

37th Academic Chairpersons Conference

Session Proposal: Brown Bag Lunch Discussion

Title: Continuing the Conversation on Collegiality

Description of Session

Using collegiality as a criterion for hiring, merit, tenure, or promotion in higher education appears to be a controversial topic. However, the importance of collegiality is indisputable. This is especially true given the rise of workplace bullying on campus coupled with the increase in Non-Tenure-Track (NTT) positions. In addition, the comprehensive analysis of campus trends presented by Lukianoff and Haidt in their book “The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting Up a Generation for Failure” suggests we are not preparing students for the intellectual engagement with people and ideas they might find uncongenial. Obviously, there are many intersecting factors at play but if we can not find ways to incentivize collegiality within our own departments, how can we possibly serve as models for our students?

This session will address key issues central to the current discussion on collegiality, offering opportunities for healthy debate. How should we measure collegiality? Or should we measure collegiality? Is it enough to address through policy, as so many universities are now doing? We will review AAUP’s position, which states that “nothing is to be gained by establishing collegiality as a separate criterion of assessment”. We will also summarize current legal cases that uphold the use of collegiality in assessment. We will end the discussion by presenting the business case for collegiality. With over 80% of academic chairpersons reporting be negatively impacted by uncollegial colleagues, it is probable that the majority, if not all, attendees will have their own story to share. The question remains, what do we do?

“But there's an even bigger story about how civility pays, and it ties to one of the most important questions around leadership: What do people want most from their leaders? We took data from over 20,000 employees around the world, and we found the answer was simple: respect. Being treated with respect was more important than recognition and appreciation, useful feedback, even opportunities for learning. Those that felt respected were healthier, more focused, more likely to stay with their organization and far more engaged.”

“Civility lifts people. We'll get people to give more and function at their best if we're civil. Incivility chips away at people and their performance. It robs people of their potential, even if they're just working around it. What I know from my research is that when we have more civil environments, we're more productive, creative, helpful, happy and healthy.”

Christine Porath, TEDxUniversityofNevada

“Why being respectful to your coworkers is good for business”