can also be an administrator’s undoing. Due to the overreliance on rules and guidelines for this generation, there often seems to be a lack of pragmatism or realism to their expectations. Moreover, this generation is quick to look to authority figures for direction and validation, which can often mean going directly to the top for issues and concerns. Why would one wait to hear from her department chair when she can go directly to the university president with her concern? In other words, this overreliance on authority can also be their downfall if this generation eschews hierarchy and bureaucracy for more immediate feedback and response.

Again, providing clear guidelines and parameters around the reporting structure and bureaucracy of one’s institution may go a long way in helping to socialize this generation of faculty to institutional norms. It is best not to assume that this generation has been taught the ins and outs of academic hierarchy and the often unspoken rules of politics when, in fact, they may have been taught for so many years that “going right to the top” was the most effective and efficient method.

Team oriented. This generation grew up in a world where teamwork was not only encouraged but also rewarded. Much of their previous academic experience has focused on group projects, collaboration, and win-win scenarios. Howe and Strauss (2000) noted that this generation has had so much structure imposed on them that they find it difficult to work without a net and expect authority figures to protect them when faced with uncomfortable situations. From this perspective, the Millennial faculty member may have an expectation that dealing with difficult students or coworkers is the responsibility of his department chair, dean, or even those in higher administrative positions. Moreover, with the overemphasis on rules and structure in their previous academic experiences, this generation may expect that there should be guidelines to rid themselves of students who are rude, for example.

This team orientation will also come through in their scholarship. This generation will want to collaborate and will expect that collaborative scholarship is not only desired but also required. In this regard, interdisciplinary scholarship could become the modus operandi for this generation of faculty. Therefore, having clear guidelines in promotion and tenure documents about the value and counting of collaborative work will be beneficial for those working with these individuals. How does interdisciplinary scholarship count? What about team-teaching and co-teaching? In what have been more traditionally solitary disciplines, how does collaborative scholarship count and how is it valued? These types of questions should become an integral part of promotion and tenure guidelines and conversations for this generation.

Conclusion

Make no mistake: despite the warnings and frantic calls to action offered by the popular media in response to the Millennials, this generation offers academia an unprecedented set of opportunities to become more engaged, more technologically conversant, and more forward looking than ever before. What may be especially galling to those of us from previous generations may also offer new opportunities to reimagine and reenvision how we do things to provide more clarity and efficiency. Unlike previous generations, Millennials may be less willing to acquiesce to existing hierarchies and prevailing norms. Nevertheless, such discussions may lead us all to ponder why we do things the way we do them—especially if “the way things are always done” isn’t particularly efficient or effective.

Things change—even if slowly in academia. Indeed, we know that previous generations of academics saw preceding generations as “whipper-snappers,” “upstarts,” or “disregarding authority” (Strauss and Howe 1991). In this way, each generation struggles to understand those who came before and those who come after them. Utilizing these conflicts and tensions in a way that assists us in understanding another perspective or provides us with empathy may be one place to start. Asking others to explain their perspectives may go a long way. The Millennials represent only one generation in our academic world. How we treat these faculty members, who will be our department chairs and deans of tomorrow, will also inform how they will mentor others some day.

Susan K. Gardner is interim dean in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Maine. Email: susan.k.gardner@maine.edu

Resources


Five Suggestions for Leaders Committed to Equality

AMY ALDRIDGE SANFORD

College and university campuses are at an impasse. Classroom educators are committed more than ever to social justice and raising the social consciousness of their students. These professors and instructors, from multiple disciplines, do not avoid controver-
sial topics in their classrooms. They encourage students to discuss race, class, sexuality, and a host of other issues in the context of both current events and historical narratives. In addition, students are coming to higher education experiences more aware of inequality and unfairness than the generations before them. They may not get their news from the same traditional sources that their parents or grandparents value, but they do pay attention to social media and what is reported there, which is often news from across the globe.

