Provost's Leadership Academy

Effective Leadership

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Outline for today

- What is leadership?

- The tasks of leaders

- The special case of university leadership: upward and peer leadership

Break

- Make meetings work for you

- Manage university staff

Problems with Defining Leadership

- Euphemism for "the good"

- The romance of leadership

- "Garbage can" for all issues and concerns

- Makes it easy to seem to address a problem without the difficult work of diagnosis ("fire the manager")

Task 1: Have a Vision

- Leaders have a particular objective (priority)

- You cannot be a leader unless you are leading somewhere

- A vision is more abstract than a goal, it inspires and can be flexible

- Visions need to be continuously communicated

- A lack of vision and the clear communication of a vision is one of the major failures of many leaders

Task 2: Take Action

- Leaders organize work, monitor progress, solve conflicts, follow up, work with outsiders, and obtain resources for their group

- If those in positions where leadership is expected do not take action, this creates problems

  - Others' frustration can lead some to try to take a leadership role and that can cause friction

  - Experienced professionals may "self organize" but they may not be coordinated with outsiders who depend on the group

- The best predictor of who becomes a leader is taking responsibility to solve problems and get the work done

University Leadership: A Special Case?

- Our own Howard Gillman stated that the top position at a major university can be compared to a politician in office; both individuals need to prove themselves repeatedly (Policano, p. 51).

- I would add that with the greater emphasis on development, self-supporting graduate programs, and increasing societal demands on all schools and departments, it isn't only the top leaders who need to continuously prove themselves to multiple constituencies

In other words, like it or not, academic leadership requires political skills

The Skill of Influence

- The ability to get another person, group or organization to do what they otherwise would not have done

- It depends on knowing what the other person wants or needs

- Influence is always a function of the situation (there is no power in the abstract).

- Influence is necessary to effective organizational functioning

- Because upward and peer influence is so abstract and situation-dependent it must be diagnosed in the specific situation

Why Is Building Influence So Often Neglected?

- Many new leaders do not understand that it is their job

- They focus on what they already know (downward focus)

- It is disdained as a dirty business

- Building influence is hard work

Getting Started

- First, how influence is built

- Next, how to use meetings to develop your diagnostic skills

Sayles's steps to building leadership

- Build on successes

- Pair events first, then set events

- Security: something all supervisors can provide

- Coping with non-response

Influence Depends on Understanding What Others Want or Need

- Successful influence depends on a diagnosis of the various situations

- Why the emphasis on diagnosis?

  - Because influence is potential it is difficult to see
  - Particularly important when you move to a new job or organization
  - Who has influence can vary a great deal in different departments and universities

- A clear understanding of who has what influence is a critical component of political skills

Break

Meetings Are Excellent Places to Develop Your Diagnostic Skills

- An exercise to learn about influence in other settings

- Each person takes 5 minutes to explain your own sociogram

- Does this diagram reflect the individuals' relative influence?

Of Course, Meetings Also Exist to Get Things Done

- Always have a written agenda with a clear purpose (no meetings solely for status display!)

- Always follow up with what should have been done since the last meeting

- Manage the time

- When a meeting gets ugly use Roberts Rules of Order https://www.robertsrules.org/rror--00.htm

Finally, Leading Staff Is a Little Different

- The higher you move in university leadership the more time you will spend supervising and working with non-faculty staff: two traps

- One trap is to try to know everything the staff knows, but this is impossible in large universities with highly specialized staff

- At the other extreme, because staff are usually long-tenured and academic leaders are short-tenured, academic leaders might find the path of least resistance is to defer to staff in everything

Staff Management Challenges

- Many staff are afraid of faculty

- The dangers of being the "nice boss"

- The dangers of being the "mean boss"

- You can always check staff advice with the central administration!

- One tool is a better use of performance appraisals to share feedback

Having a Productive Conversation

- Base feedback on objective information if possible
- Describe actions, not personalities, No "You are…"
- Describe the effects of the actions, "When you do [ ], it leads to [ ]"
- If you gain agreement that the effects are unwelcome, begin problems solving, "How can we prevent…"
- If you do not agree that an action occurred, wait for its next appearance. Do not try to persuade
- If there is no agreement after second attempt, either live with it or remove employee
- If no agreement on the negative effects, this disagreement is now the problem to be addressed. Are the effects personal or organizational?
- Clinician's trick for managing an emotional conversation

February 9 Negotiation Techniques*

with

Dr. Lisa Barron

* Ends at 3PM

Challenge Project Meetings