Fourth Quarter Educational Session

Keynote Session Topic

"How to Prepare for Innovative Leadership in Healthcare"

Dr. Harold Griffin and Dr. Alla Adams

Dr. Harold Griffin: Good morning. Alla is at the back, so we're going to kind of team tag. What we want to talk about today is innovation. More specifically, we want to talk about how to create a culture of innovation in healthcare… and then we're going to talk about soft skills. How many know what soft skills are? That's the people skills, right? We're going to talk about a linkage between those two. Why is it important to have good soft skills in order to be innovative? And from an innovation perspective, what are the specific attributes you need to truly be innovative?

Under learning objectives, what we're going to do is recognize how and under what circumstances innovative leaders make a difference in healthcare. Then, we're going to understand why leaders need to possess a mastery of those personal attributes with those soft skills we just talked about in order to achieve some professional success and to lead change. Then, we're going to identify some challenges that are associated with developing and refining soft skills, and then we're going to use some specific approaches that you can utilize to strengthen soft skills.

First thing I want to do is I want to focus on the innovation. Here's the thing about innovation. If you ask different people, what does innovation mean to you, you're going to get slightly different answers. So there was a study conducted by Harvard business faculty, and what they did is they interviewed fifteen experts in innovation. One of the questions they asked was, how do you define innovation? Then, the researchers went through, did a content analysis, and came up with the following themes. And from the themes they came up with a definition.

In short, what innovation is is coming up with ideas and how to execute the ideas; and specifically, coming up with ideas that present solutions that add value to stakeholders. Stakeholders being your organization, being your customer base. That's what innovation is in a nutshell.

The question is, do we need innovation in healthcare? Do you think that the healthcare industry can use a little innovation? We do innovate, and we do a lot of things, we do a lot of R&D in terms of technology development and new procedures. Maybe on the business side of healthcare delivery we could do a little innovation too. Maybe a little bit more. Because if you keep doing what you've always done, you're going to always get what you've always got, right?

What this graph illustrates is when you look at this study, and it's looking at eleven different developed countries, you'll notice there U.S., where the arrow is, we spend more per capita, that's per person, on healthcare. But when we look at outcomes, when we look at access or we look at quality, when we look at metrics that are used to compare healthcare systems across the globe, we're not doing very well. So you then begin to question, are we getting a good ROI? Are

we getting a good return on the investment? Now globally, we're viewed as the leader in technological innovation when it comes to healthcare delivery. But the question is, do we need a little more innovation? I think we answer yes, I saw some head nods.

Here's a couple of cartoons. Let me read those to you real quick: "My team has created a very innovative solution. But we're still looking for a problem to go with it." Does that resonate? Yeah. I mean, we can have people coming up with solutions all the time. You can ask anybody how they can resolve an issue and they'll give you lots of solutions. But we're not really sure what the problem actually is. Sometimes what we do is we put out fires. As administrators, that's what you do. You're constantly putting out fires. Sometimes you don't have a lot of time to gather all the information and really fully understand the problem, because there's a sense of urgency. But if you're not, that can be something that kind of stifles innovation. You're putting out fires, you're coming up with immediate solutions, which are necessary, but that's not necessarily innovation. You have to have time to process the problem, understand the problem. Then you can begin to come up with something innovative, and we'll talk about how to do that.

Here's another cartoon: "This really is an innovative approach, but I'm afraid we can't consider it. It's never been done before." How many of you have heard that? Well, we tried that in the past, it didn't work. How many of you have heard that before? We've never done that before… I've said it myself many times as I'm trying to justify why we shouldn't do something.

So I'll give you a side by side comparison here. What we're looking at are two ways how managers unintentionally stifle innovation. This is not intentional. And then, what are some things we can do to promote a culture of innovation within healthcare.

