

**Moving Up Without Moving Out**  
or  
**Place Bound Does Not Equal Position Bound**

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I have been at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) for 28 years. My family obligations and choices defined the geographic boundaries of my career path but I honestly do not feel this has been a barrier to my growth and development in academic administration. In the past 15 years, I have had opportunities to serve as clinic director, Assistant Dean of the College of Education, Chair of the Department of Speech-Language Pathology, Graduate Dean, and now Associate Provost. Each position has provided a chance to broaden my perspective and understanding of the university and determine how I might contribute.

Moving up the career ladder at the same institution carries risks. Some are similar to the risks of those who move up in multiple institutions, while others are unique to being place-bound. In both cases you carefully weigh the risks against the potential benefits. Obviously there are no hard and fast rules as you approach the risky business of putting yourself forward as a leader and higher level administrator at your current institution.

My mother described some of the early opportunities in my career as “being in the right place at the right time.” I did not recognize until about 15 years after I started at UCA, that her perception simply was not true. I was and would always be “in the same place, all the time,” meaning the remainder of my career. Success was not so much about being lucky but usually came from taking opportunities when they were presented and then working very hard . I was choosing to make it “the right place at the right time.”

Here are some of my own suggestions to make the *same place* be the *right place*, whenever you determine it is the *right time*.

1. Define your own beliefs and values. Be aware of your personal strengths and then look for opportunities to match strengths with institutional needs. To do that you must also develop an in-depth understanding of the needs of your institution.
2. You can attain an immediate advantage by volunteering for activities that provide an opportunity to broaden your experiences, develop new skills, get to know the institution, and become known to faculty and upper administrators. Do something that helps someone else or advances the goals of the institution or unit rather than your personal goals. This may include such things as faculty governance positions, accreditation steering committees, and strategic planning initiatives.
3. Do not take short cuts. You must go through the appropriate ranks and experiences to establish credibility as a dean or vice-president. Do not move into administration too quickly. First develop competence and recognition as a teacher and scholar.
4. Find a role model. Not everyone is fortunate enough to have a real and helpful mentor, but you can observe administrators you respect and analyze carefully the traits you admire in their leadership style.
5. Take advantage of professional development activities for HIED administrators such as the Bryn Mawr Institute for Women in Higher Education Administration, Harvard Leadership Series, and New Dean's Institutes of various professional organizations.
6. Do not hesitate to make known to others that you are interested in moving up. If offered a position as interim, consider taking it if you would be allowed to apply for the position. That gives you the opportunity to see if there is a "fit" while also demonstrating your competence in the position.
7. Be a dynamic subordinate and make your immediate superior "look good." However, be careful that you do not attach your own career to one individual. He

or she may not be place-bound. If you plan to remain at your current institution, you do not want to be viewed as being loyal only to the previous administration. Make your loyalties to the institution.

8. If you do apply for a position internally address directly the fact that you are a “home-grown.” It is tempting for search committees and other decision makers to give stronger consideration to applicants from outside the institution to bring in fresh ideas. Do not assume because you have been at your institution for so long that everyone knows or remembers what you have accomplished. Share your experiences, personal philosophy, resultant leadership style, and vision for the institution or the unit in which you are seeking a position. Give specific examples that confirm you have the experience and knowledge to provide comprehensive and quality leadership in the position you want.