

It is imperative as a professional educator that you develop your leadership skills. After all, how many business leaders do you know who are directly responsible for 100-500 people per year?... Most of our faculty are. To give you a better idea, the Dean of IA is only directly responsible for three folks... the coordinators. **How effective you are in your teaching is determined by how effective you are at motivating students to perform above and beyond their self-perceived limitations.** This is not just for your top tier students, but for ALL your students. This is where the principles of leadership provide the foundation for maximum effectiveness of an organization, and will be what Instructional Affairs will be focusing training efforts on in the second phase of our I-CAN initiative.

The Leader in You: From Mindset to Impact

- **Do you react to life's situations or take the lead?**
- **Do you take responsibility or place blame?**
- **Do you believe that leadership is "natural" or "learned?"**

Leadership is a word with a wide range of connotations.

"We can lift ourselves out of ignorance, we can find ourselves as creatures of excellence and intelligence and skill." ~ Richard Bach, Jonathan Livingston Seagull

By "leadership," most people picture someone who holds a formal title in a corporation, organization, government, church, educational or military setting – with accompanying titles like president, director, department manager, provost, team leader, minister, project manager, chief, and so on. Is leadership confined to these contexts? Of course not.

Leadership actually occurs everywhere. Where there is life, there is leadership. A title does not guarantee true leadership any more than not having a title keeps true leadership from happening. **Leadership is really a mindset much more than a title.** How often have you seen someone without organizational authority be the person everyone turns to in a time of crisis?

The mindset at the heart of leadership involves two dynamics: impact and responsibility. This dynamic must be tied to communication that can travel either direction, from leader to follower, and vice versa.

Here are 3 fundamental ideas to help you become a much more effective leader, no matter what your current position:

1) Be aware of your impact: Impact is the effect that each person has on other people – their families, communities, the environment, and the world. **When people are aware of their impact on others, and work toward having a positive influence on others, they are engaging in positive or desirable leadership.** When people ignore their impact, work toward getting their objectives accomplished regardless of the impact on others, or are interested only in being self-serving, they are engaging in negative or destructive "leadership." Let go of self-interest, and base your actions on the values you hold dear.

2) Take responsibility: A leader's willingness to notice the impact they have, and to respond in a way that is conscientious and appropriate, is acting responsibly. **People commonly reject responsibility by denying the impact they have had, or by blaming others for whatever has happened. It is much easier to deny or blame than it is to take**

responsibility, especially when something goes wrong. But people are more likely to believe in you when things go right when they have seen you take responsibility in a less than desirable situation.

Letting go of ego and simultaneously taking humble responsibility can completely alter an anticipated bad outcome for the better. The classic business world example is when Johnson & Johnson took responsibility in 1982 for poisoned Tylenol that clearly did not come from their factories.

3) Provide two-way communication: Provide a forum for voices to be heard. Whether by email, town meeting format, suggestion box, or regular private meetings with people. Make sure there is a safe place to talk. Regularly engaging in candid yet understanding talk will help those around you take more responsibility and be aware of their impact. The very best boss I ever had (and he knows who he is!) used to start any conversation about screw-ups with “I really don’t need to know what went wrong. Just tell me, how are we going to fix it?” In this way, he actually allowed for shared success in a positive outcome. You may be surprised at the amazing ideas that emerge from such shared conversations. Empowering talented people to succeed is at the heart of true leadership.

Imagine a world where everyone consistently pays attention to their impact, takes responsibility for it, and chooses a response that is conscientious and appropriate. It would change the world. If you consistently pay attention to your impact, take responsibility for it, and choose a response that is conscientious and appropriate, what difference would this make in your life and the lives of the people you influence?

You already are a leader. So, what kind of leader do you want to be?