

EXCELLENCE *in* ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

Session Three: Leading a Vibrant Unit

By the National Center for Principled Leadership & Research Ethics
at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

based on the work of C. K. Gunsalus

photo: Jeremy Thomas

design: Aaron Robinson



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Homework

1. Review the AUDIT you filled out for your unit; be prepared to discuss
2. Hold a Critical Friends session.

Vibrant Units (0 to 5)	Warning Signs (0 to 3)	Challenged Units (0 to 5)
Respectful dealings among colleagues, department; consistently high student feedback, inclusive, welcoming	Complaints disproportionate to other units, campus	Serious misconduct: discrimination, sexual, financial, criminal, etc. (arrests, lawsuits...)
Openness, transparency, shared governance	Email and/or social media wars, harassment, silos, conflict aversion	Culture that suppresses or hides problems; punishes reporting; faculty schisms, battles, flareups
Culture of excellence and quality; strong candidates	Weak or ineffective hiring, lack of diversity, requests for transfers, departures	Repeated inability to hire, retain quality faculty, staff; absence of diversity, or even a commitment to it
Support and mentoring for faculty and students alike; recognition that different people have different mentoring needs; equitably shared workloads	Weak P&T practices; many terminal associate professors	Toxic atmosphere, especially for junior faculty, underrepresented groups, students
Open discussion of ideas and research; high productivity, excellent teaching modeled and rewarded	Declining scholarly indicators (productivity, PhDs, PhD placement, time to degree, few curricular innovations, little sharing of research or learning)	Scholarly/teaching standing below institution's, uneven in unit
Distributed service responsibilities, aligned with faculty strengths with awareness of uneven burdens	Financial disarray	Departmental business at a standstill; in gridlock
High level of communication—willingness to listen, compromise, problems addressed, not submerged	Ad hoc practices; forum-shopping; seeking desired answers from different offices; hiding problems	Lack of transparency, hidden agendas, uneven application of policies; faculty involve students in disputes
Curricular innovations, adaptations to meet changing student, campus, needs	Enrollment declines, lack of curricular innovation, cancelled or missing classes regular occurrence	Curricular stagnation, lack of student interest in offerings; outdated curriculum
Leadership has high expectations, uses policies evenhandedly, makes decisions, builds community	Bimodal evaluations, generational discord, externalizing problems, miscommunication, and disrespect between groups	Weak or autocratic leadership; different messages to different audiences; meddling by previous leader of unit
Collective vision of goals and priorities aligned with institutional mission	Poor student progress to program completion/graduation/degree	Many individual priorities without shared purpose
TOTAL _____	TOTAL _____ (subtract)	TOTAL _____ (subtract)



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SPENDING TIME PUTTING OUT FIRES
SIGNALS A NEED FOR THOUGHTFUL ACTION.



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Nothing happens in isolation



Structural, cultural, financial, interpersonal, scholarly, and leadership problems interact.

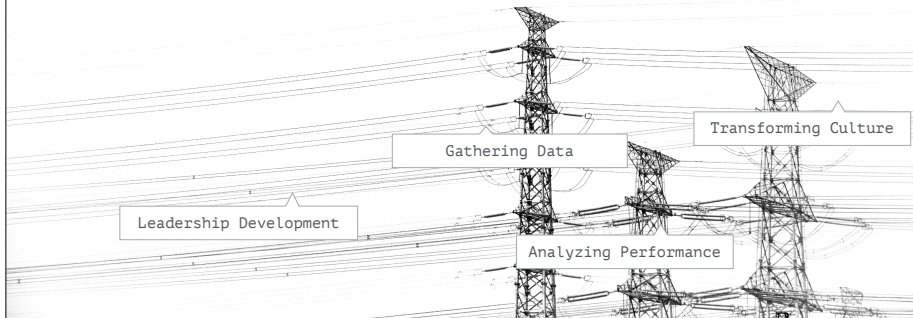
Solutions and Approaches

How can you stop fighting fires...



Solutions and Approaches

...and build a better future?




Scenario 1:
The other person is totally off base, confused, neurotic, stupid and/or just generally wrong.

It's likely some combination of the two.

Scenario 2:
The other person might have a point; you could be mistaken or have misunderstood.


Whichever it is, you are in an unpleasant situation.



Reality: *The only conduct you control is your own*



First...

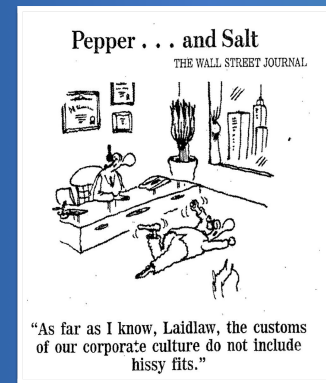
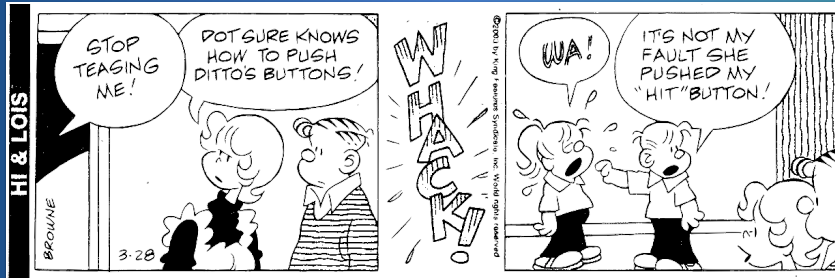


You need to know — and be clear about — some things about yourself and your situation.

