

Am I Ready For This?

Slide 2 - Welcome

Slide 3 – Overview of Session

Here is a quick overview of today's session

I want to spend a minute to discuss my approach to this session. Next, I will talk about how I came to be where I am today, and how servant leadership has come to shape my leadership experience, and how it applies to the library context

The team will introduce you to the team I work with, and how they, along with 2020 have shaped my leadership experience. I'll finish off with a couple of reflections, and there will be plenty of time in case any one has questions or comments

Slide 4 – Humans are not ideally...

- This is a little bit of a different kind of presentation
- The best way I felt I could convey this was through storytelling and talking about my experience
- While I will be talking about leadership (specifically servant leadership), adapting to being in a leadership role, while dealing with budget cuts and COVID, I am by no means an expert
- Despite styling this session in this manner, I want to hear about your experiences and stories. Please feel free to ask questions throughout the session, and even after the session. I will do my best to answer

Slide 5 – Background: Arriving to UCalgary

My journey to leadership was not one I anticipated

Slide 6 – My Path so far...

- CANWest conference at UCalgary a couple months prior to the job coming out. Was able to explore the campus as well as the TFDL and meet my future supervisor
- With minimal management experience I put in my application to UCalgary
- I left the interview extremely nervous at the prospect of being responsible for a team of 6.

Slide 7 – First exposure to Management and Leadership

- Never dreamed of being in a management or leadership role

- I have always viewed myself being in a support role, and doing front line/on-the-ground work
- I dislike telling people what to do, but prefer for them to have a say in their work so they have a meaningful connection to it
- This image was one of my first exposures to contemplating leadership (while scrolling through social media), and understanding there are different approaches to it
 - Quickly identified with the leader, and having a group work towards goals

Slide 8 – Servant Leadership

A week before moving to Calgary (two weeks before starting the position), a MLIS classmate met me for a meal. I was mentioning how I was nervous and felt like I knew nothing about my leadership style or how to lead a group. She mentioned Servant Leadership and encouraged me to take the time to look into it.

Slide 9 – The servant leader is servant first...

- I took a quick look at the Wikipedia page, found:

Servant leadership is a leadership philosophy in which the main goal of the leader is to serve. A servant leader shares power, puts the needs of the employees first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible. Servant leadership inverts the norm, which puts the customer service associates as a main priority. Instead of the people working to serve the leader, the leader exists to serve the people.

- My immediate thought was, yes! I can do this kind of leadership!
- The term Servant Leadership was coined in 1970 by Robert Greenleaf

Slide 10 – Characteristics of Servant Leadership

- As I have delved further into investigating Servant Leadership, I identified with many of the characteristics, and see their value/importance in the library setting (particularly on the service desk)
- Listening
 - Is active. Have to stop self from anticipating what is going to be said or coming up with what you are going to say next.
 - This is one that I constantly find myself in the middle of meetings forcing myself to pause, and reset my mind
- Empathy

- I added in emotional intelligence
- Emotional intelligence (EQ) combines self-awareness (understanding oneself) and empathy (the ability to feel and understand what others are feeling).
- Important to identify with the concerns of the team, and take them seriously. Acknowledge that we are all in this together
- Healing
 - Ensure that the priority needs of all are being met
- Awareness
 - Share knowledge (even if it is painful) is positive. It is worse to keep people in the dark
 - Assists with Change Management
- Persuasion
 - Convince people of ideas, not pulling rank. Building consensus is key
 - Leader takes the risk of going out ahead. Allots the autonomy of both the leader and follower
- Conceptualization
 - Thinking beyond the day-to-day function of the organization and keep long term goals in mind
- Foresight
 - View the likely outcome of a given situation combining lessons from past, present and future
- Stewardship
 - Entrusted with the talents, skills and resources of the staff and organization
- Commitment to the Growth of People
 - Nurture the growth of coworkers
 - View staff as having an intrinsic value
- Community Building
- This has changed over the years, recently in 2005 it is now Vision, Humility, Trust, Empowerment, Love

Slide 11 – How does Servant Leadership apply to the library context

- Reframing - “this lesson boils down to not just knowing yourself in general but knowing yourself on a given day.” (Moniz, 2010)
 - It is okay to have bad days
 - Have to be attuned to how you are feeling throughout the day
 - Metacognition and Self-Awareness

