Participant Guide and Reference for Leading Academic Meetings

February 21, 2013
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Introduction
Meetings are pervasive in our work environment. The purpose of this webinar and reference guide is to help leaders at all levels effectively plan for, lead, and participate in, meetings. In this context, "effective" refers to achieving a specific purpose and having a satisfactory meeting experience.

To participate in the webinar:
To participate in the webinar, you will need an internet connection. To ensure the best experience, please be sure you have an updated version of your internet browser.

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1. Go to: **http://carmenconnect.osu.edu/lm/**
2. Enter as a "guest," using your full name.
3. Please log in *at least* **15 minutes** before the meeting so you can check your computer settings and make sure audio is working properly.
4. Check the volume control on your computer, as well as within CarmenConnect. Please be sure your computer is not on Mute. When you log into the session before noon, you will hear music playing and may hear a sound check taking place by the presenters.
5. Use the following link to check your software. You may be prompted to "Install Adobe Connect Add-in." Though this feature is not required for today's webinar, you can click "Install" for any future needs.

Once the session begins, use the "chat box" on the screen to communicate your responses to polls. Use "raise hand" to ask a question.

If you are not able to connect to the meeting after following the steps above, contact your department's technical support staff.

From the webinar, you will gain:

- Practical strategies for strengthening your meetings.

- Language for keeping a meeting focused, managing a disruptive colleague, and guiding a group to a decision.

- Leadership skills to practice when you are leading meetings or participating in meetings.

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Scenario 1

Scarcity State University is under intense scrutiny to improve the quality of undergraduate programs. It has been suggested that state appropriations may be influenced by progress made on this issue, and consequently the university administration is pressing departments to give more attention to the undergraduate teaching mission of the institution (while of course not neglecting the research mission). Dr. I. M. Concerned, a full professor in the Department of Integrative Science, is personally passionate about teaching and developing "the leaders of the 21st century." He has been trying to motivate his peers to positively respond. In addition to his personal interest, Dr. Concerned also believes that the Integrative Science Department budget will be reduced if progress is not made in improving their undergraduate program.

Dr. Concerned requested time at the upcoming department meeting to discuss improving the undergraduate program. You agreed to this request (by email) and asked Dr. Concerned how much time he needed. Unfortunately, it is now the day before the meeting and you realize you never heard back from I.M. about how much time he needed. You have three other agenda items, all requiring discussion, and only an hour for your meeting. What do you do? Which of the tools/strategies below might you use to make this a productive meeting?

Identify all the strategies you would employ to increase the probability of a productive meeting:
   A. Send an email to department faculty asking for a vote on whether or not this topic should be discussed at the meeting (at the sacrifice of other discussion topics)
   B. Ask I.M. to delay this discussion until the next meeting
   C. Create and distribute an agenda with specific time frames for each discussion
   D. Tell I.M. how much time he has for this discussion
   E. Ask I.M. what he hopes to achieve through this discussion

Determine Purpose

Meetings are effective for:
- Sharing information that is too detailed or controversial to share via a written communication.
- Involving others in decisions that impact their work.
- Bringing people together who are dependent on each other's work and need to know what each other is doing; providing updates on projects and dependencies.
- Solving complex problems.
- Helping people feel a part of something larger than their individual work; building alignment with the "big picture."

Considerations before you decide to hold a meeting:
1. Ask: Why is this meeting being held? What do we hope to accomplish? If there is not a clear purpose, don't hold a meeting.

2. Ask: Is there a need to share information but limited or no interest in feedback about what you are sharing? Can the same objectives be accomplished via e-mail? If yes, cancel the meeting!

3. Identify the meeting participants based on the meeting purpose. Ask: Who should attend this meeting? Who is affected by the processes that will be discussed or decisions that will be made? Who will be involved in decision-making? Note: It is appropriate and considerate to invite someone to attend only part of a meeting!

4. Consider the type of meeting you want to hold. Different meetings are used for different purposes. Turn to the next page for possible options.

Use Different Meetings for Different Purposes

Patrick Lencioni, author of *Death by Meetings*, defines the single biggest problem of meetings as the tendency to throw every type of issue that needs to be discussed into the same meeting. There are many different types of meetings to consider, each serving a different purpose and function. Descriptions of different types of meetings are below.

