

Session Description – Best Practice

Evaluating Faculty in the Cloud: Leveraging what Online offers in Evaluating Courses and Instructors

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“You only get what you inspect, not what you expect.” Traditional Management Adage

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Spring 2020 brought significant changes to the way faculty delivered coursework. Faculty scrambled to comprehend, learn and apply the myriad of instructional tools available from their institution’s learning management system (LMS) for synchronous and asynchronous classroom delivery. Realizing many faculty were underprepared to shift courses quickly and effectively on-line in spring 2020, numerous institutions decided to significantly reduce or even delay formal faculty course evaluations. This was done under the false assumption the pandemic would pass quickly and on-ground teaching would resume in fall 2020. At the time of this writing, many institutions continue with on-line/remote delivery, with a strong possibility of staying on-line for the balance of the 20/21 academic year (with some projections indicating even further). Continuing to delay faculty evaluation as we did in spring 2020 is not an option for most institutions. Department chairs depend heavily on course evaluative feedback to help gauge student satisfaction levels, support faculty goal development, allocate resources, support award nominations and manage faculty up for promotion or under review.

Fortunately, typical on-line courses afford Department Chairs with an opportunity to evaluate the development and delivery of courses in a manner only dreamed of just a year ago. While many of the tools provided by the institutions LMS were always available to enhance in-person class delivery, many instructors did not take full advantage of these resources prior to this national catastrophe. New options include cutting and pasting announcements, discussion posts and module introductions into a robust evaluation. Additionally, it is possible to review recorded material to highlight strengths and weaknesses. We contend, with the rapid increase in on-line course delivery, chairs should now learn and adopt the resources, tools and metrics available via the institution’s learning management system to support faculty evaluative efforts. While we will undoubtedly return to an on-ground environment at some point in the future, we will likely retain the most desired elements of on-line delivery in on-ground courses. Therefore, expanding evaluative efforts to include on-line strategies now, will enhance chair effectiveness beyond the annual classroom visitation model, typical of current on-ground evaluative systems, while positioning them for the future.

This interactive, best practice presentation will incorporate innovative ideas from the field and techniques from attendees to explore how institutions are managing faculty evaluation this academic year. Methods, techniques and metrics commonly used in on-line course evaluation

and readily available from most learning management systems will be presented and discussed. Ways to reimagine how department chairs can use these resources to enhance evaluation of faculty course development and delivery will also be addressed. During the presentation, participants will be asked to discuss how they are currently doing evaluations, how their institutions are resolving the situation and what opportunities they see in reimagining the faculty and course evaluation process.