Dear University President,

I quit.

Addressing the Great Resignation in Higher Education

Jeffrey L. Buller

Atlas

Strategy #1: The Faculty First Year Experience

From time of hire:

- More personalized contact from future colleagues
- Gradual introduction of forms, paperwork, and benefits information as needed

First Day Welcome:

- 80% social; 20% business
- More acclimating than inundating

First Year Experience Program (with topics adjusted for your institution or discipline)

September

- **Teaching Focus:** Teaching large classes
- **Research Focus:** The role and function of the IRB (Institutional Review Board)
- **Service Focus:** Committee structure at the institution
- **Policy Focus:** Intercultural sensitivity

October

- **Teaching Focus:** Best practices in online teaching
- **Research Focus:** Services provided by the division/office of research
- **Service Focus:** Balancing service with teaching and research responsibilities
- **Policy Focus:** How the budget works

November

- **Teaching Focus:** Strategies for consistent evaluation of student work
- **Research Focus:** Developing a research agenda
- **Service Focus:** Selecting your first service role
- **Policy Focus:** Sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and the workplace

December

- **Teaching Focus:** Dealing with student grade appeals
- **Research Focus:** A deep dive into research integrity
- **Service Focus:** How the faculty senate/assembly works
- **Policy Focus:** First term retrospective, "How did it go?"

January

- **Teaching Focus:** The Socratic method
- **Research Focus:** Applying for external grants
- **Service Focus:** How curriculum proposals are approved
- **Policy Focus:** The institutional travel policy

February

- **Teaching Focus:** Additional strategies for active learning
- **Research Focus:** Developing budgets for research projects
- **Service Focus:** Service to the discipline
- **Policy Focus:** The outside employment/activities policy

March

- **Teaching Focus:** The professor as mentor and role model
- **Research Focus:** Local resources for writing assistance related to articles, books, grant proposals, and other research-related activities
- **Service Focus:** Service to the institution
- **Policy Focus:** The summer teaching policy

April

- **Teaching Focus:** Developing and assigning capstone projects
- **Research Focus:** Strategies and methods for solo research
- **Service Focus:** Service to the community
- **Policy Focus:** The records retention and disposition policy

May

- **Teaching Focus:** Teaching with technology

- **Research Focus:** Strategies and methods for team-based research

- **Service Focus:** Documenting service achievements

- **Policy Focus:** Applying for promotion, "What first year faculty members need to know now"

After the presentation, use this space to jot down notes of what an appropriate "First Year Faculty Experience" would look like for your institution or program:

Strategy #2: Know Your Team Exercise #1

DIRECTIONS: Think of whichever "unit" you most commonly regard as "yours." Usually that unit will be a department, office, division, or college.

Aside from yourself, how many people are in your unit? _____

Of this total number, for **how many** *of these colleagues can you perform the task indicated?*

For this many:	I am able to do this:
	I know whether or not they are married.
	I know the name of the person's spouse/significant other.
	I know the names of their children, if they have any.
	I know whether the person has pets.
	I recall a time when they were invited to my home.
	I recall a time when I was invited to their home.
	I know whether they have major food allergies or strong food preferences.
	I know the person's favorite athletic teams or that they aren't interested in sports.
	I know the person's taste in music or that they aren't interested in music.
	I know how the person takes their coffee or tea.
	I know the person's favorite beverage (besides coffee or tea).
	I know the person's favorite color.
	I know the state or country where the person was born.
	I know whether the person's parents are still living.
	I know the person's middle and/or birth/maiden name.
	I can recall the color of the person's eyes.
	I know the person's favorite hobbies or pastimes.
	I know what the person would consider his or her proudest achievement.
	I have had a pleasant, non-work-related conversation within the last month.
	I can think of one special thing that would *annoy* this particular person.

Getting to Know Your Team

Copy the following form and have it completed by members of your faculty and staff.

I'd like to get to know you, not just as a colleague, but as a person. So, please answer each of the following questions honestly. I will be the only one to see your answers, so I invite you to be as candid as possible.

