

Book Review Editor: Theodore J. Weidner, Ph.D., P.E., AIA

## Much has changed in the

past year, and campus budgets are being squeezed like they haven't been for a decade or more. New federal leadership, installed after my deadline, may bring new perspectives and solutions to economic conditions or access to higher education. These will all mean changes to how we work and provide service to our campuses. While a good campus leader knows to fall back on internal resourcefulness and tested principles, assistance through external resources can prove helpful in addressing uncertain and changing futures. Here are two very different books that I think provide some valuable insights to help us through our current problems—*T.W.*

### THE LAST LECTURE

By Randy Pausch with Jeffrey Zaslow, Hyperion, New York, 2008, 206 pages hardcover, \$21.95

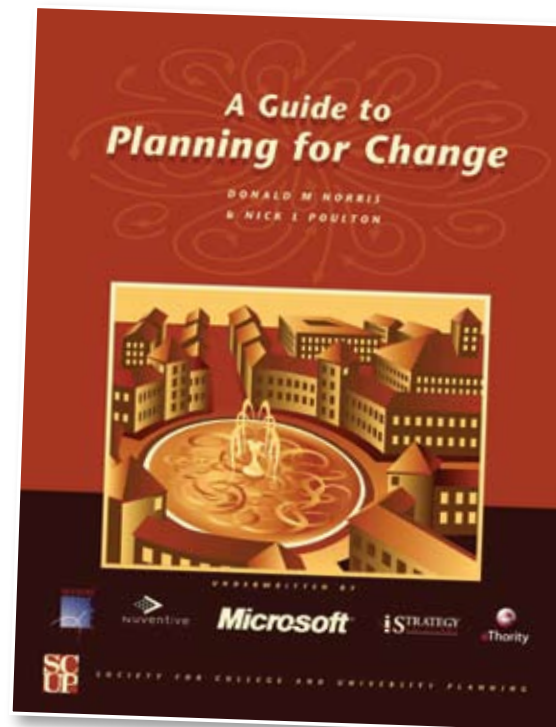
*The Last Lecture* has been on the bestsellers list since before Randy Pausch's expected passing last summer.

I couldn't help buying and reading it. The last lecture series at Carnegie Mellon University provided deep insight in their life's work, and a "farewell" message to students and peers. One would expect this faculty to be mostly near retirement or emeritus. But Randy wasn't interested in retiring. Instead, life circumstances—pancreatic cancer—had a way of making it inevitable. And, it was an opportunity for him to present an upbeat talk about what his life and research meant.

It isn't necessary to read the book, as *The Last Lecture* is available on YouTube. But, the book obviously covers more ground, and I bought the book with that in mind. It's small, about the size of a paperback, able to fit in a coat pocket. It was an easy read, except for the fact that it really was a last lecture.

What's important in life? What can one do to influence others? How is one's life influenced in return? What are the big things to fight for, and which ones are small and should be ignored? There are hundreds of books that have been written intended to answer each of these questions; some to answer all of them. *The Last Lecture*, while not going to as great a length as hundreds or thousands of leadership books, does a great job presenting how one person, an apparently well-liked professor, met life's challenges, achieved his childhood dreams, and handled them to his and many others' satisfaction, except one (life itself).

It's a moving book with personal thoughts and experiences by a young family man who had not reached the pinnacle of his career or even reached the normal halfway point. It's inspiring and thought provoking. While it's easy to set aside one hour and sixteen minutes to see the YouTube presentation, my recommendation is to get the book for a longer, yet quick-paced, contemplative read.

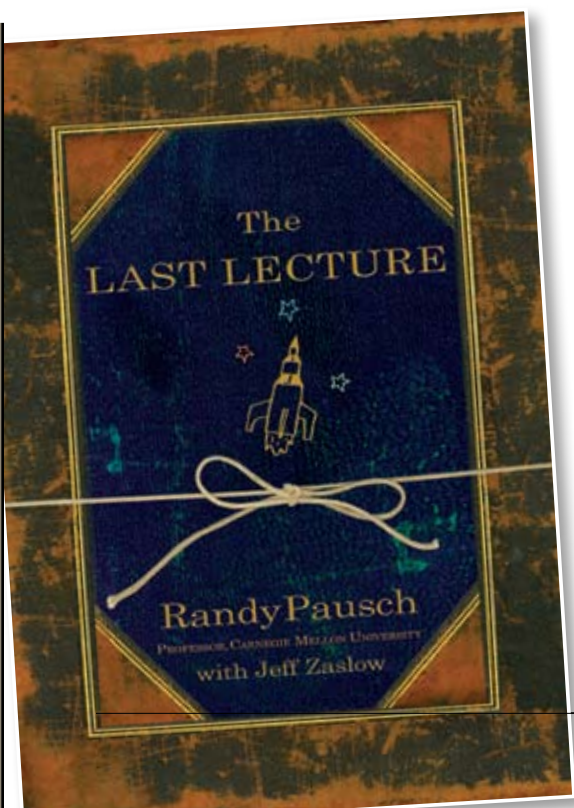


### A GUIDE TO PLANNING FOR CHANGE

By Donald M. Norris and Nick L. Poulton, Society for College and University Planning (SCUP), Ann Arbor, MI, 2008, 132 pages, softcover, \$45; SCUP members \$35.