Nine ways management can stifle innovation. One, 'Be suspicious of new ideas' and where they're originating. So if they're coming up from the bottom, what's the motivation behind that new idea? So… a little bit of scepticism when new ideas are presented. Have any of you presented new ideas to a boss and got a little bit of pushback? Show of hands. Oh, that's a big chunk, right? I've experienced this a number of times, especially if you're innovative. If you're coming up with something new, different, out of the box, never been done before, you get a little bit of pushback.

'Invoke history.' We've never done that before. Or we tried it in the past and it didn't work. Maybe the timing was off. As you know, in business it's all about the timing. Sometimes it's just not the right time for a solution. If you've got this great, innovative idea, but the timing's a little off, don't get rid of the innovation, just put it in the back pocket, because the time can turn around; and we might need it.

'Keep people really busy.' Managers, if we could measure by metrics, production metrics, quality metrics, economic metrics, operational metrics, financial metrics… so keep people busy. If they've got down time, give them work, give them more work, right? How many of you have done that? I've done that. It's important to keep people busy, right? So I can hit those metrics.

'Encourage cutthroat competition' where we put employees against employees. We put an employee against another employee… one team member against another team member. We do performance evaluations. Employees are working hard to get the best possible evaluations. The better the evaluation, the more likely you are to get a promotion, the more likely you are to make

more money. So we do that.

‘Stress predictability above all.’ A lot of things are very predictable. We want to be able to follow a process. That’s why we have a process. We want you to follow the process. We don’t want to really recognize when people overachieve, because that kind of undermines the whole planning process. It was planned that way…

‘Confine discussions of strategy and planning to just a select few trusted advisors.’ I did this once. I was running a university and I had this idea. Let me pull an offsite retreat, bring everybody out, everybody to the retreat, administrative staff, faculty, all kinds of folks. This is a strategic planning session, multi-day strategic planning session. So I tried to get everybody’s involvement, and I did. I got a lot of involvement. I’ll tell you, though, logistically it was horrible. That was bad. It was hard, but I think I got a lot of good stuff out of it... things that I might not have gotten if it was just my executive team.

‘Act as punishing failure motivates success.’ It’s not saying that we all do that, but there may be some that use the stick approach, right? This expectation that we have to kind of have that threat… There’s a threat of punishment if we’re not successful, that there will be some kind of negative consequence to you if you’re not successful. And some of that’s kind of a reality, right? If you’re not hitting your margins, you can’t continue to operate without hitting margins, otherwise you’re going to have to cut some costs. So some of that’s a reality. But we want to be careful not to inculcate that as a normal part of the process.

‘Blaming problems on incompetent employees.’ They have weak skills. Maybe the work ethic wasn’t where it needed to be. So there could be some managers who perceive it that way. Or employees that perceive that managers think that they’re not doing their fair share.

And, ‘I’ve got to the top because I know everything about this business.’ It could be some manager thing, because I rose. It’s kind of a rite of passage. It’s a difficult path to senior leadership positions, right? So I got to where I am because I know all about this business…

Nine ways to create a culture of innovation. So what can we do differently? The question is how do we overcome that?

‘Encourage new ideas.’ Make them feel those ideas are valued, right?

‘Look ahead, not behind,’ instead of saying, well, we’ve never done that before. When you’re doing innovation, when you’re doing something different, something that’s a little bit an unconventional solution to a common problem, which is what we do when we innovate. We want to look at not only addressing issues that are current, but we want to look to the future. How is what we’re doing today going to better position us for the future?

‘Leave slack for experimentation.’ Now, that may not always be the easiest thing. I mean, one of the things you say is, look, give some time so that people can innovate. Give them some time to think about what’s going on in the organization. Process the issues. Make a little seed money. There are all kinds of organizations that are doing some great things, even here in Texas and in Houston to stimulate some innovation.

‘Encourage collaboration towards common goal.’ This is where the teamwork comes in. This is

that team element. Innovation is not a solo gig. You can have the best, most innovative solution, but if nobody buys in, it goes nowhere. You can't execute. You have to work with others to flesh out these ideas. Sometimes you need a little grounding. Some people are not very creative… I'm kind of linear. But there are some people who are very creative. They got all kinds of ideas but they need a little grounding on those ideas, a little realism kind of put in there.

