Collaborative Professional Partnership: A Dean and Department Head's Story

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Collaborative Professional Partnership: A Dean and Department Head’s Story
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Administration has its share of problem-solving. In this presentation, a dean and department head join together to tell the story of the start of their professional relationship, role play their problem-solving process, and identify what they believe are key aspects that make their professional relationship effective.

Our problem-solving process:

a. Identify the problem
b. talk face-to-face
c. determine solutions/interventions
d. execute plan
e. follow up

Is collaborate to solve problems (as opposed to issuing directives).

**DEAN QUALITIES**

- Active listener
- Supportive
- Has complimentary characteristics to the Department Head
- Offers perspective
- Investigates before concluding

**DEPARTMENT HEAD QUALITIES**

- Team oriented
- Communicates
- Include & inform to keep surprises to a minimum
- Organized
- Empathetic & relational
- Time sensitive
- Detail oriented
- Strong work ethic
- Role Model

**Active listening is**

- In the moment.
- Focused on the speaker and the message.
- Providing feedback to demonstrate understanding of the message.
- The essential ingredient to a collaborative professional partnership.

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Notes from the role play:

Summary:
Administration has its share of problem solving. Deans and department heads join together to:

I. Diffuse conflict, not escalate it
II. Communicate (active listening—listen to hear the message vs. preparing the reply)
III. Work collaboratively (2 parties working together) to solve problems
IV. Form a professional partnership (parties cooperate to advance their mutual interests [DH represents/knows the interests of the faculty in the department; the Dean represents/knows the interests of higher administrators/the university])
V. The Dean and Department Head have a collaborative professional partnership (working together to advance our mutual interests)

TAKE HOME MESSAGE
Collaborative Professional Partnership-to create a collaborative rather than manipulative working relationship between the dean and department head.