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Communication, Collaboration and Commitment: Overcoming Conflict with Engaged Leadership

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Academic Chairpersons Conference Proposal 2019

Title: Communication, Collaboration and Commitment: Overcoming Conflict with Engaged Leadership.

Great leaders engage followers and harness their energy to perform to their highest ability. This interactive presentation gives insight into resolving conflict to create an effective team.

Engagement is the tie that binds the leader to successful teams. Leadership is the ability to build and sustain high performance teams to achieve identified goals. Communication, Collaboration and Commitment are specific elements central to the survival and effectiveness of successful teams. This interactive presentation provides participants with a framework and solutions for being an engaging leader who resolves conflict.

The role of the public university in the 21st century as a collaborative, responsive, and inclusive institution that makes a difference in the lives of students and the communities it serves is one that is advantageous and challenging. To live up to this expectation, it requires leadership that is transformative and empowering. This is quite difficult when cultural norms, beliefs, and values of those you lead are not congruent with your own vision and/or expectations. I arrived at Southeast Missouri State University on January 1, 2015 to assume my new role as department chair with excitement. This was my first department chair's position after serving as a faculty member for the past 15 years at another institution in the southern regions of the United States. I have worked in public education as a teacher, administrator, and building principal prior to coming into higher education. My career path has provided various regional, national, and international opportunities and cultural experiences. I have had many successes in leading and transforming various learning communities. For the first time in my career, my arrival at Southeast had created a "crisis in confidence."

Given the critical role of university department chairs:

- Communicate and implement University policy
- Convey faculty concerns, interests to Dean and others
- Manage budget, staff, and resources, as well as, evaluate faculty and/or staff
- Represent University in conflicting situations, i.e. faculty, staff, students, parents
- Lead innovation and the change processes

I knew that I need additional support, coaching and mentorship. I identified the following goals for my first year and collaborated with my Dean to create actionable items and on-ramps for achieving the following goals:

Goals

1. To utilize this Professional Development Opportunity to develop a Chair's Toolkit for
 - a. Leading & Managing Difficult Faculty
 - b. Creating a Faculty Professional Development Action Plan
 - c. Developing Metrics for Measuring Online Programs & Faculty Assessment

2. To develop a network with department chairs from across the U.S.

The following outcomes have occurred over the past 3.5 years.

Outcomes

1. Establishment of inclusive and affirming department-level procedures and practices.
2. Increase in faculty productivity through research, scholarship, teaching, and service.
3. The creation of a Department Chair's Toolkit for a Successful Community of Practice.

This interactive session will provide participants with the following opportunities:

1. Create a tool-kit for becoming an Engaged Leader.
2. Identify resources and opportunities for creating high performance teams.
3. Identify resources and opportunities for resolving conflict and empowering teams.
4. Create "vision-plans" for moving department culture from "status-quo" to "highly-effective."