

The Essentials for New Department Chairs

Edited by
Carolyn Allard

The
Department Chair
TOOLKIT

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Contents

Introduction	1
Chair as Leader	
Learning to Lead <i>by Anne V. Massaro</i>	2
The Essentials of Chairing Academic Departments <i>by N. Douglas Lees, David J. Malik, and Guatam Vemuri</i>	8
When Leadership Precedes Tenure: Advice for Untenured Chairs <i>by Jeffrey L. Buller</i>	14
Leading Departmental Change: Techniques for Positive Impact <i>by Joseph P. Linskey</i>	19
Coexisting with a Former Chair <i>by Jeffrey L. Buller</i>	25
Working Effectively with the Dean <i>by David J. Malik and N. Douglas Lees</i>	30
Getting Started	
Time Management for More Effective Results <i>by George Crandell</i>	36
Managing Tight Budgets <i>by Mary Lou Higgerson and Barry McCauliff</i>	41
Conducting a Department Meeting: The Facilitator Chair <i>by Christopher O. Lynch</i>	45

The Top Ten Things a Dean Wishes Chairs
Would Remember 49
by William Richardson

Managing Conflict

The Chair's Role in Resolving Departmental Conflict 55
by David Matz

Strategies for Managing Difficult Personalities 62
by Harry Petersen

Legal Issues in Dealing with Challenging Colleagues 66
by Barbara A. Lee

Mediating in the Academic Bully Culture: The Chair's
Responsibility to Faculty and Graduate Students 71
by Barbara M. De Luca and Darla J. Twale

Helping Faculty and Students Thrive

Building Faculty Resilience: The Key to Successful
Change in the Academic Department 78
by Cynthia Schubert-Irastorza and Suzanne Evans

Creating Time and Space for Faculty Reflection,
Risk-Taking, and Renewal 83
by Deborah Chang Lechuga and Roger G. Baldwin

Mending a Fractured Department: Strategies
for New Chairs 89
by Randall McClure

Administrator as Interposer: Helicopter Parents
Versus Alleged Malevolent Professors 95
by H. W. Elmore

Student Recruitment and Retention and Faculty
Professional Development 100
*by Katherine Frank, Maureen Murphy, William Withers,
and Winnie Yu*

Introduction

As a new department chair, you face many challenges—chief among them that you likely received little or no formal training in academic leadership. You may feel that you face these challenges alone, but in fact a wealth of information and time-tested techniques have been collected over the years from experienced academic administrators. For the first time, this booklet brings together some of the best guidance and strategies that have appeared in *The Department Chair*, resulting in a collection that is highly relevant to a new chair's work. The advice contained in these pages can help you build the skills necessary to successfully lead your department. This booklet is full of practical advice that can be put to use immediately, and each article is concisely written so you won't have to spend valuable time searching for a solution or technique. Whether you're looking for information on how to work more effectively with your dean, how to better manage your time, how to conduct successful department meetings, or how to best facilitate change, this booklet will help—it covers all these topics and more, from the basics to the specifics.

This booklet is structured to provide guidance in four critical areas: chair as leader, getting started, managing conflict, and helping faculty and students thrive. The articles were selected to provide you with timely, comprehensive information. They detail effective practice and represent the best, most innovative thinking on topics and situations you will regularly encounter. This essential resource will become your personal guide as you navigate the responsibilities of your new role as department chair.

SECTION ONE

Chair as Leader

Learning to Lead

by Anne V. Massaro

A new department chair recently emailed me in response to a “welcome” message I sent him. In that email he said, “There will be no shortage of things to learn. I just have to figure out where to start!” I believe these two statements reflect what most new chairs feel and experience—an appreciation that the learning curve will be steep, and a curiosity about what to learn first, second, and third. This particular chair was promoted from within his own department. Faculty who assume departmental leadership roles at a new university have even greater challenges.

The most profound issues faculty face when moving into the chair role include:

- Building relationships with department faculty and staff, other department chairs, and the dean
- Understanding others’ expectations
- Comprehending the current culture, structure, and governance mechanisms
- Learning how to get things done
- Grasping the administrative tasks associated with the role, such as scheduling and budgeting

Given these challenges, and more, there are cognitive shifts and behavioral strategies that can help a new academic leader transition smoothly and reach a level of productivity in a fairly quick time frame. Transitioning, learning, and listening should be the primary responsibilities for the new chair's first month. With the right support mechanisms in place, and an intentional focus on learning from the start, a new chair should consider using the three-month mark as a time to begin actively leading.

Shifting Thinking

Integrating new practices into one's daily routine is difficult; many require shifts in thinking and doing. Some may require a more passive stance than faculty are accustomed to. As noted by Danielson and Schulte (2007), new department chairs who documented their journey from faculty member to chair, "We had to learn how to listen as well as how to make ourselves heard. We needed to get the faculty and staff members involved in our decisions, and the best way to do that was to ask them for their input and listen to them before acting" (p. 79). What is described by these two new chairs is a shift from autonomous decision making to collective decision making and an emphasis on listening and asking questions, rather than telling and doing.

Intellectually, the shifts just described sound simple and based on common sense. In reality, it takes commitment and purposeful action to change behavior, especially behaviors that have become unconscious habits and that serve faculty well. A fair amount of teaching is predicated on being the expert with the answers. A significant portion of research is independent thinking and writing. Although these behaviors lead to success as a faculty member, they can lead to failure for a department chair. For anyone who has an accomplished history, it is challenging to fully understand that past actions resulting in past successes may not create successes in the future. It is imperative for new chairs to adjust from thinking and acting independently to an emphasis on involving others and focusing on the collective.

Building Relationships

Meeting with department faculty and staff is a must for new chairs. Depending on the size of the department this task alone can be a big time commitment, but it is critically important because of the chair's responsibility to lead the department with a shared vision and to create a plan that leverages individual strengths. While faculty who are promoted from within their own departments will have a tendency to believe they know their peers and relationships are already established, the criticality of one-on-one meetings remains. A relationship as peers has been previously established. A new relationship must be invented, one characterized by mutual respect, an understanding of what motivates and drives both parties, a commitment to asking for input, and a belief that suggestions (once expressed) will be heard. In general, faculty tend to be skeptical that "administration" cares about them or wants to hear their ideas. In addition, faculty peers don't typically discuss the future direction of the department or wrestle with how individual interests add to the discipline as a whole. Reducing skepticism and inviting this kind of inquiry will lay a solid foundation for shared direction and mutual respect between the new chair and each of his or her faculty members.

When planning one-on-one meetings with faculty, a new chair might consider framing the conversation around three categories: perceptions, strengths, and priorities. Asking the following questions will communicate that the new chair cares about each individual and the department in totality:

- What is your perception of our department?
- What strengths do you bring to what we are about and the students we are here to serve?
- What are your priorities for the next year?
- What departmental priorities do you believe are most important for our advancement and academic excellence?

Meeting one on one with the dean should be another high priority for the new chair. Understanding the dean's style and preferences

and obtaining information about the dean's direction for the college are reasons to make this a priority. Is the dean someone who expects to know an abundance of details, or is a high-level, big-picture perspective sufficient? What are the meetings the dean leads and what are the expectations for pre-meeting preparation? These are questions related to the dean's style. A new chair can adjust and accommodate if preferences are understood.

The dean's vision for the future of the college, and the chair's department in particular, will influence the department goals the new chair sets. In some cases the dean will have very specific expectations for the chair's department. The more explicit these expectations are, the more likely the chair can meet them. Lastly, the dean should be a source of information about the university. If major initiatives or changes are planned, it is in the new chair's best interests to learn about these early and understand how they will affect his or her department and faculty.

It has been suggested that the new chair meet with department faculty and staff as well as the dean. There may well be additional stakeholders the new chair will want to meet with in the first three to six months. Reflecting on departmental priorities and functions, the new chair should consider making a list of additional stakeholders and deliberately planning conversations with each person or group on the list over the course of six months.

Understanding Culture, Structure, and Governance

There are exact and inexact ways to discern the department's current culture, structure, and governance mechanisms. Both approaches are recommended. The easiest and most tangible way to learn about how decisions are made, and by whom, is to carefully review the existing pattern of administration for the department. This document should describe the department's committee structure, faculty meetings, key processes, and communication patterns. It is as important to understand what is not written as it is to comprehend what is written. This is the imprecise, or intuitive, way of learning. For example, one department chair perceived

a deep lack of trust between the faculty and the previous chair given the length, infinite detail, and depth of description in the current pattern of administration for her new department. Having this insight helped the chair gain credibility and carefully approach process changes.

