

TOPcast Episode 32: Provosts, Pedagogy, and Digital Learning

KELVIN From the University of Central Florida's Center for Distributed Learning, I'm Kelvin Thompson.

TOM And I'm Tom Cavanagh.

KELVIN And you're listening to TOPcast: the Teaching Online Podcast. Hi Tom!

TOM Hi Kelvin! That's one of my top ten favorite podcasts.

KELVIN It's up there for me. It might even be number one. I don't know.

TOM Maybe.

KELVIN Maybe. Something like that. So, here we are again.

TOM Here we are. We are recording on the day before Thanksgiving.

KELVIN I'm thankful.

TOM I am, too.

KELVIN For TOPcast and you and the all other people I work with here.

TOM And both of our listeners.

KELVIN *(laughter)* You and me!

TOM Hi, mom!

KELVIN You wish she'd listen.

TOM She actually does not listen. She might if I actually sat down and played it.

KELVIN Maybe tomorrow around the turkey you can hit play. *(laughter)*

TOM *(laughter)*

KELVIN "Did you know I do this?" "Tom? Turn that thing off!"

TOM Yeah. I gather all my family around. "It's time for the traditional listening of episode 22. Come along, folks! Kids, gather round!"

KELVIN Can you imagine?

TOM Oh my gosh. My family would never speak to me again.

KELVIN That's right. I got you.

TOM But we know that the people listening now appreciate us.

KELVIN Thank you. We're thankful for you.

TOM Yeah. We are thankful. You know what I'm thankful for?

KELVIN What's that?

TOM Coffee. I love coffee.

KELVIN Every day.

TOM And because of TOPcast, I've grown to have a new appreciation for coffee that I previously didn't have. You have been my Sherpa guide to the world of coffee beans.

KELVIN That's a tall order, but I will lean into that challenge. Thank you for that.

TOM Sure. So, I see a Thermos sitting in front of us.

KELVIN Yes indeed. I've poured us a little bit of this coffee. So, you know what this is? Or do you really care?

TOM I don't know what it is.

KELVIN Okay. Well, this comes to us from TOPcast listener Wendy Prantner from South Central College in Mankato, Minnesota.

TOM Hi Wendy!

KELVIN Yeah, she lovingly shipped off to us this coffee from some folks in her neck of the woods from Beans Coffee. This is their signature coffee which they gave a name to. A couple of former banking professionals opened up a coffee roasting place, and they refer to this as De Novo. It's a Sumatra coffee, but they refer to it as De Novo. You can kind of hear it in the etymology of that term, right? There's sort of a newness, a new beginnings, right?

TOM Mhmm. That's good. I like it.

KELVIN Yeah! There you go.

TOM This is quite a shtick you've got here. We've got listeners sending us coffee now.

KELVIN Thank you!

TOM Yeah!

KELVIN You, too, could send us coffee.

TOM You will get a free shout out on TOPcast and maybe a sticker.

KELVIN Maybe a sticker! Wendy has a sticker. She's got it somewhere prominent, I hope. We'll put—as we always do in the Show Notes—a little link to the coffee place and all that, but this new beginnings seemed appropriate given the topic of the interview with today's guest. Does that make sense to you? Kind of new beginnings?

TOM I think it does.

KELVIN Things are different, and new stuff.

TOM It does. Yeah. So, today's TOPcast episode is another very special TOPcast episode.

KELVIN They are all special episodes.

TOM Just recently—like last week—here in Orlando was the Online Learning Consortium Accelerate Conference, and we did a couple of interviews there, and we're going to play one of those today.

KELVIN That's right. So, you interviewed Casey Green, and most of our listeners are likely familiar with Casey for his groundbreaking decades-long surveys of higher ed. CIOs through the Campus Computing Project, and Casey's also a podcaster. He hosts the ever popular To A Degree, which—I love that title—is sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. It talks about kind of groundbreaking innovative work in the higher ed. space. However, you spoke with Casey, Tom, about some new things he's doing. Anything you want to say about the interview before we share it?

