

# Using Leadership Competencies

Tips and Tools for using Leadership Competencies in:

Recruitment and Selection  
Performance Management and Coaching  
Professional and Leadership Development

## Preamble

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) employees about 18,000 employees on 54 campuses in 47 Minnesota communities and strives to *build a workforce that delivers excellence in education*. MnSCU's Human Resources Strategic Plan encompasses six goals for talent management to facilitate high quality education to students across the State of Minnesota:

- Attract, retain, and develop employees to meet current and future educational needs.
- Cultivate a work and learning environment that is inclusive, welcoming and supportive.
- Provide employees with accurate and timely HR information to make informed decisions affecting their work and life.
- Advance a labor relations strategy that promotes flexibility and responsiveness to meet the changing needs of higher education.
- Build HR processes, systems, and infrastructure to provide efficiency, quality and cost effectiveness.
- Build HR capacity to advance system goals.

The Leadership Competency Taskforce, a subgroup from the Talent Management Steering Committee, was charged with creating a model for campuses to incorporate MnSCU's leadership competencies into talent recruitment, performance evaluation, and leadership development across the state. This guide, *Using Leadership Competencies*, was developed to supplement the existing talent management procedures and practices occurring on campuses.

*Using Leadership Competencies* defines MnSCU's leadership competencies and offers implementation concepts and suggestions in each of the areas;

- 1) Recruitment and Selection
- 2) Performance Management, and
- 3) Leadership Development.

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## Definitions

### Leadership Competencies Defined

A competency is an underlying characteristic of an individual that contributes to job or role performance and to organizational success. Competencies extend beyond the basic knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform a specific job to those that contribute to success in multiple jobs, job categories or the entire organization.

The Staff and Leadership Development Steering Committee collaborated across the system to develop a set of Leadership Competencies. Broad consultation took place and input was received from a wide range of constituents. The goal of this process was to develop a set of competencies that described the essential set of knowledge, skills, abilities and other qualities required to be an effective leader within the Minnesota State College and Universities system.

## **Leadership Competencies and Functional Competencies or Accountabilities**

The Leadership Competencies describe the knowledge, skills and attributes required to be successful as a leader in our system at any level and in any role or function. They represent the common characteristics across all leaders in our system.

All leadership positions will include both the common leadership competencies and the unique functional or job specific competencies required for success, based on the specific technical/functional responsibilities and campus/system specific characteristics.

### **The Leadership Competencies**

The Leadership Competencies are divided into categories (leader of self, leaders as relationship building, leader as manager and leader as innovator) include:

#### **Leader of Self**

##### **Understands Self and Others:**

Articulates own values and priorities. Understands individual role and demonstrates commitment to supporting the organization. Understands own personality and work style. Appreciates differences in personalities and work styles in others. Adapts communication to appeal to those differences. Demonstrates balance between humility and self-assurance. Understands the need for work/life balance and promotes balance for others.

##### **Acts with Integrity:**

Demonstrates honesty. Abides by all relevant laws, rules and regulations. Encourages others to do the same. Gives credit where credit is due. Delivers what is promised. Admits and learns from mistakes. Corrects mistakes to utmost ability.

#### **Leaders as Relationship Builder**

##### **Values Diversity**

Demonstrates inclusivity in work processes and work teams. Encourages and promote the diversification of our faculty, staff and student body. Actively seeks out and invites alternative viewpoints in planning, discussions, and decision making.

##### **Communicates Effectively**

Effectively conveys ideas and shares information with others using appropriate methods. Listens carefully and understands differing points of view. Presents ideas clearly and concisely.

##### **Builds Trust**

Builds trust with others by demonstrating respect, valuing people, and creating transparency. Keeps commitments. Extends trust to others. Inspires confidence both in word and deed. Actively works to restore trust when necessary. Keeps confidences when appropriate.

#### **Leader as Performance Manager**

##### **Customer Service**

Demonstrates a positive attitude. Listens attentively and respectfully. Responds effectively to internal and external customer needs, requests, and concerns. Exercises creative problem solving.

##### **Builds Organizational Talent**

Makes sound hiring decisions. Provides a strong orientation. Sets clear expectations. Provides ongoing feedback; effectively coaches both good and bad performance. Partners with each employee in

conducting meaningful performance evaluations. Helps each individual develop professionally. Holds each individual accountable for performance. Takes responsibility for their own professional development.

