

**OBTC 2017 at Providence College**

**June 14th – 17th, 2017**

Submission Template

SUBMISSION GUIDANCE

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| **Submission Template for the**  **2017 OBTC Teaching Conference for Management Educators** |

1. Title, Abstract & Keywords

*In your abstract, please include a brief session description (not to exceed 100 words), and three to four keywords. If your proposal is accepted, this description will be printed in the conference program.*

**Title**:

Hitting the Ground Running: Surviving and Thriving in the First Year in Your New Job

**Abstract**

The excitement of starting a new job can cause people to underestimate, or overlook, the challenges of “hitting the ground running” in a new environment. While much generalized career advice exists about how to “fit in,” this session focuses on issues pertinent to academia, especially in the critical first year where the foundations of promotions, contract renewal, and tenure are often laid. Led by mid-career academics who just recently switched institutions, we seek to share—and hopefully create with participants—the knowledge of the specific academic activities that will lead to a successful transition year.

**Keywords**: changing jobs, careers, challenges

1. Teaching Implications:

*What is the contribution of your session to management pedagogy/andragogy? Specifically, please include your learning objectives, and describe what management and/or teaching topics are relevant to your session, and why. Also, include theoretical, disciplinary, or theoretical foundations that will help reviewers understand how your ideas fit within the broader field of management.*

This session focuses on the unique challenges of “hitting the ground running” in a new job within the professorate. Sensemaking theory (Louis, 1980; Weick, 1995) informs how newcomers orient to organizations and there is no shortage of academic and popular literature providing advice for newcomers such as getting to know new people and learning the organization’s culture (cf., Rollag, 2016; Hedges, 2013; Moreland & Levine, 2001). However, being a new employee in academia presents unique challenges since much of one’s career success dependent not only on the new employee’s boss (dean), but a committee of one’s peers, and assuring appropriate levels of productivity in multiple areas using primarily self-motivation to navigate successfully through a lengthy tenure process. The unique socialization process occurs within academia mainly through doctoral training and academic conferences and geared primarily towards new PhDs aspiring to research-intensive institutions. Guidebooks written for academic audiences (Cahn, 2008; Gray & Drew, 2008) also focus on new PhDs in traditional research institutions. Although helpful, they are of limited assistance to mid-career changers and new PhDs working at non-research intensive institutions. Although prior experiences and university sponsored orientation programs aid in the transition process, they can also inadvertently introduce blind spots for those taking positions at new institutions, especially those who change institutions after a long tenure with their prior academic institution. The goal of this session is to help participants successful navigate their first year in a new academic job and set the stage for future success. The session looks beyond items discussed in OBTS’ Doctoral Institute and similar programs, as the primary focus of this session will be on those changing, or looking to change, jobs within the academy, but many of the areas discussed will also be of interest to doctoral students seeking their initial positions.

Career researchers (Phillips, 1998; Wanous, 1980) highlight the importance of realistic job previews and the role of realism to avoid inflated new job expectations that can lead to subsequent disappointment and disillusionment about one’s new job. This is especially important for job changers, who bring with them their prior experiences that serve as a referent for their new job and how they will react to their new situation (Boswell, Shipp, Payne & Culbertson, 2009). These “remembered experiences” (Schwarz, 2007) may be biased and have the potential to strengthen potential negative attitudes if the worker has unrealistic job expectations. This session serves to provide a realistic job preview of the first year at a new academic employer. The facilitators for this session have recently changed jobs after extensive tenures at their previous schools. Thus, based on our own experiences and lessons learned, we have identified six challenges inherent to changing jobs within the professorate that we will explore in this session:

1. The challenge of adapting to a new culture

While career change literature focuses on the importance of learning about your new employer’s culture (Chao, O’Leary, Wolf, Klein & Gardner, 1994), we have discovered that academia’s strong shared traditions, with its subtleties and assumed often widespread ideas, can work against a smooth transition process. This is because the strong ingrained traditions of the academy are often enacted very differently across institutions. For example, a school may assert that it is “student-focused” or “research-focused,” but despite the shared meaning of these terms across academia, these philosophies can have subtle, yet strongly consequential, differences across schools. We will explore the challenge of moving beyond contrast effects and prior perceptions one’s own cultural experiences at your previous employer (or doctoral program), and how your new school translates the norms of the academy.

1. The challenge of maintaining high-performance performance levels.

While it is essential that anyone changing jobs achieve high levels of performance as quickly as possible, the long-lead times of activities related to promotion and tenure (or contract renewal) make it imperative that the early years at a new school are productive and set the foundation for creating value in the future. The challenge here is about maintaining the appropriate balance between teaching, research, and service for one’s new institution, while still within a steep learning curve. We will discuss pre-planning for future years to work to build and maintain your performance, especially during your first year at your new employer.

