Academic Chairpersons Conference

Theme: Working with Faculty and Administration
Presentation Type: Interactive Workshop

From Without and Within: Challenges of Assuming Leadership

Assuming a position of leadership can be anxiety-provoking, but being promoted from within the university versus being hired from the "outside" creates different challenges. This workshop will focus on helping attendees navigate the particular challenges of their own situation by providing ideas on building support systems whether they were promoted "up the chain" within their current setting, or were recruited from outside into a position of leadership. One presenter has moved up the academic ladder from within the University, while the other was recruited and brought into the University as a Department Chair.

Leadership literature discusses leadership styles and is replete with examples of being supportive to those that you are leading. Northouse (2019) described leadership style as "the behavior pattern of a person who attempts to influence others" (p. 96), and different styles of leadership are well-documented. Gunsalus (2006) stated the purpose of a leader is to accomplish the goals and mission of the institution. Furthermore, Reinhartz and Beach (2004) also assert that those in leadership roles must build cohesive and goal-oriented teams who work together to achieve the objectives and mission of the institution. Neck, Houghton, and Murray (2020) defined leadership as "a process of providing general direction from a position of influence to individuals or groups toward the successful attainment of goals" (p. 337). However, there appears to be little information about building your own support system as a new chair.

When you are promoted from within an organization, you may be supervising former colleagues, and now find yourself in the role of "boss", having to evaluate and, perhaps, remediate behaviors. A shared history can create challenges in changing roles. Depending on the relationship with your once colleague, you may have shared personal experiences, engaged in activities together outside of work, and may have to forge new boundaries. On the other hand, if you are recruited from outside the university, you may not be supervising former colleagues, but you may be viewed with suspicion, anger and resentment. You do not have the context of the institutional history to guide you, and you have no built-in "safe zones". This workshop will explore various strategies of coping with either situation along with brainstorming ways to build support, focusing on the needs of the audience.

Using a sticky-note exercise, the presenters will ask participants to share, anonymously, situations in which they feel they have received little support, or in which their circumstances (relating to being promoted from within or brought in from the outside) have impacted their leadership. We will focus on specific situations or challenges as shared by the participants in this exercise (with some "just-in-case" scenarios that the presenters have experienced). The presenters will then take these shared situations, categorize them, and will use these in a group exercise to come up with concrete ways to address the circumstance. The purpose of the sticky-

note exercise is to elicit discussion and engage in problem-solving. While the presenters are categorizing responses, participants will engage in a hands-on exercise of mind-mapping to identify their own challenges. We will use the maps, with the group, to brainstorm solutions.

This presentation shares experiences in leadership at a regional university (from two perspectives, promoting from within and without) and how they built support systems to navigate changes. In a highly interactive format, participants will help guide the direction of the workshop.

References:

Gunsalus, C. (2006). *The College Administrator's Survival Guide*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Neck, C., Houghton, J., & Murray, E. (2020). *Organizational Behavior: A Skill-Building Approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Northouse, P. G. (2019). *Leadership: Theory & practice* (8th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Reinhartz, J. & Beach, D. (2004). *Educational Leadership: Changing Schools, Changing Roles* Boston, MA: Pearson.