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Successes and Challenges of Being Interim Leaders During a Pandemic

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Successes and Challenges of Being Interim Leaders During a Pandemic



Roy Brown, John Cyrus and Emily J. Hurst
VCU Libraries, Health Sciences Library
@VCUHSLibrary

Background



John Ulmschneider
Dean of Libraries and University Librarian

5 faculty and 2 staff reports



Teresa L. Knott
Director and Associate Dean, Health Sciences Library

5 faculty reports



Emily J. Hurst
Deputy Director and Head, Research and Education

1 staff and 7 faculty reports



Roy Brown
Research and Education Librarian
Nursing Liaison



John Cyrus
Research and Education Librarian
Liaison to Medicine, Clinical

Background (Interim Overview)



Teresa L. Knott
Interim Dean of Libraries and University Librarian

6 faculty and 2 staff reports



Emily J. Hurst
Interim Director and Associate Dean, Health Sciences Library

5-6 faculty reports



Roy Brown
Interim Head, Research and Education
Nursing Liaison

1 staff and 2 faculty reports



John Cyrus
Interim Head, Research and Education
Liaison to Medicine, Clinical

1 staff and 2 faculty reports

Transition into Interim Leadership

- Communication
 - with interim AD - onboarding to dept. head role, etc.
 - with direct reports / onboarding to their job responsibilities
 - between interim department heads
- Expectation setting
 - understanding scope of job responsibilities for interim dept head
 - developing goals related to interim position and balancing with liaison roles
 - open communication about any ideas for the department - “Not Just Holding a Place”

During the interim period

Challenges

- COVID-19 pandemic
 - Uncertainty and stress
 - motivating, coping, accommodating
- Supervising peers in an interim role
- Balancing Dept. Head and liaison duties
- Multiple layers of interim authority

During the interim period

Outcomes

- Finalized a Mission Statement for the Department
- Established a 5 year Plan Exercise for all in Department
 - Mentor
 - Set Training Priorities/Opportunities
- Each Gained Knowledge About What it Takes to Lead a Department
- Better Colleagues and Advocates

Transition Back to Librarian Positions

- communication with interim AD
 - discussion of any retained roles or responsibilities
- communication with direct reports
 - what worked worked and what didn't and concerns about transition back, what can we pass on to returning department head
- formal wrap up activities for year
 - annual evaluations and goal setting with direct reports

Thank You!

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