

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/get-to-know-people>

Dr. Kristina Johnson explains the importance of understanding the passions and interests of colleagues and employees. Here she explains how this positively impacted her work as a leading administrator at Duke University and Johns Hopkins University.



Transcript

I think the most important thing starting out, more - not so much as a faculty member, but really as a Dean or a Provost, it's probably true in any organization is to get to know people because as one of my graduate students told me, people want to know you care before they care what you know.. So when I started out as Dean of Engineering at Duke, actually I went to one of my roommates in college who ended up being CEO of E*TRADE, that's another lesson, stay close to people you know here because you never know and she said look the first thing you want to do is sit down with every single faculty member and just ask him what are you passionate about and that way you don't know, you want to get to know them before you have an agenda.. So I got really interesting answers like one faculty member was very passionate about golf, so we talked about golf for about an hour.. And another faculty member was very passionate about engineering education and we talked for 2.5 hours.. And I finally said look you can get to dinner if you want with me, but I got to eat.. So I think that was my biggest lesson, was what Kathy Levinson, who retired as CEO of E*TRADE, took them public, told me is sit down and get to know people.. So when I went to Hopkins as Provost, we had many faculty members, over 2,000, so I couldn't sit down with everyone, but I sat down with all the department chairs and the way I did that was I just had the lunch with the Provost.. And that had some unintended benefits which we will talk about later...