Paul Butler’s Administrative Philosophy

Value Your Colleagues

As an administrator, the main tenet of my philosophy is, “Value your colleagues.” I believe the diverse individuals we work with are our most important resource, and I do everything possible to support them with my time, feedback, and encouragement.

Lead by Example

To be successful in leading others, we must be leaders. If I am asking others to help accomplish goals, I must set an example by being organized, working diligently, staying on course, and communicating regularly. As a leader, I should be respected as a mentor, teacher, and scholar.

Create a Vision for Your Program

It is essential to create a vision to serve as the compass for your efforts. You need an overall vision commensurate with the mission of the department to be able to advocate for and carry out your goals. One underlying tenet of any vision is to seek excellence in everything you do.

Set Goals and Assess Them

To effect administrative change, it’s necessary to set goals regularly—in conjunction with others—and to regularly assess or evaluate where you stand in terms of reaching those goals. Based on your assessment, it sometimes makes sense to change or redirect your original goals.

Collaborate

While writing program administrators are ultimately responsible for the decisions they make, it’s essential to collaborate with others in reaching decisions, in implementing and monitoring policies, and in winning “buy-in” for activities, decisions, policies, and procedures.

Be Transparent

As a leader, it’s crucial to set clear policies and to be consistent. Being transparent gives you a reputation for fairness, honesty, and efficiency. These elements are necessary for others to maintain confidence in a leader. They also enable you to be a strong advocate for your program.

Build Camaraderie

I believe in building a cohesive team through camaraderie. Formal meetings, informal gatherings, time spent reflecting together, and taking time to appreciate accomplishments all help build a collegial and supportive atmosphere in a program and department.
Be Accessible

As an administrator, I think it’s essential to be accessible to others both inside and outside the program. Therefore, I have an “open door” policy, which also serves as a metaphor for the type of environment I seek to maintain as a leader.

Maintain High Standards of Research

Like writing centers, writing programs should serve as important sites of research. It’s important to facilitate research and to encourage study of the program not only through assessment but also through other types of research activities.

Be Courageous

Sometimes being a leader is difficult because you have to make tough decisions with which others may disagree. It’s important to maintain your integrity at all times and to make decisions based on the best interests of the program. Thus, being an effective leader requires courage.