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Not Your Typical Administrator

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2022 Academic Chairpersons Conference Proposal

Presentation Title: Not Your Typical Administrator

Presenter Information: Shaunda French-Collins, James Koehn & Wendy Waugh

Shaunda French-Collins is the Department Chair for Communication, Music, Art & Theatre at Chadron State College. In addition, Shaunda is a full professor in the Communication Program and also serves as the college's Graduate Studies Faculty Coordinator and Faculty Service Learning Coordinator. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations from Northwest Missouri State University and her Master of Arts in Communication from the University of Central Missouri. Lastly, Shaunda has a Ph.D. in Communication Studies from The University of Southern Mississippi.

James F. Koehn is the Chair and a Professor in the Department of Business at Chadron State College. James currently serves on the Education Advisory Committee of the Nebraska Board of Public Accountancy. He holds Bachelor of Arts and Master of Accounting degrees from Rice University and earned a Juris Doctor from Baylor University. Koehn has worked for an international accounting firm in both their Houston and New York City offices, and he practiced tax and corporate law in Austin, Texas. Previously he served as the Director of Chadron's Small Business Development Center.

Wendy Waugh is the Dean of Graduate Studies and the School of Business, Mathematics, and Science. Wendy taught Management Information Systems for 28 years, served as Department Chair of the Business Department for three years, and moved into the Dean position in 2019. She holds a Ph.D. degree in Organization and Management with a specialization in Information Technology Management from Capella University.

Disciplines: Business, Communication, Education, Education Leadership, Higher Education Administration

Presentation Theme: Working with Faculty & Administration

Presentation Type: Best Practice Presentations

Abstract: Presenters will examine the trend of “wearing many hats” in higher education leadership. For example, being both a department chair and faculty member. In addition, the notion of successfully managing up, the importance of understanding each role you have, and understanding your situational role and the communication we use will be discussed. Lastly, participants will engage in case study scenarios challenging participants to consider various administrative situations and identifying reasonable approaches based on which “hat” you are wearing.

Keywords: Administration, faculty, leadership

Presentation Documents: Description of the Session

Whether it be due to reorganization, fiscal cuts, downsizing, etc., administrative roles have continued to be modified and often enlarged in higher education. Restructuring has led many higher education institutions to have their employees be in a variety of roles at once. In this session, the presenters will discuss the multifaceted roles they each have at a small public college.

As academic middle management, academic chairs assume many roles in our institutions aka “wearing many hats.” These hats depend on their audience. In particular, chairs wear hats related to their duties towards students as an instructor and an advisor. Other hats are related to our duties towards faculty colleagues such as administrator, mediator, motivator, recruiter, leader and assessor. Hats are also worn related to our responsibilities to outside constituents such as communicator and representative. Finally, hats are worn related

to roles related to upper administration. Examples of these might include: advocate, politician, problem solver and negotiator. (Weaver, 2019) (Jones, 2011)

As we “wear many hats” at our higher education institution, our communication may be influenced. Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles & Ogay, 2007) helps us explain why and how we may accommodate our communication depending on the current role we are serving in (perhaps at a meeting, brief interaction in the hallway, etc.). In addition to the current role we are in, our attitudes/beliefs about the discussion may lead us to converge or diverge in the particular communication interaction we are currently in.

When you have responsibility, but no authority, managing up can be essential to success. The Harvard Business Review (2021) defined managing up as “Being the most effective employee you can be, creating value for your boss and company” (para. 3). Managing up helps you to build trust with your boss and will facilitate growth and success. According to McLeod (2021), “the single most significant factor impacting your job satisfaction is your relationship with your direct manager” (para. 1). Open communication and trust are necessary components in managing up, but it requires a strategic plan to determine how best to work with your boss (McLeod, 2021). To take charge of managing up and doing it well, we will discuss McLeod’s ten features.

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