

Leadership Task Force:
UNI Culture & Recognizing Leadership Initiatives Subcommittee
(Embedding a Leadership Model at UNI)

Executive Summary

Introduction:

The Leadership charge was encompassed by an overall task force and four subcommittees. The parent task force addressing UNI Culture and the subcommittee on Recognizing Leadership Initiatives experienced great overlap in content and approach. The work of these two groups is contained in this Executive Summary. The work of the other three leadership subcommittees (Employee Recognition, Diversity, and Process Improvement) is consistent and supportive of the overall direction expressed in this report.

I. The Charge:

- A. To help each employee understand his/her job, how to do it better, and to feel appreciated for doing it well.
- B. Create a common understanding of 'leadership.'
- C. Establish an approach that is systemic to the University now and in the future as developing strong leadership is not a one-time initiative.
- D. Encourage a leadership mindset and approach in all UNI employees by recognizing and rewarding leadership initiatives whenever and wherever they occur.

II. Approach to Task:

- A. Met twice a month from fall 2005 through the February 2006 Campus Conversation.
- B. Gathered and shared information from many sources related to leadership.
- C. Heard a presentation on UNI SOAR training.
- D. Discussed at length the current situation at UNI related to all employee attitudes toward their jobs, how leadership is included in those attitudes, barriers, etc.
- E. Tested thinking and sought input from others on campus.
- F. Established a working group to formulate a list of Employee Core Values.
- G. Gained and incorporated feedback from the Campus Conversation.

III. Findings & Recommendations - *Embedding a Leadership Model at UNI*

To establish an approach to leadership that is "systemic to the University," UNI needs to develop a leadership mindset with common concepts,

language, and expectations. This document describes our approach and recommendations and consists of the following:

A. Leaders & Leadership: Task Force View

1. UNI operates on a distributed leadership model under which entrepreneurship and collaboration are encouraged.
2. Leadership can result from the work of positional and non-positional Leaders.
3. Leaders and followers are both active participants in leadership.
4. Leadership is a relationship of influence, not coercion.
5. Consider “leadership acts” as part of our leadership language.
6. Since all lead and all follow, we focused on empowering all employees to prosper in an environment of distributed leadership, shared responsibility, outcome decision making, thoughtful cycles of improvement, shared vision, responsibility and strong shared values.
7. Shared leadership requires shared understanding. Shared understanding emanates from a common vocabulary based on identified values consistently applied.

B. Qualities of a UNI Employee

<u>HAVE:</u>	<u>VALUE:</u>	<u>ARE:</u>
Integrity	Each Other	Collaborative
Positive Attitude	Communication	Action-oriented
Pride	Empowerment of Others	Accountable
	Continuous Improvement	Inspiring
		Collaborative

C. Leadership Concepts and Definitions for UNI

***Note:** To establish a leadership that is systemic and a mindset that recognizes a broad range of leadership initiatives (the subcommittee’s charge), the University must have a perspective on leadership that is broad and inclusive. The linkage of a “leadership mindset and approach” to “recognizing and rewarding leadership initiatives whenever and wherever they occur” is more likely to occur if the conception of leadership is a relational and process one.*

1. Leader
At UNI, a leader is someone who takes the initiative to point a direction or assist a group in developing a direction and engages with others in an influence relationship of integrity and shared responsibility for a common purpose.

2. Leadership

At UNI, leadership is an ongoing interactive process of being, thinking, and behaving, whereby leaders and others are engaged in an influence relationship of integrity and shared responsibility for a common purpose.

3. Leadership Act

A "leadership act" is any behavior that points out a direction. For example, a custodian could suggest using a different cleaning fluid for a window, or an academic advisor could draft a different set of criteria for assigning advisors, a team member could encourage a group to listen to another team member's comments, or a faculty member could provide a department chair with ideas for increasing meeting attendance.

D. Preliminary Recommendations: Working toward a Culture of Empowered Leadership for All Employees - Embedding a Leadership Mindset at UNI

The Leadership Task Force is well aware that development of a leadership approach that is systemic is a long-term endeavor. A leadership mindset is the sum total of an institution's values, policies, procedures, behaviors, symbols, stories, etc. To accomplish the goal, UNI needs to be intentional in the creation of a leadership mindset and culture with all employees. The recommendations that follow reflect our thoughts so far on the strategies needed for this approach. The sub-points are intended to provide clarification of the concept not necessarily to be prescriptive.

1. Conceptual Foundations

Establish a conceptual foundation for a leadership mindset at UNI by doing the following:

- a. Create common concepts and a shared vocabulary for leadership. Engage the campus in a discussion to further define and refine the qualities and values of "leaders" and "leadership" for all UNI employees, including students.
- b. Develop a list of "qualities of a UNI Employee."
- c. Develop a list of "a leader is" examples from UNI employees in all employment categories to clarify our belief that leadership is for everyone.

2. Policy Development

Establish an ongoing system of campus input and engagement.

- a. Develop a cross-campus advisory (or policy) board to continue the work of the Leadership Task Force. Staff support for this advisory group would reside with Human Resource Services.

- b. Develop subcommittees as necessary to address and carry out specific recommendations and activities, for example:
 - i. Orientation.
 - ii. Personal and professional development for all employees.
 - iii. Personal and professional development for group-specific employees (faculty, P&S, merit, students).
- 3. On-Going Campus Conversation
Continue to engage faculty, P&S, merit, and student employees in on-going discussion of Campus Conversation activities. Each group would be represented on committees. The ongoing discussion could take many forms, e.g.:
 - a. Book discussion.
 - b. Annual conferences.
 - c. Panel discussions.
- 4. Education and Training
 - a. Formulate new and reformulate existing UNI training and education to teach and reinforce leadership values and skill sets.
 - b. Education/training could be for all employees as well as specific groups.
 - c. Provide modular skills sessions in multiple formats, e.g., in person and on line, to meet development needs.
- 5. Structural Support and Responsibility
The literature on leadership and on change makes it clear that support from the top is critical to the success of a change initiative.
 - a. The President's office should continue to bear primary responsibility for the on-going Campus Conversation and policy development.
 - b. The Leadership Advisory Group should report to the President.

6. Recognition
Provide ongoing and multiple recognitions for employees demonstrating the identified core values and leadership skills.
 - a. Work with existing employee recognition framework to identify elements specifically supportive of recognizing leadership.
7. Implement Structural and Policy Actions that Support and Encourage Embracing Effective Leadership Actions
 - a. Include appropriate language in job descriptions and hiring processes.
 - b. Reinforce core values in orientations for students and employees.
 - c. Include in annual performance evaluations for all employees.

Members of the Leadership UNI Culture Task Force

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