Students and their professors are demanding to be heard. They are public with their convictions. They have shown that they will not quietly accept institutional racism or microaggressions toward marginalized people. They will not simply respect someone because of a title or a salary. We have recently seen this demonstrated at the University of Missouri, the University of Oklahoma, and the University of Kansas. Some college administrators have chosen to respond to this activism by publicly shaming students—referring to them as entitled and whiny. That is one way to handle the challenge of accountability—we can use our privilege to shut down those with whom we disagree. However, is that response really what we want to teach the future college-educated leaders of our world? A better way to handle this impasse is to model a leadership dedicated to equality. We need to commit to leadership in which we can have tough conversations, embrace people holistically, value everyone’s experiences, and advance social justice.

What Does a Leader Committed to Equality Look Like?

Leadership is not solely practiced by the college’s top-level administrators. Leadership is for anyone who has a responsibility for setting good examples for others. This list includes classroom professors, department chairs, committee chairs, student leaders, staff supervisors, and other university opinion leaders. A leader who is committed to equality should have good communication skills, a willingness to be vulnerable, the ability to see people as individuals and share power with them, the desire to call out injustices, and a need to be involved in the town in which the university is located.

Cultivate good communication skills. A leader committed to equality will answer all messages and requests in a timely manner, not just the requests from people deemed “important.” An email or phone message left unanswered for more than a week communicates to the other person that you think your time is more valuable than theirs. A leader committed to equality does not believe that his or her time is more precious than anyone else’s time.

When conversing with someone, it is important to be wholly present. Put away your cell phone, do not look over the other person’s shoulder for someone more important, and do more listening than talking. Before making a comment, determine whether it will provide a valuable contribution to the conversation. If you believe it will, speak up when the other person has completed his or her thought. If not, continue to listen or ask the other person a question about what was just said. It is not necessary to say everything that pops into our minds. Again, the “leader” is not the most important person in every conversation.

It is imperative to model the thoughtful, critical dialogue that we expect from others. Commit to fully understanding the other person’s point of view, especially when there is disagreement. Do not just give up or agree to disagree. That is the easy way out and not very productive. If the conversation must stop due to time, commit to meeting to talk about the topic again.

Embrace a willingness to be vulnerable. Vulnerability is emotional exposure, and it looks different depending on the person. To leaders with a feminine style, a feeling of vulnerability can occur when sharing an unpopular opinion or disagreeing with another person. This may cause disagreement and conflict, two scary propositions for feminine leaders. Vulnerability for masculine leaders can occur when sharing personal narratives, which they fear could make them look weak because they are admitting to being a person who does not always have the answers.

Vulnerability is a characteristic of a leader committed to equality, which is an alternative style to feminine or masculine leadership. Vulnerability allows for conversations to be messy and ambiguous. It allows us to be introspective regarding our own biases and truths. There is less certainty, which allows dialogue to move forward. It is the people who are too certain regarding their own opinions who cause dialogue to stall. Basically, they refuse to budge. We can allow for paradigmatic shifting when we make room for vulnerability, which gives us permission to admit when we were wrong.

See people as individuals and share power with them. Everyone arrives on our campuses with their own lived experiences, truths, and abilities. They should all be appreciated, heard, and cared for in a nonhierarchical way. As with returning phone calls and emails, we should not singularly show interest in the people with the highest titles or the most impressive achievements.

A leader committed to equality is a leader who desires to have relationships with people who may not otherwise feel welcome. On a college campus, that could include first-generation students, people with criminal histories, international students and staff, veterans, parents, and people of color. The roles of mentor/protégé, teacher/learner, and leader/follower should always be in flux. Sometimes the teacher is the learner, and sometimes the learner is the teacher. Relationships are most rewarding when they are synergetic experiences in which both people give and take.

Call out injustices. It is important for a leader committed to equality to bring together nonhomogeneous workgroups. We need to create spaces where people can be vulnerable and voice unpopular opinions or share personal narratives. It is through this experience that we can call out injustices. For example, this should be a space where someone can suggest adding the category of “other” in addition to “female” and “male” on an admissions application. The person should be able to point out that not everyone fits the two traditional categories without being met with eye rolls or negative comments.

