



Excelsior

Published by the Guild of Administrative Officers
August 2003

The Guild Welcomes Dr. Pippins

In This Issue

The Challenges
of a New Academic
Chair -----2

Difference Between
Managers and
Leaders -----3

Characteristics of
Good Leaders ---4

Dr. Pippins held a series of visioning sessions during the summer to help her identify some of the problems and successes facing SCCC. A diverse group of college employees have attended these meetings giving the new president a very broad view of the college and its operation. These meetings will eventually lead to a strategic plan to guide SCCC in the years ahead.

After learning of her appointment as president, Dr. Pippins said, "I am honored to accept the presidency of Suffolk County Community College and look forward to the educational challenges and opportunities at Suffolk. The college has an excellent reputation within the academic community, and I will dedicate all my leadership efforts to maintaining and improving that reputation."



One of the goals Dr. Pippins has already set for our college is to raise our profile on the national scene. National recognition as one of the best community colleges in the nation brings immediate benefits to our graduates, faculty, and sponsors, as more people recognize the positive impact SCCC has had on their lives. The Guild of Administrative Officers strongly supports this goal and pledges its support to realize each of the goals identified throughout this process.

We know that vision without action is nothing more than dreaming. We are prepared therefore, to continue our goal to provide training and support for our members to become the professional leaders that our college will need to complete this plan in the years ahead.

The Challenges of a New Academic Chair

How many of our current Academic Chairs gave careful thought about the position before throwing his/her hat into the ring and now feel stressed because the work load is more than originally imagined? To avoid this, we must encourage our colleagues to first seek an understanding of the boundaries and responsibilities that go with the position. We should also train future academic chairs to engage in reflection through journal writing. This process forces us to focus on recurring problems and our personal performance when we attempt to resolve each issue. Finally, the institution needs to formally define the expectations of an academic chair and provide the training needed to do the job properly.

Here is a list of do's and don'ts for the new academic chair that originally appeared in the following article: "The Challenges of a New Department Chair: Success Despite Reality," by Jeanneine P. Jones.

Do	Don't
1. Have a clear vision for the Department that stems from the vision articulated by the College and University. Use a faculty retreat to move this vision into professional goals for the Department. Have a clear, written plan of action for each goal. It's easy to lose sight of long-range plans in the daily shuffle, so post your goals in a common place where everyone can see them. Check their progress at each Department meeting. Set up a file folder for each one ...whatever it takes to keep them first in your long-range plans.	1. Get overwhelmed by all the microscopic details that don't really matter. You'll pay for that in the end. Instead, carefully prioritize and keep your goals in sight. Do the little things lead to the accomplishment of something bigger? If not, are they really that important? If the answer is till no, don't worry about them.
2. Figure out the hidden curriculum of your Department, and then come to fully understand your role within it. Articulate your job clearly and regularly to your faculty. Sincerely invite conversation about it on an on-going basis. This will eliminate small power struggles and behind-doors complaining.	2. Assume that you know everything or even that you have to act like you do. Talk to people! Ask questions! It's ok.
3. Immediately become familiar with university policies; you know, those things you ignored as a faculty member! Guess what? It's now your job to lead the people who are still ignoring them. Also, get to know the University's attorney. You'll need his or her advice on occasion.	3. Let your departmental friendships get in the way of your judgment. You may make people angry, but they'll respect your decision to put the good of the whole before the wishes of one. Don't jeopardize your professional integrity.
4. Keep up with the simple things like voice mail and email. Getting behind with that stuff will overload you, set a bad example for faculty, make students think you're unresponsive and keep you feeling frazzled.	4. Give in to students (or faculty!) just because they cry or yell. It's a lot like effective parenting. Be consistent and firm, yet understanding and supportive.
5. Meet deadlines head on. A good tip for keeping some structure is to chunk each project into about three parts. Have a separate deadline for each noted on your calendar. Plan way ahead if the faculty is involved because their input will take a week longer than you thought.	5. Bend the rules...ever. For example, as soon as you hedge a bit on a GPA requirement, students will pour out of the woodwork, waiting in line for you to do the same for them. Stay very strict about those written policies! You're better off walking a thin line. Besides, it's your job now.
6. Work tenaciously for the recognition of faculty and staff who perform well. This will add to their confidence levels, inspire them to keep up productivity, and increase your respect among Department members. A couple of easy ideas for doing this include a faculty showcase or bulletin board located in a prominent place within the Department which features recent publications, presentations, or other accomplishments. Also, try a one-page Department newsletter with a catchy title. Faculty can make contributions to it and you can share accomplishments, deadlines, and progress toward Department goals here. Neither takes a great deal of your time and both add significantly to your mission.	6. Drag the entire office home with you. Blurring those lines will burn you out faster than you can imagine. It will really take discipline, but try to work at work and relax at home. Modeling this work ethic is important. Getting highly organized will really help. Clean out everything, set up a system of deadlines, color code your papers, make files for each day of the week and use them for things that absolutely must be accomplished.

