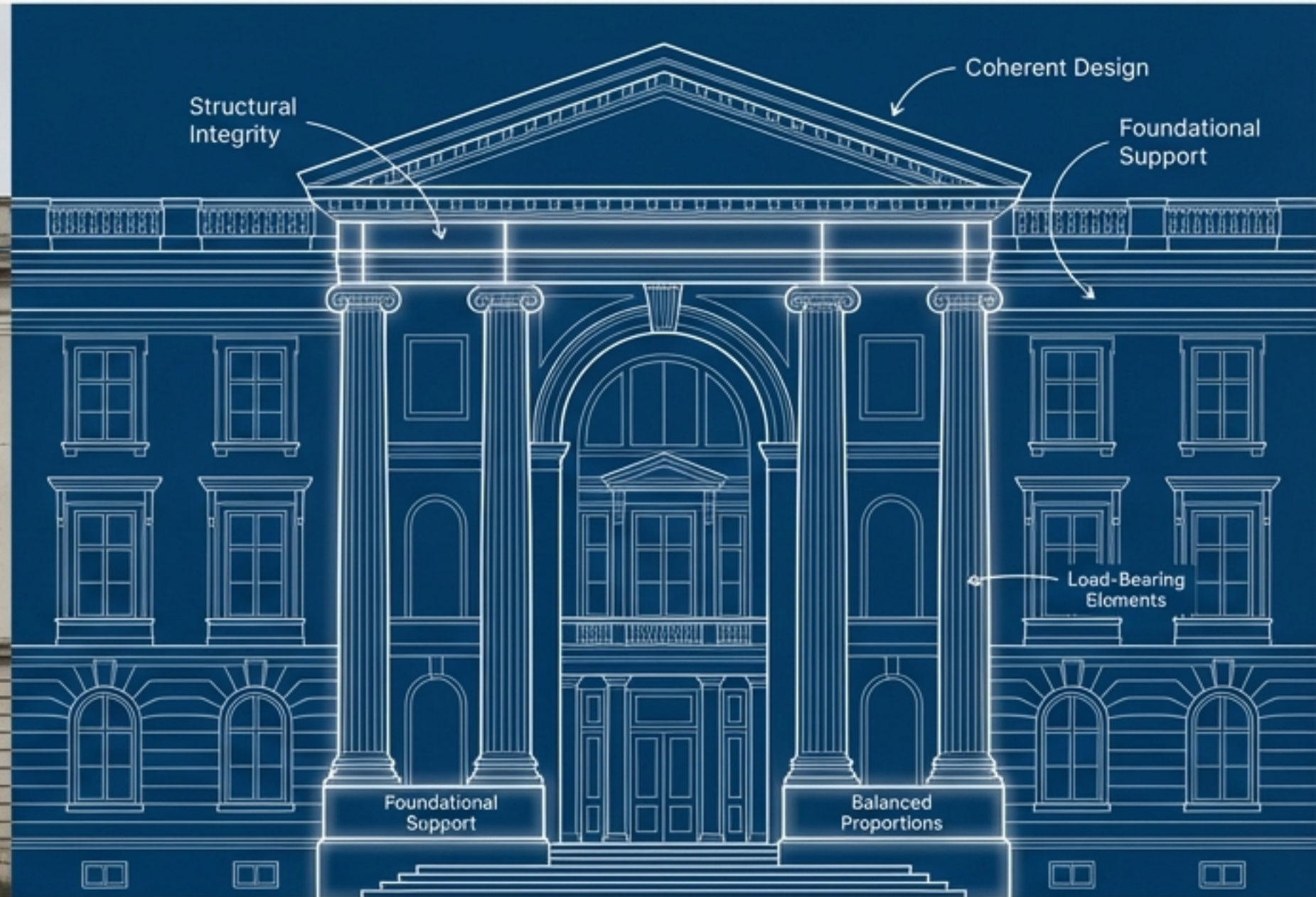


We Wrote the Book on Management. Why Are Our Own Houses Crumbling?

An argument for moving from passive observers to active stewards of our institutions.



The Inhabitant



The Architect

The Threat is Real: 'Managerialism' is Reshaping Our Universities

Managerialism refers to the application of corporate management techniques, metrics-driven decision-making, and market logics to academic institutions. It's not just 'management'; it's a specific ideology.