1. What are your hobbies or special interests outside of work?

2. What are your favorite stores?

3. What are your favorite restaurants?

4. What is your favorite type of food and drink?

5. What is your favorite color?

6. What's the best large gift you've ever received?

7. What's the best *small* gift?

8. What are some of the things you do that you don't think people recognize you enough for?

9. What's your proudest achievement?

Strategy #3: Help Members of the Team Know One Another Better

But remember this important proviso:

- When you create opportunities to socialize, remember each person's situation and needs.

- Not everyone can:

  - ✓ Afford to go out for lunch

  - ✓ Be available outside of work hours

  - ✓ Drink alcohol

- So, socializing opportunities that are without cost, occur during the work day, and have options are best.

Strategy #4: Apply Fusion Theory   Exercise #2

- Imagine that you were charged with identifying a one-day holiday that reflected your department's core identity in some way.

- Think in terms of what people actually care about, what brought them into this line of work in the first place.

- What would your holiday be?

Strategy #5: Take the Pulse of the Program

The ATLAS Campus Climate and Morale Survey

This instrument is based on principles outlined in Jeffrey L. Buller's book Change Leadership in Higher Education: A Practical Guide to Academic Transformation (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2015). It is free to photocopy and distribute, with attribution.

The ATLAS Campus Climate and Morale Survey

INSTRUCTIONS: After entering some demographic data that will help us determine whether the climate and morale of the institution is perceived differently by different stakeholder groups, indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the 25 items on the inventory. Use the rightmost column (N/A or N/R) for any question that you feel doesn't apply to you or that you'd prefer not to answer.

Relationship to the Institution:
> **Administrator**
> **Full-Time Faculty**
> **Part-Time Faculty**
> **Staff**
> **Student**
> **Prefer Not to Say**

Gender:
> **Male**
> **Female**
> **Mixed gender, transitioning, exploring, or otherwise neither of the above**
> **Prefer Not to Say**

Ethnicity:
> **White/Caucasian/European-American**
> **Black/African/African-American**
> **Latino/Chicano/Hispanic**
> **Asian**
> **Native American/American Indian**
> **Multi-cultural/Blended Heritage**
> **Other**
> **Prefer Not to Say**

How many years have you been associated with this institution? _____ year(s)

Please answer each question, using the scale to the right:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Nor Disagree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A or N/R
1. I receive the information I need in order to do my work effectively.							
2. I am able to manage the stress associated with my work.							
3. I feel physically safe on campus.							
4. I feel that my work is appreciated.							
5. I feel that diversity is valued at this institution.							
6. I feel that creativity and new ideas are appreciated at this institution.							
7. I feel that my opinion is respected at this institution.							
8. I feel "at home" at this institution.							
9. There is at least one person I can talk to candidly about issues that concern me at this institution.							
10. I have received at least one useful appraisal of my work within the last year.							
11. The central administration of the institution acts ethically.							
12. The administration of my college acts ethically.							
13. The administration of my department acts ethically.							
14. On the whole, my peers interact with me in a collegial manner.							
15. I am regularly offered opportunities that allow me to grow or improve in my work.							

Please answer each question, using the scale to the right:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A or N/R
16. I believe that my performance is evaluated fairly.						
17. I believe that the institution is following the right priorities.						
18. I believe that the institution genuinely cares about the faculty.						
19. I believe that the institution genuinely cares about the staff.						
20. I believe that the institution genuinely cares about the students.						
21. I feel that the institution has a positive reputation with the public at large.						
22. I am proud to be associated with this institution.						
23. I am optimistic about my future relationship with this institution.						
24. I could honestly recommend this institution for a student to attend.						
25. I could honestly recommend this institution as a place for someone to work.						

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The ATLAS Faculty and Staff Engagement Survey

This instrument is based on principles outlined in Jeffrey L. Buller's workshop The Great Resignation in Higher Education. *It is free to photocopy and distribute, with attribution.*

Relationship to the Institution:
> **Administrator**
> **Full-Time Faculty**
> **Part-Time Faculty**
> **Full-Time Staff**
> **Part-Time Staff**
> **Prefer Not to Say**

Gender:
> **Male**
> **Female**
> **Mixed gender, transitioning, exploring, or otherwise neither of the above**
> **Prefer Not to Say**

