

Provost Faculty Fellow Reflection

My original goal when applying to be a Provost Faculty Fellow was to gain as much experience as possible in my first year as a department chair. I still feel relatively new to SUU and the impostor syndrome has not faded as much as I had hoped. In my new role as a department chair, I knew I would be faced with many new challenges with very little preparation or training. While happy to learn on the job, I thought adding the fellowship would accelerate my training by granting me access to a variety of levels of leadership from around campus. I have been fortunate to work with Associate Provost James Sage in my time as a Faculty Fellow. In addition to helping craft campus policy, I was able to join the Institutional Effectiveness Team. I was also able to observe the Institutional Leadership meetings attended by the Provost's office, Deans, and Associate Deans from around campus. I treated these experiences as a leadership boot camp while observing how leaders have conversations and make decisions both as a group and individually.

As a result of attending these meetings, I have identified two key aspects of leadership that I will focus on as my tenure as Department Chair continues. The first aspect is to attend all meetings with an inquisitive mind. I have often found myself as a passive member of meetings, regularly listening but lacking the appropriate engagement. As a result, it is possible, even likely that I missed valuable conversations and information. By treating each meeting as an opportunity to collect data, I need to be more engaged and inquisitive. By being more central to the conversation and by asking questions, I can be more confident in my collection of information. Second, is in regards to the information itself. There is a lot of it coming to all levels of administration. Leaders are faced with information from all angles and I have found it vital that I not fall prey to the anchoring heuristic in which I rely too heavily on the first bit of information that comes to me without getting the complete story. This may require delaying a decision or an announcement, but that is preferable to making decisions based on emotion or a lack of data due to a cognitive bias. I hope to improve on these aspects of my leadership while becoming a better communicator and advocate for my department.