Learning Administrative Tasks

Learning the administrative and technical aspects of the chair's role can occur in three ways. Many universities offer workshops and online tutorials related to budgeting, hiring, and evaluating. New chairs who take advantage of these opportunities gain new knowledge and, more importantly, learn about campus resources. If these types of structured learning opportunities are not available to new chairs, seeking out and meeting with those who are accountable for various university processes is equally valuable. A new chair might discover the person responsible for fiscal affairs, assemble a list of questions, meet with this person to express an interest in understanding fiscal matters, and acquire from his or her point of view what a new chair needs to learn. A third option for learning about the budget and other fiscal matters is to identify a seasoned peer who is highly proficient in this area. The dean will likely be able to point the new chair in the direction of a veteran chair who has mastery in a specific area.

Reflecting with a Trusted Partner

Identifying a trusted partner is highly recommended for new department chairs. This partner might be a friend, peer, mentor, or coach. This is someone with whom the new chair can share observations, challenges, mistakes, and wonderings. In conversation with this trusted partner the new chair can be vulnerable and frustrated but feel safe in genuinely expressing him or herself. This partner should be from outside the new chair's college and have no hierarchical authority over the chair. More than title or status, the qualities of this person are paramount. The new chair should seek out someone who:

- Listens for complete understanding
- Commits to keeping conversations with the chair confidential
- Offers support
- Challenges the new leader when he or she is “stuck” in one way of thinking

Conclusion

Transitioning into the department chair role is much more than learning how to do new tasks. Although the new tasks may be daunting and require fast attention, it is the building of relationships and understanding the current culture that are the real foundations for success. Securing a relationship where the chair can confidentially reflect on relationships and the circumstance leads to greater personal health and satisfaction. Getting to know the department faculty and the dean, as well as accurately assessing the current state of affairs, is worth delaying changes and postponing new directions or programs. Rushing to perform or produce results without understanding the people and the situation can damage a new academic leader beyond repair. First impressions are lasting. A new chair who asks questions, seeks input, fosters collective inquiry, and plans thoughtfully will be highly regarded and will be in a more stable leadership position for stretching the department in new ways.

Anne V. Massaro is project manager in the Office of Human Resources at Ohio State University. Email: massaro.11@osu.edu

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The Essentials of Chairing Academic Departments

by *N. Douglas Lees, David J. Malik,
and Guatam Vemuri*

Much has been written about the new responsibilities of department leadership and how changes in expectations, performance, and accountability in higher education will affect the work of those who head academic units. In addition, the worldwide economic crisis has posed significant new challenges within our departments through staff and budget reductions that are, at some public institutions, accompanied by increased enrollments and education costs. Looking past the obvious short-term modifications that fiscal restriction will impose, one might predict that higher education's need to change and adapt will accelerate. We may well see a massive restructuring of our institutions that will become permanent. Such transformations will have dramatic effects at the department level and create different agendas, adding new burdens to department leaders and faculty. These pressures can cause department chairs to lose sight of the basic operating principles that will be essential for future leadership success. Our purpose here is to provide reminders to existing and potential department leaders to be attentive to the critical elements of their position that impact their preparation for leading and their effectiveness in doing this important chair work.

Personal Credibility

A primary attribute of an effective chair is personal credibility. Although an incoming chair may be known for this trait (an internal candidate) or assumed to possess it (an external hire), this presumed credibility is ephemeral and must be converted to an earned form.

Honest and candid interactions with internal and external constituents are key to preserving personal credibility. Not only will this be important in everyday dealings with the faculty and the dean, it will also be key to establishing external partnerships and collaborations where commitments of support and cooperation will be necessary ingredients. It should be displayed in presentations to external constituencies and other stakeholders to gain support and cooperation. In many ways the chair's credibility and the overall reputation of the academic department are inseparable.

Effective Communication

Chairs must be effective communicators. As conduits of vital information between the faculty and the administration, chairs must deliver all news with credible rationales, contexts, and justifications. Although it is reasonable to express concern regarding the wisdom of some policies and suggestions, chairs should present the entire story with accuracy and from a perspective that does not undermine their effectiveness with department colleagues or senior administration. Mechanisms for communication are varied and include discussions at faculty meetings, agendas or announcements sent electronically or in hard copy, impromptu conversations, newsletters, press releases, or websites. Chairs may communicate with a variety of individuals on campus and off, but the most essential communicants are department personnel and the dean.

Framing Critical Issues

Chairs will inevitably face controversial and culturally challenging decisions that will affect the lives of others at the institution. Great care must be taken when framing critical issues to properly represent the impact and consequences and how they advance the institution and its mission. An inadequate or muddled context can lead to the failure of an important initiative due to a lack of sufficient forethought, planning, or

wide support. Framing allows one to see the initiative through the eyes of all stakeholders and identify who might be favored and who might be threatened by the change. The chair's role may be viewed not only as a department advocate but also as an advocate for the greater institutional mission properly and effectively framed. Working to ensure the latter or to modify the proposal to lessen the negative effects can minimize resistance and smooth the path to success. Anticipating the source of resistance through framing allows the change agent to align strategic political support and assemble relevant and compelling data. Chairs must recognize that change is difficult for most people and seeing prospective change through the eyes of all stakeholders beforehand is a powerful asset in the quest for a successful outcome. The essence of effective framing is talented leadership.

Supporting Department Success

Chairs must be effective departmental supporters and champions. Faculty, staff, and student successes should be celebrated at every opportunity. Institutions may vary in their missions and goals but it is important to publicly cite faculty and staff for teaching excellence, winning new external funding, noteworthy publications, awards of various types, community engagement successes, efforts on behalf of students, and course and curriculum development. Chairs can disseminate accomplishments through the communication outlets mentioned earlier and by the nomination of faculty and staff for awards both local and beyond. Similarly, student success can be recognized in many of the same ways, especially when in concert with a model faculty mentor. Finally, there are achievements in academic units that are the collective accomplishments of the entire department. A record number of graduates, an excellent year in recruiting new majors, and an unprecedented number of graduates entering graduate and professional schools may be examples of overall unit success. It is important that the chair recognize and applaud these outcomes to keep faculty and staff focused and rewarded for good work on things that really matter.

Continuous Unit Improvement

It is essential that departments have goals for improvement and effectiveness. For example, a goal might be to increase annual external funding or the number of undergraduate majors. Although these may be appropriate goals, it is not likely either will increase every year. In times of reduced budgets, lower faculty counts, or delayed faculty hiring, some of these standard goals may be impossible to reach for several consecutive years. But even during such times it is important that the chair commit to continuous unit improvement even if the area chosen is not among the top goals of the unit. This is necessary to maintain positive momentum and support strong morale. Even in the worst of fiscal times improvement can be achieved through simple things such as developing an online advising template for undergraduate students or offering a summer refresher course for K–12 teachers. Such projects can get the attention of the administration who may remember, at a future time when there are resources to invest, the unit nevertheless forged ahead during difficult circumstances.

External Visibility

As we enter an era of accelerated change and institutional evolution, chairs must develop an active external visibility. Effective chairs can no longer work exclusively within their units. In recent years collaborative arrangements and interdisciplinary academic and research programs have become prominent entities on many campuses. Department chairs are key players in establishing such arrangements because they frequently involve faculty work considerations, shared costs, monetary flow in the form of tuition and grant overhead, and the commitment of equipment and facilities. If the monumental change implied at the outset of this article comes to pass, chairs will be involved in negotiating and implementing major adjustments due to program and unit dissolution, mergers, and unit rearrangements, with the latter two possibly crossing traditional school and college boundaries. Many of these

changes will overcome existing departmental cultures and be laid at the chair's doorstep. Experience in leading effectively across campus and in developing major change will be increasingly important for department chairs.

