

FACULTY FOCUS

Special Report

Academic Leadership Qualities for Meeting Today's Higher Education Challenges

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Academic Leadership Qualities for Meeting Today's Higher Education Challenges

It's been said that no one dreams of becoming an academic leader when they grow up. It's a tough job that's only gotten more challenging as budgets shrink, public scrutiny rises, and responsibilities continue to grow. It requires a unique skill set – part field general, part mediator, part visionary, and part circus barker – to name just a few. But what does it really take to be an effective leader?

Featuring 13 articles from *Academic Leader* this special report seeks to answer that question and provide guidance for anyone in a campus leadership role.

For example, in the article “Leadership and Management: Complementary Skill Sets,” Donna Goss and Don Robertson, explain the differences between management and leadership, and share their thoughts on how to develop leadership skills in yourself and others.

In “Zen and the Art of Higher Education Administration,” author Jeffrey L. Buller shows how the Buddhist practice features many principles for daily life that could benefit academic leaders. Such advice includes “Walk gently, leaving tracks only where they can make a difference.”

In “Techniques of Leadership,” authors Isa Kaftal Zimmerman and Joan Thormann outline specific leadership skills for effectively running meetings, building consensus, and communicating across the institution.

The article “A Formal Approach to Facilitating Change” explains how Northwestern University's Office of Change Management is structured as well as its operating principles for effectively managing change at the university. The key is to articulate how a change can benefit those directly affected and others not directly affected, to be accountable, and to provide clear criteria for measuring success

Other articles in the report include:

- Factors That Affect Department Chairs' Performance
- Changing Roles for Chairs
- Becoming a More Mindful Leader
- Creating a Culture of Leadership
- There's More to Leadership than Motivation and Ability

Academic leadership roles are constantly changing. We hope this report will help you be a more effective leader during these challenging times.

Rob Kelly
Editor
Academic Leader

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Techniques of Leadership

By Isa Kaftal Zimmerman, EdD, and Joan Thormann, PhD

During our combined 90 years in education, we have observed and worked with leaders who have inspired us and many of our colleagues to work “hard and smart.” In many of those instances, we and our colleagues exceeded both our goals and expectations. We have also observed and worked with leaders who are “challenged,” and as a result, the performance of those being led was not as good as it might have been.

The skills we describe below constitute a set of concrete actions that the educational leaders we admire have used to induce us to succeed. We have focused on three areas that all leaders engage in: calling and running meetings, building consensus, and communicating across their institutions. Educational leaders may wish to use our suggestions to consider their own behavior and activity and to reflect on whether these ideas might help them improve their performance as leaders. At the same time, leaders may find confirmation of their own leadership skills. This list applies at all levels, whether the person is a university president or the head of a department.

Leadership behaviors in operational context

1. Calling and running meetings

- **Getting buy-in for agendas** is necessary preparation for conducting effective meetings. Good leaders discuss the agenda with the members of their group. They include items needed to advance the work of the organization and to meet the needs of the members. One strategy is asking the attendees for input; another is establishing volunteer planning groups for specific meetings or topics so members can see that their concerns, issues, and interests are reflected in the agenda of the meeting.
- **Sending agendas in a timely fashion** allows attendees to prepare for the meeting and prevents surprise by unanticipated issues during the meeting. This kind of behavior is both respectful and productive. While the meaning of the word “timely” will undoubtedly vary with context, it is rarely true that it will mean “at the time of the meeting.”
- **Using the round-robin strategy**—that is, from time to

time, asking everyone attending the meeting to speak—can eliminate repetitive comments and “monopolizers,” as well as offer reticent members a chance to contribute.

- **Forming subcommittees with volunteers** is a good way to work on business that requires more time than is available during the meeting. Committee members report aloud at meetings of the whole group to encourage input and ownership.
- **Summarizing at the end of the meeting** what needs to be done and what agreements were reached ensures understanding about who has the responsibility for future action.
- **Following through on all agreed-upon actions** with those who have offered to act ensures follow-through, including for those outside the group who need to be involved in the action. The responsibility of follow-up rests primarily with the leader.
- **Carrying over unresolved items to the agenda of the next meeting** is the responsibility of everyone involved, but usually the task devolves on the leader. A responsible leader tracks the issues to ensure resolution and reports on items taken care of outside the meeting.

2. Building consensus

- **Listening to each person and encouraging open debate.** People need to feel heard and understood, and minority opinions need to be expressed. Creating a safe environment to express dissident ideas can lead to better solutions. One way to do this is to establish ground rules—and follow them. For example, if it is explained that one should not be judgmental during a brainstorming session, people are more likely to say what is on their minds rather than censor their thoughts.
- **Recognizing each person’s strengths and weaknesses.** Delegating work based on an individual’s strengths will make the leader’s and the group’s tasks easier, more rewarding, and more likely to reflect what the group thinks is the correct action. It is unwise to delegate work to people who do not have the capacity to be successful doing it.
- **Rewarding people** is a concrete sign of appreciation that builds respect and makes people willing to work harder and feel good about the task and the leadership. No-cost or low-cost examples include publicly thanking individuals for their work, giving an award or certificate, and asking them to speak about and/or present

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their work.

- **Being truthful** while recognizing allegiance up and down the chain of command is a leader's task. Leaders need to be diplomatic and responsible in how they speak about what they have been asked to do. They also need to be tactful when sharing information and explaining the work of their group to those above. This balance needs to be based on honesty and trust so that each level feels understood and supported.
- **Socializing** periodically allows everyone to feel part of the group. The leader should occasionally bring everyone together in a social context. Doing so is likely to create a strong sense of affiliation and group cohesion and will contribute to the productivity of the group.

3. Communicating

- **Acknowledging the receipt of a communiqué and responding to it** is a sign of respect. There is nothing more annoying than sending a note and not knowing if it was received. Needless to say, the leader should follow up on the content of the communication as well as acknowledge it.
- **Thanking a colleague in writing** helps to create a positive atmosphere in the workplace. People often remember and value a thank-you note more than an evaluation document.
- **Sharing information** lets people know they can rely on getting "the word" from their leader. Not having to guess about an outcome or event or hear it "on the street" contributes to a collegial and inclusive environment.
- **"Dipsticking"** should be used by the leader periodically by meeting individually with group members, just to check in. For the health of the group, it is important to enable any group member to vent to the leader privately. It is also important to encourage all group members to provide honest feedback about the leader's own behavior and practices. Doing so can result in the leader's own growth and development.
- **Newsletters** can feature such things as people's accomplishments, items of interest, coming attractions, and important announcements. Newsletters are useful to support those who are performing well, encourage others to reach for higher performance, and develop and maintain institutional history. Newsletters also build bonds and belonging.

Conclusion

For any initiative, whether new or revitalized, to go forward, the group needs to support the leader, and the leader needs to respect and incorporate ideas and concerns from his or her constituents. These simple yet crucial suggestions translate theory into practice in a way that any leader can use in his or her leadership repertoire.

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A Formal Approach to Facilitating Change

By Rob Kelly

In 2000, Northwestern University created the Office of Change Management "to facilitate organizational change at Northwestern University, working in collaboration with academic and administrative leaders, faculty, and staff to support Northwestern's core research and teaching mission." In a conversation with Academic Leader, Jake Julia, associate vice president for change management, discussed the structure and nature of this office and offered advice on how to facilitate change.

