

Statement of Administrative Philosophy

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I view the role of University administrator as a leader in developing and implementing a strategic plan to ensure the long-term prosperity of her (his) unit; the promoter of a culture of collegiality and mutual support among the faculty and larger constituency of the institution; a champion of inclusiveness among students; an ethical decision maker; a steward of resources; and a teacher-scholar. Finally, a good administrator needs to be generous while maintaining clarity of vision under pressure.

Strategic plan

In my view, an administrator's first responsibility is to develop a vision, a mission and measurable goals for her (his) unit. These goals must also be aligned with the larger organization. They must be developed in accordance with the faculty and other constituencies and, once adopted; must guide the allocation of resources within the unit and motivate any request of additional resources from the upper administration. Finally, they must be periodically revised to reflect changes in the larger institution and within the unit.

Collegiality

An administrator, in appreciation of the rich complexity of the university, facilitates the success of others through mentoring and good governance. In so doing, (s)he is first of all responsible for the professional wellbeing of direct subordinates. For example, a department chair must regularly mentor young faculty and listen to the input of senior members of the department, while a dean must take chairs' points of view seriously. Second, each administrative unit needs to operate harmoniously within the broader context of the university. In this manner, the administrator supports the goals set by the upper-level leadership, while at the same time advocates for the needs of her (his) own unit. Second, a successful administrator needs to work collaboratively with other units and within her (his) own to pursue institutional goals, paying keen attention to the wide variety of constituents including students, parents, faculty, staff, donors, and more.

Inclusiveness

Universities are first and foremost places of learning. It is the responsibility of administrators at all levels to assist faculty members in fostering an environment of mutual respect in which students can broaden their horizons and develop their own worldview while respecting others. Initiatives may include fostering study abroad programs, supporting international students, facilitating dialogue with under-represented groups within the University and larger community, and emphasizing inclusivity in public statements.

Ethical decision making

A key element of leadership is the ability to make decisions in a timely manner, especially difficult ones involving, for example, budgeting or personnel issues. When faced with a difficult decision, an administrator must first listen to all involved parties, make a decision, and then take responsibility for the chosen course of action through clear and transparent communication of the decision its rationale to every affected person.

Stewardship of resources

Daily administrative tasks are not glamorous. Administrators must accept and appreciate spending time on routine, detail-oriented tasks such as budgeting, scheduling, program evaluation and development, personnel management, and endless committee meeting. These are fundamentally thankless tasks, which largely go unnoticed by subordinates, superiors and colleagues unless something goes wrong. Thus, a good administrator will approach minutiae with humility and commitment, finding motivation that does not depend on the recognition of others. In managing a unit's resources, the administrator also needs to be prepared to face scarcity and the necessity of fundraising. In so doing, (s)he must be prepared to commit time and energy towards grant writing and pursuing external donors, knowing that success rates are slim and may require significant time and effort.

Teaching and Scholarship

Alongside teaching and learning, research and creative activities are the University's fundamental goals. An administrator, especially, but not limited to department chairs, should remain engaged in teaching and research in order to: a) keep a focus on the core mission of the institution; b) provide mentorship and encouragement to faculty members; and c) earn and maintain the respect of both faculty members and students.

Character

I firmly believe that a generous spirit and a welcoming attitude are the most important character traits of an administrator, and that the willingness to sacrifice one's own time and personal goals to the needs of others are necessary traits in the best academic leaders. At the same time, a successful academic leader will be able stand her (his) ground and defend decisions made, regardless the amount of pressure.

Experience to date

I have held for two years the position of Research Development Fellow at the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at the University of Mississippi. This is a 20% administrative position, where I facilitated and reviewed grant proposals, especially those involving interdisciplinary collaborations across the university; held meetings with deans and department chairs across campus to align our work with their research missions and culture; participated in planning university-wide events supporting research; conducted individual meetings with faculty members on proposals development; and performed enhanced reviews of NSF proposals. I held a leadership position as Vice-chair and later as a member of the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate. I served in a variety of task forces and University standing committees, including the Strategic Planning Council and others. I contributed to writing several policies and reports, including the Spousal Hire Policy and the Report to the Chancellor on the Establishment of the Office of the Ombudsperson. As a faculty member, I have contributed to program development and the assessment of a newly-established department.