

Short Description

This presentation shares information about the Resilient Leaders Development Programme and the experiences of UK academic leadership development with the intention that this will benefit all those who are seeking to develop authentic leaders to enable their organisations to progress and prosper in challenging times. The presentation will combine evidence from interviews with academic leaders mapped against the Resilient Leader's Elements to illustrate the leadership development being introduced in UK universities.

Detailed Abstract

UK higher education is perceived as currently being in a state of huge flux and even chaos. The “old order” of a traditionally elitist system funded by central government has been broken down and replaced with mass participation and student fees. This has led to an increase in marketization and government regulation for which academic leadership is general under-prepared. Leadership in UK universities has traditionally been conferred on those with a strong research background and there is little sense of talent development or support for progression to leadership roles. Very often this results in chaotic leadership, poor people management and a sense of confusion compounded by a turbulent macro-environment.

In amongst the confusion and chaos, there is a very real need for our universities to develop values-led, authentic leadership in order to progress and prosper in the new order. I have been working with colleagues for a number of years in building a model of authentic “resilient” leadership which is aimed at balancing both what you do as a leader and who you are as a leader. The Resilient Leaders Development Programme (RLDP) is an online programme which is particularly suited to the situation of UK higher education at the moment. It provides the ability to develop clear vision in amongst confusion and constantly changing government policy; it supports decision making which is consultative but not paralysed by analysis – which all too often happens in academic environments. The RLDP tool also helps leaders to balance both duty of care to others with supporting oneself alongside developing authentic, strong leadership presence which focuses on serving of others and the greater good of the organisation.

The RLDP tool consists of 4 elements – Clarity of Direction; Awareness; Leadership Presence and Resilient Decision Making which are grouped into 2 overarching themes: What I Do and Who I Am. Each element then highlights further key themes which enable leaders a degree of granularity to assess their current performance and abilities and identify areas for development.

As an academic leader in UK higher education, I have been using the Resilient Leaders elements for a number of years. The process that I have worked through, supported by coaching has led me to clarify vision and direction; identify how I can best take care of myself as well as others and led to a recognition that my strengths are positive but need to be balanced in order for me to function effectively and at my

best. Following my own experiences and the opportunity to become an accredited consultant for the RLDP, I have started to use the RLDP tool with colleagues in my university and I am now expanding this to academic leaders in other UK universities. I have spent some time interviewing academic leaders in UK universities and this presentation will highlight pertinent comments that they have made that link directly with the development opportunities provided by the RLDP – for example around learning what leadership is and how to set authentic vision and direction whilst still dealing with a lot of the issues that are particularly problematic in UK universities today.

This presentation is focused on sharing the experiences and information about both the RLDP tool and UK academic leadership development with the ILA community with the intention that this will benefit all those who are seeking to develop authentic leaders to enable their organisations to progress and prosper in challenging times.