



CELEBRATE PURDUE WOMEN

SENAY SIMSEK

HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUCCESS?

Success, in my view, is a multi-faceted concept. It's not just about achieving personal or professional milestones, but also about the positive impact one creates in their field. This includes the ability to drive innovation, inspire and mentor others, and contribute to the broader community. True success is also about finding personal fulfillment and satisfaction in one's work, continually striving for excellence while maintaining a balance with personal well-being.

HOW HAS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS EVOLVED OVER TIME?

Early in my career, success might have been primarily measured by personal achievements, such as publications, research breakthroughs, or accolades. However, over time, this perspective has broadened to include the success of those I mentor, the growth and progress of my team, and the tangible impacts of our work on the industry and society. This evolution reflects a shift from individual accomplishments to a more collective and impactful definition of success.

WHAT DOES LEADERSHIP MEAN TO YOU?

To me, leadership is about inspiring and enabling others to achieve their best. It's about setting a vision, providing direction, and then stepping back to let individuals shine. A leader should foster an environment of growth, innovation, and inclusivity, where every voice is heard and valued. It also means leading by example, demonstrating integrity, and making decisions that are not just beneficial for the immediate team but also for the broader community.

HOW HAVE YOU GROWN AS A LEADER?

My growth as a leader has been a journey of continuous learning and adaptation. Each role and challenge has offered new insights into effective leadership. I've learned the importance of empathy, active listening, and clear communication. Over time, I've become more adaptable, learning to navigate complex situations with a calm and strategic approach. This growth has been about understanding the diverse needs of a team and creating an environment where each member can thrive.

HOW HAS YOUR DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP EVOLVED OVER TIME?

My initial view of leadership was more about providing direction and making decisions. Over time, this has evolved to a more holistic view, where empowering others and creating a collaborative environment are central. Modern leadership is less about commanding and more about facilitating, mentoring, and catalyzing change.

WHAT DOES MENTORSHIP MEAN TO YOU?

Mentorship is about more than just imparting knowledge; it's about guiding individuals towards realizing their full potential. It involves sharing experiences and wisdom, while also learning from those you mentor. Effective mentorship creates a nurturing environment where both mentor and mentee grow, fostering a culture of continuous learning and mutual respect.

WHAT ROLE HAS COLLABORATION PLAYED IN YOUR ACADEMIC JOURNEY?

Collaboration has enabled cross-disciplinary research, leading to innovative solutions and a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues. Collaborative efforts have also enhanced the learning experience for students and fostered a culture of teamwork and shared success within the academic community.

Senay Simsek, Head of the Food Science Department at Purdue University and Dean's Chair in Food Science is an acclaimed expert in cereal and carbohydrate science. Her work bridges Food science, plant sciences, and analytical chemistry, focusing on both basic and applied research. Simsek's efforts enhance food industry understanding, particularly in cereal and food biochemistry, linking academic insights to practical applications. A former leader of North Dakota State University's Carbohydrate Research and Wheat Quality program, she has deeply engaged with diverse stakeholders in the agriculture and food industries. An inspiring educator and advisor, Simsek drives global research partnerships, significantly impacting food product development and the economic value of U.S. crops. She has authored over 250 peer-reviewed articles and contributes to numerous scientific associations and journals.

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