

# EXCELLENCE *in* ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

*By the National Center for Principled Leadership & Research Ethics  
at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

*photo:* Jeremy Thomas

*design:* Aaron Robinson



EXCELLENCE *in*  
ACADEMIC  
LEADERSHIP



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ACADEMIC  
LEADERSHIP

**Scenario 1:**  
The other person is  
totally off base,  
confused, neurotic,  
stupid and/or just  
generally wrong.

**It's likely some  
combination of  
the two.**

**Scenario 2:**  
The other person  
might have a point; you  
could be mistaken or  
have misunderstood.

Whichever it is, **you** are in an  
unpleasant situation.

Reality: *The only conduct you control is your own*



First...



You need to know — and be clear about —  
some things about yourself and your situation.

Self-Knowledge







**A** Emotions are contagious.  
**most contagious.**

***And aggression only escalates.***

## Academic Environment



*"...their special position derives from a duty which imposes special obligations of self-restraint... in the exchange of betwixt them and the professoriate respect for the opinions of others..."*



AAUP Statement of Principles, 1940

# Academic Environment

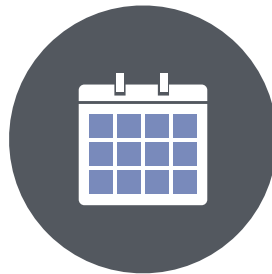
Academic  
Freedom

Star  
System



*"Well, sure it's  
sleazy and  
unacceptable,  
but it's not  
misconduct."*

## Long-Term Relationships



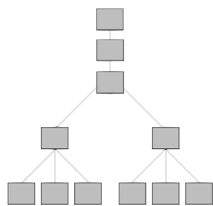
## Collegiality



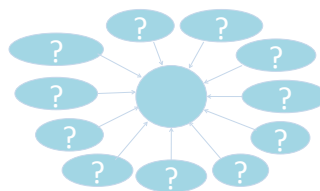
## Purpose



Mission



Role



Constituencies



Why?

*Why are you  
doing this job?*





Note:

If the leader does not  
step into the role,  
someone else will.



## Becoming an Authority Figure



As An  
Authority  
Figure

- Academia's general ambivalence about authority
- Real vs. perceived power
- Amplifying effects
- Decentralization
- Bifurcated constituencies
- Ambiguities in environment, policies, practice, etc.



As An  
Authority  
Figure

- Changed relationships
- Being an authority figure
- The persona pendulum
- Donning a leadership persona

## Thinking About Personas



Which **you** do you need to be, and **when**?

When you're responsible  
for the good of the whole,  
it isn't about you:

---

It's about the *role*, the *institution*,  
and the *mission*.



## Becoming an Authority Figure

1. It's about the institution and the mission.
2. Develop good boundaries.
3. Listen. Listen. Listen.
4. Build relationships and trust.
5. Learn to apologize, when needed, and mean it.




**You can train people to be  
bullies or to abuse the system.**





What  
mes  
do y  
to se



National Center for  
Principled Leadership & Research Ethics


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### Testing Yourself

Challenges to Your Boundaries and Authority

*How would you respond in these statements?*

1. Hiring Committee Member: "There are stories I could tell about hiring committees I've been on in the past."  
Yes
2. Faculty Member (upon receiving evaluation feedback): "I see Mark doing the same thing all the time. Are you having this conversation with him, too?"  
Yes
3. Hiring Committee Member: "If you don't address the fact that some of our committee members were being discriminatory, I may be forced to go public."  
Yes
4. Staff Member: "I have a cousin who is an attorney."  
Yes
5. Faculty Member: "There's no telling what I could do if I go off my medications."  
Yes

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2020



What words will  
you use so that  
your message is  
received?



Humor can **backfire**.



Consider  
respons

to take  
up.



It's about the **institution**,  
the **role**, and the **mission**!

## Testing Yourself



What message(s) do you want to send back?



What words will you use so that your message is received?



Humor can **backfire**.



Consider when **no** or minimal response is the best response.



Avoid escalation of aggression — seek to take the tone **down**, not **up**.



It's about the **institution**, the **role**, and the **mission**!

SPENDING TIME PUTTING OUT FIRES  
SIGNALS A NEED FOR THOUGHTFUL ACTION.



