BEING AN EFFECTIVE MIDDLE MANAGER

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OVERVIEW

- Defining middle management
- Role issues: employee’s vs. supervisor’s expectations
- Achieving greatness through effective leadership and management
- Professional growth and career advancement
- Work/Life balance
DEFINING MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

Middle managers

- link horizontal and vertical levels (Young, 1990)
- interact with diverse constituencies
- are the “unsung heroes” who keep the daily operations of the institution running smoothly (White, Webb & Young, 1990, p. 56)
- “have your fingers on the campus pulse and are able to interpret the heartbeats you receive” (Bryan & Mullendore, 1990, p. 110)
- manage people, programs, projects, and information (Mills, 2000)
- typically do not create policy – rather, interprets and implements (Mills, 2000)
- make decisions; also implement decisions from a higher level
- may have significant role with implementing technology and strategic planning
ROLE ISSUES

- Know your role!
- Meeting employee’s and supervisor’s expectations
  - Communication
  - Time and priorities
- What decisions can the middle manager make and when must approval be sought?
- Must be able to accomplish goals by working through others (Mills, 2000)
- Being an effective leader and manager is the foundation for success
- You don’t have to be *the* leader in order to be *a* leader
ACHIEVING GREATNESS THROUGH EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

“The charisma of leadership becomes a lifelong process of discerning how a person can be of service to the academic community and profession while carrying out the tasks and responsibilities of the leadership position” (Dr. Ronald Rebore, 2001, p. 65).

- Characteristics of the ideal boss
- Decision making
- Overcoming obstacles
- Getting things done
- Life-long learning
THE IDEAL BOSS

- Willing to provide constructive criticism
- Friendly, caring, and understanding
- Available for questions; accessible
- Say what you do; do what you say
- Competent and hard working
- Knows his/her employees
- Tolerance for ambiguity (Birnbaum, 1988)
- Consistently demonstrates excellent supervisory skills
- Practices cybernetic leadership (Birnbaum, 1988)
When facing undesirable behavior, ask “what am I doing that may be influencing what is happening?” (p. 210)

Upon encountering a problem ask “what is within my power to do to solve this problem that will not create more serious problems in the future? (p. 211)

Problems should be addressed through the organization’s existing structures and processes

Achieves status by being able to sincerely articulate the unspoken concerns of others

Encourages open communication and listens
DECISION MAKING

- Make decisions timely
  - Reduce the clutter
  - Time for reflecting and planning
- Understand your role as middle manager
- Think about the impact...who, what, and when
- Stay within the scope of your mission
- Do the right thing
- Do what is best for the office, department, and institution
- Communicate: before, during and after
OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Communication
- Share as much information as possible
- Timing, layers, and methods for dissemination
- Be proactive in keeping yourself informed

Listen to constituencies and demonstrate through action
Set, communicate and enforce performance expectations; provide feedback
Manage change

Acknowledge and understand culture
Get the right people on the bus (Collins, 2001)
Create a pocket of greatness (Collins, 2001)
GETTING THINGS DONE: TIME MANAGEMENT

- If you could have more time, in the work week what would you do?
- Ask yourself: “am I the only person who can do this task?”
- Effectively delegate
- Calendars and scheduling
- Processing time
- Block time for thinking, planning and completing projects
- Pickle jar theory (Wright, 2002)
- Handling items one time
- Reducing distractions and brain clutter
GETTING THINGS DONE

- Most Valuable Activities (Crenshaw, 2010)
- Learn to say no; develop a stop doing list (Collins, 2001)
- Identify small changes that can have a large impact (Birnbaum, 1988)
- Give credit where credit is due
- Keep it simple
- Create alliances; know the power people
LIFE-LONG LEARNING

“To deny ample professional development opportunities to you would gradually, if not quickly, diminish the capacity and effectiveness of your…division and your institution.” (Young, 1990, p. 110)

- Foster an environment supportive of professional growth/development
- Lead by example: engage in professional development opportunities
- Seek mentoring; be a mentor
- Develop peer relationships
- Become involved in professional organizations
- View higher education through multiple lenses (Birnbaum, 1988)
ACHIEVING GREATNESS THROUGH EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The guiding principle among all of these categories:

- Characteristics of the ideal boss
- Decision making
- Overcoming obstacles
- Getting things done
- Life-long learning

Encourage, empower, and inspire others!

(Morrill, 2007)
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT

- Keep your resume up-to-date
- Demonstrate your ability to learn, grow and develop
  - Track your professional development activities; apply what you learn; share your knowledge with others
  - Create a system to stay organized
  - Take note of references used
- Identify accomplishments: how have you made your organization better than it was before? How have you contributed to the profession?
  - An “accomplishments” section of a resume is a must; identify the strongest, most objective accomplishments that have had the greatest impact
- Build and maintain peer relationships
DESIRED SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND OTHER QUALITIES

- Low maintenance
- Communication
- Professionalism
- Ability to gather, interpret, and synthesize large amounts of information and complex issues
- Use of data
- Keep the boss well informed
“You might stumble, you might fall. Just do your best and forget the rest!”

(Tony Horton, P90X, 2008)
TIME TO REFLECT

- Consider all the areas we just covered
- Identify one area; focus on this area during the upcoming month, semester or year
- Identify a broad goal for that area and create an action plan
- After making progress and can maintain, then switch focus to another area
- Keep building, creating a continuous loop
WORK/LIFE BALANCE

- Take care of yourself
  - Eat healthy
  - Exercise
  - Sleep and rest
  - Emotional, spiritual, financial, and social wellness
  - Recognize signs of stress
  - Make time for yourself

- Choose how you spend your time; establish your priorities
- Find a trustworthy colleague
- You only have one life
REFERENCES

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS