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New Chairs in a World of Hurt: Using Trauma-Informed Leadership to Guide Communication, Compassion, and Flexibility for Five New Chairs.

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Presenter Information

Lisa Jellum, Christina Wolfe, Jessica Lindberg, Erin Shufro, Josie Baudier, and Jayme Wheeler

1) Presentation Title: New Chairs in a World of Hurt: Using Trauma-Informed Leadership to Guide Communication, Compassion, and Flexibility for Five New Chairs.

2) Presenter Information-Primary presenter CV/resume or biographical sketch:

Lisa M. Jellum

Lisa M. Jellum is an Assistant Professor of Kinesiology and Wellness and Chair of the Health Sciences at Georgia Highlands College. Lisa has specialized in areas of teaching that include the dimensions of wellness and leadership studies. Lisa has a B.S. in Exercise Science and M.S. in Sports Management and Leadership from Montana State University-Billings and an EdD in School Improvement and Leadership from the University of West Georgia.

Christina M. Wolfe

Christina M. Wolfe is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Human Services and Chair of Social Sciences at Georgia Highlands College. Prior to serving as chair, she was Director of the GHC Honors Program. She has an M.A. in Sociology and Demography from the Pennsylvania State University and is pursuing a Ph.D. in Workforce Education at the University of Georgia. Additionally, she was a Georgia Governor's Teaching Fellow for the 2018-19 academic year.

Erin Kingston Shufro

Erin Kingston Shufro is an Assistant Professor of Chemistry and Chair of the Physical Sciences at Georgia Highlands College. She earned her A.A. in chemistry at Monroe Community College, B.S. at Rochester Institute of Technology and M.S. from Northeastern University. Erin has been working hard to bring research experiences to students at GHC and has had two students accepted to present at NCUR as well as a student paper accepted for publication.

Josie Baudier

Josie G. Baudier is the Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Georgia Highlands College. Josie holds an M.S. in Instructional Technology and she is currently working to complete her Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction: Learning and Development. She supports faculty through workshops and consultations focusing on course design and development. Josie's latest chapter publication, in *The Learner-Centered Instructional Designer*, is due out this fall.

Jessica E. Lindberg

Jessica E. Lindberg serves as Chair of the English and Foreign Languages divisions of the School of Humanities at Georgia Highlands College. She earned her M.F.A. and Ph.D degrees in Creative Writing/Poetry from Georgia State University as a Virginia Spencer Carr Fellow and recipient of the Mary Ann Brown Award for Emerging Writers. She has poems published in *Mississippi Review*, *Third Wednesday*, *Glassworks Magazine*, and *Santa Ana River Review*, among others. Jessica lives in Rome, Georgia, with her family and backyard chickens.

Jayme Wheeler

Jayme Wheeler is an Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Chair of Mathematics at Georgia Highlands College. Jayme has a B.S. in Exercise and Health Science and a M.A.T. in Secondary Mathematics, both from Kennesaw State University.

3) Disciplines: Community Colleges, Education; Educational Leadership; Higher Education Administration

4) Presentation Theme: Working with Faculty and Administration

5) Presentation Type: best-practice presentation (50 minutes)

6) Abstract: Presenters will discuss their challenges as first-year Chairs facing the multiple academic fires generated by an unprecedented global pandemic. The presenters will detail how using Trauma-Informed Leadership styles allowed them to adjust for the unpredictability of communication from system-level administration, establish relationships with internal stakeholders, and develop trust with faculty as new leaders within the institution.

7) Keywords: Academic Leadership, Community College, Faculty, Trauma-Informed

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9) Presentation Documents: Description of the Session (300-500words)

Academic year 2019-2020 was the inaugural year for a new tier of leadership at Georgia Highlands College, a community college serving the mostly rural population of a five-county area of Northwest Georgia. College leadership established the Division Chair role and selected twelve new chairs for fall 2019; in spring 2020, our region saw high numbers of CoVid-19 cases. At our institution, this halted day-to-day instruction, redefined our protocol for ensuring high-quality education, and threw this group of new chairs into a faculty-management crisis no amount of leadership training could anticipate. The pandemic shift revealed the need to acknowledge issues that were less about the process administration could use achieve *success* and more about the people that it took to achieve success in a new landscape. The shift took a toll on those within the walls of the college; it looked much more like a "traumatic experience" than a solvable problem.

Nealy-Oparah and Scruggs-Hussein (2018) define trauma as an “experience that is deeply distressing” (p.12). The CoVid-19 pandemic has led to adverse health effects in faculty, staff, administration, and students, including loss in optimal function to one's physical, emotional, mental, social, or spiritual well-being. Trauma redirects our efforts of planning and organizing, and we begin to shift into survival mode (Manderscheid, 2009; Nealy-Oparah & Scruggs-Hussein, 2018)).

Using the Sanctuary Model of trauma-informed leadership (Bloom & Sreedhar, 2008), the presenters will look at trauma and its relation to the dimensions of wellness for chairs and for those the chairs serve. Each of the dimensions will be addressed relating to Trauma-Informed Leadership tactics employed to create an environment that is viewed as *safe* above all else. The art of being a trauma-informed (TI) leader encompasses the use of emotional and social intelligence that reduces the level of "vicarious trauma" or trauma that is experienced through the acts of others (Middleton, Harvey & Esaki, (2015); Nealy-Oparah & Scruggs-Hussein, 2018).

For trauma-informed leadership to be effective, leaders must walk the line between “compassion fatigue” and being “chronically traumatic.” In this presentation, we will also examine key factors that affect a chair's ability to interpret and disseminate information with a transparent, empathetic tone. This "inside-out" technique that chairs must master, takes a high level of social-emotional intelligence, and the authors, Nealy-Oparah & Scruggs-Hussein (2018), argue, "How can we teach what we do not embody?" (p14). We will discuss how the lessons of this pandemic year, our first year as chairs, defined our leadership styles and developed trust among faculty, staff, students, and administration going forward. We will share different tips and techniques that support the development of TI leadership tactics (Imad, 2020). We will follow up our presentation with questions from the participants and guide them to materials that support the leadership skills needed to navigate times of uncertainty and trouble.

References:

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- Manderscheid, R. W. (2009). Trauma-informed leadership. *International Journal of Mental Health*, 38(1), 78-86.
- Middleton, J., Harvey, S., & Esaki, N. (2015). Transformational leadership and organizational change: how do leaders approach trauma-informed organizational change... twice?. *Families in Society*, 96(3), 155-163.
- Nealy-Oparah, S., & Scruggs-Hussein, T. C. (2018). Trauma-informed leadership in schools: From the inside-out: The foundation of being a trauma-informed leader is transformational “inside-out” work that heals adult trauma and develops social-emotional intelligence. How can we teach what we do not embody? *Leadership*, 47(3), 12–16.
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