Change happens, but planning for it doesn't just happen; work is required. And not just work but assessment of the situation beyond the normal SWOT analysis. Norris and Poulton make that clear in their non-cookbook review of planning in higher education and elsewhere.

*A Guide to Planning for Change* discusses the real issues, ones I've experienced in numerous institutions. Things like: belief that good planning will make the change automatic; dealing with change through purely political means; planning for change as a bureaucratic exercise; and planning for change as a show of power. Included in the discussion about the styles of



planning are the resistance factors: fear, power, control, and lack of executive support. Planned changes have not occurred at numerous institutions because of the misapplication of change techniques, resistance that was not anticipated or ignored, or both. The authors spend several chapters discussing the what, when, and how to prevent failure of planned changes.


*Planning for Change* is not a cookbook, and after reading the book it is clear that there's nothing cookbook about change or development of an effective plan for change. We often refer to the implementation of changes in an organization as change management, but these authors suggest that change cannot be managed. Based on my experience I tend to agree.

There's something both chaotic and steady, frightening and comforting, unsettling and reassuring in change that tends to defy management. Yet there are numerous books written about change

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management; anyone who has accomplished changes in an organization has felt there have been management issues that made it successful.

The authors identify a large number of references, other authors of planning and change "management" books. They developed, without formulating, a matrix of techniques and applications for different change planning texts. If nothing else, their descriptions of change planning techniques, and the various authors of and for these techniques, is a valuable tool to determine which method(s) should be employed to help lead an organization through changes.

Whether your institutional inclinations for change are top-down, bottom-up, or sideways—whether you're looking to make changes to address technology, learning environments, space management, service delivery, sustainability, or 15 other topics—this book is an excellent reference for any type of planning. I'm making use of it now. 

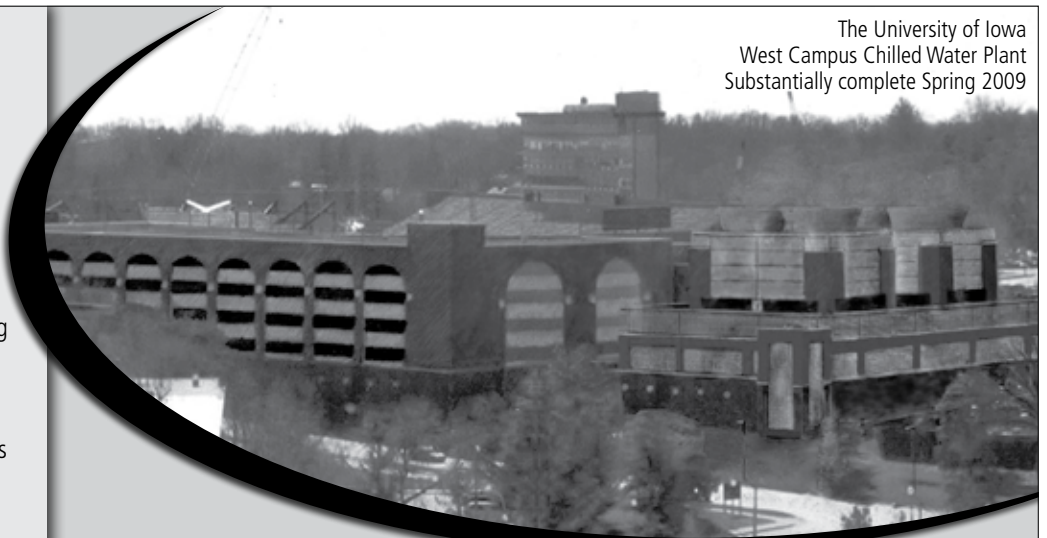
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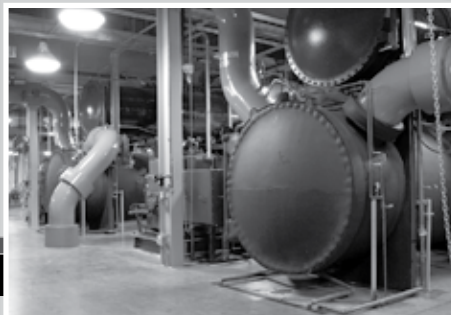
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