### **Demonstrates Good Stewardship**

Understands general principles of budgeting, finance and human resource management. Makes informed decisions regarding resource allocation. Communicates decisions regarding resources in an effective manner to stakeholders.

### **Leader as Innovator**

#### **Articulates Vision and Mission**

Understands institutional history and development. Projects institutional improvements and developments for the future. Demonstrates a student-centered approach. Anticipates change and leads and encourages adjustments in institutional roles. Seeks input and listens to all stakeholders. Communicates and explains the changing institutional vision and mission effectively to constituencies.

#### **Builds Organizational Capacity to Meet Future Challenges**

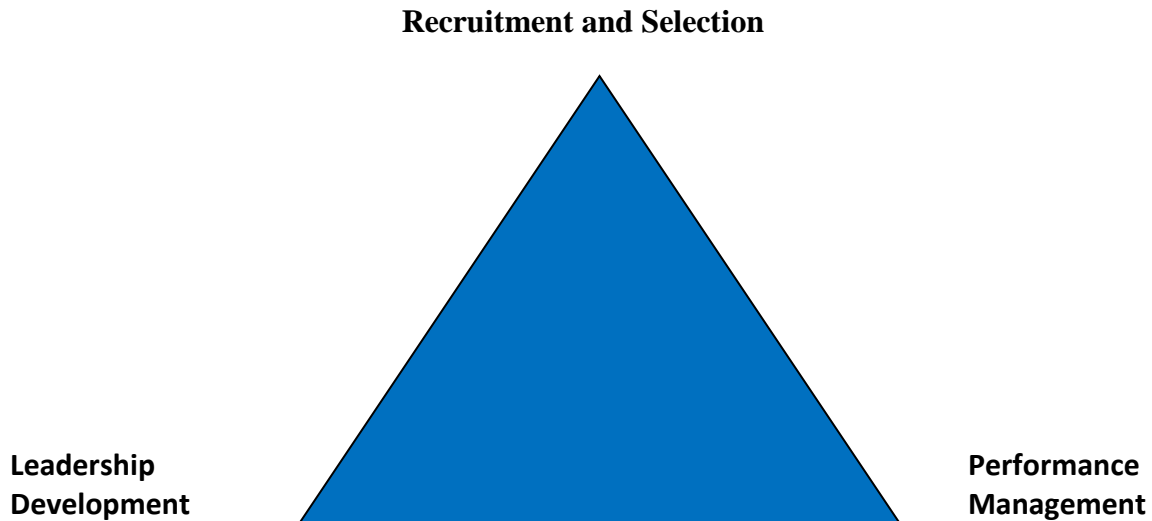
Engages and supports appropriate risk-taking. Identifies and removes barriers to innovation. Rewards and supports innovations advancing excellence and efficiency. Promotes accountability for self and others. Collaborates across educational and governmental boundaries in the system, nation and world. Networks with innovative thinkers, developers and donors.

#### **Demonstrates Effective Decision-Making**

Ability to creatively and efficiently solve problems. Demonstrates critical thinking and asks appropriate questions. Seeks alternative viewpoints. Uses appropriate decision-making methods based on the situation. Prepares stakeholders for and involves them in decisions that affect them. Communicates decisions effectively to stakeholders. Supports decisions once they are made.

## Implementation

### Using the Leadership Competencies



### Recruitment and Selection

Leadership competencies can be used in your recruitment process to define and clarify what we look for in our leaders, as a part of your communication or advertising for openings and to develop behavioral based interviewing questions.

Competencies support recruitment and selection by:

- Providing bona fide, validated, fair and unbiased standards against which to assess applicant competencies to perform in the job.
- Improving the transparency of the selection process by clearly communicating the behaviors employees must display for success in the job.
- Contributing to the design of a well-articulated, efficient and effective recruitment and selection processes.
- Creating efficiencies by providing re-usable selection tools and processes (e.g., question banks for interviews and reference-checking organized by competency; template interview and reference checking guides for jobs within the college/university; targeted role plays, work simulations; etc.)
- Providing explicit, clear and transparent criteria on which to give candidates feedback on their performance in the selection process (e.g., input for future learning and development; etc.)
- Providing standards for evaluating the success of the selection process - e.g., correlating the results of the selection process with competency-based on-the-job performance

Behavioral based interview questions provide valid and reliable information to make high quality hiring decisions. Behavioral based questions rely on demonstrated behaviors from past experience and increase your ability to predict future performance. The following examples of behavioral based interview questions focus on our specific leadership competencies and will provide accurate information on a candidate's qualifications on each of the competencies.

