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Applied Servant Leadership: A Practical Approach

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- 1) Presentation Title: **Applied Servant Leadership: A Practical Approach**
- 2) Presenter Information: Dr. Christopher J. Jochum, Chair, Department of Teacher Education, Fort Hays State University. (cjjochum@fhsu.edu)
- 3) Additional Presenter Information: (N/A)
- 4) Presentation Theme: Becoming an Effective Servant Leader
- 5) Presentation Type: Interactive Workshop
- 6) Abstract: Leadership is a people business that requires courage, character and vulnerability. This workshop enables participants to explore the facets of servant leadership by developing their own personal mission statement, learning how to effectively address conflict, and understanding the value of building relationships with students, faculty and staff.
- 7) Keywords: Servant leadership, conflict resolution, relationships, mission statement development
- 8) Presentation Description:

Overview

Serving as a department chair can be one of the most rewarding leadership positions in higher education. However, the skillset and experiences that make someone a successful faculty member, while necessary, are not entirely sufficient to become an effective, servant leader. Furthermore, most department chairs, despite having the best of intentions, may receive little to no formal training for the job. Leadership is a people business that requires a great deal of vulnerability, humility, self-reflection and ongoing personal and professional development. In addition, conflict and difficult conversations, while uncomfortable, can be a daily occurrence in the life of almost any leader. Based upon the notion that leadership is influence through service, courage, character and relationships, this interactive workshop will encourage participants to reflect on their true intentions for serving and leading others. To do this, participants will develop their personal mission statement, situated at the intersection of their passion, talents and professional responsibilities. In addition, participants will engage in activities designed to enhance the quality of the relationships with those they serve, which will address potential blind spots and areas of unintended bias. Finally, participants will learn practical steps for preparing for, engaging in and concluding conflict-related conversations that are both productive and professional.

Relevance

Given the purpose of the conference, along with the related theme (Becoming an Effective Servant Leader), this interactive workshop is relevant to all chairpersons (and other higher education leaders) as it will enable them to engage in activities designed to address the extent to which they are prepared for servant-based leadership. In addition, due to the presenter's

experience and expertise, the activities are related to best practices that contribute to effective, servant leadership within higher education and beyond.

Presentation focus & Audience Involvement

This interactive workshop will focus on the participants from a personal and professional standpoint, based upon reflection and application. Overall, the goal is for participants to leave with a better understanding of their strengths and areas of improvement as effective servant leaders.

Outcomes for participants & how the time will be used:

1. Introduction, overview and workshop goals. (10 minutes)
2. Explore their reasons for serving as a leader. (15 minutes)
3. Develop their personal mission statement for serving as a leader, focused on service, relationships, courage and character. This activity will also incorporate focusing on relationships and areas of unintended bias. (40 minutes)
4. Learn how to address conflict through preparation and documentation. (30 minutes)
5. Conclusion (10 minutes)

Relevant literature and guiding principles:

- “Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth.”¹
- “The job of chairing a department is probably the most important, least appreciated, and toughest administrative position in higher education.”²
- The skills required to be an effective department chair are distinctly different from those required to be a successful, tenured faculty member, yet most department chairs receive little to no training prior to starting the job.³
- Eighty percent of university decisions are made at the department level.⁴
- Department chairs serve an average of four years.⁵
- One in five chair positions turn over each year.⁶
- Almost 65% of chairs will eventually return to the faculty ranks.⁷

¹ James MacGregor Burns. *Leadership*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 2.

² Buller, Jeffrey L. *The Essential Department Chair: A Comprehensive Desk Reference*. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2012), 3.

³ Walter H. Gmelch, and Val D. Miskin. *Department Chair Leadership Skills*. 2nd ed. (Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing, 2011).

⁴ Walter H. Gmelch, and Val D. Miskin. *Department Chair Leadership Skills*. 2nd ed. (Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing, 2011), 5.

⁵ Walter H. Gmelch, Drew Roberts, Kelly Ward, and Sally Hirsch. “A Retrospective View of Department Chairs: Lessons Learned.” *The Department Chair* 28, no. 1 (2017): 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1002/dch.30140>.

⁶ Walter H. Gmelch, and Val D. Miskin. *Department Chair Leadership Skills*. 2nd ed. (Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing, 2011), 5.

⁷ Walter H. Gmelch, “The Department Chair's Balancing Acts.” *New Directions for Higher Education* 2004, no. 126 (2004): 69–84. <https://doi.org/10.1002/he.149>.