In addition to Julia, the Office of Change Management currently consists of two directors, a project director, and a program assistant. Unlike similar structures at other institutions, the office is not an internal cost center and does not charge an internal fee to other units within the university. Rather, it serves as a resource to the university, focusing primarily on "institutional or high-level organizational change," issues that cross traditional academic and administrative lines, Julia says.

The office gets most of its projects from the provost or senior vice president for business and finance; however, other administrators can make requests as well. "If a dean or vice president would come to us and say, 'I have something that I would really like you to work with us on,' we would sit down and make sure it fits with our mission. If it does, we'll put it in our queue," Julia says. A Change

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Management Advisory Group, composed of deans, faculty, and staff, helps link the office with the needs of the university.

Julia stresses that the role of his office is not to impose change, but to assist by facilitating the conversations that are critical to articulating and implementing change initiatives.

“We’ve been able to provide units with neutrality. We don’t have an agenda. We don’t have a position on governance or curricula-type issues, and we can help them raise issues and facilitate the discussion,” Julia says.

Julia operates according to the following principles when working to manage change at Northwestern:

- **Define, in writing, exactly what change you want.** People may have a sense that change is necessary, but they need to get beyond that by articulating what needs to be changed and how things will be when the change is implemented. “In a sense, it’s understanding the mission—which is an overused word. I’m talking about something a little more tangible, having a really strong idea about where you are now and where you want to be. The idea is to sit down and say, ‘How do I get from A to B?’”
- **Identify roadblocks or potential roadblocks.** “Are there key faculty blocs that we might not be aware of that would strongly oppose this change? Articulating that and talking about that up front helps people understand how to craft a strategy to actually effect the change.”
- **Understand the institutional culture and context.** “What are the core values that keep people together and make people want to work together on an ongoing basis? If you go into a unit or if you’re in a unit and you try to make a change that is totally contrary to all the shared values in an organization, then it can happen. But it makes it much more difficult. We try to get people to articulate some of the intangibles up front before they get going.”
- **Understand how far and how fast you can go.** “A lot of times people get really impatient, and they will want to make changes in two weeks. There are times when you have to do that, but there are other times when you say, ‘If I really want this change to be impactful, and I want to stay in place once I’m done, maybe it will take a little bit more time.’ That time should be used to help develop your networks to help get people involved to help lay things out, to get people thinking about it. Rarely can you go in and surprise somebody and say, ‘We’re going to change this tomorrow’ and

have it be impactful ... [T]rying to go around people generally doesn’t work.”

- **Look to peer institutions/units for benchmarking.** “We benchmark almost every initiative that we do. That gives us an idea of what other folks are doing. I think it’s very important for people, when doing benchmarking, to pick the right set of benchmarks.”

The degree of resistance to change depends largely on the project. “Sometimes the resistance comes from people not understanding what needs to happen and what the outcomes are going to be. There’s a natural tendency for people to like the status quo. They can be brilliant people. If you’ve done things a certain way for two, five, or ten years, having to contemplate doing it a different way isn’t always easy. Just last week I heard, ‘Why change? We’ve always done it this way.’ We’ve got to move beyond that. If we’re going to be in a leadership position, whether it’s within our institution or within a group of institutions, chances are we aren’t going to be able to stay the same if we’re going to be viable in this economy,” Julia says.

The key, according to Julia, is to articulate how a change can benefit those directly affected and others not directly affected, to be accountable, and to provide clear criteria for measuring success. ●

10 Recommendations toward Effective Leadership

By Willis M. Watt, PhD

David W. Leslie, chancellor professor of education at the College of William and Mary, notes that “colleges and universities have presented leadership conundrums...from the most varied perspectives...Yet this vast trove of purported wisdom remains somehow unsatisfying and desperately random” (Wergin, 2007, p. xv). That is to say, despite all that has been written about leadership, the question still remains: What does it take to be an effective leader?

At the risk of being redundant, I wish to share 10 recom-

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mentations that I am convinced enhance an individual's ability to be an effective leader. These principles are based on the concept of "leading in place" as recently popularized by Wergin and Shapiro. Shapiro (2005) states, "Leadership is an action, not a title, and the ability to lead can be found in every person. Each of us must claim our authority to lead at the right time and in the right place" (p. 1).

Here are 10 characteristics that I have found to positively contribute to effective emergent leadership. My suggestions are presented in a David Letterman-ish style, beginning with the least and advancing to the most important.

Number 10: Follow procedures and adhere to policies.

Effective leaders are essentially good followers. They understand that they are accountable to those in authority. They know it is not a good idea to behave as a lone wolf, but that they must instead keep their work priorities aligned with the organization's goal and have an appropriate sense of self-importance. People who lead in place value the necessity of following procedures and adhering to established policies.

Number 9: Submit to the authority of others. Closely related to number 10 is the recognition that we are all under the authority of someone, whether it is a supervisor, director, president, board of governors, or whomever else.

Number 8: Take risks. Sometimes it is necessary for leaders to step outside the box, to be innovative. Leaders must be flexible enough to know when it is time to try a new procedure or implement a new policy. For many taking a risk is frightening, but such behavior can be invaluable, benefiting the entire group.

Number 7: Commitment. Any person who assumes a leadership role needs to be committed to the group. The group's vision and mission must be internalized by the leader. An effective leader is a person who can commit to using his or her ability to lead others, perform technical skills, and conceptualize situations, thus helping to ensure goal achievement.

Number 6: Be proactive. Covey (1989) points out the need to be proactive. Individuals who assume leadership must take the proverbial bull by the horns and move forward to be successful.

Number 5: Expect conflict. Conflict among people is a natural, inevitable, and constant factor of human interaction. An effective leader expects conflict and is able to manage it in a productive manner.

Number 4: Tell the truth, but with compassion. To some

degree conflicts occur because people are not able to differentiate between task-related conflict issues and their personal investment in a given situation. Bracey, Rosenblum, Sanford, and Trueblood (1990) point out the importance of truthfulness in leadership. Yet at the same time the leader must compassionately tell the truth (e.g., about a faculty member's job performance, etc.).

Number 3: Listen. Communication plays a vital role in the achievement of interpersonal and organizational goals. Communication is a two-way process. Effective communication requires leaders capable of effective

An effective leader is a person who can commit to using his or her ability to lead others, perform technical skills, and conceptualize situations, thus helping to ensure goal achievement.

listening. Covey's (1989) Habit #5, Seek First to Understand, Then Seek to Be Understood, reflects the epitome of effective listening. Ineffective listening undermines people's self-esteem, self-confidence, and creativity. Remember, hearing and listening are not synonymous terms.

Number 2: Love people. Roger D'Aprix stated that leaders must be "loving in [their] organizational relationships" (cited in Goldhaber, 1993, p. 217). "Loving" in this context means that we acknowledge the value of our coworkers and respect them with the dignity they deserve. We let them know that we care for them whether we like them or not. The bottom line is that individuals must value people and relationships with them if they are to claim their "authority" to lead.

Number 1: Check your attitude. I contend that effective leadership begins with a correct mind-set. That mind-set is founded upon an individual's willingness to lead, to serve others. An effective leader desires the opportunity to step up to be involved in controlling not only his or her personal actions, but the actions of those being led. This leadership attitude flows from a reasoned choice; it is a conscious decision to take on

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the role with all its rights and responsibilities. Amid the natural chaos and interpersonal interactions, effective leaders are able to demonstrate a fixed purpose. Such leadership is determined to ensure not only that personal goals are reached, but more important, that the group achieves its objectives and fulfills its mission. Those who seek to lead in place must be compelled to lead no matter the personal cost.