Metrics Dominance

Obsession with **quantifiable outputs** (graduation rates, research dollars) often **disconnected** from educational quality.



Centralization

Shifting decisions from faculty governance to **administrative hierarchies**. (Source: Ginsberg, 2011)



Marketization

Treating **students as customers** and academic programs as product portfolios. (Source: Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004)



Efficiency Imperatives

Prioritizing **cost-containment**, sometimes at the expense of the **core mission**.

Does This Look Familiar?

The Symptoms of Managerialism in Practice.



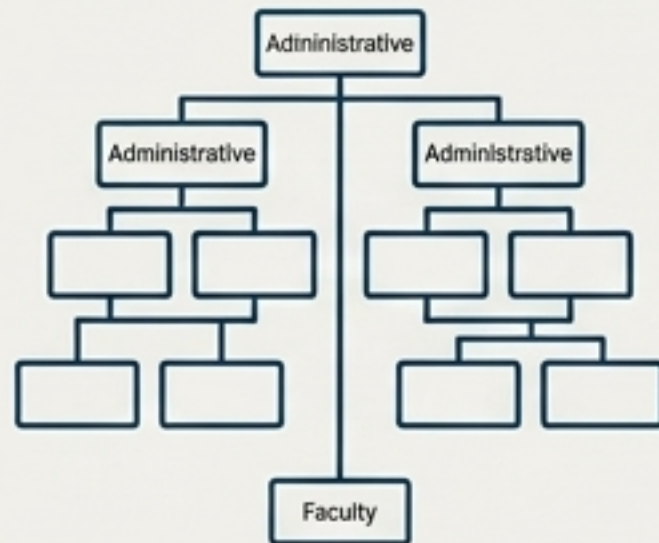
Strategic Proliferation

Strategic plans become long, aspirational lists, confusing planning with actual strategy. Hundreds of "action items" lead to a lack of focus and strategic incoherence. (Source: Mintzberg, 1994)



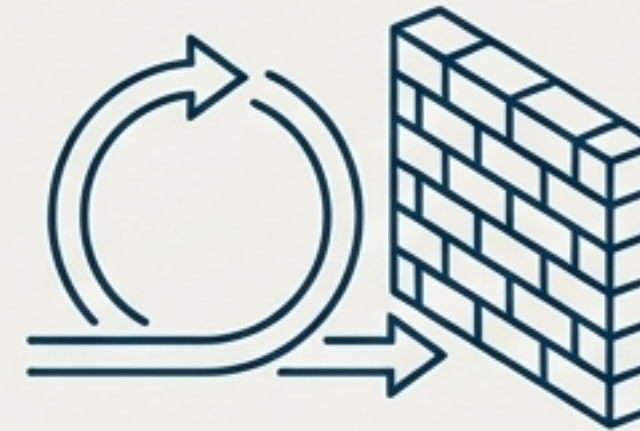
Performative Metrics

"Performance dashboards" and "data-driven decisions" are mandated, sometimes with little understanding of measurement validity, leading to potential metrics gaming and goal displacement. (Source: Espeland & Sauder, 2007)



