

HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP SERIES

The Academic Affairs Success Framework

The Central Office
Workbook

WORKSHEET EXCERPT

Juline E. Mills, PhD.

A Four-Pillar Model for
Institutional Effectiveness in
Higher Education



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Edition: 1; Publication Date: December 4, 2025; ISBN: 978-1-969945-00-7

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Citation Note: The concepts presented throughout this workbook are informed by established research and best practices in higher education leadership, accreditation, and organizational effectiveness. References are provided to acknowledge key works that align with these ideas; however, all narrative text, framework design, and interpretations are original to the author. No direct quotations from cited sources are used unless otherwise indicated.

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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establish Transparent Governance Structures. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of boards, senates, and councils to ensure accountability and balanced authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strengthen Shared Governance Procedures. Develop and document transparent processes for consultation, decision-making, and policy implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Align Governance Processes with Strategic Priorities. Integrate governance decisions into institutional planning, budgeting, and accreditation frameworks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster Collaborative Leadership Culture. Engage faculty, staff, and trustees in inclusive dialogue and joint problem-solving to enhance institutional trust.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clarify Academic Organizational Structure. Map and communicate all reporting lines, units, and leadership roles to improve operational clarity and coordination.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop Academic Leadership Capacity. Provide structured professional development, mentorship, and succession planning for deans, chairs, and directors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implement Leadership Accountability Systems. Create consistent performance evaluation and feedback mechanisms for academic administrators.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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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