

Calculating the Pace of Change During the COVID Era

The pandemic has caused ongoing economic, health, and educational challenges over the past two years. At the beginning of the pandemic, leaders were most concerned about immediate issues such as distance learning and safety for faculty, staff, and students. Now that institutions have returned to in-person learning, leaders must move forward with strategic planning, collaborative decision-making, and continuous quality improvement with pandemic issues still playing significant roles in decision-making. Chairpersons play integral roles in higher education organizational change (Amin, 2021; Branson et al., 2015; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Gmelch & Miskin, 2004). The pandemic thrust rapid change upon higher education with academic chairpersons managing and leading much of this change and transition to online learning (Gigliotti, 2021; Pace, 2021). With the return to in-person learning, academic chairpersons face numerous challenges and opportunities. State mandates, declining enrollments and funding, regional community needs, equity and inclusion concerns, accreditation requirements, calls for accountability, COVID-19 concerns, and diverse campus and external constituencies' needs are just some of the current matters facing chairpersons (AASCU, 2021; Eddy & Boggs, 2010). During this session, participants will learn and discuss approaches for managing the pace of change and emotionally intelligent strategic planning during this challenging historical period.

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