

The Strange Case of Dr. Samson: An Analysis of Interpersonal Conflict and Managing Change in a Service Organization

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ABSTRACT:

Dr. Thomas Samson had effectively served as provost at St. Francis Xavier College for 10 years. Beginning in 1995, as Provost, Dr. Samson worked hand in glove with the larger-than-life college president, Fr. Lloyd Williams, an interpersonally competent leader and rainmaker. The team made St. Francis Xavier College one of the best Jesuit Colleges in the United States. Following the tragic death of Williams in 2005 his right-hand man, Dr. Samson, now had to learn how to work effectively with the new President, Fr. Philip Steingarten, in pursuing the new vision for the school. Shortly after Fr. Steingarten's selection as president of the college in 2005, Dr. Samson was fired as provost of the college. Dr. Samson had to engage in serious reflection as he was left wondering why the events turned out the way that they did and what he might have done to remain as the powerful provost that he once was.

Keywords: Interpersonal influence, conflict management, after action reviews, metaphorical thinking

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INTRODUCTION

St. Francis Xavier College was a medium-sized Jesuit liberal arts college in Trenton, New Jersey. It was home to thoughtful administration, a well-respected faculty who were polished in their disciplines and teaching skills, and bright students who typically went on to successful careers in a myriad of arenas. Generally, students had good morale. They worked hard and played hard at St. Francis Xavier. Above all else though, St. Francis Xavier had two giant assets. Fr. Lloyd Williams S.J., the President of the college, had a reputation as a rainmaker. A genuinely thoughtful leader, Fr. Williams could convince anyone with eyes and ears that St. Francis Xavier was a wonderful experience for young people looking for a well-rounded liberal arts education. Anyone interested in donating knew that St. Francis Xavier was a fine place to engage in charitable giving. The huge reason that St. Francis Xavier was such an easy institution to promulgate can be explained by introducing its second giant asset: Dr. Samson. Dr. Samson was a scholar, a gentleman, and a great administrator. In the course of becoming full Professor of Classics, Dr. Samson decided that, loving St. Francis Xavier as he did, the only thing he could offer further was guidance.

Dr. Samson had a vision for St. Francis Xavier. Over a twenty-year period, in addition to his impeccable record of publication and his following among students as a fine teacher, he moved up the ranks from Assistant Dean of Arts and Sciences all the way to Provost, the top academic position at the college. St. Francis Xavier was a great place to be because Dr. Samson guided the school to an academic pinnacle and Fr. Williams made sure it was secure financially. Together, they had built a strong and highly touted business school named in honor of Fr. Williams. They had pressed the school into action to achieve recognition of exemplary status from seven different national organizations for higher education. They had financed ten endowed chairs in 7 different academic departments on campus along with drawing four prestigious academic journals to campus, along with the faculty members who edited them. With these two titans at the helm, St. Francis Xavier could look forward to a bright future for a long time to come had tragedy not struck in early 2010. While returning home from an evening watching his beloved New Jersey Nets, Fr. Williams was broad-sided by a drunk-driver and killed. St. Francis Xavier had lost one of its giants.

THE DIMINUTIVE DYNAMO

Dr. Samson was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1954 to a tailor named Ishmael Samson and his wife Sarah, a school teacher. Ismael and Sarah were both survivors of the Holocaust, who having met in the Mauthausen concentration camp in 1944, were fortunate enough to escape with their lives and marry two years after the liberation of the camp. Because of the circumstances of their youth, neither Ismael nor Sarah had received a complete formal education. While at Mauthausen, Ishmael was put to work making uniforms. Once they arrived in New York, the ill-gotten skill as a tailor permitted Ismael to earn a living for him and Sarah so that she was able to attend teachers' college. The Samsons eventually had four sons and Dr. Samson was the youngest. Perhaps because of their early harsh circumstances, the Samsons put enormous emphasis on education for their sons. Dr. Samson was small in stature and not at all athletic. He was plagued with allergies of all sorts and suffered terrible asthma. Though he had friends, Dr. Samson was also a target for a bully or two because of his size. His parents helped him through this difficulty by teaching him to talk back to the bullies and command respect. Tom struggled