Administrative Expansion

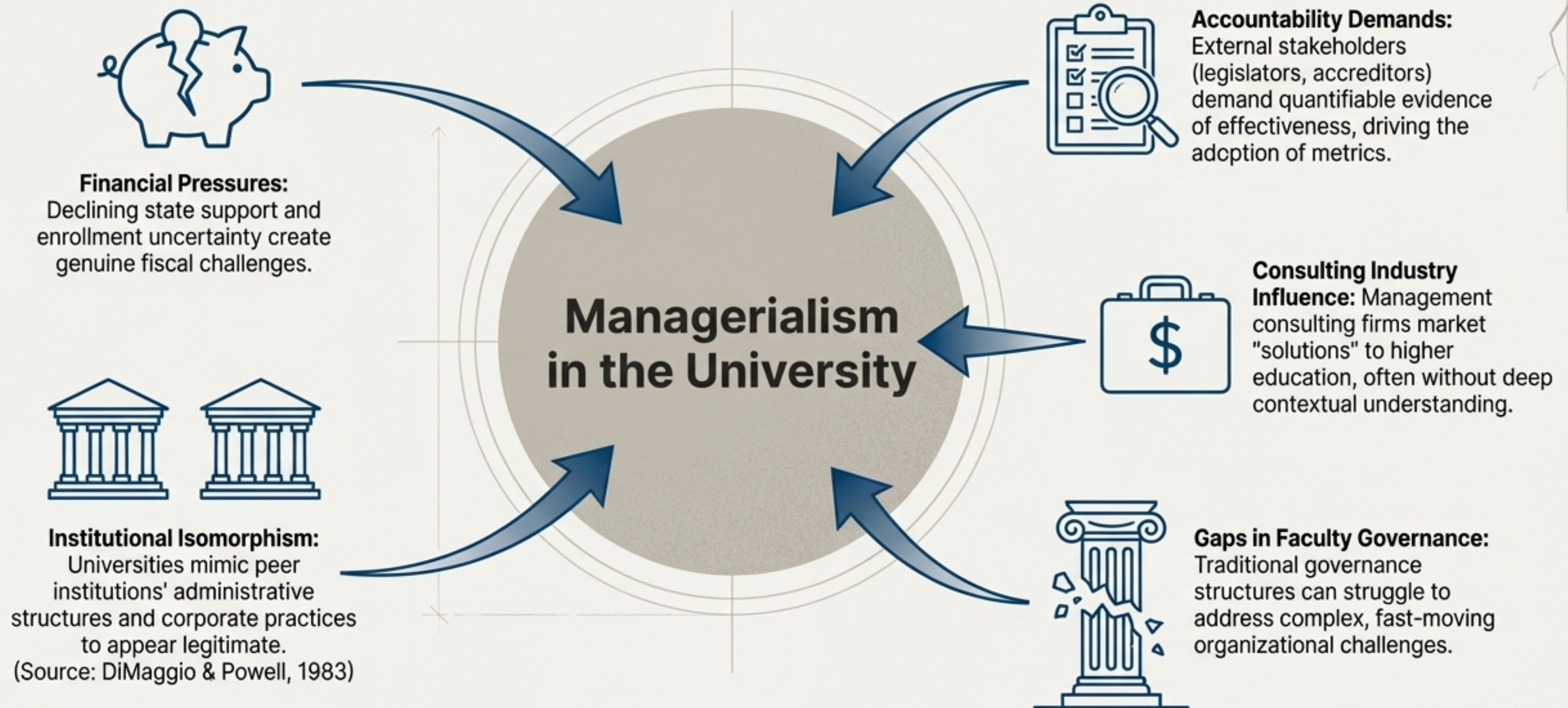
A significant growth in administrative positions (assessment coordinators, strategic initiative directors) relative to faculty, often in the name of efficiency. (Source: Ginsberg, 2011)



Failed Change Initiatives

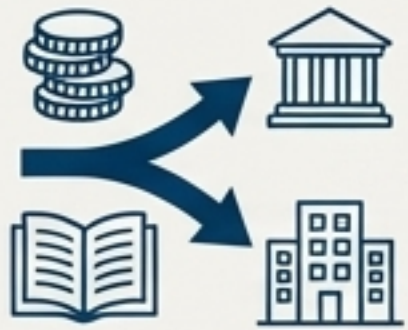
Top-down reorganizations that ignore institutional culture and workflow, predictably leading to resistance and implementation failure. (Source: Kezar, 2001)

Why is This Happening? Managerialism is a Response to Real Pressures.



The Damage is More Than Financial. It's Corrosive to Our Mission and Our People.

Organizational Impacts



Resource Misallocation: Finite resources are diverted to administrative expansion or failed initiatives instead of instruction and scholarship.



Goal Displacement: The focus shifts from educational quality to hitting simplistic metrics. (e.g., incentivizing enrollment growth over learning rigor).



Erosion of Epistemic Foundations: Institutional decisions appear disconnected from available evidence and expertise, devaluing specialized knowledge.

Individual Impacts



Learned Helplessness: Repeated, failed initiatives lead to faculty disengagement and passivity. (Source: Seligman, 1972)



Workload Intensification: Poorly planned initiatives offload implementation details and coordination burdens onto faculty.



Loss of Professional Respect: Frustration grows when decisions are made in domains where faculty possess deep expertise, but that expertise is ignored.

