Review of: "Strategies to Resolve Toxic Leadership Actions in Engineering Institutions which Impede Faculty Performance and Innovation"

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What we have is a new name for an eternal problem – toxic leadership. The introduction to the paper is promising, however, because there is the mention of a 40-year study of engineering institutions. Where are the data? Where are the interviews, records, findings? Was it a qualitative or quantitative study?

The paper drifts into the usual solutions, adding only the new term of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The leadership voids described here cannot be fixed through diversity, equity, and inclusion. You have bad actors in these organizations. Bad actors last 40 years for two reasons:

1. Those affected by the bad actors are fearful of reporting their behaviors

2. Administrators are higher levels are not paying close enough attention to the data coming out of various areas— evaluations, stats on grants and funding, publications (including co-authorships of toxic leaders). Administrators are slow or reluctant to act to remove toxic leaders and the problems continue to grow.

These two reasons are the same as those we find exist in any organization suffering from the effects of "toxic" leaders. This is not new territory but that would be fine if we had more information from the 40-year study to provide more insights. And the solutions should incorporate the work from ethics and compliance that helps get at the two reasons:

How do you get people to speak up?

How do you get administrators to respond?

These are questions that management and ethics literature have been seeking to answer for decades – the list presented here does not incorporate what we already know about reining in these leaders. We need to know what they are doing and then we have to take action to stop them. We have not been successful at either because there are so few organizations willing to embrace these key responses (some of which are in the paper but which need to be referenced):

- Regular evaluations (without demographics so that those participating have some hope of not being "found out" – open-end comments should be read by administrators responsible for oversight on the toxic leaders' areas.
- Investigation processes that involve those outside the toxic leaders' areas
- Consistent and timely disciplinary action, which may include transfers, replacement of current leadership, new policies

and procedures that rein in authority to engage in retaliatory behavior to certain members of the toxic leaders' groups.

- Monitoring – before there is any need for an investigation, administrators need to audit travel expenses, subscriptions, and other expenses in the toxic leaders' areas. Often the monitoring of the mundane provides insights into leaders' behaviors and integrity. These types of tangible audits also provide the documentation should removal become necessary.

The management and ethics literature deal with the type of data that should be monitored so that the toxic leader has some checks and balances. The advance data (not what comes from an investigation) tell the story of finances, operations, and anything else can subjected to probing, poking, and then study.

The article proposes that it is writing about resolutions for toxic leadership in engineering. Study the management and ethics literature and use that backdrop to provide some depth to the resolutions proposed here. Be sure to also offer us the depth of your work and study of 40 years.