3. The challenge of time management

We have discovered our first year was characterized by the reality that almost all activities will take longer to accomplish. Regardless of your experience at prior institutions, just about every activity you undertake—even the ones you assume to be “old and familiar” —will take you more time to accomplish at your new school as you learn the ins and outs of its processes. We will discuss how participants can adapt their mindsets, regardless of your experience and skills, to recognize that in many ways you are a rookie at your new school.

4. The challenge of job boundaries

In trying to establish a collegial reputation at your new school, it is easy to get overwhelmed with requests for service and other activities that may not advance your career goals or effect your work-life balance. This is true for those taking their first job as well as those changing institutions. Even at schools that attempt to “protect” new faculty during their early years, our experience is that we still had to learn how to say “no” in our new jobs. Especially for experienced academics, you will often be asked to do a lot of things in your new job as people seek to gain from your experience and wisdom. This is made more difficult by our natural desire is to say “yes” to everything as the new person on the team. We will discuss the challenge of where to set boundaries and how and when to say “no” to certain requests during the crucial first year.

5. The challenge of adapting what you have done well in the past to a new environment

It has been our experience that even when you have an instructor has an award-winning course or teaching awards from your previous school, the course, and even the instructor’s teaching style, will need to be adapted, sometimes significantly, at your new school. Especially for experienced hires, new faculty are often called upon to quickly teach new courses at their new schools. We will discuss the challenge of how to both successfully adapt existing courses AND managing the often significant amount of time involved in this adaptation process.

6. Finally, the challenge of surprises

We note this challenge exits of no matter how smooth your transition is to a new school—you WILL experience surprises! Some of these surprises will be good, and some will be bad. We will discuss how to anticipate these surprises to the best of your ability and how to handle them when they do occur.

Boswell and her colleagues (2005) noted that job changes experience a honeymoon-hangover effect, where new employees may experience an increase in job satisfaction that can decline over time. Subsequent research (Boswell et al., 2009), found that the reasons for the job change and if new job expectations are fulfilled strengthened or weakened this honeymoon-hangover pattern. Our goal for this session is to help participants set realistic expectations for their first year at a new institution to assure a long honeymoon with minimal hangover.

*The session’s learning objectives are as follows:*

Through sharing insights, participants in this session should

1. Discover tactics and strategies to achieve the balance and skills necessary for success in their new jobs or their first jobs.

2. Examine the unique cultural challenges related to changing jobs (or starting a first job) within academia.

3. Illustrate the challenges they encountered in successfully “translating” and creating courses in different organizational contexts.

1. Session Description and Plan:

*What will you actually do in this session? If appropriate, please include a timeline estimating the activities will you facilitate: how long will they take, and how will participants be involved? Please remember that reviewers will be evaluating how well the time request matches the activities you’d like to do, and the extent you can reasonably accomplish the session’s goals. Reviewers will also be looking for how you are engaging the participants in the session.*

This proposed 60-minute roundtable interactive sharing session is designed to engage sessions participants in a reflective conversation about the critical adaptations that need to be made in the first year of a new academic job—whether that job is the first post-doctoral position or a job at a new school. The session is designed for the facilitators and participants to learn from the shared wisdom and experience of all attending the session who may have also previously changed jobs or those that recently entered their first jobs.

The first 5 minutes of the session will be dedicated to the sessions’ facilitators (both mid-career academics) sharing their general background and rationale for the session.

The next 45 minutes will be dedicated to an interactive discussion session geared towards helping participants think about their own backgrounds and experiences and how they will impact their transitions to their new jobs. This will be a guided conversation connected to the 6 challenges discussed earlier in this proposal. The session will be conducted as a series of three 15-minute rotating roundtables exploring one or two questions each, or a general discussion, depending on the number and interest of participants. The goal is to create an intimate space for consideration of each challenge. The session facilitators will present each challenge, along with a very brief description of a concrete example of how they experienced and addressed the challenge. Session participants who have been through the job change process will also be asked to briefly share their own experiences. Finally, participants who are about to change jobs, or whom are in the midst of changing jobs, will be given reflection time to consider each question and write down their own specific strategies for addressing the challenging. Resources to help in overcoming various challenges will also be shared with participants. The session will dedicate 7-10 minutes to each challenge.

The final 10 minutes of the session will be dedicated to a shared debriefing. Participants will be asked to share any specific strategies that the developed as part of session.

1. Application to Conference theme:

How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of *Navigating the Changing Currents*?

This session is directly related to the conference theme of navigating the changing currents. At its core, it is about the identifying and exploring the necessary changes and adaptations professors will need to make when taking their first post-doctoral jobs or when changing institutions.

1. Unique Contribution to OBTC:

*Have you presented the work in this proposal before? If so, how will it be different? Is this proposal under current review somewhere else? If so, please explain. How will your proposal be different for the OBTC conference?*

We have not presented the work in this proposal before. The proposal is not under current review somewhere else.

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