Key elements of the Program Director role: my perspective

Dr Victoria Whittington – experienced early childhood programs program director
Providing a structure for the operation of the program

- Files for record keeping
- Meeting schedules, minutes, actions, follow up
- Advisory group from the field
- Student voice, a mosaic of listening, including but not limited to CEIs, SETs and CEQs
Supporting students and staff

- Trust and respect
- Responsiveness, journeying side by side
- High expectations
- Clarity of tasks
- Feeding forward emphasized more than feedback
- Sometimes involves ‘goodness of fit’ issues for some students
Research into learning and teaching with colleagues

- Focus on areas where understanding of what is happening is not clear
- A great catalyst for program development/direction forward
- Participants: students, graduates, drop outs, staff, other program and field perspectives
Networking: learning and building program profile

- **Beyond the university**
  - Build and strengthen bonds with the field within which your program resides, be out there
  - Benchmark interstate and internationally, a great catalyst for change

- **Within the university**
  - Build your ‘team’, those in key positions, who support you in the role, the ‘little black book’ eg. Campus Central, FM Assist, Security, IT, LTU, Divisional admissions staff
  - With key bodies, eg. School Board, other programs within your School, DAPAC, ASQC etc.
  - Be an advocate and information disseminator about the PD role – many, including senior management, may not know what is involved and how it contributes to uni functioning.
Problem-solving and trouble shooting

- Be available/ accessible/ on the spot as much as possible
- Build good relations with Professional staff
- Listen so you can hear what is happening
- Enjoy the creativity and satisfaction involved – you have the power to really help people who are stuck in some way
Program development

- With your team, use the university structures to change and improve the program. For example, ERRS and annual program reviews are great opportunities to reflect and rethink, then take action.
- Manage up with your Head of School – s/he will appreciate you if you present a problem (that requires her/his involvement) along with a recommendation for how it might be solved.
Celebrate!

- Don’t forget to name and make time to celebrate successes and milestones.

And......

- find a place to debrief / lower your stress levels