You're listening to, you've got this episode 272. Welcome to you've got this, a weekly podcast for higher education professionals looking to increase their confidence and capacity for juggling the day-to-day demands of an academic. I'm your host, Dr. Katie Linder. On this episode, I thought it would give a little bit of a week in the life of someone who is in an executive leadership position.

And the reason I thought I would do this is because I was at a prolific event. Um, prolific is my online community that I run for academics and higher ed professionals. And we do these weekly planning sessions on Sunday. And we got to talking about, I don't know how it came up, but we were talking about meetings and busy weeks versus low weeks.

And, uh, there was a, another kind of administrator in the room and we were talking about how we have like 40 to 45 meetings a week. And people in the room were just like shocked. Like they couldn't believe that that's how many meetings we were having. And that, that was like a normal kind of level or. For what we were dealing with.

And, uh, my light week, which was like my first week back after the break was like 25 meetings, which also felt like a lot to some people in the room. And so I thought I would spend this episode just kind of walking through what a week looks like for me right now. Um, and to tell you about like the kinds of meetings that I'm engaging in, and the week that I chose for this, as I record, this is last week where I had 39.

Um, in the week and it was actually less meetings than normal because on Wednesday I had a retreat. Um, and so I had kind of an all day meeting that I was, uh, partially facilitating, which I'll talk about in a moment. Um, so this is a pretty typical week in terms of the, the load that I'm at. And I always just think it's kind of interesting to hear about what people are doing in their jobs and how they're actually spending their time.

And I do think that there is, you know, some degree of skepticism and higher ed about like administrators and like, what are they really doing with all their time? And like, how are they, how are they spending all that time when they're not teaching or they're not researching. And they're just kind of in meetings.

Um, so I'm happy to kind of pull the curtain back and give you a little bit of a sense of what my week looks like right now. So I'm, I'm going to start on Monday and, um, I start the day, most days with a touch base with my assistant. And right now we are working remotely. And so she and I meet on zoom. All of the meetings I'm going to describe to you, um, in this particular week are on zoom because we are working remotely because of the pandemic.

So I start the day with a 30 minute touch base with my assistant. And typically what we do in this meeting is we go over what whatever's going on that day. If she has certain priorities that she's trying to move forward. Um, there's often questions that she has for me about my calendar. Like there might be a conflict and she's trying to decide what to reschedule.

Um, she also does some research projects for me, so she might have some questions. That. And then right now we're in the process of like moving a search forward for a position in my unit. So she's been kind of liaising with HR around that. So she has a lot of different, like little projects that she works on.

And sometimes she needs to check in with me with questions and things like that. And it's also just nice to see her a couple of times a day, because we're not in and out of each other's offices. Like we normally. At nine o'clock on Monday, I had a touch base with a colleague who's at another institution, which was a really wonderful way to start my Monday morning.

This is a person I hadn't had a chance to talk with in a long time. And it was just nice to kind of catch up with her, see how things are going. We're both in leadership positions. And so we were kind of just trading, um, stories about kind of what we're working on right now and sharing. Now the next couple hours of my morning, we're actually open because I have a hold on my calendar for the cabinet meeting.

And this is the meaning of the chancellor and her cabinet. And sometimes I get invited into this meeting at the last minute, and I don't always know if that's going to happen. And so what my assistant and I ended up doing was putting a hold on my calendar because I'm in case I am invited. We don't want to have to reschedule other people at the last minute.

Um, What I ended up working on that morning was a report that I'm drafting for a taskforce that I'm leading and we're getting to the stage where we're drafting a report. So I worked on that for a couple hours, took a lunch hour, which I always try to do. And then in the afternoon, I had a quarterly meeting with a colleague which, who was on our sister campus and the registrar, or the person who kind of oversees the registrar.

And we like to just check in with each other to kind of make sure that we're all on the same page. So that's a quarterly meeting. That's a standing meeting. Then I had a followup meeting with a group of faculty and administrators on our campus who had some questions about prior learning assessments.

And I had already had one meeting with them and I brought in some other people into this followup meeting to make sure that their questions could get answered because I didn't know all the answers in the first meeting. And so I'd kind of gathered what they needed and then brought the right people together to make sure that they could move what they needed to do for.