A Check-In, Touch-Base Meeting - The purpose of this type of meeting is to avoid confusion about how priorities are translated into action. A Department Chair might schedule weekly check-in meetings with his/her Department Office staff.

A Tactical Meeting - The purpose of this type of meeting is to focus exclusively on tactical issues of immediate concern. It might include:
- **A Lightning Round** – around-the-table reporting session in which everyone indicates their 2-3 priorities for the next week/month.
- **Progress Review** – routine reporting of critical information or metrics.
- **Real-Time Agenda** – the agenda is set "in the moment" and is based on what everyone is actually focused on, and how the organization is performing against its goals/metrics.

A Strategic-Focused Meeting - The purpose of this type of meeting is to wrestle with, analyze, debate, and decide upon critical issues that affect the mission of the unit in fundamental ways. Deadlines and tactical concerns should not get in the way of long-term, strategic-focused planning. Revamping learning outcomes and discussing long-term hiring strategies are examples of mission-critical issues that might be the focus of a meeting like this.

An Off-Site Review Meeting/Retreat - The purpose of this type of meeting is to take the time to focus on what's most important. It is a time to re-group, re-focus and re-dedicate energy, time and commitment towards priorities. When more time or more involvement from others is needed than day-to-day demands permit, this type of meeting is an expanded strategic-focused meeting.

Idea Generating Meeting – The purpose of this type of meeting is to involve many people in discussing a specific issue, when the resolution of the issue is not evident. Multiple perspectives focused on the same dilemma can produce the strongest outcome. As an example, an idea generating meeting might focus on this open-ended question: "How might we strengthen the student experience in College X?" World café is a social methodology that can be used to generate ideas. For information on world café, visit: http://theworldcafe.com/principles.html.

Have an Agenda

Agendas focus attention. Formats vary, but an effective agenda should be action-oriented and distributed ahead of time. The following elements should be included:

Essential Elements
❖ Meeting date
❖ Start and end times
❖ Meeting location
❖ Meeting purpose or objectives
❖ Agenda items with time allotments and a responsible person assigned to each

Optional Elements
❖ Background information or rationale for the meeting as a whole or parts of the meeting
❖ Preparation – what do participants need to do in advance of the meeting?
❖ How agenda items will be facilitated

Sample (without norms)

Department Meeting Agenda
March 5, 2013, 9:00-10:00 a.m.

Objectives:
To examine the pros and cons of moving forward with the Research Methods Series.
To finalize our list of candidates to interview for the vacant position.
To solicit feedback on the new web site.

Order	Time	Item	Person Responsible	Desired Outcome
1	5 mins	Introduce Guest	David	Make introductions
2	15 mins	Research Methods Series	Pam	Examine pros and cons for moving forward with Research Methods Series
3	20 mins	Interview Decisions	Lee	Finalize list of candidates
4	10 mins	New Web Site	Carol	Solicit feedback

Next meeting (date, time, location):
~ To be filled in by the group, during the meeting ~

Agenda items for next meeting:
~ To be filled in by the group, during the meeting ~

Meeting Skill: Writing Action-oriented Objectives

"Meetings are participatory dialogues; not individual monologues" (Ratliff, 2011, p.3). Agendas are blueprints or roadmaps that should be designed to engage participants. They describe the discussions that need to be held and the decisions that need to be reached. Use "verb" statements to specifically define meeting objectives and the desired outcome of each item. (The desired outcomes should match the meeting purposes/objectives.) The discussion or decision becomes more compelling with stronger and more action-oriented verbs.

Poorly Written Outcomes/Objectives	Well Written Outcomes/Objectives
To hear from the selection committee their recommendations about who we should interview.	To finalize the list of interview candidates.
To talk about the proposed research methods series.	To examine pros and cons for moving forward with the new research methods series.

Ask Others to Prepare for Meetings

✓   Assign background reading, either to the group as a whole or parceled out by topic to subgroups.

✓   If you offer the same assignment to everyone, ask each person to report on a different aspect of the assignment.

✓   Ask participants to interview others to collect information to be discussed at the meeting.

✓   Ask one or more knowledgeable members of the group to prepare a proposal for discussion.

✓   Use a structured format for bringing issues to the group. See "Prepare an Issue for Discussion" on page 10.

