



Understanding Authority in Higher Education

Dean O. Smith

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Within the complex environment of higher education, administrators and faculty members face daunting challenges in their unique domains of institutional governance. Many of the greatest challenges arise from basic misunderstandings of authority and its limitations by administrators and faculty members alike. These misunderstandings are the primary source of disruptive confusion, mistrust, and mismanagement. Consequently, an institution's governance would improve significantly if its personnel clearly understand the fundamental principles of authority. To bring about this improvement, *Understanding Authority in Higher Education* clarifies issues of authority in an academic setting. Throughout, it introduces basic concepts of higher-education administration and then examines the limits of authority in context. Pedagogically, the book strives continuously to ascertain whether authority is used properly from a legal perspective, emphasizing the influence of academic cultural norms on legal principles and *vice versa*. But, *Understanding Authority in Higher Education* goes further than law textbooks by using real and anecdotal case studies to examine aspects of authority that don't appear in court proceedings — those that lie beyond the reach of the law. In these cases, the book explores the anthropology — the behavior and the culture — of authority in the academic environment.

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