MCS 309

Good Commissioners Need Both Head and Heart

Time allotted	50 minutes
Teaching format	Instructor-led discussions with PowerPoint support, Activity

Resources

Handouts	• MCS 309 – Group Discussion Handout – 1 per person or 1 per group
Equipment and materials	• MCS 309 – Good Commissioners Need Both Head and Heart course plan • MCS 309 – Good Commissioners Need Both Head and Heart PowerPoint presentation • MCS 309 – Group Discussion Activity Instructions – for instructor • Computer and projector • Whiteboard or flipchart, appropriate markers and eraser
Resources for additional participant learning	•

Course Connections

Connections to other CCS courses	• BCS 106 – Coaching Leaders • BCS 109 – The Essential Element (A Servant's Heart) • DCS 509 – Legacy of Servant Leadership

Presentation Outline

Introduction and Course Objectives – 2 minutes

Introduce the learning objectives, noting that by the end of this session, each participant should…

- **Define** the role of a commissioner relative to the unit's leadership
- **Learn** how to engage units to identify unit needs
- **Understand** unit culture

In BCS 109 - The Essential Element (A Servant's Heart), you learned about the concept of servant leadership as explained by Robert Greenleaf in his essay titled "The Servant as Leader" that was later expanded into a book. That course gave you the basic concepts for Servant Leadership.
In this course, we will discuss how the servant leadership concept is carried out in service to units using your head and heart.

Commissioner Role – 8 minutes

Instructor: Think about these quotes –
(In the slide show click and read one by one for emphasis)

"You can't LEAD the people, if you don't LOVE the people. You can't SAVE the people, if you won't SERVE the people." Dr. Cornel West, philosopher and author

"Titles mean nothing. The one with the servant's heart is the leader." Joe Everett, former sports editor, The Observer - Notre Dame

"The X-Factor of great leadership is not personality, it's humility." Jim Collins, business management consultant

"The only things we keep permanently are those we give away." Waite Phillips, donated Philmont Scout Ranch to BSA

As commissioners we should use a healthy combination of the head and the heart when working with the units we serve.

The heart is compassion and lending a shoulder, and importantly, understanding why a unit would be facing a particular challenge. The head comes in learning the why of a challenge. Both heart and head, but maybe more heart, apply when the unit commissioner supports the unit by participating in the recruitment events.

We need to be flexible and aware of the fact that different approaches work better in different situations.

- Leading with your head is about competence, skills, and knowledge in Scouting.
- Heart leaders are great at making people feel special, giving them a sense of purpose and making them feel appreciated.

Do **you** usually lead with your head or your heart? *(pause for a few seconds)*

Commissioners who are able to blend the two styles are far and away the most effective. They can help units with goal setting and building teams while cultivating an environment where youth can thrive.

Commissioner Role with Unit

Commissioners work with the unit's leadership. What unit leadership are we talking about? All of the unit's leadership but in particular commissioners work with the unit Key 3:

- Chartered organization representative
- Committee chair
- Unit leader (Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, Advisor, Skipper)

The commissioner may also work with:

- The institutional head
- New Member Coordinator
- Other leaders – assistants, committee members, etc.

Commissioners are there to work with ALL of the unit leadership. While we will likely work most closely with the unit Key 3 (chair, unit leader, chartered organization representative), our role as commissioners is to support all of them.

We need to create an environment where our assistance and mentorship is not only accepted and welcome, but desired and sought.

Commissioner vs. Unit Leader Roles
Commissioners serve a role in supporting the unit as they develop their program. Commissioners need to let unit leaders run their units as they see fit, but within policies and procedures of the Boy Scouts of America.

As commissioners we serve as consultants and coach/counselors along with linking unit with district resources. Knowledge is power, and it should be freely shared – it should not be a commodity. Share resources, such as available training or leadership development events, district or council events, and individuals that can help improve the unit's program.

Our goal is to help make the unit leadership successful, and as a result, the unit succeed.

Engaging Unit Leadership – 10 minutes

Commissioners are sometimes asked for assistance, and sometimes commissioners are in a position to observe leaders who need help, but don't know it.

For virtual presentation and in the event this segment will be conducted as a discussion, consider whether to (a) allow participants to just speak up, (b) ask participants to post their responses in the chat line for the facilitator to read aloud, (c) ask participants to raise their hands for the instructor or facilitator to call on, or (d) choose a combination of these options.

How do we "help" when we identify a problem?

When we spot a problem or issue, we can tell them they are doing it wrong, but that doesn't help. The better way is to ask: "How can I help?" We need to understand why units do what they do. Is it based on unit tradition, lack of knowledge, or a bad experience?

Example: A unit you serve, which has been around for ten years, and regularly attended summer camp, has not attended summer camp for the last two summers. Why? There could be a number of reasons behind this situation:

- Scouts were not aware of the summer camp opportunity
- Leaders or parents were unable to take time to participate
- The unit does not have an active outdoor program
- The unit elected to do their own summer camp experience.
- The unit chose to utilize an out-of-council camp experience.

Prior service as a unit leader is not necessary but will help you as a commissioner. This gives you knowledge about the Scouting program, and how units operate. But, remember if you have served as a unit leader, that this was in the past, and these unit leaders are the ones directly delivering the Scouting program to today's youth.

