

Developing and Supporting the Diversity of Chairperson Roles

Proposal

After the consolidation of two very different universities, executive administration strategized ways to bring faculty members from a health science campus and a liberal arts campus together to foster a new identity and academic culture. The Office of Faculty Development and Teaching Excellence (OFDTE) was charged with the task of helping departmental leadership to accept and model the newly created vision and support faculty as they adjusted to the unique departmental needs. OFDTE designed a program to foster Chairperson professional development as well as foster collegiality among the diverse group of individuals and missions, and to create a venue that would be safe for discussing common concerns. The monthly meeting addresses topics selected by the chairpersons or by academic leadership, offering opportunities for transmission of information as well as for group support and mentoring. An annual orientation for new chairpersons and afternoon updates for “seasoned” Chairpersons provides an opportunity to welcome new chairs to the group and to update all chairs on new university-wide initiatives..

This interactive workshop will meet the following objectives:

1. Describe the Chair Professional Development program at Augusta University.
2. Highlight the challenges and outcomes of the program.
3. Demonstrate a typical exercise used by the program to develop Chairpersons.
4. Invite participants to consider how a similar program does or could operate in their institutions.

A diverse team of presenters will model for attendees the Chair Professional Development Program at Augusta University while engaging in sample activities from the program. The team will include: Jean Pawl, Chair of the Biobehavioral Nursing Department in the College of Nursing who was relocated from a department on the liberal arts campus to the health sciences in December of 2012 (4 years chair experience); Deborah Richardson, Director of the Office of Faculty Development and Teaching Excellence (former Chair of the Department of Psychology); Richard Griner, Chair of the Biology Department in the College of Sciences and Mathematics (8 years chair experience); and Beth Nesmith, Chair of the Physiologic and Technologic Nursing Department in the College of Nursing (2 years chair experience).

The agenda for interactive workshop is:

1. Introduction and background information on the Chair Professional Development Program. (10 minutes, led by Richardson)
2. Exercise 1- Diversity of room - will use a pre-filled flip chart for answers for average years of Chairs experience at the table and the number of departments represented. The group will have 10 minutes to agree on one common need in their chair role. (20 minutes, led by Griner).
3. Discussion of challenges of the program, including commonalities, diverse needs, finding a set time, alternating locations, etc. (10 minutes, led by Pawl).
4. Using the answers from exercise one, spend time role modeling the dialogue used to create safe space to discuss the concern and discuss potential solutions or further educational needs. (40 minutes, led by team)
5. Discuss the outcomes of the program as it evolves into its third year of programming. (10 minutes, led by Nesmith).
6. Provide time for questions and comments. (15 minutes, led by team).