Presentation Objectives:
1.   Briefly summarize a framework for understanding group creativity
2.   Discuss the important role diversity plays in improving group creativity
3.   Discuss how communicating virtually affects group creativity
4.   Provide strategies chairs and deans can use to improve group creativity in their virtual meetings

Presentation Description:
Faculty and administrators agree that we must offer a high quality educational experience for students; this goal requires universities to develop and maintain high preforming, creative instructional teams aimed at providing an effective, engaging and safe learning environment. However, diverse perspectives, coupled with challenges associated with educating during a pandemic, makes establishing productive and creative work groups even more difficult. Promoting cohesive faculty and student groups who either do not feel safe stepping foot on a campus along with others who believe that social isolation interferes with learning, preferring to do "business as usual," can be problematic for chairs and deans. Operational uncertainties and opposing perspectives makes it impossible for us to know how to plan and proceed. Additionally our fear of implementing the "wrong" choice can impede our creative team from performing at peak proficiency. Despite our polarizing environment, chairs and deans need to harness their department or school's faculty to accomplish the tasks necessary to meet their missions. The stakes are high: It is likely that only innovative, creative, and flexible approaches are likely to work. How can Chairs and Deans best foster creative teamwork virtually in this environment of diversity?

This presentation will begin with a brief overview of a model of team creativity (Paulus & Dzindolet, 2008). Research on obstacles to team creativity and success strategies for maintaining creative teams will be shared. Next, research focused on the effects of communication modality (i.e., virtual vs. face-to-face), member diversity, and conflict on team creativity will be discussed. Using this research literature, specific strategies that can be used by chairs and deans will be presented. For example,

1.   *Select and/or Train Faculty Members.* Select or train faculty members so that in addition to being experts in their field and highly skilled in the art of teaching, they are able to use the virtual technology. Make attempts to create pride in the discipline, encourage positive relations among the team members, and most importantly, keep the faculty and students committed. The goal is the have instructors to use their innate strengths support to the department's, school's, or university's mission.
2.   *Selecting the Technology*. The level of media richness required of the technology and the extent to which the technology needs to allow for synchronous communication will be determined by the specific decisions the faculty will be making.
3.   *Setting the Stage.* Create an environment in which the faculty members and students feel psychologically safe to communicate and innovate. Virtual brainstormers should feel encouraged to freely express crazy, new, novel ideas trusting that others will not evaluate them

negatively. There should be enough conflict to allow faculty and students to be exposed to varying ideas but not too much conflict as to distract them from the task.

4. *Creating Carrots and Sticks*. Provide enough individual and group rewards to encourage faculty members and students to persist when the brainstorming becomes boring or difficult being careful not to provide too many rewards as to undermine intrinsic motivation.

5. *Mixing It Up.* Alternate between working alone and working together. Decontruct the tasks into smaller parts. Be sure to take brief breaks.

Audience members will be encouraged to share experiences that they found to be especially useful.