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The Blogging College and University President: Academic Leadership in the Age of Web 2.0

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Academic Leadership Journal

Introduction

With the rise of Web 2.0, the Web has become a truly participatory media. The growth of what has been alternately referred to as consumer or user-generated media (content) has been hailed as being truly revolutionary in nature. From the perspective of Jeffrey Cole of the Center for the Digital Future at the University of Southern California: “Tools on the Net, from blogging to videos, let anybody be a publisher and journalist. It lets anyone distribute their ideas potentially to tens of millions of people. It’s totally reversed the whole history of mass communications” (opinion cited in Kornblum, 2006, n.p.). So dramatic has been this paradigm shift that in December 2006, the editorial staff of Time Magazine named “You” as the “Person of the Year.” The magazine recognized that the collective efforts of tens of millions of individuals were fast reshaping the Internet and the way we live our lives through the use of Web 2.0 tools such as blogging (Grossman, 2006).

Blogs are certainly at the forefront of the Web 2.0 movement. Blogging has been alternatively categorized as both “the next big thing” (Gallo, 2004) and an “Internet Wasteland” (Anonymous, 2003). In a nutshell, a blog can be differentiated from a website in that it is an easier to create and update web vehicle, usually simply by typing into a preprogrammed interface. From a definitional perspective, a blog refers to an online journal that can be updated regularly, with entries typically displayed in chronological order. While blogs now encompass not only text, but video and audio as well, it is generally accepted that if the individual posts/items/articles that cannot be linked to separately via a permalink (rather than just linking to the whole site), then the site in question is not a blog. Blogs are also commonly referred to as a weblog or web log, with blog actually being the short form of these terms. Blog is also a verb, meaning to write an article on such an online journal.

There are currently 70 million blogs in existence today, and the blogosphere (the sum of all blogs) is growing at a rapid rate, with over 120,000 blogs created on a daily basis (Sifry, 2007). Mortensen (2004) chronicled that blogging is following the same development pattern as the Internet itself. Whereas in the early days of the Internet, access was difficult and limited to academicians, researchers, government officials, and other elites, the rise of the World Wide Web and the development of browser technologies enabled the Internet to widen its audience and reach, while greatly changing – and perhaps decreasing – the quality of the content and interactions online. With the wide availability of blog creation software tools and blog hosting services, no longer does one need specialized computer knowledge and resources to create content online.

Yes, the blogosphere is a place where teenagers pour out their hearts about loves lost – and found. A place where employees blog about their coworkers – and their bosses. A place where athletes blog about what’s right – and wrong – about their team. A place where pet lovers blog about why their dog is the most wonderful in the world. Yet, it is also a place where corporate and public sector executives are finding a new way to communicate with their stakeholders and the public at large (Wyld, 2007a). And according to Dan Hunter of the University of Pennsylvania, blogging: “is not a fad...It’s the rise of amateur content, which is replacing the centralized, controlled content done by professionals” (quoted

in Knowledge@Wharton, 2005, n.p.).

Previous academic research on blogging in academia has examined how this Web 2.0 tool is being used to promote learning and communications with today's college students (Glogoff, 2005) and in fostering research dissemination and collaboration amongst university faculty (Loving, et.al, 2007). Building upon prior research that has examined the extent of blogging amongst both corporate (Wyld, 2007b) and public sector executives (Wyld, 2007a), this article looks at the present state of blogging among college and university presidents. It discusses the benefits – and potential downsides – of blogging, both for the institution and the individual leader. The article then presents a roadmap for higher education leaders to begin their own journey into the blogosphere and concludes with a discussion of what all this means for academic leadership.

The Blog Survey

In this project, the researcher sought to identify the current state of blogging amongst college and university presidents. As of November 2007, through intense Internet search, the author identified a total of twenty-four college and/or university presidents who currently have active blog sites. These are enumerated in Table 1.