Hr Offices and/or Selection Committees need to review the competencies and agree on the desired "answers" that will demonstrate competence for each question they select for the specific position they are interviewing for.

The following examples can be tailored for the specific leader or role you are interviewing and can be customized to reflect unique aspects of your institution or the department.

### *Example Interview Questions Capturing Leadership Competencies in Recruitment and Selection*

#### Leader of Self

##### **(1) Understands Self & Others:**

- A. Describe a time when someone provided criticism of your work or constructive feedback. How did you respond to that feedback and what did you learn or change in response?
- B. Describe a time when you determined that your skills in a particular work area were below what you considered appropriate. What did you do?
- C. What have you done to better understand how people on your team interpret your behavior or interactions with them? What did you learn about yourself? How have you used that information?

##### **(2) Acts with Integrity:**

- A. Tell me about a time where you were asked to do something you disagreed with and how you handled that request.
- B. Give me an example of a time when you believed what you were asked to do was unethical.
- C. Tell me about a time you had to make a difficult choice regarding whether to perform a specific assignment. How did you make your decision or what factors did you consider?

#### Leaders as Relationship Builder

##### **(3) Values Diversity**

- A. Describe a time where you were working with a diverse customer or employee base and what you did to meet differing needs or expectations?
- B. Describe your professional or personal experience working with diverse populations or cultures?
- C. How has your commitment to diversity been demonstrated in your work experience?
- D. How have you supported strengthening diversity and inclusiveness in your past experience?



**(4) Communicates Effectively**

- A. What methods of communicating with subordinates have you found most successful?
- B. Describe your public speaking experience(s). Who was your audience and what was the purpose?
- C. Describe how you assess your communication effectiveness?
- D. Describe an innovative way that you handled a conflict involving two or more of your subordinates? What was the outcome?
- E. How do you demonstrate effective listening skills and what methods of communicating with subordinates have you found most successful?

**(5) Builds Trust**

- A. What kind of things have you done to create a positive working environment that establishes trust?
- B. Tell me how you have built and sustained trust with your peers and overall campus community?

Leader as Performance Manager

**(6) Customer Service**

- A. Describe how you set and communicate performance expectations for your staff.
- B. Please give us examples of how you have provided both positive and corrective feedback to you staff.

**(7) Builds Organization Talent**

- A. Describe some of the things you have done to increase your expertise in your field?
- B. Tell me about an employee (or student) that was not meeting your expectations and how you dealt with the problem. What was the outcome?

**(8) Demonstrates Good Stewardship**

- A. Give an example of a situation in which a budget override was necessary to accomplish a goal?
- B. Describe how you have monitored or controlled a budget.

Leader as Innovator

**(9) Articulates Vision Mission**

- A. How would you describe and promote our university/college to a group of potential students or a new faculty/staff member(s) by providing specific information on school culture, demographics, atmosphere, etc.
- B. Describe how you foster and promote open communication and input from all stakeholders including students, parents, faculty, staff and community?

**(10) Builds Organizational Capacity to Meet Future Challenges**

- A. Provide an example of a time when you had an opportunity to increase your knowledge of the organization. How did the organization benefit?

- B. With current budget constraints describe how you will ensure our university/college stays on the cutting edge of advancing excellence and efficiencies through the use of technology and innovation.

**(11) Demonstrates Effective Decision-Making**

- A. Describe a time when you had a problem which you did not have either the resources or the authority to resolve. What did you do to resolve the situation and what was the outcome?
- B. Provide an example of a time when you worked as a member of a group or team and had to problem solve. How did it work? What was your role? What was the outcome?

**Performance Management**

Performance management is an on-going cycle that includes;

- the mutual setting of goals, performance expectation and leadership expectations
- the observation of performance and gathering performance data
- providing regular and on-going feedback and coaching
- the annual performance review and documentation



Leaders will have specific job, role and subject area related expectations and unique performance goals based on their role and the institution they work at.

To be successful at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities all leaders are also accountable for their performance on the Leadership Competencies.

The Leadership Competencies can be used to set or clarify leadership performance expectations in combination with the specific functional or outcome based performance expectations.

The leader’s supervisor can elect to use the leadership competencies to provide on-going feedback, coaching and development only or also incorporate the leadership competencies into the annual leadership performance evaluation.