Use Ground Rules or Meeting Norms

Ground rules are the behavioral norms agreed upon by all members of the group. They provide a non-threatening way of addressing unproductive behavior. They typically deal with:

- ❖ Basic conversational courtesies (e.g. one person speaks at a time; no side conversations; listen for understanding; turn off cell phones)
- ❖ Attendance and promptness at meetings (e.g. starting and ending on time)
- ❖ Participation (e.g. everyone is encouraged to participate; share "air time"; "level playing field"/equal participation)
- ❖ Confidentiality of information shared at meetings
- ❖ Assignments and follow through
- ❖ How the group will make decisions (e.g. voting, consensus, etc.)

Ground rules should be developed early in the discussion or life of the group that meets. At the same time, it's important not to let the group become "rule driven." Start with three to five, and create additional ones as the need arises. It's important to gain group consensus on the rules, rather than imposing them.

Examples of Ground Rules:

- Agendas will be distributed in advance and meeting minutes will follow

- Meeting start and end times will be adhered to

- Meetings will be conducted in a professional manner with collegial interaction

- Diverse opinions and the expression of divergent ideas are welcome

- No electronic devices will be used during the meeting

- PPT presentations will be limited to 15 minutes

- Members accept responsibility for preparation and for missed meetings

- When decisions are made, anyone missing will be assumed to agree with group decision

- Decisions will be made:

  - By general group agreement when controversy is absent

  - By chair when controversy exists and all opinions have been aired

Focus Discussions at Vision, Planning Levels

There are five levels on which we can focus whenever we are thinking about or discussing an issue. These five levels create a simple distinction for helping ourselves, and others, make a choice about where we put our energy.

1. Vision

Vision is about direction, where you are heading, and why you are heading there. Vision is not detailed; it is broad and emotive.

2. Planning

Once you know where you are heading, planning is about how you are going to get there. Planning involves thinking about the processes, not the actual doing.

3. Detail

Once we know direction and how we will get there, we need to take action. Detail is where people naturally tend to put all their energy. Details are best sorted out by one-two people; not a whole department.

4. Problem

Problem is the territory of where things go wrong. Focusing on problems is, unfortunately, a common part of work as there are lots of them. It is possible to focus on problems but not be coming from a problem focus. You could tackle a problem from a vision perspective or from planning. Focusing on things from a problem perspective tends to be tense, disempowering, and more likely to put us in a defensive mode.

5. Drama

Drama is the place where vision, planning, detail, and even problems disappear and all that is left is emotional charge. Drama is the least empowering of all the ways to focus and usually means we have lost perspective on an issue.

Prepare an Issue for Discussion
Adapted from *Fierce Conversations* (2004) by Susan Scott

Preparing to present an issue helps prevent incoherent or incomplete explanations of the problem. Additionally, meeting participants appreciate the good use of their time. At the top of the appreciation list is the accurate identification of the problem. If you are a leader of a group, consider asking group members to complete a "Preparation Form" with the information below, before they get in front of the group.

The Issue Is:
Be concise. In one or two sentences, get to the heart of the problem. Is it a concern, challenge, opportunity, or recurring problem that is becoming more troublesome?

It is Significant Because:
What's at stake? How does this affect dollars, income, people, products, services, customers, family, timing, the future, or other relevant factors? What is the future impact if the issue is not resolved?

Relevant Background Information:
Summarize with bullet points:
- How, when, why, and where did the issue start?
- Who are the key players?
- What forces are at work?
- What is the current status of the issue?

What has been done up to this Point:
What has been done so far? What options are under consideration?

The Help I Want from the Group is:
What result do I want from this group of people?
- Alternative solutions
- Identification of consequences
- Critique of current plan
- Where to find more information

Sample Completed Issue Preparation Form

The issue is: Scarcity State University needs to improve the quality of undergraduate programs or state appropriations may be negatively impacted. The Department of Integrative Science has traditionally focused attention on its graduate programs. It's time to explore ways to strengthen the teaching of Integrative Science's undergraduate students.

It is significant because the department's budget may be at risk. If the teaching of the undergraduate students is not improved, the quality of the undergraduate program will remain below standard, and the department's budget will be cut.

Relevant background information:

- Average Student Evaluation of Instruction for all department faculty is below the university's average
- The World Science Digest has recognized Integrative Science for its graduate program, and ranked it #10 in the country
- The Integrative Science undergraduate program has never been ranked
- The last four faculty hires have been strong scholars; the quality of teaching was not a consideration in the selection process

What has been done up to this point:

- A conversation with the Vice Provost has confirmed this is a real issue and not just a media ploy.
- Information has been gathered from our peer institutions about their Integrative Studies undergraduate programs.
- Our Assistant Dean of Assessment is developing a survey to get feedback from the undergraduates.