# NCPRE Academic Unit Diagnostic Tool (AUDiT)

*Rubric for identifying vibrant units, warning signs, and challenged units*

ncpre National Center for Principled Leadership & Research Ethics Academic Unit Diagnostic Tool (AUDiT): Edition A

Total Score: Green column - Yellow - Red

| Vibrant Units (0 to 5)  | Warning Signs (0 to 3)  | Challenged Units (0 to 5)   |
|---|---|---|
| <p>— Respectful dealings among colleagues, dealing with differences and disagreements openly; inclusive, welcoming</p> <p>— Openness, transparency, effective shared governance</p> <p>— Culture of excellence and quality; strength of candidates an expectation for all hires</p> <p>— Support, mentoring for faculty, students alike; recognition that different people have different mentoring needs; equitably shared workloads</p> <p>— Open discussion of ideas and research; high productivity</p> <p>— Distributed service responsibilities, aligned with faculty strengths, with awareness of uneven burdens</p> <p>— High quality of communication—willingness to listen, compromise, deal with problems openly</p> <p>— Curricular innovations, adaptations to meet changing student, campus, career needs</p> <p>— Leadership has high expectations, uses policies evenhandedly, makes decisions, builds community</p> <p>— Collective vision of unit goals and priorities, aligned with institutional mission</p> <p>TOTAL _____</p> | <p>— Complaints disproportionate to other units, campus</p> <p>— Email and/or social media wars, harassment, silos, conflict aversion</p> <p>— Weak or ineffective hiring, lack of diversity, frequent requests for transfers, departures</p> <p>— Weak P&amp;T practices; many terminal associate professors</p> <p>— Declining scholarly indicators (productivity, PhDs, PhD placement, time to degree...)</p> <p>— Financial disarray</p> <p>— <i>Ad hoc</i> practices; irregular or unclear policies; seeking desired answers from different offices; hiding problems</p> <p>— Enrollment declines, lack of curricular innovation</p> <p>— Conflict, miscommunication, and disrespect between groups; generational discord; externalizing problems; bimodal evaluations</p> <p>— Limited or shifting sense of unit goals and priorities</p> <p>TOTAL _____ (subtract)</p> | <p>— Serious misconduct: discrimination; sexual; financial; criminal; research; etc. (arrests, lawsuits...)</p> <p>— Culture that suppresses or hides problems; punishes reporting; faculty schisms, battles, flareups</p> <p>— Repeated inability to hire and/or retain quality faculty, staff; absence of diversity, or even a commitment to it</p> <p>— Toxic or unwelcoming atmosphere, especially for junior faculty, underrepresented groups, students</p> <p>— Scholarly standing below university's; uneven within unit</p> <p>— Departmental business at a standstill; in gridlock; unproductive or nonexistent unit meetings</p> <p>— Lack of transparency, hidden agendas, uneven application of policies; faculty involve students in disputes</p> <p>— Curricular stagnation outdated curriculum; lack of student interest in offerings</p> <p>— Weak or autocratic leadership; different messages to different audiences; meddling by previous leader of unit</p> <p>— Scattered individual priorities without shared purpose</p> <p>TOTAL _____ (subtract)</p> |

ethics centers | ncpredin

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EXCELLENCE in  
ACADEMIC  
LEADERSHIP

Nothing happens in isolation



Structural, cultural, financial,  
interpersonal, scholarly, and  
leadership problems interact.

Solutions and Approaches

How can you stop fighting fires...





## Solutions and Approaches

...and build a better future?