The following process describes how the leadership competencies can be used for either approach or both.

### *Step by Step Process for Using Leadership Competencies in Performance Management*

#### Mutual Setting of Leadership Expectations

- Introduce the leadership competencies
- Discuss how the competencies are important for success in the position
- Create shared definitions of the leadership competencies based on the specific position and role
- Document shared definitions of what success will look like and measures for the leadership competencies
- Discuss areas of strength and development areas related to the role of a leader and/or the leadership competencies

#### Feedback and Coaching

- Throughout the year, during your formal one-on-ones and informal opportunities, provide feedback on performance you have observed, targeting their role as a leader or specific leadership competencies
- Provide on-going coaching that reinforces good performance and identifies when and where improvement is required as a leader or on specific leadership competencies
- Include questions like:
  - Do any of the leadership competencies need to be re-defined?
  - What leadership competencies continue to be a strength for you?
  - Which leadership competencies are more of a struggle? How can you manage those?
  - How can I be of assistance?
  - What development opportunities could be of assistance?
    - Formal training
    - Resources (individuals or written)
    - Stretch assignments
    - Other?

#### Performance Review or Evaluation

- Include specific documentation, comments and ratings based on the specific leadership expectations, leadership competencies and measures as a part of their overall performance review.

### *Leadership Competency Performance Expectations - Examples and Ideas*

Leadership Competency – Communicates Effectively:

Front-line Supervisor – Schedules and meets with all staff on a regular basis to share information. Has regular 1 – 1's with individuals and uses effective two-way communication to present information, listen and understand their staff, and build trusting relationships. Uses

multiple methods of communication based on desired outcomes and type of information being shared.

Dean – Effectively facilitates group consensus building to make decisions in a shared governance work environment. Communicates effectively with business, industry, community and governmental groups and is able to convey the goals and mission of the college/university or department.

### Leadership Development

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Leadership Competencies are used as the framework for our system-wide leadership development programs and can also be used at the campus level to develop your leaders.

#### 1. Art & Science of Supervision Programs

Competency	Supervisory Development Topic
<b>Leader of Self</b>	
Understands self and others	DiSC Strengths Finder Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Inventory
Acts with Integrity	Knowing your ethical responsibilities
<b>Leader as Relationship Builder</b>	
Builds trust	Building trust Being a supportive supervisor Abiding by data practices requirements
Values diversity	Communicating across differences Creating a harassment-free environment
Communicates effectively	Giving clear work direction Communicating in different directions Choosing how to communicate
<b>Leader as Manager</b>	
Builds organizational talent	Situational leadership Hiring, orienting, setting expectations, coaching good/poor performance, facilitating performance evaluations, preparing disciplinary action
Demonstrates customer service orientation	
Demonstrates good stewardship	Attendance / sick leave FMLA ADA Managing in a union environment Performance Management Discipline and investigations Grievance processing Drug and alcohol policy Overtime/FLSA
<b>Leader as Innovator</b>	
Articulates vision and mission	
Builds organizational capacity to meet	Managing change

future challenges	
Demonstrates effective decision making	Solving problems and making decisions Managing conflict

2. Luoma Leadership Academy; Designed to provide the leadership theories, practices, and skills needed to support leaders, and those striving to become leaders, to lead their respective departments and colleges more effectively. The program is based on the aligned leadership competencies of both Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and The Chair Academy.
3. Campus Based Leadership Development Programs
4. Individual Leadership Development

You can use the following self-assessment with leaders to help them identify areas of strengths to leverage and develop and areas they need to manage or develop.

The self-assessment can also be used to identify informal development opportunities including stretch assignments, projects or task forces to join, rotational assignments, mentoring or coaching opportunities **and independent learning.**

### *Using Leadership Development: The Self Inventory*

This self-inventory is designed to give you a snapshot of where you perceive your strengths and weaknesses are compared to the system-wide leadership competencies. Try to objectively rate your current level as accurately as possible.

Assess your current level:

- 1 – Limited capacity
- 2 – Capacity not yet exercised
- 3 – Capacity exercised with some success
- 4 – Capacity effectively practiced
- 5 – Capacity is practiced with mastery and serves as a model for others
- N/A – I don't see this as applicable

### Interpreting Your Self-assessment

Review your totals for each of the eleven competencies.

