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Positive Academic Leadership: Stop Putting Out Fires; Start Making a Difference

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**Positive Academic Leadership:
How to Stop Putting Out Fires and Start Making a Difference**

Short Description: A highly interactive workshop on strategies that can help chairs move towards positive outcomes in even the most negative of situations, making their leadership more effective, effortless, and enjoyable

Presentation Topic: Leadership/Administration

Type of Presentation: 2½ hour workshop

Objective of the Presentation: Participants can expect to come away from this workshop with clear, practical ideas about how they can help their departments become more positive, visionary, and forward-looking. An emphasis will be made on strategies that can be put into effect immediately but that have lasting results. Participants are also likely to emerge with this workshop with a new, more optimistic attitude about their chances of making a positive difference in their departments.

Description of the Session: Despite their best intentions, most department chairs soon find their days filled with handling complaints, solving problems, and putting out fires (one hopes only in a metaphorical sense). Yet so much more is possible in academic leadership today. Borrowing from approaches like *positive psychology* and organizational behavior, Positive Academic Leadership creates a framework for changing the entire dynamic of an academic department.

The workshop is highly interactive with numerous exercises, role-plays, breakout discussions, and departmental inventories, this workshop will introduce the concept of positive academic leadership from a number of different perspectives. First, it will explore why academic leaders today so often revert to crisis management as their default leadership style even when other approaches would be more effective. Second, it will consider why the distinctive organizational culture of higher education calls for different models of leadership than those found in other environments. Third, it will explain how even slight changes in perspective and rhetoric can produce significant, lasting changes.

Positive Academic Leadership thus takes a systems approach to working with an academic department. The workshop guides participants in methods of seeing their departments in new ways, developing innovative recognition and reward strategies to encourage more constructive behavior, creating a philosophy of academic leadership that can help guide future planning, and improving the tenor of departmental meetings.