

Serving on community boards transcript

Okay. So, we're all super busy, right? Between teaching and research and all the service commitments, uh, we hardly have time to breathe.

Yeah, tell me about it.

But what if I told you that adding something else to your plate could actually make things easier in the long run?

How easier how? You got my attention.

Well, today we're diving into the idea of faculty serving on community boards, something you might not have considered as like a strategic move for your career.

Interesting.

Yeah. And to guide us, we've got this great article from Level Up. You know, that mid-career guide for faculty that's been making the rounds.

Oh, yeah. It's put together by faculty for faculty. Right.

Exactly. It's accessible through the Center for Faculty Excellence website. So, anyone listening can check it out.

Awesome.

So, we're going to break down the key points and really see how serving on these boards can benefit you, your department, even your students.

Sounds good. Let's dive in.

The article starts off with this question, why me? Which I think is perfect because when that invitation lands in your inbox, probably thinking like, "Wait, why me?"

Yeah, you're definitely not alone in feeling that way. Um, the article makes this great point that boards are generally pretty selective, right?

They have specific reasons for reaching out to you. Uh, they want something you offer.

So, it's worth figuring out what that something is, right?

Absolutely. Don't be shy about asking what they're hoping you'll bring to the table, what specific skills or experiences they're looking for.

Makes sense because it's not just about your title or your area of expertise. They might be looking for something beyond that. Exactly. They want to know what unique value you can contribute from your research or teaching, maybe even from your personal life.

How okay. So that's the why me. But then comes the inevitable question of time.

Oh yeah.

Because as faculty we are all time crunched and the level up article actually dedicates a whole section to time commitment.

Rightly so.

It basically cautions against taking on too much and you know ending up feeling totally overwhelmed.

Yeah. It's a good reminder to be realistic about what you can handle.

So before you say yes to anything. Find out how often the board meets, how much work is expected outside of those meetings, and be honest with yourself about whether you can actually fit it all in.

Yeah, you got to prioritize. Make sure you're not spreading yourself too thin.

Now, here's something interesting. The article mentions that you might be asked to contribute in areas where you don't have tons of experience

like what

like finance or marketing stuff that might feel outside your comfort zone as an academic.

Yeah, that's true. But the article actually spins this as a positive thing, right?

They say it's a chance to learn and grow. I actually kind of agree with that.

Yeah, because those new skills can be surprisingly useful even back in your university role.

Absolutely. Think about it like understanding financial oversight on a board that could really help you manage grants or departmental budgets better.

Oh, that's a good point.

And your analytical skills from academia. Yeah, they're super transferable. And don't worry, most boards actually offer orientation for new members to get you up to speed.

So, you're not just thrown in the deep. Nope. They want you to succeed.

Okay. So now the article talks about making tangential connections which basically means considering boards that are related to your field,

right? Like nonprofits working in your area or school boards if you're in education.

Exactly. And I think there's a real strategic advantage to this.

Oh, for sure. It allows you to apply your expertise in a whole new context, which can be really rewarding.

Yeah. And it raises the visibility of your department within the community. It's like a win-win.

Plus, you get to stay up to date with broader trends in your field. See what's happening outside the ivory tower.

Now, for me, the most compelling part of the article is the possible outcomes section. It lays out some really tangible benefits.

Okay. What part?

Well, first off, it talks about building personal and professional relationships, and we all know how important networking is.

Yeah. Those connections can lead to some amazing opportunities.

Exactly. And the article specifically mentions the potential to create internships and scholarships for students, which is huge plus for your department.

Oh, absolutely. That's a direct way to give back and help your students succeed.

Another benefit is connecting the board with university programs which could open doors to collaborations, research partnerships, even funding opportunities.

Yeah, it's like building bridges between the university and the wider community.

And maybe the most fundamental outcome is gaining a deeper understanding of the needs and challenges facing your community,

right? And that can inform your research, your teaching, even your service work within the university.

It's like this feedback loop where your board experience enriches your academic life and vice versa.

I like that. A feedback loop.

Now, the article also gives this really practical tip for navigating board meetings, especially if you're feeling a little lost.

Okay, what's the tip?

It says to introduce yourself to speakers or other board members after the meeting, especially if something resonated with you.

Oh, yeah. I actually do that all the time. Those informal conversations can be so valuable.

Exactly. They're where the real connections are made and you can learn so much from people with different perspectives.

Networking 101,

right? Basically, so to wrap things up, I think the key takeaway from Level Up is that serving on a community board is not just about altruism,

right? It's not just about giving back.

It's about strategically using your skills and knowledge to make a difference while also advancing your own career and benefiting your students.

It's a win-win-win situation.

Exactly. So, for our listeners out there, I want you to think about this. What community needs are you passionate about? what issues align with your expertise. Yeah,

because your involvement could create a truly reciprocal relationship, one that benefits both the university and the wider community it serves.

That's a great point.

And for more in-depth info on all of this, definitely check out the LevelUp guide on the Center for Faculty Excellence website.

It's a great resource.

Thanks for diving deep with us.

My pleasure.