Future Progress

Another essential for chairing in the coming years is being aware of what is on the horizon. Typically, chairs know their departments well and have a good sense of what is happening in their schools. Looking to the campus level, the vision becomes foggy for many. Events and policies (accreditation, reform, accountability) playing out at the national level are virtually unknown to all but a few faculty members and chairs. This cannot continue. Being informed early of what is on the way allows the department to have input into local policy, prepare faculty and staff, choose the best solution for the unit, and be first in line for resources by preparing a sound plan for implementation. Chairs must be attuned to emerging policy before it reaches their campuses by staying in touch with numerous national publications and academic leadership websites.

Delegation

Workload issues for chairs have become increasingly irregular, unpredictable, and largely ad hoc. There are frantic, full days that end with nothing crossed off the to-do list. Then there are teaching requirements, scholarly expectations, management functions, and new initiatives all on the agenda. Most chairs must delegate the increasing administrative expectations that require prioritization of tasks. In some cases administrative work can be assigned to bring a faculty member to 100% workload while in other cases a faculty member will step forward to volunteer for the overall good of the unit. For those faculty who wish to pursue an administrative track, an appointment as assistant or associate chair, with defined and high-impact responsibilities (not just stand-in and routine roles), is a good model for delegation and administrative development.

Professional Development

It is widely recognized that administrative responsibilities impede chair progress and productivity in teaching and scholarship. Those contemplating becoming a chair might consider negotiating a time for scholarship or a “package” (similar to that offered new faculty) that allows for the continuation of scholarly work through a hired surrogate. This might be the case in a research-intensive institution and may involve hiring a senior laboratory and center manager or a special assistant to keep scholarly programs viable. Another way to keep current in teaching or research is by establishing collaborations with teaching faculty at the forefront of pedagogy or productive research colleagues.

Next Steps

Chairs should plan when they wish to leave the chair role and what they would like to do next. Although the time of departure isn't always up to the chair, there are usually warnings if things are not going well. Returning to the faculty role may require retooling in teaching or research. If the chair has served five years or longer, perhaps an in-house sabbatical would be appropriate. In other cases a modest “restart-up package” might be more appropriate. Although some may object, this investment is justified by what the individual has sacrificed through years of service and by the potential unit benefits of returning someone to full productivity. If the next step is up the administrative ladder then the preparation is different. Here the chair's leadership accomplishments will be critical and should be documented in detail. The philosophy behind the chair's leadership style should also be carefully thought out and articulated.

Conclusion

There may be other essentials to serving as effective department leaders during the turbulent times ahead, and chairs and would-be chairs will gain much from the input of existing and former chairs, savvy administrators,

and external sources of guidance. Our hope is that these suggestions will offer a starting point and lead to a productive and rewarding role as chair.

N. Douglas Lees is associate dean for planning and finance at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis. David J. Malik is interim executive vice chancellor at Indiana University Northwest. Gautam Vemuri is professor of physics at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis. Email: nlees@iupui.edu, dmalik@iun.edu, gvemuri@iupui.edu. This article is based on a presentation at the 26th annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 11–13, 2009, Orlando, Florida.

When Leadership Precedes Tenure: Advice for Untenured Chairs

by Jeffrey L. Buller

Many books on corporate management are built on the premise that effective strategies are universally applicable and that good advice will remain good advice in all situations. But leadership challenges in higher education tend to involve issues that aren't encountered in other professional settings. It's not uncommon in the corporate world for a director to be significantly younger than the employees he or she supervises, but those young directors need not be concerned that those employees will one day vote on their tenure, be appointed director themselves as the position rotates among all the employees, or have as much control over the products they produce as a college faculty has over the curriculum in a system of shared governance. For this reason, untenured department chairs face completely different challenges than supervisors who work in the corporate world and are charged with evaluating senior, more experienced employees. This article addresses some of the best ways for untenured chairs to succeed in a very difficult professional environment,

protect their own careers, and help their programs move forward in a strong and positive direction.

Interact Frequently and in Person

A common problem for untenured department chairs occurs when, out of eagerness to accomplish important tasks quickly, the chair inadvertently gives senior faculty members the impression that their perspectives are being ignored, their achievements undervalued, or their knowledge of institutional history regarded as insignificant. Reaching that delicate balance between demonstrating respect for the past contributions of those long-standing department members and making necessary changes to take advantage of emerging opportunities can be difficult. Untenured chairs may find it useful to consult with other faculty members even more frequently than they think necessary, allowing people to weigh in on various issues, even in cases where it seems clear that a certain course of action is required. Making a decision too precipitously can be read by others as a desire to cut them out of the decision-making process. It is usually a good idea for untenured chairs, particularly in the first year or two of their administrative roles, to allow the other department members to voice their opinions about various issues before making and revealing a final decision. Asking follow-up questions, keeping an open mind when exploring alternative solutions, and consulting with anyone who may be affected by an action is both a valuable opportunity to gain helpful information and a sound political strategy. At the very least, extensive consultation will make it clear to the chair who is on which side of each issue. Even more importantly, when it comes time for the decision to be made, it will be easier to justify the course of action taken because most of the opposing arguments are already known.

There are situations, too, in which generational differences in communication style may need to be recognized in order for a department to work together effectively. Younger workers tend to prefer short bursts of electronic communications, such as text messages, terse emails, and instant messaging, while more senior employees favor extended oral forms

of communication, such as discussions held during formal meetings or appointments conducted face to face. When untenured chairs dash off short email replies they may feel that they're being efficient and communicating in a style that everyone expects, when what they're actually doing is coming across as abrupt, arrogant, and unprofessional to senior department members. It's important, therefore, for all chairs to consider whether the communication methods that are familiar and comfortable to them are in fact the best ways to reach their actual audience. Elaborating a similar idea, Raines and Ewing (2006) have recommended that young managers adopt what they call a "second-person perspective" whenever dealing with a senior employee: Always consider how issues are likely to be viewed by the other person and then identify areas in which your own perspective and that of the other person happen to overlap.

Be Candid About Mistakes

Academic leaders who say they haven't made any mistakes either refuse to recognize the errors for which they're responsible or haven't been in their positions long enough to have made a bad decision. If you care about ensuring positive progress for your program, you'll eventually find yourself in at least one situation that you regret or that doesn't work out as successfully as you had hoped. All chairs should be candid about their mistakes, avoiding further errors by taking responsibility for what they've done and moving away from a strategy that hasn't been effective, but the untenured department chair has an even greater need to be open about missteps as quickly as possible. Pretending that everything is fine when others strongly suspect that a problem has occurred—or, even worse, attributing a failure to someone else when the blame is really yours—doesn't make you seem less culpable. It only makes others believe that you either can't recognize your role in the difficulty or you aren't prepared to accept the onus of a flawed decision. It's far better to admit that you are aware of your mistake, indicate what you'll do to improve the situation, and demonstrate that you've learned from the problem that resulted.

It may be true that your ideas about how to improve curricula, policies, and pedagogy are far more in tune with what your discipline needs these days than those of your senior colleagues, but it's politically and practically unwise to come across as a know-it-all or as someone who has been intoxicated by your first taste of "power." That type of attitude is politically unwise because the people you're alienating will someday be making serious decisions about your future in the profession. It's practically unwise because academic leadership today is more about building effective coalitions than about making decisions in an authoritarian manner. The successful academic leader is the person who can develop consensus on an issue and move the plan forward through consultation and persuasion, not threats and pressure. It's important to build bridges with the senior faculty and to help them understand that they're an essential part of your long-term strategy. Otherwise, they could quickly become major obstacles to any progress you wish to make, limiting your chances to make a meaningful difference in the department.

Present Change in a Positive Light

As suggested by Raines and Ewing (2006), working constructively with your department's senior faculty members involves appreciation of how matters are likely to be interpreted from their perspective. What you may regard as an exciting new innovation could strike them as a rejection of their own earlier contributions. It's important to remember, therefore, that the word *change* resonates differently with different people. Some faculty members may see change as an opportunity for growth and development while others view change as a code word for needless meddling with a system that's already working, an excuse to increase their workload, and a conclusion by you as their chair that they didn't know what they were doing until you came along to "save" them. For this reason, consider describing any new directions you wish to take in terminology that those resistant to change may find more palatable. Speak about your ideas as "providing natural growth and development" for the strengths of the discipline that are due to them. Describe yourself as building on their past

successes and making a logical progression from the department's impressive earlier history. Make it clear that you appreciate the department's heritage. In fact, reiterate that you're only able to accomplish what needs to be done next because of everything they've contributed in the past and continue to contribute today. Rather than abandoning the discipline's proud traditions, you're helping to preserve them for the future. But you want to be as progressive now as they have always been. Anything less would be a betrayal of their own accomplishments.

