

CONTINUOUS DISCERNMENT:
When to Stay, When to Go,
& How to Know



MEGHAN GRIFFIN
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THE CAO ROADMAP



Be Really Smart
Work in Higher Ed
Work Really (*Really* !) Hard
Rise in Higher Ed
Lead Well
Land the Dream Job
Own the Dream Job!
CRUSH THE DREAM JOB!
Keep crushing the dream job...?
& then what...?





... and then what?

POST-CAO OPTIONS

1

CAO FOREVER:
here, there, & timing

2

MOVING UP/OUT:
prepping for the
presidency

3

MOVING BACK:
the return to
faculty

THE FOUR TENSIONS

Academic Admin/Ops

The “never finished” maintenance: catalogs, committees, contracts, accreditation, assessment, load release, program ROI...

Executive Leadership

Cabinet, Board of Trustees, fundraising, finance, things outside your “lane” but... not, ownership at the highest level.

Academic Leadership

Faculty mindsets, change management, hiring and recruiting, fit, culture, building teams that will propel your institution into its future.

Innovation/Partnership

New sigmoid curves of enrollment and revenue, the frontier, the leading edge, where we’re going next, the FUN STUFF.



Your “WHAT NEXT” moment could hit at any time ...

OFFER

an offer that surprises you, whether it's the opportunity or the timing you weren't expecting.



TRANSITION

A transition that changes everything where you are.



CONTEXT

Contextual changes that blindside us...these are wild days in higher ed!



DECIDE NOW

Which Offers You Will Entertain

Theological Tradition / Denomination

Institution Type / Size

Location / Region

Timing Constraints

*unless

Right Side of the Demographic Cliff

Red State

Innovative / Menu of Access

Theological Position / Women

Denominational / Faith Statement

Diverse Geographic Location

Governance Structure

*



LEARN TO LOCATE DESIRE

Jesus' Question to Bartimeus

What do you want?

More importantly... Lord, what is

YOUR dream for my work?

"What is your preferred professional
future?"

"What is your preferred academic
future?"

5 Years Left

Multi-Org Solutions

Adventure

WHO I work with is more important than
WHAT I do at this stage of my career

What is the Work Requiring Right Now?

What characteristics are needed of a CAO right now? What does it take to be a CAO at *my institution* right now? What does it take to serve my president right now?

Calling & Vocation

What is the Lord asking of me right now? How is this different than what He has asked of me in the past? How is He stretching me now? Who has he brought to teach me how?

DON'T MISS THIS!

What dreams has the Lord planted in my heart that **only** I can do, and **only** from here?

DECIDE NOW
What
Continuous
Discernment
Looks Like

DECIDE NOW
what faithfulness /
obedience looks
like for you.

Until you are released, be faithful.

Handle difference in vision
privately in prayer.

People need to see healthy
leaders & healthy transitions!



You are a S O U L , not a R O L E .

Remember the story of your
calling to this work.

When we thrive > faculty thrive >
students thrive!





Discussion

STORIES

How have the need for continuous discernment shown up in YOUR role? How are YOU navigating it? Where are you now in your calling to the CAO role and to your institution in particularly?

VICTORIES

Are there times you are glad you stayed? Or glad you didn't? What encouragement can you offer others who are thinking through these questions?

STRUGGLES

If you are struggling with whether to stay or go, what kinds of supports can help you discern next steps? How can this group come alongside you in this season?

NEXT

What *is* next for you? Can you see or sense it? Has the Lord placed vision on your heart? Can you ask Him to lead and guide you in this space?



Are you
troubled?

1

Hope

2

Thanks

3

Trust