TOM I enjoyed the conversation with Casey. I always do. He's a very smart guy. From his perch in the kind of work that he does, he gets to see a broad landscape, and I think that gives him a perspective that's worth listening to. He does talk a lot about chief academic officers and the work that he's done through a survey that we'll talk about as well as some work that he's doing through the Association for Chief Academic Officers, their Digital Fellows program that brings together provosts from across the country, also sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. I think both of those are important initiatives, and I enjoyed hearing his perspective and gaining his insights.

KELVIN Yeah, and I guess I should say, too, that if you're not familiar with Casey Green, his bio is honestly too extensive to read to you in the short half hour we've got here. We're going to link to that and a lot of other links to his work in the Show Notes. It really is worth a click, and you should click through that. Meanwhile, right now, we're going to cut to the recording of your interview with Casey and then we'll be back to wrap things up.

(musical transition)

- TOM So, Casey, thanks again for being here on TOPcast.
- CASEY Tom, thanks for the invitation.
- TOM So, we are at the Online Learning Consortium Accelerate Conference here in Orlando, and I know during the conference you'll be talking about some research that you've done with chief academic officers.
- CASEY That's correct.
- TOM I wanted to ask you a little bit about that. Maybe kind of give us a little summary to start off about what that survey was about and what you learned.
- CASEY Sure, I'm happy to do so. Today at OLC, it's November 15th. We go public with the national survey—some 350+ chief academic officers, provosts at 2- and 4-year public and private colleges and universities across the United States. This was a project that's titled Provosts, Pedagogy, and Digital Learning. The sponsoring organization is the Association of Chief Academic Officers, a professional organization of provosts, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. It's almost to say what's the role of academic leadership? We know a lot about the role of CIOs in part at the risk of shameless self-promotion the work that I've done with the Campus Computing Project surveying CIOs for over 25 years.

The question of provosts becomes a very interesting one. Some are advocates, some are agnostic, some are antagonistic to the whole role of information technology and the role of digital resources in instruction. They are the academic leader of their institutions. Presidents, depending on the type and kind of institution, often have a more external focus in their role. The chief academic officer is sort of the operating officer for the inside academic enterprise or could play a critical role in leadership on these issues in terms of support for resources and services. Also, the big issue of faculty recognition and reward. We've been doing this now since the arrival of PCs and Macs in the early 1980s. Sort of the structural problem for many faculty who would like to do this and say, "This is part of my scholarly portfolio." At least in my campus conversations, we hear too often it doesn't count. It's not recognized. It's not part of the traditional algorithm for review and promotion, and yet, for many faculty members—and particularly younger ones—there's both an interest, and in some ways, an implied or actual expectation. "You will do the heavy lifting on digital learning for our widgets course in the particular department."

I think back, Tom, to the turn of the century, so we go back to 2000. Perhaps not at UCF, which has earned and is widely acknowledged as a leader on digital learning, but for many other campuses, we saw strategic plans. ACME College in the 21st century. ACME College 2021, whatever it might be, that talked a lot about the transforming power and potential of information technology in terms of the student experience. They were proclamations. They weren't plans. There was nothing below that headline or kind of the glowing paragraph that helped connect the necessary digital dots in the infrastructure

about how ACME College was going to get there, and I think we continue to have that issue. I'm on record with stuff that I've written lately, and I think it carries through in the provost survey as well. The technology has changed dramatically, but the big campus issues about technology are not about technology. They're about people. They're about process, planning, programs, silos, money. The religious wars we used to have about Macs vs. PC seem to be kind of foolish at this point.

TOM Some of it's LMS religious wars now.

