

University Team Initiative

JUNE 2003 NEWSLETTER



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JOIN THE UNIVERSITY TEAM INITIATIVE!

Get On The Team!

- Participate in the Team Building Effort!
- Tell us what's happening
- Attend events
- Send us articles
- **Get involved!**

PRESIDENT KERREY

In an in depth interview, President Kerrey shares his views on Leadership at New School University with members of the University Team Initiative.

What is your vision of leadership within New School University?

I want to see New School University as a place where we strive to develop our employees into leaders who then in turn help empower other people to become leaders. My belief is that in order to increase the capacity to get things done, you have to increase the number of people involved in decision-making. It's not to say we have to have 100% consensus to make a decision, but we want people to feel that their input is valuable and respected so leadership naturally develops. We want people to learn to become comfortable with making decisions.

A good example is what happened in the aftermath of September 11th. There were thousands of things to get done without any one person saying, "Get it done." People saw what needed to be done and quickly moved towards doing what was necessary. People worked in teams. People got things done. Even though there wasn't a model to follow and things weren't written out, people took responsibility to make decisions, take action, and work cooperatively.

My vision for New School University is for it to become a place where we build people up to have real authority to solve day to day practical problems that we are facing, and to do this in a spirit of cooperation with others.

How can these ideas be put into practice?

You have to increase communication. And the best way to start doing that is not just telling people what to do, but by listening to what people have to say. You have to have the confidence, the belief, in other human beings as people who are confident and capable of making good decisions. And you have to trust that these decisions are being made based on strong values that are important to the individual and the organization.

You also have to understand that most people want to do a good job and they respond well to knowing that a job was done well. There's a satisfaction from getting positive feedback about your work from others, especially from people in leadership roles. So leaders have to let the people who work for them know when they do well.

But you have to also be honest in giving constructive feedback. There's no benefit in only giving positive feedback. If someone isn't performing to standards, this has to be brought to that person's attention. However, feedback needs to be given in a way that truly respects the other person. If a person does a job that is 80% right and 20% off the mark, this has to be conveyed to that person but in a way that conveys you will work together to help fix that 20%. People need to feel that they can trust their leaders for honest feedback given in a nurturing way.

Leadership is about relationships. A strong leader likes people and wants to work in a way that helps maintain a

positive environment for human interactions. That's why we need to focus on values as much as we focus on someone's work history and skills. It's important that someone has the credentials needed to get the job done. But it is also important that the person has values such as trustworthiness, honesty, consideration, and kindness that help others develop into strong employees, good team players, and eventually leaders. Again, a simple thing such as listening with interest and respect helps others see you as a leader and encourages people to take risks and a more active role in their work environment.

So in saying all that, we look for these characteristics, these values, when doing searches and in promoting people. Being a leader is easier for people who have had good leadership. People can still learn from negative leadership styles, as in what not to do. But by having as many leaders throughout the university as possible, we help ensure that employees grow to their fullest potential as employees, as leaders, and as people.

How would you best describe your leadership style?

Well, I've just done a good job of describing the qualities of a good leader and I like to think I have these qualities. I certainly strive to have them. My goal is to create an environment where people are confident in making decisions, and where everyone feels that they are an important part of the university.

What are some of your leadership goals for developing strong supervisors, managers, and directors within New School University?

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TEAMWORK DISCUSSIONS

The University Team Initiative is pleased to announce a new series of discussions on the topic of Teamwork.

Starting in June, Team members will facilitate an open discussion on various topics from John Maxwell's works "The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork" and "The 17 Essential Qualities of a Team Player." Both books will be on hold at the Fogleman Library. Individuals interested in participating in the discussions are welcome to borrow the books as preparation for the discussion. Below is a list of upcoming topics.

Enthusiasm – June 25, 2003. 11am – 12pm

Commitment – July 23, 2003. 12pm – 1pm

Law of the Compass – August 20, 2003. 1pm – 2pm

All discussions will meet in the Machinist Room at 65 Fifth Avenue in the Graduate Faculty Building.

For information about this series of discussions you can go to our website at www.newschool.edu/admin/team or contact Debra Rhymes or Cheryl Welcome of Human Resources via email. These discussions are open to everyone, please come out and join us.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

"There is more in us than we know. If we can be made to see it, perhaps, for the rest of our lives, we will be unwilling to settle for less."

*-Kurt Hain (1886-1974)
Founder, Outward*

Bound

"When I got cut from the varsity teams as a sophomore in high school, I learned something. I knew I never wanted to feel that bad again. I never wanted to have that taste in my mouth, that hole in my stomach. So I set a goal of becoming a starter on the varsity."

