

# Collegiality in a Diverse Environment

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Abstracts from the Faculty Panel Discussion held  
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**“COLLEGIALITY: AN ETYMOLOGY”**

Collegiality (n)--From the Latin word "collegium," meaning "society, guild, community."  
(Merriam-Webster)

The word "collegiality" first appeared in English between 1885 and 1890. It referred then, as it does now, to a subset of persons operating within a larger group to accomplish a single mission. Collegiality was first used in conversation, and only later in writing, when referring to shared, but not often agreed upon, governance...

Within (1) Roman Catholicism (ca-thol-li-si-sim), (2) Anglicanism, and (3) Eastern Orthodoxy. In each original instance, "collegiality" referred to the notion that "church bishops, along with their roles as overseers of local churches, were also members of a larger group with whom they shared the same teaching and governing functions as the Apostles in the early church. In other words, "collegiality" was, historically, the state of Co-nnected-ness (from the Latin "co-nec-tare," joined together) — that existed between and among individuals with diverse roles and obligations around an original, organizing mission.

In this original context, collegiality bore three principal characteristics:

(1) Tension. Protracted, recurring tensions among individuals with differing ideologies, and among groups of individuals with divergent priorities—all of whom were responsible for collectively taking some action; (2) An accepted, over-arching "ground rule" that while consensus would rarely be achieved, cooperative conclusions must always be achieved; And (3) A law, punishable by group expulsion, that cooperation—or the appearance or cooperation—should prevail always.

This was considered most vital to increasing power and respect for the collegial body.

(Sources: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Web. Accessed Aug 22, 2013 and *Online Etymology Dictionary*. Web. Accessed Aug 21, 2013.)

**Dr. Mark Harvey**  
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**“TIPS FOR BUILDING A COLLEGIAL RAPPORT WITH COLLEAGUES”**

- Benefits of Evincing Collegiality: Favorable consideration in promotion and tenure decisions; opportunities for networking; research collaborations; extramural funding; bigger merit salary increases; contract renewal; office and award nominations; pleasing work environment; friendships.

A non-comprehensive list of tips for building a collegial rapport with colleagues:

- Be respectful to faculty members internal and external to your department
- Use conciliatory speech rather than incendiary speech when making requests of colleagues... for instance, consider using “I’d appreciate it if ...” instead of “I want ...”
- Be willing to give both the exceptional and average students the same amount of your time and attention
- Be helpful to colleagues whenever a sensible request is made of you
- Maintain a humble demeanor about your achievements and honors
- Be willing to do a fair amount of departmental, college and institutional committee work
- Exhibit professional conduct on the job
- Establish a dependable reputation among colleagues
- Exhibit moral behavior that minimizes your risk of accusations of sexual harassment
- Exhibit moral behavior that minimizes your risk of accusations of cultural insensitivity
- Willingly negotiate and compromise
- Be a good listener
- Collaborate with colleagues on extramural funding
- Mentor junior faculty who seek out your help
- Congratulate colleagues on their career achievements
- Provide emotional support and/or other help to colleagues who have experienced personal calamity
- Be a conciliator, not a bully and a hater
- Endeavor to avoid causing colleagues to lose face
- Reply promptly to email and/or voice mail from colleagues
- Be approachable
- Carefully access and select departmental and institutional issues you’ll stand up for
- Exhibit understanding to opposing viewpoints of colleagues
- Exhibit integrity, respect, consideration and professionalism in interactions with colleagues
- Promote a sense of community with colleagues

Reference: Silverman, Franklin. “Collegiality and Service for Tenure and Beyond, Acquiring a Reputation as a Team Player,” 2004.

