the contemporary college president must also be an expert on state and federal compliance issues, and must have the talent to steer marketing and public relations activities in a persuasive manner. This paper will report the findings of a spring 2020 survey of nearly 300 college presidents in the United States concerning their perceptions about the changing nature of the college presidency, with special consideration given to media relations, fundraising, business development, internationalization, and facility management. Survey results will be analyzed based on institutional type, gender, length of tenure in the presidential position, and career pathway to the presidency.

Keywords : college president, leadership, education management, neo-liberal higher education

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