

**Collaborative Professional Partnership: A Dean and Department Head's Story**  
**Academic Chairpersons Conference, Charleston, South Carolina**  
**February 4, 2016 4:00 p.m.**

Administration has its share of problem-solving. In this presentation, a dean and department head join together to tell the story of the start of their professional relationship, role play their problem-solving process, and identify what they believe are key aspects that make their professional relationship effective.

Our problem-solving process:

- a. Identify the problem
- b. talk face-to-face
- c. determine solutions/interventions
- d. execute plan
- e. follow up

**Is collaborate to solve problems** (as opposed to issuing directives).

DEPARTMENT HEAD  
QUALITIES

Team oriented  
Communicates  
Include & inform to keep surprises to a minimum  
Organized  
Empathetic & relational  
Time sensitive  
Detail oriented  
Strong work ethic  
Role Model

DEAN QUALITIES

Active listener  
Supportive  
Has complimentary characteristics to the Department Head  
Offers perspective  
Investigates before concluding

**Active listening is**

- In the moment.
- Focused on the speaker and the message.
- Providing feedback to demonstrate understanding of the message.
- The essential ingredient to a collaborative professional partnership.

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## Notes from the role play:

### Summary:

Administration has its share of problem solving. Deans and department heads join together to:

- I. Diffuse conflict, not escalate it
- II. **Communicate** (active listening—listen to hear the message vs. preparing the reply)
- III. **Work collaboratively** (2 parties working together) **to solve problems**
- IV. **Form a professional partnership** (parties cooperate to advance their mutual interests [DH represents/knows the interests of the faculty in the department; the Dean represents/knows the interests of higher administrators/the university])
- V. The Dean and Department Head have a **collaborative professional partnership** (working together to advance our mutual interests)

#### TAKE HOME MESSAGE

Collaborative Professional Partnership-to  
**create a collaborative rather than  
manipulative working relationship**  
between the dean and department head.

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