

Feedback System Comment Report



Shields, Todd

Dean at University of Arkansas Main Campus

2020

What are this administrator's main strengths?

61 comments

- Collaborative and approachable.
- Dean Shields is amazing and has one of the toughest jobs on campus. So glad that he's in his second term!
- Todd Shields epitomizes the concept of excellence in leadership. He appreciates the importance of consensus, transparent information flow, open debate, and faculty governance. He is 100% honest, and trustable. There isn't a devious bone in his body, and his actions always balance the good of the group and the good of individuals. These characteristics make him a superior administrator who enjoys unprecedented loyalty from those who know and appreciate him. He is simply a joy to work with.
- Without any doubt, Dean Shields is the best dean/leader the Fulbright College has had in over 20 years (and possibly ever). Dean Shields knows our college, takes the time to know the entire faculty and appreciates all disciplines that constitute ARSC; He projects the spirit of collaboration and innovation, and he embraces change while putting our students, staff, and faculty, and, people in general, first! He looks for and appreciates feedback and is always willing to learn. Dean Shields is the leader that FULB College and the UA deserves; he has consistently guided the college to achieve our true potential, always making sure our stakeholders know how much this college is doing for the entire campus! His main strengths are his positive and engaging leadership style, superb communication, caring and understanding attitude, and approachability. It does not matter whether he is approached by an administrative support person, part-time faculty, a student, faculty, or the president of the system. He welcomes and listens to people regardless of who they are and what they do. In Dean Shields' mind, everyone can contribute and everyone is capable of proposing a solution and having an impact, whether it's broad or not. He walks the talk of Excellence, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion!!! Dean Shields understands that nothing happens without committed, engaged people who trust their leader and his/her vision. He knows that to win, we must win people and we must **win with people**. Another strength of his is that when good things happen he is the first to give credit to others; when issues emerge, he is the first to say: I made a mistake. Definite strength: his leadership is not just about what he can do, it is about what he can inspire, encourage, and empower others to do. He listens and invites people to contribute to get them on board, he does not run over people to achieve the goals for our college. He cultivates people and future leaders; he shares what he knows and when people succeed he is genuinely happy for them. Dean Shields' democratic and empowering leadership style does not mean that he cannot make very difficult decisions—he does not eschew making very difficult decisions. I have seen him making those, but, when he does he makes them with care, based on evidence, and always after deliberation and following the due process. I could continue discussing Dean Shields' strengths but let me just say summarize what I have just said: Dean Shields has provided excellent leadership to FULB and I have full confidence he will continue doing so!!
- The fact that he has served "in the trenches" provides him with an insight and compassion when dealing with the faculty. He truly has the institution's best interest at heart, which makes him an outstanding, fair, and thorough leader.
- Leadership presence
- The Dean's office consistently recognizes and addresses the needs and concerns of the faculty and represents the College to higher administration effectively.

