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Spinning your Wheels? Practical Time Management Solutions for Chairpersons

Craig D. Hlavac

Southern Connecticut State University, hlavacc2@southernct.edu

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Title: Spinning your Wheels? Practical Time Management Solutions for Chairpersons

Abstract: Ever feel like you are spinning your wheels as chair? Poor time management may be to blame. In a recent study of department chairs/directors, 81% of respondents indicated the amount of time required to respond to communications was more than anticipated; 31% indicated time management was their single biggest challenge as chair (Schwinghammer et al., 2012). This session will provide participants with a brief overview of several recent publications relevant to time management for department chairpersons, followed by guided small-group discussions related to time management concerns. Practical recommendations and suggestions for improving efficiency and decreasing stress will be discussed.

Keywords: Time Management, Leadership, Prioritize, Delegate

Presentation Topic Theme: Leadership and Management

Target Audience: All Department Chairs

Type of Presentation: Interactive Workshop

Objectives: Attendees of this session will:

- Review recent research related to time management for chairpersons
- Discuss the various roles of the chair
- Dialogue regarding stressors of the chairperson position
- Develop time saving strategies
- Identify tasks that can be delegated to faculty or staff
- Prioritize important tasks and minimize time waste

Session Description:

One of the most frequent complaints from both new and seasoned academic department chairpersons is difficulty managing their time effectively. In a recent study of academic chairpersons, an astonishing 100% of respondents indicated difficulty in balancing their time between the myriad roles and responsibilities in which they are expected to fulfill (Hlavac, 2012, p. 102). Additionally, as the roles of the chairperson are often poorly-defined and ambiguous, reports of role conflict, stress, and difficulty balancing time and resources are prevalent.

This session will provide current and prospective chairpersons with relevant research and pragmatic suggestions for improving efficiency, as well as an opportunity for discourse regarding time management with other chairpersons. Specifically, the session will be divided into the following sections:

Part 1 (20 minutes): The session will begin with a comprehensive review and discussion of the most common roles of the chairperson, including an informal query of participants regarding the approximate percentage of time each of these roles require in their departments. Some of these roles may include:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Chief communicator | • Faculty evaluator | • Student advisor/recruiter |
| • Team leader | • Budget manager | • Staff manager |
| • Department promoter | • Curriculum specialist | • Administrative liaison |

Part 2 (30 minutes): The session will focus on pragmatic time management skills found in the literature. Several excellent resources report a number of strategies, including:

- Using support staff effectively
- Clearly defining the roles of the chairperson in your department
- Determining priorities for immediate, intermediate, and long-term goals
- Developing and maintaining effective records
- Delegating responsibilities to faculty and staff
- Budgeting time effectively

Networking Break (5-7 minutes)

Part 3 (35 minutes): The session will continue by dividing participants into several small groups. Each group will be given a unique scenario outlining a specific situation in which a chairperson is in need of time management advice. Each group will be tasked with reviewing and assessing the scenario and collaboratively developing a list of practical suggestions that might help to alleviate some of the concerns identified. Finally, each group will present the scenario and their recommendations to the entire group. Focused discussion will be encouraged.

Question and Answer (15 minutes): Participants will have the opportunity to inquire of the presenter or of any of their colleagues regarding session topics.

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