

Statement of Administrative Philosophy

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Being an administrator means wearing many hats—not in succession, but simultaneously. Being an administrator allows one to be:

A Visionary

An administrator's first responsibility is to develop a vision for the unit for which one is responsible, a vision that is consistent with the missions of the larger organization and context within which the unit resides. A second responsibility is to share that vision with others, working to achieve the kind of wide acceptance that will allow the unit to function efficiently and consistently across constituencies.

A Collaborator

Within the broader context of the university, each unit exists within a complex web of other units, serving a wide variety of constituencies that includes students, parents, faculty, staff, administration, taxpayers, legislators, and more. In addition, each unit is home to a diverse population of students, faculty, staff, and administrators. In order to be successful, an administrator must be willing and able to work collaboratively both within the unit and beyond it. Administration is not a task to be undertaken in a vacuum, nor can it be approached independently. Administrators must be willing and able to work well with others or they simply will not survive.

An Advocate

While it is important that administrators be prepared engage in a wide variety of collaborative undertakings, it is also important that they be prepared to function as advocates for their units. Being an advocate involves not only protecting the interests of the unit, but also promoting the unit, its principles, and its practices at every opportunity. In order to succeed, the administrator must be willing to be a lively mix of table-thumper, cheerleader, and public relations specialist.

A Facilitator

Some administrators see themselves as sentries, restricting access to opportunity; others see themselves as innkeepers, welcoming opportunity when it knocks. I feel it is important to be the latter, making every effort to remain accessible and open to new ideas, to encourage well considered initiatives, to make things happen, and to help things happen. While a firm “no” must always remain an option, a carefully considered “yes” is generally more productive and should, perhaps, be the default response to reasonable requests.

A Role Model and Mentor

Just as teachers of writing should be writers and teachers of history should be historians, administrators of instructional programs should be engaged in instruction. Their classrooms and other instructional sites should model best practice, not only for the benefit of their students but also for the benefit of less experienced instructors. In addition, administrators must be willing and able to mentor future administrators, serving as role models for the students and colleagues who will one day follow in their footsteps.

An Innovator

No matter how strong an existing unit may be, it is never sufficient for an administrator simply to maintain the status quo. Administrators must be willing to push for innovation and change, not

merely for the sake of change, but for the sake of developing strong, vital programs. Staying abreast of the latest developments in the field, keeping a watchful eye on the unit as a whole, and looking for opportunities to move forward, even when moving forward means taking a calculated risk . . . each of these is a vital component of successful administration.

A Researcher

Every administrator is, by definition, a researcher. Administering an academic unit requires the constant assessment and re-assessment of both long-standing practices and new initiatives. Posing questions, designing methodologies, writing research protocols, interpreting data, and reporting findings has to be standard administrative practice. On-going assessment provides more than reassurance; it also provides exigency and allows for intentionality in relation to growth and development.

A Scholar

The daily demands of administration are such that it is easy to get caught up in logistics and the minutiae of day-to-day operations. In order to be a truly effective administrator, however, one must set aside time for scholarship. It might be easy to view reading, writing, publishing, and presenting as luxuries, but they are not; they are the lifeblood of the administrative role. A scholarly approach to administration is the foundation upon which solid programs are built and maintained, and playing an active role in the profession gives the institution a face, a voice, and an ever-widening circle of influence.