ROLE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF IN HIGHER EDUCATION

FINDING THE PROPER TOOL FOR NAILING JELLO TO THE WALL

DAN NOLAN
CHIEF OF STAFF
SHOULD YOU ASK A QUESTION AT A PRECONFERENCE SESSION?

- Do you want the meeting to last longer?
  - NO
  - YES

- Does the question apply to absolutely everyone in the room?
  - NO, just me
  - YES

- Is it REALLY, REALLY important? Like a life or death situation?
  - NO
  - YES

- Do you want your colleagues to hate you?
  - NO
  - YES

- Is someone actively dying? Like right now?
  - NO
  - YES

- You probably still shouldn’t ask a question. Send a private email instead. Do NOT CC the whole College!
- Don’t ask a question. Call 911!
• Why do we need a Chief of Staff??!!
• What does a Chief of Staff do??
• How do they do it?
• Do we need to do it??
• What I do
  – Culture
  – Strategy
  – Policy
VOLATILE, UNCERTAIN, CHAOTIC, AMBIGUOUS
HIED CEOs’ DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Academic Excellence

Economic Sustainability
HIED CEOs’ DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Academic Excellence

Economic Sustainability

- Academic Freedom
- Stewardship
- Athletics
- Student Affairs
- Alumni
- Trustee Management

Moral Behavior
- Accessibility
- Affordability
- Morale on Campus
- Black Lives Matter
- Public Speaker
- Unite the Right
- Safety
- Organizational Effectiveness

Leadership
- Innovation
- Government Affairs
- Fund Raise (Public and Private)
- Ethical Behavior
- LGBTQ Matters
- Manage Culture
- Creativity
- Technology
- Data
- People
- Policy
- Space
- Resource Management
- Money
- Time

Focus Local
- Mission
- Sleep
- Focus Local

Georgia Gwinnett College
HIED CEOs’ DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

**Academic Excellence**
- Academic Freedom
- Stewardship
- Mission

**Economic Sustainability**
- Fund Raise (Public and Private)
- Leadership
- Government Affairs

**Moral Behavior**
- Affordability
- Morale on Campus

**Unite the Right**
- Academic Affairs
- Administrative Affairs

**Freedom of Expression**
- Public Speaker
- Black Lives Matter

**Safety**
- Organizational Effectiveness

**Accessibility**

**Leadership**
- Money
- Time
- Technology

**Policy**
- Creativity
- Data
- People

**Strategic Planning**
- Vision

**Focus Local**
- Resource Management

**Manage Culture**
- Money
- Time
- Technology

**Creativity**
- Data
- People

**Space**
- Political Acumen
The Literature

- Hood, David C. (2017). *An Investigation into the Role of Chief of Staff in a Higher Education Setting*,
- Not much else

The History

- 699 – 1945: Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal
- Military Model
- Government Model
- Higher Education Model
CRITICAL RELATIONSHIPS

The HIED CEO
• Trust as the Basic Bond of Leadership
• COS of the Gaps
• Speak For, Not As…

The Executive Assistant
• In addition to…never between
• Learn the flow; learn to surf
• Be a Helper

The Board
• Custodian of Official Records
• Meeting Management
• Liaison between the Board and Institutional Community
THE SPECTRUM OF TASK COMPLEXITY BETWEEN EA AND VP

Source: Hood (2017, p. 172)
Proposed Title Progression

- Administrative Assistant to
- Assistant to
- Special Assistant to
- Executive Assistant to
- Executive Associate or Associate to
- Chief of staff

Typical Range of Responsibilities

- Executive secretary responsibilities, including clerical support, scheduling, travel, office management, etc.
- Primary professional support for the president, which may include producing agendas, policy research, writing, managing office staff, etc.
- May be differentiated from “Assistant to” by specialized portfolio, such as diversity, legislative, public information, special events, speechwriting.
- Senior policy-level assistant or advisor; may have additional management responsibilities, including staff supervision, management of agendas and governance process, representing the president at public functions, membership in the president’s cabinet
- Prefix and title denote a higher level of administrative or policymaking/advising responsibility
- Advisor to the president, manager and gatekeeper of the office of the president, coordinator of the divisions reporting to the president.

Source: Hood (2017, p.172)
Personality

- **Confidence**: a feeling or consciousness of one's powers or of reliance on one's circumstances – Based in Competence
- **Conscientiousness**: the sense of the moral goodness or blameworthiness of one's own conduct, intentions, or character together with a feeling of obligation to do right or be good
- **Creativity**: the ability or power to bring into existence
- **Diplomacy**: skill in handling affairs without arousing hostility
- **Level 5/Servant Leadership**: Leaders who employ a paradoxical mix of personal humility and professional will. More plow horse than show horse

Source: Hood (2017)
MAKE A CHIEF OF STAFF

Traits and Skills: Character

• **Flexibility**: Needs of the HIED CEO and Evolution
• **Intuitive Thinker**: Collect partial, fragmented, siloed *information* and create a picture that informs decision making
• **Relational Acumen**: The use of *information* to build relationships

Source: Hood (2017)
MAKE A CHIEF OF STAFF

COS and the Organization

• Building Relationships on Behalf of the President
• Information Gathering
• Role Clarification
  – Misunderstanding
  – Denial
  – Willful Ignorance

Source: Hood (2017)
The Servant as Leader

The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions... The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.