- Maintaining a positive attitude among faculty and staff even in an era of increasing centralization where higher ed funding is eroding.
- Todd is a visionary and an incredibly hard worker. The amount of productivity he is able to maintain is astonishing. He communicates well, has good relationships, and is able to work well through others. He is restorative and values people. He is supportive, creative, smart.
- Interpersonal abilities are uncanny. People of all kinds can relate to our dean. This inspires a tremendous amount of trust throughout the college.
- Clarity of vision for the future; a willingness to do the hard, granular work required to see that vision enacted; and a general appreciation of the work done by faculty in every discipline in the college.
- He is sensitive to the needs of others and cares deeply about the people in the College and the University. He is brilliant, loyal and honorable. This university is reliant upon his leadership at this moment and even though this is self-sacrificing, the Dean's loyalty is steadfast.
- Todd is open, accessible, and easy to talk with.
- Dean Shields has an amazing ability to engage teams, think strategically and lead strategic efforts. He is a results oriented high-energy leader and displays a commitment to the university's priorities. In addition to succeeding administratively, he manages to remain committed and engaged with research and accessible to students.
- Team building, collaboration, commitment to the general good
- This box cannot adequately fit a list of all of Todd's strengths. I would have left this University years ago had it not been for the fantastic leadership that Todd provides - he's Fulbright-focused, supportive of student success initiatives without compromising faculty support, approachable and democratic, and as hard working as any single human being could be.
- Very approachable, understanding, and sincere
- His ability to read a room and speak directly to what they need to hear!
- Proving strategic oversight of a massively complex college. Ability to deal with difficult personnel issues and people. Sound ideas for resolving conflicts. Supportive and encouraging leader.
- Dean Shields has incredible capacity for synthesizing information presented in meetings I've attended into actionable directives that are team-centric and solutions-focused. He is approachable and has authentic compassion for problems or issues team members may be facing. The overall effect of this thoughtful leadership is a team culture that is open, transparent, and characterized by support. To me, this is encouraging for future advancement at the college.
- Ability to balance a tremendous breadth/depth of significant responsibilities in a timely and responsible manner. Listens respectfully to those providing input and ideas to him, then acts on this information and his conclusions formed by his team and his own wealth of experience. Very able and tested leader who has respect of students, faculty and staff as well as his peers across campus..
- He is a great communicator, fair, pro-faculty, and dedicated to Fulbright College.
- Fairness and transparency. Unwarranted sense of humility.
- Todd listens very well. He has a contagious enthusiasm, a tremendous amount of energy, is transparent and extremely fair minded. His support of our department and its faculty is very strong. I am often impressed at his ability to find creative solutions to problems. Todd continues to be exceptional at fund raising! He has also been creative and innovative at such things as absorbing reallocations, holding positions, etc. Our Dean is a champion of inclusion and diversity! As an example, when I sit at a Chair's meeting and look at the front of the room, I see Todd and his five Associate Deans--the leadership Team he has assembled. Among this group of six leaders are three women and three men, one of whom is African American; 50%-50% male-female and 16.7% African American, which almost exactly matches the demographics of Arkansas! Todd is a great Dean! We are fortunate to have him.

- Friendly, popular, knowledgeable
- Dean Shields strength is his fair, democratic approach in guiding the college. He makes sound judgements for the college and he is clearly an advocate for improvement. As a former Department Chair, he displays empathy and understanding for the challenges faced by department chairs and he does everything in his power to assist and provide advice . Overall, Dean Shields strength as an administrator is displayed in his leadership style which has proven highly effective for Fulbright College.
- Democratic, reflective
- Handling one of the most challenging positions on campus very well.
- Great administrator... clear vision, receptive to ideas, cares about the college
- Todd works tirelessly to ensure the campus's largest college is setup for success.
- Todd is an outstanding leader. He is a vocal and effective advocate for our college. He is thoughtful, strategic, and fair. He listens very well.
- His ability to work to get all department needs met is one of his big strengths. His care for U of A and Fulbright is his other huge strength.
- Dean Shields is a great advocate for the Fulbright College's programs, faculty, staff and students. He is straight forward, direct and responsive.
- He is stright forward.
- Committed, enthusiastic, supportive. Courageously leads upholding key values in education, freedom of expression, equity, inclusion and diversity
- Leadership, fierce defense and nurturing of the college and its people, personability/approachability, honesty, collaborative vision, sincerity.
- Fairness. Advocacy for the College. Support for the faculty. Excellent donor relationships.
- He is well liked and respected by a diverse group of people including those from outside of the college and university.
- Organizational skillsPassionate about workLeadership of college
- Inclusive, Flexible, Communicator, Positive
- The administrator knows the institution well. The administrator makes an effort to assist in resolving issues. The administrator is helpful in offering directing me to the right people for assistance. The administrator projects an image of sincerity and desire to be helpful.
- Leadership and fairness.
- Visionary who delivers results.
- honesty and hard workingexcellent vision and great ideasproduces results. Nothing is too small for him to give his attention.
- Ability to juggle many difficult situations, ranging from faculty problems to space to donors to staff. Very impressive.
- His ability to discover on his own, or understand by listening to others, the nature of problems, and then to come up with solutions quickly. He has other plusses, but this is the one I appreciate the most.
- Open to ideas and team oriented
- Todd Shields is hands down the best Dean we have had during my two decades in Fulbright College. He has an expansive and engaged vision for the college and our university. He is approachable and supportive of fellow administrators, faculty, staff and students. He clearly cares deeply about the college, its students and staff, and the university as a whole. He is easy to work with, exceptionally

competent at what he does, and has an outstanding rapport with his colleagues. He is also a very good listener, an excellent communicator, and accepts feedback. He takes our ideas seriously and puts them into action.