After that I had a 45 minute meeting about definitions around alternative credentials. Um, this is a project that is being worked on by several different administrators across the campuses within our system. And so we had some people get together within the leadership team to think about, um, the definitions and kind of what we're trying to do with those.

I ended the day with a quick touch base with my assistant. And then right after that, at the very, very end of my day, I had a strategy meeting with a couple other administrators and our chancellor around online strategy in particular. And I have a meeting with that group, maybe every couple of weeks.

It's just a quick 30 minute kind of touch base about things that we're working on in those years. Okay. So that's Monday, Tuesday. I started the day with a check-in with, um, one of our leaders in the it realm. And he and I have also a standing meeting every couple of weeks. That's just 30 minutes. Um, and so I had that meeting and then right after that, I had my check-in with my assistant.

Then I had a kickoff meeting for a new project team that I've been asked to join. And as part of that project team, um, this happened on Tuesday of last week, I was asked to be a liaison between the campuses, all of the campuses within our, our system and some other people who are at system office. And so that you'll see later on in the week adds a significant amounts of time to my meeting schedule.

But, um, that online kind of project kickoff happened on two. Then I met with a project management team that is helping me with our digital strategy task force. And we did a weekly planning session. We have a task force meeting coming up soon. And so those meetings are really about like setting the agenda for those meetings.

Make sure we have the resources that we need. We look over the report that I'm drafting, um, and just make sure that we're kind of all on the same page about how that's moving from. That was my morning in the afternoon. I had a one-on-one with, uh, one of our representatives, that system who is on that project team that I mentioned from earlier in the morning.

And, um, then I led a stakeholder meeting with our librarians and library staff specifically for the task force. I'm leading around digital strategy. And we met with those folks just to get their input on what we were working on. And then at the end of the day, I had a quick prep meeting for the following day.

We're doing an all day Dean's retreat. And so I had a prep meeting with the provost and some other members of his cabinet, and then ended the day with a touch base with my assistant. Okay, that gets us to Wednesday. I hope this isn't completely boring for you, but, uh, if you're interested, uh, this is the kind of stuff that I'm dealing with every day.

So, uh, the next day I had a quick call in the morning with a colleague from another campus. We squeezed it in before the Dean's retreat. Then I had to do a system level meeting, uh, for half an hour. And this is now a daily meeting that got scheduled based on that project team meeting, uh, where I am the campus liaison.

And so I do a third. At daily check-in with this, uh, system team that I'm working with. And then we had an all day deans or treat, I facilitated the morning part of it. We had a, an off-campus speaker come in. Um, this was all again on zoom. And then, um, that went through the afternoon and then I ended the day with a touch base with my assistant.

So that day was fully on zoom, but I wasn't kind of jumping around to a bunch of different meetings. I was just facilitating, um, this retreat that we had between the provost cabinet and the Dean. All right. So that brings us to Thursday, started the day with that daily touch base with the project team that I mentioned that I met with my assistant.

Then I had a one-on-one session with my boss. Who's the provost, you and I meet weekly for one hour. So that happened at night. Uh, at 10, I had a, uh, quick break in between meetings. And so I squeezed in some feedback on a document that I had to send to someone. And at 10 30, I had a one-on-one with another system level colleague related to online teaching and learning at 11, I had an hour long session with a vendor, and this is something that frequently happens, I would say every other week or so we have some kind of vendor demonstration.

And so that happened in the. Took a lunch break, which I always try to do. And then in the afternoon I had a quick half an hour meeting with, um, kind of, uh, a national organization that runs some different, like I'm trying to think of the best way to kind of like. Themed sessions with different leaders across the country.

And this one was on academic, um, technology. So I attended that for about half an hour before I had to leave for an overlapping meeting with a another vendor who was pitching something to our campus. So then I had that vendor meet. Um, and then the rest of my afternoon, I had a quick meeting with a faculty member.

Who's been working on an online project that I wanted to learn a little bit more about. I try to meet one-on-one with faculty, if they have kind of things that are interesting to me, just so I can get to know them and get to know their projects. And so I had a meeting with a faculty member. Then there was, uh, the weekly touch base that we have for that, um, project team that I mentioned where I'm the campus liaison.

We also meet with our system president as part of updating him. So that happened on Thursday afternoon, had a quick touch base with my assistant and then did a quick debrief with someone else on that project team at the end of the day. So that was like the last couple hours of the day. I had four 30 minute meetings that I squeezed.