'Be flexible.' In health administration, that's about the name of the game, is the flexibility. Adapt and overcome, from military folks. Flexibility, adaptability. You got to be able to flex a little instead of that rigidity, got to follow process. Now sometimes we have other real issues. We have to follow certain processes or we'll get in trouble. But allow some flexibility when possible.

'Open strategic discussions.' Like I said, getting more views, more points of view will strengthen your plan. What happens when you develop a plan in kind of isolation where you just got a few folks, there may be things you're overlooking. Not intentionally, but you could be overlooking something important, an opportunity that's missed because you didn't get more input.

'Accept that stretch goals means that some things won't work.' Sometimes, you're not going to hit the goals. Sometimes you're going to miss. That's why they're stretchy. What happens sometimes, you ask your employees to put some goals together: What are your goals? They'll give you some goals they know they're going to hit. Because if they don't hit the goals, they're afraid there are consequences for that. But we want people to stretch the goals a little. We know you're not going to necessarily hit the stretched goal, that's what makes it stretchy. It's doable, but if all the factors are right. So there could be some opportunities that you won't hit.

'Foster respect for people and their talents.' We have to respect everybody and their talents and what they bring to the table.

'Learning is imperative.' And then of course, learning. You don't know everything. Nobody knows everything. It's not possible, right? So we have to, this is a lifelong process. Learning is a process. Every experience you have adds a little bit more towards your development. Learning is a process. Nobody knows everything.

Is that really heavy? Okay, so here's what I want you to do. You've got two pieces of paper on the table and plenty of pens. What I want you to do is have somebody at your table be the facilitator to make sure everybody participates. I need somebody to be a scribe. Don't do complete sentences, just jot down the ideas, the thoughts. And the timekeeper, I'll be your timekeeper. The objective is to share what your organization is doing to promote innovation. And if you're in school, that's an organization, so what is your program doing to promote innovation? We're going to have ten minutes for this activity, so get to know each other. It's important because we've got another activity coming up soon, so you got to be comfortable with each other. You have to work together.

Okay, ya'll. Time is up. I've been around to different tables. A lot of discussion going on, a lot of sharing, and I appreciate that. Hopefully you got to know each other and did a little bit of best practice. What's going on in different industries by different companies to promote and innovate?

Innovation… I think unarguably this is the secret sauce to business success. Now in some industries it's more critical. If you're in the technology industry and you're not innovating, well

then you're in trouble. That's what it's all about. Pharmaceuticals - if you're not engaged in R&D and coming up with new product, you got a problem, because the clock is ticking and the patenting will run out and you got an issue. In healthcare administration, we need to innovate, too. We need to find new ways to do things that we haven't done before, new strategies, kind of break the hold a little bit. We could use a little paradigm shifting, right? I was talking to some folks at different tables, and we're kind of in agreement we need a paradigm shift.

There was a Harvard study done, that looked at some innovative leaders, specifically innovative entrepreneurs; and what the researchers noticed is that discovery skills are more important than cognitive skills. So let me kind of define for you cognitive skills. I'm going to use Bloom's Taxonomy. So we start at the lower level cognitive skills and go up to the higher level. So knowledge is the lowest level. Then we've got comprehension, right? Then we've got analysis, then we got assessment, then we've got synthesis, then we've got evaluation, and then some say at the top is creativity. That would be these discovery skills. The top, those discovery skills. Out of those interviews the researchers conducted, I'm going to be going over some examples of these discovery skills. Association, questioning, experimentation, observation and networking. These are what these individuals have in common.

What do I mean by association? Basically, association is when you're taking two concepts, two questions, two ideas that may not even be related and pulling them together and coming up with some ideas… totally different. Let me give you an example.

