You're listening to You've Got This, episode 434.

Welcome to You've Got This,

a weekly podcast for higher education professionals

looking to increase their confidence and capacity

for juggling the day-to-day demands of an academic life.

I'm your host, Dr. Katie Linder.

On this episode, I thought I would talk a little bit

about how I'm closing out an interim leadership role

that I've had for the last year and a half

at my institution.

And I kind of teased this on a previous episode

that this kind of closure is coming up.

I'm gonna be transitioning this role

in the beginning of July to a new permanent leader

who's joining our institution.

I'm so excited to welcome her

and I think she is just the perfect fit

for what we're looking for in this role.

But it also, I think, is a moment

of kind of intentional reflection for me

about what it means to close out a role like this

when I kind of took it on

and then I'm not going to be in the role anymore,

but I'm still gonna be at my institution.

And I don't know that I've ever had that experience

where I've taken on a position

within an institution like this,

and then I've kind of stepped out of that position

and moved into something else.

Typically, when I'm in a role and I have teams

and other things that are kind of reporting to me,

I don't move out of that until I leave the position,

leave the institution.

And so this is just kind of a different situation for me.

And I thought it would be interesting

to kind of reflect on how I'm thinking about it

and what I wanna be doing

to kind of help myself transition out,

help this other person transition in,

and also to kind of help the division of people

that I've been kind of working with

for the last year and a half,

help them engage in a successful transition as well.

So the first thing that's really on my mind

as I'm thinking about this transition

is I really wanna document the learning

that I've had from this role.

And I've done a little bit of journaling about this

over time, just because there's so much

that I have picked up in the last year and a half.

And the people that I've worked with,

particularly a leadership team of four individuals,

they have been so gracious in helping to like teach me things

that there were many areas of this division

that just were not familiar to me.

And just to give you a sense,

this is a division of about 250 people.

It oversees kind of the entire student success life cycle

for students at our institution.

And that's everything from when students apply

and they're admitted to the institution,

to living in the dorms and engaging in our dining.

This is a division that works

with international students as well.

And also a division that looks at kind of their persistence

and how they continue through things like advising

and honors programs and all of these different kinds

of things that we do to support our students.

So there's a lot of components

that are tied up into this division.

And it was not really the area of an institution

that I was kind of raised in.

I was more raised in academic affairs.

And so I just learned a ton.

And I think it's important for me

to kind of document that learning

and to think about where I started and where I'm ending

and just kind of the things

that I was able to pick up over time.

Now, the second part of that,

I think is to document notes from the role for my CV.

Like are there accomplishments that I want to note

from being in this particular position

that are more formal accomplishments

or things that I want to document that are just helpful.

And when I do the updates for my CV,

I have like a reminder note to myself once a month

to kind of go in and kind of just add anything to my CV.

I know that I will just forget a bunch of things

if I'm not doing it regularly.

And so I've done a little bit of this

just to kind of note things.

But typically how my CV is set up

is I have kind of the positions I've had throughout time.

And I do note kind of bullet lists of like,

these are things I was able to accomplish

in each of these positions.

And basically it ends up being kind of a story

of the evolution of my career and my leadership over time.

And so there's kind of the learning I've had personally

in the role, but there's also kind of this more formal

documentation that I want to engage in as well.

The other thing that I really want to do

and take some time to do is to think about

how I can have closure through gratitude.

And that's just going to involve a lot of thank you notes

to a lot of people who really showed up

in some pretty significant ways

for my leadership during this period.

And also for the institution in terms of like

really stepping in to help me do a lot of things

that maybe I didn't fully understand how to do

or that they had to really come together as a team,

to kind of support different initiatives

and things that we had over this last 18 months.

So I really want to spend some time

just kind of writing those notes.

I'm a huge thank you notes person.

I think they're really important.

And it's just part of kind of how I think about

these kinds of transitions is like,

who do I want to thank and express gratitude to?

Now, of course, a huge part of this transition

is the transition plan for the new leader.

And as I record this,

I've already started working with a small team

to kind of think about onboarding this person.

And I'll probably be talking with her

in the next week or so to kind of understand

what's most important to her in terms of this onboarding.

But we're starting to kind of just pull together

other forms of documentation of like the current initiatives,

the division-wide goals, our communication strategy,

what are all the kinds of things

that this person probably needs to know.

And I want to make sure that that is really feeling solid

in terms of like the first set of meetings

that this person is gonna have,

how I can be as helpful as I can be

and kind of making her feel welcome on campus,

but also making sure that all the information she needs

is kind of at her fingertips.

And for a division of the size of the one

that I currently oversee, that's a really important thing

that I need to make sure I'm kind of pulling together files

and different things that might be helpful.

Now, the other thing I think

that is going to be really important

is during this period of time

where I've been in this interim leadership role,

I have also been retaining my other leadership role

at the institution.

So there are two other groups of people

that have been kind of patiently waiting

for me to have more time and attention to turn back to them.

Now, they have done a fantastic job

through this last 18 months,

but they have not been getting my full attention

because I've had to do this other interim role.

And I'm really excited to also think about the transition

of what are the initiatives and things

that I want to kind of go back to those groups

and really think deeply about our work,

to think about our vision for each of those areas

and like how we wanna move different initiatives forward.

So there's kind of the transition of this stuff

off my plate,

and then there's the transition of other things

back onto my plate.

Even though they've kind of been there all along,

the amount of attention I've been able to give them

and the energy I've been able to give them

is maybe not as much as I would have liked.

Now, the other side of that, of course, mentioning energy,

is I need to schedule some time

for some pretty deep rest and recovery.

This has been a lot to carry the interim role

and my previous role all at the same time.

And if I'm being completely honest,

at this point when I'm like seeing the end,

the finish line, the light at the end of the tunnel,

I'm feeling pretty burnout.

I mean, I can recognize that in myself

and I can kind of see that I need to be thoughtful

about how I'm giving myself time to rest.

Now, as I'm recording this,

I'm actually in the middle of like a three-day mini vacation

because I needed to kind of step away

and I wanted to make sure

that I was giving myself a little bit of rest

during a period of the term

where I had the option of doing that.

And I haven't been able to take much vacation

during this last 18 months.

I've carved out things here and there,

but I'm really looking forward

to a couple of weeks this summer

that I think are gonna help me kind of reset

and have that energy to kind of go back into the work

in a way that's gonna feel really positive.

Now, I think that there's also a need for me

to kind of think about how I document

the immediate list of priorities

for all of these different areas as they're moving forward

so that no continuity is lost.

And I think that I am going to be continuing to engage

in some of the deeper initiatives

within this larger division for a little bit,

just to make sure that like everything is smooth

and like things are moving forward.

But I also wanna think really intentionally

and carefully about stepping away

and making sure this new leader kind of has their time

and their ability to kind of step into the role.

And I'm just excited to work with them.

This is a division that I've come to care about

and I really want them to be successful.

And I'm just excited to see how bringing this new leader

into the fold is gonna be something that hopefully

is gonna be a really good fit for them

as they're moving forward.

So those are a few thoughts of how I'm closing out

this interim leadership role.

I would love to hear if you've ever had a situation like this

where you've had to close out a leadership role in this way.

You can always email me at hello@drkatylinder.com.

I always do love to hear from you.

Thanks for listening.

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