- Responsive, open to new ideas, clarity, gets things done
- down to earth and approachable. shows genuine concern for all levels of faculty/staff/students
- Operating under uncertainty and confusion stemming from offices like ORSP
- Todd leads the most difficult college in the University and he does it with excellence, professionalism, innovation and collegiality. He is unflappable.
- Positive, thoughtful, people-oriented in a time where all individuals are appreciated.
- Approachable, caring, good leader
- Seems to truly care about faculty and students.
- He is an effective voice for the college.
- Very supportive of the faculty, and communicates effectively. Builds teams and makes the faculty know they are appreciated. Best Dean I have worked for in 30 years.
- I believe he tries to advocate strongly for the college, particularly in regards to faculty, and resources.
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- His vision, his understanding, and his approachability. He is honest, direct, and open to ideas. He does not only accepts but requests feedback. He is an excellent administrator and wonderful leader. Aware of his own weaknesses and a great manager of his own strengths. Dean Shields is an outstanding colleague, and more importantly, a great human being.
- Approable and relatable.

How might this administrator improve his or her performance?

46 comments

- Nonething that I can think of.
- Not much to improve. All-around great performance.
- never stop refining
- Recognize and utilize the strengths of his team
- The Fulbright Dean needs an endowed chair. He simply must have more discretionary funding. I find that to be a high priority for this institution.
- Sometimes I feel that his communication could be a bit better.
- Delegate more
- He could improve by teaching other deans how to lead. I have learned a great deal from him but I would like to learn more. It is evident that he not only leads the college well, but he also leads his family well. He makes the university look better than reality.
- Hard to think of anything. He holds a very difficult and vital position for the University, with a lot of decision making responsibilities that will never please everybody. I am sure some colleagues could identify instances or concrete examples to show how Dean Shields could improve his performance as an administrator. I hope those instances consider the many different variables Dean Shields has to juggle before making a decision, and the level of pressure and responsibility his position demands.
- Be more data driven.
- Dean Shields has a demanding schedule which can slow down response times, but never when the

issue is urgent.

- I have no recommendations for improvement. Dean Shields is an outstanding boss and advocate.
- Keep on doing the same.
- I think Todd's weaknesses are due to being overworked; the upper administration leans unfairly hard on the College Deans, and Todd is no exception to this.
- Todd focuses a lot on what is in front of him. This can be a good thing -- he addresses what needs to be addressed when it needs to be addressed. His long term vision, on the whole, could be improved. His focus on short term needs and opportunities seems to cloud the long-term and the big picture. He capitalized remarkable when Alice Walton expressed interest in making a large donation to the Art Department because that was what was in front of him. But, in a time when the enrollments in other UARK colleges are starting to rival ARSC in size, and when enrollments seem to matter to central administration, I don't see a plan being put into place to address this pending challenge. There needs to be one. If we as a college do not act soon, there could be serious long-term repercussions for the departments in the college. I recommend he direct the college to ensure its departments remain relevant to the undergraduate student body.
- His performance is A+.
- I can't think of anything.
- Todd excels at all aspects of his job, and he surrounds himself with capable honest and thoughtful individuals who get the job done and done well. There is nothing I can honestly point to that needs improvement.
- nothing to comment
- Probably due to high amount of emails received, not all emails are answered or answered in a timely manner.
- He is a rockstar
- I don't know how he could accomplish this, but development needs stronger leadership within the college and for some reason, this area seems to be critically important to the growth of Fulbright, but there's not enough experienced support to provide the movement needed to more consistently cultivate new donors/benefactors. The people we have are great individuals, but they are not available or proactively working with the chairs to create new funding opportunities.
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- Todd is an inclusive and collaborative leader who values the insight of others. This is a positive attribute, but can lead to slower decisions and team frustration. Not sure how to balance this in a better manner
- Understandably for a college as large as ARSC, for practical matters the relation with faculty is mediated by a cohort of associate deans, all of which are excellent for their position, consider how to maintain personal interaction with faculty, specially junior faculty who may not have had much opportunity to interact with the Dean.
- Somehow find a way to convince the Central Administration to provide more resources for Fulbright. This is a difficult problem, and I do not think it implies poor performance on the Dean's part. Todd is outstanding at outside development, but this does not affect all disciplines within the College equally. The same can be said of the Central Administration's development efforts. Finding a pool of more flexible resources such as a few new faculty lines would be helpful. There can be times when it is difficult to reach Todd, particularly when he is traveling for development or other purposes. Other times, I am amazed at how accessible he is even when traveling. His Associate Deans and other staff are usually able to assist when Todd is intensely busy or away, and they can even provide access to Todd during these times. There may be ways to further improve the organization of his staff.

