Principled, Preventive Academic Leadership
Survival Skills for Administrators

Leadership Skills Series

Leadership Skills Series

Four Parts
The Special Challenges of the Academic Environment
Bullyproofing Academic Units
Skills
Conclusion

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Scenario 1:
The other person is totally off base, confused, neurotic, stupid and/or just generally wrong.

Scenario 2:
The other person might have a point; you could be mistaken or have misunderstood.

It’s likely some combination of the two.
Whichever it is, you are in an unpleasant situation.

Reality: The only conduct you control is your own

First…

You need to know — and be clear about — some things about yourself and your situation.
Self-Knowledge

And aggression only escalates.

Emotions are contagious; most contagious.

Query:

Have YOU ever been persuaded by being insulted, contradicted or shouted down?

Philosophical Centering

Mission

Role

Constituencies

Why
Academic Environment

"...have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars... In the exchange of criticism and ideas, professors show due respect for the opinions of others..."

AAUP Statement of Principles, 1940

"...their special position in the community imposes special obligations. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others..."

AAUP Statement of Principles, 1940

"Well, sure it’s sleazy and unacceptable, but it’s not misconduct."
…Please protect my safety.
Sincerely…

"Is that really any of my business?"
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Becoming an Authority Figure

- Academia's general ambivalence
- Real vs. perceived power
- Amplifying effects
- Decentralization
- Bifurcated constituencies
- Ambiguities in environment, policies, practice, etc.

Becoming an Authority Figure

- Changed relationships
- Being an authority figure
- The persona pendulum
- Donning a leadership persona
Thinking about Personas

Which you do you need to be?

Boundaries

When you’re responsible for the good of the whole, it isn’t about you:

It’s about the role, the institution, and the mission.

Better living through better boundaries.
Outer Boundaries

- Lying
- Abuse of power or position
- Impeding or diminishing the productivity of others
- Causing fear

One Final Note….

It’s easy to misplace your boundaries and roles in the decentralized academic environment.

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You can train people to be bullies or to abuse the system.
1. Read all the Testing Yourself prompts; write out full answers to at least two.

2. Read, discuss & solve Scenario 13.

Managerial 101

1. Ask questions
2. Don’t assume
3. Policies and procedures are your friend
4. Communicate expectations
5. Learn about progressive discipline
6. Use it

Academic Unit Diagnostic Tool (AUDIT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vibrant Units (0 to 5)</th>
<th>Warning Signs (0 to 3)</th>
<th>Challenged Units (0 to 5)</th>
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<td>Complaints disproportionate to other units, campus climate, etc.</td>
<td>Serious misconduct; discrimination; sexual, financial, climate, etc.</td>
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<td>Openness, transparency, shared governance</td>
<td>Email and/or social media wars, harassment, etc.; conflict resolution</td>
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<td>Culture of excellence and quality; strong candidates</td>
<td>Weak or ineffective hiring; requests for transfers, departures</td>
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<td>Support and mentoring for faculty and students alike</td>
<td>Weak PI/PM practice; many terminal associate professors</td>
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<td>Open discussion of ideas and research; high productivity</td>
<td>Declining scholarly initiatives (productivity, PhDs, PhD placements, time to degree)</td>
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<td>Distributed service responsibilities, aligned with faculty strengths</td>
<td>Financial decline</td>
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<td>High level of communication; willingness to listen, compromise; problems addressed, not submerged</td>
<td>Artistic or technical disagreements; seeking desired answers from different offices; hiring problems</td>
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<td>Curriculum innovations; adaptations to meet changing student, campus, needs</td>
<td>Enrollment decline; lack of curricular innovation</td>
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<td>Leadership has high expectations, uses policies, makes decisions, builds community</td>
<td>Bilateral evaluations; generational discord; externalizing problems</td>
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<td>Collective vision of goals and priorities</td>
<td>Limited sense of priorities</td>
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TOTAL ______
TOTAL ______ (unsubtr.)
TOTAL ______ (unsubtr.)

Many individual priorities without shared purpose

Limited sense of priorities

Scholarly standing below university’s; uneven in unit

Departmental business as usual; in gridlock

Curricular stagnation, lack of student interest in offerings; outdated curriculum

Email and/or social media wars, harassment, silos, harassment, etc.; conflict resolution

Financial disarray

Ad hoc practice: forum shopping; seeking desired answers from different offices; hiring problems

Declining scholarly initiatives (productivity, PhDs, PhD placements, time to degree)

Artistic or technical disagreements; seeking desired answers from different offices; hiring problems
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Part Two: Bullyproofing Academic Units

Educational efforts

Respond to problems

Penalties for violations

Low incidence, high severity paradigm

The Faculty Senate has endorsed the following set of guidelines for the campus:

Members of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign community are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional conduct in carrying out their teaching, research, service, and other professional responsibilities. Each recipient is subject to norms and ethical codes that vary somewhat among disciplines, as well as to differing individual perceptions and interpretations; but certain general ethical guidelines reflecting the commitment of the campus to these standards are applicable to all faculty, staff, and graduate assistants on the Urbana-Champaign campus.