Ethnicity:
> **White/Caucasian/European-American**
> **Black/African/African-American**
> **Latino/Chicano/Hispanic**
> **Asian**
> **Native American/American Indian**
> **Multi-cultural/Blended Heritage**
> **Other**
> **Prefer Not to Say**

How many years have you worked for this institution? _____ year(s)

Please answer each question, using the scale to the right:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A or N/R
1. I have a clear sense of what this institution stands for.						
2. I have a clear sense of how this institution is different from others that are commonly compared to it.						
3. I have a clear sense of the values or principles that guide the area, program, office, college, or department in which I work.						
4. I feel "at home" at this institution.						
5. I feel that my opinion is respected at this institution.						
6. I feel that my life is somehow better for having been associated with this institution.						
7. I regularly make voluntary financial contributions to this institution.						
8. I regularly contribute my time to this institution in ways for which I don't expect to be compensated.						
9. I regularly events sponsored by this institution that my job doesn't require me to attend.						
10. I regularly events sponsored by this institution that do not occur within my normal working hours.						
11. I regularly events at this institution that are sponsored by areas outside my own area, program, office, college, or department.						
12. I regularly look forward to coming to work.						

Please answer each question, using the scale to the right:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A or N/R
13. I regularly offer my services when volunteers are requested for some project or activity.						
14. I currently believe that I'll continue working at this institution at least as long as I had originally intended.						
15. I would feel comfortable speaking publicly about something at this institution if I thought some of the people I report to were doing something immoral or harmful.						
16. I could honestly encourage other people to work at this institution.						
17. I could honestly encourage students to enroll at this institution.						
18. When people outside the institution ask who I am or what I do, I regularly mention my association with this institution.						
19. I genuinely care about the reputation of this institution.						
20. If offered a similar job at a similar institution in a similar location for 5% more salary, I would probably decline the offer.						
21. If offered a similar job at a similar institution in a similar location for 10% more salary, I would probably decline the offer.						
22. If offered a similar job at a similar institution in a similar location for 25% more salary, I would probably decline the offer.						

Please answer each question, using the scale to the right:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A or N/R
23. If offered a similar job at a similar institution in a similar location for 50% more salary, I would probably decline the offer.						
24. I believe that my supervisor knows me as an individual.						
25. I believe that my supervisor knows my values and priorities.						
26. I believe that my supervisor genuinely cares about me as an individual.						
27. I believe that I know my supervisor as an individual.						
28. I believe that I know my supervisor's values and priorities.						
29. I genuinely care about my supervisor as an individual.						
30. If someone from outside this institution said something demeaning or unflattering about it, I would defend it.						
31. On the whole, I find the atmosphere of this institution to be stimulating.						
32. On the whole, I believe that this institution reflects what is best in higher education.						
33. On the whole, I believe this institution adds significant value to the lives of its students.						
34. On the whole, I believe this institution adds significant value to the lives of its faculty members.						
35. On the whole, I believe this institution adds significant value to the lives of its staff members.						

What Do People Want From You?

This personal profile will be used to determine your preferred style of engagement. The inventory consists of sixteen statements. Consider each statement and reflect on how much you agree or disagree with its sentiment. Then check the appropriate box that matches the level of your agreement.

Adapted from Kruse, K. (2015). *Employee engagement 2.0: How to motivate your team for high performance : a "real-world" guide for busy managers*. Richboro, PA: The Kruse Group.

	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neither Agree Nor Disagree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
RECOGNITION					
I feel good when my supervisor says thank you.					
I feel good when a colleague says thank you.					
I feel good when one of my ideas is implemented at work.					
I feel good when someone at work asks for my opinion.					
TOTAL					
TRUST					
Knowing my institution's goals is important to me.					
I feel good knowing how my work contributes to my institution's goals.					
It's important to have a supervisor who cares about me.					
It's important that our upper administration does what it says it will do.					
TOTAL					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	5	4	3	2	1
COMMUNICATION					
Meeting with my supervisor one-on-one, at least weekly, is important to me.					
Meeting with my colleagues in my unit (office, department, etc.), at least weekly, is important to me.					
I like to read institution-wide communications, like the school's annual report or periodic updates from the upper administration.					
I wish I had more opportunities to ask questions of my president or chancellor during meetings.					
TOTAL					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
GROWTH					
Career advancement is important to me.					
I like to learn new things and to be challenged at work.					
I would like to have a mentor to help guide my career.					
Knowing the next steps in my career path is important to me.					
TOTAL					

Which engagement driver received your highest score? This is the #1 area for you — and I as your supervisor — to focus on in your career. I want to help engage you more in this area.