**Dr. Nina Saha-Gupta**  
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**“COLLEGIALITY AND DISSENT: CAN BOTH CO-EXIST IN THE WORKPLACE?”**

- While most people believe that collegiality should be an expected norm in any organization, some question its place in higher education.
- Those who believe in the notion of collegiality argue that - collegial organizations emphasize consensus, shared power, consultation, and collective responsibilities where status differences are downplayed and people interact as equals.
- Those who argue against collegiality believe that an obvious problem with collegiality is its potential to silence dissent and generate uniformity.
- This group believes that there is an inherent tension between collegiality and academic freedom.
- According to the above group, the greatest problem seems to be in the area of faculty evaluation. Collegiality (as many envision it) tells us nothing about the actual quality of one's job performance.
- Those who argue against it believe that when universities evaluate collegiality, they run the risk of evaluating a dissenting individual – who exercises her or his right of academic freedom – as somehow “uncollegial.”
- In my opinion, dissent, debate and discussion can all happen within a collegial framework.
- Since diverse minds generate diverse perspectives and viewpoints, it is important to respect others' perspectives and give them due consideration, even if we do not agree with them.
- One way to be open to, and respectful of diverse perspectives, is to separate our personal feelings and biases from our professional behaviors, and to treat our colleagues with dignity and respect.

**Dr. Sheri Smith**  
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**“WHAT DOES COLLEGIALLY TEACH OUR STUDENTS?”**

To understand what collegiality teaches our students, we first must have a clear understanding of the concept.

Taken from the University of Arizona Extension Services (21012) “Collegiality can be defined as the ability for an individual to work productively with faculty, students, colleagues, staff members and constituents in all environments impacted by the university. Collegiality encompasses the basics of the professional ethics of the academic world: Respect for persons, integrity of intellectual inquiry, concern for the needs and rights of students and clientele...”. One can conclude that collegiality is NOT civility, congeniality, consensus, likeability or sociability. These criteria make collegiality easier to achieve but does not give it meaning.

In the School of Public Affairs, we educate urban planners, public administrators, future attorneys, police officers, political scientist and judges. By definition these fields solicit and elicit conflict. And, in a global society, with varying values, perspectives, experiences and cultures, that conflict can be escalated. Still, plans must be made, policy enacted and laws passed and enforced. This may happen slowly but as a society, we must continue to move forward, be productive.

What does the collegiality we display teach our students? We provide them the framework in which to work out and through challenges faced when attempting to achieve a goal. For example:

- Students learn in the classroom
  - How to solicit and negotiate through discussions from a diverse body of students and accept that one’s ideas are not universally accepted yet still being able to move forward, maybe not to resolution, but to hearing and being heard
  - Group work, while not popular in the classroom, learning to contribute to achieve a mutually beneficial goal: accountability
- Students learn seeing the strength of the program
  - The product of collegiality is seen in the progress of the department: its growth, cutting edge research and projects. Students need and want to be part of something greater than themselves. Seeing how their faculty are able to achieve this through the obvious differences in philosophies and personalities are teachable moments.

The college experience has an impact on our students. Students learn both explicitly through the content we teach and implicitly by what they see achieved. We help to set and reinforce those expectations of collegiality as they matriculate through their programs. In the end, we hope that our display of collegiality produce a productive professional and citizen.

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**“COLLEGIALITY: FOR OUR STUDENTS, FOR OUR TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY”**

- **Adverse effects of lack of collegiality:**
  - Inability of faculty to deliver effectively
  - Leads to poor learning environment
  - Affects student achievements and accomplishments
  - Poor perception of our institution
- **Collegial Responsibility:**
  - View our products (student achievements and accomplishment) as our collective responsibility.
  - Frequent collegial conversation and discussions about teaching and learning should be encouraged, for such will help to improve and synergize effective student training.
  - Peer review and providing feedback for one another on teaching and service.
  - Collaborative development of curriculum for effective student accomplishment.
  - Teaching one another about teaching, learning and leading -enhance quality of teaching and advising
- **Administrative Responsibilities:**
  - Academic administrators need to develop an effective line of communication to carry faculties along in attaining the highest academic delivery for effective student learning and achievement.
  - Involve faculty in the development of strategic academic goals.
  - Be transparent in dealing with faculty on issues involving academic excellence – recognition, fairness etc.
  - Avoid abrupt change in school culture without effective communication about the need for the change and what value such changes would support the mission of the school.
  - Avoid change for the sake of change or because others are doing it! - It negatively affects collegiality and loyalty to the system and hence negatively impacts performance.
- **Finally, collegiality can be achieved by understanding our mission (TSU), which is training of students, research, and community service. Through transparency, fairness, and open communication, collegiality can be achieved, maintained, and promoted by TSU community.**