The help I want from this group is commitment to identify and implement strategies for improving the undergraduate program. I am looking for three volunteers to form a task force. The task force will return to a department meeting in three months with recommendations.

Scenario 2

Improving the undergraduate program in Integrative Science is on the agenda of today's department meeting. Dr. Concerned has the floor and is giving an impassioned "speech" about the faculty's obligation to "teach tomorrow's leaders of the country and the world." Most of the faculty are responding with eye-rolling. Dr. Constance Impatient, however, mutters under her breath and then gets louder and louder in her verbal disputes. While Dr. Concerned is still talking she yells out, "This is a waste of my time." Then, "Are we a research university or are we not?" And lastly, just as I.M. has finished, Dr. Impatient stands, looks at her colleague, I.M., and says, "You only care about this because you have no ability to get any research funding. If you had a rigorous research program like the rest of us you'd know that teaching has got to be second to research."

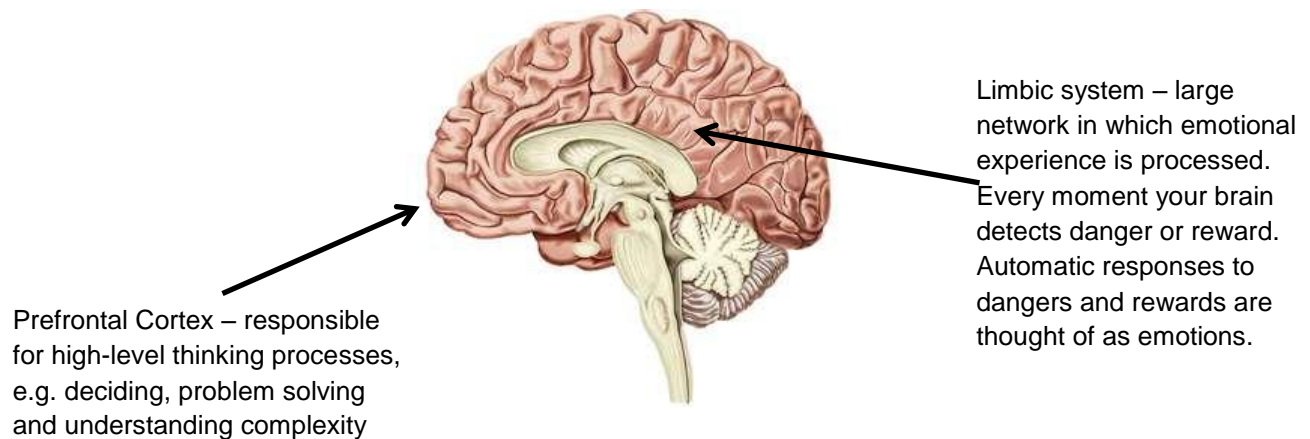How do you respond to Dr. Impatient's outbursts?

Identify all the strategies you would use to respond to this situation:
  A. Ignore the outburst
  B. Take a break in the meeting
  C. Give Dr. Impatient private, one-on-one feedback
  D. Thank Dr. Concerned for his thoughts and acknowledge Dr. Impatient's views (in a more neutral manner than she expressed them)
  E. Ask for alternative points of view

Negative Emotions in Meetings

Emotions are contagious under the best of circumstances. Negative emotions such as anger, frustration, feeling judgmental, and stressed out can destroy a meeting faster than you can take attendance. Understanding how the brain works, and the threats inherent in many meetings, can help explain why people do what they do.

Limbic system – large network in which emotional experience is processed. Every moment your brain detects danger or reward. Automatic responses to dangers and rewards are thought of as emotions.

Prefrontal Cortex – responsible for high-level thinking processes, e.g. deciding, problem solving and understanding complexity

David Rock's SCARF model of social threats and rewards is based on the brain's response to dangers or threats. Whether the danger is psychological (social, emotional) or whether it is physical, such as hunger, the limbic system impairs the functioning of your Prefrontal Cortex.

