Developing Networks for Academic Leadership Development

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Outcomes

- Understand the central value of networks to your development as an academic leader

- Start to build a personalized plan to develop your educational leadership network

Leadership Development Experiences of Department Chairs at a Canadian University

How do department chairs develop their leadership capacity?

Qualitative case study * 17 semi-structured interviews

94% had a mentor

100% were mentors

Entering Leadership Roles

[my department chair] said that he felt that I would potentially be good in the role … I had individual meetings with other department heads who were encouraging me to apply … also, I called a number of different people in my network who've had senior leadership positions…and uniformly everywhere I turned I was getting the green light that this was a good thing for me to do and to strongly consider doing … the support was overwhelming. People would come to me and say, "We really support you to do this." And that helped me a lot to think, "okay, I'm making the right decision" because I did feel huge amounts of support and still do.
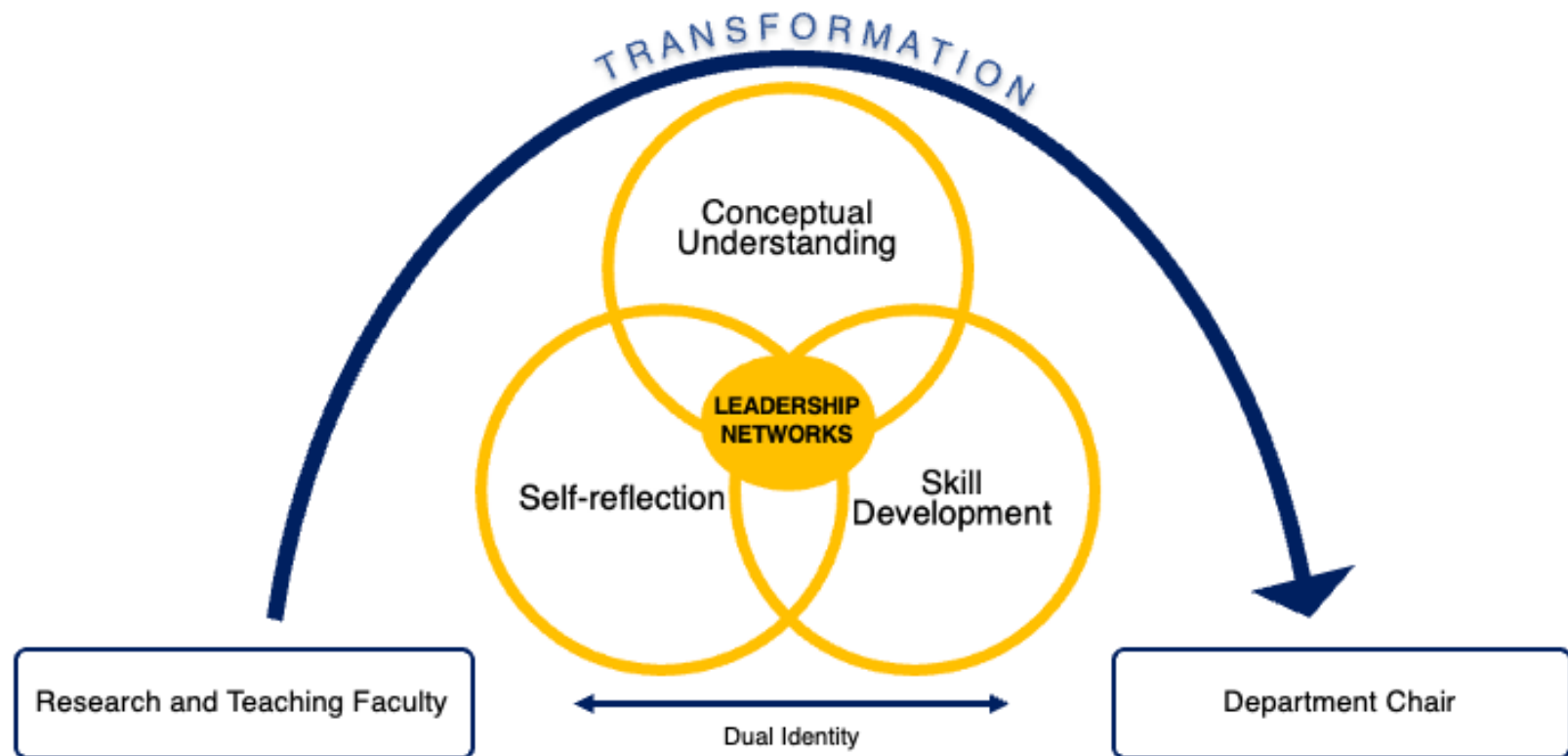
Developing New Skills

The [formal] course really helped me understand myself as a leader while the [network] was really sort of more practical. It really helped me in terms of intrapersonal relationships and communication with the members of the department. I found it really helpful in terms of "okay, the difficult conversations are going to be there; it's part of your job. How do you handle them effectively? How do you handle a person who's disruptive in a meeting? How do you handle the person who never contributes when they're on a committee or in a meeting? How do you draw them in?" So, learning strategies for dealing with these situations mostly came from the [network] stuff and [the learning] was really helpful.

Critical Reflection

When I'm with my department head colleagues, that's when I observe their styles of leadership and the problems that they're having and that's when I sort of start reflecting on "How would I handle that issue? Have I developed in a way that would allow me to handle that situation or not? Is there a way that I could do it differently? So, at the moment when I'm with that group of colleagues, that's when I start to reflect [about my leadership practice].

TRANSFORMATION

Conceptual
Understanding

LEADERSHIP
NETWORKS

Self-reflection

Skill
Development

Research and Teaching Faculty

Dual Identity

Department Chair

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A Rewarding Experience

I am enormously grateful to be here. This is the best job I've ever had.
Period.