Do you have a tie, or are several scores close? Each engagement driver can have a score ranging from 4 to 20. Although it's rare, some people have two or more engagement areas that are tied or several that are just within a point or two of each other. If this is the case for you, consider it a good thing. It means that there is more than one way to enhance your feelings of engagement.

Are all your scores 12 or below? If all the areas have a score of 12 or less, it means that you answered every single question as neutral or with a level of disagreement. You are basically indicating that communication, growth, recognition, and trust aren't important to you. Although this result is very rare, there are other drivers of engagement that turn up less frequently, including teamwork, quality, and corporate responsibility. Let me know what these factors are for you.

Questions to Ask Periodically

1. How does coming to work each morning make you feel?

2. Do you understand what is expected of you on a daily basis?

3. Are you proud of where you work?

4. Do you feel close to your colleagues?

5. Do you feel that your job is important?

6. Do you feel comfortable contributing ideas and suggestions at work?

Strategy #6: Time the Mentoring Right

1. What do *newer* faculty members need?

- Guidance on tenure, promotion, and/or long-term employment

- Feeling that they are part of the "family"/larger enterprise

- Reassurance that someone "has their back"

- Protection from excessive service demands

- Time and money

2. What do *mid-career* faculty members need?

- Help through "the mid-career crisis": "Is this all there is? What's next?"

- Advice on leadership and governance opportunities

- Preparation for promotion to full professor

- Protection from "middle child syndrome"

- Reflection: "What kind of professor have I become"?

3. What do *senior* faculty members need?

- Legacy development

- Transition to post-faculty life

- Opportunities to become a mentor/"pay it forward"

- The freedom to "shake things up"

- The chance to explore new interests

4. What do *minority* faculty members need?

- The recognition that there's diversity within diversity

- An appropriate sense of community

- Freedom from "cultural taxation"

- As much interest in *retaining* them as you had *hiring* them

- Culturally relevant leadership opportunities: "Not everyone leads alike"

5. What do *contingent* faculty members full-time temporary, part-time) need?

- Choices

- A path forward where possible

- The power to say "no"

- Comparable pay for comparable work

- Respect

References Made in the Workshop

1. Jeffrey L. Buller, *Retaining Your Best College Professors: You Worked Hard to Recruit Them; Now How Do You Keep Them?* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefeld, 2021.

2. Jeffrey L. Buller & Robert E. Cipriano, *The ATLAS Gide to Career Development in Higher Education*. Raleigh, NC: ATLAS Leadership Publishing, 2020.

3. Lauren Collins, Are After-Work Drinks a Conspiracy Against Women? *The New Yorker*. *https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/are-after-work-drinks-a-conspiracy-against-women*.

4. Gallup Organization. *State of the American Workplace*. https://www.gallup.com/workplace/238085/state-american-workplace-report-2017.aspx.

5. Chip Heath & Dan Heath. *The Power of the Moments: Why Certain Experiences Have Extraordinary Impact*. New York, NY: Bantam, 2017.

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7. Tracy Maylett & Paul Warner. *MAGIC: Five Keys to Unlock the Power of Employee Engagement*. Austin, TX: Greenleaf, 2014.

