

## Building a Vibrant Coaching Relationship

A vibrant coaching relationship can result from many needs, including the desire to build or strengthen a team, develop a strategy and a more strategic outlook, link strategy and fundraising, or connect the strategic aims of an institution across its various units; strengthen one's general skill and practices as a manager and leader, or strengthen speaking and communication practices; improve or deepen faculty engagement; repair damage and build a sense of a new beginning, or contribute to positive on-boarding. Susan uses questions like these to explore the goals of each potential coaching client:

- What is your path to this point? How did you come to your current work?
- In terms of your leadership or administrative experience, what has been particularly gratifying? Can you give an example?
- What has been particularly challenging? What is an example?
- Why were these instances gratifying or challenging? If you are not sure, what is your best guess?
- Can you describe your relationship with the person you report to? Is there anything in this relationship you'd like to change or improve?
- Can you describe your relationship with people who report to you? Is there anything in these relationships you'd like to change to improve?
- Can you describe a recent win? A recent challenge? What is it about these occasions that bring them to mind?
- Do you have reservations about engaging in a coaching relationship? If so, what are they?
- If we move forward, what do you most hope to accomplish?

In general, Susan finds it more useful and fun to draw on the client's current experiences and challenges and examples to grapple with, rather than inventing fictional situations to discuss. This way, the client is accomplishing real work within the boundaries of the coaching engagement.