



REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP AND GROWTH OF AN SRO AT A PUI

Ella L. Taylor, Ph.D.

Director, Sponsored Research Office
Western Oregon University

Poster presentation for NCURA
Annual Conference

October, 2010

Leadership Challenge

Five step iterative process



Kouzes & Posner's Model

Setting the Stage (pre-SRO)

- Mid-sized PUI with approximately 5,500 students and 300 faculty
- Annual sponsored research expenditures ranging between \$9.5 - \$10.6 million
- Institutional culture focused on teaching
- Strong faculty union
- Majority of external grants based in College of Education
- No centralized, academic oversight of pre- or post-award functions

Catalyst for Change

- New Provost arrives on campus
- Organizes an Office of Institutional Research and Sponsored Projects
- 1 FTE created for Institutional Research
- 1 FTE for Sponsored Projects
- Charges newly created Sponsored Projects Coordinator with organizing a centralized pre-award and post-award office

SPO Charge & Centralized Model

- Identify new external funding possibilities & disseminate to faculty/staff
- Facilitate grant application procedures & post-award implementation
- Ensure accountability using best practices

Pre-Award

- Sponsored Projects
 - Locate funding sources
 - Assist in development of proposals (as requested)
 - Review proposal & budget for compliance with grantor and WOU policies
 - Submit proposals (institutional submission authority)
 - Accept awards & ensure administration is consistent with grantor and WOU policies
- WOU Business Office
 - Budget review

Post-Award

- Sponsored Projects
 - Support faculty/staff in monitoring expenses for allowability, allocability, reasonableness & adherence to grantor & WOU policy
 - Distribute internal budget reports to PI(s)
 - Support faculty/staff in monitoring effort reporting
- WOU Business office
 - Collect funds
 - Invoice or draw-down funds
 - Complete final financial report for close-out of funds

Model the way

Clarify Values

Find your voice

Affirm shared values

Set example

Personify shared values

Teach others to model
the values

- SPO CV posted on website
- SPO met with all academic departments on campus
- Shared personal grant-writing history and research funds brought into the university
- Held introductory workshops to highlight new services for faculty

Inspire a shared vision

Envision the Future

Imagine the possibilities

Find a common purpose

Enlist Others

Appeal to common values

Animate the vision

- SPO Model presented to Faculty Senate for support
 - Senate votes approval
- Liberal arts & sciences faculty interest in grants increases
- Business office (initially resistant to change) sees benefit in pre-award services for faculty
 - Proposal budgets follow guide-lines resulting in fewer post-award changes and/or questions

Challenge the process

Search for Opportunities

Seize the initiative

Exercise oversight

Experiment and Take Risks

Generate small wins

Learn from experience

- University undergoes an A-133 audit
 - SPO plays a key role in providing a written response to questions
 - SPO plays key role in writing university policy for post-award management of grants
- Audit results are positive
- SPO and university business office continue to meet to discuss policy issues and post-award requirements

Enable others to act

Foster collaboration

Create a climate of trust

Facilitate relationships

Strengthen others

Enhance self-determination

Develop competence and commitment

- University business office personnel begin attending grants trainings
- SPO & university business office agree to a unified response to post-award management
 - Communicate award questions between SPO and business office to ensure PI(s) receive quality service and are unable to play one against the other
- SPO posts RFP announcements on department specific webpages
 - Faculty may subscribe to receive email notices
- Proposal submissions double
- Successful proposals increase by 115%

Encourage the heart

Recognize contributions

Expect the best

Personalize the recognition

Celebrate the values and victories

Create a spirit of community

Be personally involved

- All grant submittals and results shared with university leadership team each month
- Funded grants have PI(s) recognized by President during graduation festivities
- SPO facilitates meetings in which groups of faculty, staff and administrators meet to develop university-wide grant proposals
- SPO renamed to Sponsored Research Office and coordinator appointed as Director

Where we are now (challenges)



- Position of SRO within university hierarchy
 - Value of research to the academic enterprise
 - Authority to make decisions questioned by finance
- Maintain momentum of faculty
- Increasing financial pressure due to decreased state funds
 - Pressure to minimize administrative offices



Where we are now (success)

- Standardized pre-award & post-award process
- Submissions increased dramatically (200%) throughout the university
- Successful grants increased by 115%
- Sponsored research viewed more favorably by faculty and administrators
- Sponsored research expenditures increased to \$10.6 million
- Sponsored Research Office reports directly to VP of Academic Affairs



Personal growth

- Transition from faculty member to administrator is challenging both for the individual and the community
 - Leadership requires balancing values of university administration with university faculty to ensure both are acknowledged and modeled
- Change may not be linear
 - Adage – two steps forward; one step back
 - Politics between individuals both facilitates and inhibits change (sometimes simultaneously)
- Recognizing when it's better to push for change and when it's better to wait



Contact Information

ELLA TAYLOR, PH.D.

TAYLORE@WOU.EDU

503-838-8589

WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

345 MONMOUTH AVE. N.

MONMOUTH, OR 97361

WWW.WOU.EDU/SRO