CASEY And actually, that's an interesting point! So, in the survey data, when we ask provosts about the campus general satisfaction with different IT resources, the one that was almost highest rated was the LMS compared to analytics, compared to the student information system, compared to lots of things that are mission critical for both students and faculty. We asked them on a 1 to 7 scale. Is it not satisfied/very satisfied in terms of campus mood? Surprisingly, the LMS—where there's always people complaining about the LMS—comes up relatively high, and what we learn from the provosts is great optimism about a lot of the potential of digital resources. You ask them about adaptive technology, the numbers are almost at the top. 80-90% higher about the potential of adaptive learning technologies. They would like their faculty to use it more in entry-level and gateway courses. Similar numbers when we ask about the role of digital curricular resources, and we compare that optimism against well, what about the effectiveness of your current investments? Again, on an effectiveness scale of 1 to 7, not effective, very effective, and let's just say the very effective are those who say 6 and 7 get relatively low numbers for a lot of these things, and when we look at the data in terms of the modes by institutional segments, they're 3s and they're 4s. That's just not good enough.

TOM Were those results that you're describing—particularly the kind of optimistic ones about digital learning and adaptive learning—is that across the board by segment? Like this 2-year, 4-year, public, private, large, small or were there different variations?

CASEY That's a really good question because it's important to disaggregate these data by sector and segment and student populations, which we always have done with the Campus Computing survey and we've done with this one as well, and while the numbers may vary a little bit by sector and segment, again, when we see high numbers, we see them generally across the board. There's not one where there's necessarily a big dip compared to others.

TOM Interesting.

CASEY We see that on one or two other things on the survey in terms of what's the role of the provost in terms of being informed or generally involved or actively involved, and there's a little shift in some of those numbers on those three issues that the big number masks that. So, about 40% say they're generally involved and the other 45% say they're actively involved and on a balance they say generally informed and then again when we disaggregate that by sector and segment, we do see some interesting differences,

particularly on the actively involved as opposed to the generally involved. Some of that's size. Some of that's delegation. You know, larger institutions may have a vice provost or an assistant vice president for whom that's the particular portfolio being explicitly the provost, and a lot of provosts have different portfolios. As I talk with members in the provost community and I'm told that often when a provost takes office—is hired—he or she will have a particular agenda—campaign promise, if you will? Kind of a metaphor. “These are the things that I would like to focus on during my tenure here at ACME College as the academic leader.” And those can be all over the place. They can be improving the quality of undergraduate education. They can be not surprisingly student success. That one's fairly common. Some will say technology and digital learning is part of that. Others won't. So, again, that becomes an interesting question about what are the leadership and institutional priorities of the chief academic officer, and then how does that convey its way down in terms of the activities of deans and department chairs and then also to faculty?

TOM Well, you kind of describe a tension that we live with even at UCF, and so, I agree. I think that we're not afraid of technology or digital learning, and we do a lot of it. I've got tremendous senior support, you know, from the president and the provost, yet we continue to try to push our reputation as a research university and our faculty—our tenure track faculty—are more, I think, encouraged sometimes to pursue research rather than pedagogical innovation at times, depending upon the department. So, I'm really fortunate. I get to go to conferences like this and EDUCAUSE and other places and talk about interesting things like CBE and adaptive learning, and then I come back to campus and I talk to certain departments and they are not necessarily rewarded for innovating in the pedagogical practices in their classes. They're rewarded for getting that NSF grant or that NIH grant. Now, it's not across the board, but kind of my last outpost that I'm trying to get converted over to try some new things is sometimes really hard, even at a school I think as embracing of it as UCF is.

CASEY Sure. Well, I think there's two parts to that. I would agree wholeheartedly. You know, one is the distance that often separates the proclamations of presidents and provosts as opposed to the behavior of department chairs and deans.

TOM Yeah.