*-Michael Jordan
Pro basketball superstar*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

University Teamwork Survey

The University Team Initiative needs your support as we move forward on our goal to identify and gather information about teamwork at the university. We hope you will support us in this effort by linking to the survey below.

www.newschool.edu/admin/team

Roving Reporter

Ever think you missed your calling as a journalist? Are you knowledgeable about what's going on in the University? Do you want to see articles about what you feel are exciting and interesting activities here at the New School? Then become a Roving Reporter! In each issue of the University Team Initiative Newsletter we will feature an article written by a member of the New School staff. Please submit ideas and articles to Nicole Drayton, 55 West 13th Street 7th Floor. Email: Draytonn@newschool.edu Phone: 229-2662 ext. 257

4 IDEAS TOP BOSSES KNOW AREN'T TRUE

The best leaders know that life is easier and results are better when they respect their team members. Here are four morale killers they've learned to reject:

"I'm smarter than the people who report to me."

Titles don't signal intelligence, just authority. Experienced team members usually know what works and what doesn't. You can avoid a lot of mistakes by asking for input from workers.

"I'm entitled to special perks."

Certain privileges come with authority. But that doesn't mean you can flaunt them. Use your perks sparingly and choose more often than not to receive the same treatment as the team.

"No one will notice my mistakes."

Smart bosses know when they've done something wrong, and they're not afraid to admit it openly. Your vulnerability makes you seem more accessible to team members. And you'll model the behavior you expect when they make errors of their own.

"I don't have to work as hard as my team members."

If anything, you need to work harder * and smarter. Most of your team members take pride in the quality of their work. Spur them to greater leading with your example.

PRESIDENT KERREY INTERVIEW (CONTINUED)

As I said, a major goal is to increase confidence amongst our employees. A related goal is to have everyone stand behind a shared vision of wanting New School University to become as great a place as possible. We have goals for the university as a whole in important areas such as academic research and community programming. And we have extremely high standards of excellence for these areas. So we want our employees to support these standards and also share with us the high standards they have for themselves and their role at the university. So the overall high standard and vision for the university is really the collective of all the high standards and visions of the individuals who make up the university. You want to let as many people grow and develop as possible because it leads to an overall positive environment.

What are your views on diversity and leadership? How can we expand our efforts in recruiting and developing leadership within the African American, Latino, Asian American and Native Americans within

each division? What plans are in place to retain current leaders within these groups?

One of my goals for New School University is that it becomes a more diverse place, embracing students, faculty, and staff from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. In order to be successful in this, we must sustain recruitment efforts that reach out to students from different backgrounds. And we must take affirmative action in our outreach to new faculty and staff to ensure that the pool of applicants in each of our searches is as diverse as possible and that our interview and selection processes are fair and open.

I can say with confidence that in both the student services area and in the office of human resources, there is a conscious commitment to diversity and to the employment of plans and strategies that will enhance that diversity at both the recruitment and retention levels. One of the things that I believe is most supportive in the retention effort is for students, faculty, and staff to have a community that is itself diverse. So success builds on success

improvements in recruitment and retention of diverse students, faculty, and staff improve the chances of greater success.

I am also open to the ideas of members of the University community on this issue. Recently I met with the University's diversity committee and heard some very helpful ideas. I encourage all members of the University community to voice their suggestions to the University Team Initiative committee, to the Diversity committee, and to my office.

Do you have any ideas on how to increase accountability at New School University, both from supervisors to their employees, and from employees to their supervisors?

An important part of accountability is being sure to evaluate a person's performance. As I said before you need to be honest with these evaluations. Help people see how they are doing in order to help them grow. Honesty is key. It's not enough just to reward people. You want to develop a system that helps people see how capable they are. How they meet goals. How they are fitting in with the job. Sometimes we have to be honest and admit a person isn't in the right position.

There are three important things that can affect how someone is doing on a job. First there are life changes, things that happen outside the job, personal and career goals change. Second, there are changes within the job, such as a change in job duties or a promotion. Third, there are structural changes such as a change in management. You want someone to realize if they are no longer a good fit for the job and help them figure out why and what steps to take at that point. And you need a system in place to do this. A system that makes employees comfortable in bringing concerns to their supervisors. You want the right people in the right jobs. There is no benefit to having someone in a job that they aren't happy in. You have to continually ask yourself what can be done to make people more satisfied with their jobs?

What initiatives and tools are available at New School University to identify and promote leadership?

The Team Building Initiative is a major factor in helping to identify and promote good leadership at New School University. And there's other work going on in Human Resources to continue to make New School University a great place to work.

What I'd also like to see take place is a movement towards what's called adaptive management. This is where decisions are made on a collective basis, and these decisions are based on data and facts, not preconceived ideas or opinions. People agree to use facts and data. They agree that they won't always be right. They agree that they will make mistakes. And most importantly, they agree not to blame one another.

