Proposal for Academic Chairpersons Conference

Title: Step Right Up: Walking the Work-Life Balance Tightrope in the Circus of Higher Education

Presenters:

- Dr. Krystal Brue, Chair, Department of Business
- Dr. Shaun Calix, Chair, Department of Psychology
- Dr. Jennifer Dennis, Dean, School of Graduate & Professional Studies

Presentation Topic Theme: Leadership and Management

Target Audience: All department chairs and deans

Type of Presentation: Best Practice Presentation

Abstract for program and website:

Most professionals experience demanding obstacles when balancing on the work-life tightrope. Managing highly demanding occupational and life challenges may not come naturally. This presentation's purpose is to examine work-life imbalance, review movements for finding harmony between work and non-work, and recommend strategies for improving work-life balance in high impact positions.

Presentation Objectives:

1. Examine causes of work-life imbalance and challenges in higher education associated with work and non-work roles for chairs and faculty.
2. Analyze recent work-life balance research and apply findings to institutions of higher education.
3. Consider work-life harmony strategies given current educational trends.

Presentation Description:

Changes in the workplace have become the catalyst linking our work and non-work roles. In 1986 the term work-life balance was originally coined and brought to light the connection between work and life domains (Baral & Bhargava, 2010). Continued research and discussions regarding this topic do not suggest that work-life balance occurs when roles are equal, but rather is met when mutually agreed upon requirements and responsibilities in each role are met (Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska, 2009). Viewing balance through a lens of role goal attainment allows working professionals to develop a sense of accomplishment and overall personal and professional satisfaction (Hirschi, Shockley, & Zacher, 2019). With new business, workplace, and educational paradigms, work-life balance continues to be an imperative labor force issue today. Today's universities provide both opportunities and challenges regarding work-life balance and faculty job satisfaction.

Juggling diverse teaching modalities, augmented workloads, and increased student anxieties, faculty members, chairs and deans must consider and address work-family conflict, spillover, and integration. Recent research discusses how home responsibilities, family support, family pressures, child responsibilities, health issues, faculty/peer/supervisor support, work culture,

and work challenges emerging as significant themes in recent work-life balance conversations (Diego-Medrano & Salazar, 2021).   In order to attract and retain faculty, we must begin to consider these topics and provide support systems and initiatives not only for ourselves, but our faculty.

This presentation will identify current educational changes which have enhanced and deteriorated personal and professional goal attainment. Drawing upon related frameworks such as retaliation theory, role conflict theory, positive and negative spillover, work-family conflict, and social support (Hirshi et al., 2019; White, 2020, Powell, Greenhaus, Allen & Johnson, 2019), we will explore the impact of working in a highly demanding occupation within our presentation.

Our goal is to offer academic chairs and deans with strategic actions aimed at (1) managing the boundaries between home and work and (2) reducing professional burnout which often occurs as a result of work-life imbalance, and (3) modeling this behavior to those we supervise.

References

Baral, R., & Bhargava, S. (2010). Work-family enrichment as a mediator between organizational interventions for work-life balance and job outcomes. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 25*(3), 274-300.

Carlson, D. S., Grzywacz, J. G., & Zivnuska, S. (2009). Is work-family balance more than conflict and enrichment? *Human Relations, 62*(10), 1459-1479. doi:10.1177/0018726709336500

Diego-Medrano, E., & Salazar, L. R. (2021). Examining the work-life balance of faculty in higher education. *International Journal of Social Policy and Education, 3*(3), 27-36.

Hirschi, A., Shockley, K. M., & Zacher, H. (2019). Achieving Work-Family Balance: An Action Regulation Model. *Academy of Management Review*, *44*(1), 150–171. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2016.0409

Powell, G. N., Greenhaus, J. H., Allen, T. D., & Johnson, R. E. (2019). Introduction to Special Topic Forum: Advancing and Expanding Work-Life Theory from Multiple Perspectives. *Academy of Management Review*, *44*(1), 54–71. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2018.0310

White, C., & Maniam, B. (2020). Flexible Working Arrangements, Worklife Balance, and Working Women. *Journal of Business & Accounting, 13*(1), 59–73.