The P&A Senate Inaugural Professional Development Forum

Preparing Ourselves to Meet Grand Challenges: A future-focused discussion on administrative and professional competence needed to meet the University’s mission, now and in the future

May 6, 2015
Welcome!
Katherine Dowd - P&A Senate Chair
Engaged employees make for an exceptional work place and a nation-leading University. As P&A staff, you play a vital role in the success and vitality of our University. Today’s session is designed to be forward looking and to examine and ask: What role will you — must you — play in the future, and what will the University need to do to support you? I look forward to hearing about the outcomes of today’s Forum, and thank you for all you do for the University of Minnesota.
Karen Hanson – Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

To implement the Twin Cities campus strategic plan, academic professional and administrative staff must play a central role. P&A employees bring wide-ranging experience and crucial skills that help advance University research, support student success, and forge meaningful local and global partnerships. P&A staff are knowledgeable problem-solvers, and they can be important change agents as we all work together to create a more dynamic campus and a University celebrated for innovation, collaboration, and achievement.
Curiosity and humility will serve you well. Listen. And when you speak, remember that you are rarely given the opportunity to speak "outside" of your role--words that you intend to be casual or speculative will be taken with great seriousness by someone because you occupy a leadership role. Surround yourself with individuals who have vision and bold spirits. Leading is more a matter of shaping this vision and following these bold spirits than it is a matter of advancing a personal agenda.
Don't spend all your time on the how's and the what's. It is important to revisit the why once in awhile.
Universities are proceeding through a period of substantial change. This is a story of change, but it is more fundamentally a story of continuity: we continue our drive to be world-class in all dimensions. Adjustment, flexibility, and innovation are key to achieving this vision. As P&A's consider professional development opportunities, I would encourage them to seek experiences that focus on strategic planning, maximizing effectiveness, and building a culture of creativity and innovation.
Scott M. Lanyon, Professor and Department Head - Ecology, Evolution and Behavior

The rapid rate of societal and environmental change today poses a serious challenge to land grant universities - the need for nearly continuous strategic changes to our research, teaching, and outreach programs. To succeed in this rapidly changing landscape will require an administrative support staff working proactively and very creatively to identify and remove barriers to change.
An engaged workforce understands, embraces and delivers results, making the organization’s mission reality and the vision possible. We (P&A) have the opportunity to be leaders and supporters in building the culture needed to create and sustain an engaged workforce. Identifying and developing competencies to support this culture is imperative for future success.
Leaders today who can adeptly blend positional influence and people power are those most likely to make enterprise level impacts.
Jane Phillips, Education Program Manager
College of Biological Sciences

Stay ahead of the technology changes in your area -- whether that is software, hardware, scientific or engineering equipment, or any other technology -- be the leader incorporating these tools to reach your larger goals!
Great leaders develop themselves - and their careers - with intention. They take on risks and new responsibilities in their current roles. They ask for and act on feedback. They look outside of their domain for best practices. They build external relationships. They make mistakes, and they learn from them. This is how we get better as professionals, and how we elevate our game to meet the challenges of the future.
While computer competency is essential, the most important competency is the ability to work well and communicate with others. We have become a society so attached to our electronics, we have forgotten the art of interacting with people, face-to-face. Those who do it well are generally very successful. Of course, it is important to have a variety of technical skills, but what will set us apart is the ability to listen and respond to the person in front of you.