with this for some time but realized that he could command respect by being the best in school – something that came naturally to him anyway. Being the youngest and having seen not only how hard his parents worked but also the good examples set by his older brothers, Tom became the family star. He worked hard at his studies through grade school and high school and made his whole family proud when he won a full scholarship to Georgetown University. There he studied philosophy and classic literature while the whole time developing a dynamic personality through his efforts on the debating team. Ismael and Sarah were so proud of their son and when he completed his doctorate in Classics from Princeton University in 1982, they could hardly wait to see more of his bright future unfold in the academy. Concerned with beginning his academic career, Dr. Samson took the first job he was offered. He went to work at a small liberal arts college in Trenton, New Jersey called St. Francis Xavier in the fall of 1982. Dr. Samson became a favorite teacher among students and established himself as an authority on Aristotle's scientific works and their relationship to Plato's. He had several friends among the faculty who supported him through his rise to Provost but none more than his friend Fr. Lloyd Williams S.J., an established finance professor at St. Francis Xavier who eventually became its 11th president. Fr. Williams and Dr. Samson moved St. Francis Xavier forward growing its enrollment along with its endowment.

BIG SHOES TO FILL

The community at St. Francis Xavier was devastated by the loss of its caretaker, Fr. Williams. The Board of Directors of the college appointed Dr. Samson to be the interim President of the college in order to allow adequate time to find Fr. Williams' successor. The Board, knowing Dr. Samson's love of St. Francis Xavier, also knew that in spite of his willingness to do both jobs indefinitely, that it was too much for any one person to be both chief academic officer (AKA Provost) and President of the college as well. In addition, St. Francis Xavier had always had a Jesuit priest for president and that tradition was not likely to change even for Dr. Samson. Three months into their search, which was conducted in direct conjunction with the Jesuit order of Priests – the school's Catholic Order - a short list of replacements was announced. After visits by each candidate to campus, addresses by each to the faculty, and a meet and greet with distinguished alumni and donors, the decision for Fr. Williams' successor was made. The next President of St. Francis Xavier was to be Fr. Phillip Steingarten. Among the candidates, Fr. Steingarten was the clear favorite, especially with the Board of Directors. He had been vice president of advancement in his previous post and had designed the most recent marketing strategies for three of the other smaller Jesuit colleges – St. Melchior's, St. Isaac Jogues', and St. Gabriel's. His strategy had increased enrollments significantly enough to save two of the schools from closing and put one of them on track to be a regional favorite in the southwest.

Having met all three of the candidates, Dr. Samson knew why the Board of Directors had chosen Fr. Steingarten. He possessed substantial business acumen and the Board must have assumed that Fr. Steingarten could propel St. Francis Xavier forward, increase its size and exposure, and make it the premier Jesuit college in the nation as it was already on top as the best regional Jesuit order school. Fr. Steingarten was business savvy and very capable but he didn't have the social graces that Fr. Williams had. He was stubborn rather than principled. He was argumentative rather than persuasive. He was a salesman rather than a social butterfly. St. Francis Xavier started to miss Fr. Williams almost immediately.

No one could deny Fr. Steingarten's passion though. He frequented basketball, baseball, soccer, and lacrosse games and acted as Chaplain for the teams. A significant idea he had for St. Francis Xavier was to build a name for the school in athletics. While St. Francis Xavier had a fine athletics program for most any taste a student might have, it only had two programs in NCAA Division I sports – Men's Soccer and Women's Soccer. Fr. Steingarten thought that as a marketing tool, nothing would draw more students over time like top tier athletics. Division I athletic programs would cause people to wear St. Francis Xavier team apparel. People wearing St. Francis Xavier apparel would mean more people are thinking about St. Francis Xavier. When people have St. Francis Xavier on their minds, they would be more likely to send their children and their children's children. The next generation of St. Francis Xavier students would want to come for more reasons than ever before. Athletics would be the perfect complement to excellent academics. Nothing could dissuade Fr. Steingarten from pushing for a full-sized university quality athletic facility and stadium as the starting point of his grand strategy – build it and they will come.

BIG MAN ON CAMPUS

Phillip Steingarten was raised in a very devout Catholic household. The son of an attorney, Fr. Steingarten's intelligence was honed as his father always pressed him to make his voice heard and to argue convincingly. Phil, as he was called by family and friends alike, was also a gifted athlete. He played football, basketball, and threw discus and shot for his high school. Combining good grades with being a 3-letter-man, Fr. Steingarten cut a path for himself many would envy. He was recruited by three schools to play basketball and by four others to play football. He chose to play football for Notre Dame University. At the university, Fr. Steingarten was very popular and the center of much attention. He worked hard to keep his grades high and played tight end at a high level. But what kept him grounded was his deep-seated Catholic faith. Once he finished at Notre Dame, he followed his heart into the seminary and became a priest. Though a man of great faith, Fr. Steingarten struggled in some relationships due to certain personality traits. His upbringing and his love of sports had made him extremely competitive and he simply did not like to lose. This carried him through his athletic career and his education but as a priest, he needed sensitivity and patience, traits he was short on. Once he was ordained as a Jesuit priest, Fr. Steingarten directed his competitiveness into positions in high school administration and coaching and then into administrative positions at the college level. His successes in enrollment management and marketing various schools led him into the position of vice president of advancement at St. Anthony Daniel's College. Though there were some hurt feelings along the way, no one could doubt Fr. Steingarten's attention to detail and his laser focus on success for the schools where he worked.

