

## Proposal for Academic Chairpersons Conference

**Primary presenter:** Mary Dzindolet has been Chair of the Department of Psychology at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma, for over five years. She joined Cameron University's Psychology Department in 1993 and a year later began as the Principle Investigator on a grant with the Army Research Laboratory. Over the next decade and a half, many Cameron University students worked as Research Assistants on this grant leading to over 40 papers and 150 presentations that explored ways to make teams more productive and creative—even when one of the “team members” was an automated aid. She earned her BS in Psychology at Skidmore College in Saratoga Spring, New York, a Masters in Applied Psychology at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, and a PhD in Experimental Psychology at the University of Texas at Arlington.

### **Additional presenter information:**

Dr. Stephanie Boss, Chair, Department of Sports & Exercise Science, Cameron University,  
[sboss@cameron.edu](mailto:sboss@cameron.edu)

Dr. Jennifer Dennis, Chair, Department of Education, Cameron University,  
[jdennis@cameron.edu](mailto:jdennis@cameron.edu)

Dr. Lisa Huffman, Dean, School of Education & Behavioral Sciences, Cameron University,  
[lhuffman@cameron.edu](mailto:lhuffman@cameron.edu)

**Title of presentation:** Joining Forces: Fostering Creativity and Success across Departments

**Abstract for program and website:** The chairs of a Psychology, Education, and Sports & Exercise Science Department and their dean share how they have been able to apply a model of collaborative creativity (Paulus & Dzindolet, 2008) to promote teamwork and innovation in their departments and in the School.

**Keywords:** Teamwork, Communication, Innovation, Creativity, Leadership

**Presentation topic theme:** Working with the Dean

**Target audience:** All department chairs and deans

**Type of presentation:** Best Practice Presentation

### **Objective(s) of the presentation:**

1. Provide audience members with a model of collaborative creativity and innovation that can be used to facilitate teamwork in their departments and schools.

2. Provide specific examples of how one school was able to increase creativity and innovation in their departments by understanding the interplay of various group, task, and situational variables and team related processes.
3. Audience members should leave the session with specific ideas of how they can foster creativity in their departments and schools.

**Description of the session (300-500 words):**

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 unilaterally 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.

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