**Dr. Katherine Vukadin**  
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**“TEAMWORK: COULD COLLEGIALITY UNLOCK YOUR RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY?”**

- Collegiality is based on relationships; relationships take time. Faculty members' schedules are filled with research, grading, teaching, and committee work, making collegiality seem like a luxury item. Building common ground with colleagues takes time a busy faculty member may not have.
- But does time spent on collegiality really come at a cost to research productivity? Research indicates quite the contrary. In fact, higher levels of collegiality are associated with higher research productivity.
- A study of academic nurses in doctoral programs showed just such a correlation.<sup>1</sup> Those nurses with greater collegiality also had increased research productivity. Collegiality was measured according to frequency of contacts with colleagues, breadth of network, location of colleagues, and field of colleagues. Research productivity was measured according to acquisition of grants, and research publications.
- The nurses with a broader network and a greater frequency of contacting those people in their networks also had higher research productivity. This does not indicate causation, but it's enough to suggest that reaching out to colleagues helps keep us engaged and creative.
- Another study looked at factors in faculty burnout.<sup>2</sup> It found that even compared with other important factors such as length of time teaching and tenure status, collegiality was the factor most associated with lower burnout.
- Building collegial relationships takes a little time but that time is well spent, even when viewed in terms of research productivity. Ambitious scholars should therefore reach out, not hide away. A lunch invitation might yield fresh ideas. A conversation with a colleague at another institution might suggest a new twist on a tired project. And perhaps best of all, friendship and collegiality may deepen job satisfaction and focus.

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<sup>1</sup> Virginia Henderson International Nursing Library, *The Effects of Collegiality and Collegial Networks on Research Productivity*, <http://www.nursinglibrary.org/vhl/handle/10755/178949?mode=full> (last visited Aug. 26, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> MICHAEL SEIGEL & KATHI MINER RUBINO, *COLLEGIALITY III: AN ANALYSIS OF DATA PERTAINING TO COLLEGIALITY AMONG LAW PROFESSORS*, [HTTP://SSRN.COM/ABSTRACT=1279698](http://ssrn.com/abstract=1279698) AT 18 (SEPT. 19, 1008).

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**“CIVILITY AND CHALLENGING TIMES IN THE ACADEMY”**

The purpose of this report is to examine the implications of increasing incivility on the viability of U.S. colleges and universities. It provides an analysis and evaluation of the challenges posed by the current multi-cultural academic environment and the need for civility and collegiality amongst the stakeholders. Research for this report included a review of current literature on civility and collegiality in the academy. The major findings indicate that incivility is on the rise. And recent surveys show that Americans consider the issue a serious problem and call for collective action to promote and create a civil environment that can cultivate a diverse environment. While it is clear that the degree of the incivility problem will vary from campus to campus, this report recommends that colleges and universities continue to promote diversity efforts, as well as create and cultivate a welcoming work environment where people will want to work and contribute to their fullest potential.

Key points:

1. Evidence suggests dire challenges tasking the viability of US colleges and universities;
2. Increasingly multi-cultural academic environment demands better culture of civility and sensitivity; and
3. Need for collective efforts by stakeholders to engender appropriate environment and wellbeing of the university.
4. Need for official college or university policy document on diversity, civility and collegiality; start by modeling the way in the classroom and rest of campus.
5. Faculty should model collegiality in the classroom and work across campus to foster collegiality.