A GIANT CONFLICT

There wasn't much dissuading Fr. Steingarten from his ideas about athletics. He designed a 10-year plan where St. Francis Xavier would first build a stadium for its NCAA Division I Soccer teams. During the project, they would shop for lacrosse coaches and basketball coaches in order to establish Division I teams quickly with coaches who could recruit sound players. These pieces established, the long-range goal would be football. These projects would require leveraging St. Francis' endowment and certainly the favors of financial supporters.

Dr. Samson had difficulties relating to Fr. Steingarten. They were clearly both interested in maintaining St. Francis Xavier as an enviable institution of higher education. What Dr. Samson could not help Fr. Steingarten to realize was that even by pressing the substantial large capital donors that Fr. Williams had established relationships with over the years, the athletics programs simply could not be paid for without compromising educationally-focused capital programs and the endowment that permitted them. This conflict was taken before the Board of Directors in several forms over the ensuing first year of Fr. Steingarten's tenure as President. The Board liked Fr. Steingarten's vision but when the accounting work was done, it was clear that Dr. Samson had the upper hand with the majority of Board members as both ends could not be met without an overt debt the size of which was not advisable for an institution the size of St. Francis Xavier. Fr. Steingarten would have to press his team into finding other investors if movement was to be made on the athletics projects.

This loss of face by Fr. Steingarten was not forgotten. For the next year, Dr. Samson noticed repeatedly that whenever he had to deal with Fr. Steingarten personally, he was talked down to and seemingly put in his place. Their meetings sometimes ended in rolling eyes, other times in increasingly loud arguments. One such argument went in the direction of the athletics program strategic plan of which Fr. Steingarten was so proud. Dr. Samson walked out of Fr. Steingarten's office after Fr. Steingarten roared at him to "stop thinking so small!" In meetings with the Board of Directors, Fr. Steingarten would try to undermine the ideas of Dr. Samson and cleverly make Tom look like the problem. After another year of this conflict, Fr. Steingarten recommended to the Board that Dr. Samson be removed as Provost but with his professorial status kept intact, as it was discovered that Dr. Samson had been seeking the position of President at another area school. This along with his constant disagreement, made Fr. Steingarten question Dr. Samson's loyalty to St. Francis Xavier. Unfortunately, this conflict had also been recognized by the Board and they too felt that there was merit to this course of action despite Dr. Samson's long track record of excellence. As good as Dr. Samson was as Provost, as an author, and as a teacher, he couldn't seem to get out from under Fr. Steingarten's ill will. Tom felt bullied on his own turf and resigned his position as Provost in fall 2008.

A STRANGE CASE

No one liked the idea of Dr. Samson stepping down as Provost of St. Francis Xavier, but it had to happen. The Board took Fr. Steingarten's recommendation seriously because several members were actually in favor of the strategic plan of investing in athletics and a prime piece of real estate had been lost to a more aggressive buyer. This had put Fr. Steingarten in a position to have to redouble efforts to raise capital for the athletic complex. This loss swayed enough Board members that conflict between two officers of the school was incompatible with success.

In a meeting between the two, as something of an exit interview from his position as Provost, Fr. Steingarten and Dr. Samson spoke on the matter of their incompatibility. Dr. Samson pressed his position about the greater importance of education at a place like St. Francis Xavier and how top tier athletics was a futile effort on a medium-sized campus. Dr. Samson accused Fr. Steingarten of knowing better and being too resolute and headstrong to admit when he was wrong. Fr. Steingarten told Dr. Samson the truth, "I know you are smarter than I am and that you and Fr. Williams made this school what it is today over the last decade and a half but a man in my position cannot afford to be made to look like a fool. That's how I've felt since we started working together. It is also why I don't want you as Provost anymore." Dr. Samson went

back to his office in the Classics department and read the last chapter of the Homer's *Odyssey*. It helped focus his attention in order to consider why the situation evolved as it did. He also knew he had to systematically reflect on this turn of events and frankly wondered what he might have done to avoid his firing as Provost.

