Proposal for Academic Chairpersons Conference

Description of the session:

In the ever-changing, complex, competitive environment of higher education, universities, schools, and departments must find creative and innovative solutions for their faculty and students to thrive. In the university system, few decisions, if any, are unilaterality made. It is groups, and not individuals, that create and approve curriculum additions, deletions, and modifications; it is groups that recommend tenure and promotion decisions; it is groups that create and enforce admissions and graduation criteria. However, few faculty members are provided a foundation of how groups and teams work together, or of the factors that promote team creativity.

In this workshop, a model of collaborative creativity (Paulus & Dzindolet, 2008) will be briefly presented to provide audience members with a foundation for understanding team collaboration. General examples applied to universities of how the team, task, and situational variables and team related processes work together to promote or stunt creativity and innovation will be presented. Next, the chairs of a Department of Psychology, Department of Education, and Department of Sports and Exercise Science, and their Dean will provide specific examples of how an understanding of key variables in the collaborative creativity model helped them to improve creativity and innovation in their departments and in their school. Examples will include: (a) how the department chairs were able to find common themes across the departments that united the mission and vision of the school, (b) how one course brought students and faculty together across three departments, culminating in a service-learning project for the entire community, (c) how two departments worked side by side to assist students by offering linked courses, and (d) how a different model for summer budgets allowed the school to be strategic in course offerings, which ultimately brought in additional funds for the university to provide funding for specific needs in the school.

Ultimately, we have learned that we are stronger when we work together, that one department can support another department's efforts to create a win for the entire school. Team creativity is a product of working together, and when done in a strategic fashion, is beneficial to the entire school, university, and the community it serves.

Paulus, P.B., & Dzindolet, M. T. (2008). Social influence, creativity and innovation. *Social Influence, 3,* 228-247.