

Q&A with Acting President Craig McAllaster

October 2014

Q: How do you define Service Excellence?

A: I think Service Excellence is just that, providing excellent service. If everyone does the minimum job, “as expected,” we might be a good institution, but we strive to be an excellent institution. In order to do that, we need to provide exceptional service.

I sometimes use the analogy of the classroom. If you meet all of the requirements in my graduate seminar, you will probably get a B. To get an A you go above and beyond. We are going for the A.

Q: Give me an example of Service Excellence you have witnessed during your time as Acting President.

A: During move in, I learned one student’s parents were blown away by the Facilities staff because a student wanted to put her fridge under her bed and the staff took it upon themselves to make it happen by cutting wood to raise the bed and installing it for her. To me, that kind of service is going above and beyond what is expected. All of our faculty and staff care about our students, so my belief is that kind of thing happens every day.

Q: In your words, can you share your thoughts on the four service pillars?

A: Being responsive means determining what’s most urgent and responding in an appropriate time. That could be Facilities fixing a leak, or faculty helping a student who has missed classes.

The way we treat each other is immensely important. Being respectful means showing civility, smiling, saying “Hi,” helping out others when we can. We should all do those things gladly. We need to stop sending crazy emails and instead talk and listen to each other. We are all passionate about what we do — and we don’t have to agree — but it’s important to not be hurtful, not attack others, and instead have a dialogue.

Being collaborative means we work together, that the sum is more than the individual parts. In the Center for Leadership & Community Engagement, we are particularly exceptional in this. I think collaboration is so important, and I hope to keep recognizing the individuals and departments that do this well.



I see competent as being a lifelong learner, as opposed to just getting by with what you know now. This ranges from an employee in IT knowing the latest codes, to someone in the bursar's office effectively and efficiently processing student tuition payments, to faculty being current in their field. Because we are a learning organization, we need to be constantly learning.