

University Admin Setting

Facilitators: Angela Martin and Sharon Milberger

Participants discussed the variety of people they are charged with reporting to and the list included chancellors, deans, Vice Presidents of Research, and in the College of Allied Health, and College of Education.

Current Challenges and Issues

In current climate, there is the challenge to create a proactive approach to a lot of issues facing UCEDDs and the university administration and community stakeholders keep changing. We face a lot of criticism, especially around budget issues and demonstrating the UCEDDs worth.

One UCEDD Director noted that change over in administration was a challenge. New administrators have also come from outside of the educational or human service fields and have a focus on business and economics. There is a constant need to take human service work and show its value to people driven by business models and bottom lines.

Another UCEDD whose Center is part of the state system, described a visit with top state-level government administrators and how important it was to clearly explain what their Center does and then show the Return on Investment (RTI) the UCEDD is generating. While the administrators did not know the details of the UCEDD, but the fact that the UCEDD was not costing the state additional funds and was in fact leveraging additional funds, made sense for these administrators who are based in the business model.

UCEDD Director noted that they match their funds and so administrators know if their budget is cut that means the match will be lost.

If core funding is leveraged strategically, the UCEDD becomes an asset to the state government while also helping people with disabilities.

Another challenge a Director mentioned is when the university administration doesn't turnover and the same top down militaristic style is kept and that can hinder creativity and innovation.

Relationships with university administration can be very political.

Turnover with UCEDD staff, in particular UCEDD Directors, has been problematic when trying to show administration your impact and you've been going down several different paths and had continuity disrupted.

Responses/Ideas to Challenges

Find ways to collaborate with university administration that does not involve asking for money. One example is to collaborate on a research application together.

Work to not be a burden to the administration. Instead see how you can make contacts and help administrators enter into other systems due to the connections and work the UCEDD has done in the community.

A lot of funding sources are focusing and demanding interdisciplinary and translational research and UCEDDs are situated to be able to offer that and be beneficial to the university.

Using the UCEDDs interdisciplinary approach has helped with partnering across existing university institutions for a multidisciplinary approach.

One UCEDD has a separate tax id from university, and while it's hugely beneficial, the UCEDD must maintain a business and the UCEDD needs to have a big infrastructure.

Another UCEDD had thought about establishing a separate tax id, but it was a very complicated and doesn't work for our bottom line and university wasn't excited about that.

Charters

One UCEDD learned from past experience to use the purpose of the DD Act when needing to advance policies that go against cultural normal. The DD Act has been a protective measure for the UCEDD.

Several UCEDDs have been told "the people who signed it are no longer here, so there's no teeth in it."

A UCEDD Director mentioned that their state DD Council has had trouble with state administrators adhering to the DD Act.

One UCEDD had set up a charter in 1985 and created an advisory committee for the Vice Chancellor, and it can be a very powerful mediating tool. CAC is good, but no substantial power, so a group of stakeholders that are stronger and more powerful can be an asset. If possible, setting up an advisory council is really helpful and then it doesn't feel and seem like the UCEDD is standing up alone.