**Discussion points at break-out session, “Effective Practices for Department Chairs – Supporting a Student-Centered Culture”**

Other duties of the faculty chair:

* Teach his/her classes
* Handle student complaints
* Participate in the evaluation process
* Shared governance
* Sometimes, Perkins reports and budgets
* Sometimes, participation on planning committees

If the culture in the department is fragmented or strained, some ideas were:

* Have the department identify common goals and/or a common vision and values. This may help faculty focus on their commonalities not their differences.
* If the department is large, create some meeting norms
* Build a team by accomplishing something together. This could be outside of the classroom, such as participate in the Believe Walk as a group.
* Meet with faculty occasionally off campus. One person hosts a holiday party at her house; one person has a hike; someone has the department volunteer at an event. It is helpful to see each other out of context and find a comfortable way to talk to each other.

Inclusion of adjunct was stressed. One group used funds such as Perkins to pay for adjunct to complete a project, such as outreach efforts. Include adjunct when you schedule department meetings or discussions, even if not all adjunct can come. If your college has an Adjunct Orientation the beginning of the term, consider having a department meeting with full and part time faculty that day.

To share the load of mentoring new adjunct faculty some suggestions were to have other full time faculty mentor or coach the adjunct teaching the same course. Another idea is to have seasoned adjunct help new adjunct as needed who are teaching the same course.

A culture of sharing and support was emphasized. If this is a problem for some faculty, one suggestion was to model that culture anyway so the culture can trend that direction.

Evaluations can be a time for sharing ideas and to cultivate a self-growth mindset. During the peer evaluation, suggest that peer evaluators identify at least one thing the faculty (full time or adjunct) is doing well, and provide at least one suggestion to try, even if the evaluatee is excellent. Many times the assigned peer evaluator can learn from the evaluatee.

One Department Chair surveyed her department, including adjunct, on the strengths of the department. She gave away three prizes to the first ones to complete the survey.

Since new full time faculty are being hired across the state, the “old guard” faculty should encourage enthusiasm and creativity. Many times, “old guard” state “well we tried that and it did not work.” In a new context with a new approach, the idea may work. Allow faculty to feel safe to try ideas and recognize that failure is part of the improvement process. Faculty may feel more comfortable piloting a new idea or changing in increments, measuring effectiveness of student success, and then expanding idea.

During department meeting when strong opinions are presented including many negative comments, consider using the simple strategies identified in the Six Thinking Hats (book by Ed DeBono).