The College Administrator's Survival Guide

The No Asshole Rule

Building a Civilized Workplace and Sustaining the Rule

Robert I. Sutton, Ph.D.

Don't Say That!

$250 FINE MINIMUM
“Does the “target” feel oppressed, humiliated, de-energized, or belittled? Does the target feel worse about him or herself?”

Sutton’s Definition, Test One (page 9)

“Does the alleged **** aim his or her venom at people who are less powerful rather than more powerful?”

Sutton’s Definition, Test Two (page 9)

What is a bully?

“A bully is someone who is responsible for pre-meditated, continuous, malicious and belittling tyranny.”

Michele Elliot (Editor) Bullying: A Practical Guide to Coping for Schools, 1991 (page 6)
Traits of Bullies

- Willing to cross the boundaries of civilized behavior that inhibit others.
- Lack guilt (believe the victim provoked the attack and deserves the consequences).
- Value the rewards brought by aggression.
- Become effectively unsupervised.

Traits of Bullies in Children

- Entitlement mentality
- Failure to empathize
- Pattern of corner cutting
- No concept of trust (secretive, withholding, lying)
- Blames others (refuses to be held accountable)
- Misinterprets social cues as hostile (oversensitive to criticism)

Traits of Bullies in Academia

- Flourish in microclimates
- Play academic freedom and collegiality cards
- Colleagues are not equipped
- Relatively rare

5-10%?

Types of Bullies

- AGRESSOR BULLIES
- Victim Bullies
Myths About Bullies

- Bullies are few and far between.
- It’s best to let sleeping dogs lie.
- It’s just not worth it.
- There’s nothing we can do.

Activate the people of good will.
Shift power from the bully (or bullies) to the silent majority.

Bullyproofing Principles

1. Level playing field
2. The outer boundaries must not be crossed
3. All members of a unit should:
   - Be able to work without fear
   - Not have their creativity or productivity impaired by others
4. The community also has rights
Nothing happens in isolation

Structural, cultural, financial, interpersonal, scholarly, and leadership problems interact.

DYSFUNCTION: EXAMPLE

Big personality acts out and goes rogue
No response—or conduct is rewarded, ineffective evaluations
Normalized deviance
Factioned faculty

Gridlock and inability to make decisions

DYSFUNCTION: EXAMPLE

Factioned faculty
Governance gridlock
No cohesive plan for the future
Inability to hire or retain faculty and students
Curriculum stagnation and uneven scholarly standards
### Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantifiable</th>
<th>Qualitative/Subjective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hiring (quality, yield)</td>
<td>Leadership shortcomings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention, transfers</td>
<td>Silos, internal factions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment trends</td>
<td>Ad hocery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>Random hiring pattern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scholarly productivity</td>
<td>Lack of cohesion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complaints, grievances</td>
<td>Favoritism, in/out groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial elements</td>
<td>Conflict, conflict aversion</td>
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<td>Serious deviations</td>
<td>Email wars</td>
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<td>Complaints disproportionate to other units, campus</td>
<td>Serious misconduct, discrimination, sexual, financial, criminal, etc. (emotions, behaviors)</td>
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<td>Openness, transparency, shared governance</td>
<td>Emotions and social media wars, harassment, silos, conflict avoidance</td>
<td>Culture of silence, fear, or lack of trust problems; punishes reporting, faculty scheme, bullies, favoritism</td>
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<td>Culture of excellence and quality, strong candidates</td>
<td>Weak or ineffective hiring, requests for transfers, departures</td>
<td>Repeated inability to hire, retain quality faculty, staff</td>
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<td>Support and mentoring for faculty and students alive</td>
<td>Declining scholarly indicators (productivity, PHDs, PhD placements, time to degree,…)</td>
<td>Toxic atmosphere, especially for junior faculty, students</td>
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<td>Open discussion of ideas and research; high productivity</td>
<td>Weak PMT practices; many terminal associate professors</td>
<td>Scholarly standards below university; uneven in unit</td>
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<td>Distributed service responsibilities, aligned with faculty strengths</td>
<td>Declining scholarly indicators (productivity, PHDs, PhD placements, time to degree,…)</td>
<td>Departmental business at a standstill, in gridlock</td>
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<td>High level of communication—willingness to listen, compromise, problems addressed, but submerged</td>
<td>Financial distress</td>
<td>Lack of transparency, hidden agendas; faculty involve students in disputes</td>
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<td>Curricular innovations, adaptations to meet changing student, campus, needs</td>
<td>Enrollment declines, lack of curricular innovation</td>
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<td>Leadership has high expectations, makes decisions, builds community</td>
<td>Emotional evaluations, generational discord, externalizing problems</td>
<td>Weak or automatic leadership: different messages to different audiences, meddling by previous leader of unit</td>
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<td>Limited sense of priorities</td>
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**TOTAL:**  | **TOTAL:**  | **TOTAL:**

**Part Three: Conflict Skills**

Spending Time Putting out Fires signals a need for Thoughtful Action.
Scenario 1:
The other person is totally off base, confused, neurotic, stupid and/or just generally wrong.

