

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE PHILOSOPHY

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Introduction

The purpose of this statement is to provide a brief summary of my leadership philosophy for administering an academic department. To begin, I am a highly energetic scientist-administrator with abundant experience in research and teaching as well as in the management and administration of scientific enterprises. I have enjoyed success in both types of endeavors, and would now like to take up the challenge of synthesizing what I have learned in order to carry out both tasks simultaneously.

Administration

It is my observation that to lead a university faculty it is essential for the group to feel that their opinions are truly important and valued. Hence, I believe strongly in shared governance. In my view, major decisions affecting a faculty should first be discussed together with a council comprised of at least a cross-section of senior members of the group. In order to both maintain and continuously renew the college, ongoing strategic planning is absolutely necessary. This should interface seamlessly with an Institution-wide plan, and should articulate the long-term vision and goals of the college succinctly and unambiguously. It is, in my opinion, the responsibility of deans and departmental chairpersons to ensure that every member of a given faculty completely understands and supports these goals. Even while I strongly endorse a policy of shared governance and consensus-building, however, I am unafraid to take full responsibility for making potentially unpopular executive decisions when necessary.

Leadership

I feel strongly that while there are many ways to function as a leader, no single approach is best for all situations. I consider a number of attributes to be important. A leader, especially in an academic setting, should in my opinion be intellectually curious, enthusiastic, and empathetic, as well as a forceful and passionate advocate for departments, programs, faculty and staff under his or her watch. I believe a leader must be forthright and sincere, as well as open-minded and of the very highest personal integrity. Also, while I feel strongly that the pursuit of excellence should be the guiding principle for faculty members at all times, I am equally convinced of the value of compassion in the face of adversity. I feel that fairness toward all constituencies should be beyond question, and that diversity is not only good for its own sake, but that it adds tangible value to institutions, the academy, and society. I believe that academic freedom is essential to providing the highest quality of instruction possible, yet I do not consider this inconsistent with a policy of post-tenure review of senior faculty. A faculty leader should be prepared, in my view, to represent the college to the highest levels of University administration in all relevant matters. Further, I am convinced that academic leadership also requires ongoing accomplishment in the three major aspects of scholarship, including teaching, research, and service to the university (and wider) community. In my experience, the respect accorded by a faculty derives at least as much (but likely more so) from the scholarly accomplishments of its leaders than from any real or perceived authority exerted over the group. My goal is to lead by way of shared governance and consensus-building, effective mentoring at multiple levels, and perhaps most importantly, through my own example.