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Adapting to Challenging Leadership in Academia: A Mindfulness Approach

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12/8/2021

To: Academic Chairpersons Conference Proposal Reviewers

From: Chris Hirschler, PhD, MCHES
Chair and Associate Professor
Monmouth University Department of Health and Physical Education

Scott Richards, PhD, PA-C, DFAAPA
Program Director/Acting Chair, Associate Professor
Monmouth University MSPA Program

Re: Presentation Description for Proposal: Academic Chairpersons Conference 2022

Both Dr. Hirschler and Dr. Richards have many years of experience as chairpersons and program directors. Dr. Hirschler has presented several times at previous Academic Chairpersons Conferences and has extensive experience in academic leadership roles. Along with being a psychiatric PA and psychologist, Dr. Richards has been practicing mindfulness meditation for the past 20+ years under the guidance of teachers from Tibet, Nepal, and India.

The presentation will address characteristics of effective and supportive leadership in addition to skills to adapt to less supportive leadership styles and environments, including confronting and navigating the “toxic triangle”. Mindfulness techniques and practices for recognition of ego involvement in ourselves and others, clarifying intentions, and promoting more effective leadership skills and interpersonal interactions and outcomes will be covered throughout the presentation. Further, mindfulness skills promoting healthier adaptation to negative situations (e.g., ineffective leadership) will be reviewed and practiced.

Identifying and navigating difficult leadership styles and improving our own leadership styles, understanding basic mindfulness practices and skills, and applying mindfulness in our daily lives as academic chairs are the primary goals of the presentation. The presentation will progress through discussion on “brave spaces”, properties of effective and supportive leadership, properties of ineffective and potentially abusive leadership, and coping with unsupportive leadership. Three breakout sessions will be incorporated providing an opportunity to explore leadership components and adaptations to promote the best possible outcomes. For further details please refer to the attached preliminary PPT.

Participants will describe and evaluate effective and supportive leadership (e.g., servant and mindfulness leadership) vs. ineffective and abusive leadership styles and identify positive adaptations and survival techniques promoting higher quality employment and greater contentment. Throughout the presentation, mindfulness principles and techniques will be incorporated and practiced.

For more details, please see the attached rough draft of our PPT presentation.

With the greatest respect,

Chris Hirschler, PhD, MCHES
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