

Title: Leading from the Middle: Lessons Learned for New Chairs

Presentation Theme: Leadership and Management

Presentation Type: Best Practice Presentation (45 minutes)

Abstract:

In this session, two academic chairs will share lessons learned during their first years leading a department. This session will include advice related to faculty development, managing conflicts, academic accreditation, initiating new programs, working with higher administration and time management for active teacher-scholars.

Keywords: Five (5) keywords about your presentation. These are used to help participants search for sessions in the conference proceedings.

Departmental leadership, New chairs, Program development, Conflict management, Time management

Overview:

The multifaceted components of the academic chair position can, at times, be a challenging labyrinth to navigate, which is further nuanced by the need to maintain an active research agenda and also be an effective teacher. In this interactive session, two chairs will share their successes, failures and lessons learned from their first years leading a teacher education department. This session will include advice related to faculty development, mitigating conflicts, initiating new programs and working with higher administration, along with how to manage your time to be an effective teacher-scholar—especially for those who are on still on the promotion and tenure cycle. Special emphasis will be placed on how to manage the duality of being a chair and “leading from the middle”. This can be a difficult transition for newly-appointed chairs as they must maintain their position as a faculty member, but also represent the interests of upper administration.

Relevance of session to chairpersons:

Given the purpose of the conference, along with the related themes (Leadership and Management, Working with Faculty and Administration and Operating the Department), this session is relevant to all chairpersons. Newly-appointed chairs will benefit as it will give them advice related to their position. Experienced chairs will also find value in this session both personally and in how they mentor new chairpersons.

Presentation focus:

This presentation will focus on first-hand, real-life experiences (both positive and negative) that a new chair experiences. Through these experiences, participants will be able to better identify their own strengths and weaknesses and leaders and devise future plans for enhancing their strengths and mitigating their weaknesses.

Recommendations for chairpersons:

Overall, the purpose of this session is twofold: (1) to provide new chairs with advice and strategies for addressing common occurrences in their jobs and (2) to allow participants to work with each other to share experiences and prominent lesson learned during the session.

How the audience will be involved:

Session participants will be actively engaged throughout the presentation, both with each other and with the presenter. Although there will be formal information presented, the overall structure will encourage an ongoing dialog within the presentation. In addition, participants will be asked to work with each other to share their experiences and prominent takeaways from the presentation.