Conclusion

Academic departments are often strongly politicized environments. This environment can become a veritable minefield for department chairs who are still building their careers and who need the support of others in the discipline when they will be reviewed for promotion and tenure. Negotiating a safe path through that minefield requires tact, diplomacy, patience, and the ability to find consensus in the midst of conflict. Nevertheless, those qualities are exactly the traits that help chairs become successful at any stage of their careers. I became a department chair when I was twenty-seven and untenured, while every other member of my department was over sixty and long tenured. What I discovered is that there's actually a great deal of value to be gained from working in such an environment. It tempers a tendency for rash decisions, surrounds you with abundant mentors (remember that even bad examples can still provide you with useful lessons), and gives you rich experience in the strategies of compromise and constructive dialogue. That's not a bad learning environment for the types of skills that can help any academic leader succeed.

Jeffrey L. Buller is dean of the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College at Florida Atlantic University. Email: jbuller@fau.edu

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Leading Departmental Change: Techniques for Positive Impact

by Joseph P. Linskey

It is often said that the only constant in life is change. Certainly in modern times change occurs more frequently and at a faster pace than ever before. For any organization to stay functional, current, and competitive, it must remain in a constant state of change. While many recognize that change is a good thing, the average employee is often concerned by, if not fearful of, change. This article addresses the issue of change in the workplace and offers methods for a department chair to be a positive change agent.

Key Terms

To develop a foundation I provide working definitions of two important terms: *organizational change* and *leadership*. Organizational change is a planned, system-wide effort that is managed from the top levels of an organization for the purpose of improving organizational effectiveness. It is a process that is researched, planned, and implemented to bring about positive change in an organization. It can be used successfully in any organization, and has proven to be effective in moving an academic department forward.

In a department that is experiencing problems, it is necessary to bring about change so that faculty may work together to accomplish the department's goals and meet the needs of the students. In a department that is doing well or reasonably well, it is still necessary to be continuously involved in productive change in order to help department members stay current and competitive.

I have read many different definitions of leadership. There are certain words that I have found to be frequently used and that seem to help

clarify what is actually involved in leadership. For some time I have defined leadership as the process of motivating and influencing others to accomplish the goals of the organization because they want to.

The first key word in this definition is *process*. From this we see that leadership is not a quick fix, but rather a long-term method of guiding a unit or group of people, such as our faculty members. Next we see the need to motivate and influence our followers, rather than command them. This involves how we communicate with people as a matter of routine. Communications should be open and friendly, orders given in the form of a request, and input welcomed. In this way we create a positive environment that allows us to begin to inspire followers to go above and beyond the norm.

Next is accomplishing the goals of the organization. It is important to recognize that the primary purpose of all members in an organization should be to accomplish the goals of the organization. If this is not recognized, it may lead to divisions that negatively impact the productivity of the organization. If the organization is not successful, then its members are not needed and everyone loses. On the other hand, if all work toward the success of the organization, effective teamwork can enhance productivity, the organization will prosper, the prosperity will trickle down, and all will benefit. Applying this to the academic environment, we see that such efforts will encourage department members to extend themselves and accomplish their professional goals, thus enabling them to better motivate their students to achieve success in their studies and personal development.

We become academics in the hopes of impacting positively the lives of those we teach, and thus, the society we serve. The last part of the definition of leadership speaks to getting followers to provide highly productive work because they want to. This involves helping followers understand the organization's vision, believe in it, and realize their part in attaining that vision. This will show them that they will be contributing to something that is worthwhile, and so they won't see the work as a chore. Think of how much better we are at doing something when it is something that we want to do.

Assumptions About Change

In exploring methods to bring about effective change, we must recognize that time and experience have shown that certain things are always present when an organization attempts to bring about change.

- Change will not occur unless those involved are motivated to change.
- The process of bringing about change involves learning something new and discontinuing current attitudes, behaviors, or practices.
- In combination with this, change requires reinforcing new behaviors, attitudes, and practices.
- The most important resource in any organization truly is its people. If the people do not buy into the change, it will not occur.
- Resistance to change will be present even when the goals of the change are seen as desirable.

Change Resistance

To bring about effective and positive change in an organization, we must first try to foresee potential causes of resistance. People naturally resist change, even when the proposed change is thought to be a good thing. Much of this resistance stems from the fact that we like to be comfortable in what we do. Even when things are not going well we are comfortable with the status quo because we know what to expect. Change upsets the status quo. Thus, the biggest resistance to change often comes from fear of the unknown. A department member may feel that even though things are really bad at work, he or she can depend on them being that way and will not be surprised.

Other common causes of resistance to change include:

- An environment of mistrust within the organization/department
- Fear of failing

- Concern over potential loss of status or job security
- Inappropriate timing of the change (too soon or too late)
- Peer pressure
- Lack of or insufficient planning and/or training
- Perceived lack of commitment or sincerity by upper administration

Some level of resistance should be expected and planned for. Resistance may come in differing degrees, the four most common of which are:

- *Active resistance*: engaging in intentional mistakes or even deliberate acts of sabotage in an attempt to prevent the change
- *Passive resistance*: engaging in protests or work slow downs
- *Indifference*: appearing apathetic or resigned to the impending change
- *Acceptance*: there is no resistance, but rather cooperation, enthusiasm, and an understanding of the changes being proposed

Minimizing Resistance to Change

As the leader of your department, when a change becomes necessary or desirable, your responsibility is to do all you can to minimize resistance to the change. The foremost way to do this is through effective communication. By ensuring an environment of open communication you will aid your faculty in understanding the need for the change, the details of how it is to be accomplished, and the impact it will have on them. This will do much to allay their fear of the change. Communication is ultimately the resolve to all problems; therefore, during a time of change, effective communication skills become even more important.

Another method that can be used to minimize resistance to change is training. By preparing your personnel in advance and ensuring that they have acquired the necessary skills to be successful in the changed environment, you can do much to ease their fears and gain support for

the change. Along with this, it is helpful to use faculty involvement. Work to develop your department members into a true team, where teamwork and collaboration are the norm. By seeking input about how best to bring about the change from the people who actually have to do the work, you will help them feel they are a valuable part of the department and have a stake in its success, and they will be more apt to work to make the change successful. In addition, change tends to cause stress. Using stress management techniques will help reduce stress to an acceptable level so that it does not impede progress.

Forces for Change

The need for change is brought on by a variety of forces that an organization must respond to. External forces include market changes, government laws and/or regulations, changes or fluctuations in the labor force, technological advancements, competition, and the economy. Internal forces include changes in the needs of the organization, workforce changes, employee attitudes, and new development in or acquisition of equipment. If we can understand the forces that are driving our organization's present changes and effectively communicate this understanding, we can further the necessary changes.

Conclusion: How to Be a Positive Force in Change

As a leader there are several things you can do that have proven to be helpful in bringing about effective and successful organizational change. The first is to believe in yourself. If you do not demonstrate that you have confidence in your own ability to bring about the change, why would anyone want to follow you? It is also important that you understand the big picture of the organization's vision so that you can explain it clearly. You must be supportive of all your faculty, no matter how difficult a time an individual may be having in understanding or bringing about his or her part of the change. In trying to do something new, negativity cannot be expected to result in a positive reaction.

Another useful technique is to focus on what you can control and not spend time worrying about things that you cannot control. You and your department members are one part of the organization. If you work to do your part the best it can be done, you will be successful in your responsibilities. Far too often we waste time watching others and complaining about what they are doing or how they are being treated. Yet if they are not within our sphere of influence, there is nothing we can directly do about it. If we were to use that time and effort to tend to our responsibilities, we often would lead the way.

As leaders we must be sure to reward good behavior. This should be done on a daily basis anyway as part of effective leadership; however, it is perhaps even more influential during a period of change. It is during these times that we are attempting to get department members to abandon old ways of doing things and adopt new behaviors, so it is truly important that when the new behaviors are demonstrated that they be immediately rewarded.

