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

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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 that 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?
Until you are released, be faithful.

Handle difference in vision privately in prayer.

People need to see healthy leaders & healthy transitions!
You are a SOUL, not a ROLE.

Remember the story of your calling to this work.

When we thrive > faculty thrive > students thrive!
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