I’m pleased to be here to share some thoughts about LEADERSHIP!!

I learned the hard way but then attended a leadership academy (mention Heifetz book)

I don’t like cookbook approaches to leadership – and that’s why the Heifetz book is so good.

LEADERSHIP ISN’T ABOUT WHAT YOU DO BUT ABOUT WHO YOU ARE. IT’S NOT A JOB YOU DO WHEN YOU GET UP IN THE MORNING, BUT ABOUT YOUR APPROACH TO THINGS.

IT INVOLVES CHARACTER MORE THAN STRATEGY, RESPECT AND SACRIFICE MORE THAN POWER AND PERSONAL GAIN.

LEADERS DO ONE MAJOR THING. THEY EMPOWER OTHERS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS.

The bad news: Only some of what you learned throughout your career prepared you for this position!

The good news: You are getting an opportunity that few others before you have gotten!! Plus, being a chair/director is probably the most important position in the University – and
we’re trying to do a much better job of preparing people for it and incentivizing people to do it!

If you see your role as a chair or director as a distraction from what you really want to be doing (research), you need to recalibrate.

When you are a leader, it’s not about you but about others.

People look to you for three things: Direction, protection, and resources

Must understand the difference between leadership and management.

**Management** applies known solutions to problems and is about coping with COMPLEXITY. Like directing an MS thesis – the process.

**Leadership** identifies solutions when none exist and is about coping with CHANGE. It empowers and directs people to achieve a common goal when pathways to progress don’t exist or are not obvious. 9-11 is an example.

Leadership can be exercised with FORMAL or INFORMAL authority. Trust, being on the front lines.
As a leader, you must

- See the big picture and help others see it as well, though without trying to take them out of their natural role as a professor
- See all sides of the situation and clarify the issue at hand
- Motivate people toward developing a common goal. Management pushes people in the direction YOU want them to go. Leadership motivates people by satisfying their basic human need to achieve and be recognized and to solve problems
- Protect every voice and don’t let any one person or group dominate
- Empower younger people to take the lead
- Manage the stress of the environment and provide a safe place for people to discuss difficult challenges
- Avoid the temptation to provide a “quick fix” rather than dealing with underlying issues and challenges.
- Realize you can’t make everyone happy, and if your goal is to minimize distress and disequilibrium, then you’re just maintaining the status quo. Leadership involves dealing with real, important issues and not being afraid of distress – but also knowing HOW to manage it!!
- Communicate in a way not that pleases people, but rather is consistent with what you’ve been told and motivates
people to action. Don’t turn a positive message into a negative.

- Keep cool and be the voice of reason and balance
- Realize that YOU aren’t the one to do the work, but to align others toward a common goal and empower them to do the work needed to achieve it!

Some common challenges in being a chair

- The many distractions of small things and not having an opportunity to deal with the big things (but realize that it’s often the small things that no one sees that leads to the big things everyone wants)
- Letting 10% of the challenges or people take 90% of your time
- Never having enough resources. Make this a motivation rather than an excuse. The National Weather Center didn’t always exist here!!
- Focusing on what’s wrong rather than what’s right and can be made even better. In this country, we faced impossible challenges after WWII but passed the GI Bill and invested massively in research
- Trying to make everyone happy
- Blaming others for your missteps because you don’t want to look bad
• Thinking too narrowly about your own programs and activities instead of thinking about where you fit institutionally, nationally and internationally. I once had a chair tell me that understanding my budget and our limitations wasn’t his job. Well, he was wrong!

We all have to work together. And the LEADERSHIP TEAM TODAY IS THE STRONGEST IT’S BEEN in my 30 years at OU.

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY