

# Educational Leadership Philosophy

Educational Leadership I began thinking about leadership in the first year of my teaching career in 2002. I saw leadership skills as something that would enhance my teaching by helping me design better learning experiences and motivate and connect with my students.

Teaching very large classes pushed me to think of myself as not only a teacher and subject matter expert, but as a leader of the students in my classes. I never wanted to rely on authority and power to get students to engage in learning, rather I wanted to co-create learning experiences alongside with my students.

Ten years after I first began teaching, Faculty of Science Dean Dr. Ken Barker appointed me to a newly created educational leadership position in the Faculty of Science: Associate Dean – Teaching and Learning. I was excited by the opportunity, believing that it was a natural progression from being the Tamara Teaching Professor in Geoscience (2007-2012) and leader of the educational development program Project Engage (2009-2012). I also believed that this role would be challenging and rewarding.

Now two years into this position, I find myself in a leadership role where I can help build a vision for teaching and learning in the Faculty of Science. It is a position where I can create the community and opportunities necessary to empower my colleagues and empower the people within departments and programs to meet the learning goals they have for their students.

This position is challenging, rewarding and exciting. Success in this role will be if we have been able to build educational leadership capacity in the Faculty and shift the teaching and learning culture towards one where student learning is at the heart of all discussions and decisions about teaching.

In my time in the Tamara position and now as Associate Dean, I have reflected on the qualities of effective educational leaders and the qualities I aspire to develop. I constantly strive to improve my leadership skills through critical self-reflection, mentors, and taking leadership courses. I use the leadership framework of Kouses and Posner (2007) as a guide to my leadership practice, which is built around five key characteristics of effective leaders: (1) model the way; (2) inspire a shared vision; (3) enable others to act; (4) encourage the heart, and (5) challenge the process.

I believe that effective leadership transforms people and organizations to reach their maximum potential. Doing this requires an array of skills and knowledge of leadership, organizational change, and a deep understanding of the function, values and goals of the organization.