

Proposal for Academic Chairpersons Conference

Primary Presenter: Dr. Jennifer Dennis, Chair, Department of Education, Cameron University, jdennis@cameron.edu

Jennifer Dennis received her Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma in Educational Leadership in 2005. She is an Associate Professor and has been the Chair of the Department of Education at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma for eight years.

Additional Presenter Information:

Dr. Stephanie Boss, Chair, Department of Sports & Exercise Science, Cameron University, sboss@cameron.edu

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Dr. Lisa Huffman, Dean, College of Professional Education, Texas Woman's University, lhuffman@twu.edu

Title of presentation: Recruiting for your Department: The Role of the Chair

Abstract for program and website: The chairs of an Education, Sports & Exercise Science, and Psychology Departments, and their former dean, share how they have been able to implement innovative recruitment strategies from an academic standpoint to increase enrollment in their departments and in the School of Graduate and Professional Studies.

Keywords: Recruitment, Enrollment, Innovation, Data, Alumni

Presentation topic theme: Operating the Department

Target Audience: All department chairs and deans

Type of presentation: Best Practice Presentation

Objective(s) of the presentation:

1. Provide audience members with innovative ideas in recruiting for academic programs.
2. Increase knowledge about the role of the chair in the area of recruitment for program success.
3. Provide specific examples from three different departments of recruitment activities that can be implemented from an academic standpoint.

4. Audience members should leave the session with specific ideas of how they can foster recruitment initiatives in their departments and schools.

Description of the session (300-500 words):

In the ever-changing, complex, and competitive environment of higher education, universities, schools, and departments must find creative and innovative solutions for recruiting new students to their academic programs. Academic department chairs and faculty must take initiative and responsibility for finding students to fit within their own departments, and not rely solely on university recruiters to bring prospective students to programs. However, few faculty members and chairs have a background in strategies that are effective for promoting their academic programs and departments.

In this workshop, a model of demonstrating the different phases of the life cycle of a college student, from awareness about college to becoming an engaged alumnus, are considered in conjunction with how academic programs can support, encourage, and collaborate with students throughout the course of their journey. From encouraging students to apply for college to getting them enrolled, there are many support activities that can be provided along the way.

Examples will include how department chairs can make their websites more aesthetically appealing and useful for prospective students. Additional strategies will include how to create engaged alumni to assist in recruiting for academic programs, using data to pinpoint locations for recruitment, and how to grow and establish pipelines to find students who are likely to have an interest in the institution and program.

Participants will be asked to identify what makes their programs unique and how they inform potential students of their strengths. Also, ideas for generating interest in the major and what departments can do to encourage students to apply and stay engaged once in the program will be shared.

Ultimately, we have learned that we are stronger when we work together and that our work can and should support that of the university recruiters. With chairs, deans, and recruiters working together, we can all become stronger and assist more students on their journey through higher education.