CASEY You know, ultimately this is a ground game for individual faculty members in terms of the culture and the leadership and the priorities of their departments, so it's one thing for the president or the provost to say, “Here at ACME College, we truly believe in this and we want our faculty to do it,” and it's another thing in terms of bringing forth your dossier or your portfolio for review and promotion and how that's viewed by a dean, how that's viewed by a department chair and the senior members of the department. I think the second—and that's when I go back to Ernie Boyer's work on scholarship some years ago. In terms of expanding the notion of what scholarship might be in an appropriate context. Should faculty members get points for simply posting a syllabus on a website? No, but for those faculty members across departments who say that “digital pedagogy is a fourth

component of the algorithm beyond research, teaching, scholarship, and service, and I would like that algorithm to be expanded, and I'd like to be recognized." That's a hard sell in a lot of places. We have some data on that from the provost survey. Many provosts say their institutions do, yet year in and year out—we've been asking this for about 15 years on our CIO survey—and the CIOs have a different view. They say maybe 20% of the campuses have expanded the algorithm. The provosts' number is much higher.

So, there is a gulf on this, and again, it may be just that distance between the well-intentioned proclamations of provosts as opposed to the actual behaviors of deans and department chairs and where that departmental leadership—that closer to the ground leadership—places its priorities. I do know it's really important that we protect and defend the faculty and particularly young faculty who want to do this. Like you, I've been to too many show-and-tell days. I say that a little flippantly but respectfully that those are the days where once a year the faculty members who get release time have an opportunity to have fifteen minutes. We used to call it a war haul unit. Today, it'd be the equivalent of a TED Talk. It's a measurement of time. "Tell us what you did in your class." The psychologists don't care about the physicists or the music college-ists, and the mathematicians aren't interested in what the humanists have done, but the script is, "Tell us what you did. Tell us what it looked like, and in the last three or four minutes, we'll do an evaluation. Was it effective? How much did you actually do? What are your plans to go forward? What kinds of problems did you encounter?" Invariably, every time I've done these over the years, it's really invigorating. It's professionally rewarding. We got about 80% done. We encountered a couple of rabbit holes because we got some bad advice, and we got caught in a couple of traps. Students seem to like it. Our sort of preliminary assessment of does it make a difference seems to be yes, but we're not quite sure how much. We're getting some nice feedback from colleagues off campus who have faced similar challenges in terms of addressing this particular instructional issue, and I'm forever indebted to Steve or Susan who is either the work study student or the graduate student as indentured servant who was done a lot of the work on this and finally the person says to my departmental colleagues, "Please remember this day I know I have fallen on a digital sword, because this won't count," and it needs to count. It really needs to count.

- TOM Well, or we at least include it as part of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and that's helped because we do have a pretty robust SOTL initiative, but it counts more in some departments than others.
- CASEY Sure.
- TOM So, it's not necessarily universal.
- CASEY Yeah, so much of this is cultural and contextual and beyond the institutional level, down to the different departments. Without question.

TOM Yeah, absolutely. So, I wanted to ask you also about your work with the Digital Fellows initiative which is also which chief academic officers and if there were similarities between the survey that you found and the sort of the practitioners on the ground discussions that you've been having through the Digital Fellows initiative or if there are any sort of particular leadership traits or themes that you've seen kind of being merged between these two initiatives that you've been a part of.

CASEY Yeah. So, let me backtrack a little bit and sort of backfill a little bit about what the Digital Fellows project is. This is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Foundation has put a lot of support into a variety of initiatives in both K-12 and higher education. I think when I came into it, the Foundation was doing a lot of on the ground stuff with both institutions and with others to kind of help find the efficacy and the effectiveness of different kinds of digital learning strategies and technologies much as they've been doing with iPASS and coursework and other kinds of things, and I think the Foundation's interest was is there a leadership lever, and if so, what can we do to inform and empower academic leaders?

The host group is the Association of Chief Academic Officers. That's actually a professional association of provosts. It's a young group—about three years old. The intent of the project is we have thirty folks who went through a national competition about why should you be a Digital Fellow? What would this do for your campus? It's an eighteen-month project but actually a one-year campus-based project in terms of by the time we were able to select the folks and begin to support some projects that they're doing. What differentiates this from most fellowship opportunities is it's not about me in the sense of my portfolio. Yes, you know, you'll get a badge. You can put something on your resume that says, "I was a ACAO Digital Fellow," but part of it is peer-to-peer vetting of solutions that work in terms of perhaps the best credibility, in terms of provosts talking to other provosts about our efforts in math or our efforts in remedial work or our efforts in economics, our efforts in different areas in gateway courses. How can we do better?