In closing, allow me to point out that these characteristics are not some magic formula for success, nor do they serve as a 10-step program like the A.A. 12-step recovery program; but when you adopt these characteristics and their underlying principles, I am certain that you will be a more effective leader.

I agree with David W. Leslie, chancellor professor of education, that there has been a lot of thinking, theorizing, and writing about leadership. Yet I am convinced that we should continue to explore what constitutes effective leadership. In doing so it may be that we can bring greater clarity to what it takes to lead effectively.

Based on what I have shared, I do not pretend that I have answered the question of what it takes to be an effective leader. Hopefully, however, by sharing my thoughts about leading in place, I have added to the wisdom of literature concerning effective leadership.

These characteristics are based on my leading in place for more than 30 years in the academic community. Let me encourage you to take action, to claim your authority to lead when the time comes, in the right place.

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Changing Roles for Chairs

By Rob Kelly

As at other institutions, department chairs at Black Hills State University are feeling the impact of some major changes at the institutional, state, and national level. The changes mean a more complicated and labor-intensive position that leaves less and less time for teaching and scholarship.

The biggest changes at BHSU, according to Holly Downing, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, are

- a move toward merit-based faculty evaluation,
- an increased emphasis on faculty research since the university's mission changed from that of a normal school to that of a comprehensive university,
- a changing social climate in which students seem increasingly willing to appeal grades and file grievances, and more willingness on everybody's part to sue each other, increasing scrutiny from accrediting agencies and the government.

Merit-based review

Fifteen years ago, institutions such as BHSU and the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater (Downing's previous institution) didn't emphasize faculty scholarly work, and faculty members could expect salary increases across the board after fairly informal annual evaluations.

With the move to merit-based salary increases, annual evaluations have become much more important to the faculty, and chairs have to be more systematic in their evaluations. Complicating these evaluations is the likelihood that a chair will serve only a limited time and eventually return to a regular faculty position. This responsibility combined with only temporary authority can put chairs in an awkward position of having to evaluate their peers, which can make chairs feel intimidated or bullied by their colleagues and actually fear giving an honest negative evaluation.

"We haven't gotten into the situation in which I've had anybody intimidated by the job and thought of going back to the faculty after they are done, but I can see the potential for that," Downing says.

To safeguard against the potential problems of merit-

based faculty evaluation, such as arbitrary evaluations, BHSU has clear evaluation criteria, and ultimately, the vice president for academic affairs determines the final rankings for teaching, research, and service.

This is not to say that all departments evaluate faculty in an identical manner. Department-specific criteria allow faculty to have a sense of self-determination. “Each department came up with very different systems for evaluation,

“Nobody wants to stay in chair positions very long simply because of what happens to their research and teaching,” Downing says.

but the general level of achievement was the same across most departments. You can see where the discipline and the culture of that department were weighing in on how to evaluate themselves. It’s probably a good thing because then you get buy in,” Downing says.

Because the evaluations are more closely scrutinized than before, they require more time and effort on the part of the chair. “It’s very important that they are written carefully and that the chair can document that he or she is following the same criteria for all faculty,” Downing says.

Changing mission

With the increased emphasis on faculty scholarship, chairs must evaluate that component of each faculty member’s job and also support that research by finding space and funding, and ensuring that the department complies with safety standards. “Especially on a small campus like BH—we have fewer than 4,000 students and don’t have a lot of support staff—many of these responsibilities fall to the chair,” Downing says.

In addition to the increase in emphasis on scholarly activity, the mission of BHSU has expanded to include more distance learning, which has also contributed to the increasing workload for chairs. Although chairs are not necessarily scheduling all the distance courses, they have to keep track of who is teaching what and find qualified instructors to teach these additional courses.

Legal issues

Unlike deans, who generally have administrative experience and a network of people on campus to help them, chairs often find themselves adrift, trying to handle a

growing number of legal issues.

When Downing was chair at her previous institution, she felt underprepared for many issues, some of which the school could have been sued over if she made a mistake. Seven years later, Downing sees the legal environment becoming more complex and contentious. “What I see is a trend toward students increasingly willing to appeal grades and file grievances, and faculty are less likely to put up with colleagues who are rude to them. And there seems to be more willingness on everybody’s part to sue each other, even at a little school like [BHSU],” Downing says.

Outcomes assessment

Like institutions nationwide, BHSU is facing increased scrutiny both internally and externally. For example, syllabi for general education courses have been standardized and must include specific information about learning outcomes and assessment measures, which links to this “overall accountability to the taxpayers,” Downing says. “The problem is that you can really get overwhelmed by that. I’ve had comments from chairs and faculty members who have been asked by chairs to [work on learning outcomes assessment] that it really has reached the point where they feel like they don’t have time to teach.

“My feeling is that this is the new standard. Everybody nationwide is going through this, and yes, we’re going through a period in which we’re putting all of this in place, which will be time-consuming, but once it’s in place, it will be easier because we won’t be working from scratch. Writing up all the documents is hard initially, and I do have some people looking for other jobs, but I don’t think it’s going to be any better anywhere else.”

Compensation/release time

Six years ago, BHSU developed a scaled compensation package based on the size of the department, which seemed to satisfy chairs at the time, Downing says. However, the changes that are occurring make it difficult for chairs to concentrate on their teaching, let alone research. Some chairs have been reluctant to give up their major courses and forgo their release time because “they don’t see themselves as full-time administrators and don’t want to give up their major classes,” Downing says. “Nobody wants to stay in chair positions very long simply because of what happens to their research and teaching.”

It’s a common problem among colleagues at other institutions as well: how do you delineate the role of chair without making it overly burdensome? “We need to recognize that [department chairs’] responsibilities are changing, and we need to compensate them appropriately and provide training,” Downing says. ●

Hope-Centered Leadership in Practice

By *Kaye A. Herth, PhD, RN, FAAN*

There are many books about leadership; however, only recently have there been studies supporting the connection between leadership and hope, and the inclusion of hope in emerging models of leadership (Adams et al., 2002; Helland and Winston, 2005; Snyder et al., 2000).

Prior to the last 15 years, hope had been viewed as fluffy and abstract, but recent pioneering work has substantiated its complexity and value. Hope is now identified as a complex, multidimensional, and dynamic cognitive process that is observable across numerous contexts and has applicability to leadership (Elliott, 2005). Studies conducted by Peterson and Luthans (2003) and Luthans (2005) have found that hope-centered leadership positively impacts important organizational outcomes, including unit financial performance, human resource outcomes, and resiliency of employees. To hope researchers such as myself and Dr. Shane Lopez at the University of Kansas, hope is an attribute that can be measured, enhanced, and instilled. Further, Dr. Lopez, along with others in the field, contends that hope plays a central role in organizations as it compels goal setting, innovation, and motivation (Helland and Winston, 2005; Snyder and Lopez, 2006).

Research findings from studies on hope (Elliott, 2005), including my own work from a clinical perspective, suggest that hope-centered leadership involves three major components: strengthening and engaging one's own hope (the "hoping self"), minimizing hope inhibitors, and creating a vision of hope in others (Herth, 2007).

