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TEACHING & LEARNING

Building Negotiation and Leadership Skills in Management Students

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As most faculty begin the academic year, the search for innovative experiential exercises and unique approaches to enhancing the student classroom experience takes on new energy. In this issue of *OMJ*, the Teaching & Learning section offers two interesting approaches to classroom learning. One of the articles is an experiential exercise designed to build principled negotiation skills, while the second article examines the experiences of student teaching assistants (TAs) in supporting student leadership development.

In the first article, "Riverton Press: An Exercise in Principled Negotiation," written by Joe Seltzer, students are provided an opportunity to build their negotiations skills through a two-person role-play that uses a principled negotiation approach. As an alternative to standard position-based negotiations that focus on self, the principled negotiation process seeks mutual gains that meet the needs and interests of both sides while maintaining positive relationships (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011). In this exercise, students take on the roles of two business partners who are in the process of dividing the assets of their jointly owned printing and publishing business. The negotiation plans developed by small groups of students for use in the role-play adopt principled negotiation techniques. Negotiation skills are an important management competency, and the exercise enables the development of these skills through experiential learning. Principled negotiations can be used to solve complex problems and effectively position managers and their companies for the future through the development of positive personal and professional relationships.

The second article, "Middle Managers of the Leadership Classroom: Realizing the Developmental Capacity of Teaching Assistants," written by Lisa Rosh and Timothy J. Tobin, examines the roles and experiences of TAs in supporting student

leadership development. The authors provide unique insight into the perceptions of exemplar TAs as they enact their role in a program designed to develop leadership competencies in business students. The TAs conceptualized their role as "middle managers," independent of professors and students, while serving as a bridge between the two groups. Although the TAs saw their primary responsibility as cultivating student leadership skills, they focused much of their energy on maintaining system stability, particularly through their roles as communicators and liaisons. Understanding how the TAs perceived their role in relational leadership interventions is important for faculty members who develop similar programs, and the authors propose guidelines for the use of TAs in these developmental relationship roles.

Managers must draw from multiple skill sets as they navigate the complexity of the global business environment. Developing competency in negotiations, particularly principled negotiations that have the potential to maintain positive relationships into the future, is an important aspect of student education. Development of leadership skills is certainly important, and the role of TAs in this process has great potential in the classroom experience. Equally important are the learning opportunities afforded the TAs as communicators, liaisons, and system stabilizers in their middle manager roles. The two articles appearing in the Teaching & Learning section of this edition of *OMJ* offer unique insights into the development of important management skills in our business students.

REFERENCE

Fisher, R., Ury, W., & Patton, B. (2011). *Getting to yes: Negotiation agreement without giving in* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Penguin.

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