Leadership Development

Gathering Data

Analyzing Performance

Transforming Culture

## Vibrant Academic Units



**Student Learning**  
Appropriate  
quality, volume



**Scholarship**  
Research/creative  
work at institutional  
standards, with impact

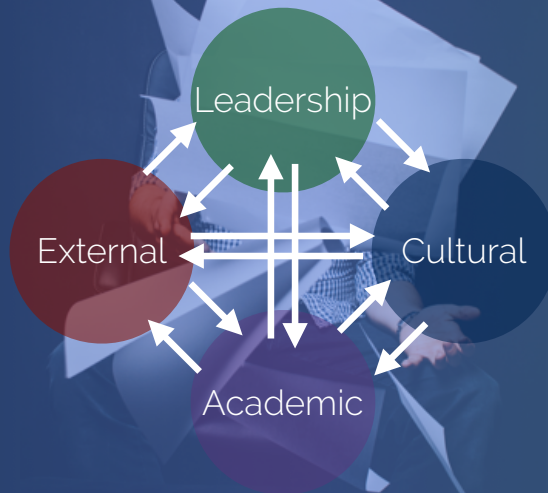


**Service, Outreach**  
Contribute to  
institutional mission

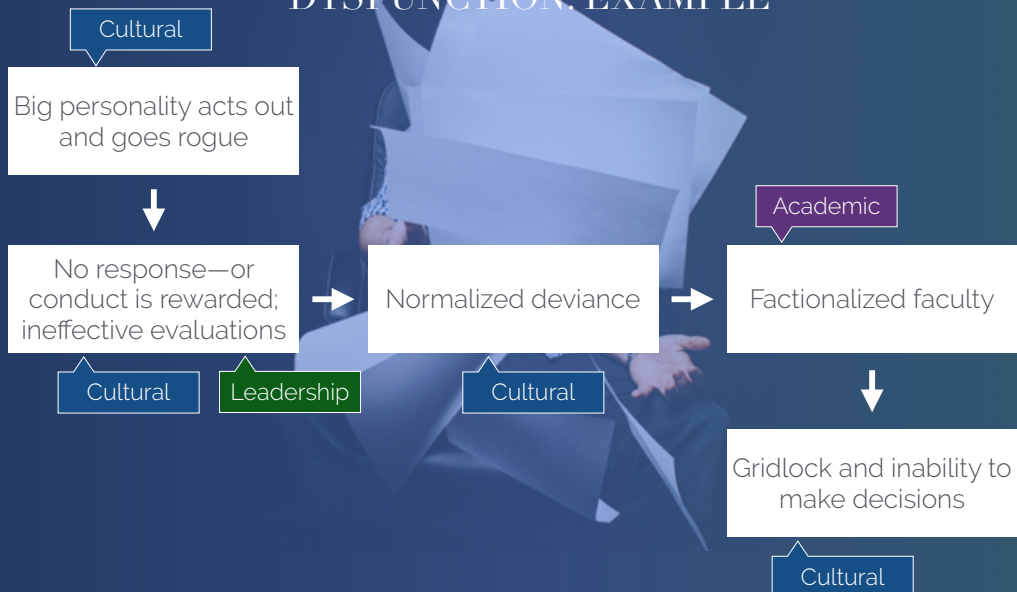


**Governance & Culture**  
Ethically, legally,  
fiscally responsible;  
healthy working  
environment

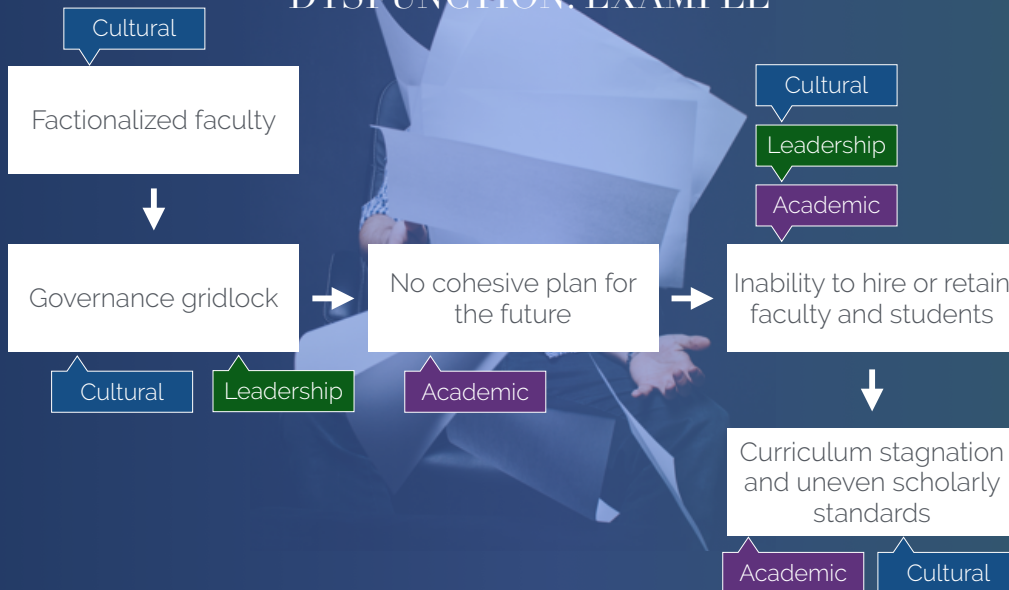
## DYSFUNCTION



## DYSFUNCTION: EXAMPLE

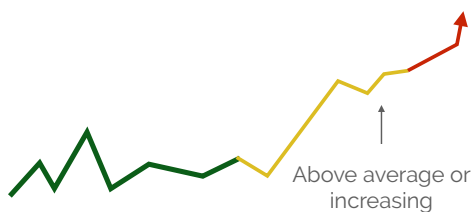


## DYSFUNCTION: EXAMPLE

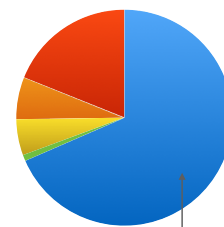


### Dysfunction - Culture

#### Quantifiable HR Measures

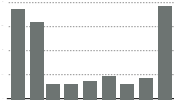


- ▲ Staff, faculty, student transfers
- ▲ Departures, unsuccessful retentions
- ▲ Hiring yields, failed hires
- ▲ Contingent faculty proportion, turnover
- ▲ Terminal associate professors
- ▲ Supplemental pay requests, demands
- ▲ Complaints, grievances



Disproportionate distribution of enrollment re: faculty

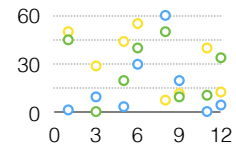
## Quantifiable Measures



**Bimodal Evaluations**  
(e.g., publications,  
student evaluations)



**Financial Disarray**



**Ad Hoc-ery**

## Indicators

### Quantifiable

|                         |
|-------------------------|
| Hiring (quality, yield) |
| Retention, transfers    |
| Enrollment trends       |
| Demographics            |
| Scholarly productivity  |
| Complaints, grievances  |
| Financial elements      |
| Serious deviations      |

### Qualitative/Subjective

|                             |
|-----------------------------|
| Leadership shortcomings     |
| Silos, internal factions    |
| Ad hocery                   |
| Random hiring pattern       |
| Lack of cohesion            |
| Favoritism, in/out groups   |
| Conflict, conflict aversion |
| Social media and email wars |



## Vibrant Academic Units



### Student Learning

Appropriate  
quality, volume



### Scholarship

Research/creative  
work at institutional  
standards, with impact



### Service, Outreach

Contribute to  
institutional mission



