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**Course: C565, Introduction to University Administration**  
**Semester: Summer, 2017**  
**Artifact: Final Paper**

I am concluding my canine journey with this artifact because the course shows how different my confidence level was at the end of the program compared to the beginning.

The class involved writing a series of one-page papers which discussed two sides of an issue with a final paragraph giving our own opinion. The purpose of the class was to teach those who work in university administration the ability to write succinct, cohesive opinions on issues about which they feel strongly.

Easy-peasy, lemon-squeezy, I thought. But when my first draft came back to me, it had massive amounts of requested changes. Rather than looking at the criticism objectively, I chose to blame the instructor. How dare this professor question my writing to the point it needed a complete revision? What was her problem? So I re-wrote the paper and received better reviews on the second submission.

When it came time for the final paper, I thought I understood the process, and it was a subject I felt strongly about: that universities should be managed more like for-profit corporations (you may disagree, but I worked for Indiana University for over 10 years, and the amount of waste and inefficiency was enormous compared to the corporate world from which I came).

I wrote my paper with passion and facts, convinced that the professor would see the error of her editing ways. But this second draft came back with more changes than the first. What was going on? I again blamed the professor for not liking my paper simply because my

opinion disagreed with hers. So I began talking with her via email, and she said my writing wasn't persuasive enough for the opinion I held. Even my final version of the paper didn't please her. So we continued to talk, and what she had been saying (what I was refusing to hear up to this point) finally began to make sense. Via our discussions, she helped me clarify my opinion and how to defend it – what I really believed was that universities should hire more leaders with a corporate background, while still maintaining academia's unique needs.

I wanted to prove to myself that I could do better, so she graciously agreed to let me submit a third version. I didn't care if it would count toward the grade – I just wanted to raise my level of writing to the demands of the class, and I finally did it. I was as proud of that one-page paper as of any more lengthy final papers of the program.

When I look back, I see the juxtaposition of my first assignment of the program, in which I doubted my ability to write even the simplest of papers. By the last class (before this Capstone), I was doubting the professor's ability to recognize good writing when she saw it. Now that's quite a change! My old dog-self had become a little cocky when dancing on my hind legs, which resulted in falling snout-down in the dirt. But I learned from the experience and am now a little more careful when grooving to the bossa nova ... but I'm still dancing!

### **Artifact #8**

As higher education faces growing economic, accountability and technological challenges, many believe that universities should create value for stakeholders (state and federal government, students, parents, etc.) by instituting tighter financial controls and other management strategies from corporate America (Harker, 2014). Until the 1970s, higher education was primarily viewed as communities of scholarly learning, autonomous and adamant in their support of academic freedom (Rossi, 2014). But times have changed. Now colleges and universities face many of the same issues as big business, including global competition, increasing pressure from governmental agencies and ever-dwindling resources (Swain, 2016). To determine if higher education should adopt various for-profit management practices, the

advantages and disadvantages of a corporate structure must be thoroughly analyzed. Only then can an informed decision be made regarding the future of university administration.

For years, universities thrived on monies collected from uncapped tuitions, generous donations and large state and federal funds -- with little accountability to anyone (Rossi, 2014). Iosue (2011) contends that this “easy life ... seduced academia into complacency and privilege,” (p. 1). But the exploding cost of student tuition and subsequent loan debt has put the spotlight on university spending with diverse factions -- including students, government and think tanks -- demanding change (Blumenstyk, 2015). Many external forces are advising higher education to adopt a for-profit business model in terms of management in order to survive (Harker, 2014). And there is proof that operating higher education as a corporation can be extremely effective. Drexel University was near bankruptcy in the 1990s, due to its “slow-paced, fiscally lackadaisical academic culture,” (“Drexel University President Papadakis Dead at 65, 2009, p. 1). When the school brought in a president from the private sector, business practices were established, including instituting benchmarks for all managers and adapting “prudent, cost-cutting management,” (“Drexel University President Papadakis dead at 65,” 2009). Under the president’s guidance, enrollment grew 130 percent, while selectivity of incoming students increased (“Drexel University President Papadakis Dead at 65,” 2009). Anecdotal transformations such as Drexel’s should at the very least convince higher education that a different management style can be successful for stakeholders. Those institutions that do not heed the warning for increased business acumen may not survive to see future days (Harker, 2014).

On the other hand, critics perceive higher education administration utilizing for-profit management strategies as a mistake (Keep, 2012). According to many in academia, higher education is not a business (Keep, 2012). Winston (1999) says that “standard economic intuition and analogies, built on an understanding of profit-making firms and the economic theory that supports it, are likely to be a poor guide to understanding higher education,” (p. 33). For example, Keep (2012) fears the elimination of programs and departments simply because they are not profitable. Katopes (2009) condemns another stalwart of the for-profit business model: putting customers, in this case students, at the forefront of decision-making. He fears placing the fate of professors in the hands of students, who can use their evaluations to simply reward popular instructors -- who may not always be the most effective teachers. This practice can lead to faculty catering to learners to maintain high evaluations. Too much student power, according to Katopes (2009), can lead to “an imbalance in the relation between students and institution, (creating) a culture of entitlement and instant gratification,” (p. 1). Another argument for not treating higher education as business is the perennial mission of universities to effect social change. Educational goals, according to many in academia, deal with subjects much larger than financial accountability. Astin and Astin (2000) advised that “educational reforms should be seen as part of a fundamental transformation of the values and vision of American society as a whole,” (p. vi). Ray (2014) summarizes many of the concerns mentioned above when he says, “I don’t think we should have a business model, we should have a university model.”

Although academia’s concerns with operating higher education as a business are valid, they are not enough to preclude the adoption of corporate financial controls and management strategies. Not treating higher education as an actual business may eventually result in its demise. Corporate ideas and programs can be implemented, while striving to maintain academia’s unique needs. Higher education must not bury its head in the sand regarding corporate innovation and

business acumen. The stakes are too high for both its longevity and the students served within its confines.

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