

**Title:** Building Capacity through Facilitated Conversations

**Theme:** Building an In-House Leadership Development Program for Chairpersons

**Presentation Description:**

Until this year, professional development for chairpersons on our campus was limited to quarterly informational meetings attended by most of the 50 chairpersons on campus and facilitated by the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and informal networking meetings attended by 4-5 chairpersons. What was missing was a systemic approach to support chairs and directors. Seeing this opportunity, one chairperson paired up with the campus Center for Faculty Excellence and created an advisory group of current chairs and directors. This advisory group then helped to shape a course created in the campus learning management system of Canvas. This “course” was then used to facilitate face-to-face meetings, promote collaborative conversations, and provide resources for the 5 new and 45 returning chairpersons on campus. Participants in this session will walk away with ideas from both our process and our deliverables:

- Professional Development support plan that is sustainable
- Canvas course which serves as the hub for all activities and information
- Replicable model of faculty excellence that will be shared with other metropolitan campuses
- Program assessments to measure the impact of chairperson professional development project
- Potential gains in department chairperson/faculty retention and quality

**Relevance:**

While there is a national call for more training and support for department chairs who are positioned to have direct impact on faculty quality, only 3-4% report having received any type of formal training. Collectively sharing resources and facilitating conversations is a fiscally responsible way to support the development of all chairs and directors on a campus. This presentation will provide one institution’s journey and model for providing necessary training and support to chairpersons and directors. Chairpersons can create their own in-house leadership development program rather than continuing to wait for their institution to bring one to them.

**Recommendations for Chairpersons:**

Our process in creating this system was to 1) get the support of the Deans and Academic Affairs, 2) maximize currently available resources by creating a central resource for both virtual and face to face conversations, and 3) lean on the vocal chairpersons at our institution to serve on an advisory board to create a support system for both seasoned and novice chairpersons. Other chairpersons can and should replicate this structure to provide for both their own professional development, as well as to growth other chairs and directors on campus. Chairpersons are also most likely to have the least amount of campus professional development opportunities and therefore must create it themselves.