The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?

from “The Servant as Leader” by Robert K. Greenleaf
CULTURE, STRATEGY, POLICY
SPECIFIC DUTIES AS ASSIGNED

My Portfolio
• Culture – Monitor, Measure, Recommend.
  – Don’t need to know if the water is boiling
  – Need to know the BTU
• Strategy – Linking Vision to Performance Management
• Policy – The Wisdom of the Institution

The Others
• Initiatives – Synchronization, Community Engagement, Data Influence…
• Stand in/Stand up
• Good/Bad Cop
• Keen Ear and Sealed Lips
• Sounding Bar
MY BASIC PREMISE
UNIQUENESS OF CULTURE

• One of the most important building blocks for a highly successful organization and an extraordinary workplace
• The most important thing about culture is that it’s the only sustainable point of difference for any organization
• Anyone can copy an institution’s strategy, but nobody can copy their culture (maybe...)
• **Culture is driven by leadership** – How leaders behave, what they say, and what they value drives culture
EDGAR SCHEIN’S MODEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

• “A set of values, norms, and artifacts, including ways of solving problems shared by organizational members”
• “Gives organizational members meaning and sets the internal rules of behavior”

Levels of Organizational Culture

Artifacts
(observable products)
- Symbols, stories, texts
- Ceremonies, rituals, facilities, awards

Values
(Rules of behavior)
- Norms about what is right/wrong, un/important
- Slogans, mission statements

Assumptions
- Taken-for-granted shared beliefs
- Hidden, must be inferred

THE GRIZZLY TRIANGLE

Accessible
Attentive
Affordable
THE WATER IN WHICH WE SWIM
What it Means to be a Grizzly

Grizzlies **selflessly attend** to the strengths, needs, and uniqueness of everyone at GGC. We **work together** to build meaningful experiences, solve problems, and share resources.

Grizzlies **create caring and supportive relationships** that are essential to learning, persistence, graduation, institutional health, and community growth.
On Everyone’s Desk

- Description of Behaviors
- Future State of Being
- Pathways to attain Vision
- Immutable Goals
- Near Term Priorities
CULTURE MANAGEMENT: A GROWTH MODEL

- Capability
- Aspirational Values
- Practical/Compliant

- Ethical
- Economic & Legal

- Philanthropic
- Inspiration for others
- Lived Values
- Behavior

Growth
CULTURE MANAGEMENT

Values, Behavior, and Ethics

- Culture: the water we swim in or a purposeful social construct
- Culture or Character are the foundations upon which vision and mission are built
- Values are a statement of aspiration
- Behavior is a manifestation of what is really valued
- Ethics are the match between aspiration and lived
- Integrity ratio indicates where you need to work.

Culture drives Vision, Mission, and Institutional Goals

- Vision (Ends) describes the future state of being: Facts and Assumptions
- Mission (Ways) provides a description of how the Vision is attained
- Priorities establish the temporal precedents for action
- Initiatives are related to Priorities and are the voice of the Campus
- VPs synthesis assigned initiatives with Operational Needs to describe Operational Goals
- Objectives are the Basis for Unit Planning
VALUES-BEHAVIOR: INTEGRITY INDEX

How important? vs. How Lived?
It’s the Planning, not the Plan

- Required by SACSCOC 2018 *Principles of Accreditation*, para 7.1
- The framework for a sequenced arrangement of resources to achieve the near term vision in accordance with the mission. Agility is a product of a common operating picture and clear lines of communication
- Lines of communication are not all talk
- “No plan survives first contact with reality”
NESTED STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

- Culture, Vision, Mission
- Strategic Plan (Institution)
- Operational Plan (Division)
- Unit Plan
- Ind Performance Management
- Goals and Competencies
- Tasks and Actions
- Goals and Objectives
- Priorities and Initiatives
Distilled Wisdom of the Institution

- Transformation of Data…
- Thou Shalt
- Meet Economic, Legal, Ethical and Philanthropic Standards
- Responsibility, Authority, and Accountability
- Less is more: Policy vs Process


• Mann, L. (2012). *Exploring trust between the higher education president and the assistant to the president*. The University of Alabama, Educational Leadership Policy, and Technology Studies.


QUESTIONS?

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