Through effective leadership we can create a culture of change. We know that a department chair's behavior can have a substantial impact on the behaviors of our faculty. If we work to build an environment of honest and open communication and cooperation, over time they will trust and respect us and we them. In such an environment, change will be not be seen with fear, but rather as a positive force that is good for the institution, the department, and the individual department member.

Joseph P. Linskey is dean of international programs at Centenary College. Email: linskeyj@centenarycollege.edu. This article is based on a presentation at the 23rd annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 8–10, 2006, Orlando, Florida.

Coexisting with a Former Chair

by Jeffrey L. Buller

If you're a department chair, the odds are very good that at least one former chair is serving as a faculty member in your department. At institutions where the chair rotates, it is even possible that all of your colleagues have been chairs at one time or another. In systems where chairs are elected by the faculty or chosen by the administration, you are likely to find that either one or a small number of your faculty members have chaired the department before you. In the best of all situations, having former chairs in your department can be a very good experience. They understand the difficulties of the job because they've done it. They may have advice on the best ways to negotiate institutional landmines and to advance the needs of your department in the unique political environment of your college or university. They can provide a sympathetic ear when you need it, serve as a mentor, and even work behind the scenes to help you when an unofficial departmental ambassador is needed.

The problem arises when one or more former chairs are not supportive and collaborative, but undermine your authority as chair, work against you, or let you know in subtle but unmistakable ways that they'd be handling matters differently if they were still running the department. Every department will have its own unique opportunities and challenges, but the following are among the best things you can do if you find yourself trying to coexist with an uncooperative former chair.

Determine whether some of the friction between you and your former chair is generational. If you pay close attention to the work habits and expectations of college personnel, you begin to notice some generational differences. More senior faculty and staff members sometimes feel that if meetings are not being held, work is not being done; many younger faculty and staff members prefer to collaborate electronically, distributing drafts of documents via email or groupware. Senior faculty

and staff sometimes intervene when they believe that someone isn't being respectful or professional in their dress, informal speech, or sense of humor; younger faculty and staff may resent being "mothered" by colleagues whom they regard as their peers. Because there exist certain generational differences in our work habits and expectations, tensions with a former chair can worsen when the two of you are on opposite sides of this generational line. Because you are not doing your job the way the former chair would have done it, he or she may make you feel that you are not doing your job at all. In these cases, your best solution may be to have an informal conversation with the former chair, perhaps over lunch, where you make clear why you make decisions, conduct meetings, and gather information in the way that you do. Explain that your operating procedure, although different, is aimed at doing what is best for the department, its faculty, and its students. In many cases, after the former chair has a better understanding of why you do things differently from the way they were done in the past, he or she will begin to cut you more slack and your tensions will ease.

Establish a clear new initiative. Some former chairs can find it hard to give up the habit of running the department, even when they are no longer officially in charge. This can be exacerbated in departments where the curriculum, organizational structure, and mission have not changed since their term as chair. The way the department operates feels very familiar to them, and they have become so accustomed to being in charge of these matters that they act as though they still are. If this is the case in your department, you can take steps to make the department your own and to feel slightly less familiar to those who have been around for a while. The nature of the initiative you take will depend on your discipline and the needs of your institution. You never want to be in a situation where you start changing things to leave a legacy, shake things up, or make a change for its own sake. On the other hand, it is the rare academic department that cannot be improved in some way. Certainly there is an area of your curriculum, departmental procedures, the discipline's internal organization, or academic policies that could benefit from a complete overhaul. Your initiative can be as all-encompassing

as a complete revision of the curriculum for your major programs or as modest as bringing your policies and procedures manual up to date. The important thing is that it is *your* initiative and that you present it as an activity of substantial importance to your department. Talk about your initiative regularly at department meetings and the message will soon become clear: The department is no longer in the same place as it was under previous chairs.

Focus only on the former chair's actual behavior and the problems that it has created. Sometimes when we have been irritated by the treatment we receive from other people, we begin finding fault with them, even when their words or actions cause no real harm. It can be important, therefore, to carefully separate the words and behavior of the former chair that are causing you and the department genuine problems from those that, although annoying, are ultimately not interfering with the smooth operation of your program. After all, you can't ask someone to have more respect for you—such a request is likely to be counterproductive at best—but you can direct a person to stop doing A and B and begin doing C and D. Sometimes, too, when we carefully look at a former chair's actions, we discover reasons for those actions other than sheer malice or a dislike of having someone else in charge. For instance, someone who has been a long-time department chair may have gotten used to no longer needing approval for his or her course schedule, purchases, or travel plans. The former chair may resent having to go through channels when he or she is used to making decisions. A large part of this resentment may even be subconscious and have very little to do with whether he or she thinks you're succeeding as chair. In such a case, your best approach may be to have a conversation with the faculty member about how it is in the best interests of the department for everyone to submit their proposals together, so that a reasonable plan can be developed. If the former chair truly cares about the strength and reputation of the department, tying the behavior that you want to the good of the program may be your most effective strategy.

Find a new outlet for the former chair's energies. Some chairs discover that, after leaving behind their administrative responsibilities,

they have a great deal of experience, ideas, and talent about how to solve problems but nowhere to apply these resources. Some of the frustration the former chair may be causing you could be due to the fact that he or she is looking for something to take on as a problem to solve. If you suspect this to be the case in your department, see if you can find a new project at which the former chair can excel. At times, directing the person's energies inward to the department by putting the person in charge of a curriculum revision or search committee will not solve the problem; it will merely give the former chair an official platform from which to create new difficulties. The best outlet is an activity that extends beyond the confines of the department. Get the former chair involved with a revision of the institution's general education program, a search committee for an upper administrator, or an interdisciplinary initiative. Launch a departmental initiative to have the former chair elected to the institution's curriculum committee, faculty senate, research board, or program review committee. Channeling the former chair's energies externally makes good sense for both the individual and the department: Having already demonstrated success at the department level, the former chair is ready to assume service to the institution at a broader level of importance. With new challenges to tackle and new victories to win, the former chair will also be less likely to keep rehashing old problems at the department level, the very sort of problems that you want the liberty to deal with untrammelled by the former chair's constant "supervision."

State your concerns directly but privately with the former chair. Some poor professional behavior occurs simply because people don't know any better or are unaware of how their actions are perceived. If none of the preceding strategies has worked, a candid discussion with the former chair about the position he or she has placed you in, the difficulty it is causing, and your expectations for the future may, in certain cases, be highly beneficial. Keep the conversation as constructive and forward-looking as possible. Discuss past problems not in the spirit of fault-finding or assigning blame but merely as indications of the sort of problems that the former chair's "unintended" behavior has caused. Express, if you can honestly do so, your appreciation for what the person

accomplished as chair, but make it clear that you expect the same opportunity to work unimpeded and unchallenged that the former chair had. In a private conversation, you can appeal to the former chair's understanding of the many challenges and frustrations that result from supervising a department, request some consideration for the difficult role you are playing, and seek an improved working relationship for the future.

Admittedly, the approaches we have considered so far do not always work. They require that the former chair be a reasonable person with at least some capacity for self-awareness and generosity, prerequisites that, unfortunately, are all too often unmet in the real world. Nevertheless, despite how unprofessionally you may have been treated, you have a professional obligation to explore these possible solutions before considering one last, more extreme measure.

Consult your dean or provost. Perhaps the most common extreme measure you can take when frustrated by a former chair is to discuss the matter with your superior either to seek support for the actions that you intend to take or to request that your superior intervene directly. Going to your boss always elevates the seriousness of the situation. For one thing, you run the risk of appearing to be in a situation you can't handle yourself. Depending on the personality of your dean or provost, you may receive sympathy for being in a very difficult situation or exasperation for tattling on a department member. In addition, if your supervisor intervenes, it is always possible that, rather than solving the problem, you may be making it worse by giving the former chair the impression that you are forming a coalition against him or her. If you decide that the situation is serious enough to involve your supervisor, begin the conversation by stating that you are exploring possible solutions and seeking advice, not necessarily direct action. Come to the conversation with specific instances of difficulties created by the former chair's behavior, remedies that you have attempted, and indications that your own attempts to resolve the situation have been unsuccessful. Determine the extent to which your dean or provost seems willing to back you up in this situation, and explore together approaches that you and your supervisor can consider. Don't act as though you're giving up or leaving the problem for

your supervisor to solve. Indicate your willingness to take positive action that is in the best interests of your program and the institution. Avoid giving the impression that you expect your boss to “fix” the former chair. Rather, suggest that you are interested in an approach that is beneficial to someone who worked in the past to help your department and to the new directions that the department must take under your leadership.