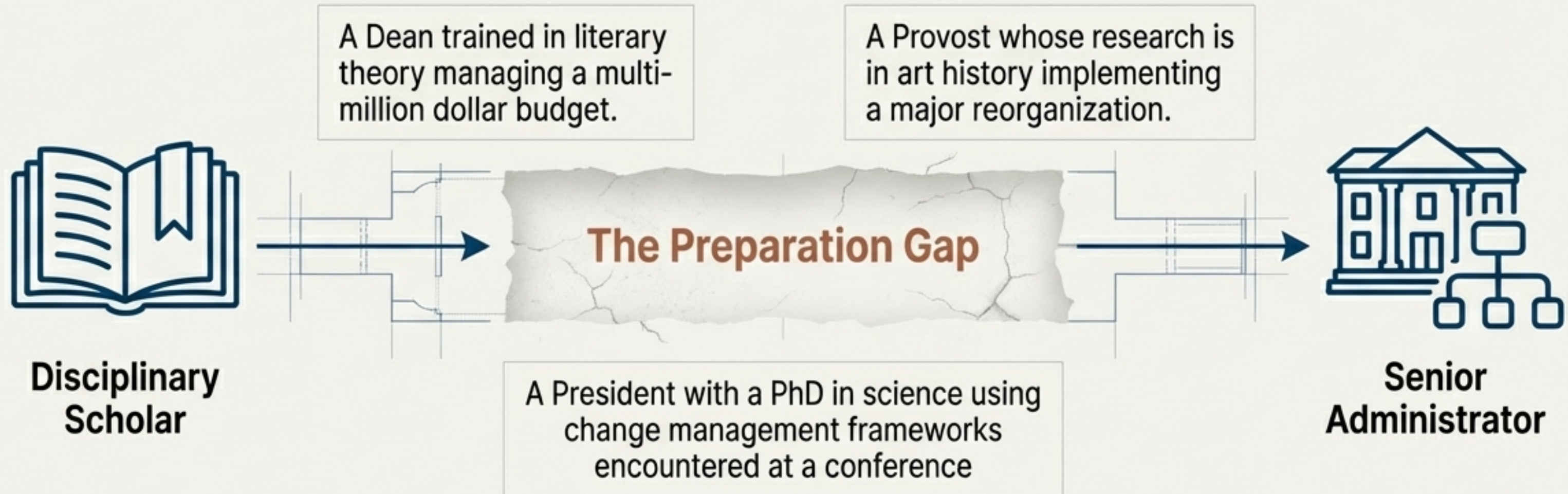
The Great Irony: We Are the Experts in the Room, Yet We Remain Silent.



- * We critique corporations for poor strategic execution, yet accept aspirational lists as “strategic plans.”
- * We research organizational change failures, yet watch our administrators repeat documented mistakes.
- * We teach the dangers of metrics gaming, yet tolerate crude metrics that distort our educational mission.

