

MOVING FROM A PERFORMATIVE TO SERVICE-ORIENTED HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP CULTURE IN 7 STEPS

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SERVICE

Leadership is not just about a position; it is about taking responsibility and accountability to step up and support colleagues. Leadership is about service, guiding people under a collective mission, taking responsibility, building trust, making decisions, and delegating while helping others.

EQUITY

Current DEI work is compliance-based and performative, but strategic and collective actions are needed. There is a lot of great work happening by passionate people, but not systematic. Equity is center of focus in some departments, but not campus wide.



AGENCY

Middle managers (Department Heads) have a lot of responsibility and lack the authority to be leaders. There is an opportunity to provide clearer expectations, standard operating procedures, informational feedback, reevaluating term limits.

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The selection to be a part of the UOLA community was an investment in participants and provided external validation from UO community of their worth. Self-assessments, “crucial conversations,” reflection activities, and relationships with peers were impactful. In building self-agency.



INSPIRATION & INFLUENCE

UO leadership culture needs a shift through providing opportunities to use good leadership practices (e.g., community, relationship-building, creating opportunities for others, uplifting others etc.). More leadership coaching is needed at higher leadership levels to help people in these positions.

COMMUNITY

Leadership environment at the UO needs a culture of community. Peer-to-peer mentorship critical in sharing effective practice and ideas to help navigate challenges. The human connections to decompress from work and have fun can encourage excitement and mitigate burnout.



FOCUS ON THE LONG TERM

It is critical to share this information widely with the campus community to inform from an improvement model to better support leaders at the UO. This level of transparency and care about how our colleagues are experiencing leadership is fundamental is supporting retention and employee engagement.

“BEING UNCOMFORTABLE ALLOWS US TO UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER IN A SAFE SPACE”

“UOLA WAS AN INVESTMENT IN ME AND NICE TO SEE THE RECIPROCITY FROM THE INSTITUTION”

“ADDRESSING THE MATERIAL CONSEQUENCES OF EQUITY ARE NOT HAPPENING”

These 7 steps summarize focus group findings conducted as part of the University of Oregon (UO) *Leadership Culture Study: Exploring Perceptions of Leadership Academy Participants & Organizational Leaders*. Results are based on 13 focus groups conducted during the Spring 2022 term. Focus groups explored UO Leadership Academy (UOLA) and academic leaders’ perceptions of their experiences to understand areas of improvement around leadership development. Participants were recruited via email through the Office of the Provost (OtP) and 45 people dedicated 60 minutes of their time to share their experiences in their voices. Collectively, the following overarching themes emerged.