Few things can undermine your authority as a department chair more completely as an uncooperative former chair. If the situation becomes severe enough, you can find yourself exasperated and unable to complete the important work of your discipline. As you try to resolve the situation by putting into effect the various strategies outlined here, it is also important to keep in mind one overarching realization: Someday you, too, will be a former chair, and you are likely to be serving as a faculty member in the same department you now supervise. When that occurs, remember to accept your new role with good humor and grace, reducing the likelihood that your successor will one day be reading this article, wondering what to do about you.

Jeffrey L. Buller is dean of the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College at Florida Atlantic University. Email: jbuller@fau.edu

Working Effectively with the Dean

by David J. Malik and N. Douglas Lees

Department chairs can attest to their unique position of working simultaneously for the dean and for the department faculty. Clearly this can be an awkward position where each side expects the chair to listen to and carry the message to the other. On some issues, this struggle between “two masters” can be a major source of chair stress. We assume the most regular, comfortable, and effective communication occurs between the

chair and the faculty. However, the communication between the dean and the chair is equally important and cannot be neglected. In this article we review why this communication is critical to both chairs and deans and summarize key ideas that can enhance its efficacy.

In most institutions, the dean is a central authority in perhaps the full spectrum of activities that can enhance or diminish the department's prospects for achieving overall success. The dean is the main arbiter of budgets and their allocation, a source of potential funding for projects and new initiatives, or allowance (or permission) for carryover funding. The dean usually authorizes changes in faculty work expectations, including teaching loads, release time, or other special course considerations. Permission to hire new, temporary, or replacement faculty and staff is often a dean prerogative. Faculty issues involving promotion and tenure, salary adjustments, and the like are either decided by the dean or final decisions are based on recommendations by the dean. Deans are also involved in the development of departments' long-term plans and their mission and vision statements. The role of the dean is paramount in facilitating success and opportunity for the department.

The chair-dean relationship, however, is not a one-way street. Deans also depend on chairs. The dean presides over many departments, some of which can be far distant from the discipline that the dean has experienced as a faculty member and administrator. This would be most manifest with a dean of arts and sciences. In such cases deans will depend on chairs to "educate" them about needs, characteristics, and expectations of academic units that span from physics to philosophy. Deans also depend on chairs to "translate" or frame new policies and expectations to faculty in ways that are consistent with unit culture to ensure that they are followed and understood. It has been said that deans are only as effective as their department chairs.

Combining both directions of the chair-dean relationship is essential in addressing key elements for promoting the department's success. Some examples follow.

Success through resources and resource management. Deans and chairs can work together to ensure that department funding is fungible—that is, not rigorously tied to predefined or prescribed budget categories.

The dean can give local independence to the chair on how the department budget is allocated among categories with flexibility for carryover. The dean can be approached to provide matching funding for external proposals to ensure that department and school goals can be achieved. The dean and chair can also identify areas of improvement or increased success that will lead to budget enhancement, such as returning a portion of increased tuition income derived through enhanced enrollment, a share of indirect cost recovery (overhead) from increases in external funding, or other rewards that are incentive-based.

Creation and maintenance of high productivity and an efficacious environment. The dean and chair both have interests in establishing productive work environments for faculty. Not only does this impact the year-to-year unit output but it also is a critical ingredient in recruiting new faculty. Major items for candid discussion include faculty workloads, merit-based incentives including salaries and bonuses, and special recognition for examples of noteworthy excellence in aspects of faculty work.

Institutional infrastructure to support missions. Campus and unit infrastructure should support faculty scholarship and the educational mission. Areas where deans and chairs might work together to ensure this include available technology and the support staff with expertise in a range of newer electronic pedagogies, distance education, testing centers, and so on. In addition, support for faculty development in areas related to classroom teaching and student learning environments as well as support structures for scholarship (travel, internal seed funds, equipment purchase and maintenance, grant writing help) all contribute to essential infrastructure.

Curriculum and program initiatives. Creative people can sometimes envision new degrees or degree options that have present or future potential to increase visibility and value to the institution. Such initiatives cannot succeed without collaboration at the department level and above. Planning for such endeavors may involve new faculty hires, revised strategic plans, new or renovated space, changes in assignments, and additional staff, among others. The dean's local resources and ability to directly bring this potential to campus administration are key to this

planning. Recognizing that new program initiatives can be transformational for both the department and the school is an essential step in building a stronger campus.

These examples must be tailored to the discipline, culture, and expectations of the unit and are dependent on the ability of the institution to deliver the necessary resources and support. It is essential that the initiatives brought to the dean resonate with the mission and vision statements of the school and the institution. Furthermore, the dean needs to recognize the catalytic consequences of supporting a new initiative or curriculum modernization.

Similarly, there are items that the dean must bring to the chair. Dean expectations of a chair include, among others, departmental adherence to campus mission and a well-thought-out departmental plan, effective practice of campus and school priorities to faculty, and a strong role in providing critical campus data such as improving retention rates, external funding profiles, scholarly productivity, graduation rates, and faculty awards. Deans also expect minimal conflict among students, staff, and faculty, and when conflict does occur they much prefer to be briefed ahead of time about what is coming to their offices.

The dean also expects several personal attributes in chairs that facilitate communication and inspire confidence in their ability to perform well globally. This lengthy list would include characteristics such as integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, credibility, civility, candor, and forthrightness. The chair needs to be an effective departmental advocate, but also able to demonstrate a willingness to put campus- or school-wide priorities over personal or departmental interests when appropriate. The chair needs to recognize the limits of argument and persuasion and when to yield or concede issues. This does not mean compromising principles, but it does mean understanding the balance between authority and principle. Sustained conflict is not an asset to the chair-dean relationship. Finally, because the chair has the advantage of knowledge of local detail and culture, it can be tempting to overstate a case in order to win a concession or gain resources. In the long run, however, accurate and honest assessment is best.

Moving to a more personal dimension, knowing when and how to approach the dean with a special request or to discuss an important matter can be a factor in the ultimate success of the visit. Knowing how the dean prefers to be approached—formal meeting appointments, drop-by visits, invitations to coffee or lunch—can set the tone for the meeting. Chairs who are on good terms with the dean’s staff have the advantage of seeding their ideas through others who have ready access to the dean and to ask whether a given time is a good one to approach the dean. Chairs may learn from the dean’s assistant or secretary when the dean is very busy and occupied with a special project, when the dean has had an unpleasant encounter with someone, or when the dean is having a difficult day for any reason. Unless the visit is a true emergency, these situations indicate that another day or time might prove more productive or successful.

Many of the suggestions here may be simple common sense. However, over the course of our combined years of chair experience, we have seen these issues arise again and again. Favorable interaction with the dean is sometimes challenging, sometimes troubling, and must be productive and mutually valuable. Thus, we have created our “Ten Do’s” and “Ten Don’ts” lists.

Almost ten do’s:

- Protect the investment of the institution in its faculty; mentor, support, and advise them well.
- Respond to the needs and priorities of the dean.
- Provide positive accomplishments and achievements in the department’s success.
- Publicly thank the dean for creative and positive accomplishments and wise investments.
- Respond quickly and earnestly to requests for information, data, or otherwise.
- Provide data that facilitates the dean’s interactions with higher administration.

- Provide stories, vignettes, or anecdotes that personalize the department and provide positive perspectives on the faculty and students.
- Alert the dean early to potential problems, adverse publicity, or growing hazards.

Ten don'ts:

- Don't overspend or overcommit budgets and allocations.
- Don't overstay your welcome in the dean's office.
- Don't repeat requests excessively.
- Don't demand additional resources or concessions.
- Don't regularly violate the chain of command or your institutional protocols.
- Don't provide surprises and unanticipated conflicts.
- Don't be argumentative and judgmental.
- Don't encourage student visits en masse or more public demonstrations of antipathy.
- Don't aver your requests while panning the requests or resources of others.
- Don't misrepresent facts, statistics, or situations for the purpose of gain.

Finally, enjoy the opportunity to build your department and get the most from the resources you have. Where resources are in short supply, imagine out-of-the-box solutions that can favorably impress your dean with your cleverness and resourcefulness.