Self-Knowledge



And aggression only escalates.



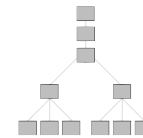
Query:

Have *YOU* ever been persuaded by being insulted, contradicted or shouted down?

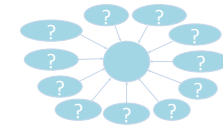
Philosophical Centering



Mission



Role



Constituencies



Why

Why are you doing this job?

(overlaps with self-knowledge)

Vibrant Academic Units



Student Learning
Appropriate
quality, volume



Scholarship
Research/creative
work at institutional
standards, with
impact

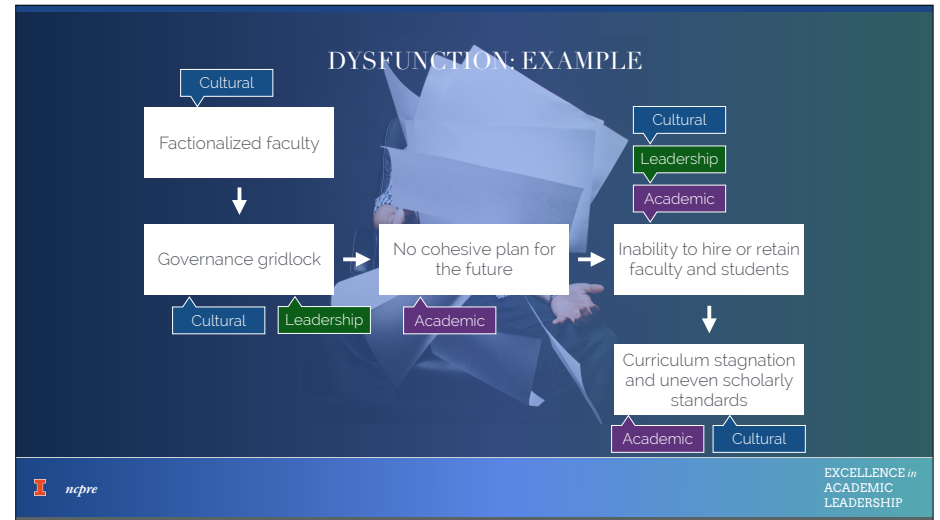
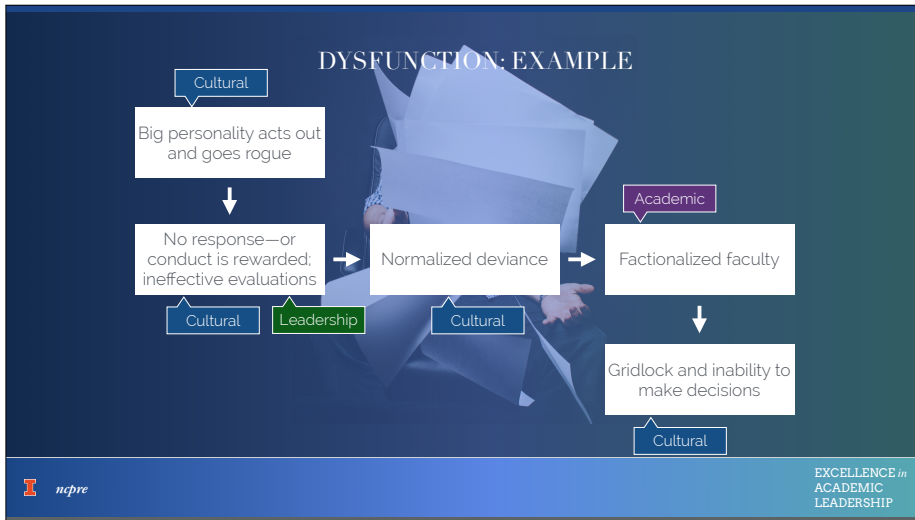
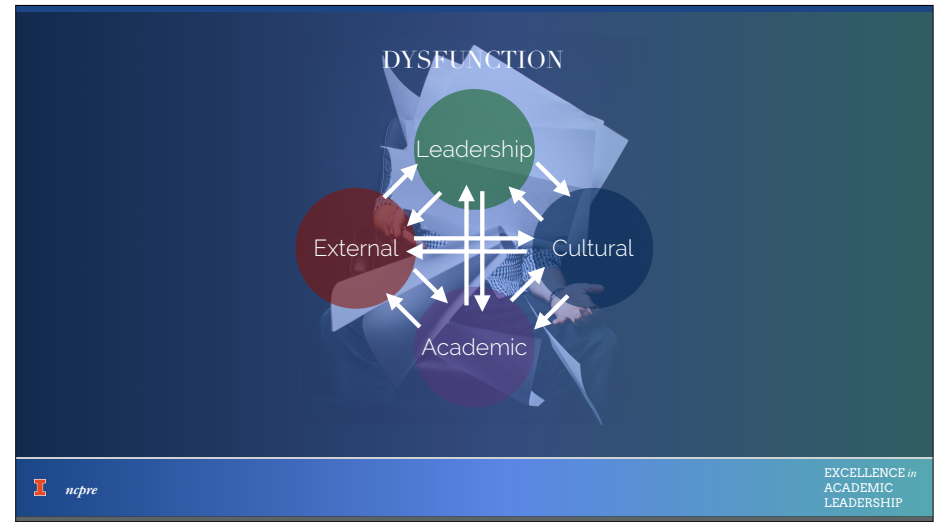


