

As my professional positions and contexts have changed, I found that my leadership is dynamic. I continue to grow and learn about leadership through the people with whom I work and learn. I admit to being an avid reader, devouring books on leadership and exploring my own lessons learned through blogging. However, one particular book has stuck with me. In my opinion, the book - [Daniel James Brown's *The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics*](#) is not a story of how the gold was won. To me it is a book about leadership – what it takes to build a team and be a member of the team. I use the tenants of the book as a framework for my philosophy of leadership and how it frames taking risks and making changes to sustain quality programs.

Building a solid boat, coaching the team, providing direction, and rowing forward achieve the goal of winning the race. As a leader, I must be nimble, moving across all roles, understanding that the boat must run true by building a community comprised of talented individuals who are nurtured to be their best, regardless of their position. I must know when to provide direction and when to allow the strengths of individual members to take the helm. As a leader, there are many times when one needs to pick up an oar and not just coach or not serve as the coxswain, but actually in the boat, assisting with the rowing. A successful leader must model the behavior that is needed to be successful and I must be willing to roll up my sleeves and put my back into moving the boat forward.

In these times of change within higher education, our teams constantly need to be supported so that they can be the best they can be. We need to be looking ahead at what is to come and position ourselves to be ready to move confidently in that direction, This means taking risks,,,.which I believe has been a hallmark of my career. I have been willing to make decisions based on data and context that have stretched what we have always done. Those times have been challenging and have required me to be at my best, willing to assume the responsibility of the consequences of those risks – be they the outcome we anticipated or not. In any case, being ready to take next steps based on the outcome.

And those outcomes of risks more often than not require change. A change in direction, a change in organization, a change in recognizing what is going to not only support our constituents but what is going to help us grow and sustain our position. A leader – the boat builder, the coach, the coxswain or the rower – all have a hand in making those calculated changes and I am willing to be part of the race. I believe that it is my responsibility as leader to anticipate how risks influence outcomes and how outcomes result in change and that my team will be looking for me to facilitate and support the new directions.

And the new directions – if carefully planned and implemented – should be undertaken with an eye toward sustainability. As a leader, I must have the end in view – know not only that we will complete the race but will be able to sustain the momentum for continuous growth and productivity.

So, my philosophy is summed up by saying the I believe I must build a community where solid teams can be built. And that a solid team is one in which individual talents and strengths are used to advantage the whole. Where diversity is not only embraced but lived through our actions and our words. My responsibility is to cultivate those individuals and help them reach their potential. And I do that through relationships built on trust. As a leader, I need to be willing and able to jump into any position on the boat in order to maximize our talents and achieve our goals. It requires risk taking, making changes, and at the end of the day, recognizing what it takes to sustain a thriving College