I'm over at Brazosport College, where I run the undergraduate program in Health Services Management. How many of you know what 4 + 1 programs are? That's where an undergrad student can pick up so many courses in a graduate program, apply those hours to the undergrad, and then get that jumpstart on graduate studies should he or she matriculate in that program. Well, lots of universities that offer graduate programs offer 4 + 1 options. But that's a community college. Most community colleges don't offer baccalaureate degrees. None of them offer graduate degrees. I'd never worked in a community college before, I've always worked in four year universities. So I got in and I'm looking at this, and said well look, we're one of four community colleges that offer baccalaureate programs in Texas. But I would love for my students to be able to get grad degrees. I got some really bright students. So then I started thinking, well, 4 + 1 programs… Since I don't have a grad program why can't I just partner with some other universities that have graduate programs and create an option where students from the community college, when they get to their junior year, because we offer baccalaureate, they can then go take hours of a graduate program, apply it to their undergrad, and they get a head start on grad school. Why would I want to be, anyway, limited to just graduate programs offered at one university? I want to do it at lots of universities. So it took me two different concepts, 4 + 1, which doesn't even apply to community colleges, and then take the community college culture and now somehow merge the two together to create brand new products. It'll take us from only forty students to, I bet you, one of the largest programs in the state in about a year, year and a half.

That's what I mean. Taking two concepts and just connecting them, right? Association. Steve Jobs said, "Creativity is connecting things." Just what I said. Pierre Omidyar, the founder of E-Bay. Is everybody familiar with E-Bay? What he did, there's a couple of stories out there. One story is that his fiancée collects these Pez dispensers. You know what those are? Maybe some of you are too young for that. Pez dispensers. And so he started looking online, and he said well,

she collects these, so he goes looking at classifieds. Not one ad, classifieds, and see if they've got some Pez dispensers. Couldn't find any. He's really into emerging markets. He's really into markets, the Internet, he just, he got shut out doing that IPO. So then he starts putting these concepts together. He says well, why don't we create an Internet marketing space where we can then market these items, these products, and have consumers buy them on the Internet? That's one story.

I think the true story is what he did to kind of test his theory… he took a laser pointer like this one that was all busted up. And he put it on the Internet to see if somebody would buy it. And sure enough, he got a taker at $14.00. So he called them. He had a picture, he called them just to say: "Look, are you aware of the fact this is a busted up pointer? It doesn't work, it's all broke up." The buyer said: "Oh, I collect those." Who would have thought… probably for parts, right? Probably collects it for parts. So I think that's the real story, not the fiancée story. But that's an example of taking different ideas, different things and putting them together in a way that makes sense. It solves a problem.

What's the answer here? 5 + 5? Ten, very good. It wasn't a trick question. I know some of you would say it. Ten. What if? See that at the bottom there? You see that in the program, I say what if? Now ? + ? = 10. There is, for you mathematicians, there's almost an unlimited number of scenarios. I can do negatives, I can do all kind of numbers, there's unlimited combinations to come out with 10, right? So in other words, don't be confined by this world view, this conventional view. What we do, though, with kids is we kind of count and there's one right answer. There's one way to do it. You agree with that? When going through school, don't we teach you this is how you solve the problem? This is how you do it? There's lots of ways to solve the problem. Maybe the problem isn't the problem. Maybe our reality is stifling our ability to innovate. The constrictions, the confinement of reality cause us not to innovate.

Discovery skills # 2 - questioning. Peter Drucker said: "The most difficult question, the most difficult job is never to get the right answers, it's to find the right questions." Peter Drucker… our guru of process improving. If you think about it, that's a great thing. It's never about getting the right answer, it's about making sure you ask the right questions. That's what I was talking about earlier with the Provost. Make sure you understand the problem, then you can come out with innovative solutions. If you don't do that, what happens, if you don't fully understand the problem before you implement solutions? Is it possible that a situation could get worse? If you don't understand the nature of the problem and then you implement a solution to fix the problem it can actually get worse. Is it possible to have no effect whatsoever? That's another option. You implement a solution but you really didn't address the problem at all, so therefore there's no change. And then if there is a shot that it might solve the problem, but for now. But maybe it's not going to solve this same problem in the future.

