Leadership: Mentoring Faculty, Staff and Students

Mentoring faculty, staff and students in leadership skills and techniques is a strategic investment in the school's future. Leadership training activities during this past year have taken several forms:

Individual Leadership Education Conferences – Eleven faculty and seven students participated in national educational and leadership conferences where they had the opportunity to expand their professional skills beyond traditional veterinary medicine disciplines. At the national level, they worked on concepts of leading change, emotional intelligence, teamwork, enhanced communication and media training. Participants also networked with colleagues from other veterinary institutions.

Strategy Champions – Dean Lairmore invited 48 faculty and staff to be strategic planning champions to lead, define and implement activities that support the seven strategic plan goals. The champions gathered in sessions to discuss team and network building, project concept development and communication skills to better prepare them to lead their teams. Ongoing leadership educational topics will be offered throughout the 5-year strategic planning initiative.

Existing Leaders – More than 25 faculty/professional staff already serving in leadership positions participated in an engaging series of leadership, communications, conflict resolution and influence building discussions. Presentations and group activities focused on six basic styles of leadership outlined in the Harvard Business Review article “Leadership that Gets Results.”

Faculty and Staff Leaders – The School is committed to developing faculty and staff leaders from its broad team of experts. Twenty-three faculty and 48 staff leaders were invited to participate in a 3-part series of leadership sessions.

The Seven Strategic Goals

- Educate world leaders in academic veterinary medicine
- Perform high-impact transdisciplinary research
- Develop cutting-edge clinical programs
- Promote animal and human well-being
- Maintain school infrastructure and sustainable resources
- Retain excellent faculty and staff
- Promote academic, government, industry collaboration

The first session explored the powerful effect that “mental models” have on the decision making process. Participants learned the science behind how past experiences, points of reference and interpretation influence behavior, and explored different leadership styles, communication strategies, and conflict management techniques. Awareness of these concepts enhances leadership effectiveness and helps to reduce obstacles to desired outcomes. A series of open lunchtime leadership seminars was launched to cover various topics such as: improving communications, making meetings more productive and managing time better. The School also strongly supports career growth opportunities of its faculty and staff related to the expansion of program needs. This past year individuals were identified to lead critical initiatives to advance animal health, promote department administrative duties, expand global programs and create a new career center.