Table 1: College and University Presidents with Blogs

Institution	President	Start Date	Blog Site
Arizona State University	Michael Crow	December 2005	http://www.michaelcrow.net/
Avila University	Ronald Slepitz	March 2007	http://www.avila.edu/President/presblog.asp
Bethany College	Ed Leonard III	July 2007	http://swedesprez.blogspot.com/
Cambrian College	Sylvia Bernard	July 2007	http://www.cambriancollege.ca/wordpress/
Cedarville University (Iowa)	Bill Brown	September 2004	http://www.xanga.com/billbrown
The College of Westchester	Karen Smith	March 2007	http://www.cw.edu/presidentsblog/

Colorado College	Dick Celeste	December 2005	http://www.coloradocollege.edu/welcome/presiden
Hendrix College	J. Timothy Cloyd	March 2007	http://www.hendrix.edu/president/presblog.aspx
Michigan State University	Lou Anna K. Simon	December 2004	http://president.msu.edu/desk/index.php?/
Middlebury College	Ron Liebowitz	September 2007	http://rononmiddlebury.wordpress.com/
Mohawk College of Applied Arts and Technology	MaryLynn West-Moynes	October 2006	http://blogs.mohawkcollege.ca/blog/president/
Nicholls State University	Stephen T. Hulbert	August 2003	http://www.nicholls.edu/president/presidents-mess:
Ohio Dominican University	Jack Calareso	August 2006	http://www.ohiodominican.edu/blogs/blogs/preside
Oregon Institute of Technology	Martha Anne Dow	May 2006	http://marthaannedow.blogspot.com/
Pellissippi State Technical Community College	Allen Edwards	May 2006	http://www.pstcc.edu/president/
Quest University	David Strangway	August 2006	http://strangway.blogspot.com/
Red River College	Jeff Zabudsky	October 2004	http://www.rrc.mb.ca/index.php?pid=3898
Southern	Mary	April 2007	http://www.sou.edu/president/blog/

Oregon University	Cullinan		
Towson University	Robert Caret	February 2006	http://presidentcaret.org/blog
Trinity University (D.C.)	Patricia McGuire	September 2005	http://www.trinitydc.edu/offices/president/blog/
Trinity Western University	Jonathan Raymond	September 2007	http://jonathanraymond.blogspot.com/
University of Calgary	Harvey P. Weingarten	September 2007	http://www.ucalgary.ca/news/blog/harvey
University of Washington	Mark Emmert	June 2006	http://depts.washington.edu/presblog/wordpress/
Wenatchee Valley College	Jim Richardson	August 2005	http://wvcpresident.blogspot.com/

How successful have university presidents been as bloggers? Overall, a review of the twenty-four blogs identified through this research show that they have largely been kept updated (new entries within the past month) and are well-presented. What was found amongst the blogs of these college and university officials was a wide variety of content, as these institutional leaders offered their views on both campus issues and wider news events (such as the 2007 Virginia Tech mass shootings). They also blogged to publicize the successes of people and programs in their institutions. The presidents also used their blogs to serve as an open diary on their travels and other job duties, as well as opening a window to varying degrees – on their family life.

Presidential blogging has generally received positive responses from institutional stakeholders. Take the blog of President Bill Brown of Cedarville University for instance. A screenshot of President Brown’s blog is provided in Figure 1. President Brown recently commented that: “It’s (Blogging) been a very positive experience, and that’s why I keep doing it. When I first started, I thought I’d have to come up with a treatise each time, but that’s not what people want to read. They want to hear about my family, about what I’m doing, about what I’m thinking” (quoted in Fisher, 2006, n.p.). Debbie Weil, a corporate blogging consultant, pointed out that: “Bill’s blog is great! He’s got just the right bloggy touch – informal, authentic, and an interesting glimpse into the thinking of a university president” (quoted in Cedarville University, Public Relations, 2006, n.p.). Office President Brown’s blog is drawing positive responses from students and their parents as well. The parent of a Cedarville student recently commented that: “I am impressed at your joining the blog family. What an excellent way to know the hearts of your

students” (quoted in Fisher, 2006, n.p.). Likewise, who could look at the blog of Towson University President Robert Caret and not get a sense of the man behind the office when he’s hugging the school’s mascot (as can be seen in Figure 2). Other “best in class” examples of presidential blogs are presented in Figures 3-7.

Figure 1: Blog of Cedarville University President Bill Brown

(Available at <http://www.xanga.com/billbrown>)

the personal blog of
Dr. Brown
President of Cedarville University

DESIGNED BY MICHAEL JUMPREHT

billbrown:weblog photos videos audio pulse profile subscribe!

nickys flag | page | join | sign in

billbrown
read my profile
try my webcam

Sunday, October 14, 2007

Fall break is already here. Halfway through the semester, a quarter of the way through the school year I feel like the year just started. In fact, last week I was talking to a student and asked them if the semester had started well. She looked at me and said, “Dr. Brown. We’re already in the eighth week of the semester.” Oh.

