A Learning Community for New Chairs

Given that "most individuals who become department chairs have neither leadership preparation nor a clear understanding of what the job entails," (Wolverton, Ackerman, & Hold, 2005), the professional development of new chairs is critical, especially because the work that chairs do has an "immediate and lasting impact" (Buller, 2012) for faculty and students. Of the nine chairs on our campus new to their positions during 2012-2013, the seven female chairs accepted an invitation to participate in a professional learning community (PLC) for new chairs. Other members of the PLC included an experienced chair and the Associate Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning who supports and trains chairs at our university. The chairs' learning community drew chairs from five colleges and included those with no previous chair experience, as well as those with chair experience at other universities chair experience in other departments, or other academic leadership experience. Of the seven new chairs, two were external hires; the other five were interim chairs. Of the five interim chairs, three applied for their positions and were selected as chair during the year of the PLC. Three of the seven chairs headed newer departments.

In this session, we will analyze the learning trajectories during our first years as chairs, including major topics that will be of interest to other new chairs. We will also share the key benefits of forming a professional learning community, "where people are continually expanding their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to learn together" (Senge, 1990).

As our chairs' learning community met monthly for discussion, we found that the inadvertent all-female composition of our group provided a uniquely supportive network, affording peer-mentoring, and role modeling in ways that a mixed-gender group might not have accomplished. We hypothesized that reasons may include the differing of women's leadership style as compared to their male counterparts (e.g., Eagly, 2007) and women's concerns for balance between their personal and professional lives (Dean, Bracken, & Allen, 2009).

Participants will be encouraged to ask questions and share their own experiences throughout the session. In addition, the session will include a discussion of the key characteristics of an effective learning community, along with an opportunity for participants to discuss how this model of professional development for new chairs might transfer and apply to their particular institutions.

References:

Buller, J. L. (2012). *The essential department chair: A comprehensive desk reference.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

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Learning to be Chair: A Learning Community

Meghan Burke, Ruth Goldfine, Dawn Kirby,
Patty McHatton, Monica Nandan,
Sharon Pearcey, Kandice Porter,
Lynn Stallings, Amy Woszczynski
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Session Overview

- Transitioning to chair
- Why there's a need for support for new chairs.
- First year challenges
- Chairs Learning Community
- Lessons Learned
- Resources for Chairs

How/when did you become chair?

- Traditional search and begin in June or July?
- Assume the role on the next business day?
- Assume the role at year end?
- Appointed?

Let's do a quick survey. . .

Raise your hand if you had NO professional development related to becoming a chair before you assumed the role.

Transitioning to Chair

- From solitary to social
- From focused to fragmented
- From autonomy to accountability
- From manuscripts to memoranda
- From private to public
- From professing to persuading
- From stability to mobility
- From client to custodian
- From austerity to prosperity

(Gmelch and Seedorf, 1989)

Need for Chair Support

"Colleges and universities are among the most complicated organizations around—and they present unique challenges for administrators" (p. 1) because of the "special aspects of the academic environment such as life-time employment security (tenure), a non-hierarchical management structure for key employees, and the self-motivated nature of the creative work involved in research and teaching" (p. 4).

Gunsalus (2006)

Need for Support

"Most individuals who become department chairs have neither leadership preparation nor a clear understanding of what the job entails" (Wolverton, Ackerman, & Hold, 2005).

The professional development of new chairs is critical, especially because the work that chairs do has an "immediate and lasting impact" (Buller, 2012) for faculty and students.

Roles of Chair

- **Faculty Developer**
- **Manager**
- **Leader**
- **Scholar**

<div align="right">(Gmelch & Miskin, 1993)</div>

- **Faculty member**

"The academic department chair is the most unique management position in the country. Chairs find themselves in a role that has no parallel in business or industry. Do chairs still teach and produce scholarship? Absolutely yes—they are still faculty. What other managers take their previous jobs to their new ones and perform both?" (Gmelch, 2011)

First year challenges associated with roles

Management

- Processes (how to hire, approve travel, make purchases, etc.)
- Budget
- Managing staff
- Resources and on-campus contacts
- Marketing

First year challenges associated with roles (cont.)

Faculty Development

- Understanding the faculty and staff
  - o Internal hire
  - o External hire

- Evaluation and mentoring

First year challenges associated with roles (cont.)

Leadership

- Strategic planning - Each department was charged with development of a five-year strategic plan.

- Curriculum or program assessment and re-visioning (if necessary)

First year challenges associated with roles (cont.)

Scholarship

- Know yourself. Say "yes" and collaborate by using your strengths.

- Know yourself. Stay in your passions.

First year challenges associated with roles (cont.)

Role as faculty

- Teaching *What are the right teaching assignments? Online? Supervision of interns? Doctoral students? Co-teaching?*

- Professional Service *What makes sense beyond your work as chair? Reviewing for journals? University-level committees? Service to professional associations?*

Chairs Learning Community

- Supported by KSU's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning ($750 for books.

