

Leadership Tips for Department Chairs: From Theory to (Best) Practice

Abstract: This presentation will discuss tips and best practices that effective leaders use in working with and motivating faculty and staff. Good leaders are rare but most of us can lead effectively if we understand how to negotiate the mission/people balance in our organization.

Presentation Focus: We will discuss best practices we can put into place when working with faculty and staff. This is critical not only to our personal growth but the growth of our faculty, staff, department and institution as well. Leadership concepts backed by theory can help department chairs, no matter the discipline or department size. From Lincoln and Freud to Hersey and Blanchard, many have theorized on how to motivate those we work with.

We will talk about best practices that are easy to implement to gain buy-in. We will examine the difference between what typical supervisors think their employees want from their job to the actual things our employees desire. We will touch on some motivational theories to better understand competing factors that may limit productivity. Our focus will be on how to develop effective teams and how to tell if the team you supervise need more structure or support.

At the Department level, most of us are first level supervisors with all of the difficulties that come with working closely with people and supervising them at the same time. The presentation will provide tips on how you handle yourself on a day to day basis, why discipline is important and how to work effectively with your boss. We will conclude with tips on achieving a healthy work-life balance.

Recommendations:

1. Identify the major issues in your department. Determine if your team needs support or structure.
2. Use tools discussed in the presentation to effectively engage with your faculty and staff that will generate effective results for your organization.
3. Remember that your team is watching you and will follow your lead.
4. How your boss views you has a direct impact on your department. Determine how you can improve that relationship through communication.
5. If you burn out, both you and your employees will suffer. Develop strategies on work life balance so you can be an effective leader and person.

Audience Involvement:

1. The audience will be informally polled on what they believe employees want from their jobs.
2. The audience will be encouraged to share if they believe their current team needs more structure or support and why.
3. Audience members will be asked to share what has been successful for them in their role as department chairs regarding faculty and staff productivity.
4. Audience members will be asked to share their biggest challenges.
5. A description of best practices (that are easy to implement) will be distributed to attendees.