TEACHING NOTE

Synopsis

Dr. Samson had effectively served as provost at St. Francis Xavier College for 10 years. Beginning in 1995, as Provost, Dr. Samson worked hand in glove with the larger-than-life college president, Fr. Lloyd Williams, an interpersonally competent leader and rainmaker. The team made St. Francis Xavier College one of the best Jesuit Colleges in the United States. Following the tragic death of Fr. Williams in 2005, his right-hand man, Dr. Samson, now had to learn how to work effectively with the new President, Fr. Steingarten, in pursuing the new vision for the school. Shortly after Fr. Steingarten's selection as president of the college in 2005, Dr. Samson was fired as provost of the college. Dr. Samson had to engage in serious reflection as he was left wondering why the events turned out the way that they did and what he might have done to remain as the powerful provost that he once was.

Research Methods

The Critical Incident is based on the experiences and observations by one of the authors of the case. The names of the individuals, the school, and its location have been disguised to preserve anonymity.

Learning Objectives (LOs)

In completing this assignment, students should be able to:

1. Evaluate the role that work styles and politics may play in a service organization
2. Evaluate strategies for constructive conflict resolution
3. Consider and develop different frameworks for engendering productive relationships with one's boss
4. Follow a system approach to develop a set of key takeaways as well as actions to improve future performance.

Questions

1. What are Dr. Samson's and Fr. Steingarten's strengths and weaknesses? Consider the use of a PMI. (de Bono, 2010). (LO1)
2. Based upon their observed behaviors, what are the inferred VABEs (values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations) of Dr. Samson and Fr. Steingarten? (Clawson, 2012). (LO1)
3. Which approaches to managing conflict were used by Dr. Samson and which might have been more effective and why? (Davidson, 2001). (LO2)
4. What might Dr. Samson have done to more effectively manage his relationship with Fr. Steingarten? (Gabarro and Kotter, 2005). (LO3)
5. What influence techniques might have been productive in managing Fr. Steingarten's relationship with Dr. Samson? (Cialdini, 2013). (LO3)

6. Using a creative thinking approach, develop an action plan for Dr. Samson. (de Bono, 2010). (LO3)
7. Assuming you are Dr. Samson and then Fr. Steingarten, complete an After-Action Review (AAR) based on significant case events. (Darling, Parry, and Moore, 2005). (LO4)

Answers to Questions

1. What are Dr. Samson's and Fr. Steingarten's strengths and weaknesses? Consider the use of a PMI. (de Bono, 2010). (LO1)

Clawson (2012) discusses leadership as the ability to: think strategically; to communicate effectively with others; to design supportive organizations; and to lead change. He developed a VCM model containing three elements to encompass these aspects: strategic thinking or visioning (V), garnering commitment of others to their vision (C) and monitoring and measuring progress towards their vision (M). Viewed through the lens of this model, leadership contains both elements of leadership as well as management (Kotter, 1990). We can see by looking at these three components that Dr. Samson and Fr. Steingarten have sizable vision components. Fr. Steingarten has worked somewhat on the C component while virtually ignoring the M; Dr. Samson on the other hand, since Fr. Steingarten became president, has spent little to no time on the C and M components of the model.

It might be helpful at this point to size up the two case players via de Bono's (2010) PMI approach which examines the pluses, minuses, and interesting points of each of the lead characters' behaviors. The PMI is a powerful tool that is designed to facilitate the development of deeper insights about a given topic. It is one of de Bono's Directed Attention Thinking Tools (DATT). Through its structure and application, it removes the effects of feelings and emotions about an issue. To use it, begin by focusing for about two minutes on generating as many positives or strengths about a particular issue. For this case, start with Dr. Samson as the focus. Next, take about two minutes to develop a list of all potential minuses or weaknesses about Dr. Samson. Then, still working with Dr. Samson as the focus, take about two minutes to think about and list all the ideas about him that are not positive or negative, but are inherently interesting. For example, start by saying, "It would be interesting if..." The beauty of the PMI exercise is that by generating a list of interesting points, further ideas might be triggered in sort of a stepping stone fashion, possibly providing a breakthrough insight about Dr. Samson; this result may be less likely to be forthcoming through a cursory strengths/weaknesses analysis. As indicated in Table 1 and Table 2 (Appendix), the PMI tool is applied to Dr. Samson and Fr. Steingarten. This analysis gives us a more complete aspects of exactly what Fr. Steingarten and Dr. Samson bring to the table.

