The Academic Affairs Success Framework

The Central Office Workbook

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A Four-Pillar Model for Institutional Effectiveness in Higher Education

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I.   ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

Strong governance provides the framework for decision-making and accountability across the academic enterprise. This domain emphasizes clarity of roles, shared governance, and effective oversight. *Use this checklist to ensure leadership structures support mission-driven outcomes.*

TASK	NOT STARTED	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETED
Define and Communicate a Unified Academic Vision. Align academic priorities and strategies with the institutional mission to foster shared purpose across units and departments.	☐	☐	☐
Establish Transparent Governance Structures. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of boards, senates, and councils to ensure accountability and balanced authority.	☐	☐	☐
Strengthen Shared Governance Procedures. Develop and document transparent processes for consultation, decision-making, and policy implementation.	☐	☐	☐
Align Governance Processes with Strategic Priorities. Integrate governance decisions into institutional planning, budgeting, and accreditation frameworks.	☐	☐	☐
Foster Collaborative Leadership Culture. Engage faculty, staff, and trustees in inclusive dialogue and joint problem-solving to enhance institutional trust.	☐	☐	☐
Clarify Academic Organizational Structure. Map and communicate all reporting lines, units, and leadership roles to improve operational clarity and coordination.	☐	☐	☐
Develop Academic Leadership Capacity. Provide structured professional development, mentorship, and succession planning for deans, chairs, and directors.	☐	☐	☐
Implement Leadership Accountability Systems. Create consistent performance evaluation and feedback mechanisms for academic administrators.	☐	☐	☐

Formalize Decision-Making and Delegation Protocols. Establish transparent procedures for distributing authority and enforcing policies within Academic Affairs.	☐	☐	☐
Maintain and Review Academic Policies. Ensure all academic policies are up to date, accessible, and aligned with governance and compliance standards.	☐	☐	☐
Update Faculty Handbooks and Governance Documents. Regularly revise bylaws, charters, and handbooks to reflect evolving institutional and regulatory expectations.	☐	☐	☐
Benchmark Leadership and Governance Models. Compare institutional governance practices with those of peer and aspirant institutions to identify opportunities for continuous improvement.	☐	☐	☐

DOMAIN PROGRESS SUMMARY ANALYSIS

| STATUS	NUMBER OF TASKS	GROWTH PERSPECTIVE
Not Started		Opportunities for **growth** and development.
In Progress		**Momentum** is building. Keep advancing.
Completed		Demonstrated **strength** and institutional capacity.

Interpretation Guide
- If many tasks are **Not Started (5 or more).** This signals an opportunity to strengthen foundational practices.
- If most are **In Progress (7 or more).** You are on the path forward. Consistency and follow-through will build results.
- If many are **Completed (8 or more).** Celebrate these accomplishments. Consider advancing initiatives that deepen, broaden, and enhance institutional success.

Every status point indicates progress, whether in growth, momentum, or strength.

About the Author
Juline E. Mills, PhD is a higher education leader with more than two decades of experience in academic affairs, accreditation, and institutional strategy. She has served as a senior academic administrator guiding infrastructure, accreditation, curriculum, and student success initiatives. Her work has helped colleges and universities strengthen governance, ensure compliance, and build cultures of excellence that support both students and faculty.
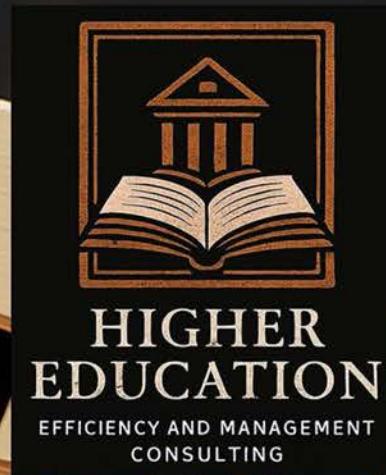
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