

Carlos Losada – “From Professorship to Leading in a Higher Education Organisation”

Summary of the presentation. Webinar, November 11th, 2024. Kircher Network - The Canisius Formation Course

Evolution of Managerial Roles in Higher Education

Losada discussed the evolution of managerial roles in higher education, emphasising the shift from academic to managerial responsibilities. He highlighted the differences between organisational and educational activities, noting that the time devoted to management increases as one progresses in one's managerial career. Losada also mentioned the importance of understanding the content of organisational work and its impact on individuals. He encouraged the audience to consider how these characteristics affect them personally.

Nature of Managerial Work Discussed

Losada discussed the nature of managerial work, emphasising its high intensity and lack of a definitive ending point. He highlighted the constant need to do more and the high work rhythm, contrasting it with academic work. Losada also pointed out the need for more uninterrupted time for reflection and the fragmented nature of managerial tasks, which often involve brief and varied activities. He used research examples to illustrate these points.

Transitioning From Academic to Dynamic Role

Losada discussed the challenges and implications of transitioning from an academic activity to a more varied and dynamic role. He emphasised the need for adaptability, emotional intelligence, and the ability to shift between different moods and situations quickly. Losada also highlighted the importance of depth over superficiality, encouraging the development of discernment and sensitivity to identify when issues require deeper exploration. He stressed the need for a strong orientation towards action and change, even if it means relying on unverified information.

Importance of Personal Relationships in Management

Losada emphasised that interpersonal relations account for a significant portion of a manager's time, citing studies showing that managers spend 60-90% of their time on oral communication. He also discussed the role of emotional leadership in managing relationships, as emotions are directly related to a significant portion of a manager's time. He noted that managers often become the centre of an information flow, managing numerous relationships and information.

New Technologies and Managerial Impact

Losada discussed the impact of new technologies on managerial positions, emphasising that they exacerbate existing traits. He highlighted the importance of being proactive and taking advantage of imposed activities. Losada also noted that new technologies increase external communication but may reduce internal communication. He stressed that managing is inevitable but must be done within limits to avoid dysfunction. He then asked the team to reflect on the potential consequences of their job and offer recommendations to avoid negative impacts. The team was encouraged to share their thoughts and reactions.

Managing Workload and Expectations

One participant proposed two recommendations to manage the negative Losada and the participants discussed strategies for managing constant work and interactions, such as blocking time for uninterrupted work and celebrating small successes. Losada agreed with these suggestions and emphasised the importance of managing one's agenda to allow for deeper thinking and avoid burnout.

Balancing Human Relationships and Roles

Losada emphasised the importance of human relationships and the need for balance in managing and researching. He noted that switching from managing to researching is challenging, but some people can do it effectively. Various participants expressed concerns about their ability to manage and study simultaneously, noting the difficulty of focusing during research after a long day of managing. One participant suggested using meditation and other activities to help transition between different roles and prevent the old habits from polluting the present situation. For instance, to engage in manual work at home to help separate the manager's hat from other roles.

Effective Management in Higher Education

Losada emphasised the importance of effective management in higher education, likening it to a central part of the institution's mission. He highlighted the need for reflection on how to tackle the challenges of managing and underscored that managing is not a secondary or subsidiary task. He discussed the multifaceted role of managers, from problem-solvers to leaders, and encouraged viewing managers as action-oriented individuals who generate results. He suggested that managers should be seen as doers, generating results through their actions.

Managerial Roles and Responsibilities Discussed

Losada discussed the role of managers in organisations, highlighting their primary focus on problem-solving and crisis management. He noted that managers spend significant time managing information and representing the organisation in various networks. Losada also mentioned the importance of communication and information dissemination within the organisation. He introduced a model of managerial roles, which includes direct action, managing through other people, managing information, and managing through systems. The model aims to provide a more holistic understanding of managers' organisational tasks and responsibilities.

Understanding Jesuit Institutions and Discernment

Losada emphasised the importance of understanding a university's purpose and orientation, particularly in the context of Jesuit higher education institutions. He highlighted the need for discernment in decision-making and the development of specific knowledge for each role. He also stressed the significance of reflection, sensitivity, and understanding situations. Some participants noted the value of common discernment and respecting each other's competencies.

Managing and Enabling in Academia

Losada concluded by discussing the significance of prayer, meditation, and preparation for discernment in managing, noting the similarities between managerial and academic roles, particularly in enabling others. Participants also addressed the challenges of managing relationships within Jesuit institutions.