

# BECOMING AN EDUCATIONAL LEADER

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Educational leadership in higher education involves strategic institutional or Faculty-wide program reform/curriculum renewal, evaluation of teaching, graduate and faculty supervision, and academic leadership program initiatives in higher education settings. This work is often conducted by a group of educational leaders, hired to strategic positions, working on specifically supported intuitional initiatives.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

As a method of supporting the strategic needs of the institution, educational leadership supports strategic capacity building of campus-wide expertise that also supports the development and evaluation of curricular and pedagogical changes, addresses key issues of strategic alignment, and supports the integration of educational leadership practice and scholarship for educational leaders. It is research informed, evidence based curricular and pedagogical leadership with particular attention to educational innovation, research design, and dissemination.

## WHAT CAN WE DO

Complex institutional contexts mean that educational leaders work within, and across their Faculty or institutional context. This could include activities such as redesigning curricula, assessing program level learning outcomes or graduate attributes, ensuring that programs align with the requirements of external accreditors, to name a few. In order to support this work, institutions need to offer focused and institutionally supported professional development.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Teaching is not just something we do. It requires the development of expertise in order to be able to make decisions based on evidence rather than hunch. Evidence-based educational leadership supports staff and students as decision-making and curriculum development is done using the available literature, creating a robust process.

*Many SoTL scholars are already influencing others to work towards shared goals in the classroom, in the curriculum, in their disciplines, and in the public sphere*

(Miller-Young, et al., 2017, p.3)

Building educational leadership capacity is not for everyone. Instead, this is for those who are trained, and strategically tasked with high stakes decisions around pedagogical practice and curriculum renewal. Using literature informed, empirically supported research, Educational leadership supports the development and evaluation of curricular and pedagogical changes.

Supporting educational leadership begins with local professional development for those who are interested. These positions are often supported through governance changes and funded at the institutional level. Key institutional support includes aligning promotion, tenure, and merit criteria with differentiated work load allocations.

How to develop institutional capacity for educational leadership ...

- Hire and train educational leaders
- Create a community of SoTL scholars, and educational leaders
- Provide institutional resources to support SoTL and Educational Leadership, including finances and dedicated time
- Empower the educational leaders to make curricular and pedagogical decisions.

*Faculty are most influenced by colleagues within their close, significant networks such as departments and workgroups*

(Roxå & Mårtensson, 2009)

## REFERENCES

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## NOTES

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