SCARF Model of Social Threats and Rewards

AWAY from Threat Response

Status
Certainty
Autonomy
Relatedness
Fairness

TOWARD

Reward Response

© David Rock

Status	Your brain is constantly monitoring how you compare to others in a group.
Certainty	The brain is a prediction machine. Uncertainty causes a limbic system response.
Autonomy	The experience of having choice. Lack of choice is threatening.
Relatedness	Feelings of trust and empathy among others.
Fairness	Feeling like you are being treated fairly.

Attacking/Defending

When someone feels psychologically threatened, his/her limbic system is aroused and a natural response is to attack and protect that which is threatened. Effective emotional regulation reduces the natural, human inclination to attack. Without effective emotional regulation, words and actions:

- Are personal; about a person
- Have an emotional component triggered by the aroused limbic system
- Sound and feel judgmental and/or blaming of others
- Reflect a "fighting" response

Those who are able to disagree without attacking or defending have learned how to regulate their emotions.

Disagreeing

When disagreeing, words and actions:

- Are about an issue or opinion; not about a person
- Come from logical, rationale thought (i.e. the Prefrontal Cortex)
- Are neutral or judgment-free
- Include a question after a statement so that an exchange of ideas can occur

Strategies for Managing Negative Emotions in Meetings

- Start your meeting with positive items such as acknowledging individual or group achievements, progress or completion of a project, or good news about a student.

- Meet before the meeting with those who have strong feelings. Give people a chance to express strong feelings in a place where so many others will not be negatively impacted.

- Use and enforce the meeting norms discussed previously. This creates safety for all.

- Before a heated discussion gets underway, acknowledge various opinions and ideas and ask for disagreement; explain that attacks will not be tolerated.

- Model a balance of advocacy and inquiry.

- Use a system for calling on one person at a time. Set a standard time limit for each person's comments.

- Use a parking lot.

Balance Advocacy with Inquiry: A Meeting Skill (Bolman & Gallos, 2011)

Advocacy – the ability to communicate clearly and persuasively. Advocacy includes statements that communicate what an individual thinks, knows, wants and feels.

Inquiry – seeking to learn what others think, know, want, or feel. Inquiry is the ability to listen, reflect what you hear to test accuracy, and craft questions that enable you to learn the things you need to know. Good inquiry uses questions of how, what and why.

High advocacy coupled with high inquiry allows faculty to express openly what they think and feel while also actively seeking understanding of others' thoughts and feelings.

Inquiry questions:

➢ What's your point of view?

➢ Help me understand…

➢ What's the most important thing for us to talk about today?

➢ What is it that you'd like me to know about this?

➢ What is it you are hoping I'll do with this information?

➢ How might we use both of these ideas?

➢ What makes the most sense given who we are today and where we want to be in the future?

➢ What are the down sides to moving ahead as proposed?

➢ How do we do this?

➢ What is the opportunity here? What is the challenge?

➢ What is your assessment?

➢ What is your point of view?

➢ What are you seeing that I don't see?

Control Discussions

Create a Queue to Establish Speaker Order

Establishing a queue signals who is "next in turn" to speak.   This can be done verbally, or in writing – perhaps on a flip chart. This visual display of when "it's your turn" might be most effective with a group that is anxious to speak and "weigh in."

Pass an Object to Signify the Speaker

Something as simple as a magic marker, or as symbolic as an object that represents the "hot topic" can be passed from one speaker to the next. The person holding the object is the only one allowed to talk. Everyone must commit to listen for understanding when they do not hold the object.

Use Round-Robin to Equalize Participation

This entails simply going around the room (table), giving everyone an opportunity to contribute as their turn arises in rotation, or "pass" until the next round.

Set a Time Limit for Each Speaker

Clearly state the amount of time each speaker is allowed. Give a 5-second "warning" and then cut the speaker off at the allotted time limit.

Insert a Short Break

Inserting a break into a heated discussion is a fairly direct way to gain better control of the conversation. You might be explicit in suggesting meeting participants come back prepared to listen, or minimize interruptions. Or without explicitly stating your intent, simply taking a break may be what helps everyone regain focus.

Use a Metaphorical Parking Lot

A parking lot is a place to "park" ideas that are expressed. Sometimes people get "off topic" in meetings. They say something that is not relevant to the current agenda item. "Parking" their idea captures the idea and allows the discussion to get back on track.

A parking lot is simply a piece of flip chart paper labeled as such, and posted in a visible spot. Any member of the group is permitted to add a thought to the parking lot or suggest that someone else's expressed idea be added to the lot.