<p>7. Try hard for the win-win in conflict resolution situations. Always gather all of your evidence before you utter a single word to anyone, though, and make your decisions and recommendations public only after a period of reflection about your decision. Never jump to conclusions.</p>	<p>7. Try to do it all yourself. Many people in the Department know many things, so give them a chance to show you how smart they are.</p>
<p>8. Support, support, support. Mentor, mentor, mentor. Remember: Your job is to make everybody else look good.</p>	<p>8. Try to be someone you're not.</p>
<p>9. Ask for a regular, private meeting time with the Dean if it's not offered. Keep a folder filled with running questions, scenarios, and problems. Record notes on the advice offered about each. Turn the notes into a checklist of sorts that will lead to the successful addressing of each concern.</p>	<p>9. Commit yourself to a rigorous schedule of publishing, conference presentations, and consulting. That alone will wear you down and will, more often than not, undermine your strong reputation. Plan to shave off some of your prior activities to make time for the additional responsibilities.</p>
<p>10. Spend the first hour and a half of the day in your office with the door shut at least three times a week. Use this for your own writing, organizing the week, grading papers, and generally catching up on your personal work before you move on to that of the Department. Make this a habit you won't break!</p>	<p>10. Be constantly doing something. Even though you're swamped, try to give faculty and staff the impression that you've always got time for them. It's better to have a structured closed/open door policy than to always find that people are uncomfortable for interrupting you.</p>
<p>11. Figure out everything in the office from the budget to the process for hiring student workers. This will help you appreciate the role of your office manager or secretary while streamlining and monitoring the daily routines.</p>	<p>11. Be caught off guard. Even though you're not directly involved in everything, you're still ultimately responsible for it.</p>

**Difference
between
managers and leaders**

- Managers have employees, for example. Leaders have followers.
- Managers command and control. Leaders empower and inspire.
- Managers seek stability. Leaders seek flexibility.
- Managers make decisions and solve problems. Leaders set directions and then empower and enable their team to make their own decisions and solve their own problems.
- Managers accept the organizational structure and culture. Leaders look for a better way.

Excelsior
Published by the
Guild of Administrative Offices
533 College Road
Selden, NY 11732
Editor - Thomas Breeden
Executive Committee: Thomas Breeden, President;
George Tvelia, Vice President; Randy Manning,
Treasurer; Jane Shearer, Secretary; Lowell Kleiman,
Grievance Officer; Naomi Phelps, Anthony Napoli,
at Large.

Show Your Support for the
College Budget Vote!
Come to the
Suffolk County Legislature
in Hauppauge August 5, 2003
at 10:30 a.m.

Characteristics of Good Leaders

- They are the people who recognize excellence and creativity in others, especially those members of our team who are out there on the front lines.
- People with ideas champion them, and through the agony and ecstasy of trial and error, make them work.
- The ability to listen and truly hear what's being said.
- You must know how everything in your business fits together, how each critical element impacts and influences other elements. Your knowledge of the big picture is one of the things that marks you as a leader.