I’m Leading, but Is Anyone Following?

Erik Person, NW Area Multi-District / ESA 5

This article is not research based. It makes for easier writing that way. What this is, however, is a greeting to all of SDACTE from the Admin Division and a reflection on leadership that I will share with my fellow administrators. The school year is underway, and most of us are breathing a sigh of relief.

The beginning of the year is tough. Sometimes we get so involved with making things work and putting out fires that we do not take the time to really lead. We all aspire to be instructional leaders, but at times we fall short. It’s like a dirty little secret that we don’t want others to know about, but it happens. It happened to me this year. Most of my leadership agenda has been temporarily suspended so that I can deal with the most pressing items at the moment. But I am getting back on track. I suspect that I am not the only administrator who feels this way.

Once we get back to leading, we face the ever-present challenge of getting others to follow us. It is hard enough to come up with the right vision, let alone share it with others. One thing I have noticed about successful instructional leaders I have seen is that they never take their eye off the ball. They can deal with the immediate things effectively, but they continue to lead. Another thing I have noticed is that they are not the lone ranger. They have the vision, but it is always a shared vision. The final observation I will share here is that true leaders are positive. As a side note, check out “Fighting the Consequences of Negativity” in the May 2008 issue of School Administrator. I stumbled upon it just at the right time last spring.

Back to my point... Sometimes when I feel that being a leader is especially difficult, I ask myself why people are not following. More often than not, it boils down to me. I have either lost my focus, or I am trying to lead based on a vision that is mine alone, or I have somehow allowed myself to be negative. I find myself reflecting on these leadership principles this time of year and trying to keep myself on track. If I need the reminder of what leadership is, then maybe someone else does too. I hope it helps.
I've never visited with anyone who hasn’t felt it was a worthwhile experience. What a great professional development opportunity! Make plans to attend the national ACTE conference.

In addition, the division presidents agreed to have an article in each newsletter that would either provide up-dated information or a best practice in the classroom.

The Board will strive to be forward thinkers, be goal-oriented and follow through, improve communication to members/committees, increase member awareness, and advocate strong professional development.

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**Business/Marketing**  
Annika Russell, Mitchell  

The Business/Marketing Division had a great summer conference in August!! We tripled our attendance and registered several new members. We had set this as a goal last fall and worked hard to accomplish it. The officers have decided that we need to continue working on the goal of increasing involvement of our State’s business teachers and have many things planned to work toward that goal.

One item is the Business/Marketing Division newsletter! Look for a newsletter in October, January and April that will include lesson ideas, information on the progress of the career cluster work, information from the State office, etc. Our hope is that the newsletter provides you with valuable resources that you can use either in your classroom or professionally.

We are also looking for ideas for the summer conference. If you have any ideas of presenters or things you would like discussed, please let me know. We want to plan a conference that will benefit you.

If you have any suggestions for the newsletter or conference, please contact me at: annika.russell@k12.sd.us.

I hope your school year is off to a great start!!!

**FACS Division**  
Suzy Ries, Baltic  

The results are in! A tally of surveys from the July 2008 CTE Conference in Pierre have been totaled and here’s what our FACS teachers said: the best part of the conference was the opportunity to network with other CTE and FACS teachers, Janie Walters was a favorite presenter, the simplified registration process this year was appreciated, and the ability to attend all round table presentations was a bonus. Members were grateful to learn about Career Clusters and UBDs, and in the future you’d like to see similar activities and agenda but would also like the option to tour outside of conference lodging.

A membership report handed out at our Fall Leadership Retreat shows our division is 79 members strong. I took a few moments to compare our membership list against the list of FACS teachers provided by Becky Nelson at State OCTE. I found that there are an additional 58 FACS teachers in South Dakota who are not members of our organization. If each of us were to talk to one member about joining, it would make an already strong division even better. Make it a priority to mention the benefits you receive from SDACTE to a non-member this school year – our program will be better for it.

Your SDATFACS board members, committee members and chairs will be working hard this year to make our organization a valuable investment for you – its members. If you have ideas for improvement or change, please feel free to contact any one of us by phone, post or email. Your board members are Joline Dunbar from Brookings, Janelle Weatherly from Flandreau, Marlys Hauck-Fenner from Freeman, Diana Whipple from Wilmont, Carol Birgen from Lyman/Presho and myself – Suzy Ries from Baltic.

**Trade & Industrial & Tech. Education**  
Steve Schlaht, Watertown  

Well here we are. It is almost the end of October, but it seems like yesterday we were in Pierre for summer conference. The Board of Directors met on September 20th in Watertown with our first meeting and it went very well. In T & I we will be planning some things to hopefully keep you busy and interested the entire time that you are at summer conference next summer.

The new president-elect for our division is Trent Thye and our new secretary is Jerry Taylor and our new treasurer is Kathy Biersheid. We will work hard to make next year’s conference a good one for you.

Take a minute and visit our new website at www.lakeareatech.edu/sdacte/ It is a good one,

We have a great board of directors and they will do a fine job in preparing a great conference for you. Once again if you know anyone that wants to join SDACTE, please encourage them to sign up and come to conference this summer and we will see you there.

Lots of winners . . .  
$500 scholarship recipients  

Scholarship Committee Chair Kathy Bierscheid announced the following:  
Secondary level- Dylan Eckman from Bruce, Kelsey Kummer from Parkston, Thorwald Vostad from Volga  
Post secondary level- Kyle Finn from Mitchell

ACTE Conference stipend recipients  
Selection Committee Chair Dr. Tim Andera announced the following:  
Tracy Kern, FACS, Harrisburg  
Suzy Ries, FACS, Baltic  
Janelle Weatherly, FACS, Flandreau

Professional Development stipend  
The $500 award will go to  
Josh Christianson, Ag, Flandreau

The website has moved to  
http://www.lakeareatech.edu/sdacte/  

Check it out!
Have you registered yet?