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Ethical Dimensions of Dyadic Communication for Chairs

Rob M. McKenzie

East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, mckenzie@esu.edu

Kelly L. McKenzie

East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, kmckenzie@esu.edu

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This discussion will be facilitated by two presenters: A Chairperson and an Adjunct Faculty Member. The format will involve the Chairperson raising an ethical issue that is commonly present in the dyadic communication between the chair and another person (could be a student, staff member, administrator, or other faculty member). Then the Adjunct Faculty member will raise the same issue, but from the point of view of a faculty member interacting with the Chair. Then the audience will be invited to contribute to the discussion by adding their perspectives or additional instances they have encountered in their positions.

This discussion will be useful to Chairs because Chairperson duties often revolve around making difficult decisions that make some people happy and others upset. For example, a Chairperson meeting with a student who is complaining about the grade they received from a faculty member faces the onerous possibility of needing to request that the faculty member provide a rationale for how the grade was assigned. The resulting decisions that the Chair must make, in an effort to resolve the situation, may be accepted by the student but not the faculty member, or vice versa.

Particularly in the current context of higher education where enrollment numbers are driving many of the decisions, Chairpersons need an outlet such as this proposed discussion to help them refine their thinking and sort through the ethical implications of the decisions they have to continually make.

The issues that will be raised during this brown-bag lunch discussion:

Advising Students

Registering Students for Courses

Making Decisions about Allocating Funding

Evaluating the Performance of other Faculty

Communication Channels Used by the Chair to Communicate Information

The presenters will also provide time for the audience to raise ethical issues they have encountered.