David J. Malik is interim executive vice chancellor at Indiana University Northwest. N. Douglas Lees is associate dean for planning and finance at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis. Email: dmalik@iun.edu, nlees@iupui.edu. This article is based on a presentation at the 24th annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 7–9, 2007, Orlando, Florida.

SECTION TWO

Getting Started

Time Management for More Effective Results

by George Crandell

If there's one thing that most department chairs would like to have more of, it's time—time to do what's urgent and what is truly important. But time is the one resource that we can't get more of by asking the dean or by cultivating relationships with generous alumni. To have more time, we simply have to make better use of what we have. But how?

The literature on time management, although often written for business executives, can be useful to chairs. In an academic setting, the three strategies most likely to yield immediate results are organizing an effective workspace, managing workflow, and planning. Chairs who habitually practice these strategies may benefit by reducing stress and by becoming more productive.

Organizing the Workspace

A survey of the relevant literature on time management suggests that a well-organized workspace is essential. By eliminating clutter, creating an effective filing system, gathering essential tools, and managing workflow, chairs can easily organize an effective workspace.

Removing clutter is itself a time-consuming task, but a cluttered workspace significantly impairs your ability to find things. To retrieve materials quickly, you'll need an effective filing system that includes three basic kinds of files: working files (materials used frequently and needed close at hand), reference files (information needed only occasionally), and archival files (materials seldom retrieved but that must be kept). For ease of retrieval, organize files simply (e.g., label files with a one- or two-word tag and arrange the files alphabetically).

Once clutter has been eliminated and other materials have been filed, the effective workspace includes only what is essential: a set of three trays to control the workflow on your desk, standard office supplies, a computer, and a telephone. Everything else, except for what you are working on at the moment, can and should be filed where it can be retrieved as needed.

Managing Workflow

How do you process the mountain of material that collects in your paper and electronic inboxes? The answer is one piece of paper, one electronic message at a time. Many of the experts on time management agree that the most effective workers act on an item the first time it is touched. Although difficult at first, the practice can become habitual and is made easier by remembering the four Ds: delete it, delegate it, do it, or defer it. If the message you receive is trash (or spam), *delete it*. Or, if it's something that you might use later on, file it. If a task is not yours to do, then *delegate it*. If a task can be completed in two minutes or less, *do it* immediately. If the task is one that can't be completed quickly and if it's not high priority, *defer it*. Electronic communications can be managed just as easily and as quickly as paper by using the four Ds. Like other routine tasks (returning phone calls, paper mail), email is best handled in batches at regularly scheduled times of the day. If you limit the number of times per day that you process email, you'll notice immediate time savings.

Using calendars. To manage all of the things that you have to do, it's important to organize your reminders into a small number of calendars

and lists that can be reviewed regularly. A calendar (paper or electronic) is the obvious place to record reminders of meetings, appointments, and due dates. For chairs with multiple responsibilities, an annual calendar organized by areas of responsibility (budget, personnel, schedule, planning, miscellaneous) may be especially valuable. For each of these areas, one can list (month by month) the major responsibilities. With such a calendar, the chair can see at a glance which tasks must be completed in a given month of the year.

Using lists. Because chairs typically have hundreds of tasks to complete, a calendar may not be the best place to record reminders other than those specific to a time or date. Instead, a variety of lists can be used to manage the collection of reminders. Three kinds of lists are especially useful for academic chairs: a list of projects, a list of “next actions,” and a list of things you’re waiting for (Allen, 2003).

Projects list. A project is “any desired result” that takes more than one step to complete (Allen, 2003, p. 37). Thus, chairs typically have a long list of projects under way at any given time. Each of the chair’s major responsibilities, for example, can be defined as a project, just as other desired results (e.g., curriculum change) can be so defined. As an organizing tool, the list of projects provides a reviewable list of the scope of your responsibilities and initiatives.

Next actions list. To move any project forward, Allen (2003) recommends that you define for each project the next action: “the next physical, visible activity that needs to be engaged in, in order to move the current reality toward completion” (p. 34). Just as you need a calendar to remind you of tasks to complete at specific times, you also need a list of next actions to do as soon as possible. For the chair who routinely handles scores of projects and hundreds of next actions, it may be helpful to organize these next actions by area of responsibility or project name.

Waiting-for list. Allen (2003) also recommends that you keep track of things you are waiting for. The effective chair who delegates responsibility can benefit from a list that monitors to whom responsibility has been given, the task to be completed, the date it was assigned, and the date it is expected.

Planning

Organizing the workspace and managing workflow are two important strategies for using time more wisely, but equally if not more important is planning. The basic steps in planning include setting goals, listing tasks, setting priorities, and implementing the plan. For academic chairs, calendars, project lists, and lists organized by categories of responsibilities are among the most effective management tools for setting goals, scheduling tasks, and implementing plans.

Setting goals. If a project is a desired result, then the chair's list of projects amounts to a list of goals. If for each project on the list, the chair also develops an action plan—a sequence of steps necessary to achieve the desired results—then the chair only needs time to implement the plan.

Listing tasks. If you've tried to list all of the things that you plan to do on a daily calendar, you probably know the futility of such an effort. For most chairs, listing tasks to do within a week is more appropriate. You may be surprised to learn that in as little as one hour per week, you can review your calendars and lists of reminders and update them for the following week. The task is made simpler by knowing that you have a limited number of calendars (dates and responsibilities calendars) and lists (projects, next actions, waiting for) to review. By also reviewing your complete list of projects and the action plans needed to complete them, long-term planning may be accomplished at the same time. Simply add the next action to complete a long-term project to next week's list of actions.

Setting priorities. The chair who plans on a weekly basis and who has written reminders is free, on a daily basis, to assess what is most urgent and important to do. In five minutes or less, the chair can jot down (using a simple grid to divide the categories) what is urgent and important, urgent but not important, important but not urgent, and not urgent and not important. Even if interruptions occur (and they will), and even if tasks take more time than anticipated (and they usually do), the chair can still focus that day on what is most important.

Covey (1990) argues that focusing on important tasks that are not urgent is “the heart of effective personal management” (p. 153). In this area, Covey groups “all those things we know we need to do, but seldom get around to doing because they aren’t urgent” (p. 154).

Implementing plans. By listing tasks and setting priorities, you’ll be able to execute the next actions needed to accomplish goals, but even if, at the end of the week, not everything has been done, you’ll be in a position to say, “I absolutely know right now everything I’m not doing but could be doing if I decided to” (Allen, 2003, p. 185).

Conclusion

Because even the best of plans seldom survive the first encounter with the enemy, the effective chair must still be flexible, disciplined, and well prepared to confront time wasters, realizing that sometimes the enemy is us. No one, of course, can eliminate time-wasting behaviors overnight, but it is possible to make incremental change starting with a simple commitment to do it now. Organizing an effective workspace, managing workflow, and planning to achieve goals are all strategies that chairs can use to reduce stress and be more productive. Writing things down and knowing where they are written down (on your calendars or lists) relieves stress. Managing workflow makes it easier to plan, and planning makes it possible to strike a balance between what’s important and what’s urgent. By using time more effectively, you’ll actually have more time to be productive.

George Crandell is acting associate dean of the graduate school at Auburn University.
Email: crandgw@auburn.edu

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Managing Tight Budgets

by Mary Lou Higgerson and Barry McCauliff

As institutions of higher education face the challenge of managing in a recession, it is important for chairs to proactively employ measures that make optimal use of department time and money and consider new ways of securing additional resources for the department.

Making more optimal use of the available budget and securing resources for the department may seem like an impossible task at a time when many institutions are freezing positions, reducing salaries, enforcing mandatory furloughs, and exercising other measures to shore up institutional finances in the face of devalued endowments and lost revenue. While the specific strategies that work best will vary with the institution, chairs are not powerless. The most effective strategies for an individual chair will be determined, in large part, by what decisions are delegated to chairs on the campus. For example, department chairs who are empowered to build course schedules have a means for achieving economies that can reduce faculty workloads and spare the money spent on overload teaching and/or adjunct faculty. In contrast, what does not work is relying on requests for additional funds at a time when the institution is managing campus-wide freezes in new positions, capital expenditures, and slash or salary increases.