Then you can really address what changes need to take place even if resources are not there. You can acknowledge both the good and the bad. I strive for transparency in the decision making process. That is, letting people see what goes behind the decisions. You want everyone involved in the process, even though not everyone may like the final decision. But you move forward and continually strive for positive, constructive change. The important thing is that people feel heard and respected. So I'd like to see more models in place that allow for adaptive management.

What are your plans to enhance team spirit at the New School?

Our most concrete effort at this moment is the work of the University Team Initiative. Bringing together representatives from across the University to identify and promote examples of teamwork is a great start.

What are your thoughts on teamwork and team players? What models would best represent your goals and objectives to make the New School a great place to work?

One of the most powerful models of teamwork in my experience at New School University occurred in the days and weeks following September 11, 2001. People from across the University worked together to help each other and to take on the myriad responsibilities and tasks that had to be done. Although the event that was the catalyst for this outpouring of kindness, hard work, and generosity of spirit was a great tragedy, I remember with pride the community spirit and the teamwork that was our response.

What is your vision of how New School University will be perceived by employees, students, and the surrounding community?

Beyond the mission statement, I want people to see us as a university willing to change and to grow. We are a unique university and we want to maintain that uniqueness. In a way I don't want us to become New School University. What I mean is I always want us to be becoming New School University. This indicates constant growth and change, and not being content to be fixed in our ways, which leads to stagnation. I also hope people see New School University as a New York City university. New York City is truly our campus. New York City is a center of liberal thought -- vibrant and active. I want New School University and the students and people here to be part of that. We most certainly want to avoid building walls between New School University and New York City.

Think about this. There are 124 foreign language newspapers published here each week. This is a city where Hindus and Muslims and Christians and Jews live next door to each other and sit in the same classrooms together. This is where an Israeli and a Palestinian shop in the same deli. People get along. And this is no small idea. This is a big idea. New York City is a political experiment that is working. And we at New School University need to be part of it. We want to define ourselves

by the nature of this city. It's now up to us to figure out how to do that.

New York City will be different in 20 years. It's a changing city. The face of the city will look different. New School University has to change with the city. We need to offer New School University as a viable option to people, including new immigrants, as a place where ideas can be exchanged, opinions expressed, visions sharpened, skills developed, so these things can be applied towards solutions to some of the problems here in the United States and abroad. New School University needs to be seen as a vehicle for people to affect world change.

Closing Remarks.

I want New School University to be a place where students are happy. A place that students graduate saying, "I'm glad I went here." I want students taking one course through one of our continuing education program to say that. I want people attending our conferences and public programs to say that. And this ties in with our employees being happy. I'd like to hear the people who work here say, "This is a great place to work."

And to some degree this does happen, but we have to continue to work towards making it more and more of a reality. We have to address those things at the institution that lead to student and employee frustration. For example, how can we improve on cross-registration to make it easier for students to take courses throughout our various divisions? If you want students to identify with the university as well as their divisions, we have to make them feel a part of the overall university. The same is true for our employees.

Interviewed by:
Tom McDonald, Director of Student Disability Services
Matthew Webster, Knowledge Union Technican .

UNIVERSITY TEAM INITIATIVE MISSION STATEMENT

The University Team Initiative aims to foster a creative and inclusive work environment. To this end we will provide faculty and staff with opportunities to better understand the university's structure; to broaden their networks and contacts throughout the organization; and to develop professionally and personally. Our goal is a renewed commitment among university employees to the development of the organization and a better understanding of their role in this process.

While there are clear differences and needs among the faculty and staff, there are also processes and procedures in use which are duplicated among individuals, committees, departments and divisions. Many of these processes have developed into successful models. Although we will not be able to find a complete set of models to fit every purpose and every group, we can take advantage of successful initiatives that have come to fruition and have benefited others. We can use these models to give us ideas on how to tackle problems that may exist within our setting and to promote an efficient, respectful, creative and enjoyable work environment. The UTI

effort began with the clear purpose of highlighting a few of these successes, sharing them with the University community, and making some choices among these successes for future action.

To get us to this point, we will need to accomplish the following objectives:

- Identify good team models,
- Gather information on those models,
- Assess the information,
- Communicate our findings and recommendations to the University community and,
- Build the support and buy-in of the University community and administrators necessary to enable implementation of our ideas and findings.

By implementing these models, we will then be able to:

- Create alliances that will promote teamwork and cooperation,
- Improve communication on all levels, and
- Help people to feel their contribution is of value.

WHO WE ARE

We are employees from all sectors of the University who have come together to create a more cohesive and productive work environment through teamwork.