Academic Leaders and Decision Making

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1. Presentation Title: Academic Leaders and Decision Making
2. Presenter Information: Dean J. Laury, Ed.D.

   Dr. Dino Laury, a native of Cleveland Ohio, is an eleven-year chairperson for the Department of Engineering Studies at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). He earned a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Rochester in May 2016. His decision-analysis dissertation focused on curriculum and program developments, which incorporates many issues within higher education that include accessibility, affordability, and accountability components. His research interests include decision-making, cost analysis, educational leadership, engineering education, policy and shared governance, and diversity and inclusion. He wrote several articles regarding collegiality, retention, and admissions criteria – all current issues in higher education - as a doctoral student.

3. Discipline: Education, Educational Leadership; Higher Education Administration, Engineering Technology
4. Presentation Theme: Advocacy & Leadership and Management categories
5. Presentation Type: Best Practices (45 minutes)
6. Abstract: Presenter and participants will discuss decision-making strategies and best practices via case studies available to chairs (new or veterans) to support the decision making process within department operations.
7. Keywords: Department culture, Decision theory, decision analysis, decision making
8. Creative Commons License: Microsoft Office
9. Presentation Documents: Description of the Session (300-500 words)

   Educational leaders, as decision makers, are often under scrutiny when making decisions. Educational leaders frequently go through their decision analysis (DA), a thought process of selecting a choice (or an option) that involves different disciplines such as philosophy, theory, methodology, economics, and knowledge as change agents to influence the decision maker (BD Dictionary, 2018; and Decision Analysis, 2018). The thought process also incorporates the educational leader's views, beliefs, and values when dealing with a list of alternatives having uncertainties (or tradeoffs) that meet the objective(s) of a department.

   I wrote an article for the Department Chair: A Resource for Academic Administrators, a Spring 2012 Vol. 22 No. 4 periodical, and the topic was: A Junior Administrator's strategies for Handling Collegiality Issues. The strategy that I utilized to improve department culture were: to leave my ego at the door, reduce conflict, empower faculty & staff, avoid preferential treatment, and provide leadership opportunities to faculty and staff within the department. The article did not discuss decision theory (i.e., decision analysis and decision making strategies). After several self-assessments with a former associate vice president of academic affairs (VPAA), the VPAA encouraged me to pursue a doctoral degree, and my dissertation was on decision analysis to increase my creditability and scholarship work as a chair. From the lecturer review, the eight decision-making models are influenced by heuristics and bias of the decision-makers' thinking processes known as System 1 thinking and System 2 thinking (Kahneman, 2011). Kahneman (2011) defines System 1 as a stakeholder effortlessly thinking rapidly and making quick judgments while System 2 as the stakeholder thinking slowly with more effort to make a decision regardless what the uncertainty or tradeoffs are. The decision analysis (DA) models,

regarding my perspective, experience, and research often utilized mixed scanning (Etzioni, 1967), recognized primed (Klein, 1998), or satisficing (Simon, 1955), a favorite administrative tool. However, recently I have adopted Hoy and Tarter's (2008) shared decision-making model known as a simplified model that involves different stakeholders (i.e., group by consensus, group by majority, leader with advice, or leader alone), which could lead to transformation within department culture.

For this seminar, the presenter and participants will discuss several case studies. To frame and contextualize the discussion, eight individual decision models from the lecturer reviews, and a theoretical framework will be briefly introduced. As for my theoretical framework, my views are pragmatic and constructivist with a deaf lens (Creswell, 2013), which morphed the theoretical framework leading to why I adopted Hoy and Tarter's (2008) simplified model. Finally, following the discussions, I will illustrate the Hoy and Tarter's (2008) simplified model to enhance decision theory methods for the chairs at the department level involving all stakeholders, when appropriate depending on the circumstances, to improve department culture, chairperson's creditability, and decision-making process at the department level.

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