**Case Study One**

**Leading Your Department’s Response to “Returning” After COVID-19**

Dr. Toni Fauchy is about to begin her first semester as a department chair at a private liberal arts college in the Fall 2021. While she’s glad to have some of the uncertainty of global pandemic behind her, she knows that there are a number of “unknowns,” such as navigating ever-changing public health guidelines, lingering exhaustion, a 25% cut to her operating budget, and a collective hunger to do some things *differently* in light of all we have learned from teaching and working remotely.

She is already imagining how her department will have to continue to adapt to meet these new conditions. Her head is spinning trying to reimagine the academic offerings as well as some of the department’s signature events like visiting lecturers and speakers, student Honors presentations, the alumni advisory board meeting, department meetings, the senior luncheon, the monthly majors colloquium, and on and on. She has a few ideas for how the department might adapt some of these offerings, but for others, she is less sure about how to proceed.

Dr. Fauchy knows that as a leader, sometimes others look to her to “act quickly and get things done.” Other times, others “want to be consulted” in developing a collaborative solution to a tricky problem.

Dr. Fauchy is preparing the agenda for the opening departmental faculty meeting of the year. She realizes that she has a lot of ground to cover and will have about an hour to lead her colleagues in a discussion about the year ahead.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Identify one decision that Dr. Fauchy can make on her own regarding the upcoming year and another that is prime for a departmental-wide conversation. What criteria helps to distinguish these decisions?
2. What information or guidance does Dr. Fauchy need to gather in advance of the departmental meeting so that she feels informed and prepared to answer her colleagues’ questions?
3. In addition to providing leadership for 8 faculty in the department, Dr. Fauchy also oversees two full-time professional staff members, including a part-time administrative assistant. These individuals typically do not attend departmental meetings. How might Dr. Fauchy involve these staff members in the deliberative decisions and inform them of other relevant decisions.