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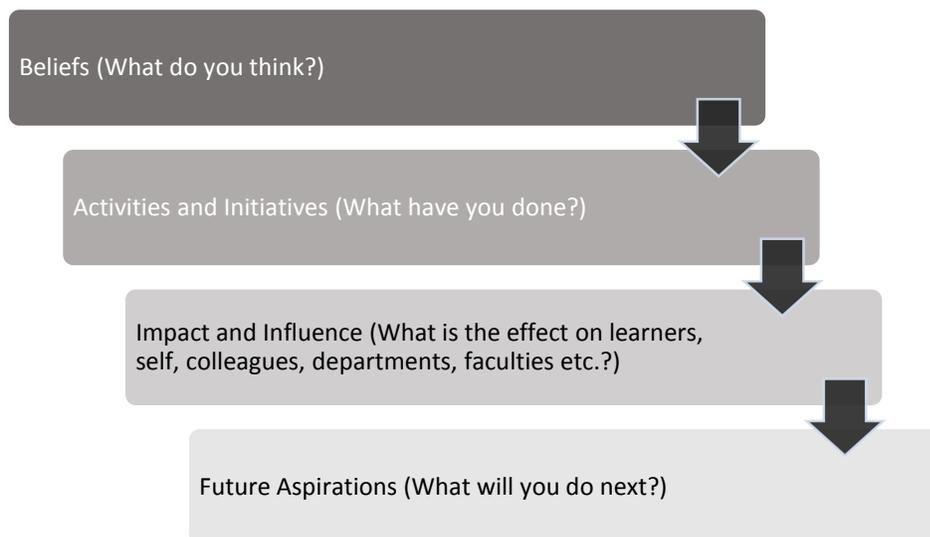
What is an Educational Leadership Philosophy Statement?

Educational leadership philosophy statements clearly communicate what our beliefs are about educational leadership, why we hold these beliefs, and how we translate our beliefs into practice. They articulate and make visible the many ways that educational leadership is enacted in higher education, to have an impact beyond our own teaching practice (within the University of Calgary and/or more broadly). For example, educational leaders mentor and inspire colleagues; develop and lead curriculum and learning initiatives; share their educational expertise through professional development programs; involve and enable others to enact change; and influence department and institutional teaching and learning cultures (Taylor, 2005; UBC, n.d.; STLHE, n.d; University of Calgary, n.d.).

What does an Educational Leadership Philosophy Statement Look Like?

Similar to a teaching philosophy statement, an educational leadership philosophy statement is typically 1 to 2 pages in length, and written in the first person narrative. Building upon the teaching philosophy statement work of Chism (1998) and Schonwetter et al. (2002), an educational leadership philosophy statement can be structured around 4 key components (Figure 1): Beliefs (what do you think); Strategies (what do you do); Impact (what has been the impact); and Future Aspirations (what will you do next)?

Figure 1: Example structure for an educational leadership philosophy statement (adapted from Kenny, Jeffs and Berenson, 2015)



Based on this framework, the introductory section of an educational leadership philosophy statement summarizes your core **beliefs** about educational leadership, and describes why you hold these beliefs based on personal experience, and scholarly literature related to leadership in higher education. The next section provides an overview of specific **activities and initiatives** that you have implemented that actively demonstrate and align with these beliefs. The next section highlights the **impact and influence** that your leadership has had on yourself and others (e.g. learners, colleagues, departments, faculties etc.). Finally, the concluding section most often summarizes your key beliefs, the influence you have had on teaching and learning within the University of Calgary and/or more broadly and your **future aspirations** for your own growth and for leading and inspiring change. Table 1 provides a breakdown of each of these sections with some guiding questions for further reflection.

Table 1: Key components of an educational leadership philosophy statement with guiding questions for reflection.

Philosophy Statement Components	Guiding Questions
Beliefs about educational leadership	What are my beliefs about educational leadership in post-secondary education? Why do I hold these beliefs? Who or what has most informed my leadership approaches? How have my beliefs been influenced by my experiences as a postsecondary educator and/or scholarly literature related to leadership? What difference do I hope to make as a leader? What does it mean to be a good leader in a post-secondary context?
Educational leadership activities and initiatives	What educational leadership activities, practices and initiatives have I implemented? How do these align with my beliefs? When have I felt most engaged and affirmed as an educational leader? What are my key strengths and skills as a leader? What am I most proud of? What sets me apart? What are some of my accomplishments as a post-secondary leader?
Impact and Influence	What difference have I made, and how do I know? What has been the impact and influence of my educational leadership (on me, on students, on colleagues, on my department, on my faculty, on the institution and beyond)? What have others learned from my leadership approaches?
Future Aspirations	How will I continue to develop, grow, and improve as a leader? What interests me most about teaching and learning in post-secondary education? What changes do I most hope to see and inspire? What are my future goals and aspirations as a leader in post-secondary education?

Questions adapted from: Kearns, K.D. & Sullivan, C.S. (2011); Kenny, Jeffs & Berenson (2015); Stavros & Hinrichs (2011); Schonwetter et al. (2002); Seldin, P., Miller, J. E., & Seldin, C. A. (2010).

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