

Social Change Symposium

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Title: Succession planning for academic leadership in the Australian tertiary education sector

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to explore how tertiary education institutions (TEI) can include succession planning into their current practices in order to prepare future academic leadership to address academic departures and vacancies (Washington, 2016; Mallard, 2015). A crucial component of succession planning is the ability for TEIs to prepare organisations effectively and professionally for the challenges of dealing with employee departures and vacancies (Washington, 2016; Mallard, 2015).

Succession planning facilitates a smooth leadership transition as well as ensures that academic staff are prepared to assume leadership responsibilities as needed in the near future (Class et al., 2014; Flynn, 2014). Through a well-structured succession planning program, TEIs can ensure the continuity and sustainability of their visions and knowledge (Mhlongo & Harunavame, 2017; Ahmad et al., 2015).

This study will utilise a mixed-methods research approach to gather both quantitative and qualitative data to better understand succession planning in Australian TEIs. Through this approach, I will look at how TEI's current leadership development programs or academic staff promotion contribute to TEI's succession planning. I will use the psychological contract theoretical framework to understand how academic staff expectations and the institution's expectations relate to leadership development, which can be utilised to implement the succession planning within TEIs. The study will be conducted using a multiple case study approach, consisting of two phases: phase one, a pilot study and survey, followed by phase two, a survey and document analysis.

Keywords: Leadership development, career development, promotion, academic leadership, succession planning.