Strengthening and engaging the hoping self requires thoughtful self-reflection and dialog with others on what hope means and how to engage oneself and others in maintaining and enhancing hope. A set of hope exercises that I developed and that others have used and found helpful, called "Viewing Hope-Centered Leadership from the Inside and Outside," is a good starting point (see Table 1). It is absolutely critical that hope be present within the leader and be modeled by the leader. Strengthening the hoping self requires a commitment to putting into practice the following seven strategies for empowering hope that have been identified through qualitative research studies over the last two decades:

1. Set as a priority frequent and meaningful connection

with others, with a focus on nurturing these connections.

2. Take time to uphold and revisit affirming memories. One tool that could be used for this purpose is the "joy journal," a daily diary about positive things that is reviewed regularly.
3. Set aside time to pause, read, and reflect on priorities in your life that can become skewed by job pressures.
4. Employ cognitive strategies, those thought processes used consciously to transform perceptions into a positive frame. These strategies can include speaking affirmatively with oneself, envisioning hopeful images, and reciting in your mind favorite uplifting quotations.
5. Engage in intentional activities that provide meaning and purpose in life. Ask yourself what gives meaning to your life and then spend a set amount of time each day or week engaging in that activity.
6. Develop short- and long-range personal and professional goals that include contextual goals, or ongoing goals that help an institution thrive, and content goals, or the heart and soul of what you are seeking to accomplish—your legacy.
7. Consciously employ prosperity thinking and lightheartedness in your own life and in your interactions with others. The Amish call it "centering down"—making a conscious effort to focus on those aspects of work life that bring joy and hope.

Putting hope-centered leadership into practice involves decreasing hope inhibitors in oneself and others. Ask yourself, when you look at the circumstances you are facing, what most threatens your hope. The presence or absence of hope in you is evident to others, as hopefulness or hopelessness is passed from one person to another. Hopelessness is the number-one hope inhibitor. Other hope inhibitors include those things that drain and deplete physical and/or psychological energy, continual losses (relationships, home, valued possessions, income, position, and/or health) over a period of time, feeling unable to make a difference, and feeling that one's personhood and/or contributions are not valued. As the leader, you must reduce energy zappers and create an environment of hope that emphasizes potential rather than limitations.

Hope-centered leadership means developing in others a sense of the possible (a "vision") and empowering others through coaching, teaching, mentoring, helping others recognize the riches that are deep inside, and celebrating one another's victories. Creating a vision of hope involves:

- Building a sense of connection, trust, and belonging by

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inviting others to tell their stories (personal and/or professional). Set aside time to meet individually with the members of your team to listen to their stories. Start meetings with a 10-minute period that focuses on individuals sharing experiences in their lives. Actively listen with both your ears and your eyes. Set aside 30 minutes a day to communicate appreciation to those you work with and 15 minutes daily to give extra encouragement to those who need it.

- Providing an atmosphere of openness that celebrates new possibilities and new ways of doing things and that encourages those you lead to express their fears, questions, and ideas. Hope-centered leaders include others in goal setting and in constructing stepwise goals, developing alternatives, and celebrating small steps along the way toward achieving the goals.
- Sharing hope stories and offering hope suggestions—critical actions, as hope is a contagious reality and needs to be shared. It is important to point out signs of hope, to emphasize potential rather than limitations, and to provide encouragement and delight in hopes expressed. This can be done in a number of ways, including online posting progress toward goals along with current and past successes and hopeful stories for others to see, as well as sending short, hope-filled email messages.
- Encouraging hope images and hope models. Model the way by example and by simple daily acts that create progress and momentum. Connect individuals to hopeful successful colleagues so they can see and experience how hope is linked to success.
- Building hope bridges—a crucial process, as hope has been shown to be experienced in the present but is also linked to the past and the future. Help make that link by posting on bulletin boards or in newsletters past successes and future visions, including a step-by-step timeline for your current goal or project along with markers placed as you move forward toward completion. Help others develop the art of hopeful patience (refining your goals as circumstances change or as you change). Hope is paradoxical; it is neither passive waiting nor unrealistic forcing of circumstances that cannot occur.
- Sharing and fostering an attitude of lightheartedness. Lightheartedness enhances receptivity, reduces resistance, and enables us to stand aside from things, which then engages hope. Collect and display joyful and humorous cartoons, stories, and other material on bulletin boards and in other places. Begin group

meetings with lighthearted, hope-filled messages. Find ways to give joyful surprises that reflect each individual's uniqueness. Recently I gave each of the department chairs at my college a book that reflected him or her. For example, I gave the book *Death by Meeting* to someone who disliked meetings intensely and the book *Managing People Is Like Herding Cats* to someone who is in charge of ensuring that numerous tasks are completed by highly independent persons.

Hope-centered leadership not only may be crucial to creating and sustaining a healthy and highly productive work environment, but also shows promise in creating hopeful and effective leaders for the future.

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Becoming a More Mindful Leader

By Rob Kelly

How do you come across to the people you work with? Do what you say and how you say it send mixed messages? Are your actions consistent with your words? Do you listen intently? Do you acknowledge others' ideas? All these questions are important for any leader, and answering them honestly can help you become a more mindful leader, says Florence Richman, special assistant to the president for academic growth at Northern Virginia Community College.

Richman, a former dean of nursing who also has a background in corporate leadership, recommends that leaders work toward becoming more mindful—engaging with what

But mindful leadership goes well beyond giving the impression of being a good listener. It also requires that you become more reflective about your communication and the messages you get from others.

others are saying and “being present in the moment” rather than leading with one’s own preconceived ideas about the way things ought to be.

This is particularly important in academia, where input from all levels goes into the decision-making process; whereas in the corporate environment, leaders can be more authoritarian.

“Faculty are very powerful. They can get rid of a dean or even a president if they want to. It would be very misguided not to utilize all the talents you have in being engaged and really listening to your followers,” Richman says.

Failing to listen intently or giving the impression that you do not take input from others seriously can suppress good ideas as well. “Some people in a group may be silent, not because they have nothing to say but because they might feel or interpret that they are not heard. What’s the effect of that? The division or group could lose out possibly on a wonderful bit of information or idea from a possible contributor who is silent,” Richman says.

Some of the skills of being a more mindful leader are basic “Communication 101” skills such as acknowledging others’ ideas by saying, “What I hear you saying is . . .” nodding, maintaining eye contact, or asking for more information, Richman says.

But mindful leadership goes well beyond giving the impression of being a good listener. It also requires that you become more reflective about your communication and the messages you get from others.

“After communicating, you’ve got to step back and ask, ‘What was said? How did I come across? Did I truly communicate my goal, my ideas, my intent?’ These are really simplistic notions, but to really implement them into our everyday lives is another story,” Richman says.

The method of engaging in this type of reflection is up to the individual. Options include taking a few moments after a communication session to think about what transpired, keeping a journal, or even asking a trusted colleague to give his or her impressions.

When you reflect, you don’t have to sit quietly. You can simply jot down what you heard, how you practiced listening and mindfulness, and any reflective thoughts you have about the communication. By keeping a journal, you can monitor your progress; however, Richman cautions, progress will not be automatic. “We’re not always one hundred percent all the time. It depends on the situations that come up. Keeping a journal and constantly practicing can be tough at first. As you keep practicing—it is practice—you will improve.”

