

Provost Fellow Review

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I have truly enjoyed my time spent over the past school year as a Provost Fellow. As I am still fairly new to the University, and also new to higher education so I found it very informative. It was a great opportunity to look 'behind the scenes' some and see how the University operates as a whole instead of only within my own department.

We Are Not Alone

When I first joined the College of Engineering and Computer Science as an Aviation Lecturer, I felt like we had a wide variety of departments that may not be very connected. As a fellow I was able to see the variation in other colleges as well. In particular I was able to get to know the College of Performing and Visual Arts as I was working with Dean Mendini. Her college may first appear very specialized until you are able to see how many different departments are contained within. This particular college includes departments from Acting to Graphic Design. This made me realize our own college departments may not be so different. As part of the aviation department in particular, I often felt as though we were one of the larger outliers of the college. Now as I look at other departments, I can see we may be a better fit than I originally thought and just need to make more connections. This is even more true with the addition of our new aircraft maintenance program.

Leadership

The timing of this fellowship opportunity also worked out well with my MIS degree that I completed last semester. One of my areas of emphasis for the degree was Leadership. Being able to observe some of the different departments and colleges and see some of the different leadership styles in action was very beneficial. This, combined with the opportunity I had to work with a selection committee for our new dean, gave me some real insight into how successful leadership is accomplished. I was also able to better identify some of the leadership traits in the candidates we were considering in the selection process.

The Future

My hope for the future of SUU is to see the various departments within each college, as well as within the University overall, come together in a more collaborative and unified way. As a new faculty member who came into higher education as an outsider, I have had a different perspective during my fellowship. As an aviation faculty member in particular it is easy to feel as if we are working outside of the University and also outside of our own College. I have also observed this in other departments as well, although maybe not as pronounced. I feel a larger effort to collaborate and work more interdisciplinary amongst the colleges and departments would improve the unity amongst faculty and staff and also carry over to the students. This could help the University overall in many ways, including faculty and student retention.

I am very appreciative of the chance I have had to work as a Provost Fellow for the past year, and more specifically with Dean Mendini from the College of Performing and Visual Arts. I appreciate all of the time and insights she has shared with me throughout this opportunity. The timing was also great because it has helped me get to know many others across campus and feel a bit more 'at home' here at SUU.