

## **Team Burnout Scenarios, Great Deans 2022 September Meeting**

### **Faculty Burnout Scenario**

Faculty member Martha has been at your college for 14 years. When she was first hired, Martha was thrilled to get the job. She had strong student evaluation scores and rarely garnered a complaint. She seemed to be very enthusiastic and had lots of new creative ideas. You have gotten to know Martha pretty well, and she often comes into your office to chat. You find her pleasant and personable, the kind of faculty member who alerts you to developing issues and problems in her area. She's a great go-to gal.

A few years ago, you noticed that Martha's student evaluation scores declined to the department average, and then below the department average. Her peer evaluations remain satisfactory, but the number of student complaints has risen. Last semester, four of her students came to complain. The complaints are that she's too rigid, inconsiderate, and lacks empathy. When you have approached Martha about student complaints, she always tells long stories that specific students are obnoxious. She then forwards you copies of emails from other students that are complimentary, "Dear Professor, Thank you so much for all you did for us this semester. I appreciate your class!" Martha also assures you that she is fine.

- Do you think Martha is experiencing burnout?
- When you talk to Martha about her declining popularity, she assures you that the problem is the students. How do you handle that?
- Do you have any faculty like Martha? Tell us about them.

### **Student Services Scenario**

As a Dean of Student Services, you oversee a variety of programs that support students and you are aiming to increase support for students coming from disproportionately impacted backgrounds. You have two staff members, Teresa and Jennifer, who both go above all expectations to support students beyond their jobs. Teresa is an outreach specialist who works with high school students, but once the students get to the college they find support from her. Jennifer is a classified staff member in Counseling and many students go to her for questions, mentorship, and to get appointments. Over the last few years they have informally advised student clubs; Teresa advises the Queer Students of Color Club and Jennifer informally advises the Black Student Union. They both have also created informal employee groups to welcome other employees of color to the college; they host regular lunches and help fundraise for student scholarships. Over the last few months there have been several race motivated bias incidents. Several months ago, an unofficial Facebook group associated with the colleges made a post that stated "The minority students get special treatment and way too much free stuff at the college."

This post went viral and many students were upset that the college “didn’t do anything.” Most recently, a hateful “evangelist” came to campus and publicly stated many anti-LGBTQ and anti-immigrant messages. Both Teresa and Jennifer hosted a gathering space to process, which was over three hours long. As the supervisor you noticed and heard from their direct supervisors that both Teresa and Jennifer have been showing up late, seeming tired at work, and struggling to complete basic tasks in a timely manner.

A tragic incident of anti-Black violence occurred in a nearby city and has now made national news. The students at the college are feeling very upset, overwhelmed, and unsure what they need or where to go. You gather your leadership team to discuss how to support your college community. They all suggest you ask Teresa and Jennifer to lead student support efforts. When you reach out to them they first say “yes,” then seem reluctant, and then say they should think about it.

- How do you plan to proceed?
- How do you identify all the priorities for your area?
- What are short-term efforts to support the variety of communities?
- What are long-term efforts?
- What could have been done proactively to prepare?