

Leading In A Perpetual State Of Change
2017 Academic Chairpersons Conference Proposal

Relevance to Chairpersons: In the ever-changing, complex, competitive environment of colleges and universities, department chairpersons (and deans) must find creative and innovative solutions for their faculty and students to thrive during difficult times.

Focus of Presentation: The purpose of this presentation is to provide audience members with examples from three academic departments (Education, Psychology, and Sports and Exercise Science) of how their department chairpersons and dean have led through complex budget difficulties and the restructuring of a university. In particular, low faculty morale due to elimination of positions (including tenure-track), reduction in resources, and deletion of once prominent programs created a highly unstable environment. Three chairs and their dean will discuss actions taken to reduce faculty, staff, and student insecurity during these difficult times. In particular, department chairs focused on mission and strategic plan priorities to develop greater efficiencies to meet goals with their now ever-narrowing resources. Through these difficult times there were disappointments and failures, but there were many more successes. These included collaboration across and within departments to streamline programming, cultivation of partnerships that led to fundraising for new off-campus sites, and student-led academic ventures that highlighted our mission - to not just be in a community, but to be an active part of the community.

Recommendations: Recommendations for leading through change will be highlighted. Specific examples of how department chairs and their dean have led their units through difficult times will be given; topics will include faculty turnover, budget cuts, and university restructuring, among others. Additionally, successful outcomes will be highlighted that resulted from these changes.

Audience Involvement: The audience will be asked to share examples and insights from their own experiences and respond to case-study scenarios. Audience members should leave the session with specific ideas of how they can lead and manage through changing times.