We all know the quote often attributed to Einstein—which is not his—but in saying "expecting to do the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome" and yet each fall, the campuses across the country, we continue to teach gateway courses the same way with—depending on the campus—very high DFWI rates. We sort of point the finger at our students without saying are there some structural things we can do better in terms of the resources, the technologies, the support services? It's not just about going high tech. My work—and I think a lot of other work really confirms that the best implementations of high tech are really tech-enabled high touch. If you look, for example, at Georgia State where they have done this incredible job in light-year speed in terms of how academic organizations move, eliminating the gaps between the different sub-groups of student populations: first gen., low income, students of color, and the graduation rates. The top-level statement is that's about high-tech analytics. Yeah, but they also hired several hundred people to provide really important support services for those students, so it's not just, "There's an analytic algorithm that kicks out an email that

says, ‘Casey, you’re in trouble.’” There are resources and services and people that will get me out of the rabbit hole when I get that email on Monday morning. Same thing with the BA for Baristas program at Arizona State. Same thing with the math accelerator that’s using adaptive technology at Austin Community College.

And so, with the Fellows program, in part we’re doing convening to bring resources that many have not seen before. Many were sort of technology advocates. There’s a journey of discovery many are experiencing on their own campuses when they’re asked to say what’s actually happening. Many have told us, “You know, I thought I had a good understanding of what’s going on and I’ve been surprised because so much of this is decentralized. It’s the choices of departments and faculty, particularly at the entry-level gateway courses about what and in which ways to go with the role of technology and digital resources in terms of trying to do better in those critical gateway courses.”

Again, we’ve got 31 campuses. We’ll see how this plays out. It’s a really rich and interesting group: community colleges, a lot of public 4-year masters and baccalaureate institutions, a few privates, couple of research universities. Not one strategy for all of them. They’re doing a project. Some are doing very discrete projects that we provide some support for. Some are leveraging a little bit of money for campus projects and going large in lots of different ways, and again, part of this is to build a resource on peer-to-peer basis for provosts. So, they can go to the ACAO website. They can find the resources that have effectively been vetted and affirmed by other provosts in their own efforts to say, “Where do I go to try to understand where opportunities might be or how can my campus do better and how is it I as a provost get more involved in that?”

TOM Is there a plan to do this again after eighteen months or wait and see?

CASEY We’re not sure at this point. I mean, this is a first-year project. The funding takes us through summer 2018. We’ll find out.

TOM Cool. Well, in the few minutes we have left, this is your opportunity to speak to our vast TOPcast audience about anything that’s on your mind that you think is important as a trend or a concern or an opportunity in the digital learning space. Anything that you’ve been thinking about a lot lately?

CASEY I’ll come back to one issue. The conversation about recognition and reward for faculty. We just have to do better, and we have to do much better. We have to be much more explicit, and again, we need to close the gap where it might exist between the proclamations of presidents and provosts to the behavior and the priorities of department chairs and deans, particularly for young faculty. That scholarship of pedagogy that you talked about at UCF that some other campuses are finding, but again, our data—particularly from CIOs—suggests that even on campuses that have a teaching mission over a research mission, barely 20% have expanded the algorithm that way. A second issue in the conversation about digital learning that’s critical we address is the issue of

digital accessibility. We see that in our survey of CIOs that when we ask CIOs are you doing an effective job—

TOM Are you talking about students needing accommodations or digital divide accessibilities?

CASEY No, we're talking about accommodations, essentially for ADA compliance kinds of issues.

TOM Sure.

