Personal Leadership in Tertiary Education: will I be there when it matters?

Phil Ker, HERDSA, July 2010
Who Comes To Mind When You Think About Leadership?

- Leadership gurus?
- Successful business leaders?
- Politicians?
- A colleague?

Someone who has made a difference …
What Is Leadership?

• “Leaders are people who do the right things”
  - Professor Warren Bennis
• Not something just for managers
• An essential career competency
• Leaders are made not born
• Not anyone can lead
Why Do We Need More Leadership?

• Challenge 1: Funding
• Challenge 2: Educational performance
• Challenge 3: Value for money
• Challenge 4: Rapidly changing technology
• Challenge 5: Changing generational expectations of what is important
• Challenge 6: Doing more with less
Meeting These Challenges Requires Leadership At Two Levels

• Leadership in “pushing back”
  – shifting the debate to what we can do rather than what we can’t do
  – ending our silence
  – harnessing the internet

• Leadership of change
  – doing better by our learners
  – challenging the taken for granted
  – real grass roots leadership
Back To The Essence Of Leadership

• Positively influencing people and events
  – anticipate and plan for change
  – envision better futures
  – deal with difficult and challenging situations

• Helping others to change and cope with change
  – being positive
  – fostering trust and openness
  – motivating through enthusiasm
What Is Needed For Grass Roots Leadership To Develop?

• First – want to be a leader
  – stand up and be counted
  – see the cup as half full
  – be generous
  – avoid the ‘valley of excuses’, “it is always your fault”
  – be willing to try new things and hear new ideas
  – deliver on your promises
  – own up when you have got it wrong
What Is Needed For Grass Roots Leadership To Develop?

- Second – develop the necessary skills
  - learn how to learn and be a lifelong learner
  - be personally effective
  - become action oriented and result focused
  - learn how to lead yourself
Leadership Is Developed By Practising Leadership

• through passion, energy, vision and focus leaders encourage the same in others
• by standing for things worth doing leaders inspire others to pursue doing what is worth doing
• by seeing things in new or different ways leaders bring about real improvement
Developing As A Leader Is A Never Ending Journey

• constant self evaluation of your capabilities
• renewing self knowledge – especially of your strengths and a focus on using these
• learning from mistakes in self and in others
What Can Our Organisations Do To Improve Grass Roots Leadership?

- create the environment for leadership to flourish
- provide staff with development opportunities to learn about themselves and to develop personal effectiveness
- have expectations of and create opportunities for staff to practise leadership
- develop a culture of openness where critique is welcome and alternative views can be expressed
Bringing It All Together

• I would like to leave you with five simple points of reference:
  – we live in challenging times
  – in such times we need strong leadership to do the right things
  – we cannot afford for that leadership to reside only with our managers
  – so we need grass roots leadership
  – we need YOU
THANK YOU

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