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Charleston, SC

Collaborative Professional Partnership: A Dean and Department Head's Story

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Recommended Citation

Rugari, Susan M. and Pierce, James R. (2016). "Collaborative Professional Partnership: A Dean and Department Head's Story," *Academic Chairpersons Conference Proceedings*. <https://newprairiepress.org/accp/2016/Dean/4>

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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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