### Governance & Culture

Ethically, legally,  
fiscally responsible;  
healthy working  
environment

## Cultures of Excellence

Our premise is that excellence is  
more than *what* work is done, it also  
encompasses *how* work is done:

with rigor, reproducibility, inclusion, and integrity.



# stretch break



# Managing Difficult Conversations



Manage  
yourself



Develop  
your skills





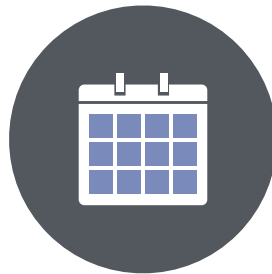
## Difficult Conversations

What  
situations  
give you  
heartburn?

Do the people  
involved have  
anything in  
common?

What is it?  
Can you  
articulate it?

## Long-Term Relationships



***Scenario 1:***  
The other person is  
totally off base,  
confused, neurotic,  
stupid and/or just  
generally wrong.

***It's likely some  
combination of  
the two.***

***Scenario 2:***  
The other person  
might have a point; you  
could be mistaken or  
have misunderstood.

Whichever it is, ***you*** are in an  
unpleasant situation.



Reality: *The only conduct you control is your own*



## Outcome?

Tell the  
person off?

Never deal  
with him or her  
again?

Solve a  
problem?

## GOAL:

Layer professional skills *over* your  
personality and reactions.

## GOAL:

*Layer professional skills over your personality and reactions.*

### 1 Know your conflict comfort and style

Write a response to each of the statements below.

1. When do you do well in difficult situations involving conflict?
2. What makes you nervous? What do you like it?
3. What have you seen others do well that you would like to have how to do?
4. When do you still need to improve?
5. How (specifically) do you plan to do that?

KLINGHOFF

## GOAL:

*Layer professional skills over your personality and reactions.*

### 1 Know your conflict comfort and style

### 2 Gain specific skills

### 3 Practice, so they're accessible when needed



Develop your  
skills



Learn a little social psychology



Listen well, ask good questions



Align with others



Develop good personal scripts



👉 Egocentrism bias

🔄 Reciprocity norms

👹 Sinister attribution error



Sinister  
Attribution Bias

Never attribute to malice that  
which incompetence will  
explain.

