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978-0-521-11612-1 - Strategic Leadership in the Business School: Keeping One Step Ahead
Fernando Fragueiro and Howard Thomas

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Strategic Leadership in the Business School

Business schools have come under fire in recent years, with criticisms centring on their academic rigour and the relevance of business education to the 'real' world of management. Alongside this ongoing debate, increasing international competition and media rankings have led to a fierce struggle between business schools for positioning and differentiation. These are among the challenges that are faced by the dean of the modern-day business school. In this book, Fernando Fragueiro and Howard Thomas show how deans of business schools can meet such challenges in terms of strategic direction setting and the execution of their leadership role. Drawing on their invaluable experience as deans of highly successful business schools, they present a series of case studies to show how leaders of five major business schools (IMD, LBS, INSEAD, IAE and Warwick) have built effective strategies in the context of internal and external political pressures.

FERNANDO FRAGUEIRO is Professor of General Management and Director of ENOVA Thinking, a centre for developing corporate leadership in emerging markets, at IAE Business School in Buenos Aires. He served previously as Dean of IAE Business School (1995–2008) and as Vice-President of Austral University (1995–2007).

HOWARD THOMAS is Dean and LKCSB Chair in Strategic Management at the Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Singapore Management University. Until recently he was Dean of Warwick Business School (2000–2010), and, prior to this, he was Dean of the College of Commerce and Business Administration at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign (1991–2000).

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*To Lynne and the Thomas family, who are Howard's
foundation and who light up Howard's life.*

*To Carlos Cavallé of IESE, the dean of deans, who has been
an indispensable mentor to Fernando and a long-standing
friend to both of us.*

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Preface

This book is grounded in the research and writing of the two authors: on one side, the work Howard Thomas has undertaken over the past decade at Warwick Business School (WBS), the Association of Business Schools (ABS), the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International, the Global Foundation for Management Education (GFME) and on business schools and their strategic leadership; on the other, Fernando Fragueiro's five years of research on 'strategic leadership as processes in a specific organizational context from a political perspective' at three world-class European institutions: IMD, INSEAD and London Business School (LBS), as well as his own experience as dean of IAE Business School, from 1995 to 2008.

The logic of this book, which examines business school strategic leadership processes in practice, is explained in the following flow diagram (suggested by Alex Wilson, research fellow in strategic management at WBS).

Overall, the diagram tries to throw light on the critical role of strategic leadership in business schools. Deans have been variously described as 'jugglers', 'jacks of all trades, but masters of none', 'dictators', 'doves of peace' and 'dragons'. Taken together, these metaphors illustrate the multifaceted, important and often stressful role of leading a business school as a university discipline and department. Deans are faced with reconciling contested identities as CEO, entrepreneur and scholar. Some of the most successful, such as George Bain (at LBS and, earlier, WBS), demonstrate how a range of characteristics, including integrity, humour, confidence, resilience, determination and scholarship, define the personality of a leader in the political process of leadership, and enable the chosen path and strategic direction – e.g. to beat INSEAD – to be understood by the

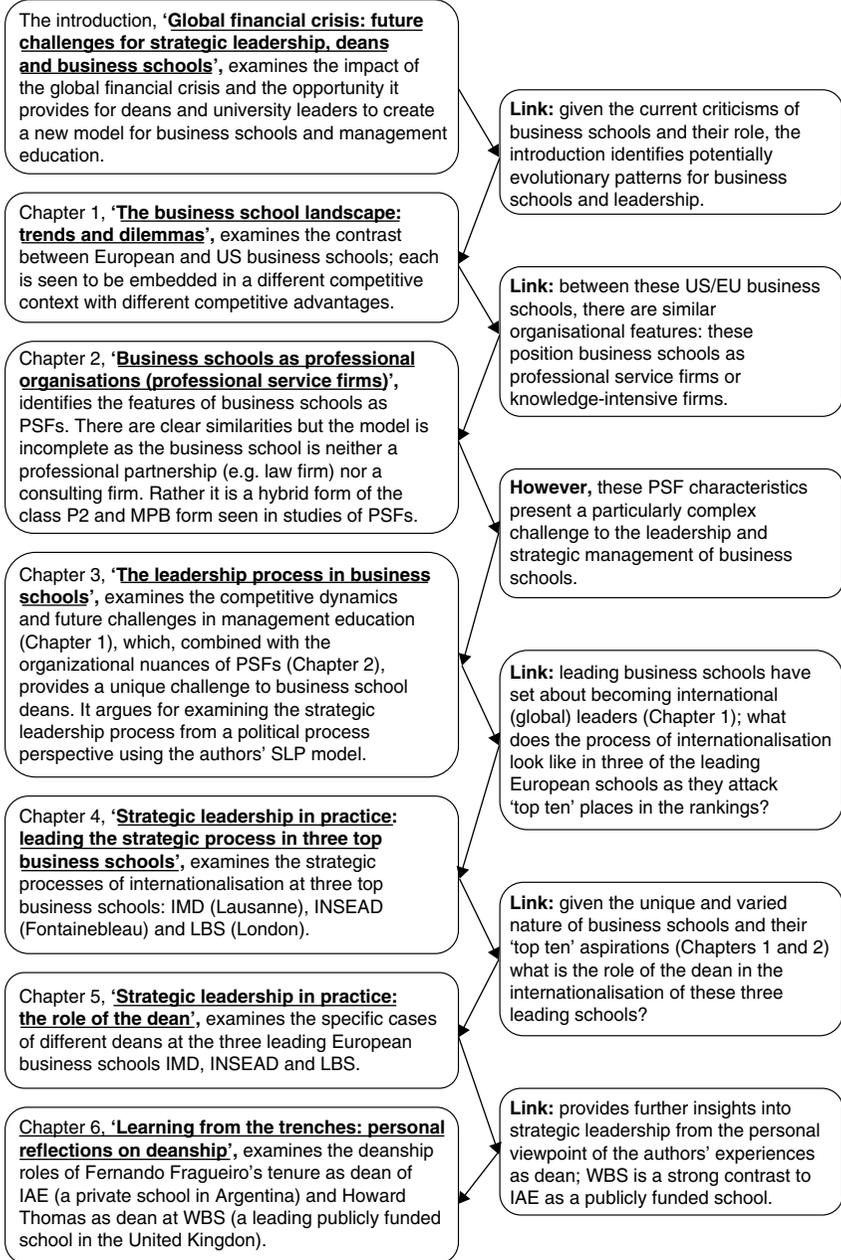
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school's multiple constituents (staff, students, alumni, business and government).

We hope that the insights developed from our strategic leadership process models and our case studies of strategic leadership in practice at IAE, IMD, INSEAD, LBS and WBS will provide useful material for debates and dialogue about future business school models, and, more importantly, stimulate further research in this area.

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We would also like to thank our colleagues and researchers at IAE Business School and Warwick Business School for their support and understanding while we devoted the necessary time and effort to writing this book. Finally, our sincere appreciation goes to Claire New (Howard’s PA at WBS) and Alex Wilson (WBS), with whom it has been our pleasure to work on this endeavour.