This past weekend, Lynn and I went to Pleasantville to be with April and wedding since we were given further by friends. I was invited. Just as well. I had a lot of speaking preparation and writing to catch up on. Saturday, I did attend the university play, *The Imaginary Invalid* by Moliere (absolutely hilarious), and later in the day I went to the Dayton Philharmonic concert (they performed Cedarville Dean, Dr. Steve Wintercamp’s composition, *Resolution* – incredible).

Early Friday evening, I thought I’d run to the store and on the way saw a couple of guys walking along Hwy 25 with a gas can. I pulled over and asked if they wanted a ride. I knew that the next gas station was six miles away and they had no idea what a long walk they had. They jumped in the car and I found out they were from another college near Cedarville. They left two others in the car to wait for them. One of them was a Christian and the others had been seriously learning to pray since they ran out of gas.

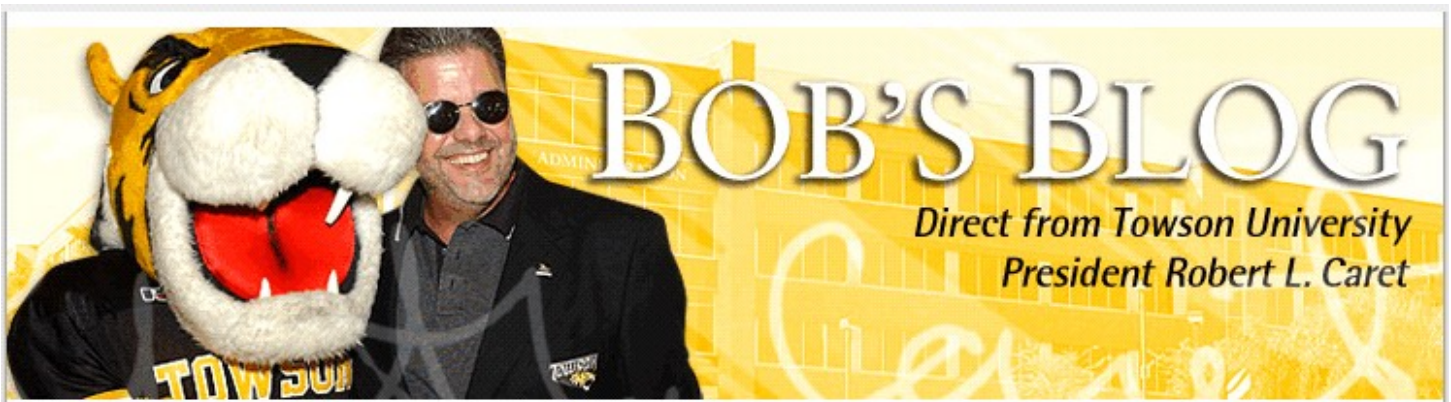
I bought them some gas, took them back to the car and started to leave but thought I’d make sure their car would get going again. Good thing I stayed. It wouldn’t even turn over so I moved my car and tried to jump start theirs but no luck.

After calling several places to get a tow, it became apparent they weren’t getting any help that night. Needless to say they were pretty discouraged. I offered to take them back to their school so they locked up the car and piled into my car. Why God allowed this to happen to them will only be known on the other side of the resurrection. But it was great being a little time to share Christ with some guys that had other plans.

Name: William B.
Country: United States
State: Ohio
Metro: Cedarville

Figure 2: Blog of Towson University President Robert Caret

(Available at <http://presidentcaret.org/blog/>)



On The Face Of It . . .

October 17th, 2007

Back in 2006, Michael Tracey, a journalism professor at the University of Colorado asked 140 students how many had seen the previous night's news or read that day's *New York Times*. A few hands went up. Then he asked how many used Facebook that day. Every hand in the room went up. Professor Tracey along with many other academicians and university administrators were amazed.

I wasn't too surprised. You may already know that I have a Facebook account and am hosting a group called TU Students. I received a fair number of inquiries from students as well as the media about my decision to use Facebook. Apparently, only a handful of college and university presidents are personally involved in social networking sites, so my participation is perceived as somewhat unique.

I have been asked "Why?" And "What's next?"

