



ACADEMIC COMPUTING AND
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COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



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Leadership @ All Levels

Some years ago, I was preparing for one of my first [Educause](#) presentations which required me to write a bio for their website. I was a new manager, and this was an exciting experience and opportunity. Once I had a good draft, I decided to get feedback from one of the higher-ranking IT Directors at my institution. Well he sure did give me feedback, but it wasn't what I expected.

He pulled me aside and said that I shouldn't be referring to myself as a "leader" or "leading" anything. He said that there was only one IT leader at an institution (the CIO) and that it might reflect badly or confuse people if I used that term. As you can imagine, I was in a bit of disbelief. I not only felt dejected but wondered if my core thoughts about leadership were wrong. Was it true that there was only one real leader?

So, I decided to get a second opinion...

I walked into my boss's (Glenn) office and told him about the situation and asked him what he thought. Glenn was an author, former collegiate athlete, institute director, Dean of Students, motivational speaker, and pillar in the Detroit community. So, in terms of leadership, he had quite a bit of experience and perspective.

Glenn smiled, and said "everyone has the ability to be a leader. You don't have to have a high-ranking title to be a leader, you just need to exhibit the characteristics that make a leader." He continued, "we need to have leaders at all levels of our organization. That's really the only way that we'll be successful." He said, "can you imagine if we only had one leader out there? How would we get things done? Who would work with our students? Who would get things done for our community?" He went on to say, "the word leader is much more than a title. It's about how you can make a difference and about how you can help people around you."



I think Glenn's words pertain to many of the things we are seeing today. There are many complexities affecting our campus like new IT challenges, Coronavirus, shifting budget landscapes, etc. These are not times where one person has the answer. Instead, we need all our teams, our leaders at all levels, to engage, be active, and contribute to the future success of our organization and campus.

Recently, many of you answered the call for volunteers for our upcoming strategic initiatives. At the same time, many are currently serving on large-scale projects that affect our division, campus, and CSU-System. Additionally, we have team members who are gaining new professional development in the areas of leadership and leading change so that they can lead from where they are. These are all great examples of leadership at all levels.

As we go forward, I strongly encourage you to ask yourself what are you doing to lead from where you are? How can you make a difference? How can you help the people around you? How can you role model the type of leadership you'd like to see in others?

-Brandon

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name "Brandon".

