Leadership doesn't have to be lonely: Creating cross-institutional community

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Leadership can be lonely and isolating, especially as one rises across academic ranks (Payne, 2016). This has been exacerbated in recent years by the pandemic (Gallos & Bolman, 2021). As faculty members move into administrative roles, they often experience a disruption in their sense of community, connectedness, and belonging among their colleagues (Evans & Pomper, 2021). Similarly, the move into an administrative role necessitates a shift in focus away from traditional scholarly writing due to fragmented time and often limited support/expectations to continue this work.

Academic leaders feel isolated partially because their peer group becomes smaller as they advance into leadership roles. Not only does isolation lead to frustration and dissatisfaction for the individual leader, but it also negatively affects the institutional culture, impeding shared governance, hindering collaborative problem-solving, and creating an unhealthy and alienating work environment. For these reasons, intentionally creating opportunities for connection and support across institutions is essential for increasing servant leaders' effectiveness, job satisfaction, and career longevity.

The leaders of this workshop represent a variety of disciplines, institutions, and leadership positions. Together, they share their experiences of unexpectedly becoming co-authors after engaging in discussions around leadership challenges relating to shared governance. Their multi-year collaboration grew out of core members' participation in a multi-institutional academic leadership program.

In this interactive workshop, participants will learn about and practice collaborative problem-solving through group ideation, reflection, and interactive co-writing. Specifically, participants will be introduced to ways they might seize opportunities to collaborate with other leaders holding similar administrative roles. They will learn strategies for developing new scholarship pipelines connected to their administrative experience while balancing the obligations of servant leadership. Participants are encouraged to create meaningful connections and continue collaboration following the interactive workshop.

Citations

Evans, M. T., & Pomper, M. (2021). Moving Up and Down through Leadership Roles. *The Department Chair*, *32*(1), 1-2. https://doi.org/10.1002/dch.30391

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Payne, B. K. (2016). Becoming an academic administrator: Dancing in the dark or highway to hell? *Journal of Criminal Justice Education, 27*(2), 271-284. http://dx.doi.org.10.1080/10511253.2015.1128705

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