Service, Outreach
Contribute to
institutional mission

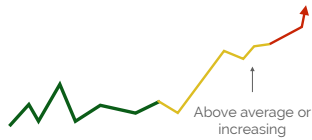


Governance & Culture
Ethically, legally,
fiscally responsible;
healthy working
environment

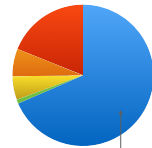
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Quantifiable HR Measures

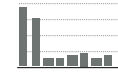


- ▲ Staff, faculty, student transfers
- ▲ Departures, unsuccessful retentions
- ▲ Hiring yields, failed hires
- ▲ Contingent faculty proportion, turnover
- ▲ Terminal associate professors
- ▲ Supplemental pay requests, demands
- ▲ Complaints, grievances



Disproportionate distribution of enrollment re: faculty

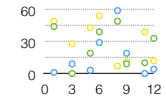
Quantifiable Measures



Bimodal Evaluations (e.g., publications, student evaluations)



Financial Disarray



Ad Hoc-ery

Indicators

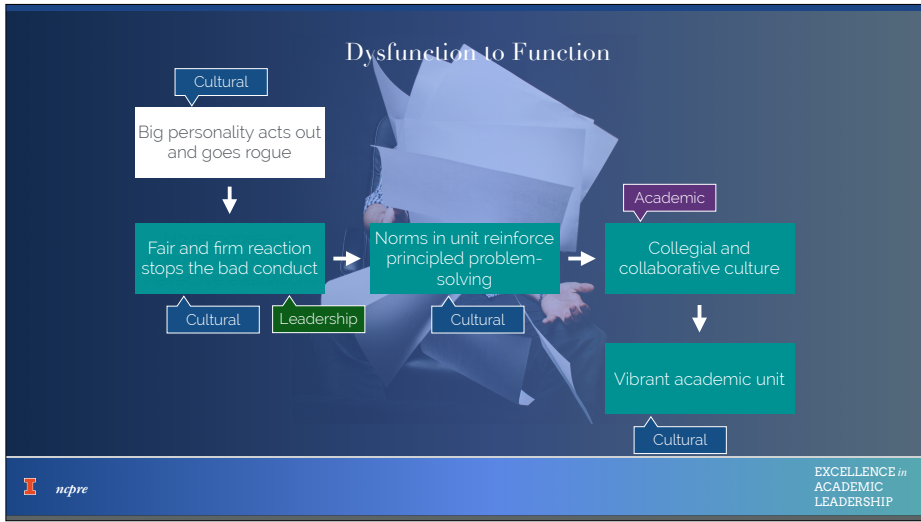
Quantifiable

Hiring (quality, yield)
Retention, transfers
Enrollment trends
Demographics
Scholarly productivity
Complaints, grievances
Financial elements
Serious deviations

Qualitative/Subjective

Leadership shortcomings
Silos, internal factions
Ad hocery
Random hiring pattern
Lack of cohesion
Favoritism, in/out groups
Conflict, conflict aversion
Social media and email wars

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Vibrant Academic Units

- Student Learning**
Appropriate quality, volume
- Scholarship**
Research/creative work at institutional standards, with impact
- Service, Outreach**
Contribute to institutional mission
- Governance & Culture**
Ethically, legally, fiscally responsible; healthy working environment

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Articulate your unit's purpose and mission

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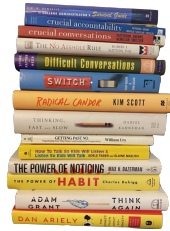
Create an elevator pitch for your unit

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Homework

1. Create a **ONE MINUTE or shorter** elevator pitch for your unit, connected to its purpose and mission.
2. Find a book to read that matches your interests, growth interests.



Creating a Culture of
Excellence

1. Mindset
2. Collegiality
3. Create a shared vision of success
4. Provide needed resources
5. Reward excellence
6. Support revitalization and reinvention by unit members

Questions or concerns?

Key takeaways?