You're listening to, you've got this episode number 297. 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 life. I'm your host, Dr. Katie Linder. In this episode, I thought I would share some of my reflections from my first year in this new job.

That's right. About a year ago, I was transitioning into this new job and, um, it's kind of hard to believe that I've been in this job for a whole year, but that is the case. And I feel like when you first start a job, It can take a while to ease in. And I feel so much more, uh, settled now than I did a year ago when I was first starting out.

So I thought I would share some reflections of just kind of like what I've picked up over time. What's changed over time with this job. Um, and, uh, just kind of catch you up on, on how things have gone over the last year. So, um, Just some like logistical things. I started with my commute and just kind of getting into my job, taking the train every day and I would get dropped off at the train, picked up at the train and, um, not too long into the job, I would say maybe a month or two, my partner wanted to just start driving me in because COVID cases were going up and, um, People on the train were no longer required to be masking and things like that.

So I ended up switching my commute to kind of this daily drop off pickup, and it takes about 25 minutes to commute in. So this is like a, a, almost an hour round trip for my partner every day. But it's also a great opportunity for us to kind of. Chat in the morning, catch up in the afternoon. And I've really, really enjoyed that as part of my schedule and kind of debriefing my day.

And he gets extra time to listen to podcasts in the morning. And, you know, at the, the way in to pick me up, um, it also allows us to like go to the grocery store after work or pick up groceries or whatever it is we're gonna do. So, um, that's one thing that's kind of shifted throughout the. the other thing that I've really had to get used to this year is, uh, way more meetings than I've ever had in my professional career.

So my meeting schedule over time has increased to at peak times during the year up to 50 meetings a week. And you might be like, how is that even possible in cuz I'm working like roughly eight to five. Sometimes I get in a little bit earlier in the morning, but I'm pretty religiously leaving work at five o'clock.

and, um, really what allows that to happen is 30 minute meetings, uh, meetings that are shorter, squeezing more of them in throughout the day. And it's definitely seasonal because the summer was a bit of a reprieve from, from that heavy schedule, which I really, really appreciated, but it's definitely something I'm kind of gearing up for as we enter into this new academic year that I have to kind of brace myself a little bit for those meetings.

I am, um, booking in a couple of conferences this fall that are local to Denver. That I did not have the opportunity to do last year. And so that should also give me a bit of a break in October where I'm gonna be attending like conference sessions and things like that. And that'll give me a bit of a break, but, um, that's definitely something I've noticed in this job is lots and lots of meanings.

the other thing that's really happened over the past year is I've met a ton of people. So, um, typically when I interact with anyone like over email, I have a foldering system where I create, you know, a folder with their name. So I can kind of start to process, you know, their emails that come in. So everyone that I met with, um, my biggest folder is definitely faculty.

Um, I've met with more faculty overall, but I've had more frequent repeated meetings with a lot of my administrative colleagues. So there's been a ton of people that I've met. And, and I engaged with in my institution. I've also met a lot of different people from across our system, cuz we're a four campus system.

And so I've had to do a lot of like local networking of people that I'm interacting with across that system and across our institution. So lots of new people that I've met over the, the past. And a big part of that has really been establishing relationships and trust. So the work that I do across the institution is just highly, highly collaborative.

There's a lot of work. Um, just to give one example, my areas responsible for new program development and that's new program across all modalities, um, and across credit and non-credit. And so the amount of people who are involved in the creation of new programs, you know, we have. An academic planner at our institution.

We have someone who is focusing on strategic enrollment growth. We have the marketing unit. Uh, we have my unit, which is comprised of multiple different teams that engage in this work. We have, um, people who do kind of non-credit education across the entire institution. So there's all these different like teams and people who are involved in just that one part of my work.

And so I've spent a lot of time developing relationships with other leaders at my institution, uh, different administrators, different staff, of course, the faculty and trying to establish trust. Since we're often working on a lot of these projects together. . And so there's a lot of like weekly check-ins or check-ins like a couple times a month through one-on-ones, but also just a ton of email communication and regular updating.

So people know the status of these different projects and the role that they're playing in these projects and the role that I'm playing in these projects. So lots of work on like strategic communication this year. And trying to understand like the rhythms of this particular institution and how to best communicate with people.

I would say at least 10% of my job goes to communication. Um, in various forms, like communication planning, strategic communication planning, uh, and thinking through that. The other thing that I was really, uh, kind of excited for in this first year on the job is getting some small wins under my belt. And, and really, to me, what this looked like was helping people to understand how I work and how I can contribute to the institution.

And, um, there were a couple of projects in this. In my first kind of year that were really devoted to this effort of like, what exactly does my area do and how can I be kind of helping with these different, you know, pieces around the institution. And one of those projects was a strategic planning project for digital strategy, which I think I've talked about a couple of times on the podcast and that included chairing a task force for about five months and producing a report that came out this past spring.