2. Based upon their observed behaviors, what are the inferred VABEs (values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations) of Dr. Samson and Fr. Steingarten? (Clawson, 2012). (LO1)
- Clawson (2012), chapters 11 and 12, argues that if we really want to understand why people behave as they do, we must dig below the surface to uncover their values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations (VABEs). One powerful way of doing this is to construct a table with observed behaviors; from these we develop reasonable inferred VABEs. VABEs are written as "ought to or should..." As indicated in Table 3 (Appendix), inferred VABEs are applied to Dr. Samson and Fr. Steingarten.

3. Which approaches to managing conflict were used by Dr. Samson and which might have been more effective and why? (Davidson, 2001). (LO2)

Conflict basically arises when people have access to different sets of information. It is likely that Fr. Steingarten's circle of influence has a broader perspective of what makes a college preeminent due to his more extensive experience than both Dr. Samson and the previous president Fr. Williams. The analysis that follows is from Davidson (2001). It appears likely that Dr. Samson approached Fr. Steingarten from a competing position which is high on assertiveness and low on cooperation. This approach, which focuses on getting your way, tends to engender hostility and resentment. Collaboration might be a preferred approach for Samson and Fr. Steingarten to work together effectively. Collaboration means one is coming from a perspective of being both high on assertiveness as well as cooperation. The goal with this approach is to find an integrative solution when both sides or concerns are too important to be compromised. A primary objective here then is to learn from the experience/encounter. A sub-goal of a collaborative approach is to work through feelings that have interfered with a relationship as they surely have between Fr. Steingarten and Dr. Samson. An additional advantage of this approach to conflict management is that it facilitates the merger of insights of people with different perspectives. When employed correctly, collaboration enables a problem-solving approach, in which newer alternatives surface creating novel and different solutions to preexisting problems.

4. What might Dr. Samson have done to more effectively manage his relationship with Fr. Steingarten? (Gabarro and Kotter, 2005). (LO3)

An important approach that Dr. Samson might have taken is to try to manage upward the relationship with Fr. Steingarten with a certain clarity about their interwoven goals at the personal, departmental, and organizational levels.

Employees with new bosses need to recognize the high importance of actively managing their newfound relationship. Benefits will be realized by all involved parties as soon as Dr. Samson actively manages his relationship with Fr. Steingarten. The benefits can begin to accrue if Dr. Samson focuses on empathy with Fr. Steingarten and gaining clarity about Fr. Steingarten's strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, Dr. Samson must internalize the pressures he feels from above and from fellow colleagues and channel this newfound knowledge into organizational and personal objectives to be met. Dr. Samson must refocus his attention away from "I" to the broader view of "us." Gabarro and Kotter (2005) remind us that business success does not rely on politically motivated interactions with a boss but in managing relationships with bosses or colleagues for the purpose of success, as one would with a customer.

Dr. Samson would have been wise to be clear about Fr. Steingarten's expectations of him and goals for him. Just as important, he should have monitored these goals and expectations frequently in order to adjust his behavior as these goals and expectations changed. Dr. Samson and Fr. Steingarten needed to align their objectives more closely for the good of the organization. It would have been useful to look into how Fr. Steingarten operates. Some specific things that Dr. Samson might have done were to clarify goals and expectations that Fr. Steingarten had for him and to check regularly to determine if these changed over time and for what reason. Dr. Samson might have considered:

- Does Fr. Steingarten prefer formal or informal meetings? Will he be accepting of a short passing conversation in the hallway?

- Does Fr. Steingarten prefer listening to or reading the information he needs?

The overall aim is to meet the needs of one's boss rather than bending one's personality around the personality of one's boss.

Schlesinger (1996) suggests a strategy that might work for dealing with Fr. Steingarten. He has the reader consider which character from the Wizard of Oz one's boss is most like: the scarecrow, the tin man, or the cowardly lion. If one's boss is a scarecrow, a boss that lacks intellect, autonomy in such a position can allow one to shine as a leader. In the scarecrow scenario, one would determine a course of action after careful analysis, take the action in question, and ask for forgiveness instead of permission (Clawson, 2012). Dr. Samson could then yield the praise for success to Fr. Steingarten after the fact.

If one is working for a cowardly lion, this boss is someone who will not assert authority by taking a position. Encountering a cowardly lion in the workplace requires plumbing the boss' character for passion. Under these circumstances, determining what is important to the cowardly lion in charge helps one determine what is important and worthy of a confrontation. Under these circumstances, Dr. Samson would need to engage Fr. Steingarten's passion through a proposed course of action or mutual goal.