 Search

Pages

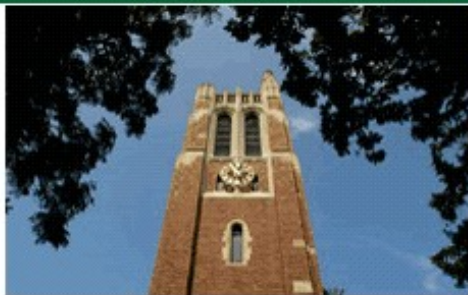
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- » [December 2006](#)
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Figure 3: Blog of Michigan State University President Lou Anna K. Simon

(Available at <http://president.msu.edu/desk/index.php>)



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From the President's Desk

Friday, October 12, 2007

Homecoming 2007 – Celebrating the heroes among us

The annual MSU Homecoming weekend begins later today with the traditional parade down Grand River Avenue, officially kicking off this year's celebrations. The theme is "Where Heroes Are Made," and Athletic Director Ron Mason will serve as the parade's Grand Marshal. Visit the [MSU Homecoming Web site](#) for more information about all of the events happening throughout the weekend.

More from the
President's Desk

Archives

- [October 2007](#)
- [Complete Archives](#)

Recent entries

- [Homecoming 2007 – Celebrating the heroes among us](#)
- [Campaign for MSU a resounding success](#)

Figure 4: Blog of Trinity University (D.C.) President Patricia McGuire

(Available at <http://www.trinitydc.edu/offices/president/blog/>)

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» Innovation.
» Integrity.
» Influence.

President Patricia McGuire

About President McGuire
Welcome
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President's Blog
Comments/Questions

President's Blog
Sunday, October 14, 2007

Peace Prize, Environmental Epiphany

We can only hope that this year's award of the [Nobel Peace Prize](#) to Al Gore and the United Nations Intergovernment Panel on Climate Change will have the effect of sparking an epiphany moment among the countless policymakers and business executives who still think that global climate change is some kind of left-wingnut fantasy. Civilization's greatest long-range challenge is the potential for dramatic social and political destabilization resulting from dramatic shifts in climate and weather patterns and their impact on agriculture, industry, international migration and the competition for increasingly scarce natural resources. The Norwegian Nobel Prize Committee stated on its [website](#), "*Indications of changes in the earth's future climate must be treated with the utmost seriousness, and with the precautionary principle uppermost in our minds. Extensive climate changes may alter and threaten the living conditions of much of mankind. They may induce large-scale migration and lead to greater competition for the earth's resources. Such changes will place particularly heavy*

Comments?
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- **Peace Prize, Environmental Epiphany**
- **Congo Women's Crisis**
- **Marion Jones, Olympian Tragedy**
- **Sputnik @ 50**
- **Justice Thomas v. Professor Hill**
- **Millions of Children Left Behind**
- **"Freedom for the Thought that We Hate"**
- **Voices of Trinity: Faculty, Alumnae**
- **50 Years Later: The Legacy of Little Rock**

Figure 5: Blog of Southern Oregon University President Mary Cullinan

(Available at <http://www.sou.edu/president/blog/>)



Dr. Mary Cullinan

PRESIDENT, SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

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[President's Home](#)

President's Blog

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Opening of the year

October 08, 2007

[Newsroom](#)

Renee Fisk recently sent a wonderful thank-you message to the campus highlighting the faculty, staff, and students who participated in making Civic Engagement Day such a great success. I have included her message below because she expresses so many of the things I want to say.

[Speeches](#)

[Final Retrenchment Plan, March 2007](#)

[Strategic Planning](#)

I don't think the SOU community fully realizes the tremendous efforts everyone has made over the past six months to recruit, support, and welcome the new students to our campus. We know individual parts but not the whole. Civic Engagement Day was one huge piece. The planning was extensive and intense—from contacting agencies to arranging transportation to ensuring students reflected meaningfully on the important role they each play in their new community.

[Community Connections](#)

[Provost & VP for Academic Affairs Search](#)

[Read More](#)

Recent Blog Entries

- [Opening of the year](#)
- [Budget Update](#)
- [SOU Grants and Contracts](#)
- [Campus Art](#)
- [Community and Communication](#)
- [Independence Day](#)
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- [COPLAC Conference](#)
- [Intermittent Summer Blogs](#)
- [End of School Year](#)
- [Traditions and Changes](#)
- [My First Year Highlights](#)

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Figure 6: Blog of University of Calgary President Harvey P. Weingarten

(Available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/news/blog/harvey>)

Notes from the President

[News](#)[Events](#)[Media Relations](#)[Publications](#)[Experts Online](#)[Communications Office](#)

Calgary Weather



Currently:
Temp 13°C
Wind 9 km/h

Quick Links

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- [Experts Online](#)
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Harvey's blog

Inside, outside (with apologies to Herman Wouk)

October 3, 2007

University presidents serve and respond to communities both internal and external to the university. It is said that presidents have struck the right balance when the university audience inside complains you are spending too much time away and the community audience outside complains that they do not see you enough. (I leave it to those far smarter than me to figure out how we ever got to a point where a measure of whether you are doing your job well is that everyone is complaining about you.)

