Performance Management or "Herding Cats"? Strategies to Support Faculty Success

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Title of presentation:

Performance Management or "Herding Cats"? Tools to Support Faculty Success

Description:

Performance management is both one of the most important and most challenging aspects of being a department chair. An effective department chair can play a decisive role in guiding and coaching faculty towards success; however, many times managing faculty feels like the proverbial "herding cats" or, in other words, "an effort that will likely be futile or at least very, very difficult to accomplish."[1]

How, then, do chairs effectively manage and mentor their highly-independent faculty for success in an environment that increasingly requires collaboration and compliance? In this workshop we will explore strategies and tools for addressing faculty performance and mentoring for success.

Using a series of case studies, we will have participants work in small groups to identify and discuss the common faculty performance issues presented in each case: What are the specific issues involved in each case? What policies or practices might be in play? What additional information is necessary for you to take action? What legal implications, if any, might there be? With which resources might you consult? The main performance themes identified through the discussion of case studies will include understanding faculty as people, setting expectations and maintaining standards, establishing metrics for performance assessment, and utilizing effective communication strategies.

Following the case studies, we will share an effective three-step human resources approach to performance management which centers on: 1) setting clear and specific performance expectations; 2) providing periodic information and formal feedback about performance relative to stated goals; 3) holding individuals accountable.[2] This approach can be effective in addressing performance concerns whether they are related to faculty

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[1] From "Herding Cats." CatStuff. Cat-related idioms, their meanings, and histories. Web. December 4, 2016.

[2] Based on best practices outlined in "Managing Employee Performance," Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM), 17 September 2015. Web. 4 December 2016. For a more extensive treatment of performance management, consult Elaine D. Pulakos, *Performance Management. A roadmap for developing, implementing and evaluating performance management systems,* SHRM Foundation, 2004.

productivity (e.g., number of research publications, grant funding, teaching effectiveness) or faculty conduct (e.g., violation of university policy, non-compliance, bullying behavior).

Emergent themes in this workshop will include how to best document faculty expectations, and how to establish a culture of accountability. We will share with participants some of the practical tools (policies, best practices, templates) that we have developed to document, communicate, and maintain faculty accountability and to mentor for success.