Michael Dell, the founder of Dell Computers, which is known for producing very cost effective, cost efficient low cost computing systems. Questions… His question was, why does it cost five times as much to sell a computer as it does to purchase the parts to make the computer? So he questioned himself. Because what he used to do is he'd tear apart the computers, he'd build computers. So it only cost him $600 to buy the parts to build a computer, but yet they're retailing for $3,000. So he couldn't understand why such a mark-up on the product. So that's the idea, so maybe we should look at producing computing systems at a lower price point so that regular consumers could utilize those systems, those computers.

‘Asking questions.**’** Ask why, why not, what if? Look here, it says imagine opposites. How many of you do devil’s advocate, play the devil’s advocate? Show of hands. There’s a few. Take the opposing position. Question the conventional wisdom. Question the world view on the issue. That’s it, play devil’s advocate. Sometimes the best solutions come when you’re looking at two alternatives that are diametrically opposed to one another. Finding a way to synthesize them together and get the best possible solution. That’s some real innovation.

‘Embrace constraints**’**… what typically constrains our thinking is the reality check. When we start thinking about well, we got limited allocate, we got limited resources. We don’t have the technology. So you come up with an idea, but then your mind says look, there’s all these barriers, all these constraints. Question the constraints. What if we were to say, I’ll give you a question. What if it were illegal? What if it were illegal for you to continue to provide services to your current consumer base? What would that make you do? It’s illegal. You cannot provide the services you currently provide to the customers you currently have. What would you do? This is like a code red, right? We need to come up with something, we got to get more customers. You can’t survive without customers. You can’t bill if you’re not providing services, right? So you have to start thinking a little more innovatively. You have to change the paradigm which you’ve been operating, in order for you to expand into a new base, get more clients.

Discovery skills # 3 - Experimenting. This is something that all these innovative entrepreneurs say - there has to be some level of experimentation. We learn from our failures. It’s not the successes. How many of you believe that? How many of you have had some failures? Oh gosh, I can’t even count how many failures. You know, for every good idea there’s probably ten that failed. It’s the failures where you really learn. It’s not winning, it’s the losing.

There are different types of experimentation. There’s intellectual curiosity. Michael Lazaridis, the cofounder of Blackberry and also Farm Valley Industries. He’s really big on quantum computer technology. He really promotes it and has got a non-profit to support quantum computing technology. He did a mental experimentation in high school, really pondering, mulling over the theory of relativity. You recall in his interviews.

Look at physical tinkering. How many of you like to tinker around? Bezos, founder of Amazon, when he was a toddler took apart his crib. Steve Jobs took apart a Walkman to see how it works. There are lots of people who are really tactile. They like to tear things apart and put them back together, figure out how they work. And it gives them ideas; it gives a stimulus to some ideas. It’s an engaging in new surroundings like Howard Shultz, founder of Starbucks. He toured around Italy, testing coffee in different coffee shops and then ultimately coming up with the idea for Starbucks.

Executives, all them say look, experimentation is an integral part of their business model. It’s essential that they engage in some level of experimentation, and they want their employees to do the same thing. Now again, in some of those industries it’s critical. You don’t innovate, you die. We could say the same thing here. If you’re not innovating, if you don’t do any innovation, you just do status quo, you’re really behind. This is not an exam, but you’re either going forward or you’re following behind. There is no stand still in business.

If you really want to be successful, you have to separate yourself from the competition. You’ve got to find ways to do innovative solutions to common problems. Do something better than

everybody else, something different allows you to find more market share and position yourself for long term success.

Discovery skill # 4 - Observing. A lot of innovators get a lot of inspiration, a lot of ideas from just observing others. They look at the details. They look at what's going on with their suppliers, they look at what's going on in particular with their consumers. They look at what's going on with other companies. And they take good ideas from those. Those ideas germinate and they come up with some innovative solutions.