[read more](#)

Building: So, where's the fun?

September 17, 2007

Since mid-June, I have met every second Wednesday morning with some other U of C senior administrators, the Vice-Provost Libraries and Cultural Resources, the leader of Campus Infrastructure, and the architects, designers and construction folks to review the plans for the Taylor Family Digital Library. We meet downtown in the architect's "Visioning Room" (yes, you read it right – no "Board" rooms for visionary thinkers!).

[read more](#)

Figure 7: Blog of Red River College President Jeff Zabudsky

(Available at <http://www.rrc.mb.ca/index.php?pid=3898>)

RED RIVER COLLEGE
OF APPLIED ARTS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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 - FAQ's
 - Contact Information
 - Best Practices
 - College Policies

Admin... > Presi... > President's Blog

Quick Search **GO**

Oct 18, 2007, by Jeff Zabudsky
Our Thanks to Toromont
As the picture at left indicates, I am happily holding a cheque that I gratefully received from representatives from Toromont in support of scholarships for students in our Heavy Equipment programs. On hand were Terry Harkness, Product Support Manager in...
READ MORE | 1 COMMENTS

Oct 04, 2007, by Jeff Zabudsky
Learning Innovation at Red River College
At Red River College we are fortunate to have a Dean of Learning Innovation (one Paul Little, the smiling gentleman at left) who has a mandate to explore new means of delivering education that is flexible and that often leverages...
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Sep 27, 2007, by Jeff Zabudsky
Strategic Planning

BLOG ARCHIVE

List [all blogs](#) written since...

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- [a month ago \(3\)](#)
- [two months ago \(5\)](#)
- [three months ago \(9\)](#)
- [six months ago \(30\)](#)
- [a year ago \(41\)](#)
- [two years ago \(59\)](#)
- [three years ago \(83\)](#)

A Blogging Guide for University Presidents

A Blogging Guide for University Presidents

Let's say that you – whether you are a college president or just a faculty member – make the decision, “Yep, I'm gonna start blogging today!” What do you need to do? What do you need to know? Well, the long and short of it is, not much. By using the widely available blogging software and hosting services (discussed in the second part of this report) or blog options offered as part of other software/web hosting packages, all one basically has to do is make a series of decisions regarding the basic format and structure of your blog. It begins with naming the blog, and then you progress to items such as the screen layout, archiving options, and whether to allow comments or not. This final item is particularly important, for comments provide the opportunity for readers to provide feedback to the blogger.

The present generation of blogging software is quite sophisticated and yet, remarkably user-friendly, allowing for one to have a quite professional looking blog in an hour or so – at little or no cost. Blogs can be created using a variety of free or low-cost software and/or hosting services, such as those listed in Table 2. Today's blogware gives you the ability to easily create links between your blog postings and items anywhere on the Web. Say for example you reference say your state (i.e. Louisiana) or your city (i.e. New Orleans) items in your blog, the software can help you to link to say encyclopedia entries on the subjects (like Wikipedia's entries on the items) or to their official websites. The software also

generally enables you to create permalinks that other bloggers can use to link back to a specific post on your blog, not simply the front page. Thus, if they are referencing a specific post you made in May 2007, the reader will be led directly there. The trackBack features on blogs allows a blogger to see who has seen his/her original post and has written another entry concerning it. The system works by sending a “ping” between the blogs, and therefore providing the alert. Thus, you will automatically know when someone is writing about your blog. Finally, you can elect to provide blog readers with the option to “subscribe” to your blog using RSS (Really Simple Syndication) or Atom feeds. By providing a link on your site, readers can then be provided with the content of your blog whenever it is updated. Through the use of feed “readers” or “aggregators” that work with RSS or Atom, individuals can “subscribe” to all their favorite sites and view all new updates on all their favorite sites through the reader, without having to go to each site.