Here’s an exercise that can help get you in the proper frame of mind to reflect on your communication: “Take a raisin. Look at it in your hand. What does it look like? What does it feel like? Place it on your tongue. How does it feel on your tongue? Move it around in your mouth. Chew it. What is its texture like? That’s being mindful to every detail,” Richman says.

The same concept can be applied to communication: “Am I really looking into the person’s eyes? Am I really hearing what they’re saying? Is their body language matching what they’re saying? Are they just being diplomatic and agreeing, or do they really agree?”

Getting a second opinion from a trusted colleague can help you become more aware of your communication skills and habits. “After a meeting I might say to the dean, ‘How do you think that went? Do you think I communicated what I needed to? Do you think I heard what the group had to say?’ I ask for honesty.

“You’ve got to be open to the risk of changing your practices and your thoughts and maybe hearing some critical words,” Richman says. ●

Creating a Culture of Leadership

By Rob Kelly

Department chairs are too conservative in their exercise of leadership, often viewing themselves as the “keepers of the keys” and not recognizing the powerful influence they can have on their departments and the institutions, says Ken Hammer, professor in the department of recreation and tourism management at Malaspina University-College in Nanaimo, British Columbia and a leadership consultant.

Hammer, a former department chair, was recently given two course releases through his institution’s Teaching and Learning Centre to explore ways to develop leadership on campus and has found that department chairs and coordinators received little recognition for their roles as leaders and often downplay their influence. “When I started to use the word ‘leadership,’ they were very apprehensive about that, suggesting that ‘Well, no, I’m just the keeper of the keys. I’m charged with several tasks and functions, but I’m not really a leader.’ They felt that they didn’t come into the system to [be leaders]. My strong belief is that we all have leadership potential and lead at one time or another,” Hammer says.

One of Hammer’s goals is to get chairs and coordinators to see themselves as leaders rather than temporary functionaries. “I try to get them to understand that they influence the direction of the program and the department, and have influence on the faculty. They can guide the vision and direction of the program and set priorities. They also have a direct influence on students. They’re modeling their behaviors, and their leadership influences what the students see and even their behavior,” Hammer says.

The key to this cultural shift is attaching leadership development to an organizational need. “Most people don’t participate in leadership development because they think it feels good. They participate because it is attached to something the organization needs or it is attached to an area of scholarship,” Hammer says.

Exposing leaders to leadership research can elevate the status of leadership on campus and even encourage them to conduct leadership research themselves, Hammer says.

The leadership literature outside higher education is more advanced than that in higher education, Hammer says. “[Higher education] is struggling with some of the things

that other sectors struggled with twenty, thirty, even a hundred years ago in terms of what is the appropriate curriculum for leadership development. I think, in general, academics become experts in particular areas and that’s the world they live in, and leadership isn’t a part of that, although it’s changing.”

Hammer cites as evidence the growth in the number of graduate leadership programs as well as the increasing emphasis on leadership within a wide range of disciplines at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. “That, to me, is new and will have an influence down the road,” Hammer says.

Start with yourself

In order to be an effective leader, leaders need to be self-reflective, Hammer says. “The model I believe in is where you start with leading yourself, understanding yourself and the competencies of leading others and an organization. I think we can learn a lot from the leadership literature outside [academia]. We just need to take it into the context of higher education.”

Linking theory to reality

The leadership literature can provide a foundation for effective leadership, guiding leaders to develop certain competencies (such as effective communication and collaboration skills and organizational abilities), but they must also be given the chance to link the theory to their specific situations by attending retreats, workshops, and conferences.

“People need to see progress. We can’t just have classroom development where you bring people into a room, show them a little leadership theory, and say, ‘Go out and be a leader.’ It doesn’t work that way. We have to have effective leadership where we’re exploring these things, putting these ideas into practice, and actually changing attitudes and behaviors,” Hammer says.

Beyond positional leadership

Hammer stresses that leadership is not limited to people in certain positions. “I think we have to start to understand that leadership is not necessarily from positional power but from the power of influence. We’re all in influential roles, but chairs are probably in more of an influential role because of access to information due to functions that they’re engaged in. Rather than suggesting that now that they’re in a particular position and have particular power, [faculty] need to understand they too are in influential positions. Shared leadership is very important,” Hammer says.

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Part of getting others to lead is helping them see the benefits they can provide to the institution as well as what's in it for them. "When people see there's value in it for themselves personally, they tend to buy in. If they don't see that, if someone is saying, 'You have to do this; you have to come to this retreat,' they're not going to be there," Hammer says.

Take advantage of changing demographics

As more and more baby boomers retire, there will be an opportunity to change the leadership culture, Hammer says. "Higher education is going to have this major shift, and so the timing is right for us to address leadership and prepare faculty members to become chairs, deans, and vice presidents. I'm not saying that the next generation is all fired up about moving into leadership positions, but I think the traditional management style will shift to one of more empowerment for everyone to take the lead, and [colleges and universities] will certainly be flatter organizations and I hope more accepting of a leadership culture."

To prepare for this demographic shift and bring about a culture of leadership, institutions need to select new faculty members based in part on their leadership experience and potential. Hammer recommends conducting behavior-based interviews to assess candidates' leadership aptitude. ●

Understand Change Theory, Persuasion to Manage Change

By Rob Kelly

When faced with yet another change initiative, faculty and staff will inevitably ask, "Why do we need to change?" To bring about change successfully, you need to be prepared to answer this question and offer a compelling vision and a process that encourages input from those affected by the proposed change.

The key to implementing change is negotiation, says Susan Williams, professor of management in the Jack C. Massey College of Business at Belmont University in

Nashville, Tennessee. "What you're talking about is getting people to accept risk, and risk is a difficult thing for folks in higher education," she says.

Williams recommends combining change theory and persuasion techniques—a compelling change process and integrative bargaining—to "let people understand that their interests are going to be met."

In a recent change initiative, leaders at Belmont used a "Change Cycle" process based on the work of John Kotter. The Change Cycle includes the following steps:

- Establish a sense of urgency: Why is the change necessary? Belmont's former president sought input from students to illustrate the need for changes to the core curriculum.
- Build a guiding coalition: How do you put together a group with power to lead the change initiative? "One of the most disastrous things to do is to send forth a small group that will focus on the change initiative but that doesn't have the power to enact it," Williams says.
- Create a powerful vision: "Here's how things will look once we've accomplished this change," Williams says.

To this change cycle, Williams adds elements that help her and others understand the change process, including a force field diagram that lists all the driving and restraining forces that affect the proposed change. "As you do this work, you're planning and creating short-term wins. You say, 'What can we do to ameliorate this particular part of the plan that people are [resisting]?'"

One technique that Williams found to be particularly useful in a recent change initiative was putting the most vocal opponent to the change on the change team "because we knew if we didn't, the team could be sabotaged."

Throughout a change initiative, it is important to have short-term wins—small, visible, positive changes that show people that the initiative is progressing. For example, recent changes to Belmont's core curriculum began with creating curriculum around a common book as part of the first-year experience. "The students loved it for the most part. It created an early win for the general education curriculum that was very positive," Williams says.

There was broad involvement from all ranks in all departments across campus on the core curriculum change initiative. This gave everybody the opportunity to make their opinions known and to ensure that everybody understood the goals whether or not they agreed with them. This opened the door to negotiation. "For some, [the curriculum changes] may mean understanding that one of their options is to teach a course differently in a different format.