CASEY There is just a huge gap in terms of the need and the requirement—whether you look at it at a legal mandate or you look at it as a moral issue about how institutions need to address it, you still have to address it, and CIOs tell us that they don't do a very effective job. Those numbers from our survey for the last several years when we ask how effective are you at this are not great. Provosts from our most recent surveys seem to have a higher assessment that they're doing better. I'm not sure that they're necessarily as well informed about that. They may be on an individual basis, but when we look at the data, the provost numbers are much higher than the CIO numbers. I think I have a little more faith in the CIO numbers in terms of the issue of accessibility. This one doesn't go away, and I know that from my periodic forays into the archives of the Chronicle of Higher Ed/Inside Higher Ed, you look at campuses where there's been an incident of a complaint or a plaintiff. There's a complaint on campus or it gets elevated to a legal issue. Complaints and plaintiffs win.

TOM Right.

CASEY It becomes imperative as we talk about doing this that we do it well and we do it right. I think the third issue that we need to address is sort of the digital divide that you also asked about. When we've done surveys over the last year of faculty, of CIOs, and provosts, about 30%—plus or minus—across these three groups, with a little bit of variation by sector and segment, tell us that a big barrier to the campus effort to go more digital or all digital is large numbers of our students don't own platforms. You know, it's with good intent that many campuses open labs late at night, but that's not a strategy for a part-time or a full-time student who's working, who has family commitments, who has other obligations, who needs the convenience of being able to grab a device at 11:00 in the evening as opposed to drive to campus and sit in the lab. Whether it's digital content or digital tools or digital widgets, it becomes essential for whatever the class might be. We would like to think when we look at the consumer market, "Gee, everybody's got devices. Everybody's got a phone. Everybody's got access to wireless." That's just not the case, and that's particularly true for first gen. students, low income students, part-time students. We look at the populations in community college. Many first gen. students, low income students at residential institutions. It's as important as first day access to a textbook. Deferred access means that you essentially start in a hole.

TOM Yeah, absolutely. I mean, we've also found just through our own experience not just the access to a device but access to broadband has been an issue.

CASEY I would wrap those together.

TOM Yeah.

CASEY I mean, one of the most interesting stories I've heard about that access issue actually is K-12 story in California. A low-income district did a one-to-one program, and to complete that, well, what were the kids going to do once they left the schools? There was no signal at home. Families just didn't do that. The superintendent put routers on school buses, parked them in neighborhoods, and lit up the communities as a way that kids would have signal, but also then kids could help their parents learn these technologies on a one-to-one tablet program, and it really is a tablet and even more so a laptop. You know, you can do a lot with a phone, and we certainly see a lot more in some ways being done with instructional technologies on phones outside of the United States, but it's with that screen space and the keyboard that really, you know, not bad as a consuming device, not great for a creation device but that's part of the divide in the technologies as you've found.

TOM We've talked about this on this podcast in fact in the past. It's interesting. We're in a pretty suburban/urban environment, at least the traditional service area for UCF, but we've got partner community and state colleges that are very rural, and at least one of them, many of the students just simply don't have access to broadband. The only broadband is the small outpost campus that's in their county, which is interesting.

CASEY Yeah, so it's not one versus the other. It's both, because it's a stall. The sum is more than the parts. The tablet or the device will only take you so far, and it is having signal because that's what feeds the device, that feeds the beast, if you will.

TOM Absolutely. Well, Casey, thank you so much for taking time out of your very busy day here at the Online Learning Consortium Accelerate Conference to speak to us. Have a great conference.

CASEY Tom, thank you very much for the opportunity to be on TOPcast.

(musical transition)

KELVIN So, that was your interview with Casey Green, Tom.

TOM It was. Yeah. He was a really interesting guy to talk to, as I said. He always is.

KELVIN Yeah, absolutely full of insights and touches so much of higher ed. You know, if you don't mind, I thought a couple of little things that stood out to me—there's a lot of things

stood out—but a couple things that I was left with that were these little sound bite nuggets of ideas: the great optimism of provosts I thought was really interesting.