And, um, the other big project included, you know, a range of D. Meetings and negotiations that allowed me to eventually build out my teams. So I have four different teams that report up to me now, and this kind of came together over the summer. And so I spent a lot of time working through, you know, team building and we're still working through together, visioning out, you know, what our division does.

Um, but now I oversee a division called teaching innovation and program strategy. So I've spent a lot of time in this last quarter. So getting to know my team members, and that's been one of the best parts, um, you know, of this last year is starting to build out those. the other big thing. I think that takes some time when you're first starting a job is trying to figure out what your role is meant to do.

Um, because I think that this isn't always clear some jobs it's clearer than others, but when I first started my role, digital strategy of my university was getting a bit of. Like a reboot or a reset. And so part of my job was actually like defining that and defining what my role would be in that and what I would be contributing to the institution, which is incredibly cool to be able to do that.

And I, I guess I would just say, I feel much more confident about what I do now than when I first started the job. And it was a little bit more nebulous and unclear, but it was a really cool thing to be able to contribute to what that would look like. So I think it's just kind of, it takes some time to ease into that as part of.

so some other things that have happened over the last year, just as I'm kind of reflecting is I really strengthened my relationship with my executive assistant. And I think it takes some time to kind of get to know each other, understand each other's preferences because we work together very closely.

This is someone that I. Try to, if I can, and this depends a little bit on my schedule, but we try to meet together in the morning and at the end of the day, so I'm meeting with this person a couple of times a day, and she also sits right outside my office. And so we're kind of interacting throughout the day and I feel just incredibly lucky to have such a talented executive assistant with a really good attitude for the work that we're doing together.

And one of the kind of highlights of my summer was getting a chance to take more walks with her, like walking meetings and really. Being able to spend some time together, which is a little bit harder to do during the academic. Uh, this past year, I also ended up earning a change management credential through Prosci, which was just an incredibly helpful addition to my skill set.

Since I do so much work related to large scale changes happening at the institution. And one of the highlights of. That experience was the focus on communication and strategic communication, and really, um, thinking about how you can shift communication based on different stakeholder groups and thinking really intentionally and purposefully about that.

So that was really helpful. And I think it really helped me over the past year to start to develop a bit of a reputation within my institution, as someone who is a good communicator, and who's really actively trying to be a transparent leader. Um, and also somebody who can kind of get things done because the more you're communicating about what you're doing, the more awareness people have about your projects and how they're moving forward.

Um, and those are all things that people kind of mirrored back to me about how they see me operating in my role. And I just find those things incredibly positive. You know, that's definitely the kind of leader that I'm trying to be. And so it's always helpful when people tell you whatever you're doing is working, you know, to, to move you in that direct.

Now another hugely important part of this last year was balancing my new job with my side business. And this was something that I knew I would have to be really intentional about. And I didn't wanna let the coaching and the coach training components of my work go when I started this role, because they're so important to me, kind of personally and professionally, but I also needed to adjust my schedule to help them fit into a job that.

Much more demanding and, um, has components that are not always in my control in terms of like evening work or work that I might have to do outside of my normal hours. So shifting my business work entirely to the weekends, um, actually really worked for me because it left my evenings free and it really helped me to achieve a good sense of balance throughout the year.

Of knowing that I would have some time, you know, on the weekends to devote to client work and to devote to things like content creation, but not feeling like that was encroaching in any way, you know, on the work that I needed to be doing in my day job. So I'm excited that I could kind of balance that.

And I actually feel really good about both areas. You know, I felt like I was able to contribute what I needed to, to my day job. And then I was also able to maintain, you know, the time that I needed to give to the business as. so overall I'm feeling pretty positive as we head into this next year, year two of this job, um, that I've been able to, you know, establish myself within this institutional ecosystem.

Um, start to establish my teams as well, develop a lot of really collaborative and trusting relationships and, um, start to understand my unique contributions that I can be making to our overall institutional goals. And. So I would love to hear as always, if you've started a new job or maybe if you're about to start a new job and what are you learning along the way of that process?

I think new jobs give us a lot of opportunity to learn new things, but also to learn so much about ourselves as well. So you are welcome to email me. You can always email me at hello at Dr. Katie leonard.com. I always love to hear from you, and if you are starting a new job, hang in there. I know it takes a while to ease in.

But now that I'm a year into this, I can say, you know, the, the time and the dedication to really kind of settle into the space is totally worth it. So thanks for listening and I'll be back next week with a new episode. Thanks for listening to this episode of you've got this. You can access show notes and transcripts for each episode at Dr.

Katie linder.com/podcasts. If you found this episode helpful, please also consider reading and or reviewing the show through apple podcast.