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Creating options is a big part of the tactical part of negotiation,” Williams says.

Another way to get input from those who will be affected by the change is to visit with them individually and talk about their concerns. “We had a fellow here who used to visit people in the late afternoon when he knew people would be in their offices. He’d say, ‘I’ve been thinking about this [proposed change.]’ And using negotiation techniques, he’d say, ‘Help me understand why you care so much about x, y, and z.’ He would listen and the person would realize that he or she had been heard,” Williams says.

Although it’s important that faculty feel that they are heard, it’s also important to thoroughly consider their opinions. “These are thoughtful people. We need to understand them, and if it’s a criticism that’s justified and well founded, we need to adjust our thinking. Or we need to involve them in a different way so that they understand it better,” Williams says.

Some resistance to change is normal and inevitable. And certainly, persuasion and negotiation are essential skills in overcoming resistance. But it’s also important that those implementing or encouraging change understand how people react to change. People who face change deal with many of the same issues outlined in Elizabeth Kubler-Ross’ model on grieving. “This model says that change is a significant emotional event. We first go through shock and anger—‘It can’t happen to me’—and we try to bargain our way out of it. And then there’s this whole notion that we have to grieve a lot. The theory behind this is that all change produces loss, and all loss must be grieved in some way or another before we accept it. By allowing folks the opportunity to rail against whatever change is coming or whatever change they perceive may be coming gives them an opportunity to talk about that loss. Many don’t recognize it as talking about loss, but that’s what it is: ‘I’m losing control of x,’ or ‘I’ve lost my ability to do y.’”

By keeping these negotiation and change theory principles in mind, change can help faculty be part of a community of change rather than in an isolated change position (having change imposed on them). Creating a community of change does not mean that everybody will be happy about the changes that result, but perhaps they will understand the outcomes better and know that they at least had the opportunity to express their opinions. ●

Factors That Affect Department Chairs’ Performance

By Rob Kelly

Department chairs need an accurate description of what the position entails, adequate release time, professional development, and orientation, according to a recent survey of experienced community college chairs.

The study, conducted by Debra Kuhl, division chair of business, computer sciences, and mathematics at Cumberland County College in New Jersey, sought to identify institutional policies and procedures that affected chair performance, ascertain the presences of these policies, and to learn department chairs’ opinions about the importance of these factors.

Kuhl surveyed 165 experienced chairs at 22 community colleges in 15 states in the North Central Accrediting Region. The following are the study’s key findings:

- Approximately 75 percent of the chairs in the survey had the information they needed to perform their jobs and were consulted in the decision-making process.
- Approximately 76 percent of the respondents indicated that their goals matched the institution’s goals.
- Less than 25 percent of these chairs received professional development in connection with their chair duties (i.e., budgeting, scheduling, leadership development, etc.).
- Less than 25 percent of these chairs felt they had adequate orientation to the institution (i.e., information on the culture, history, and procedures of the institution).
- The chairs indicated that they had adequate reassigned time, but their comments indicated that the time needed to do the job negatively affected their personal lives.
- The chairs in this survey indicated that mentoring and assistance from former chairs is not that important to their performance. (This was a surprising finding because the literature indicates that this is an important factor for chair performance. Kuhl speculates that inexperienced chairs would likely indicate that this was an important factor.)

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Chair-recruiting practices among the institutions included in this study fell into three categories:

- Rotation—Each member in the department serves for a term of several years.
- Seniority—The most senior faculty member serves as chair or is promoted from within.
- Recruited—The most qualified person from an internal and external pool of candidates is selected.

Externally recruited candidates are often the most qualified, Kuhl says. “By advertising externally as well as internally, you can look at all your candidates and pick out the one with the greatest strengths. If you promote from within the division, you’re challenged in terms of the resources that these people have, and a lot of times [internal candidates] are strictly devoted to being faculty members. They’re experts in their fields and good at teaching, but they are not necessarily able to make the transition from professor to chair. That’s why the method in which you advertise and recruit your chairs is important.”

Whether a chair is an internal or external hire, he or she will likely need a full year to adjust to the new position, says Thomas Isekenegbe, vice president of Cumberland County College. For external hires, much of this will involve learning about the institution, while internal candidates without leadership and management experience would likely need professional development in the tasks the job entails.

“If you have faculty members who have not had any management experience and put them in this position without mentoring, assistance, or training, you’re setting them up for failure,” Kuhl says.

Based on the findings of this study, Kuhl recommends the following low- or no-cost measures:

- Make sure the job description accurately explains everything the job entails.
- Be clear about whether the chair is considered a faculty member or administrator.
- Provide adequate release time.
- Include chairs in decisions that affect their departments. ●

There’s More to Leadership than Motivation and Ability

By Rob Kelly

A preliminary study of academic middle managers indicates that the performance of deans and division and department heads is affected by more than just their skills. In order to be effective, academic middle managers and their supervisors need to pay attention to other factors that affect performance.

Gregory Dlabach, academic vice president of academic affairs at Navarro College, conducted a cross-sectional survey to answer the research question, “To what extent do academic middle managers (AMMs) in Illinois community colleges perceive climate, ability, motivation, environment, and opportunity to perform (CAMEO) to be factors that influence their performance as instructional administrators?”

Although the survey showed that ability is the most significant factor, all the factors in the CAMEO model appear to significantly affect performance. The mean response for ability was 6.13 (“7” indicated a strong influence, “4” a moderate influence, and “1” no influence). The mean response for climate—how the AMM felt about how things are done in his or her unit—was 5.73. The mean response for motivation—questions related to satisfaction and fairness—was 5.72. The mean response for opportunity—matching skills and interests with responsibilities—was 5.54. The mean response for environment—factors such as pressures from faculty unions, state and federal agencies, and accrediting bodies—was 4.38.

Dlabach was surprised that the respondents perceived environment to be the weakest of the five factors. He states that there are two possible explanations for this. The first is that AMMs are incredibly flexible and resilient people. Since they are so used to being confronted with new requirements from a state agency or an accrediting body, they don’t see those environmental forces as great hurdles. They are simply part of their day-to-day routine.

The second explanation is that vice presidents and presidents effectively shield deans and chairs from environmental influences. When the president or vice president comes

to a department chair or academic division chair and asks that something be done, the dean responds, puts the problem to bed, or addresses the issue, but doesn't necessarily know where that directive originated.

In many cases, according to Dlabach, this lack of information about environmental factors that affect certain decisions is unintentional and usually occurs because people are too busy to take the time to explain the rationale for every action.

Dlabach states that these results indicate that development opportunities should consider all the CAMEO factors instead of just focusing on skill development. "I thought that ability and motivation would come out on top and that the rest would be also-rans. I was surprised to see how well the model actually performed and that the respondents actually felt that all were valid factors that influence their day-to-day performance."

Dlabach believes that you need to know how people feel. "Regardless of how good things are, can't they get better? The idea is to establish a baseline and identify how the unit may improve and regularly revisit these issues to determine whether or not the unit is improving."

There are climate assessment tools available, but few are designed specifically for higher education institutions. One tool that is designed for higher education institutions, though not specifically for community colleges, is the Organizational Culture Inventory.

