Chapter 1
Strategic Leadership Development in Research–Intensive Higher Education Contexts:
The Scholarship of Educational Leadership

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ABSTRACT

This chapter draws on 17 years of research and mentoring experience with hundreds of academic leaders in diverse research-intensive university (RIU) environments around the world. The authors argue that scholarship should be central to academic leadership initiatives in RIUs. The scholarship of educational leadership (SoEL) has significant benefits for RIUs and academic leaders with educational roles and responsibilities at various institutional levels: SoEL provides a strategic foundation for educational reform and other quality assurance and quality enhancement activities; SoEL is strategically aligned with RIU mandates for sustained and productive scholarly activity; SoEL fosters an institutional culture of educational scholarship aimed at enhancing effective and efficient practices in undergraduate and graduate programs; and RIUs become better known for valuing educational excellence through SoEL and its strategic contribution to enhance regional, national, or international rankings. This chapter examines theory-practice applications of SoEL in diverse RIU contexts.

INTRODUCTION

In an environment of unprecedented global competition, rapid technological change, limited resources, diversity in the student body, and demands for internationally-responsive undergraduate and graduate

degree programs, the quality of higher education practices is being scrutinized as never before. Academic leaders around the world on research-intensive university (RIU)[1] campuses are increasingly required to account for effectiveness and efficiency of their practices. While RIUs have long recognized the importance and complexity of academic leadership, the enactment of strategic and localized scholarship directed at these leadership practices remains very much in its infancy (Bryman, 2007; de la Harpe & Mason, 2014; Hubball, Clarke, Chng, & Grimmett, 2015; Mohrman, Ma, & Baker, 2008; Quinlan, 2014). The argument put forth in this chapter is that scholarship should be central to academic leadership in RIU contexts in order to sustain and enhance high quality, strategically-aligned, research-informed, and evidence-based practices. The scholarship of educational leadership (SoEL) has unique benefits for RIUs and academic leaders (e.g., senior administrators, Associate Deans, program directors, curriculum leaders, program and teaching evaluators, teaching award winners, and tenured instructors and professors) with particular roles and responsibilities for quality assurance, educational reform, and curriculum and pedagogical leadership at various institutional levels within and across diverse disciplinary contexts.

This chapter draws on 17 years of research and experience with academic leaders in multinational research-intensive university (RIU) environments. The authors are academic leaders at The University of British Columbia who have served in various educational capacities, including as directors of programs and as members of Faculty and/or institutional promotion and tenure committees. All are teaching prize winners, and two are National Teaching Fellows who have mentored hundreds of academic leaders from around the world with respect to SoEL.

Different acronyms are used in different institutional contexts to describe the scholarship of educational leadership (SoEL), including scholarship of leadership in education (SoLE), scholarship of teaching and learning leadership (SoTL leadership), and teaching and learning leadership (TLL). In this chapter, the term *SoEL* is defined as a distinctive form of educational scholarship with an explicit transformational and strategic agenda that is directed at academic leaders in RIU settings. Issues addressed in this chapter focus on effective ways for RIUs to engage in SoEL. Attention is given to a rationale for SoEL in global RIU contexts; a theoretical framework for SoEL; practical examples for strategic use of SoEL by academic leaders within diverse institutional settings; and key institutional challenges and supports. Readers are encouraged to consider the following core questions in their own institutional context:

- To what extent are strategic educational initiatives (e.g., quality assurance/quality enhancement, program-level student learning outcomes, learning technology, educational reform) supported through research-informed and evidence-based practice within and across the disciplines?
- To what extent are institutional supports (e.g., strategic professional development, alignment of promotion and tenure criteria) adequate for academic leaders to engage in SoEL in order to sustain and enhance high quality, strategically-aligned, research-informed, and evidence-based undergraduate and graduate level degree programs, teaching, and student learning experiences?

CONTEXT FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP (SoEL)

In the global context of higher education reforms, the increasing attention to student experiences in both undergraduate and graduate programs (as judged by the students themselves) has resulted in highly publicized "league tables" on which some RIUs, to their dismay, find themselves on lower rungs than they might have anticipated. Despite controversy and methodological concerns, world university rankings do

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