TOM Yeah, I find that encouraging. *(laughter)*

KELVIN I think that could cut two different ways, right? You could look at that as encouraging and visionary and leadership and hey we can do this, you guys. Or it could also reflect— He talked about the proclamations of presidents and provosts sometimes potentially being out of step with folks on the ground. That's a threat. Right? So, you hope not to have that. You hope for the former, not the latter, but generally I'm a fan of optimism.

TOM Yeah, well, I mean even those great proclamations by presidents and provosts that are often not supported by the kind of on-the-ground activities or reward structures that are in place. I mean, recognizing that you have a problem is the first step to solving a problem, right?

KELVIN That's right.

TOM So, just even kind of calling that out is, I think, a good thing.

KELVIN Yeah, I think you make a real good point. That was a theme that we heard really that's on Casey's mind obviously about the way that we reward and recognize faculty. If we're serious about anything, then it ought to show up in the way that we reward and recognize faculty. So, teaching, innovation, all those. But boy, in higher ed., we don't like to mess with that stuff too much.

TOM No, and certainly from our position in the org. structure, it's really hard to effect change on the tenure and promotion process.

KELVIN That's right.

TOM All we can do is continue to support faculty and do the best we can.

KELVIN And honestly, presidents and provosts can't, you know, laterally change that kind of stuff either.

TOM No, they cannot. That's true.

KELVIN So, it takes a village. But I also liked Casey's tech-enabled high touch phrase. I like that a lot, too.

TOM Yeah, he gave that Georgia State example, and I don't remember if we talked about this on the podcast before, but I know we've talked about it personally that what Georgia State has done is really impressive. They've gotten a lot of publicity because of the

analytics technology, but honestly, as big a component of that has been the human aspect of that.

KELVIN Yeah, absolutely, and you know, this is not exactly what Casey was calling out with his tech-enabled high touch, but the more I was thinking about that again and again over the last week or so, it's what we aspire to in blended learning.

TOM Yeah, I think that's true. Yeah, and we know here that that is our most successful, most popular modality.

KELVIN Yeah, if you do it right, you're enabling the human. You're enabling the high touch through the technology somehow or other, but yeah, we could talk more about this all day and you really should check out the Show Notes because there's a lot of good stuff in there.

TOM Yeah, absolutely. Go look at the results of the survey that Casey references and go through the various resources that'll be in the Show Notes. There's a lot of good stuff out there.

KELVIN Yeah, absolutely.

TOM And check out his podcast, too!

KELVIN You really should. It is worth a listen. I listen to it. You listen to it. He usually has— Quite often there'll be like multiple interviews on an episode, but then he chops them up so you can listen to just one interview if you want to or the whole thing.

TOM Yeah, and these are some pretty high-level folks with really interesting perspectives. A lot of university and college presidents.

KELVIN Provosts.

TOM Yeah, and others.

KELVIN Yeah. Maybe one day you'll get to be on his podcast.

TOM *(laughter)* Yeah, maybe.

KELVIN Maybe. Well, how about this as a way to press pause for right now on this conversation? I think this is a theme from your conversation with Casey and what we've talked about these last couple moments, too. If we're really going to have lasting impact in any kind of innovation within our institutions, particularly digital and/or online education, then our chief academic officers need to be personally involved in these efforts. Would you agree with that?

TOM I would agree with that, and I've certainly appreciated our provost's involvement here at UCF. It's made an enormous difference in moving some things forward, so I think it just reinforces some of the findings that Casey has.

KELVIN Yeah, absolutely. And if you haven't listened or if you haven't gone to iTunes—or the Apple Podcasts as they like to call it now—or your podcast app of your choice and left a little star rating...

TOM What's wrong with you?

KELVIN Yeah, we'd love you to do that. It lets us know that you're there, and leave a little comment behind. That'd be awesome. That being said, for TOPcast, until next time, I'm Kelvin.

TOM And I'm Tom.

KELVIN See ya.