The third type of boss is a tin man, a removed boss without feelings and lacking the emotional depths needed to develop sound relationships. This type of boss might well be highly motivated by the success of the organization but not have the social competence for strong relationships. This is the closest match to Fr. Steingarten. Successfully navigating the position of Provost with such a university President will require attention to the details of feedback provided by Fr. Steingarten, taking strong, objective criticism, and as a result, developing a mental toughness. This may require a strong network of support throughout the organization that does not include the President. Schlessinger asks us to view the relationship between boss and subordinate in a positive frame where being proactive makes the difference between success and failure in one's career. Managing up allows one to maximize one's strengths by taking responsibility. According to Drucker (2005), the best way to identify strengths is through sound feedback analysis. Regular After Action Reviews (AARs) (Darling, Parry, and Moore, 2005) following important organizational events can provide such feedback. Effective After Action Review questions which highlight strengths and weaknesses might include:

- What was the individual in question trying to do?
- What occurred?
- Why did that happen?
- What ought to be continued?
- What ought to be different?
- What did we learn by working through this AAR?

This proactive method of continuously reflecting and learning from the past and applying that knowledge to future situations would put Dr. Samson in the position to thrive in most any organizational climate with most any boss.

5. What influence techniques might have been productive in managing Fr. Steingarten's relationship with Dr. Samson? (Cialdini, 2013) (LO3)

From Fr. Steingarten's perspective, it would be useful to apply Cialdini's (2013) Interpersonal Influence Strategies in attempting to work with Dr. Samson and have him see what the Board of Directors saw in his proposal to create a robust athletics program at St. Francis Xavier. Reciprocation recognizes that people feel indebted to those who do something for them or give them a gift. The thought behind reciprocity is that you have to act first and give something in order to get something in return. It may have benefited Fr. Steingarten to see what Dr. Samson's motivations/VABEs were when he decided not to consider the athletics program besides what his financial concerns were; this would have helped him understand what Dr. Samson's strategy would have been to elevate St. Francis Xavier to the next level.

It seems that Fr. Steingarten used the Social Proof strategy well when it came to knowing which peers to turn to for approval or buy in when it came to the new marketing strategy he was trying to implement for creating a robust athletics department. When people are uncertain about a course of action, they tend to look to those around them to guide their decisions and actions. Fr. Steingarten was well liked by the Board of Directors from the beginning, and he even had the buy in from the Board of Directors on his idea. He should have leveraged the Board of Directors earlier and used peer power to get buy-in from all his peers and bosses who are well-regarded by others. If he had done that, maybe his plan would not have been delayed and he wouldn't have lost time which caused a prime piece of real estate to be lost to a different investor. The Social Proof strategy consists of evaluations of consistency, scarcity, expertise and authority, and finally, liking.

Consistency: Fr. Steingarten's biggest error may have been not recognizing the importance of consistency or not being willing to see a compromise on how to stay consistent. St. Francis Xavier became a wonderful and stimulating intellectual climate under the guidance and leadership of Dr. Samson. While Fr. Steingarten never exactly stated that he wanted to shift gears away from this noble goal, his inclination for growth and expansion through national recognition in athletics, while a powerful idea under certain circumstances, would likely mean a compromise of the consistent aim of academic excellence.

Scarcity: Fr. Steingarten wanted it all. He wanted to create an institution of higher learning that was also an athletics powerhouse. Fr. Steingarten imagined St. Francis Xavier as the next Villa Nova (a superior academic institution with a national championship caliber basketball team year in and year out) or the next Notre Dame (national championship caliber football program for decades). Eventually the athletics teams would feed the popularity of the academic program further than it could be on its own and yet, the vision was far off in the future across enormous investments of time and money. Fr. Steingarten knew the strategy could pay off but pushed his agenda with a bit too much zeal. What ultimately was scarce in Fr. Steingarten was patience.

Expertise and Authority: Arriving at a new institution, it may have been presumptuous of Fr. Steingarten to assume that his ideas would be accepted *carte blanche*. As a Jesuit priest, he would have known of the superior status that Fr. Williams and Dr. Samson had crafted together at St. Francis Xavier. He would also have been clear about its size, populations, and endowment. Though enthusiasm and vision can take one far as a leader, a bit more patience with the pre-existing strategies and budgetary constraints imposed by St. Francis Xavier, as well as considering the thoughts of other experts on campus would have behooved Fr. Steingarten. Dr. Samson knew how to wield power and influence in order to assemble a faculty and learning

environment of superior quality. Fr. Steingarten should have recognized Dr. Samson's accomplishments and found a way to lead with Dr. Samson rather than leading against him.