Slide 12 - How does Servant Leadership apply to the library context

Slide 13 - How does Servant Leadership apply to the library context

- Service learning – in the 1980s educators began to write about the linkage between the servant-leader concept and experiential learning under a new term called “service-learning.” It is service-learning that has become a major focus for experiential education programs
 - Learning on the frontline is critical
- “Treat People with dignity/respect”
 - Such a simple concept, especially when it comes to library users
 - It can be easily forgotten in the workplace, and treating one’s self with dignity and respect is important

Slide 14 – The Team

Slide 15 – Team Composition

- Aside from 2 members of the team starting 3-6 months prior to me, the rest of the team have been with the University anywhere from 10-35 years
- This does not include our Student Assistant Team, and Peer Roamers
- Leeanne made it extremely clear how important connection and relationships were for the team

Slide 16 – Integrating into the Team

Without realizing it, I started implementing servant-leadership techniques.

I didn’t walk in expecting to be able to change the work environment and culture. However, it did not mean that I had to accept it for what it was. It takes time for them to morph and change.

I was told I was going to have to hit the ground running. It felt as though employees were anticipating lots of decisions and changes to be made as soon as I arrived. I was uncertain about what changes I could or was allowed to make

I spent the first 3-6 months trying to learn about my area.

- Community Building

- Out of Office Adventure Time
 - Mini golf, pottery painting
- One-on-One Meetings
 - One on one meetings were extremely important in getting to know about each team member's work and goals, but to learn about them on a personal level
- Vulnerability
 - "Asking for help shows vulnerability and helps to build trust. Leaders are more likely to trust their team if the team asks for help, yet leaders are hesitant to ask for help" (Rising Strong, Brene Brown, 5:58:00)
 - I was not afraid to ask for help and to say I don't know
- Placing large amounts of trust in individuals
 - Asking for their guidance and perspective
 - Had them tell me what they believe should be the focus for projects in our area
- Lead by Example
 - Determined to lead by example
 - Cross Training (when giving a staff member a new task, I also want to learn the task/process, so if there are questions I can try to assist them)
 - Know enough so when they ask a question I can understand, and can pose the question to someone else (or solve the problem between the two of us)

Slide 17 – Integrating into the Team

- Empathy & Emotional Intelligence
 - Listening is such an important skill
 - When someone is experiencing a difficulty, find that the majority of the time they don't need a solution, they need someone to listen
 - Making space and time
 - Through one-on-one meetings
 - Originally we used to meet monthly (pre-pandemic)
 - Would touch base as we walk past each other in the office, or taking over a service point
 - Some of the team meet weekly, others biweekly
 - Let them set the timing, and see if my schedule can accommodate

- Motivation
 - Try to provide opportunities for new exciting projects
 - The librarians are always finding new ways to get the team included
 - Just because someone has a skillset for a project, doesn't mean someone else can't help them/or do the job
 - Practicum students
 - Reinvigorate and energize the team
 - Students are encouraged to challenge us on how we do things
 - Meetings
 - Touching base helps, they can seek clarification if they are lost

Slide 18 – What makes this team great?

Stories are what connected me with the team. They want to connect with you on a personal level, and want you to connect with them on the same level

They are an open and tight-knit group. They are the party planners, small occasion or big occasion celebrators, just and excuse to have a party kind of group

Slide 19 – The year was 2020...

Slide 20 – Timeline of Events

- Layoffs
 - Lots of concern and worry about an in-year cut, which got people concerned in November and concern built in December
 - Had many discussions with the team (group and one-on-one), to let them talk about their concerns
 - Lots of time spent with emotional labor, and not knowing what was going to happen
 - Came to the realization that there was nothing I could do, but could listen and empathize
 - Staff wanted to feel heard and get worries off of their chests
 - Mid-January is when the layoffs happened
 - The fulfillment department was impacted, and still trying to prepare course reserves etc

- Not that you are being selfish, but you are looking after yourself, so you can assist others later
- Listen to the little voice inside; don't doubt it
- Regular and honest communication
 - Tell your team as much information as you can
 - helps to manage the grapevine