Just-in-Time Leadership Seminars for Chairs

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Presenter Information

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<u>Description of the Session</u>:

        With new Chairs being hired and veteran Chairs complaining of lack of guidance and support for their roles, Heritage University (HU) developed a series of focused, just-in-time seminars, keyed to an annual timeline of Chairs' responsibilities that combined both task-specific and developmental support. Harden and Curry (2013) comment from their perspectives as a provost and search consultant respectively "that building a new generation of faculty leaders will be a major challenge in the next decade." Too few institutions invest the time and money needed to develop department leaders (Gmelch & Miskin 2004). Wolverton, Ackerman, and Spencer (2005) began developing a process to identify potential faculty leaders about a year in advance of a potential move to the Chair's position, and to offer a series of workshops to begin preparing them for the leadership role. However, small institutions with small departments often face the challenge of hiring chairs from outside the institution with little time for preparation in advance.

Focused, just-in-time seminars, keyed to targeted Chairs' responsibilities, are the focus of this work. New Chairs at HU were strongly encouraged to participate, while veteran Chairs were invited to participate as appropriate. A high percentage of continuing Chairs participated in the seminars. Continuing a "faculty helping faculty" culture established by the University Center for Intercultural Learning and Teaching, the Chair seminars provided agendas that allowed ample room for Chair questions, strategies, stories, challenges, and problem-solving. The participation of Chairs from multiple disciplines and the intentional inclusion of the Registrar (all sessions), Financial Aid Director (selected sessions), Director of Academic Advising (selected sessions), and an administrator from Information Technology (selected sessions) provided growth opportunities for Chairs, in addition to valuable opportunities for transformative dialogue and the emergence of new pathways to systemic effectiveness for the institution.

This unique presentation will provide participants with the following:

- An example of an adaptable model of just-in-time chair seminars designed to support new and continuing chairs.
- Strategies for developing an effective professional learning community that includes opportunities for transformative dialogue and collaboration with key stake holders across campus.
- Results of a survey of Chairs who participated in the seminars.
- Opportunities to engage in reflection and sharing with others regarding application of this model for their institutions.

<u>References</u>
Harden, D. & Curry, J. (2013). Faculty Members Can Lead, but Will They? *Chronicle of Higher Education, 59*(31), 36*.*
Gmelch, W. & Miskin, V. (2004). *Chairing an Academic Department (2nd ed.)*. Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing.

Wolverton, M., Ackerman, R., & Holt, S. (2005). Preparing for Leadership: What Academic Department Chairs Need to Know. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 27*(2), 227-238.