**“Student Centered, Innovation Driven” Discussion Guide**

This guide is designed to prompt conversation and reflection for anyone interested in institutional transformation. Whether you’re using it for a reading group, leadership retreat, or personal development, these questions and prompts are intended to spark ideas and action.

**Chapter 1: Who Is Wichita State University?**

* How does your institution define its identity? How is that identity perceived by your community?
* Wichita State’s history is deeply rooted in access, innovation, and community. Which of these pillars resonates most with your institution’s mission?
* Wichita State President Rick Muma describes the Innovation Campus as a response to economic and reputational challenges. What challenges at your institution could be reframed as opportunities?
* How do student demographics shape strategic priorities at your institution?
* Reflect on for a moment on a time when your university embraced risk in order to grow. What lessons emerged?

**Chapter 2: A Bold Vision, a Shared Vision**

* How does your campus culture respond to change? What does that say about your institution’s readiness to innovate?
* President Muma highlights both the power and the pain of transformational change. Where is your institution on that spectrum?
* What’s the difference between being heard and being part of the decision-making process? How do you ensure inclusive engagement?
* President Bardo’s approach was visionary, but controversial. What kind of leadership style is needed at your institution today?
* “Is it nice to do nothing?” When does politeness or fear of conflict hold back meaningful progress in your organization?

**Chapter 3: Lean Into Possibility**

* How does your institution define innovation. Is that definition shared across departments?
* Wichita State built a research culture focused on applied solutions. How can your institution expand its own research relevance to community or industry needs?
* What systems exist (or need to be created) to turn good ideas into scalable impact at your campus?
* Brainstorm one challenge at your institution and outline a way it could be approached through applied research or tech transfer.

**Chapter 4: Manifest the Vision**

* What steps has your institution taken to align day-to-day operations with its strategic vision?
* How do you make sure that the vision doesn’t just live in a document, but drives real change?
* What does accountability look like at your university?
* Map a goal from your strategic plan to the actual systems, structures, or habits that support it. Where is there alignment? And where is there drift?

**Chapter 5: Embrace Your Identity**

* What is your institution’s identity? How well is it understood by students and employees?
* Where do you see disconnects between how your university presents itself and what it delivers?
* How can student experience be used to reinforce your brand?
* Talk with a group of colleagues from other departments. What words would each of you use to describe your institution’s identity? Are you speaking the same language?

**Chapter 6: Who Do You Serve?**

* Who are your students today. And how has that changed over time?
* What systems are in place to support your most vulnerable students?
* How do you ensure a culture of belonging rather than a checklist of support services?
* Look at student retention or graduation rates by demographic. Where are students falling through the cracks. And what’s your campus doing to close those gaps?

**Chapter 7: Beyond Being an Employer, Driving Prosperity**

* How does your university contribute to your city or region’s economic vitality?
* What role does your institution play in workforce development and talent retention?
* Sketch a visual of your university’s ecosystem. Who are the key partners? Where are opportunities to collaborate or lead?

**Chapter 8: What’s In It for Everyone?**

* How does your community perceive the value of higher education?
* What are the most powerful stories your university can tell?
* How transparent are you about student outcomes, affordability and ROI?
* Draft a one-sentence message about your institution’s value. Test it with people outside higher ed. Does it land?

**Chapter 9: Everything Comes Down to Priorities**

* When everything is a priority, nothing is. How does your institution decide what matters most?
* What programs or initiatives continue without a clear tie to strategy? Why?
* How do you balance tradition with transformation?
* Make three lists: your institution’s stated priorities, your actual investments (time, budget), and your personal work priorities. Where do they align. And where don’t they

**Conclusion**

* What is your biggest takeaway from this book?
* Where do you see opportunities for long-term transformation at your institution?
* What’s your role in shaping that future?
* Write a short letter to your future self: What kind of leader does your institution need next year—and what can you do now to be ready?