I have been faculty in higher education since 2003 serving 4 years at Texas A&M University and then moving to Elon University where I have spent the majority of my career. I have found this institution inspiring and a place where I want to grow as a professional and grow toward a meaningful and collaborative leader on campus. I have had opportunities to lead projects on committees, to lead research teams, to lead students and faculty. I was Director of Health Professions for 3 years and served two terms (8yrs) as department chair. With these roles I have learned a lot about myself as a leader and a lot about what leadership entails. Serving in the role of department chair is a unique role where you support, lead, and evaluate colleagues at various stages of their career. This is a rotating position and thus requires a balance of trust, honesty, and pursuit of collaborative excellence. It is a role where your success is exemplified not just from top performers but from the whole of the department. I thrived in this type of role. It required a collaborative balancing act while often making important decisions. I listened to individuals' goals and challenges, provided meaningful and critical feedback for colleagues' professional development and student experience, and balanced departmental and institutional missions, priorities, and goals. I have a clear understanding of my strengths, vision of leadership, and challenges. I continue to look towards opportunities that allow me to grow and challenge me in new and exciting ways. I continue to seek guidance, skills, tools, and information to continue to evolve into an effective leader in higher education.

Leadership Goals

My goal as a leader is to continue to work with larger groups of individuals working towards a common goal and empower real change in how students, faculty, and staff interact within and across disciplines. I believe there is a great need to blend disciplinary and professional fields and nurture an educational model where mentoring models fit the questions/needs and not tradition; where the community stakeholders are truly partners in their experiences around interventions, interactions with higher education and the outcomes of our work.

Leadership Qualities

One of my strengths as a leader is that I have vision; I can see the big picture and effectively articulate the importance. With this ability to see the big picture, I often lead by empowering those around me. Those I work with are the ones that have the pieces, the skills, the experiences that lend to the big picture and I help empower them to see how they fit and how they can contribute. I have always been a team player and know that the sum of our parts is greater than any one of us. I have always gained energy and ideas from working with others on a common goal. I value the contribution of each of my colleagues and students and know that collaboration is what brings the most influential outcomes. It is important to empower these individuals by acknowledging their contributions and celebrating their accomplishments. I know vision, empowerment, and acknowledgement are skills and qualities that are important to an effective leader. What I have found through time serving in leadership/mentoring roles is how valuable and universal this quality is. My leadership mantra is 'leave people better than you found them – not by changing them, but by helping them believe they can'. I never underestimate the power of believing in others; supporting and challenging but always believing another has strengths, talents and drive that they can offer. While I know this is not the only tool in the toolbox of a leader, I have found that it is the most foundational to the individual. This individual buy-in and trust is essential to moving a group of people in the same direction.

Leadership Challenges

A unique challenge I have as a leader is that my ability to think quick on my feet, often able to articulate strategic vision and see all the moving parts come together fast, can leave others feeling left behind and unheard. I have learned that I need to check to make sure others are still moving in the same direction and don't feel left behind or left out. This check-in and reconvening process I have found to be valuable to the ultimate outcomes. Our initiatives and ideas must be accessible to many and validating the multiple perspectives and paths to understanding is essential to this process. Additionally, empowering each individual to work on their own path while maintaining common vision and goals makes our work richer. Acknowledging diversity of paths and the amplification of individual contributions and accomplishments, supports holistic self-confidence and collective celebration of growth and development.