- Monthly meetings at various locations on campus, usually over lunch.

- Each meeting agenda included readings and discussion of timely topics, as well as any other issues on participants' minds.

- An invitation to participate was sent to the nine new chairs on campus; the seven women chairs quickly responded (which filled the CLC).

Excerpt of CLC Schedule

Date	Topic/Activities	Reading
Monday, October 1 **11:00 AM - 12:30 PM** **CETL**	Review of Faculty Performance Review and revisions of plan for FLC work.	Chu, Chap. 10: Professional Development, Personnel Management, and Handling Challenging Personnel (handed out) KSU Faculty Handbook, Section 5
Tuesday, November 6 **8:30-10:30 AM** **KH 3221**	Review of Faculty Performance (cont.)	
Monday, December 17 **11:30 AM – 1:30 PM** **CL 3050**	Annual Reviews	Chu, Chap. 10: Professional Development, Personnel Management, and Handling Challenging Personnel Buller, Chap. 38: Creating Written Evaluations Buller, Chap. 39: Conducting Oral Evaluation Sessions Buller, Chap. 23,24 (optional) KSU Faculty Handbook, Section 5
Monday, January 28th **11:30 AM - 1:30 PM** **Prillaman, 3203** **(Suite 3200)**	Searches & Faculty Development	Chu, Part 1: What New Chairs Need to Know Buller, Part 3: The Chair's Role in Searches, Hiring, and Firing Buller, Part 5: The Chair's Role in Faculty Development KSU Faculty Search Document*
Friday, February 22nd **12:30 - 2:30 PM** **KH 3221**	Running the Department	Chu, Part 2: Getting Started: How New Chairs Can Make a Difference Buller, Part 2: Departmental Management and Politics Buller, Part 4: Mentoring Challenges and Opportunities for Department Chairs

Chairs Learning Community Participants

- The nine participants were from five colleges.

- Five were interim chairs. Three have since gotten the "permanent" position. (Another search is underway.)

- One was currently also Associate Dean. (She has since taken a higher level position at another university.)

- Two were new chairs to their departments, but had served as chair: one at another university and the other in another department on campus.

- One was an experienced chair within the department and was currently serving as chair of Chairs Council.

- All were married or in long-term partnerships.

- Six had school-aged children.

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Bagwell College of Education
- Patty McHatton, Chair, Inclusive Education *(now at U. Missouri, KC)*
- Lynn Stallings, **Interim** Chair, Secondary & Middle Grades Education *(now chair)*

Coles College of Business
- Amy Woszczynsky, **Interim** Chair, Information Systems *(no longer a chair)*

College of Humanities & Social Sciences
- Dawn Kirby, **Interim** Chair, Interdisciplinary Studies *(now at Utah State)*
- Sharon Pearcey, Chair, Psychology *(no longer a chair)*

Wellstar College of Health & Human Services
- Monica Nandan, Chair, Social Work & Human Services *(now interim dean)*
- Kandice Porter, **Interim** Chair, Health Promotion & Physical Education *(now chair)*

University College
- Ruth Goldfine, **Interim** Chair, First Year Programs *(now chair)*

Meghan Burke, Associate Director, Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Possible Benefits of All-Female Learning Community

- Peer-mentoring

- Role modeling of women's leadership styles

- Trust/vulnerability

- Shared concerns for work-live balance

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Lessons Learned

- Many days you won't finish your "to do" list. Assess the landscape. Triage.
- Take care of the people (faculty and staff). They will take care of the students.
- Identify the strengths of your faculty. Capitalize on those strengths in teaching and service assignments.
- Keep/get faculty and staff in their passions.
- Find mentors (CLC and others) from outside your immediate circles.
- Know the history, but don't let it influence the future.
- Changing the culture is a process. Be patient.
- Have difficult conversations. Fight the battle once, rather than year after year.

Resources

- Timeline for chair

- Sample Learning Community schedule.

- Recommended readings (see handouts)

