

Debra Fowler's remarks for President's Leadership Award for Faculty

March 28, 2019

First, I want to express my deep gratitude to my colleagues who nominated me for this award, Drs. Susan Ruppert, Lisa Boss, Sandy Branson, Angi Nash, Francine Snow, and Erica Yu. I am truly humbled by their acknowledgment of my leadership contributions.

Social scientists debate whether individuals are born leaders or if leadership is learned. My brother would tell you that as a kid, I was bossy. So my journey to becoming a true leader has been a lifelong learning process. Through many years of formal and informal leadership experiences, I have grown to understand that listening is more persuasive than telling, relationships are more important than org charts, and organizations thrive when the people who work in them are given opportunity to develop to their fullest potential.

In his book, *The Servant as Leader*, Robert Greenleaf tells us the measure of a servant leader is whether the people served grow as persons. During 10 years of teaching aspiring nurse leaders in our graduate program, I have witnessed huge transformation as students realize their potential as leaders. Seeing colleagues I've worked with and mentored, excel in their professional development is extremely rewarding. My students and colleagues teach me to be a better leader.

There are many awards for achievement; I so appreciate this award because it validates the service I endeavor to give every day. My job advancing professional development at Cizik School of Nursing is certainly my career pinnacle and the most important position I've had. I feel so fortunate to work with the outstanding students, staff, and faculty at the school. It is truly a privilege to serve as a leader in the school and the university.

Again, thank you to my colleagues for their heartfelt endorsement. Thank you, President Colasurdo, for selecting me to receive this honor in tribute to Michael Jimenez.