Building Capacity for Shared Leadership

Monthly Leadership Meeting
January 24, 2023
The Case for Shared Leadership

- Consistently emerging as an effective leadership approach in a rapidly changing environment
- A key factor for organizations to develop a stronger capacity to learn, adapt, and innovate in a complex environment
- Shared leadership builds institutional memory and creates co-ownership over aspirational goals and strategies that could otherwise vanish with executive turnover
- Units benefit when leadership skills are developed at all levels
- Recommendations are stronger and more realistic when multiple points of view are considered
- Strengthens relationships between units
Defining Shared Leadership

Common characteristics
(Holcombe & Kezar, 2017)

• Leadership is not based on position or authority
  – Provides more leadership opportunities for people across campus
• Team members' roles are interchangeable
• Capitalizes on multiple perspectives and expertise for problem solving, innovation, and change
• Emphasizes collaboration and interactions across the university
Shared Leadership & Shared Governance

- Leadership is not based on position held at university
  - Shared governance: elected leaders representing constituencies
  - Shared leadership: members selected by expertise

- Cross-university collaboration
  - Shared governance: ongoing
  - Shared leadership: project-based

- Diverse perspectives contribute to problem-solving and innovation
  - Shared governance: advocacy
  - Shared leadership: advisement
Presidential Charge to the Task Force

- Recommend **strategies to support an environment of employee growth and development** that includes building capacity for shared leadership.

- Ensure that the **right mechanisms, infrastructure, processes, managerial support and guidance** are in place to do so at NIU.

- Identify **expertise and professional development opportunities** that align with skill-building around consensus-building, creating shared vision and goals, generating feedback, navigating difficult conversations, and self-awareness.
Building Capacity for Shared Leadership at NIU – Anticipated Outcomes

• Model shared leadership as we explore opportunities for NIU to build capacity

• Identify barriers and opportunities for shared leadership

• Suggest practices that will advance our goal of enhancing organizational capacity for shared leadership at NIU

• Recommend next steps for implementation
Shared Leadership Task Force

• Cross-functional group established in April 2022
• Diverse team with appropriate expertise – diverse by role, background, and experience
  – Rena Cotsones, Chief Engagement Officer and Vice President, OERD (co-chair)
  – Amanda Durik, Chair, Department of Psychology
  – Molly Holmes, Director of the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center
  – Michaela Holtz, Office of the President Staff Fellow (committee management)
  – Christine Lagattolla, Assistant Director of Outdoor Adventure
  – Mayra Lagunas, Assistant Vice President of Enrollment Services and Director of Undergraduate Admissions
  – Bryan Lutes, Administrative Assistant, University Advancement and NIU Foundation
  – Holly Nicholson, Assistant Director, Web Strategy and Support (co-chair)
  – Tawanda Paul, Senior Research Associate, Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation
  – Irene Sanderson, Director of ERP Application
  – Tom Viel, Director, Physical Plant
  – Elina Wlaznik, Assistant Director, Campus Activities Board
Building Capacity for Shared Leadership at NIU – Conversations

Key conversations

• Six essentials for creating culture of shared leadership
  – Establish framework
  – Commit time and resources
  – Enhance community/connectedness
  – Encourage innovation
  – Accountability and transparency
  – Motivation and incentives

• Culture and mindset shift required to create this environment – create environment for success at the individual, unit and institutional level
Recommendations – Individual Level

- Embrace being a Huskie and seek opportunities to engage with NIU at many levels
- Take advantage of opportunities for professional development
- Ensure individual alignment with unit and university mission, vision and values
Facilitate individualized employee development and engagement plans

- Ensure understanding of unit and employee goals
- Provide professional development for current role and aspirational roles
- Timely and meaningful evaluation to determine progress and plan next steps
- Document and celebrate employee interaction with/contributions to institutional mission and culture
Recommendations – Unit Level

• Ensure professional development for managers/supervisors, prioritizing the following:
  – Leadership development
  – Effective evaluation and constructive feedback
  – Goal setting
  – Communications
  – Consensus building
  – Mentoring
  – HR administrative processes
Recommendations – Institutional Level

• Create and adopt an NIU-specific shared leadership model

• Utilize short-term, single focus action teams made up of employees at all levels to craft solutions and approaches to university challenges

• Commit to financial/HR support for professional development that will help facilitate shared leadership

• Focus on institutional culture to bring institutional values to life
Model for Shared Leadership at NIU

Collaboration

Innovation/risk

Culture
- Mission
- Vision
- Values

Commit time/resources

Transparency/accountability

Institution

Unit

Individual
Next Steps

Phase I - complete by July 1, 2023

• Determine the plan for operationalization of the recommendations in the final report

• Strengthen the model with NIU's specific guiding principles for shared leadership

• Seek feedback from campus about how to embody shared leadership in NIU culture

• Create a system of accountability at all levels
Next Steps

• Increase opportunities and support for professional development at all levels
• Expand employee onboarding
• Continue to expand the repository of templates and other resources
Indicators of Success

• Increased employee satisfaction and retention
• Visible tangible improvements
• Documented and celebrated innovation
Thank you!

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