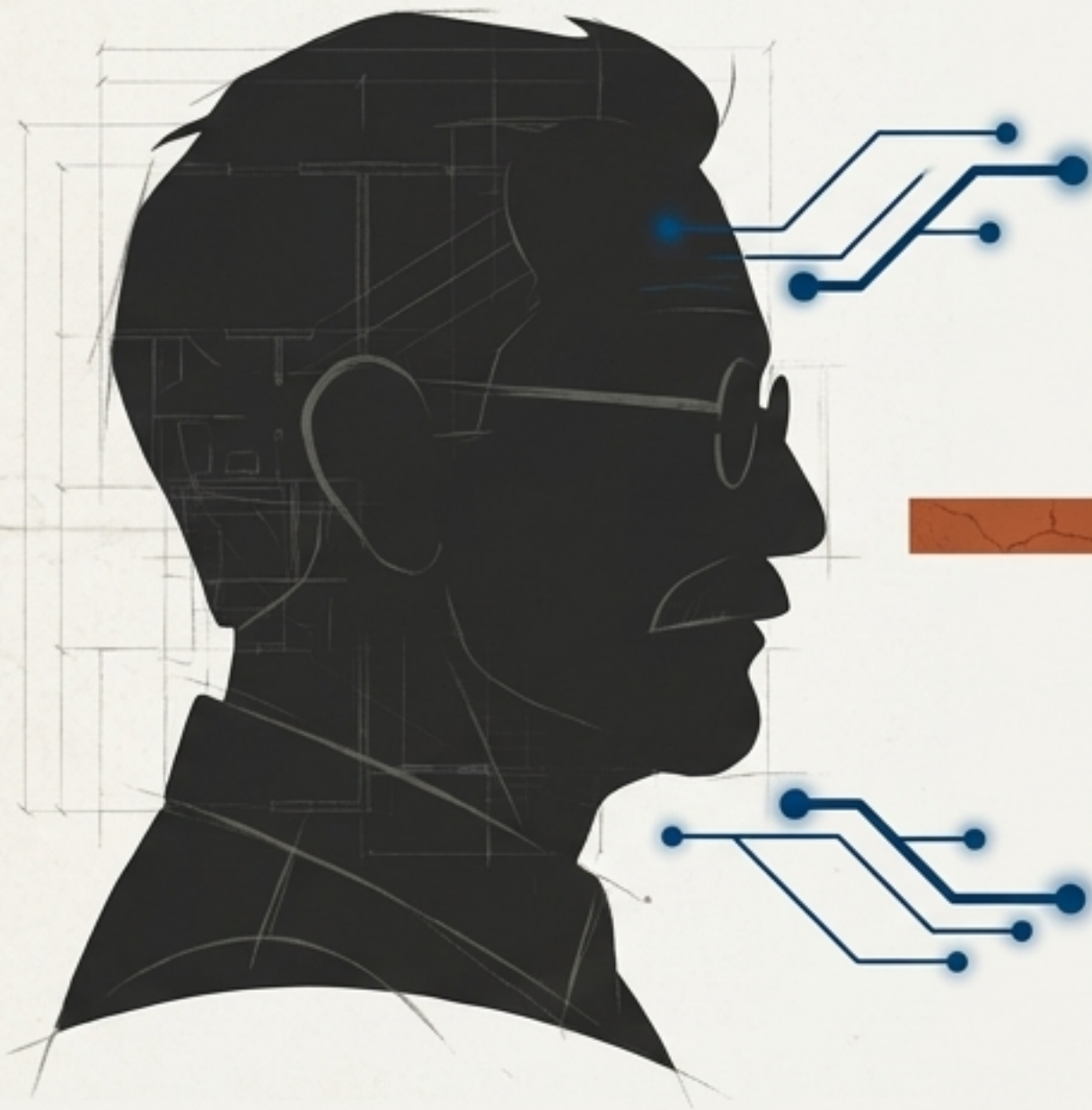
A Systemic Flaw: The 'Administrative Preparation Gap'.

Many senior university leaders are accomplished scholars in their fields (humanities, sciences) but often lack formal, systematic training in management, strategy, or organizational design.



This creates a critical situation: management authority is centralized in roles not always staffed by individuals with extensive management training.

The Root Cause Isn't Fear. It's Our Professional Identity.



Disciplinary Knowledge

Something to be researched and taught.



Abstracted from Context

Applied to corporations, not our own institutions.



The Result:

- We see flawed institutional management as an “administrative problem,” not our professional responsibility.
- There is no perceived obligation to deploy our practical capability in our own organizational context.
- This creates a dissonance between our professional expertise and our institutional experience.

Consider a Medical Analogy...



- > *“If medical faculty observed hospital administrators making clinical decisions contradicting medical knowledge—prescribing treatments research shows are ineffective, ignoring evidence-based protocols...
...and remained silent because ‘patient care is what we teach, not what we do,’ we might recognize this as problematic professional disengagement.”*

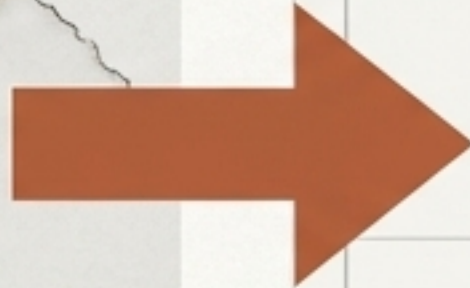
Why is our silence different?

The Way Forward: An Identity Transformation is Required

From: The Disciplinary Expert (The Inhabitant)



- Views management as abstract knowledge.
- Observes organizational problems passively.
- Focuses on research and teaching.



To: The Institutional Steward (The Architect)



- Views management as applied capability.
- Actively diagnoses and solves organizational problems.
- Accepts responsibility for the health of the institution.



What Stewards Do: Demand Evidence-Based Processes.



