

Academic Leadershipwith Lillas and Linda

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It would have been the perfect example of “practise what you preach” – that is if anything that we experienced during Lillas and Linda’s leadership road show bore any resemblance whatsoever to preaching. Of course it didn’t, because the kind of leadership that they encourage – the kind that they exemplify – is a whole lot more about listening than preaching.

Lillas Hatala and **Linda McCann** brought a condensed and high octane version of their academic leadership seminar to CAFAD in Regina at this year’s annual conference and it proved to be a great boost for a collection of deans wearied by administrivia. This dynamic duo of academic leadership recharged our collective batteries focussing attention on our own core of knowledge about what makes for great academic leadership. Long-time professional associates in leadership training, Lillas, now a partner with Integrative Leadership International of Calgary and Linda, principal with McCann Consulting of Saskatoon, displayed their own considerable leadership skills in empowering and facilitating participants to discover the leaders within. They also challenged us to operationalize the leadership principles and characteristics we admire in others.

Lillas and Linda coached us on the benefits of appreciative inquiry, an approach that seeks to appreciate value through organizational change. It is optimistic, hopeful and rooted in the values that we hold most central. It is inquiry that seeks to add value to what we do and how we do it. By the end of two intense – and all too short – sessions, Lillas and Linda had guided us in putting together an inventory of the leadership principles that collectively we admire and try to exemplify.

We agreed that top leaders

- listen well
- consult widely
- create spaces where things can and do happen
- display positive attitudes and are willing to champion new initiatives
- build environments where respect inspires participation and a sense of ownership
- respect and encourage diversity of opinion
- seek well-argued and deeply considered compromise, rather than consensus
- take time for reflection every day
- speak only truths and always manifest integrity

Working at the speed of trust, true leaders act with humility and fierce resolve! With trust, humility and a fierce resolve, Canadian Fine Arts Deans were encouraged to renew their commitment to principled and effective leadership by Linda McCann and Lillas Hatala in a memorable and transformative few hours which became a real highlight of our 2009 CAFAD Conference.