Ratan Tyler, cofounder of Tata Group, which is the holding company for Tata Motors… which has got Jaguar and Land Rover, so those are the two big names that you'd be familiar with. But Tata Motors also owns lots of other cars, they're more European and Europe based, South Asia based. He's from India, and what he did was that he observed a family of four squeezing onto one of those little gas powered scooters… and that got him thinking. He observed the squeeze on this gas powered scooter, a family of four, he says well look, I'm in the automotive business… why don't I just create a car, the cheapest car, the least expensive car in the world? So he came up with Nano. Nano means very small, right, and it is a little teeny car. No frills, it's kind of like Southwest Airlines, no frills. They don't have four lug nuts, they've got three. They don't have a side, rear view on passenger side. They cut it down to bare bones. There were a few little issues like catching on fire, but they worked through those. But of course that shook consumer confidence, as you can imagine. So eventually in May of 2018 they discontinued the product line. But they were able to get the production done by using a modular production model. A different model, and they were able to get the price down to $2,500. I think it started out at $2,000 and eventually got to $2,500.

What it did do is it had other companies changing their business model. They were lowering their prices to try to be competitive 20% to 30%. So even though this product wasn't successful, their competitors started to lower their price points, which did benefit the consumers. So that's the good thing about innovation. Innovation can stimulate changes in the business model and benefit all consumers. Not just your company, but it can have an indirect benefit for lots of consumers.

Discovery skill # 5 - Networking. This is a networking event. But networking for innovators is about being in environments where they can be exposed to new ideas, new concepts. They love trade conferences, things like that. So they're meeting people because that's where they get their inspiration, they get their ideas. So that's very important. So these kinds of events, if you really network, you can get some excellent ideas. And that's why I'm coming to the ranks, to the table discussions. You can get some good ideas of what people are doing that are really different, out of the box, that maybe might be useful in your organization. Remember, there is no magic pill, so you can't read a magazine, somebody did something and automatically assume it's going to work in your organization. Culture is different, the strategic plan is different, right? Your issues may be different. Look the same but may be different when you look in, you dig deeper. So there's no magic pill. But they love networking.

Okay, so here is your major table top activity. I'd like you to say if you've got four or five at your table, then you're a group. If you've got more than four or five, get into two groups. You'll notice you have some Ziploc bags, and in those bags you've got a couple of supplies. You've got 20 strands of uncooked spaghetti, thick. I didn't go with thin, extra thin. I went thick, that's a blessing for you. You also have a marshmallow. Your task, you have 20 minutes, not a second

more, 20 minutes, for your team to build the tallest tower, tallest structure and the marshmallow must be affixed at the top of the structure. You've got tape. Normally this is one yard. I gave you 8.3 yards of tape. So you're working in groups. Afterwards we've got some volunteers, they're going to go around and they're going to measure the height. The team that wins will get prizes, so there's a reward. You got 20 minutes and the clock starts now.

Okay, ya'll. Time is up. Now we've got measurers going around. Some of you it looks like they're going to have to estimate. Some of them are kind of tall. How does this relate to innovation? You only have a few rules, right? You had to use spaghetti; you had to insure the marshmallow had to be on top. That's the only rules I put on you so you got a lot of latitude. I see a lot of creativity. That's perfect. Also, what are you noticing? Teamwork, it takes a team, right? So you need teamwork and you need collaboration. You have to be flexible, right? Okay, ya'll, let's refocus. We only got a little bit of time left. I want to make sure we get you as much as we can. I know it's exciting.

Let me give you some stats while you're doing that. It looks like you're going to beat some. I'll give you same stats. Business graduates tend to have an average height of 10 inches. Business MBAs have an average height of about 10 inches. Attorneys do a little bit better at 13. The average is 20. And how many are kindergartners here? Kindergartners about 26 inches on average. MBAs have 10, kindergartners at 26. CEOs average about 21 inches. If we add an administrative assistant to it it's 31. They need somebody to manage the process.

