Quick Bytes: Leading Teams That Work

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Session Goals & Boundaries

• Learn some challenges in leading and managing teams
• Emphasize strength of teams
• Mitigate frustrations of working in teams

• Introduction to teamwork
• Takeaways
  • Today’s brief experience of teamwork
  • Handouts with reminders
  • Foci for future practice

How Do You Feel About Team Work?

• Common reasons for resistance:
  • Focus on the positive attributes of teams

Helpful Team Reminders

• Complementary expertise—use it
  • Invite all voices to be heard; listen well
  • Get all ideas on the table before driving to a conclusion
• Stay on topic for maximum gain
• Don’t let perfect stand in the way of good

The Situation

• Your dean has named you (a doctoral student) head of a task force on graduate student advising
• Challenges from the dean’s point of view:
  • Too many graduate students “orphaned” with little connection to an advisor
  • Few faculty reach out to graduate students in advising process
  • Provost is concerned about graduate student dissatisfaction

Challenge #1: Clarifying the Purpose

• Articulate a statement of purpose for this task force (10 min.)
  • Team members need to know what they are expected to do
  • The dean of your school is your audience
    • Needs to know your purposes/interests are aligned
    • Clear, concise, on target for the team and the dean
Challenge #1: Takeaways

• What was easy and what was hard?
• How satisfied are you with purpose statement?
  • Does it guide the team?
  • Will it be clear to the dean?
• What challenges to team process did you encounter?

Challenge #2: Putting the Team Together

• Get “the right people on the bus” (Collins, 2001)
  • Skills
  • Knowledge
  • Dispositions/habits of mind
• Read about potential team members in your envelopes and select 4 for your task force (10 min.)
  • Be thoughtful and explicit about your reasons for selecting some and not others

Challenge #2: Takeaways

• What tradeoffs did you have to make?
• Were you worried about anyone you selected? Why?
• In what ways might the team you selected be challenged to achieve its purpose?

Challenge #3: Creating an Action Plan

• Given the purpose you have articulated:
  • How long will it take your task force to achieve the purpose?
  • What indicators would tell you that you are making appropriate progress?
  • What resources does your task force need to achieve its purpose?
  • What evidence will tell you if your purpose has been achieved?
(10 min.)

Challenge #3: Takeaways

• What commitments were you willing to make?
  • Were some difficult to swallow?
• What challenges did you encounter?

Challenge #4: Meeting Mechanics

• No time to address here—in handout
Discussion: Well-Functioning Teams

- Clear purpose
- Complementary expertise and behavior
- Action Plan
- Productive meetings (see handout)

- What did you learn?
- Is there hope for better group work?
- What questions remain?