Scenario 2:
The other person might have a point; you could be mistaken or have misunderstood.

It’s likely some combination of the two.

Whichever it is, you are in an unpleasant situation.

The only conduct you control is your own.
**GOAL:**

Layer professional skills over your personality and reactions.

1. Set the tone
2. Know your conflict comfort and style
3. Gain specific skills
4. Practice, so they’re accessible when needed

Develop a little social psychology
- Set the tone
- Align with others
- Develop good personal scripts
- Study negotiation

A Little Social Psychology
- Egocentrism bias
- Reciprocity norms
- Sinister attribution error
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Never attribute malice to that which incompetence will explain.

Knoll Corollary

Never attribute to incompetence that which temporary inattention or miscommunication will explain.

A Little Social Psychology

Sinister Attribution Bias

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Build Rapport, Likability

Listen

Listen

Listen

Ask questions

Exercise

“Uh huh” (nodding)

“Tell me more about that.”

“Help me understand more about...”
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Why?

Importance of being heard
Importance of being understood
You might learn something
Buy time

Influence

Persuasion

Negotiators who ask more questions get better results.

- How good are your questions?
- How well do you listen?

Emotions

Good moods promote creative thinking and openness to ideas.

People process information differently in different moods.

Emotion is a self-fulfilling prophesy.
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Go-to Questions

- "Can you show me?"
- "Can you help me understand?"
- "Is this right?"
- "Just to be clear, you're suggesting...?"

1. As a mark of a person who learns and cares about learning
2. To avoid cognitive errors (sinister attribution bias)
3. To prevent problems, defuse aggression spirals

Aligning with Others

- Improves audience attention, retention
- Changes your alignment
- Reduces conflict, aggression spirals
- Takes constant practice!

Collect YESes
- Agree wherever you can
- Agree without conceding
- Acknowledge the person
- Acknowledge the person’s competence and authority
- Don’t say “but,” say “yes, and...”
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Words you have prepared, in advance, and practiced, for predictable situations.

Personal Scripts

Preemptive
1. Speaking regularly about values & mission
2. Building it into a habit to ask questions about others, their interests
3. For anticipated events: You know it’s coming (feedback, evaluation, difficult conversations)

Reacting
4. Buying time to think
5. Calling a pause in a topic or discussion that is getting off the rails, too heated
6. Turning the tables to the other/s: asking for solutions
7. Noting positives
8. Agreeing to disagree

Some Useful Scripts

“I need some time to reflect. Perhaps I could get back to you in about 20 minutes?”

“I recall there is something about that in the policy manual. Let me review that and get back to you.”

“I’m so rushed right now, I couldn’t do this justice. I’ll carve out some dedicated time Wednesday afternoon.”

“This will affect others as well as just you. As soon as I have had a chance to speak with each, I will decide.”

Essential: Your Tone

Polite
Quiet
Respectful
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Assertion, not aggression.

Scripts for Receiving Complaints

“What actions do you seek from me?”

“I need to find out how others view this matter. I will do that and get back to you.”

“You need to do what you need to do.”

Phrases to Excise

“‘You have to understand…’ or ‘You need to…’”

“You’ll just have to trust me on this.”

“I regret that you’re unhappy with my decision.”

“This is as hard for me as it is for you.”
You can win the battle and still lose the war.
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- The “what happened” conversation
- The “feelings” conversation
- The “identity” conversation

What you can change is you.
Focus on the role.

Know your role and why you’re in it.
- Gain skills and use them purposefully, constructively.
- Know that what you can change is you.
- Align your actions with your goals.

Gain a working knowledge of the effective parenting literature.
(Or the dog training literature)
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Secret weapon

Lessons from the Literature

*How you can change*
- Active listening + silence
- Labeling
- Recognizing the part you play
- Connecting actions and meaning

Lessons from the Literature

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk by Faber and Mazlish

Getting Past No by William Ury

Difficult Conversations by Stone, Patton, and Heen

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Two Quick and Hard Changes

00:02

Spend the first two minutes of every interaction just making sure you have understood the other party’s perspective.

No arguing back!

Replace “but” with “and” in your vocabulary and phrasing.

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Depersonalize conflict
Focus on principles and facts. Don’t let it be about you.

Manage for the good of the whole.

Change the script by changing your lines.

Responsibility

Personal

Institutional
Please help your colleagues by completing an evaluation. In previous workshops, most participants have completed the evaluation.

Thank you!