- Periodically reexamine the organizational structure of the college, especially the flow of information up and down the food chain, in hopes of keeping our top administrators understand all aspects of the college.
- Continue to cultivate listening skills and awareness of developing situations.
- He needs to communicate more with the rest of the college. He only seems to communicate to chairs who he has a personal relationship with otherwise he's very insulated. His decisions are also based on advice of a few and doesn't seek out other input personally. Again an example of insulation.
- I cannot think of anything regarding this question; However, I do believe that Dean Shields' leadership style was more widely embraced on our campus he and leaders like him would be much more effective and our campus would be much better for it.
- clone himself.....wish that were possible.
- Being more supportive of UA Executive Leadership especially with external audiences
- Not trying to please everyone.
- Perhaps one approach might be to add some additional, trusted senior team members to help balance the overall workload. Time management is his major balancing point challenge and he does superbly in this delicate dance but could use some additional assistance. Creating additional time to deliberately create opportunities for more direct interaction with his students and his faculty/staff in their environments would be the result.
- Don't have favorites
- Nothing comes to mind, he does an outstanding job.
- I can't think of anything
- Listen better. Develop a visionary plan for the college.
- It seems like decision making is a joint process among all deans. It may lighten his load if he maybe delegated more decision making to his associate and assistant deans.
- The administrator can sometimes be self-promoting to the point that it distracts from problem-solving. The administrator can follow-through more on providing information offered to address issues.
- Dean Shields is the best Dean ever and there is nothing he needs to change.
- While it's understandable that taking resources from underperforming departments creates some ill-will, it's also true that resources are not always distributed according to need in the college. There also needs to be much more transparency about the college budget.
- Designating one go-to for dean's level decisions when the dean is unavailable - even if they sometimes simply route question/decision to someone more appropriate.
- He should concern himself less with how his decisions are perceived by others, especially ones that do not have the campus's highest interest in mind.
- Have better and more effective support from the upper administration.
- More public acknowledgements of research achievements. It sometimes seems like kudos are going to teaching and service achievements (of course also very important),

What are the most important challenges facing this administrator?

51 comments

- The college keeps growing in size without the financial support for more faculty. :(
- Tight budgets.
- The challenges faced by Dean Shields are largely structural in nature. As the largest college on campus, Fulbright College needs more resources to serve our growing student body. We desperately

need more tenure-track faculty lines. The Dean actively and dynamically advocates for faculty lines as well as other resources, seeking to direct those resources where they are most needed.

- 1. Identifying space for offices and research facilities as departments need addition space for growth and expansion research capabilities. 2. Implementation of changes that have been initiated over the past few years, ranging from curriculum to academic policies to fiscal software transition. 3. Budget. The lack of significant change in the maintenance and TELE budgets despite significant growth of departments over the past decade. We continue to do more with less funding and while the Dean is fully aware, the challenge is how to solve the problem.
- Lack of resources and a checked-out provost.
- Main "problem" is not with dean but for dean = recurrent reluctance of central administration to heed priorities of A&S faculty, especially as pertains to the needs of the humanities
- I don't know.
- The amount of resources allocated to this college relative to our needs is insulting.
- Reinventing, reimagining and marketing the value of an arts and sciences college education
- Maintaining the strengths and values of the College in the face of diminishing resources and increasing demands.
- The direction of the college with Central.
- As the institution evolves, with increased research demands on faculty, can we sustain the supportive culture we have been known for or will the revamped push for competitiveness undermine such supportive social fabric
- Budget and positions.
- Limited resources.
- The college is failing to retain top talent (especially minority faculty), particularly as the demographics of the college (and larger university) are beginning to shift.
- Dollars. More \$ support would allow so much more to be done
- University rules, policies, and insufficient funding.
- The most important limitations/challenges facing campus leaders of Dean Shields' quality are: (1) despite our efforts to transform our culture toward the culture of "YES," there are too many instances when we continue to hear a "no."; (2) while the culture of positive and democratic leadership exists on our campus, it should be cultivated and modeled more widely and strengthened; (3) it appears that our campus has been moving too much toward central micromanagement, which affects our efficiencies, flexibility, and makes us less nimble; and, (4) as campus, we have too many priorities and are asking people who get paid less than the living wage (part-time faculty, departmental office personnel) to do more and more for the same pay. In fact, the number of priorities, initiatives, and requests that are piling up on our lowest-paid employees is simply beyond reasonable; the same is true for department chairs and faculty. While they tend to be better paid they are also overwhelmed and can barely keep up - hence the challenge: to keep people's morale intact!! No doubt - Dean Shields will live up to this challenge but the issues and challenges he faces extend beyond our college
- historic lack of resources allocated to the university's largest college.
- The chancellor and his administration is the major challenge facing the dean and the college.
- Financial limitations due to scarce resources.
- A Provost and Chancellor that understand the importance of Fulbright College and reward the college for the role it plays in the UA.