But what this exercise illustrates is, one - innovation and creativity. Sometimes you bend the rules a little, you don't break the law. Bend the rules a little, right? It shows you do it as a team. I think most would agree if you did this individually you may not come up with such an end product. It's about collaboration. Innovation is nothing without soft skills. I'm going to turn this over to Alla so she can talk a little about soft skills, and what they're doing that's innovative in our institution's MHA program to make sure the students have it, and why we're focusing on this.

Dr. Alla Adams: Thank you. Let's take a look at this cartoon: "So, as you can see, customer satisfaction is up considerable since phasing out the complaint forms." Well, there is a grain of truth in every joke. Let's see… there are complaint forms. The literature indicates that the main reason customers complain anyway is because of the lack of connection - if we didn't listen to them, or how we responded to them. Well customer satisfaction is really related to our soft skills. So this is actually about soft skills.

To recap what we talked about previously, we established that soft skills are related to innovation, to innovative leadership. We've learned that innovators need to, among other things, collaborate with others, work within teams, put the group interests above their own self-interests, be comfortable with ambiguity or change in rules, demonstrate the ability to be flexible, and respect other people and their talents. One needs to have first the soft skills before one can be successful in innovation. Both soft skills and the process of innovation can be learned, so we can teach soft skills.

The literature actually indicates that in the U.S. workforce there is a perceived skills gap in the area of soft skills; specifically, in teamwork, communication, flexibility, leadership, punctuality, collaboration, work ethic, organizational savvy, and time management. There are surveys of

senior executives across industries that show that soft skills is a real issue and problem, that new hires lack soft skills, that education is not doing enough, that the whole focus is on hard skills, but not enough on the soft skills. Graduates consistently struggle to effectively work within a team structure. Well, because we established that the soft skills are critical for innovative leadership, it's actually urgent that the academia really integrates the soft skills development in academic curriculum, soft skills development and assessment.

The good news that we are doing it. The challenges are that well, it's difficult actually to define the soft skills, there are many definitions of them. And something that is difficult to define, so it is difficult to develop and difficult to assess. There is an industry perception that schools must integrate soft skills into their curricula regardless of delivery modality. As you know, education is going more and more online, we need to be able to do it not only in face to face modality, but also in online environment.

More than two years ago, Park University's MHA program started development and refining the soft skills of students through an innovative approach to teamwork. Well, many schools try, but the results vary… What we decided to do was to do something different, and something that works both online and in classroom.

We based our MHA program curriculum on the Healthcare Leadership Alliance competency model. We implemented team projects with specific approaches in each core course. In each team, there are three to four students. One members of each team is assigned to serve as Project Manager. They work on a substantive healthcare project through the course, hold a team meeting via video conferencing every week and submit it for grading. Each week, instructors provide qualitative feedback to each person on teamwork and on leadership.

We want to make sure that we prepare operational professionals with the hard and the soft skills, necessary to ensure their success, and the success of their organizations. We decided that we want to prepare people successful in operations. So, we try to bring these projects closer to real life. And the way they do it, we do pressure assignment. That means something unexpected, something that when they receive their assignment they think that they are locked on, but the instructor changes things; and it is intentional - changing the instructions, or the deadlines, or requesting status reports, and watching how they function under the pressure. So we want the students to experience in school what happens in real life situations. We create situations that are probably worse than what's going to happen in practice; but they surely will be prepared for the real world.

Dr. Harold Griffin: Let me give an example. So students, they prepare for their presentation, right? They're prepared for their presentation, they practice, they got 30 minutes is what we tell them. Then all of the sudden, oh, you got 15, so not a lot of time to change. You got 15, go. Just like we're having to do here, cutting time back a little bit. So real exciting stuff.

Dr. Alla Adams: What I would like to do is some demonstration. I'm going to show briefly two team meetings. The first one is in the beginning of the course, here we go...

