Being a Good Citizen and Leader in your Institution

Christopher Sonnenday, MD, MHS
The Darrell A. Campbell, Jr., MD, Collegiate Professor of Transplant Surgery
Surgical Director of Liver Transplantation
Associate Chair for Clinical Affairs
Disclosures

• No disclosures
Citizenship
What is Citizenship?

Citizenship implies duty and obligation in return for inclusion in the greater group.

“With greatness comes great responsibility.” Winston Churchill
Citizenship 101: The basics

AKA... how to stay off your chairperson’s radar

• Sign notes and bill on time
• Complete resident and student evaluations
• Attend department meetings, M&M regularly
• Treat those who support your work – administrative assistants, advanced practice providers, nursing staff, clerical staff, maintenance staff – impeccably
• ”I’m too busy” is not an excuse
Citizenship 201: Service

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is 'What are you doing for others?'"

-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Service commitments are necessary for the good of the group, but may offer little direct benefit to the participant. In the best teams and cultures, these commitments are shared equally.
How do you decide which service commitments to take on?

Ground rules:

1. Enjoy the honeymoon period.
2. Never more than 1-2 at a time.
3. Accept these opportunities gratefully, but with a term limit.
4. Service commitments to prioritize:
   a) Service aligns with career goals
   b) Service aligns with goals of a key mentor or your team
Citizenship: Who do you represent?

Remember that from this day forward you not only represent yourself, you represent:

• Your partners
• Your mentors
• Your subspecialty
• Your department
• Surgery
Remember who you represent

Don’t play hospital games

• Speak with people directly
• Do not resolve conflicts in the chart or loudly in the hallway
• If you are asked to be involved, follow through
• Don’t rely on previous systems
Leadership is intentional

- A focus on what needs to be done
- A focus on developing self
- A focus on developing people

Intentional Leadership
Consider this...

• Training in academic surgery may not prepare you to effectively lead multidisciplinary teams outside of the operating room.

• In fact... Training in academic surgery may prevent you from effectively leading multidisciplinary teams outside of the operating room.
Traditional leadership in surgery

- Titles valued more than opportunities
- Means to an end...

Leaders chosen because:
- busiest clinician
- most RO1s

Traditional hierarchy
“Boardroom” decision-making

Cult of personality
Accountable to individual
Follow your passion

People with great passion can make the impossible happen.
Passion is the antidote

• Clinical medicine is hard.

• Patients and team members will judge you by your passion for your work.

• Inspiration and innovation don’t appear when you are coasting.
Test your authenticity

Does my team recognize me as the most passionate and committed member?

“Surgeons should inspire others. They must keep the spirit and mission of the team at the forefront”

Shon Dwyer, MBA, RN
Executive Director University Hospital/CVC
Michigan Medicine
Authenticity and trust

Competency-based trust
- Clinical skill
- New knowledge
- Teaching ability
- Citizenship

Character-based trust
- Trust is earned every day with patients and team members.
Common threats to authenticity

- You move heaven and earth to make a meeting with your boss, but cancel meetings with team members at the slightest conflict and at late notice.

- You treat patients, medical students, nurses, team members differently when your attending is present.

- Imposing your ideas without feedback, but dismissing team member suggestions without a trial.

- Appearing too busy to be approachable.

- Allowing a senior or expert team member to violate team rules or abuse other members.
Leadership in the era of inclusion

Credit: Susan Pitt @susieQP8
Inclusive leadership

• All voices deserve to be heard

• Contribution to your team should not be a competition

• LISTEN

• SPEAK UP
“The standard you walk past is the standard you accept. That goes for all of us, but especially for those who have a leadership role.”
Pay attention to how leadership is granted

• Leadership need to reflect the teams they lead

• Selection processes need to be transparent and reproducible

• Sometimes the best thing to do may be to get out of the way
3 Essential Leadership Lessons
Three essential leadership lessons

1. Learn the difference between success and fulfillment.
Success and Fulfillment

Success is an iceberg

Never forget that success is defined by others and is often an illusion.

Seek fulfillment.
Three essential leadership lessons

1. Learn the difference between success and fulfillment.

2. Learn the difference between confidence and courage.
Confidence and Courage

Confidence is the sense of calm you gain through practice and repetition.

Courage is doing the right thing despite fear and unfamiliarity.

COURAGE is being scared to death, but saddling up anyway.
- John Wayne
Three essential leadership lessons

1. Learn the difference between success and fulfillment.

2. Learn the difference between confidence and courage.

3. Protect yourself.
Protect yourself

- Family is similar to clinical medicine:
  - Daily work
  - Authenticity

- Put important family commitments on your calendar – and protect them unapologetically

- Escape when you can – work will find you
Thank you
Chris Sonnenday
Email: csonnend@umich.edu
Twitter: @HPB_Txp_Surg