To provide effective unit service we need to:

- Understand the challenges your unit leaders face.
- Help leaders discover and understand the challenges they face, rather than telling them what they are.
- Investigate to understand the reasons units are not succeeding. Sometimes, the issue you observe is the result of a different problem.
- Communicate with leaders in ways that leaders want.

Are you there to help?

- Do you visit your unit unannounced, just to note a simple contact in Commissioner Tools?
- Or do you build a relationship and really get to know your unit, their chartered partner, their program, and their leadership?

Is your "help" really "helpful" to the unit?

- Whose purpose are you serving?
- Do you visit only when the district or council needs something from the unit, such as product sales, Friends of Scouting presentations, or camp promotion date?

What direction is the flow of energy between you and your unit?

- Are you on the giving end or the receiving end?
- And, more importantly, what would your units think if they were asked this question?

Ask participants for 2-3 examples where a commissioner's interactions with unit leaders set the right tone.

We need to approach every situation with empathy. Here is a great quote by Arthur Adler to define empathy: Empathy is ***seeing*** with the ***eyes*** of another,
listening with the ***ears*** of another, and
feeling with the ***heart*** of another.

Unit Culture – 25 minutes (including 15-minute activity)

Not Wrong…Different

Every unit is different – whether it be different chartered partners (religious vs. civic), geography (rural vs. suburban vs. urban), demographics (young scouts vs. older scouts, diverse memberships), unit traditions, leadership experiences, or unit resources (money, equipment, knowledge).

Scouting functions because we charter community partners to provide the Scouting program to their youth. Each chartered partner has the opportunity to implement Scouting as they desire, within the guidelines of the Boy Scouts of America.

As an example, some units will have more religious elements in their programs, while others may have less. Some will be more focused on their chartered partner for service opportunities, while others may focus on the larger community.

Commissioners need to recognize the difference between doing something wrong, versus doing something different, and not doing something as others do, or as well as could be accomplished. Not every unit will function exactly like other units, do the same things, or do them in the same way.

Different leaders have different approaches on achieving goals and accomplishing tasks. We need to recognize and support those approaches as long as they are within BSA's policies and guidelines.

To be able to help we need to understand the unit we are serving.

- Where is the unit located? Rural, urban?
- Who is the sponsor of the unit?
- What are the socio-economic conditions affecting that unit?
- How knowledgeable and experienced is their leadership? Are they trained for their roles?
- What resources are available to that unit?
- What are the ages and experience levels of the Scouts within the unit?
- What Scouting experiences has that unit had?

Note to instructor: These questions set up and are used in the Activity on Slide 13.

Activity and Instructor Led Discussion – 10-minute discussion time and 5-minute debriefing:
Instructor: Following **MCS 309 – Group Discussion Activity Instructions** divide the class into 2 or 3 small discussion groups, giving each **MCS 309 – Discussion Group Scenario handout**.
In Slide Show click on **"How can I help You"** button for group discussion. Click again to recover button.

- Using the questions from Slide 12 (also listed on handout), have each group discuss how to provide unit service by identifying resources best suited for their needs.

- About midway in their group discussion time **ask**: "What things that might not be obvious could be causing difficulties?".

- **Ask** the **AWE Question (introduced in BCS 106) - *And What Else?*** (more information on this is instruction document.

- Depending on available time, have each group quickly debrief their discussions.

For virtual presentation, consider the following strategies:

- The handout may be sent (a) in advance or (b) during class a few minutes prior to when it will be useful so it has time to get to each participant. Another option is to post the handout to a Google Drive, Drop Box, or similar location where participants can access it. The disadvantage of this option is distraction and potential confusion of participants. Posting a link in the chat line is also an option, but it can be distracting and confusing too.
- Use breakout rooms for small groups.
- Assign an assistant instructor to each breakout group to guide the discussion and to ask the questions as indicated in the 2nd and 3rd bullets above.
- In small breakout groups, allowing participants to just speak up or raise their hands usually words well.
- For the post-breakout debrief, (a) allow participants to just speak up, (b) ask participants to post their responses in the chat line for the facilitator to read aloud, (c) ask participants to raise their hands for the instructor or facilitator to call on, or (d) choose a combination of these options.

As you can tell in this activity, we remain engaged to assist the unit in receiving help, and assisting the unit to implement the help. An effective commissioner should empower the unit leadership. Our role is to observe, guide, and assist, not to run the unit program. We observe, and note areas for improvement.

Remember the best unit service a commissioner can give is showing that we care and we want them to be successful. This takes using both our heads and our hearts. If the unit is successful with a great program, the youth will be successful in Scouting.

When the best leader's work is done, the people say, "We did it ourselves." --Lao Tzu

Summary/Conclusion – 2 minutes

- Understand the role of a commissioner relative to the unit's leadership;
- Understand the need to engage units in a guided discovery process to identify unit needs; and
- Develop communication skills to work effectively with units

Sometimes knowing how to link a unit to resources does the trick. The heart to care about the success of the unit, its leaders, its parents, and its Scouts makes the job easier to do and the unit commissioner more successful in serving their units.

Questions? – 2 minutes