8. Bob Nelson, *The 1001 Rewards & Recognition Fieldbook: The Complete Guide*. New York, NY: Workman Pub, 2003.

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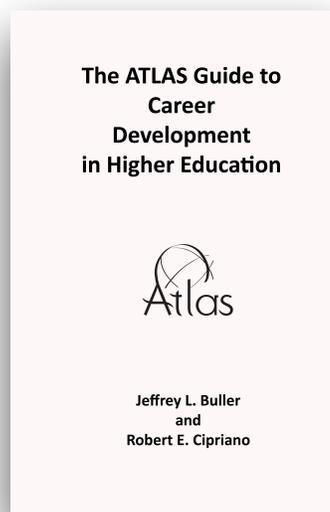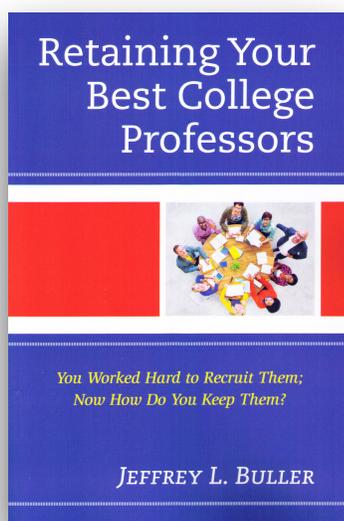
About ATLAS

ATLAS: Academic Training, Leadership, & Assessment Services offers training programs, books, and materials dealing with collegiality and positive academic leadership. Its more than fifty highly interactive programs, which can be conducted either in person or as webinars, include the following:

- Introduction to Academic Leadership
- Promoting Faculty and Staff Engagement
- Stress Management for Academic Leaders
- Conflict Management for Academic Leaders
- The Introvert's Guide to Academic Leadership
- Best Practices in Faculty Recruitment and Hiring
- Best Practices in Retaining Outstanding Faculty Members
- Developing Resilience as an Academic Leader: How to Bounce Back When Times Are Tough
- Why Academic Leaders Must Lead Differently: Understanding the Organizational Culture of Higher Education
- Getting Organized: Taking Control of Your Schedule, Workspace, and Habits to Get More Done in Less Time with Lower Stress
- Positive Academic Leadership: How to Stop Putting Out Fires and Start Making a Difference
- Authentic Academic Leadership: A Values-Based Approach to Academic Leadership
- Mindful Academic Leadership: A Mindfulness-Based Approach to Academic Leadership
- Fostering a College University: An In-Depth Exploration of Collegiality in Higher Education

ATLAS offers these programs in half-day, full-day, and multi-day formats. These programs may be provided either in person or via webinar, as you prefer. ATLAS also offers reduced prices on leadership books and issues an e-newsletter that addresses a variety of issues related to academic leadership. The e-newsletter is sent free to subscribers.

For more information, contact:

ATLAS Leadership Training
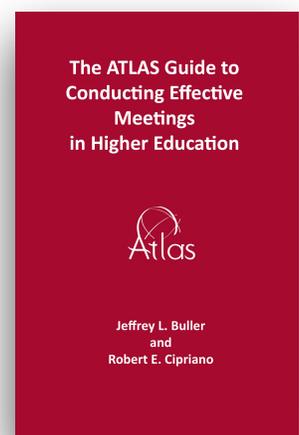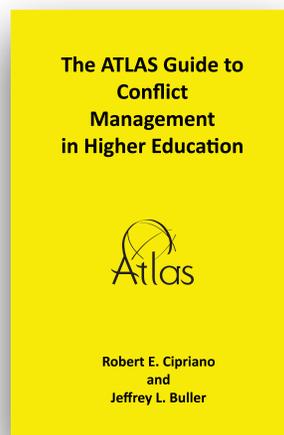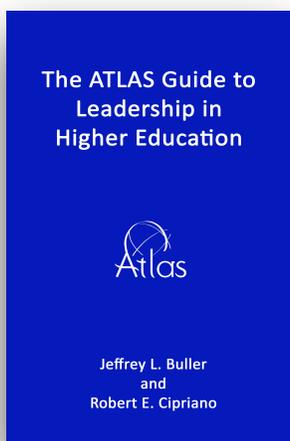9154 Wooden Road
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ATLAS Guides

ATLAS Guides are concise resources (usually 100 or fewer pages in length) that can be used for personal leadership development, as the basis for conducting a workshop for faculty members or academic leaders, or as a workbook/handout to be used for professional training programs. The guides include material from ATLAS's popular workshops, plus exercises, inventories, case studies, and resources for further study. Each guide costs only $2.99 as an ebook or $5.99 as a paperback and is available from Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

The following ATLAS Guides are currently available.

