

# Strategic Thinking

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# Leadership in a University

Ed Lazowska, University of Washington

"Being the president of a university is a lot like being the caretaker of a cemetery: You have a lot of people under you, but none of them seem to be listening."

William R. Brody

President, Johns Hopkins University, 1996-2009



- *Choose* a few priorities, in line with strategic directions and competitive advantages
- *Communicate* these priorities clearly and compellingly
- *Grease* it - facilitate good deeds
  - Chase and create opportunities
  - Creatively invent ways to make it possible to do things
  - Make priorities real by moving resources and energy
  - Visibly recognize and reward success

# Strategic Thinking

- Congrats on becoming CEO of CS, Inc.
  - Only *you* have the whole view. Think long!
- Leadership
  - Set vision, prosecute mission, take care of people
  - *Glory is not a conserved quantity* – G. Tryggvason
  - Power is never given, only taken
- If you lack strategic training / experience
  - Get an Advisory Board with it
  - Read / study leadership / business
- Hiring, tenure, retention: 40-year impact



Northeastern University

College of Computer and  
Information Science

# New Chairs Meeting CRA Snowbird Meeting 2010 Panel on Strategic Thinking

Larry Finkelstein, Dean





# Strategic Thinking

- Develop a set of strategic directions which are in alignment with
  - Institutional goals
  - Department strengths
  - Growth in the discipline
  - Other factors, such as local considerations, e.g. Healthcare and BioTech in Boston
- Be prepared to answer the question:
  - In what areas will your department achieve excellence (by any reasonable measure)



## Leadership

- "Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen – A. Keith
- Chairs have a complex balancing act –
  - Need to engage in a process of shared governance with the faculty, but not be afraid to make decisions
  - Must work with other chairs in a collaborative fashion while still making a strong case for your own program



## Future Issues

Rapid changes in the university ecosystem present a set of new leadership/management challenges

- Online Learning
- Increased interest in interdisciplinary research and education especially at the graduate level
- Managing joint appointments
- Increased focus on both cost containment and revenue generation
- ....

Chairs will play the most critical role in responding to these challenges