Name Concerns Professionally

Move from private complaint to public, constructive engagement. Frame critiques with expertise: "As someone who teaches strategy, I see a potential flaw in this plan's logic..."



Offer Evidence-Based Alternatives

Don't just critique; propose better solutions grounded in research. (e.g., an alternative reorganization based on sound organizational design principles).



Insist on Procedural Justice

Advocate for decision-making processes that are transparent, inclusive, and fair. This builds legitimacy and acceptance. (Source: Tyler & Blader, 2003)

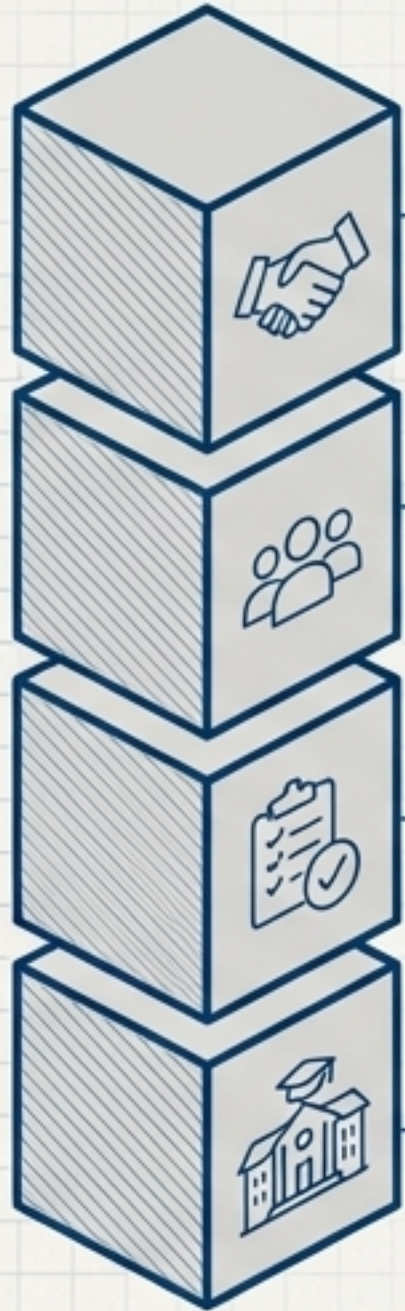


Map and Deploy Internal Expertise

Before hiring external consultants, ask: "Who on our faculty already has world-class expertise in this area?"

Building a Stronger Institution: Systematically Develop Management Competence

Four strategies for founding a solid management foundation



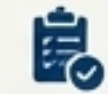
Establish Internal Consulting Mechanisms

Create formal channels for administrators to access faculty expertise on organizational decisions.



Promote Faculty Management Literacy

Offer workshops for all faculty on university finance, strategy, and organizational design to enable more informed and effective governance.



Advocate for Competence-Informed Appointments

Argue for matching administrative assignments to demonstrated competence, not just scholarly seniority.



Business Faculty-Led Executive Education

Design and deliver custom management training for your university's deans, chairs, and provosts on topics like university budgeting, strategic planning, and change management.

A Call to Action for Business Schools: Practice What We Teach.

The legitimacy of our field depends on demonstrating that management expertise matters. Our own universities are the first and most important test case.



Reward Institutional Contribution

Revise tenure and promotion criteria to explicitly value and reward the application of professional expertise to university challenges.



Legitimize Applied Research

Treat rigorous research on higher education management as a valuable scholarly contribution.



Model Engaged Citizenship

Senior faculty must lead by example, serving on key committees and demonstrating that such engagement is a legitimate professional practice.

A Call to Action for You:

Reclaim Your Professional Agency



Volunteer Your Expertise: Join the budget committee, the strategic planning task force, or an administrative search. Don't wait to be asked.



Engage Constructively: When you see a flawed process, speak up. Offer your expertise as a resource to improve it.



Build Coalitions: Talk to your business school colleagues. A collective professional voice carries more weight than individual complaints.



Educate Your Peers: Help faculty from other disciplines understand the principles of sound management to strengthen shared governance.

The Choice is Not *Whether* to Engage, But *What Kind of Professionals* We Choose to Be



If we will not apply our expertise to improve our own organizations, we implicitly suggest that management knowledge makes limited practical difference.

But if we become active stewards, we demonstrate through practice what we profess in theory: that competent management matters, and that expertise can build better institutions.