Insert link to Article Supplement 9

Table 2: Major Blog Software/Hosting Providers

There are many things to bear in mind when blogging, including decisions to be made down the line as one becomes more experienced and comfortable with the media (i.e. including integrating audio podcasts or video links in your blog). However, the principal recommendation of this researcher is simply a refrain of the classic NikeTM marketing slogan – “just do it!” – if you think you have what it takes to make it in the blogosphere. One of the chief lessons to be learned from this survey of blogging amongst college and university leaders is that it takes dedication – and a bit of bravery – to take that first step into Web 2.0 and join the conversation in the blogosphere. Indeed, the leader role today is quite different than it was just a few years ago, and the need to engage in new media is a part of it. Thus, as blogging becomes more and more common amongst higher ed leaders, there will be both peer and public pressure to join in. As D. Michael Lindsay of Rice University bluntly put it: “Leaders have to spin many more plates today than they had to 20 or 30 years ago. That’s just the nature in which society grows and develops. As it grows and develops, you have more people to satisfy, more demands on your time, more expectations. It seems that those kinds of elements never go away, they just increase” (quoted in Anonymous, 2007, n.p.).

Based on an analysis of the best practices of blogging executives, across the private and public sectors, here is a brief “cheat sheet” of tips for college and university presidents who wish to enter the blogosphere.

- Tip #1 – The Admiral Stockdale Question – In 1992, Ross Perot’s running mate was the Vietnam War hero and former prisoner of War, Vice Admiral James Stockdale. At the Vice-Presidential debate, he infamously began with the rhetorical questions: “Who am I? Why am I here?” (Holmes, 2005, n.p.). While these questions didn’t lead to victory for Admiral Stockdale, they can for you. You should – at least mentally, but perhaps in your first post – state the reasons you are starting your blog, what you hope to do with it, who you hope will read it, etc.
- Tip #2 – “DIY – Do-it-yourself!”: Do not have someone else write your blog! While you may enlist assistance for any technical aspects that you feel uncomfortable with (and with the blogging tools available today, this really should not be an issue, but....), you must be the author to make it authentic and interesting to your audience.

- Tip #3 – Time Management: Before you begin your blog, know that you must make a personal commitment to have the time available to not only regularly post to your blog, but to read and respond to comments made on it (and if the comment section is managed, you – or perhaps a subordinate – must make decisions on which comments will be posted on the blog and which will not). You should work blog writing – and reading – time into your regular schedule, and if you know that you will be unavailable for a period of time, invite a guest blogger(s) to fill your virtual shoes. Remember, in the blogosphere, ten days without posts could mean the death of your blog, as readers will be drawn elsewhere in virtual space.
- Tip #4 – Be Regular: While related to the first two tips, the need to regularly post to your blog merits particular attention. In short, if you do not regularly post updated material to your blog – interesting material – whatever readership you have will quickly fade away.
- Tip #5 – Be Generous: If your blog is nothing but an exercise in self-centeredness and self-congratulation (or links to organizations congratulating you), then your readership will tire of it. Use your blog as a platform for your students, your faculty, your staff, your family (to an extent), etc. Take the opportunity to highlight special people in your university community, and let your blog be a channel for spotlighting your area, not just yourself. Provide praise, spotlight unsung heroes, highlight people in need of special help, etc. In short, do good works with your words.
- Tip #6 – Have a “Hard Hide”: You can not have a thin skin and engage in blogging. You will receive comments that may range from the thoughtful and insightful to the unwarranted to the unprintable. You will also surely be praised by some tech-savvy constituents for using a new communications medium, while others will call your office or write a “snail mail” letter to ask what’s wrong with using more established forms of communication.
- Tip #7 – Spell Check: This almost goes without saying, but it is surprising how many blog posts have spelling and/or grammar errors, and when spotted, such problems can generate satirical comments, spawn bad publicity in traditional and non-traditional media, and detract from your message. As the saying goes, “That’s why God made a spell-checker!”
- Tip #8 – You Can Give TOO MUCH Information: While it is great to be honest and open in your blog, you can do it to the extreme. Let the blog be a window into your thoughts, your work, and your travels, but remember the blunt admonition of the Anonymous (2003) author of The Blogger Manifesto, “nobody gives a s#@!\$ about what you had for breakfast” (n.p.).
- Tip #9 – Content is Not Enough: While you must concentrate on providing timely updates to your blog, making them read well, and be interesting, having good content is not enough. It is crucial that you have an easy to navigate, visually appealing layout to your blog. In today’s environment, there is a ratcheting-up of blog standards, and in a short time, one can imagine that it will be almost expected that include video and audio elements on the blog. While you must learn to walk before your run in blogging, you should seek out links to audio/video sources to go multimedia at no cost. Then, you could begin to consider recording/producing your own audio/video content to offer as posts and/or podcasts on your blog.
- Tip #10 – Be a Student of Blogging: You should make it a regular habit to spend time each day being exposed to blogs other than your own. Find favorite blogs (academic and non-academic) and

