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A Campus Education Model for Department Chairs Councils

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A CAMPUS EDUCATION MODEL FOR DEPARTMENT CHAIRS COUNCILS

BY CHRISTOPHER BARRICK

Abstract:

This presentation examines common missions for department chairs councils and proposes a framework that serves its members by offering campus-specific education. In this model, department chairs learn the ins and outs of their campus, including operations, meeting key university leaders, understanding available resources, and new developments across campus.

Session Description:

While many universities have a network or council of department chairs that discusses issues from around campus, many don't have one at all. Chairs councils can be important support systems to academic chairs where they can have a voice in university decisions and network with colleagues. But, department chairs can also benefit from their organizations in another way: by focusing on campus education.

This session will first focus on mission statements from department chairs councils, as attendees will be able to discuss both how their current council serves them as well as what else they would like to get out of the organization. The pros and cons of different council missions will be discussed in an interactive format.

Next, this session will propose a model of campus-specific education for an academic chairs council. Inspired by an administrative training fellowship, this model includes a rotating schedule of presentations and guest speakers that provide the department chairs of a variety of information a variety of office around campus, including:

- The president's or chancellor's office
- The provost's office
- Each dean/associate dean
- The CFO's office
- Campus business center
- Admissions
- Financial Aid
- Library
- Athletics
- Student Affairs Office
- Marketing
- Numerous others

The guest speakers (campus directors/leaders) can be asked to present a number of different things. They can be presented with potential talking points, and then encouraged to share whatever they feel might be pertinent to academic chairs. The talking points might answer some of these questions:

- What is your professional background?
- What brought you to this institution?
- How long have you been here and how has your role changed (for experienced leaders)?
- What areas fall under your purview?
- Who are the key people in your department/office? What are their roles?
- What current projects is your office undertaking?
- What message would you share with academic chairs? What do you want them to know about what you do?
- How can academic chairs help your office to be more successful?

A key portion of every presentation is time for questions. Academic chairs often have specific questions regarding how various offices on campus serve and affect their own department. Some specific examples will be shared.

These presentations can be invaluable to new chairs and chairs that are new to the institution. Experienced chairs are often eager to ask informed questions, learn new nuances of various campus offices, or simply “put a name with a face” of someone they may have emailed countless times.

In summary, this presentation will describe the different missions that department chairs councils have, and how a campus education model — or even merely just a campus education component — could serve academic chairpersons.