Chairs Learning Community, 2012-2013

Date	Topic/Activities	Reading
Monday, October 1 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM CETL	**Review of Faculty Performance** Review and revisions of plan for FLC work.	Chu, Chap. 10: Professional Development, Personnel Management, and Handling Challenging Personnel (handed out) KSU *Faculty Handbook*, Section 5
Tuesday, November 6 8:30-10:30 AM KH 3221	**Review of Faculty Performance** *(cont.)*	
Monday, December 17 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM CL 3050	**Annual Reviews**	Chu, Chap. 10: Professional Development, Personnel Management, and Handling Challenging Personnel Buller, Chap. 38: Creating Written Evaluations Buller, Chap. 39: Conducting Oral Evaluation Sessions Buller, Chap. 23,24 (optional) KSU *Faculty Handbook*, Section 5
Monday, January 28th 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM Prillaman, 3203 (Suite 3200)	**Searches & Faculty Development**	Chu, Part 1: What New Chairs Need to Know Buller, Part 3: The Chair's Role in Searches, Hiring, and Firing Buller, Part 5: The Chair's Role in Faculty Development KSU Faculty Search Document[*]
Friday, February 22nd 12:30 - 2:30 PM KH 3221	**Running the Department**	Chu, Part 2: Getting Started: How New Chairs Can Make a Difference Buller, Part 2: Departmental Management and Politics Buller, Part 4: Mentoring Challenges and Opportunities for Department Chairs
February 6-8	Academic Chairpersons Conference, San Antonio, Texas	We haven't yet found any additional source for funding, but this is a worthwhile conference.
Monday, March 25th 12:30 - 2:30 PM Prillaman, 3203 (Suite 3200)	**Coaching & Mentoring**	HBR, Chap. 1: What Coaching Is All About HBR, Chap. 2: Preparing to Coach HBR, Chap. 3: Discussion HBR, Chap. 4: Active Coaching and Follow-up HBR, Chap. 5: Becoming a Better Coach
Monday, April 29th 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM UC 122	**Reflecting on the Chair's Role** **Coaching & Mentoring** (cont.)	Buller, Part 1: The Chair's Role and Career Path HBR, Chap. 7: Mentoring and Management HBR, Chap. 8: Matchmaking HBR, Chap. 9: Being an Effective Mentor HBR, Chap. 10: Women and Minorities

Date	Topic/Activities	Reading
		HBR, Chap. 11: Beyond Traditional Mentoring

*https://web.kennesaw.edu/academicaffairs/sites/web.kennesaw.edu.academicaffairs/files/facultysearchpolicy.pdf

Suggested Timetable for Department Chairs

- Some items are listed in two months because the process may begin in one month and end in another
- These are just the items with fixed or suggested deadlines. Many other items will need to be addressed on an *ad hoc* basis but in a timely manner

July
- Look over your budget allocations and raise any issues that need to be addressed

August
- Fall Part/Time Payroll Due

August-September
- Review T&P Portfolios – Department Faculty
- Spring Course Schedule Due
- Initiate Faculty Searches (some may actually need to start in July to get the best applicant pool)
- Meeting to Develop Faculty Performance Agreements (FPAs) for 1st –yr Tenure-Track Faculty and 1st -yr Lecturers

September-October
- Review T&P Portfolios – Department Chair
- Review 3rd Year Progress Review Portfolios (& for 6th Yr. (post-promotion) Lecturers) - Department Faculty

October-November
- Annual Reports/Annual Reviews and setting of FPAs for 2nd-yr Tenure Track Faculty
- Review 3rd Year Progress Review Portfolios (& for 6th Yr.(post-promotion) Lecturers) - Department Chair
- Review T&P Portfolios – College Faculty
- Review Post-Tenure Review Portfolios - College Faculty

December
- Prepare Summer Budget Requests

January
- Annual Reports Due
  - 1st-yr Tenure-Track Faculty and 1st-yr Lecturers
  - 3rd-yr Tenure-Track Faculty
  - 4th-yr and beyond Tenure-Track Faculty
  - 2nd –yr and beyond Lecturers/Senior Lecturers
- Summer Course Schedule Due
- Spring Part-Time payroll Due
- Review T&P portfolios- College Faculty (Provost's requests)

February
➢ Staff (secretaries, etc.) Performance Evaluations

March
➢ Fall Course Schedule Due
➢ Submit your Annual Report to your Dean (unless the Dean requests that it be submitted at another time)
➢ Annual Reviews Completed (Distribute Letters, Have Faculty Sign, Have Dean Sign) and develop FPAs (Have Faculty Sign and Have Dean Sign)
  o 1st –yr Tenure-Track Faculty
  o 3rd-yr Tenure-Track Faculty
  o 4th –yr and beyond Tenure-Track Faculty
  o 2nd –year and beyond Lecturers/Senior Lecturers (Remember: Sr. Lecturers/Lecturers with six or more years of full-time service to KSU must receive notification of non-reappointment by **Feb. 15)**

April
➢ Salary recommendations for merit and equity adjustments usually due by 1st week
➢ Conduct elections for department, college, and university committees for the next academic year (particularly the tenure and promotion committees)

May
➢ Remind faculty who need to submit portfolios (3rd year review, 6th year (post-promotion) review (for Lecturers), tenure, promotion, or PTR) of the deadlines for submission in the fall. This is especially important for those who may be gone for the summer.

June
➢ Summer Payroll Due

Buller, J. L. (2012). *The essential department chair: A comprehensive desk reference.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Chu, D. (2012). *The Department Chair Primer.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

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