- Identify the two or three that have the most 3 and 4 boxes checked. These likely are your competencies that are an area of strength for you.
- Identify the two or three that have the most 1 and 2 boxes checked. These likely are leadership competencies you have not used in your current role or are competencies that need developing.

Development planning.

- Look for opportunities to leverage your competency areas that are a strength for you.
- Look at the competencies that have lower scores and identify those that are needed for success in your current role or in desired future roles. These gaps are potential developmental areas for you.
- Include both your competency strengths and gaps in your annual individual development plan that you create with your manager. Options for development can include:
  - Simple daily activities
  - Additional assignments, projects, or task force participation
  - Reading and self-study
  - Formal programs

**A: LEADER KNOWLEDGE OF SELF:**

<b>Understands Self and Others</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Articulates and owns values and priorities						
Understands individual role and responsibilities						
Committed to and supportive of the organizational mission						
Aware of own personality and work style preferences						
Welcomes diverse personalities & work style preferences in others						
Adapts communication to appeal to audience						
Demonstrates balance between humility and self-assurance						
Values and promotes work/life balance						
<b>TOTALS</b>						

<b>Acts with Integrity</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Abides by all relevant laws, rules, and regulations						
Encourages others to abide by the same laws, rules, and regulations						
Gives credit where credit is due						
Delivers what is promised						
Admits and learns from mistakes						
Corrects own mistakes to utmost ability						
<b>TOTALS</b>						

**B: LEADER AS RELATIONSHIP BUILDER**

<b>Values Diversity</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Demonstrates inclusivity when establishing work processes and teams						
Encourages and promotes the diversification of faculty, staff, and student body						
Actively seeks out and invites alternative viewpoints when planning, leading discussions, and making decisions						

<b>TOTALS</b>						
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<b>Communicates Effectively</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Shares information appropriately						
Listens carefully and seeks to understand differing points of view						
Presents ideas clearly and concisely in writing						
Verbally presents ideas with clarity						
<b>TOTALS</b>						

<b>Builds Trust</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Demonstrates respect and values the contributions of others.						
Creates an atmosphere where transparency of process is perceived in word and deed.						
Keeps commitments						
Extends trust to others						
Inspires confidence both in word and deed						
Actively works to restore trust when necessary						
Keeps confidences when appropriate						
<b>TOTALS</b>						

**C: LEADER AS MANAGER**

<b>Builds Customer Service Orientation</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Displays a positive attitude						
Listens attentively and respectfully						
Responds effectively to internal and external customer needs, requests, and concerns						
Exercises creative problem solving						
<b>TOTALS</b>						

<b>Builds Organizational Talent</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Makes sound hiring decisions						
Provides a comprehensive orientation to new employees						
Sets clear expectations for employees						
Provides ongoing feedback; effectively coaches both high-quality and poor performance						
Partners with each employee in conducting meaningful performance evaluations						
Helps direct reports develop professionally						
Holds direct reports accountable for performance						
Takes responsibility for own professional development						
<b>TOTALS</b>						

<b>Demonstrates Good Stewardship</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Understands general principles of budgeting and finance						
Understands general principles of human resources management						

Makes informed decisions regarding resource allocation						
Communicates decisions regarding resources in an effective manner to stakeholders						
<b>TOTALS</b>						

**D: LEADER AS INNOVATOR**

<b>Articulates Vision and Mission</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Makes decisions that are informed by system and institutional history						
Articulates strategic objectives publicly						
Creates and sustains a student-centered approach						
Anticipates and manages change						
Seeks input and considers stakeholder positions						
Conveys institutional transformation efforts to constituents						
<b>TOTALS</b>						

<b>Builds Organizational Capacity to Meet Future Challenges</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Engages in and supports appropriate risk-taking						
Identifies and removes barriers to innovation						
Rewards and supports innovation which advances excellence and efficiency						
Promotes accountability for self and others						
Works in partnership with educational institutions and governmental agencies.						
Exchanges ideas with innovative thinkers and developers						
Networks with donors						
<b>TOTALS</b>						

<b>Demonstrates Effective Decision-Making</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Demonstrates critical thinking by using questions to promote reflective consideration in others						
Seeks alternative viewpoints						
Uses situational decision-making and problem-solving methods appropriately						
Utilizes a collaborative decision making approach, involving others in decisions that affect them.						
Prepares stakeholders for changes in process flowing from decisions/resolutions.						
Communicates decisions effectively to stakeholders						
Supports decisions once they are made – stays the course.						
<b>TOTALS</b>						