*Knoll Corollary*

Never attribute to  
incompetence that which  
temporary inattention or  
miscommunication will explain.

A background image showing a student with long brown hair, wearing a white shirt, sitting at a desk and reading a book. The image is overlaid with a blue gradient. The text "Trust MATTERS" is written in a large, white, serif font, with "Trust" in a script font and "MATTERS" in a bold, all-caps serif font.

# Trust MATTERS



Build Rapport,  
Trust

🔊 Listen

🔊 Listen

🔊 Listen

? Ask questions

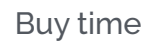
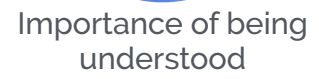
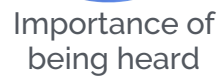
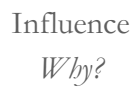
## Exercise

“Uh huh” (nodding)

“Tell me more about that.”

“Help me understand more about....”







Persuasion  
*Negotiation*

# ?????

*Negotiators who ask more questions get better results.*

- ? *How good are your questions?*
- 🔊 *How well do you listen?*



Persuasion  
*Emotions*

Good moods promote creative thinking and openness to ideas.

People process information differently in different moods.



*Emotion is a self-fulfilling prophecy.*

## Go-to Questions

*"Can you show me?"*

*"Can you help me understand?"*

*"Is this right?"*

*"Just to be clear, you're suggesting...?"*

- 1 As a mark of a person who learns and cares about learning
- 2 To avoid cognitive errors (sinister attribution bias)
- 3 To prevent problems, defuse aggression spirals

### Moving to the And Stance (inspired by William Ury)

Rephrase each of the following prompts to use "and" instead of "but" without changing the fundamental meaning.

1. The first five pages are very good, but your organization and argument deteriorate after that.

2. If I show you how able to assist, your answer for a day off, but you will be about as off that day already.

## Aligning with Others

4. This really shouldn't be turned into a legal situation, but we don't have a good solution yet.

5. I'm very supportive of your candidacy, but I don't think I will be able to write a letter for you.

## Aligning with Others

- 🎧 Improves audience attention, retention
- ⚙️ Changes *your* alignment
- ☀️ Reduces conflict, aggression spirals
- 🔄 Takes constant practice!



Personal Scripts

Words you have prepared,  
in advance, and practiced,  
for predictable situations.

## Personal Scripts

### Preemptive

- 1 Speaking regularly about values & mission
- 2 Building it into a habit to ask questions about others, their interests
- 3 For anticipated events: You know it's coming (feedback, evaluation, difficult conversations)

### Reactive

- 4 Buying time to think
- 5 Calling a pause in a topic or discussion that is getting off the rails, too heated
- 6 Turning the tables to the other/s: asking for solutions
- 7 Noting positives
- 8 Agreeing to disagree

## Some Useful Scripts

*"I need some time to reflect. Perhaps I could get back to you in about 20 minutes?"*

*I recall there is something about that in the policy manual. Let me review that and get back to you."*

*"I'm so rushed right now, I couldn't do this justice. I'll carve out some dedicated time Wednesday afternoon."*

*"This will affect others as well as just you. As soon as I have had a chance to speak with each, I will decide."*

## Tone is Essential



Polite



Quiet



Respectful

# Assertion, not aggression.



## More Useful Scripts

*"I am interested in your success. It is my duty to share a candid evaluation with you so you can assess and adjust going forward."*

*"I'm not comfortable discussing that."*

*"Let's agree to disagree for now and both go have a good think about this. Let's try again tomorrow."*

*"I hear what you're saying and I respect how strongly you feel."*

## Concepts, Phrases to Excise

~~*"You have to understand..."  
or "You need to..."*~~

~~*"You'll just have to trust  
me on this."*~~

~~*"I regret that you're  
unhappy with my  
decision."*~~

~~*"This is as hard for me  
as it is for you."*~~



## Validated Surveys: SOURCE & CAIR



*Assess Climates*



These are not  
**engagement** or **employee  
satisfaction** surveys



They measure **perspectives** and  
**perceptions** of **key reportable  
dimensions** of the  
**organizational environment**

