

Proposal:
“The Four Quadrants of Administrative Effectiveness”
Academic Chairpersons Conference
February 2017

Building on the work of Michael C. Munger at Duke University, as well as Stephen R. Covey’s *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, this presentation seeks to understand administrative effectiveness in terms of control and responsibility, using X and Y axes to create four quadrants: High Responsibility / High Control (HRHC), High Responsibility / Low Control (HRLC), Low Responsibility / High Control (LRHC), and Low Responsibility / Low Control (LRLC).

“Control” refers to the level of personal control administrators seek over their environment, including the people who work for them. High Control individuals are likely to be micromanagers, whereas Low Control individuals tend to take a more trust-based approach to management. In a higher education environment—especially when leading faculty—the latter is more appropriate, given the level of competence and independence displayed by most college professors.

“Responsibility” refers to the degree of personal responsibility administrators accept for what happens on their watch. Low Responsibility individuals are prone to passing the buck, except when taking credit for others’ accomplishments, while High Responsibility leaders are more inclined to absorb blame and deflect credit. Again, the latter is more appropriate in a higher ed setting.

The most effective type of academic leader, then, is the HRLC, who accepts a great deal of personal responsibility for what goes on in his or her area but does not seek to exercise undue control over faculty. Next is the HRHC, whose penchant for micromanaging may be forgiven, up to a point, due to the fact that he or she does accept a great deal of personal responsibility. The LRLC may actually be well-liked, since he or she doesn’t expect much out of people; unfortunately, this type of person tends to be lazy and therefore is usually ineffective. The least effective administrator, however, as well as the most unpopular, is the LRHC, who seeks maximum control over every variable while taking little or no responsibility for what happens as a result.

This highly interactive presentation will define and examine closely the characteristics of all four administrative types, using examples and case studies. It will also include an assessment developed especially for this presentation, by which participants can chart themselves and find out where they fall on the HRHC – LRHC – LRLC – LRHC scale. **(Note: If this presentation is chosen for a plenary session, we will put the assessment online so that participants can take it at their leisure.)** In this way, they can come to a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as academic leaders and leave the session with a very specific personal improvement checklist.