Few institutions conduct this kind of assessment. Dlabach estimates that only 100 of the 1,100 community colleges in the United States regularly assess their organizational climates, usually due to lack of time rather than an unwillingness to do it. "I think the rest of us get so muddled with getting classes filled, staffed, and scheduled that we don't find time to do this," he says.

In addition to guiding leadership development and climate assessment, Dlabach believes that surveys based on the CAMEO model may also be used to predict leaders' performance. "I'd like to see people pay attention to these factors. I think the study needs to be replicated in other states, and eventually there needs to be some type of predictive study done based on these factors—what level of performance will be predicted by responses on these items? I'm not suggesting that they be used in the selection process yet, but there's no reason we couldn't go in that direction." ●

Mentoring Future Higher Administration Leaders: Necessity and Value of Mentoring

By Henry W. Smorynski, PhD

Effective human capital management is critical to creating distinctiveness and competitive advantage in higher education. Unfortunately, on the typical campus human capital replacement has centered on faculty retirements. An even larger problem is now developing concerning administration leadership. There is a special need to rapidly develop new leadership, particularly diverse leadership. Developing this leadership will be difficult. Leadership needs to be tailored to specific institutional needs. The training/development programs available through ACE, Harvard, and others are necessarily generic in focus and insufficient in size to meet need.

Turnover in the presidency is being mirrored in academic affairs, finance, human resources, and institutional development. More complex and challenging career paths are not as attractive today compared to other professional opportunities. There is a dearth of future women and diverse administrators. The new competitive environment of planning, fundraising, and strategic market management calls for different and differently prepared leadership. Leaders must be ready to make a difference tomorrow, not in several years.

Two approaches used in business, called succession management and effective future leader mentoring, can together provide answers to the creation of an adequate supply of trained and prepared administrators. Succession management's focus is on identifying and stretching future talent. If it is not combined with effective, facilitative professional mentoring, then it is not likely to be successful. Mentoring holds the key to creating and developing future administrative leadership.

While serving in key administrative and faculty leadership roles in both regional state institutions and in private colleges/universities, I have committed myself to mentoring as a critical aspect of daily leadership. I have successfully mentored future provosts, deans, associate deans, retention

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managers, and enrollment managers for public, community college, and private institutions. From those experiences I have come to understand some key principles of effective long-run mentoring.

For mentoring to be effective, the mentee must seek a mentor relationship. There must be a strong desire for professional development. However, mentors must be constantly on the lookout for signals of true desire to be mentored. These requests are often not directly expressed. If nonverbal cues and other signals are not acted upon and supported before the mentee's personal efficacy is secure, then the potential relationship is likely to be lost. Successful mentoring is very much a real-time and ongoing process.

Some important aspects of successful mentoring include the following:

- Higher education mentoring must be concerned with establishing an inside-outside sense of change. Attention must be focused on national trends and their local impacts.
- The whole person's development must be mentored, not just the organizational self-interest.
- Mentoring must communicate a comfort level with deciding in favor of the future in a real-time environment of risk and uncertainty.
- The mentor's personal characteristics, vision, and communication style are far more important than the characteristics of a formal program.
- Mentoring must be done with confidence. Cloning is not mentoring. The mentor must honestly grapple with differences in values, behaviors, and experiences between the mentor and mentees.
- Mentoring should be for higher education and the whole organization, and go beyond succession planning.
- Mentoring should occur in natural settings more than formal settings. Always be on the lookout for opportunities and settings to mentor.
- Mentors should communicate the importance of environmental scanning, systems thinking, and risk taking in problem identification and solving.

In *Good to Great*, author Jim Collins stresses that 90 percent of companies that went from "good" to "great" had new leaders from inside. Very few innovative institutions are examining the value of succession planning, executive development, and mentoring together for effective transitions of power and authority. Identifying

talent and providing stretch assignments will not get the job done. Mentoring needs to become the responsibility of more leaders and managers.

The benefits of more pronounced, common, and effective mentoring are many. There will be increased productivity. There will be increased capacity to both accelerate change and an increased capacity to respond to turnover. Administrators will stay in place longer and increase their capacities to build effective management teams. Most important, succession in institutional leadership will be made far easier and continuity in strategic directions will be far better assured.

Henry W. Smorynski is provost at the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University in Minnesota. ●

Leadership and Management: Complementary Skill Sets

By Rob Kelly

An interview with Donna Goss and Don Robertson, co-directors of the Leadership Development Institute at Northampton Community College.

Management is a big part of what academic leaders do on a daily basis—managing budgets, dealing with personnel matters, scheduling courses, etc.—but being a true leader demands a more visionary perspective than the day-to-day management tasks. To better understand this relationship between management and leadership, Academic Leader recently spoke with Donna Goss and Don Robertson, co-directors of the Leadership Development Institute at Northampton Community College.

What is the difference between management and leadership?

Robertson: For us, the most important thing is recogniz-

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ing that although they are both important, they are different. [Leadership] is focused on where we are going—what new future possibility do we want to pursue? For leadership there is this aspect of the future and getting people excited about this new possibility, whereas managing is more about the present. It's more about planning and organizing and controlling and coordinating and setting up budgets and putting in place to-do lists but, it's all focused on what we are going to do right now.

Goss: Leadership is about altering what people think is possible and appropriate. Leadership is about taking people to a new and different place. ... Leadership is a choice you make. And we think effective leaders will use themselves as tools to make changes.

You work with academic and business leaders. What differences are there between leadership development in higher education and business?

Goss: I don't think it differs all that much. Don and I came out of business into the academic world, and we sometimes joke with clients that you haven't lived until you try to put business thinking into an academic setting. ... One of the biggest differences is how business and academic institutions hire at the senior level. [Higher education institutions] tend to put the organization in turmoil as they go on a two-year search, whereas in the business world it's a little bit simpler to do.

What are some of the skills that someone from the faculty brings to management and leadership?

Goss: One of the things I think is the natural tendency in higher education to debate, question, and challenge. It's part of what makes an academic institution what it is. Here on our campus it is not unusual to go toe-to-toe with the president. The problem is how do you take it out of just the academic exercise of debate and move into actions?

Robertson: I think that what goes hand in hand with that—and it clearly is a skill—is one's ability to influence. Influence is about helping people see things differently. Our ability to influence, our ability to inspire people, to get them excited about something is one of the real challenges—how do I challenge somebody in a way that tends to get them excited rather than in a way that creates a lot of defensiveness?

How do you develop leadership skills in yourself or others?

Robertson: I think that a lot of leadership is about self awareness. It's the willingness to step back and look at

yourself and gain some insight about yourself—what is my passion? What is it that excites me? What is it that makes me become defensive and gets in the way of my effectiveness?

The biggest challenge we find in working in an organization is the fact that they're so busy managing the day to day that they don't make the time to step back and think about the kinds of things they could be doing.

Goss: One of the things I would tend to say to a leader that might be emerging is to ask, Are you finding yourself being selected for committees over and over again? Are you finding yourself in leadership positions on those committees? Why are you taking those positions? And I would suggest it has something to do with some natural abilities beginning to surface.

Robertson: Leadership is not a position you hold, it's a choice that you make. You may have somebody who is a chairman of a committee or head of a department, and yet they're terrible leaders. And you could have others in the middle of the organization who demonstrate leadership all the time, perhaps because of their ability to relate to others, the relationships they build, their willingness to ask difficult questions, their willingness to offer ideas. But there's also something about them that engages people, and it's easy for people to be comfortable with them.