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**“COLLEGIALLY ACROSS CULTURES”**

**Cross-cultural interactions are fraught with potential mishaps.**

My Chinese colleagues sometimes react in ways outside of my expectations.

Yet at the same time, I realize that I behave in ways my Chinese colleagues might not expect.

**Cultures are multiple—we are always dealing with other cultures.**

Cultural differences exist not just between China and the West, but also between countries in the West, as well as across differences in race, class, gender, and education.

**Collegiality is an ethos shared across cultures throughout history.**

Writings attributed to Confucius emphasize the nobility of being humane, learned, and collegial.

The seventeenth-century Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci shared much with his Chinese Confucian scholar-official counterparts.

**Whatever happens, collegiality is usually the best solution.**

**Renard L. Thomas, Ph.D.**  
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**“LEARNING TO LEAD COLLEGIALLY”**

Learning to lead in a collegial environment requires great influence across a matrix of intertwined colleges, schools, departments, programs, administrators, faculty, staff and students. Your effectiveness as a leader is built upon your character and the practice of sound principles.

**Principle #1: Understanding Your Colleagues as well as Your Workplace** — mutual respect, and awareness of your workplace, is paramount, (i.e., the unofficial rules/politics/culture, organizational strengths, weaknesses, challenges, acronyms, lingo, inside jokes, etc). When your colleagues appreciate how much you care, then your credibility and respect grow. Your credibility and respect translate into effectiveness. Effectiveness translates into greater influence. Influence fosters your leadership!

**Principle #2: Impartiality in Decision Making** — difficult decisions strain relationships and can be divisive. Perceptions of biases and prejudices in your decisions can cause you to be perceived as untrustworthy. Consistency and fairness expand your influence.

**Principle # 3: Influence Supersedes Authority** in the matrix environment. The more control you seek, the more you are perceived as a threat. The old military model of command and control does not work. Engaging and empowering your colleagues enhances your influence across divisional units. Influence is the epitome of leadership.

The practice of sound principles must be blended with at least the following collegial characteristics:

- Respect – the highest of regards for your colleagues
- Empathy – walking in the shoes of others with understanding and compassion
- Fairness – to be fair and tolerant toward your colleagues
- Loyalty – conviction to be faithfully devoted to the common good
- Diplomacy – compromising on interests for the greater common good

It is one’s character and the practice of sound principles that enhance your influence among your colleagues. Learning to lead collegially can be a great asset in our University’s **Broader Impact** — enhancing the intellectual capital of the minority community and the nation as a whole. We have the most important job in America—teaching our students – and we must succeed!

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**“FOSTERING COLLEGIALLY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA”**

- A number of us are using Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ to connect with students. However, none of us seems to be using social media to connect with colleagues here at TSU.
- A research study conducted on the use of twitter as a social media tool to foster collegiality in academic settings found that social media was able to help faculty:
  - 1) Extend and expand their interactions.
  - 2) Create a culture of sharing and learning because we learn better through social interactions and informal settings.
  - 3) Increase the number of collaborative projects.
  - 4) Improve professional development as faculty members learn more from tweets than from development training sessions.
  - 5) Increase the job satisfaction and on-the-job positive experiences.
  - 6) Help new colleagues get quickly acclimated to the new environment and shorten their self-isolation period.
  - 7) Increase faculty connection to important issues and to one another.
  - 8) Increase recognition for peer-to-peer support.
  - 9) Empower faculty to initiate change.
- Social media works best when used in a structured setting, when we have a focused use. There has to be clear objectives for the social groups and set goals. They work best when fostered by the institution, department, or unit, and participation is recognized and rewarded.
- Social media magnifies character flaws. Any unprofessional behavior will be hard for a researcher to fix, as comments written using social media are permanent records.

As we learn from others and as others recognize our contribution to their learning, we build the following: respect and trust, commitment to the common goal, and collegiality.