

# MAKING THE CASE FOR COACHING

*A Professional Development Funding Rationale for Leaders in Higher Education*

## 01 The Research Case for Coaching

Use this paragraph as-is or adapt it. Citations link to original sources.

### COPY-PASTE VERSION

Research consistently supports professional coaching as a high-ROI leadership development intervention. A [global study by the International Coaching Federation](#) found that 86% of organizations report recouping their coaching investment, with clients reporting a 70% improvement in work performance and a 72% improvement in communication skills. The [Center for Creative Leadership](#) found that among 240 experienced leaders who received executive coaching, 98% increased their overall leadership capability and 95% improved their job performance — outcomes that workshop-based training rarely replicates. [Harvard Business Review](#) research further identifies that the most effective coaching is applied and context-specific — working through real challenges in real time, not developing generic skills in the abstract. For academic leaders specifically, [CUPA-HR workforce research](#) identifies leadership transitions as among the highest-risk periods for institutions; structured coaching support during these windows has been linked to reduced early-tenure attrition and stronger team stability.

Source	Key Finding
<a href="#">ICF Global Coaching Study</a>	86% of organizations report positive ROI. Clients report: 70% improved work performance, 72% improved communication, 63% stronger team relationships.
<a href="#">Center for Creative Leadership</a>	Among 240 experienced leaders: 98% increased overall leadership capability, 95% improved job performance, 96% drove greater business success.
<a href="#">HBR — Coutu &amp; Kauffman (2009)</a>	The most effective coaching is context-specific and applied to real challenges as they unfold — not generic skill-building in the abstract.
<a href="#">CUPA-HR Workforce Research</a>	Leadership transitions are among the highest-risk institutional moments. Structured support during these windows reduces early-tenure attrition.

## 02 What Changes When Leaders Get Coaching

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Pick two or three outcomes from the list below that best match your situation. Drop them directly into Section 5.

### Decision-Making

- Make faster, more confident decisions under conditions of ambiguity and competing stakeholder pressure
- Reduce reactive decision-making in high-stakes or emotionally charged situations
- Develop a more reliable process for navigating complex, multi-stakeholder decisions

### Communication and Conflict

- Conduct difficult performance or accountability conversations without avoidance or over-explanation
- Manage interpersonal conflict at the faculty or department level before it escalates to senior administration
- Improve direct feedback delivery — clearer, more specific, and less likely to damage working relationships

### Leadership Presence and Sustainability

- Build a more sustainable pace for the role — maintaining effectiveness without burning out the people around me or myself
- Increase confidence and intentionality in navigating the political dimensions of academic leadership
- Develop a clearer leadership identity — the ability to lead as myself, not just as the role demands

### Team and Institutional Impact

- Reduce the number of personnel escalations that reach senior administration
- Improve morale and retention within my direct reports by leading with greater clarity and consistency
- Strengthen our unit's ability to execute on strategic priorities — because implementation follows leadership

## 03 Your Sample Rationale — Fill In the Blanks

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### FILL-IN TEMPLATE

#### **My Role and Institutional Context**

Our unit is currently [navigating a curriculum overhaul / managing a leadership transition / implementing a new strategic plan / preparing for reaccreditation]. This work requires sustained judgment across faculty governance, personnel decisions, budget stewardship, and external stakeholder relations simultaneously.

#### **The Challenge I Am Navigating**

I am currently navigating [specific challenge: a personnel situation / a governance conflict / a department reorganization / a transition in institutional strategy]. Unlike a conference or workshop, professional coaching provides the repeated, applied practice I need to work through this challenge as it unfolds — not in the abstract. Specifically, I need support developing [outcome from Section 2] and [second outcome from Section 2].

#### **What the Institution Gains**

By the end of this engagement, I expect to [behavioral shift from Section 2]. This will directly affect [specific downstream outcome: faculty retention / accreditation readiness / team morale / reduced escalations to senior administration]. When a chair or dean develops as a leader, the unit around them develops. Improved leadership judgment reduces escalations, preserves relationships, and protects institutional reputation at exactly the places where decisions are hardest.

### Cornerstone Leadership Group

*Academic leadership development for campus leaders and the teams they lead.*