Conversations should be moderated and shifted so that the people with the most sophistication, privilege, maturity, or content knowledge do not dominate. If a group is always in agreement, then they have likely
fallen into the trap of groupthink. The group may need new members, or at the very least, they must read and discuss articles by people who disagree with them.

Seek community involvement. There are many ways that campus leaders can become involved in the greater community, such as volunteering for a local nonprofit, although it is important that the local organization has a mission that fits with the personal mission of the volunteer. Also, if possible, leaders should give monetarily to local nonprofits, although money should never substitute for real volunteer hours. A leader can also give workshops or talks in the community and write editorials for the local newspaper. Not everyone in your community has had exposure to the ideas that are currently taught in universities; this is an opportunity to share that knowledge and to model care and civility.

Conclusion
Yes, our universities and colleges are at an impasse. Our faculty and students are calling out social injustice as they see it, and sometimes they do that in very public ways in our university common spaces and on our Twitter pages. As higher education leaders, we can choose to ignore it or shame the people involved, but a more appropriate response is to model the sort of commitment to equality that we expect from others on our campuses. We must treat all people with respect through our everyday communications and interactions. We must share our narratives, call out social injustices, admit when we are wrong, share our power, become involved in our communities, and be willing to (sometimes publicly) change our minds. We must surround ourselves with people who have experiences and truths that are different from our own. It is only then that we can call ourselves leaders committed to equality.

Amy Aldridge Sanford is associate vice president for academic affairs at Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi. Email: amy.aldridge.sanford@tamucc.edu

Making the Case for Chair Promotion Based on Administrative Service

N. DOUGLAS LEES

There are numerous examples in our colleges and universities where faculty members who are less than full rank are selected to chair their departments. The focus here will be on associate professor chairs, although it is recognized that, on occasion, even assistant professors are occasionally called to duty as chairs. Some reasons that deans and departments would consider appointing an associate professor include the lack of full professors who are willing to serve or have the appropriate characteristics to be an effective chair, the tradition of appointing chairs from within, and the potentially high cost and risk of recruiting an external chair. In recent years, cost pressures likely come into play more frequently than in the past.

Appointing associate professors as chairs is not commonly found in the vast majority of academic departments in major research universities or professional schools. These institutions have large department faculties with an abundance at full rank, robust personnel infrastructures available to lessen chair workloads, and more than sufficient resources to conduct an external search to bring in a chair who will raise the institutional research profile. One is far more likely to find associate rank faculty serving as chairs in institutions where department faculty rosters are small and where the chair is appointed on a rotating, limited term (typically three years). Such institutions rarely seek external chairs because of budget restrictions that may be pressed to absorb an additional high salary. In between these two institutional types are well-respected comprehensive universities, many of which are located in highly populated urban areas. Such institutions have higher student-to-faculty ratios, fewer staff to aid in department management, heterogeneous student bodies, and modest budgets relative to the major research universities. Resource issues often mandate that they seek internal chairs, with some of them being associate professors.

The bottom-line question for associate professor chairs, especially for those who have open-ended appointments, is: “Can you meet the expectations of your discipline as defined by your local culture to be eligible for promotion to full rank?” Many chairs in this position will find the road to promotion a very challenging one. The burden of performing the chair role while retaining the regular work of the faculty—some mix of teaching, research, and service—leaves little time and energy to excel in one or more areas to a degree sufficient to warrant full rank consideration. This is a discouraging place for those in the academy who step up to assume department leadership while realizing that they are sacrificing their opportunity for promotion.

The case to be made here is one that creates a promotional path for “administrative service.” Because most institutions require a high level of performance (excellence or something similar) in one of the traditional areas of teaching, research, or service, at the least, then administrative service that is delivered at a high level should be eligible, if, indeed, it is an acceptable form of service. While this seems reasonable on the surface, what one sometimes hears from promotion committee members and other faculty is: “It is the individual’s job to be an effective administrator, so why should it earn promotion?” The obvious response here is that faculty teach, do service, and conduct research as part of their jobs, and they are promoted when they perform at high levels. Another argument one hears, and this is used often in cases where the individual runs a service or statistical center or oversees a unit, for example, where students receive special support, is: “This work is not disciplinary;