Department Chairs and Deans Retreat

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Wisdom from C. K. Gunsalus

• Embrace Your Fate
  • When you take on an administrative role, you become—like it or not—an authority figure.
  • This is problematic in an academic environment…because ambivalence about authority is pervasive.
  • Acknowledging your ambivalence, and finding constructive ways to think about it, are important early tasks.
• Know Thyself

• Focused introspection, in advance, can help prevent overreactions (yours) that might put you at a disadvantage in a charged situation.

• Starting point:
  • Why you sought or accepted the administrative position. Why are you doing this job? (Activity #1—Privately answer this)
Know Thyself (cont’d)

- Why are you doing this job?
- Usually comes down to one of four or five reasons:
  1. To give something back (often initially presented as “It was my turn”).
  2. Because I was a better alternative than anyone else (or, less benignly, “To keep X from doing it and destroying the department”).
  3. To grow in a new dimension (a way to stretch creatively or intellectually).
  4. To make a difference.
• Know Thyself (cont’d)

• *Activity #2*: Articulate two or three (not more) goals for your term of service.
  • Formulate specific improvements you would like to make. Don’t be general (e.g., making this the best department it can be).
    • In what two dimensions would you like things to be different (better)?
    • Is there a way to measure this difference?
    • How will you know if you have succeeded?
• Know Thyself (cont’d)

• Refer back to your goals on a regular basis—once a week is not too often.
• Without the reminders, you can become consumed by activities that are depressing and stressful.
• With the reminders, you stand a better chance of keeping a sense of your priorities and staying centered.
• Know Thyself (cont’d)

• One warning: once you know the why and what, do not turn them into a political stump speech.
• Unless the goals come out of the environment and are shared by others, you may be seen as excessively careerist (might not be the same goals as the dean or provost…and that is OK).
Know Thyself (cont’d)

Activity #3: Think about your personal vulnerabilities.
- What pushes your buttons?
- What kinds of interactions cause you to overreact?
- If you are having trouble with this, ask your spouse, significant other, or sibling?
Engagement Defined

The state by which individuals are emotionally and intellectually committed to the organization or group, resulting in greater productivity.
So what does all this mean?

...we manage performance
Manage Performance by Giving Employees What They Need from Work

- Clarity
- Standards
- Feedback
- Training
- Respect and feeling valued
Accountability

Once expectations are clear, follow through!

Don’t pull back from performance management

No excuses…
What to Document?

- Performance
  - Beyond or Below Expectations
- Conduct
- Incidents
- Absences & Tardiness
- Feedback from Others
- Conversations with Employee
- Expectations
HOW TO DOCUMENT

- Be objective/factual
  - Who – employee involved, any witnesses
  - What – incident, event, precipitation for documentation
  - When – date/time
  - Where – location
  - Why – employee’s response
  - How – facts surrounding incident
Addressing Concerns

- Coach through regular dialogue/feedback loop
- Counsel: communicate weaknesses and/or deficiencies; reiterating expectations
  ➢ HARDER THAN IT SOUNDS!
- Use Performance Evaluations as a tool:
  ➢ Not as corrective action!
- Engage in progressive discipline
Progressive Discipline Framework

**Informal Discipline:**
- Memo of Counseling
- Written Reprimand

Both include:
- Documented issues
- Expectations
- Consequences

**Formal Discipline:**
- Education Code 89535
  - Sets forth grounds for taking disciplinary action against permanent or probationary EEs
- Disciplinary Actions:
  - Suspension
  - Demotion
  - Dismissal
Employee Rights

- Weingarten Rights
- Skelly
- State Personnel Board Appeal
WHAT IF I DON’T KNOW…

ASK!
Final Thought

Changing your lines can change the script.