The name of the person responsible for the comment should be added next to the "parked" statement. This will allow you to come back to the issue and the person at another point in time.

Parking Lot
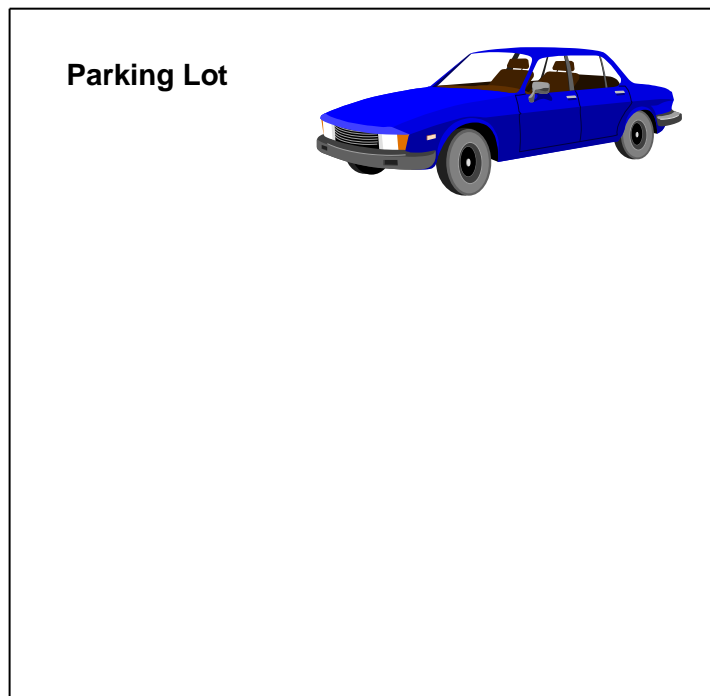
Meeting Skill: Verbal Summarizing

Groups that feel they re-hash the same conversation over and over and never reach decisions might consider appointing someone to verbally summarize throughout the meeting, or asking everyone to practice verbal summarization. Summarizing is restating in a compact form the content of a previous discussion or decision. The purpose is to minimize repetition and move the conversation forward.

Examples:

❖ "So far we've agreed a) we need a new marketing brochure, b) we'd like to have it ready to go by October, and c) we have approximately $1,500 in the budget for the brochure."

❖ "I heard Ron say he was in favor of the new program and Stan expressed ambivalence. I haven't heard anyone give a compelling argument to reject the new program. I suggest we go with it."

These statements sound so simple – they are! Despite its simplicity, summarizing has a big impact on moving a meeting forward.

Offer Feedback After the Discussion/Meeting

Deciding to offer feedback outside of a discussion or a meeting is difficult. Some of the issues that might prevent you from offering feedback include:

- ✓ Power differentials
- ✓ Lack of confidence that anything will change
- ✓ Concern about how you will come across
- ✓ Concern about hurting the other person's feelings

Only you can decide if you should offer feedback. Sharing your thoughts and feelings with a trusted colleague before you offer feedback is a smart idea. Talking through how you will approach the conversation will prepare you to give the feedback in the most productive way possible.

If you decide to offer feedback outside of the discussion/meeting:

- Get very clear in your intention. Approach with respect and a genuine desire to reach resolution.
- Specifically describe what you believe is a problem in very observable, behavioral terms.
- Describe the impact of the behavior, on you and/or the group.
- Listen.
- Ask for a specific behavior change.
- Identify ways you can support the behavior change and/or the person.
- Commit to next steps.

Example (related to Scenario 2):

"Constance, can we talk about this week's department meeting?... I want us to have productive and collegial discussions in our meetings. Your comments to I.M. about his lack of research funding do not match my idea of productive or collegial. Instead of helping us focus on improving the undergraduate program, your comments resulted in a put-down of our teaching faculty. You and I both know we have teaching obligations, as well as research demands. Both teaching and research are critical to the success of this department and together we have to approach issues to get the best outcome. In the future, I ask that your comments reflect consideration of everyone's contributions, and not just that of our researchers."

Meeting Skill: In-the-Moment Feedback

Offering in-the-moment feedback is risky… you want to do it in such a way as to help the group be more productive and effective. And you want to do it so that you are not embarrassing anyone or creating more pain for the group as a whole.

