ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL SETTING

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Abstract

The main purpose of educational leadership is to guarantee academic success through process, training and material improvements. Unfortunately, this success cannot be guaranteed or even accomplished without the help and collaboration of everyone involved, including the students, parents, teachers, policymakers and even the general public. From a business standpoint, educational leadership is a method of quality control and academic management. Every year schools are looking for ways to improve their system and provide students with the best possible education, which is where good education leadership comes into play. Surprisingly enough, many people involved in their local educational system are uncertain as to what defines educational leadership. Education leadership is a combined process that utilizes the forces, knowledge and talents of teachers, parents and teachers with the goal of improving not just the quality of education but also the education system itself.

Keyword: Leadership, Goals of Higher education, Qualities of good leader

Introduction

Higher education staff members need to view themselves as leaders not because they are exceptional or senior but because they recognise what needs to be done and can work collaboratively to do it. Depending on a small number of people in higher level institutions to carry the leadership flag is no longer an option. Now is the time to encourage staff at all levels to come together to work on real challenges and opportunities. Identifying individuals with leadership potential and supporting their leadership development is a positive solution but it is not the only one and will not sustain leadership in higher education. The future involves working across boundaries with multiple stakeholders dealing with complex bureaucracies and politics. Higher education needs individuals who do not currently identify with being a leader to engage in leadership. It is time to start concentrating on an individual's effectiveness as a leader; only then will we be able to tackle sustainability of academic leadership for the higher education sector.

Definitions of Leadership

Leaming (1998) defines Academic Leadership:

Skill to motivate others to take certain courses of action, to persuade others that prescribed tasks much be done on time and in a particular way, and to garner respect for others, especially those with whom one works and/or associates

Leadership is not defined by the exercise of power but by the capacity to increase the sense of power among those led. The most essential work of the leader is to create more leaders.

(Follett, 1942:3

Goals of Higher Education

• The basic purpose of education is to create skill & knowledge & awareness of our glorious national heritage and the achievements of human civilization

• He/She should produce leaders

• He/She should strive for academic excellence and progress of arts and science

The Changing Nature of Higher Education Higher education continues to undergo significant change in response to such factors as government policy, continuing growth in demand for ever higher levels of educational attainment and credentials, rapid economic development, pervasiveness and society wide impact of communication and information technologies, demands for increased access, internationalisation and globalisation (Bolden et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2012; Sustaining Academic Leadership 6 in Higher Education Pauline Joyce)

Qualities of a Good Leader

a. Integrity: Quality having strong moral principles

b. Enthusiasm: Great Zeal

c. Warmth: Excitement/Earnestness

d. Calmness: Peace/Quiet

e. Tough but fair

The changing demands on higher education are challenging traditional assumptions not only about the nature and purpose of higher education and its place in society, but also about the systems of management and leadership that should operate within educational institutions. Cowan and Heywood's (2001) research findings, and more recently those of Jones et al. (2012), support Ramsden's (1998:4) old argument that leadership should be distributed, rather than being based on a hierarchy, viewing leadership as 'how people relate to each other'. Bolden et al. (2012) contrast the traditional model of the University as a community of

scholars with a highly democratic and decentralised process of decision making, representing leadership as a shared responsibility, with increasingly common corporate or entrepreneurial approaches to leadership and management in universities. However, modern thinking about leadership highlights new approaches which might be considered for sustaining leadership in higher education.

Approaches to Leadership

1. Trait Theory

2. Behavioural Theory

3. Situational Theory

It is important to emphasize that leadership development in higher education requires a parallel and integrated development of educational competencies. Many faculty who have a managerial or leadership role in universities may have received little or no training for their educational and teaching responsibilities. Many of them are professionals or researchers and their career paths and promotion depended mainly on their research activities. The potential synthesis between these areas is addressed in educational scholarship and educational scholarly activities as proposed by Boyer and explored by Glassick et al. (Boyer, 1990; Glassick, Huber & Maeroff, 1997). Leadership development programs should not be separate from educational development programs but rather should be integrated in order to emphasize its relevance and context.

Characteristics of good Leadership

• Being expert

• Championing new technologies

• Being on institutional entrepreneur

• Being a student affairs advocate

• Being a savvy fund-raiser

• supporting selected excellence

• Being a legal interpreter

• Being a public intellectual

• Being a shaper of consensus, and

• Being a visionary pragmatist

In its vision for the higher education system in Ireland, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) (Higher Education Authority, 2012) advocates a core of well-qualified and motivated

staff who are capable of teaching to the highest standard while pursuing opportunities for scholarship and conducting research. In achieving this vision, there is a need for a system-level approach where each institution must play to its strengths in order to make the biggest impact to the benefit of itself and of Irish society in general. In the HEA strategic plan 2012-2016 (Higher Education Authority, 2012) objective 5, the top three priorities are:

• achievement of excellence in higher education,

• the management of teaching and learning,

• research, innovation and engagement with community and enterprise.

The seven habits of successful Leadership/ Chairperson/HODs (Leaming, 1998):

• Having Goals

• Getting to know their colleagues and fellow administrators

• Being agent of charge

• Understanding and appreciating teaching, research & public service

• Being honest

• Forthright and decent, fairs & even-handed

• Being consensus builders and good communication

Conclusion

Generally, the focus of leadership development starts with the individual and then moves to the organisational context. People will engage enthusiastically at different points in this journey depending on their work situation. For teachers in higher education, this progression can involve leadership of schools or faculties, moving to senior management positions. In this scenario, there can be tensions between leaders as teachers, or, teachers as leaders. Here, the culture of the organisation is paramount in supporting any learning back to practice with the ideal situation being one where activity is underpinned with a learning organisation philosophy. This integration of leadership development with career progression and organisational performance is not an automatic follow through. Kandiko and Blackmore (2010) recommend a review of recognition and rewards, including promotion, to ensure that excellence in teaching and its leadership are recognised appropriately, alongside other aspects of excellence.

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