

Letter from past attendee sent to Amit Mrig, President, Academic Impressions

Dear Amit-

Please share this and use it for future iterations of the Advanced Leadership Development in Higher Ed Conference. Potential attendees should hear from someone that has been through the experience:

I wish that I had been able to take part in such a soul-searching, learning experience when I was a junior faculty member. I think you will find many of the workshop activities, readings, and networking opportunities very beneficial to your development as a leader. You mentioned that you hope to expand your “toolkit,” and that is a good takeaway from this Institute -- there were many useful tools that we practiced with, and regardless of how much reading, etc., you’ve done on Leadership to date, if you’re like me it is not your area of expertise, nor do you have time to make it so. This Institute provides the highlights on the scholarship of the field as you practice putting it into action. Pat and Clint were the workshop facilitators, and they were great. Compassionate, great story tellers, tough, experienced, and good humored. They made everyone in the intimate-sized group feel safe -- even as we felt challenged.

I think you will find your toolkit and your understanding of yourself and others will be significantly enhanced by the experience. I had 14 of my own colleagues anonymously evaluate my leadership using the 360 survey. It was a lot to ask of them, but the information was invaluable and Clint and Pat each met with me to discuss the results. It was rewarding to have experts identify my leadership strengths -- and weaknesses -- and help me consider how best to improve my skills moving forward.

I left the Institute energized as I face my “crucible moment” as I consider moving from faculty/department Chair to potential Dean or Provost -- positions I never used to think I aspired to, but now I realize how important it is for people with emotional intelligence, integrity, and leadership to “step up” and accept responsibility for moving an institution forward. I was so motivated by the Institute that I’m offering a January course for students in Leadership -- and together the students and I will further delve into the literature and practice leadership skills. I will continue to reflect on my own leadership development as I develop the course materials (much of which I will adapt from the Institute) as I give the students an early start on this lifelong journey.

One lesson that sticks with me is that there is no particular formula for effective leadership, because each potential leader has a personal style that is influenced by his/her own life journey -- and we bring different strengths and weaknesses to the task. But how we come to understand ourselves -- and those around us -- will make us better leaders.

Good luck to you!

Ellen Goldey
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