

Leading in Professional Associations

Ever get that feeling like you hit a certain point in your career and you want to kind of like level up?

Yeah.

But you're not exactly sure where do you even start?

I know that feeling.

Well, today we are taking a deep dive into something that a lot of faculty might overlook professional associations.

Okay.

Now, we're looking at an article from Level Up, uh, which is a guide for faculty written by faculty that's all about maximizing your involvement in professional associations.

Right?

We know you're busy. We're just going to jump right into it.

Okay.

So, one of the things that really stood out to me was that this article goes beyond just attending conferences or networking a bit.

Yeah.

It really stresses that faculty should actively try to get involved in leadership within these associations.

Absolutely. And I think that's really where the big benefits come in.

Okay. So, like the article talks about boosting your CV and you know expanding your network which are all great, right?

But I'm wondering like how does that actually play out?

Yeah.

So, like let's say for example you take on a leadership role in something like the National Communication Association.

Sure.

How does that translate into tangible benefits in your career?

Well, I think it's all about the skills that you develop and the connections that you're making.

Okay.

So, if you're chairing a big conference or leading a committee, you're going to have to learn how to really hone your organizational skills.

You have to learn how to manage diverse personalities and make tough decisions.

Yeah. Those are huge in academia.

Yeah. And those are all really valuable assets whether you are applying for grants, whether you are thinking about leading a department someday or even just like navigating faculty meetings.

Oh, absolutely. I hadn't even thought about the faculty meetings.

Right. It can be a training ground.

It's so true. So, it sounds like it's not just about like you said adding a line to your CV, but it's really about like building a skill set.

Exactly. And, you know, going beyond just your immediate institution, right? Oh, yeah.

These associations, they often have connections to industry. They have connections to government agencies. funding organizations.

That's right.

And so the relationships you build there could lead to all sorts of things.

Yeah.

Collaborations, mentorship opportunities, maybe even a pipeline for some great graduate students.

Yeah, I like that pipeline.

Right.

Uh okay, so the article had this really like comprehensive list of all these ways to get involved. It really did.

So it talked about board memberships, presenting on panels, joining subgroups, even volunteering for peer review and conference moderation.

Yeah, they really cover it all.

What do you think are some of the activities that are like more impactful than others.

That's a good question.

Especially at different career stages.

Yeah. So, I think for faculty who are early in their careers, they probably want to focus on building up their expertise.

Okay.

So, that might mean, you know, presenting their research, maybe getting involved with peer review. As you move along in your career, it might be time to start thinking about leadership positions, maybe within a subgroup or a committee.

Okay?

And then for those folks who are really aiming for, you know, the top leadership roles in their association, right?

Seeking out board memberships is a good signal that you're ready for that next level. That makes sense. So, it's all about like strategically picking what you're doing based on where you are, I think. So, strategic engagement. That's a good way to put it.

Yeah. And one thing I thought was interesting was that the article also mentions how important it is to show appreciation for the work that association staff and the leaders are doing.

That's so true.

It sounds obvious when you say it out loud.

It does.

But I think sometimes we forget just basic common courtesy.

I know I do sometimes,

especially when we get, you know, wrapped up in our own stuff.

It's like any relationship, right? Like just a little appreciation goes a long way.

Exactly. And that goodwill can lead to more opportunities down the road.

Absolutely. And that brings us to another really interesting point that the article raised, which is don't be shy about expressing your interest in a leadership role.

Yeah, I can see where people would maybe hesitate on that one.

Sure.

What if vice would you give to someone who wants to do that with coming off as power hungry?

That's a good question. I think it's really about like finding the right moment and the right tone.

So, for instance, after a really productive committee meeting,

you could maybe casually mention to the chair that you're interested in getting more involved in the future.

Oh, okay. So, not like making some big announcement, but just like kind of expressing your interest.

Exactly. You don't want to make it all about you.

Right. Right.

And you know, that actually brings us to the bigger picture, which the article does such a great job of highlighting, okay,

which is that getting involved in professional associations, it's not just about advancing your own career.

Yeah. It's got to be more than that, right?

It really is. It's about shaping the future of your entire field.

That's what I really like about it. You know, you're contributing to something larger than yourself.

Absolutely. And you can have a real voice in the direction that your profession takes.

Right.

The article ends on this really powerful line about seeing your vision for your profession advance.

I love that.

So, it makes you think, what is vision for your field

and how can you get involved in an association to really help make that happen?

That's a great question for all of our listeners to think about.

It is.

And if you want to learn more about this, the full LevelUp publication is available online at the Center for Faculty Excellence website.

Yes.

And it's filled with great advice from faculty who have been there, done that, right?

And it's specifically written for faculty at our university.

Such a valuable resource.

It really is. Thanks for joining us for this dive.

My pleasure.

We'll see you next time.

Bye.