And then finally that gets us to Friday. So I started the day with another 30 minute touch base for that daily meeting on the project team. Then I had about an hour to draft a document that the chancellor had requested. Um, and so I spent an hour kind of pulling that together. Got that sent off to her.

Um, I had a quick touch base with our, um, Uh, a person that we have on our team who kind of focuses on partnerships, um, within the city and with different vendors. And he and I needed to kind of touch base on priorities and what he's working on, how he wants me to be involved. And I also needed to get his feedback on a document that I had to create for the chancellor.

So, um, he and I had a quick touch base after that I met with, um, our. Uh, lead who's in, um, the budget office. He and I have a weekly meeting and he, and I talk about various things related to kind of the online budget and just strategy as we're kind of moving things forward. And he also works with me on putting together things like hiring plans and things.

Um, after that, right before I did a lunch meeting, I had one more meeting, which was with a couple of faculty members who wanted to talk with me about the overlap between, um, some of their DEI initiatives, diversity equity, and inclusion initiatives with online strategy. And so I met with faculty for about 45 minutes to try to kind of listen to what they were hoping to do.

And then, um, because they wanted to do a project that just involved a ton of other people in terms of leadership roles. I then followed that up with an. And just kind of, kind of handed it off because there were other people who were more involved in what they needed to do and just made sure to connect the right people together.

After that, I had a lunch meeting with a colleague who loves to read and she, and I maybe once a month or every six weeks or so, we meet on a zoom for lunch, or if we're on campus, we meet on campus and we just talk about books. Um, so I did that for my Friday lunch hour, got some good book recommendations that was really.

Uh, at one o'clock I had an hour long meeting with a new person who just joined our campus in our marketing team and he is just getting started and, uh, it was his first week. And so I was on his kind of onboarding schedule just to meet me and get to know each other. So we had that meeting in the early, after.

After that I had a touch base with my assistant. Um, and then following that we did, uh, there was a committee meeting for the technology committee that, um, our faculty Senate, uh, has a technology committee and I serve on that committee. As kind of a non-voting member and attend the meetings. And so I had that meeting for about 90 minutes in my last hour of the week from four to five on Friday, it was actually free.

I did not have a meeting, which was kind of nice. And I use that time just to kind of review my week, make sure. You know, done what I needed to do. Um, and so I don't know if that gives you any kind of sense of, of just the kinds of things that I'm working on. As you can see, there are some projects I work on that take up several meetings in one week, like I'm touching base with a project team or, um, I have multiple meetings related to the task force that I'm leading.

But there's also just a lot of different kinds of people and projects that I'm meeting throughout the week. What I really like about that is it makes things go by relatively quickly. I mean, I I'm really just kind of jumping from one thing to another and, um, I have to just be. Really realistic with myself about what I can get done in between.

And, uh, right now my assistant and I are actually working on carving out specific time. Today's a good example. Um, as I record this, this is Monday and I'm on a Dean's search committee and needed to review a bunch of the applicants today. And so I needed to look over applicant materials. And so she was able to carve out like, I'm looking at my calendar five hours, six hours for me to do that today.

But we had to carve that out, like really far in advance so that it wouldn't get booked over. And because Monday can sometimes be a lighter day for me, we took advantage of that. So, um, I was able to actually have less meetings to. But even on a low meeting day, um, I had four meetings throughout the day, um, in addition to kind of reviewing all these applications.

So I think that that's a pretty good picture of kind of what a week looks like for me, the range of different kinds of meetings that I have, the different initiatives I'm trying to move forward. And as you can see for focused work like drafting reports, um, I'm probably doing it after hours. Like there's just not a lot of time to do that during the day.

So I'm definitely kind of similar in some ways to a faculty role where you don't necessarily have just a nine to five, um, you're, you're often doing emailing and other things outside of those hours. So, um, I always love to hear about other people's weeks in the life or days in the life. So if you want to email me and tell me about your schedule, I would love to hear it.

You can always email me at hello at Dr. Katie linder.com. And if you have questions about this schedule or, you know, juggling it, managing it, or just, um, I dunno, curious questions. I'm also always happy to answer those as well. So thanks so much for listening to this episode about a week in the life, and I wish you a good upcoming weekend.

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