subscribe to them using a news reader or aggregator program (using RSS or Atom feeds). With these tools, you can view updates from your favorites in one place, without having to surf to multiple sites. Finally, check out the top ranked blogs (according to Technorati or ComScore), and use this as an opportunity to benchmark the best of the best.

Conclusion

Like their counterparts in the private sector, blogging offers college presidents and other senior university administrators an unprecedented opportunity to communicate directly with their constituencies. In the higher education setting, this includes students, faculty and staff, alumni, prospective students, the community, public officials, etc. However, blogging offers unique benefits to the scholar who is also an executive. Writing in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Rita Bornstein (2004), the former president of Rollins College and the author of *Legitimacy in the Academic Presidency: From Entrance to Exit*, observed that “From the moment new presidents are selected, their

utterances and decisions are scrutinized for meaning, and they quickly learn to tailor their

remarks to the expectations of different groups.” Dr. Bornstein surmised that: “After observing and studying successful presidents, I have concluded that, at every stage of

their tenure, presidents who are aware of the challenges to their authenticity retain a clear-eyed view of who they are as individuals...and fight the temptations of self-importance and stay connected to their authentic selves” (p. B16). Blogging gives all academics a unique opportunity to do just that. Henry Farrell (2005) commented that:

“Academic blogs offer the kind of intellectual excitement and engagement that attracted many scholars to the academic life in the first place, but which often get lost in the hustle.... Academic blogs also provide a carnival of ideas, a lively and exciting interchange of argument and debate that makes many scholarly conversations seem drab and desiccated in comparison. Over the next 10 years, blogs and bloglike forms of exchange are likely to transform how we think of ourselves as scholars. While blogging won't replace academic publishing, it builds a space for serious conversation around and between the more considered articles and monographs that we write” (n.p.).

There are many legal issues to be considered as we see the growth of blogging in general and the rise of blogging amongst academic officers. Certainly, there are legal issues to be considered, as there have been several high profile cases already involving bloggers who have run afoul of their employers for what they wrote in their blogs (Gilbert, 2005) and executives who have been accused of making improper disclosures or misrepresentations on their blogs (Vaas, 2005). In the higher ed setting, one's blog becomes a virtual paper trail that may indeed help or hinder one's success. Already, Tribble (2005) reported that search committees were routinely “Googling” applicants to determine which of them had blogs – and not considering those that did any further in the search process. Likewise, one scholar noted in this article, Daniel Drezner, believes that his own well-known blog (which can be found at <http://www.danieldrezner.com/>), may have indeed played a role in his being denied tenure at the University of Chicago (Butler, 2006). Since blogging is such a new activity, there are very few standards or best practices to call upon, let alone intellectual protections for an activity that some academics frown upon due to the unfiltered, non peer-reviewed nature of the medium.

The one certainty is the need to be honest in one's blogging activities. As in the private sector (McConnell and Huba, 2004), under no circumstances should a university president's blog be written by a school's public relations office or delegated to an assistant. As Steve Hayden, Vice Chairman of Ogilvy & Mather, the advertising giant that is now advising its corporate clients on blogging, recently remarked: "If you fudge or lie on a blog, you are biting the karmic weenie. The negative reaction will be so great that, whatever your intention was, it will be overwhelmed and crushed like a bug. You're fighting with very powerful forces because it's real people's opinions" (opinion cited in Graves, 2006, p. 12).

Over time, blogging college and university presidents will likely become normal, if not "the norm," and as with their private sector top executive counterparts, this will be an area ripe for practical advice and research as higher education administrators learn to thrive – both professionally and personally – in a "carnival of ideas." There will certainly be ample opportunities for future research of the types enumerated in Wyld (2007a), as we move beyond the baseline chronicling of who is blogging amongst academic leaders and into research dealing with the demographics of the bloggers and their audience, as well as the leaders' blogging behaviors and tactics.

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