Focus on behaviors you directly observe in the group. Directly observable behavior comprises the verbatim words that people speak and the nonverbal actions they make. It is the data a videotape recorder might capture.

Referring back to Scenario 2, the following has occurred:

> I.M.: "We must teach tomorrow's leaders of the country and the world."

> Constance (muttering): "Are we a research university or not?"

> I.M. (with even more passion): "We have no choice but to improve our undergraduate program and that means we must, and I mean we must, focus on our teaching."

> Constance (standing, and pointing at I.M.): "You only care about this because you have no ability to get any research funding. If you… you'd know that teaching has got to be second to research."

Share your direct observation and offer a suggestion about new behaviors that might be more helpful and productive for the group:

> "I.M., you are asking us to examine our undergraduate program. Constance, you have said that teaching must be second to our research program. We are not here to discuss which is more important than the other – teaching or research. We are here to discuss how we will respond to the need to strengthen our undergraduate program. Our budget is dependent on our thoughtful response. May I ask for someone to propose next steps for responding to this issue? "

The key to your observation is to avoid sharing your inference, or your interpretation of what's going on. It is easy to infer lack of objectivity because of the passion in I.M.'s voice and Constance's muttering. It might be apparent to you that Constance's real interest is to diminish I.M. in front of his peers because Constance and I.M. have been at odds for years. Train yourself to distinguish between observable behavior and inferences and comment only on behaviors.

The more you share about behaviors, and the less you share your inferences:

- The more likely you focus the group on what is relevant, and
- The more likely those engaged in the unproductive behaviors will try a different behavior/approach.

Guide Decision Making

Know your Pattern of Administration

The very best strategy for guiding decision making is reviewing your departmental Pattern of Administration (POA). Your POA outlines decision-making processes. This does not mean your faculty will know what is written, or that they will understand what is written pertains to the decision at hand. Meeting leaders must review their POA's, then state and restate how specific decisions will be made. Nothing will derail a decision longer than the following unanswered questions:

- Should we take this vote now?
- Do we have a quorum? What is a quorum?
- What about those who are travelling or absent for other reasons? When will they weigh in and vote?
- So-and-so told me she could not be here and asked me to ask the group to reschedule so she can vote. Can we wait until she gets back to have this vote?

Differentiate between Discussion and Decision

A second strategy for helping a group move toward a decision is to differentiate clearly between a discussion and a decision. A discussion emphasizes multiple perspectives; it is the opportunity to seek and express input. Groups are often uncertain if a discussion will end in a decision, or if a discussion will end with multiple perspectives offered on one issue, and no decision.

It can be helpful to get into the habit of introducing and discussing an issue at one meeting, and then making a decision at a future meeting. When this occurs, faculty are given the opportunity to disagree and to advocate for what they believe. After different points are volleyed, then the leader can take a bit of time before the next meeting to succinctly put forth the decision to be made. If this practice is implemented, the leader can also have one-on-one informal conversations between meetings to evaluate how others are thinking.

Summarize Points of Agreement; Address Points of Disagreement

The last strategy for effectively guiding decision-making is to listen for points of agreement, and summarize them to the group. Most decisions are complex and multi-layered. On what minor or major points is there agreement? State and restate these to the group so that it is clear there is common understanding of some things. Then, identify each point of disagreement, and ask for succinct "arguments" on each side of the point. Help the group truly listen to understand each perspective. If possible, move the varying perspectives closer together. If that is not possible, follow your norm for decision making. This might mean the leader makes the decision for the group. Or, it might mean you take a vote and follow your procedures for voting.

Summary

To lead and participate in meetings which achieve a specific purpose and are satisfying for those involved, these strategies are recommended:

- Determine a clear purpose for every meeting

- Use an agenda with action-oriented objectives that define the meeting purpose

- Establish and use ground rules or norms

- Focus discussions and meetings on vision and planning (not detail, problems or drama)

- Consider using a prescribed form/method for preparing and leading discussions

- Embed feelings of safety in how you conduct meetings; minimize threat and the emotional reactions associated with feeling threatened

- Teach and model the difference between attacking and disagreeing

- Encourage a balance of advocacy and inquiry

- Control discussions so they are productive, collegial and focused

- Verbally summarize varying opinions to move a group forward

- Have the courage to give feedback in meetings, and after meetings

- Review and state the decision-making procedures in your POA

- Allow discussion before making a decision

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