ADE Bulletin Special Issue

Succession Planning

Call for Papers

Timeline:

* Abstracts due 9/1/2025
* Essays due 8/2026

Succession planning is a vital activity that supports the smooth transition in leadership and transfer of institutional memory and department practice at all levels of department management. Yet far too often, department leaders, from chairs to program coordinators to faculty advisors, find themselves so buried in the day-to-day minutia of program maintenance and crises of the moment, that looking beyond the next semester—must less years down the road—feels daunting if not impossible. How might we more effectively build succession planning into our day-to-day practices of program management? What kinds of practices have facilitated or failed to support succession planning? How might (can?) effective succession planning help address current threats to humanities programs and external political pressures?

This special issue of the *ADE Bulletin* invites essays that address all aspects of succession planning from policies and procedures, to the soft skills that support effective mentoring. In addition to exploring some of the more complex issues of effective leadership development and continuity planning, we especially welcome solution-focused pieces and discussions of actionable practices that draw on successful implementation in the authors’ own departments. How do these practices address the needs of the specific program they support? How might these practices be adapted for implementation in other programs? We aim to provide insight from a range of institution and program types and sizes. (e.g., research and teaching; two-year, four-year; single- and multi-disciplinary).

Department leaders from all types of backgrounds and institutions and at all career stages are encouraged to submit abstracts. We interpret “leader” in its broadest sense and welcome submissions from individuals engaged in any aspect of program or department management (e.g., program chairs/coordinators/directors, etc.). Submissions are particularly encouraged from prospective authors working at:

* Access-oriented institutions
* Community colleges
* Historically Black colleges and universities
* Hispanic-serving institutions
* Tribal colleges and universities
* Small and mid-sized institutions
* Rural institutions
* Departments undergoing merging or restructuring

Final submissions may include essays of 3,000-6,000 words, brief notes, checklists with annotations, and other resources. For example, models of department bylaws, policies, and procedure documents with annotations are welcome.

Possible topics might include

* Preparing the next generation of department leaders
* Perspectives from outgoing leaders
* Perspectives from incoming leaders
* Faculty development workshop series on leadership
* Emergency succession planning: how can we prepare for the unexpected?
* Building a deep(er) bench (esp when your program is small)
* Sustainable documentation development practices
* Where to start when you’re in the weeds
* You want to lead in the humanities: what skills do you need and how do you develop them?
* Succession planning as support for new faculty
* Strategic succession planning for survival in politically volatile times
* What to do when you’re “it” by default (alternatively: how to train the person who is “it” by default)

The *ADE Bulletin* is the refereed journal of the Association of Departments of English, published annually by the Modern Language Association. Publication is scheduled for fall 2027.

Issue Timeline:

* Abstract deadline 1 Sept. 2025
* Essay deadline 1 Aug. 2026
* Publication November 2027

Special issue editors:

* Ashley Bender, Associate Professor and Interim Chair (former BA Program Coordinator), Dept. of Language, Culture, & Gender Studies, Texas Woman’s University
* Genevieve West, Professor, former Chair of LCGS, Associate Dean of Research for the College of Arts & Sciences, Texas Woman’s University.

Submission procedures:

Manuscripts should be no longer than 6,000 words, prepared according to the ninth edition of the MLA Handbook, and submitted as a Word attachment to Janine Utell, managing editor, at jutell@mla.org. Queries can also be sent to this address or to the editors at abender@twu.edu and gwest@twu.edu.