I'm going to stop here. So as an instructor, what I see here is that this is a four-member team, but they are having a meeting with only three team members attending. The Project Manager is serving as the Project Manager for the first time… and it not running it. There is no agenda. The

meeting runs only for 14 minutes. The team does not discuss the project case. Several students noted that they did not read the case, so of course they're going to get lots of points docked for advance preparation. So this is the first meeting, and I'm going to show you another meeting with the same team…

I think I'm going to stop here. What I'm trying to demonstrate here is that the Project Manager is now actively running the meeting, because she received the instructor's feedback and also because of learning from each other. So, there is an agenda; now, there are all four members in the meeting even though one is in Japan; but they already adjusted about the time difference, and they're working actively on the project. It's a completely different story, so they get a better assessment this time.

Dr. Harold Griffin: So you can just visually see that there's some improvement. So just giving a little bit of feedback and learning from each other, you can see a significant improvement from the first meeting to the subsequent meeting. In other words, you can teach these soft skills. We can teach this, even in an online delivery platform.

What I'm going to do is illustrate something. One of the challenges you have with soft skills is how you measure them. How do you even define them? So what is it to have integrity? It means different things to different people. Do what you say you do. Do the right thing. Be honest.

The problem with a soft skill is always how do you operationally define it, and if you can't define it, well then you've got an issue because you can't measure it. But we decided, look, most of us, most of the faculty have been in industry, and we know that there is an issue with new hires not really having the soft skills; they are really needed to not only have individual success, but also organizational success. So we committed, when we redeveloped this curriculum, to instilling activities that would promote soft skill development.

We've been working on instrumentation to help us quantify whether or not students are actually improving from a soft skill perspective. I'm going to go over these results. Here are the skills for Project Managers. We're looking at directional strategy, having integrity, organizational savvy, cooperation, tolerance to ambiguity, adaptability and flexibility, and self-awareness. So that's what we expect the Project Managers to have. We did some content validity analysis using 35 subject matter experts in several things such as leadership, management, instrument development, those types of things. We're looking for CVR at least a .31 or better, and what we came up with was obviously much more, except for self-awareness. It's only .2. So we really should throw that out. Content validity analysis says that basically this rubric measures what it's supposed to measure.

Then we did a couple of types of reliability testing. So if we were to administer this over and over again, would we get consistent results? We used two raters. When we look at the inter-rater reliability, that's between two individual assessors, assessing the same students in the same classes. We get 67.9 percentage agreement, where they agree with each other. But that doesn't factor in error. So we did a Cohen's kappa for that for the Project Managers, it's only .4. That's low, so that's a little disappointing. When we applied it to the Team Members, we came up with 73 percent agreement, with a Cohen's kappa just slightly better at .41. Really the dream would be somewhere around .8 or higher. I think it's hard to do with soft skills. It's hard to get that consistency because it's hard to really operationally define them. But when we look at the

test/retest reliability, so each rater is first doing their first rating, putting this down for a while, coming back later and reassessing, it looks good - 92.5%, 92% or plus. So not too bad on the intra-rater reliability.

The question is, what you saw on that screen, is that just an anomaly? When we look at the results, when we look at the statistically significant results, we see across the board statistically significant improvements in both Project Managers and Team Members. And a lot of that we can contribute to several things. One, an act of learning. They're actually doing. We're not just talking about being in a leadership role, we put them in a leadership role. And they're in leadership roles a couple of times throughout the curriculum. We don't just talk about how important it is to be part of a team, but we assess - are they a part of a team? They do collaborative learning. They're learning from each other, not just from an instructor. We're just a piece of the puzzle, right? At the end of the course, they all want to get A's. So people hold each other accountable and they want to get an A, right? So that's a motivator. And then of course, instructors giving that one-on-one feedback, that constructive criticism: "Here's something I think you did well, here's where I think you still got some room for improvement."

So with that, I'm going to pause and ask if anybody has any questions about what we've covered. You see how it's important. We need to focus on soft skills first before we start really focusing on innovation, because even the most innovative ideas have to be executed. And if you can't connect to people, if you don't have people skills, it's pretty hard to execute your vision without people skills. Thank you very much.