The Council of Independent Colleges

Creating **Tomorrow's Institutions**, Together

2026 Institute for Chief Academic Officers with Chief Advancement, Enrollment, Financial, and Marketing Communication Officers

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Leading With Intention: Developing Team as a Strategic Imperative

Dr. Steven E. Titus, VP and Executive Coaching Practice Leader, Academic Search
Dr. Lynn Bongiovanni, Provost and Dean of Faculty, University of Mount Saint Vincent

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Welcome and Pause

For Leaders Who Hold Power

John O'Donohue



Session Intention

To create the space and holding container for deeper, richer, and honest conversation about the joys, challenges, and practices of forming, leading, and sustaining effective and healthy leadership teams.

Hoped For Outcomes

1. Insight – What am I noticing?
2. Diagnosis – What's real & What's possible?
3. Confirmation & Commitment – 1 thing
4. Grace – Development over evaluation




"I don't want to change. I want all of you to change!"


Who wants change?
Who wants *to* change?
Who wants *to* ***lead the*** change?


PROFITS
SALES
"What if we don't change at all ...
and something magical just happens?"

“My Best Team”

- The best team I have ever been a member of is…
- It was the best because…
  - Qualities, characteristics, behaviors, beliefs, etc. – be specific
- In 1-3 words, being on this team made me feel…



From the Field



Your Team Diagnostic

On a Scale of 1 (Low) to 5 (High) Rank:

1. Level of TRUST among team members.
2. How and/or whether the team engages or avoids CONFLICT.
3. Team members' COMMITMENT to the mission and the work.
4. Level of ACCOUNTABILITY among the team.
5. The effectiveness of the team to achieve desired RESULTS.



Unpacking 5 Behaviors Team Model



From The 2006 Linkage Excellence in Management & Leadership Series: Building and Leading a High-Performance Team, Patrick Lencioni

1. Absence of trust

This occurs when team members are reluctant to be vulnerable with one another and are unwilling to admit their mistakes, weaknesses or needs for help. Without a certain comfort level among team members, a foundation of trust is impossible.

2. Fear of conflict

Teams that are lacking on trust are incapable of engaging in unfiltered, passionate debate about key issues, causing situations where team conflict can easily turn into veiled discussions and back-channel comments. In a work setting where team members do not openly air their opinions, inferior decisions are the results.

3. Lack of commitment

Without conflict, it is difficult for team members to commit to decisions, creating an environment where ambiguity prevails. Lack of direction and commitment can make employees, particularly star employees, disgruntled.

4. Avoidance of accountability

When teams don't commit to a clear plan of action, even the most focused and driven individuals hesitate to call their peers on actions and behaviors that may seem counterproductive to the overall good of the team.

5. Inattention to results

Team members naturally tend to put their own needs (ego, career development, recognition, etc.) ahead of the collective goals of the team when individuals aren't held accountable. If a team has lost sight of the need for achievement, the business ultimately suffers.


High Performance Team
Dysfunctional Team
Outstanding and recurring team results
Highly motivated and engaged team
Inattention to Results
Poor performance and results
High team turnover
Poor performers are managed and held accountable
Same standard apply to everyone
Avoidance of Accountability
Missed deadlines and key deliverables
Poor performance is tolerated and creates environment of resentment
Buy in and alignment on common objectives
Clear direction and priorities
Highly engaged team members
Lack of Commitment
Ambiguous direction and priorities
Revisit discussion again and again
Absenteeism
Confront problems and issues quickly
Develop practical solutions
Get input from team members, minimal politics
Fear of Conflict
Go around problems
Do not confront tough issues or behaviours
Lack of transparency drives confusion
Safe environment to speak up
Team members help each other
Leverage strengths for the team
Lack of Trust
Hesitate to ask for help
Conceal weakness
Dread meetings and avoid team members
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Characteristics of a High-Performing Team (HPT)

- **Clear goals** tied to team & institutional priorities
- Understand how its work **advances the mission**
- **Defined** roles and responsibilities
- **Communicate** clearly and respectfully
- Thrive on **two-way feedback**

Source: Quantum Workplace

Characteristics of HPT Members

- Work and deadlines managed around priorities
- Feel aligned and connected
- Trust and respect each other
- Celebrate success together and recognize contributions
- Practice continuous learning
- Balance short-term priorities with long-term growth

Source: Quantum Workplace



A Strengths-Based Team

A group of imperfect [and] talented contributors who are valued for their strengths and who need one another to realize individual, team, and institutional excellence.

A Strength-Based Team



Play to their ***strengths***.



Share a common mission and purpose.



Understand and appreciate that he or she is great at some things and not very good at others.



Are aware of each other's ***talent filters***.

A Strength-Based Team

- Members of strong teams are as **committed to their personal lives as they are to their work.**
- Strong teams are aware of each other's strengths.
- Strong teams **embrace diversity** (difference is an advantage).
- Strong teams are **magnets for talent.**



Questions to Consider

- Do we trust each other?
- Is it safe to disagree?
- Are we all on the same page?
- Are we keeping our standards high?
- Do we put team results before our personal status?
- Have we clarified our principles of engagement/operating principles?
- Have we clarified the role and purpose of our team?

Takeaways, Commitments, and Gratitude