

Provost Experiences Reflections and Advice From a Former Number Two on Campus



BOOK DETAILS

- Author : Larry A. Nielsen
- Pages : 402 Pages
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BOOK SYNOPSIS

Don't look for the answers on the bookshelf. There is scant literature devoted to the Provost-ship - for which the author advances a number of hypotheses - so, until this informal and autobiographical account, there has been little for aspirants or new appointees to draw on for guidance or to provide a feel for what the role entails. Larry Nielsen offers a highly personal account of his tenure as Provost of North Carolina State University, from his unexpected invitation by the Chancellor to act as interim Provost, to the events that forced his resignation four years later, and brought him unwanted notoriety. In a fast-paced, self-deprecating style he invites the reader to share the activities that crowded his schedule, the symbolic character of the role, its opportunities to shape policy, and its limitations, as well as the joy and satisfaction he derived from making a difference in people's lives and the institution. We see him in action, and get a sense of the role, as he addresses problems large and small. He shares insights on the governance of a large public institution, on how monies are allocated, and funds made available for strategic initiatives. By the end of the book, we gain an understanding of the myriad roles of the "number two" position of the institution, responsible for the direction and functioning of all its academic and curricular affairs, that Larry Nielsen characterized for himself as "the University's stay-at-home Dad." He concludes the book with a look back at the Provost's job from his renewed perspective as a faculty member, further demonstrating the truth of his assertion that "where you stand depends on where you sit." This is an entertaining and insightful read for anyone who wants to get a glimpse of how a large university functions, as seen through the eyes of an ultimate "insider." For those interested in taking on the highest administrative positions in higher education it offers a window into that world, including the perils to which incumbents can be exposed when their actions become front-page news.

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