- *The ATLAS Guide to Leadership in Higher Education*
- *The ATLAS Guide to Promoting Collegiality in Higher Education*
- *The ATLAS Guide to Effective Meetings in Higher Education*
- *The ATLAS Guide to Effective Communication in Higher Education*
- *The ATLAS Guide to Emotional Intelligence in Higher Education*
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Books by Jeffrey L. Buller

Academic Leadership

- *Academic Leadership in the New Normal* (ATLAS Leadership Publishing, 2021)

- *Retaining Your Best College Professors: You Worked Hard to Recruit Them; Now How Do You Keep Them?* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2021)

- *Free Speech and Campus Civility: Promoting Challenging But Constructive Dialogue in Higher Education* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2021; co-authored with Robert E. Cipriano)

- *Evaluating Boards and Administrators: Promoting Greater Accountability in Higher Education* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2020)

- *Confronting Today's Issues: Opportunities and Challenges for School Administrators* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2020; co-authored with Chad Prosser and Denise Spirou)

- *A Handbook for College and University Advisory Boards* (CASE, 2019; co-authored with Dianne M. Reeves)

- *Mindful Leadership: An Insight-Based Approach to College Administration* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019)

- *Managing Time and Stress: A Guide for Academic Leaders to Accomplish What Matters* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018)

- *The Five Cultures of Academic Development: Crossing Boundaries in Higher Education Fundraising* (CASE, 2018; co-authored with Dianne M. Reeves)

- *Authentic Academic Leadership: A Values-Based Approach to College Administration* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018)

- *Hire the Right Faculty Member Every Time* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017)

- *Best Practices for Faculty Search Committees: How to Review Applications and Interview Candidates* (Jossey-Bass, 2017)

- *World-Class Fundraising Isn't a Solo Sport: The Team Approach to Academic Fundraising* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017; co-authored with Dianne M. Reeves)

- *Going for the Gold: How to Become a World-Class Fundraiser* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017; co-authored with Dianne M. Reeves)

- *A Toolkit for College Professors* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015; co-authored with Robert E. Cipriano)

- *The Essential Academic Dean or Provost: A Comprehensive Desk Reference* (second edition, Jossey-Bass, 2015; first edition, Jossey-Bass, 2007)

- *A Toolkit for Department Chairs* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015; co-authored with Robert E. Cipriano)

- *Building Leadership Capacity: A Guide to Best Practices* (Jossey-Bass, 2015; co-authored with Walter H. Gmelch)

- *Change Leadership in Higher Education: A Practical Guide to Academic Transformation* (Jossey-Bass, 2015)
- *Positive Academic Leadership: How to Stop Putting Out Fires and Start Making a Difference* (Jossey-Bass, 2013)
- *Best Practices in Faculty Evaluation: A Practical Guide for Academic Leaders* (Jossey-Bass, 2012)
- *The Essential Department Chair: A Comprehensive Desk Reference* (second edition, Jossey-Bass, 2012; first edition: Anker Publications, 2006)
- *Academic Leadership Day by Day: Small Steps That Lead to Great Success* (Jossey-Bass, 2011)
- *The Essential College Professor: A Practical Guide to an Academic Career* (Jossey-Bass, 2010)

Academic Research

- *Eternal Dreamer: The Imagery of Richard Wagner* (ATLAS Leadership Publishing, 2021)
- *Sophocles and the Sacred Hero: A Study in Imagery* (ATLAS Leadership Publishing, 2021)
- *Classically Romantic: Classical Form and Meaning in Wagner's Ring* (2nd ed. ATLAS Leadership Publishing, 2021; 1st ed. Xlibris Press, 2001)

Novels

- *Die, Meistersinger!* (ATLAS Leadership Publishing, 2021)
- *Moebius Strip: A Retro-Futurist Memoir* (ATLAS Leadership Publishing, 2021)
- *Payvand Reed's Academy of Secrets* (ATLAS Leadership Publishing, 2021)
- *Payvand Reed's Cabinet of Mysteries* (ATLAS Leadership Publishing, 2020)
- *Payvand Reed's Curiosity Shoppe* (ATLAS Leadership Publishing, 2020)
- *Yesterday's Tomorrow: A Retro-Futurist Memoir* (ATLAS Leadership Publishing, 2020)

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