Liking: Fr. Steingarten was going to be compared to Fr. Williams. Fr. Williams was genuinely a thoughtful leader, had social grace, and was considered the rainmaker of St. Francis Xavier. Fr. Steingarten, while he had a wealth of experience, was more argumentative than persuasive and was a salesman rather than a social butterfly. Dr. Samson may have responded to Fr. Steingarten had he been more pleasant, likeable, and charismatic as opposed to the argumentative, salesperson he was described as. People prefer to say yes to those they know and like and people are also more likely to favor those who are most similar to themselves and those that give them compliments.

6. Using a creative thinking approach, develop an action plan for Dr. Samson. (de Bono, 2010) (LO3)

Metaphorical thinking is a powerful way to stimulate creative thinking. It is based on the lateral thinking process developed by Edward de Bono (2010). Typically, we want to generate some novel ideas around some key case events or characters. We ask students to randomly choose an object or process, capture a picture of it (the visual metaphor), and then develop characteristics or properties of the random object. These characteristics or properties are then extrapolated on to key events in the case situation to develop novel perspectives that have the potential to be extremely useful in understanding and resolving case dilemmas. For example, how might the characteristics of a piece of rebar be applied to an action plan for Dr. Samson? As indicated in Table 4, it can be seen how students are empowered by this method to consider alternative courses of action for Dr. Samson in developing a compatible working relationship with Fr. Steingarten.

7. Assuming you are Dr. Samson and then Fr. Steingarten, complete an After-Action Review (AAR) (Darling et al, 2005) based on significant case events.

Here, students are encouraged to apply a powerful tool for systematic reflection discussed by Darling, et al (2005). Students are asked to put themselves in Dr. Samson's place at the end of the case and answer the following questions.

Assuming you are Dr. Samson at the end of the case:

1. What were you trying to do?
2. Implement and sustain a vision of academic excellence for St. Francis Xavier.
 - Work with Fr. Steingarten to accomplish my agenda.
 - Remain on good terms as provost with faculty and supporters
3. What happened?
 - I alienated Fr. Steingarten
 - I lost support of the Board
 - I resigned as provost
4. Why did it happen?
 - I did not effectively manage upward
 - I did not call on powerful faculty backers for support
 - I didn't fully use the power and influence I had developed over the years as an excellent scholar and administrator over the years.

5. What should be sustained?
 - Putting influence and effort into building the reality and reputation of academic excellence of St. Francis Xavier
 - My long-standing loyalty and allegiance to the school
 - Uphold my favorable reputation in the eyes of the faculty by taking actions that they find attractive and supportable
6. What should be changed?
 - More flexibility and openness in dealing with the new president
 - Change my style of leader/management to be supportive of my new boss
 - Actively search for creative solutions to seemingly insurmountable problems
7. Key takeaways/new learning
 - I need to learn how to manage upward as effectively as I have managed laterally
 - If my career is at an impasse or I am suffering setbacks, then seek assistance/advice from trusted colleagues
 - Practice daily mindfulness to enable clearer thinking
 - Complete a thorough AAR after experiencing a major career event, either positive or negative.

In a similar fashion, students can be directed to put on Fr. Steingarten's hat in order to complete an AAR from his perspective.

1. What was I trying to do?
 - Make St. Francis Xavier the "Villanova of the MidAtlantic"
 - Make his mark as the new president/CEO of St. Francis
 - Get the support of major donors and the Board to pursue his agenda.
2. What happened?
 - Forced a formerly strong and very effective provost to resign
 - Got the support of the Board for his agenda
 - Won the power battle with Samson
3. Why did it happen?
 - I am short on interpersonal competence
 - I operate on the principle that might makes right
 - I was unwilling to compromise in pursuit of my vision which I developed in relative isolation.
4. What should be sustained?
 - Energy/enthusiasm/business acumen brought to bear in pursuing my vision.
 - Salesmanship when it is tempered with big donors and the board
 - Ability to generate contagious enthusiasm among my supporters among the board members
5. What should be changed?
 - Listen and learn from my more experienced colleagues when I am new to the team.
 - Treat people the way they want to be treated by actively learning their unique VABEs

- Be open to different ways to define excellent and in different ways to get there
 - Ask for feedback on my behavior and operating style when I note rancor and discord being expressed because of my actions
6. New learning/key takeaways
- When first taking charge, take some time to learn how things work and its effectiveness (how the components work together) before pursuing change
 - You can win the battle and lose the war; be sure to thoroughly explore and try to understand the unintended consequences of your actions.
 - Might does not and should not make right; be kind and humble in pursuing your agenda
 - Examine how the effects of my actions are played out over time in pursuit of my agenda. Then, be willing to abandon, change, or pursue a different vision in light of hard, clean data.
 - Ask for feedback along these dimensions from key stakeholders and recipients of your change agenda:
 - What should I continue doing?
 - What should I stop doing?
 - What should I be doing differently?Then seriously consider whether you have the skill and willingness to act on these suggestions.
 - Be crystal clear in your own mind what your vision is and why and how it will lead to success; then be able to clearly communicate it to all stakeholders so that they know what their purpose is in the organization as well as their role in the pursuit of the vision.
 - Before firing or demoting someone, carefully consider your operating style and actions on this person's performance. You are responsible for creating the system that should allow your employees to take pride and joy in their work.