What is the way to go about teaching leadership?

Goss: Don and I use the work of Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, which is *The Leadership Challenge*. We use that particular research to build a program that is personal—who are you, and what's important to you? How do you get comfortable in your skin? How do you get to an authentic place that you lead from? Two leaders in the same organization need to share the passion for the [organization's] vision, but they also need to speak to it in a way that's believable. I think leadership can be taught. While I say that I will also say obviously there are born leaders. There just are not a whole lot of them.

Robertson: I think for me it goes back to this notion that leadership is a choice because somebody can read forever about what leadership is and go to programs where they are gaining the knowledge about that, but some people choose to take that knowledge and translate it into action and others don't. I may not be comfortable in speaking out and trying to engage others and trying to take on a leadership role, but I can make the choice to do that. And in a lot of cases leaders are taking a leadership role because of their willingness to go to that uncomfortable place.

What do you suggest for limited-term leaders?

Robertson: The first thing is to ask, Are we doing what's best for the organization by having terms that are only three years long? Maybe the terms need to be longer than that in order to break that cycle of just reaching the point where leaders are ready to provide some leadership and all of a sudden they're stepping out of that role and a new one's stepping in and you start the cycle all over again. The other thing that comes to mind is that there has to be modeling that starts at the top of the organization. One of the most important things a leader does is set the tone for the rest of the organization. I think that people at the senior-level positions need to recognize that their practices and behaviors are in fact setting the tone for the rest of the organization.

If a department chair tries to take a leadership role, tries something and it doesn't work and the response to it is be punished then there is a very strong message—the tone has been set that says, Don't take a risk. Go with the flow and keep the status quo because that's the safe way to make sure you get through your term and can walk out without any major blemishes against your record.

Goss: But what are you risking if you play it safe all the time? ●

Zen and the Art of Higher Education Administration

By Jeffrey L. Buller, PhD

One of the best books on how to be an academic leader actually has nothing to do with higher education administration. Daniel Levin's *The Zen Book* (Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 2005) is a combination of introduction to Buddhist practice and guide to daily life. It is also a wonderful summary of principles that are useful to any academic leader. Consider the following.

Be thankful for anyone in your life who's a problem. They're your teachers, for they show you where you truly stand. A great saint once said to a disciple who came to him complaining about someone else: "He is your greatest

blessing. In fact, if he were not here, it would behoove us to go out and find one like him." Levin (2005) 34.

We sometimes are frustrated with people who just don't seem to "get it" or who have personality traits that seem to make our work harder. When we deal with people like this, we actually have a choice: We can either give in to our frustration (thus making the whole situation a negative experience), or we can try to discover why it is that the "problem people" where we work annoy and disturb us so (thus making the whole situation a learning experience). The worst administrator I ever worked for caused me endless aggravation until I suddenly learned how much I was learning from him: No one else, before or since, ever taught me so much about how not to run a college.

"Do things in a way that makes others feel that they did them. In this way, everything will get accomplished." Levin (2005) 124.

Most of the successes experienced by faculty members are personal successes. It is usually one particular person who got a book published, serves as principal investigator on a grant, wins an award for outstanding teaching, or makes the contact that opens a door for a brilliant student. On the other hand, most of the successes experienced by administrators are group successes. Even if it was our decision to review the general education program, it is almost always a committee that develops and implements the proposal. Even if we did most of the negotiations that brought in a major gift, it frequently takes a team to make the most of the new funding the institution has received. For this reason, the sooner we as administrators begin finding our success in the success of others (even if they could not have achieved anything without us), the better we will serve our institutions.

"Walk gently, leaving tracks only where they can make a difference. Where no difference can be made, walk without leaving tracks. This is how the sage passes through life: unseen and invisible, yet effecting change everywhere." Levin (2005) 134.

Truly effective administrators learn to pick their battles. Not every cause has to be a fight to the death. In fact, not every issue is even worth having a strong opinion about; many situations in higher education will work out roughly the same no matter which course of action the institution chooses. So, be sure that you take a stand where it really matters. Strong leaders are not necessarily the people with the loudest voices; they're the individuals with the most compelling vision. And part of a compelling vision comes from your ability to incorporate the ideas and hopes of others into your area's overall plan. The goal, therefore, is

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to “lead by not leading.” In other words, rather than continually striving to make your voice heard and to impose your ideas on others, be a catalyst for improvement by creating an environment where everyone’s contributions are welcome and respected.

“Succeed quietly, letting everyone else believe that it was because of their efforts that a venture worked. At times, you may feel unrewarded for your efforts, but you’ll always know in your heart the value of your contributions.” Levin (2005) 147.

Multitasking has been elevated to the status of a modern virtue, but it is much overrated. In most cases, when we say we’re multitasking, we’re really giving each activity only a fragment of the attention it deserves. As a result, we end up being careless rather than more productive.

As we saw earlier, administrators achieve their greatest success through the achievements of others. Even beyond this, however, many of the choices made by an administrator go unnoticed because they do not have the immediate prestige of a book that is published or a grant that is received. Many of an administrator’s accomplishments cannot even be measured or quantified by customary methods of assessment. The most satisfied academic leaders are, therefore, the ones who do not rely on the constant recognition of others in order to achieve their sense of worth. They know the contributions they have made, and many times that knowledge is enough.

“When no one is doing what you think is right, do it yourself.” Levin (2005) 163.

Good administrators lead by example. They also do what’s in the best interests of their institution, not because these actions are popular or even necessarily noticeable, but because that’s what they were hired to do. It can be difficult (and extremely lonely) being the person who says “no” when it is necessary for the sake of the budget. Making a decision in order to achieve a long-range goal at the expense of a less-important, immediate pleasure can be extremely isolating. But it is these situations that really prove the merit of the best academic leaders.

“When you walk, walk; when you eat, eat; and when

you sit, sit. This is the way of Zen. Do what you do fully in each moment.” Levin (2005) 178.

Multitasking has been elevated to the status of a modern virtue, but it is much overrated. In most cases, when we say we’re multitasking, we’re really giving each activity only a fragment of the attention it deserves. As a result, we end up being careless rather than more productive. Good administrators are usually “sequential taskers” rather than multitaskers: They give each project their whole attention; and when it is time to set it aside and move on to the next responsibility in sequence, they give the new project their full and undivided attention. If we continue to fixate on decisions that have already been made or work that is already completed, we end up getting nothing done. In fact, we act as though nothing is ever “done” since we keep reopening closed decisions and allowing them to distract us from our other duties.

“When we are with people, be 100 percent with them; when we’re by ourselves, be 100 percent alone. This is the way of all things: Be exactly where we are at any given moment and everything will be without strain.” Levin (2005) 197.

If multitasking is inadvisable when we are dealing with projects, it’s unforgivable when we’re dealing with people. No one wants to feel that they are receiving only a fragment of an administrator’s attention. Many people have said that one of the most remarkable things about being in the presence of Jacqueline Kennedy or Bill Clinton is that, while you were speaking with them, they made you believe you were the most important person in the world to them. Good administrators proceed in the same way. When they are meeting with a faculty member, student, parent, board member, or other member of the institutional community, they give that person their complete and undivided attention. Often they will even give the other person the time that he or she needs, not simply the time that is available. By so doing, they may not achieve “enlightenment,” but they come to be regarded as truly enlightened academic leaders.

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