### SOURCE

*Research Integrity Climates*







*Analytics*

-  RCR Resources
-  Regulatory Quality
-  Integrity Socialization
-  Integrity Norms
-  Advisor-Advisee Relations
-  Lack of integrity Inhibitors
-  Department Expectations

### CAIR

*Accountability and Personal Respect*

-  Psychological Safety
-  Interpersonal Accountability Climate
-  Conflict Resolution
-  Institutional Harassment Responsiveness

# NCPRE Results Analysis Engine DATA

SOURCE: 23  in database

Faculty  
researchers  
and scientists

**13K**

Graduate  
students in  
research

**8.7K**

Postdoctoral  
researchers

**1.9K**

Staff  
researchers

**5.2K**

Undergraduate  
or non-research  
grad students

**3.2K**

CAIR: 3 

**744**

**557**

**100**

**365**






**17**



*ncpre*



SOURCE  
*Analytics*

-  Web-based tool for understanding results
-  Analysis for institution; individual units within it; by roles
-  Ability to interact with data in multiple ways
-  Accessible data
-  Data summary at different levels



*ncpre*



**Benchmarking power comes from  
competitive instincts of human beings.  
We can harness that to improve.**



*ncpre*



**Measurement opens up  
opportunities to *act.***



*ncpre*



A photograph of two people, a man and a woman, sitting at a table in a meeting. They are looking at each other and talking. There are laptops and papers on the table. The image has a blue overlay.

**People and structures interact in an institution to create and maintain healthy, ethical professional environments.**



*ncpre*

A photograph of a theater stage with a blue curtain and wooden walls. The stage is empty. The image has a blue overlay.

*Depersonalize* conflict



 *ncpre*

EXCELLENCE in  
ACADEMIC  
LEADERSHIP





## Two Hard, Leveraging Changes

00:02

Spend the first two minutes of every interaction just making sure you have understood the other party's perspective.

*No arguing back!*



Replace "~~but~~" with "and" in your vocabulary and phrasing.

*You can win the battle  
and still lose the war.*

Focus on principles and facts.  
*Don't let it be about you.*





Manage for the good of the whole.

*Change the script by  
changing your lines.*

We create relentlessly practical programs,  
assessment tools, and resources.



### Leadership Development

- Academic leaders and faculty
- Lab leaders and lab members
- Early career professionals



### Climate Assessment

- Research Integrity: SOURCE
- Interpersonal Accountability and Respect: CAIR
- Academic Unit Diagnostic Tool: AUDIT



### Resources

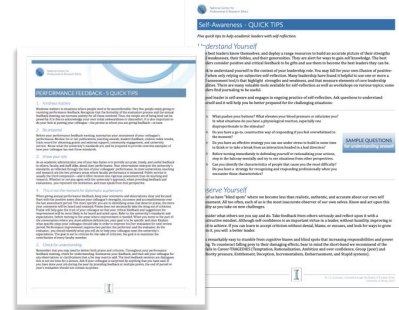
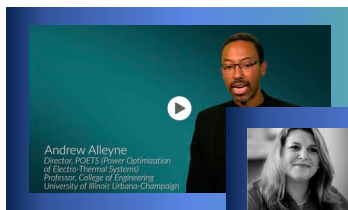
- Leadership Collection
- Videos, expert interviews
- Quick tips, case studies



ncpre

## NCPRE Leadership Collection

*Collection of resources for developing yourself, motivating, and leading strategically*



### Focal Areas

1. Developing Yourself
2. Leading and Managing a Unit
3. Leading Beyond the Unit

### Collections



Just-in-time (now!)



Deep Dive (deep knowledge)

### Updates

The Leadership Collection is regularly updated with new resources  
<http://ncpre.csl.illinois.edu>



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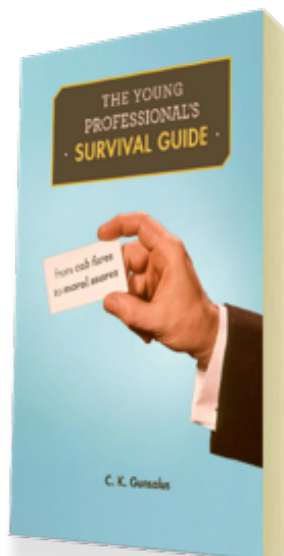
# Responsibility



Personal



Institutional



*Thank you!*