APPENDIX

Table 1 - PMI for Dr. Samson

Pluses	Minuses	Interesting points – It would be interesting if...
Has best interests of school at heart	Did not effectively manage his boss (Fr. Steingarten)	He had worked with the Board to garner their support
Clear focus on academic excellence	Does not manage upward very well since Fr. Steingarten became president	If he offered a compromise position to better work with Fr. Steingarten
Well-liked by students and faculty	Tendency to be somewhat close-minded	If he had worked to rally both students and faculty to support his vision
Excellent scholar and effective administrator	Didn't seem to garner support from his advocates both inside and outside the organization	He had left St. Francis Xavier and took the position of president at a competing school
Interpersonally competent for the most part		If he worked as a consultant to help other Catholic colleges enhance their competitiveness through the pursuit of academic excellence
		If he went to a career coach to find out why he was demoted by Fr. Steingarten
		If he had a cool-headed exit interview with Fr. Steingarten where he would listen and question but not defend himself or judge Fr. Steingarten
		If he had used the Jesuit discernment process for decision making to improve the quality of his decision making in working with Fr. Steingarten
		If he sought the counsel of OB professors in the business school at St. Francis to determine what went wrong and what he might do going forward

		If he had read, understood, and internalized the recommendations of Jeff Sonnenfeld in his Harvard Business Review article “Firing Back”
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Table 2 - PMI for Fr. Steingarten

Pluses	Minuses	Interesting points – It would be interesting if...
Very persuasive	Pushy	If his sole focus was fundraising and continuing the status quo
Cut a dashing figure and exudes confidence based on his success as an athlete	Uncompromising – my way or the highway	He was a better listener
Manages up well - does good job of cultivating outside donors as well as board members	Not a team player	He was willing to compromise
Drive and determination	Vision might not fit specific context of St. Francis Xavier as an academic powerhouse	He had cultivated a strong team to pursue different options to enhance the competitiveness of St. Francis Xavier.
Forceful	Lost the wisdom of Dr. Samson, a long- time successful academician and administrator at St. Francis without finding a good replacement	If he had used the Jesuit discernment approach to decision making to improve the process and outcome of decisions made at St. Francis
		If he had sought the advice/assistance of a career coach to smooth out his rough edges and to increase his EQ (emotional intelligence).
		If he had read, understood, and internalized the ideas of Daniel Goleman’s HBR article – “What it means to be a leader and/or Annie McKee’s HBR article – “How the most emotionally

		intelligent CEOs handle their power.”
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Table 3 – Inferred VABEs for Dr. Samson and Fr. Steingarten

	Observed Behavior	VABEs
Dr. Samson	Superior academic performance	One should put maximum effort into their known strengths to differentiate themselves from others
	Presented a realistic and balanced financial view of the present situation	One should carefully pitch one’s presentation to the specific audience
	Walked out of Fr. Steingarten’s office after having been verbally abused	One should not just stand by and quietly accept verbal dressing down
Fr. Steingarten	Exhibited strong business acumen	A college president /CEO should be skilled in all aspects of leading a successful organization
	Behaved in a very competitive fashion within his own college	One should put winning and coming out ahead as their primary goal(s) when the acquisition of scarce resources is involved
	Losing face was not forgotten	One should engage in aggressive behavior towards individuals who seemingly cause one to be embarrassed – after all, it’s all about me.

Table 4 – Metaphorical thinking - Comparison of Random word Rebar and Dr. Samson's Potential Action Plan



Characteristics of rebar	Action plan for Dr. Samson
Tough and strong	Never give up and work to build a coalition of support within the college and outside the college
Not meant to be seen	Can work behind the scenes with peers at other Catholic colleges, the press, consultants
Works together with concrete for strength	Try to work respectfully with Fr. Steingarten and in an accommodating fashion.
Used every few feet	Meet frequently and purposefully with key stakeholders with an open mind
Provides rigidity and support	Appeal to outsiders and the press to sing his praises in order to develop more power and influence with Fr. Steingarten

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