- Preparing for the impending drop in undergraduate enrollment.
- Funding challenges; running a large, complex entity with multiple internal and external threats (competing values from the Board, State Legislation, negative narratives about higher ed and liberal arts).
- He has plenty of challenges. He presides over the largest and most diverse college on campus. He has to serve diverse constituencies with different priorities, including a central administration that at times wants to make UARK into a top-flight research university, and other times make us into a four-year liberal arts college. We have a central administration that is obsessed with "student success," but has emphatically stated we will do so with no new resources, including additional faculty lines. He presides over a college that sees the tuition it generates to the university get sucked away by other colleges on campus.
- Self-interested administrators that do not care about the people on campus especially the staff and faculty doing all the hard work. There is a deteriorating morale issue on campus and the administration must redirect its focus to helping the campus begin to feel like a welcoming community. You cannot just "say" you care, you must role model your intentions. Be the change you want to make otherwise it is lip service and the people on this campus know better and are deserving of better. Dean Shields is a true leader that is what he says he is and cares for others. The morale on campus is not as bad as it could be because of Fulbright College's leadership.
- The only one that comes to mind that other deans don't have to worry about on some level is the negative portion of the Fulbright legacy - something that seems to receive scrutiny on a more regular basis, leading to an increase in negative comments on campus and beyond.
- Size and diversity of the college and related needs; availability of resources for competing priorities; leadership support.
- reallocation of resources to programs that continue to grow
- Making sure the whole college is on the same page with our goals, and moving in the same direction
- Budget and push/pull with central administration.
- A lack of new resources from the State and the Central Administration. A zero-sum game year after year makes it increasingly difficult for the College to innovate and grow. Given this zero-sum situation, reallocating resources may be an increasing difficult challenge in the future.
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- Large college, diverse demands on his time and priorities. Decreasing enrollments.
- Vague and often misguided directives from Central Administration.
- Growth of the college while the professor lines and resources are static.
- Our institution enjoys a diversity of leadership styles, and these styles are variously compatible. Todd's biggest challenge is working with and making sense of campus leaders that take a more authoritarian approach.
- More power going to central.
- The most important challenge it seems that he has to face is possibly an inconsistent message from some members of the upper administration.
- Managing the largest and most heterogenous (in terms of disciplines) college on campus.
- Administrating such a big College is not an easy task. Budgets, politics, priorities, the largest number of students at the UofA, faculty, administrators and multiple stakeholders within the University and beyond. All of them with their own sense of entitlement, egos, narcissism, values, virtues and points of view. Dean Shield is an outstanding leader, with an impressive, humble and unique talent to relate to the human experience of everyone connected to Fulbright College.

- Knowing the direction central administration is going. Lack of communication from central administration.
- The most important challenge lies in working with the upper administration to keep the goals of a liberal arts education in plain view, 24/7. It's a nearly impossible task, but over the thirty + years I've been at Arkansas, Todd has been the most committed to doing this.
- Achieving the delicate balance between his huge organizations significant requirements across the spectrum versus the available resources. His team directly impacts the largest percentage of students at some point during their time at the UofA of any college.
- ADHE, Trump admin and supporters.
- He states that being the chair is the most difficult but he doesn't seem to support the chairs as much as he should or provide transparency.
- Dealing with an upper administration that forgets that the heart and backbone of the University is Fulbright College.
- Budget and enrollment
- ORSP
- Managing a large a diverse college with multiple programs that at times will have competing needs. With that said everyone I talk to says Dean Shields is equitable and fair in his decisions and support.
- Equitable distribution of scarce college resources.