1) Presentation Title:
Creating (Socially-Distanced) Community in a Multi-site, Multi-disciplinary Department

2) Presenter Information (biographical sketch):

Christina M. Wolfe

Christina M. Wolfe is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Human Services and Chair of Social Sciences at Georgia Highlands College. Prior to serving as chair, she was Director of the GHC Honors Program. She has an M.A. in Sociology and Demography from the Pennsylvania State University and is pursuing a Ph.D. in Workforce Education at the University of Georgia. She was a Georgia Governor's Teaching Fellow for the 2018-19 academic year and will serve as a University System of Georgia Chancellor's Learning Scholar for 2020-22.

3) Disciplines: Community College; Higher Education Administration; Multidisciplinary; Multisite

4) Presentation Theme: Working with Faculty and Administration

5) Presentation Type: Best Practice Presentations

6) Abstract: In this presentation, I discuss ways to facilitate a sense of community in a multidisciplinary department at a multisite community college in a time of social distancing.

7) Keywords: academic leadership, communication, community, departmental culture, multidisciplinary department, multiple sites

8) Target audience: Administrators of multidisciplinary and/or multisite departments

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10) Presentation Documents: Description of the Session

Building on the framework Kain (2019) laid out for chairs to navigate multidisciplinary leadership challenges and the Sanctuary Model of trauma-informed organizational change (Bloom & Sreedhar, 2008), I will discuss community-building methods that took place in a large social sciences department after moving to remote instruction due to COVID-19. Chairs of multidisciplinary departments face unique challenges when working with faculty and administration. For chairs at multisite institutions, it can be difficult to connect with faculty, especially those who they may not see frequently. Bloom & Sreedhar (2008) address the importance of creating a culture of shared governance and open communication in order to counteract the impact of extreme stressors, such those caused by COVID-19. In light of inability to interact face to face due to COVID-related campus closures, I experimented with the creation of informal virtual opportunities and shared online spaces for department discussion. By creating these venues for connection, a greater sense of community developed, allowing faculty to create

cross-discipline collaborations and strengthening relationships between tenure-track and adjunct faculty. This contributed to the burgeoning development of a post-COVID department culture focused on social learning and increased emotional intelligence in order to better support faculty and students (Bloom & Sreedhar, 2008; Imad, 2020).

Bloom, S. L., & Sreedhar, S. Y. (2008). The sanctuary model of trauma-informed organizational change. Reclaiming children and youth, 17(3), 48-53.

Imad, M. (2020, March 17). Hope matters. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/03/17/10-strategies-support-students-and-help-them-learn-during-coronavirus-crisis

Kain, E. L. (2019). Chairing a Multidisciplinary Department. *The Department Chair*, *29*(4), 15-16.