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In the Middle: Department Chairs as Mentors and Mentees

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2018 Academic Chairpersons Conference – Presentation Proposal Outline

Title: In the Middle: Department Chairs as Mentors and Mentees

Presenters: Groff, C. and Konopack, J.

Biographical Information:

Carolyn Groff, Ph.D. is chair of the Curriculum and Instruction Department in the School of Education at Monmouth University. She is an associate professor of K-8 literacy instruction.

James F. Konopack, Ph.D. is the Associate Dean of the Marjorie K. Unterberg School of Nursing and Health Studies at Monmouth University. He is the former chair of the Department of Health and Physical Education where he is an associate professor. He is the recipient of the 2017 Distinguished Teacher Award at Monmouth University as well as the NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative.

Presentation Theme: Working with Faculty and Administration

Presentation Type: Brown Bag Lunch Discussion (30 minutes)

Abstract (25-50 words only): Department chairs, especially new chairs, need mentoring as they simultaneously learn to provide mentorship to department faculty. The type of mentoring that department chairs need from their administrators to be successful leaders can differ from the type of mentoring chairs are provide to their faculty colleagues.

Keywords (5): Mentoring, tenure, promotion, leadership, administration

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Presentation Documents:

300-500-word description of session

During this brown bag session, co-facilitators will focus on the following questions:

1. How does the mentoring that chairs need to be successful differ from the mentoring that chairs provide to their faculty colleagues?
2. What are the commonalities, if any, between the two types of mentoring?
3. What do the two types of mentoring look like in practice?

The presenters will facilitate the discussion by briefly sharing their mentoring experiences as an associate dean and department chair (5 minutes). The participants will then engage in two activities. First, they will brainstorm a list of differences and similarities between the two types of mentoring; this will assist in answering questions 1 and 2 above (10 minutes). Facilitators will ask session attendees to share examples of how they were successfully mentored by their former chairs and, similarly, ways in which they have been successfully mentored *as* academic chairpersons (by deans, chair colleagues, or others). This will be done amongst participants at each table. Discussion will revolve around the concept that mentoring cannot ‘trickle down’ but

must be catered to the mentoring needs of chairpersons and faculty within their departments, which are different in many ways (10 minutes). This activity will correlate with question 3 above. To conclude the session, the facilitators will ask the participants to share the key ideas that arose from their table conversations with the entire group (5 minutes).

This session is relevant to the conference audience, especially new chairs and deans, since mentoring can often take a back-seat to the other daily duties of department chairs and deans such as scheduling, student issues, budgeting and strategic planning. However, without such mentoring from higher-level administrators, chairs may not be as successful at performing these day-to-day operations. In addition, deans who previously have been department chairs can offer guidance to chairs on faculty mentoring based on their prior experience. Evidence that mentoring young faculty members leads to better outcomes in terms of their success exists in the body of literature on mentoring in academia (e.g., van der Weijden, Belder, van Arensbergen, & van den Besselaar, 2014).

Any handouts or materials, as available: N/A