

# Sustaining University Leaders: From Emotional Labor to Institutional Wellbeing

Higher education leaders face intense, often invisible, emotional demands leading to burnout and institutional instability. This infographic outlines the problem and evidence-based solutions for a sustainable leadership environment.

## THE HIDDEN TOLL OF ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP



### The Invisible Work: What is Emotional Labor?

Managing your emotions to meet professional expectations, like projecting confidence during budget cuts.



### The Individual Cost: Burnout and Health Decline

This invisible work leads to emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and physical health problems.



### The Institutional Cost: Leadership Turnover

Leaders leave, creating costly transitions (up to \$300k+ for a president) and instability.

### CASE STUDY: Department Chairs (Ohio State University)

Focus of Work	Time Spent Weekly
Emotional & Relational Work	15-20 hours

## BUILDING SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP: AN INSTITUTIONAL GUIDE



### 1. Make Emotional Work Visible

Acknowledge emotional skills in job descriptions and create forums for leaders to discuss challenges.



### 2. Redesign Roles for Sustainability

Implement team-based leadership models (e.g., co-chairs) to distribute emotional burdens.



### 3. Invest in Wellbeing & Skills

Provide coaching on emotional intelligence and offer sabbaticals for administrative renewal.