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NAVIGATING ACADEMIC CHANGE DURING TURBULENT TIMES

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Abstract

Since 2016, the United States has seen a wave of college closures, mergers, and program cuts. In this presentation, I argue that faculty (even though they are the intellectual core of their institutions) seldom receive the financial information or training they need to understand the financial crises many institutions of higher education are facing. I write as a former dean who sat between faculty life and institutional budgeting, and I will share a set of challenges that U.S. faculty are experiencing in many colleges and universities. These include, for example, increased workload and burnout, the speed of financial decisions, outside pressures like federal funding cuts and changing financial aid policy, growing distrust of administration, pay gaps across disciplines and ranks, opacity around budgeting and operating margins. I conclude by asserting that faculty cannot protect their academic mission if they do not understand the operations behind it, and that colleges that want to survive this moment need to involve faculty as partners.

Keywords:

Higher Education, Faculty, Financial Challenges, Academic Change, Institutional Sustainability