Building Esprit de Corps in your Faculty

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CSE
CSE- A Case Study

• Anecdotal Evidence
  – Big advantage: Starting from scratch (1968)
  – Greatest Challenge: Continuous growth (1 FTE per year on average over 35+ years)

• Not a recipe for success
  – You don’t “mandate” esprit de corps
  – You don’t impose a culture

• Some helpful hints (hopefully)
Early Years Defined the Culture

• Small Faculty → Collegiality
  – Social gatherings (ski outings, “pit party” etc.)
  – Open door policy (all fac. offices have same key)
  – Collaboration among subdisciplines
• Motto: “Hire someone better than ourselves”
  – Or “Hire someone to better ourselves”
    • new area vs. consolidation of strength, diversity
  – How to fit in important in the hiring process
    • Did not hire a “superstar” because of personality concerns
The Challenge of Growth

- Integrating, mentoring, and advising new faculty
  - Very serious "friendly" reviews from year 1 on
  - Sharing of expertise (e.g., grant writing)
  - No administrative load for junior faculty
- Lack of space required sacrifice from "old" faculty
  - Common misery (not recommended!)
  - No "jealousy"
- Large infrastructure grant involving almost all faculty
In Two Words: Remove Barriers

- Hierarchical
- Physical
- Discipline-wise
No Pulling Rank

- No rank hierarchy unless mandated (promotion and tenure)
- Involve junior faculty in all important decisions
  - Hiring (one person, one vote)
  - Executive Committee (elected)
  - Teaching review of Senior Faculty
- Total consensus not required but “large majority”
  - Can be draining but worthwhile
- The Chair must communicate, communicate, communicate
  - Some decisions are (must be) unpopular
No Segregation Between Subfields

• No formal “group”
• Mixing of offices
  – By rank and by subfield
• A fair amount of co-advising of graduate students
• A fair amount of co-sponsored cross-discipline quarter-long seminars
Social Interactions

• Monthly Faculty Lunch
  – Half-social, half-“work” (e.g., review of subfield)
• Celebrations
  – Annual holiday party (skits)
  – Etc.
• Involve graduate students and staff
  – Work hard – Play hard
Conclusion

• Quoting from Lou Gerstner
  “You can’t simply give a couple of speeches … and declare that the new culture has taken hold. You can’t mandate it, can’t engineer it. What you *can* do is create the conditions for transformation. …In fact, in the end, management doesn’t change culture. Management invites the workforce itself to change the culture.”