

is especially problematic that such bitter pillorying of modernity frequently singles out Islam as particularly violent (86, 135) and barbaric (“hopefully benevolent dictatorship” being the best option for the “contemporary Middle East” [82]), the LGBTQ community as “wicked” and “nihilistic” (135), women as especially heartless (Hillary Rodham Clinton is labeled “Miss Abortion USA” [79]) or dull (Virginia Woolf is singled out as “incoherent” [107]), and when an example of an easy-to-understand author is needed, Jane Austen is the choice [134]), and environmentalism as mere “tree hugging” (136, 140).

A healthy skepticism about modernity—and indeed, about one’s own, personal beliefs—is highly desirable and helpful. So is a fond admiration and honest consideration of Augustine (and many other ancients and medievales). Those two attitudes together could lead to open and productive dialogue between ancient and modern thought and between various, competing schools of thought in the modern world. This book provides none of those things.

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*Realizing the Distinctive University: Vision and Values, Strategy and Culture.*

By Mark William Roche. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017. viii + 275 pages. \$25.00 (paper).

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Early in *Realizing the Distinctive University: Vision and Values, Strategy and Culture*, scholar and former university dean Mark William Roche notes the reticence many professors feel about the prospect of entering academic administration. Although some of this is clearly attributable to the desire to focus on research or classroom teaching, there is also a degree of trepidation around the responsibility for leading an institution and shaping its mission. In this highly readable and useful text, Roche offers a guide to present and future administrators by analyzing the core issues institutions face and illustrating them with personal narratives from his seventeen years of academic administration. The combination of anecdotes and scholarship provides an engaging and approachable outline for how best to define, pursue, and sustain an institution’s mission.

The central concerns that Roche lays out for the university administrator are vision, resources, and organizational culture. While he is adamant that an administrator have a clear vision, he is especially effective at noting the numerous obstacles that hinder making that vision a reality. Some of

these stem from confusing messaging over issues like the balance between research and teaching, while others stem from poor financial planning or incentives. In terms of the resources needed to pursue this vision, Roche offers helpful insights for prioritizing the use of funds and cultivating projects that are attractive to donors. Moreover, he emphasizes the faculty as the most essential resource the university has without simply instrumentalizing them.

A core strength of the text is Roche's focus on organizational culture. He rightly notes that existing culture can, at times, be an obstacle for the administrator's vision, but he also notes the pitfalls of those who seek change too quickly. Through a series of chapters on competition with other institutions, incentivizing faculty, being an accountable administrator, and building a cohesive community, Roche highlights the diverse ways that organizational culture can be transformed through transparency, persuasion, and compromise. These sections of the text would be helpful not only for current or potential academic chairs and deans, but also for faculty and staff seeking greater insight into how to work with those figures at their own institutions.

The strategic emphasis of the text might otherwise have come off as dry were it not for the personal anecdotes Roche uses throughout to illustrate his recommendations. These stories go beyond showing narrative examples of how specific approaches succeeded or failed because they also demonstrate the importance of reflecting on one's personality, experience, and values when navigating institutional politics. Roche's concrete ownership of his strengths and liabilities effectively model the sort of transparency that many hope for from administrators.

One lacuna within the text is that Roche affords comparatively little consideration to the place of students in the university. He clearly has a concern for recruitment and retention, as well as cultivating a positive relationship that might, among other things, lead to future donors, yet he offers no real reflection on how students contribute to the culture of the university. This absence is understandable, given the text's focus on the administrator's need for vision and resources, but a fuller sense of how students play a role in that vision would strengthen this already valuable text.

The intended audience of the text is university administrators (especially deans and above), and it would be most valuable to those new to these roles. Beyond this group, faculty and staff looking for ideas and approaches to negotiating with administrators may also find the book useful.

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