

# A GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE & STRATEGIC CABINET RETREATS



## Teams are hard work, and most teams don't do the hard work.

A well-designed cabinet retreat is key to cultivating the trust, clarity, and alignment necessary for collaborative and high-performing teams.

Effective leadership teams leverage retreats to enhance capacity building and ongoing learning. Cabinet retreats are an opportunity for a president to invest in their team, clarify expectations, deepen relationships and collaboration, align and commit to institutional priorities, and build a plan and momentum for the year ahead. Presidents who approach cabinet retreats intentionally and strategically can expect heightened team dynamics that lead to a more sustained and focused impact.

### 1

#### Enhance Team Relationships & Strengths

***High-performing teams do not simply execute tasks—they foster a culture of trust, collaboration, shared responsibility, and results.***

- What is the level of trust and collaboration within the team?
- What are the strengths and blind spots of each team member? How are strengths leveraged? How are blind spots managed?
- How well does your cabinet engage in candid, constructive discussions? What is the constructive zone of tension within the team?

### 2

#### Clarify Team Roles & Expectations

***Most leadership teams operate on implicit and untested assumptions regarding the role and expectations of the team.***

- Is the cabinet advisory? Decision-making? Both?
- Who makes what decisions and how? How are decisions communicated? What is your decision-making framework?
- How clear is the cabinet about its norms and guiding principles?
- How is feedback given and received?
- What is the team's approach to accountability and transparency?

### 3

#### Translate Strategy & Priorities Into Action

***Even the most carefully crafted strategic plans can stall if ownership, accountability, benchmarks, and timelines are not clearly established.***

- What does success look like and by when?
- How are key initiatives aligned with cabinet member experience, expertise, and operational oversight?
- How is leadership shared within the cabinet? Beyond the cabinet? How is the community invited and empowered to contribute to achieving the plan?
- What is the process for tracking progress? How is progress communicated? How is progress recognized and celebrated?

# Aligning Your Cabinet to Support Sustained Institutional Growth and Success

Effective teams commit to ongoing reflection, development, and engagement to ensure that the team is functionally well and that strategic priorities translate into meaningful action and results.

If you are exploring ways to invest in and strengthen your leadership team, Academic Search partners with presidents and cabinets to design and facilitate retreats that clarify roles and expectations; deepen relationships, trust, and collaboration; enhance alignment, commitment, and accountability around institutional priorities; and leverages the strengths of the team in order to build institutional momentum.

## ***Academic Search Team Development & Coaching Services***

Our senior executive coaches are expert facilitators who are seasoned higher education presidents and senior leaders. We partner with you to design, tailor, and lead effective and focused cabinet retreats that help you to accomplish your leadership and institutional goals.



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Academic Search*



**Steven E. Titus, J.D., Ph.D.**  
Vice President and Executive  
Coaching Practice Leader  
[Steve.Titus@academicsearch.org](mailto:Steve.Titus@academicsearch.org)



**L. Jay Lemons, Ph.D.**  
President and Senior Consultant  
[Jay.Lemons@academicsearch.org](mailto:Jay.Lemons@academicsearch.org)



1015 18th Street NW, Suite 510  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-332-4049  
[info@academicsearch.org](mailto:info@academicsearch.org)  
[academicsearch.org](http://academicsearch.org)