In this article we offer strategies that chairs can employ to successfully meet department revenue needs with tight budgets. The strategies presented are those that are likely to have value for the greatest number of chairs across a full range of institution types in this very difficult economy.

Share a Position

When securing a new or replacement position is unlikely, consider proposing a joint appointment between two academic departments or between an academic department and some other entity on campus. For

example, the need for additional faculty in foreign language might be combined with the need for additional faculty to teach courses in international business, international law, or intercultural communication. Or, a chair might propose a position shared with an academic support unit such as the writing lab, learning center, academic advisement, or career services. In some instances, chairs might consider a joint appointment shared by two institutions in the same region. A shared appointment between neighboring institutions that, for example, share a 2-plus-2 or a 3-plus-2 articulation agreement could benefit student learning at both institutions.

Revise the Curriculum

When institutions are unable to replace departing faculty, the workload for remaining faculty increases. The department can help restore faculty workloads and sanity by reducing the number of courses offered. This might be done by reducing electives, rotating some courses under a special topics course offering, and/or repackaging the course content while eliminating units of study that have become less relevant. Generally, any effort to structure the curriculum to more efficiently lead students through the major (or minor) will spare both faculty time and department resources. Such changes are likely to have the added benefit of improving student scores on assessment measures and increasing retention and graduation rates—outcomes that will make any department more valuable to the institution.

Eliminate Unnecessary Work

Chairs do faculty a huge service when they help them know which tasks can be eliminated. The department can effectively reduce existing workloads by eliminating courses, programs, and initiatives that have outlived their usefulness. Unnecessary work may exist in such ongoing initiatives as assessment, newsletters, department meetings, and student organizations. For example, as the assessment of student learning becomes more

integrated with instruction, it is not essential to assess every variable each year. Chairs can make the assessment of student learning more manageable for faculty by collecting targeted data that help to inform current decisions without producing lengthy reports that sit on a shelf until the next program review. Chairs should lead the faculty in a continuous review that considers the benefit derived from all expenditures of time and money. For example, if department resources are used to support a student organization, consider which percentage of the majors participate and whether the organization's activities benefit individual students and the department's efforts to increase retention. Similarly, the department should ask whether the money spent on student workers provides optimal benefit to the department. In sum, assess whether the benefits received warrant the faculty time and department funds spent on the activity. Knowing the return on the investment of time and budget can be useful in deciding which tasks might be eliminated.

Form Partnerships

Chairs can form mutually beneficial partnerships with other departments and offices on campus as well as with off-campus agencies. Departments might, for example, form alliances that permit the sharing of faculty and staff, the co-funding of mutually beneficial initiatives, or the exchange of professional expertise. Departments in the social sciences might pool their resources to deliver a research methods course that serves all students majoring in the different social sciences disciplines. Cost sharing for equipment or facilities that are not used daily can help stretch resources. When a professional conference is likely to draw faculty from different departments, it can be cost effective to register as a team from the institution as most conferences offer group and early-bird registration discounts. Such partnerships not only help to extend scarce resources, they help to accrue additional visibility for the work being done in the department. Departments can sometimes stretch tight budgets by trading expertise with other departments. For example, faculty in the computer science department may help design a webpage for another department

in return for assistance in designing a survey instrument for assessing student learning. Picking up tasks that align more closely with department expertise in return for work that would widen a department's skill set can save time and frustration.

Use Technology

Advances in technology make it possible to provide interactive experiences for students and faculty with professionals at other locations without leaving campus. Technology can also permit departments to teach more students in a single class section while providing differentiated instruction. Many departments have successfully incorporated smart classrooms as a way of delivering classroom instruction to a greater number of students. These technologically enhanced classrooms permit the integration of PowerPoint presentations, video and DVD feeds, document cameras, direct connection to Internet sites, and other such instructional tools. Newer technologies such as Personal Response Systems can be used in large classes to increase the amount of interaction between students and faculty. With "clickers," students are able to respond to Socratic questions posed by the instructor, and the instructor is able to monitor student responses to the content being presented—all during the lecture. Use of this technology permits faculty to tailor and even repeat lecture material being presented in response to student need and understanding.

Analyze Course Enrollment

Tracking course attrition can yield significant savings for the department. In particular, it is helpful to track the typical first-week drop rate for each course section and use this information to reduce the number of empty seats in each class. No matter the cap on a course, empty seats represent wasted resources. If the chair knows how many students typically drop a class during the first week, it becomes possible to prevent any loss by adding that number of students above the cap. This can be

done in a way that does not create extra work for faculty by telling students on the wait list to attend the class from day one so they can be added to the roster should space become available.

Conclusion

We hope these strategies stimulate further thinking about how you might use the decisions and responsibilities assigned to you to manage tight department budgets during this time of serious economic challenge for higher education. We encourage you to share your thoughts on this topic with other chairs, as we expect this will be a pressing issue at both public and private institutions for some time.

Mary Lou Higgerson is vice president for academic affairs and dean of the college at Baldwin-Wallace College. Barry McCauliff is professor and former chair of communication at Clarion University. Email: mlhigger@bw.edu, mccaullif@clarion.edu. This article is based on a presentation at the 26th annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 11–13, 2009, Orlando, Florida.

Conducting a Department Meeting: The Facilitator Chair

by Christopher O. Lynch

Running a department meeting can be a challenge—from ensuring that all points of view are presented to keeping participants focused within specific time limits. Chairs wear many hats by acting as sharers of information, facilitators, and even challengers. Chairs have their own views, but they must also ensure dialogue and represent the group. The key principle is to create a balance so that faculty can build community in

a relaxed fashion while meeting goals and deadlines that involve the department's business or productivity. This is no easy balance and it's up to department chairs to make the process as painless as possible. Indeed, there are times when issues cannot be resolved at one meeting. That's when facilitators need to invoke the concept of time—when issues are tabled—giving faculty a chance to reflect or until some of the intensity can be assimilated.

Before the meeting the chair should seek agenda items to provide direction. This can be done by initiating an agenda and publishing it the week before. The agenda should provide a start time and an end time so all attendees will know how long the meeting will run. It is important to begin the meeting promptly and end it on time. Faculty should get in the practice of suggesting additional agenda items before the meeting. Putting the department's vision statement on the bottom of each agenda can provide criteria that will be useful for future decision making and it raises constant awareness about an agreed-upon vision. An assistant should be selected in advance to record decisions and information for those who cannot attend.

It is important for chairs to know their audience (Ghais, 2005). You should try to gauge how faculty will respond to proposals in advance. You don't want to control voting patterns or manipulate behind the scenes, but you do want to have a sense of all perspectives so that there are no surprises. Providing the agenda in advance also gives faculty time to think through issues to create genuine dialogue.

As chair, it is important that you are prepared and ready to start the meeting on time. This will build your credibility. In addition, you should have the seats arranged before the meeting begins. I once attended a curriculum meeting where the faculty sat in rows where seats were anchored to the floor. It inhibited any dialogue and created a negative climate. Each participant should be able to see the other at a meeting to help build community.

When preparing your agenda, be sure that you have sufficient time to cover all items. Tension will arise if people perceive that issues are being rushed and discussion is limited. At the meeting you need to allow for members to express themselves.

You should adopt a listener-facilitator stance until ideas are expressed. As chair, your input can help stimulate discussion or provide insights from an administrative perspective. You should be comfortable sharing your personal viewpoints but never at the expense of ending dialogue. Inevitably individuals will go off on tangents or side conversations.

You need to be flexible enough to allow for spontaneity. This is part of the relationship- or community-building side of any meeting—we all want to be heard—but it is important to also gently bring the discussion back on track by focusing on the agenda or the time.

At meetings I often try to highlight places of consensus and periodically sum up the tone of the discussion. Meta-communicating is a process where a group member reflects on what has happened in the process of discussion. It is a helpful tool to refocus the group while acknowledging each person's feelings. Sometimes meta-communication is the simple statement, "We only have fifteen minutes and not all ideas have been mentioned" or "Why does our conversation keep going in circles?"

A "yes and stance" acknowledges the other viewpoint while also sharing input. This enhances civility and raises the level of conversation to include everyone. As administrators we need to avoid killing an idea through statements that begin with "but" or "the problem is . . ."

Having a vision or mission statement with agreed-upon key values is a positive way to focus the group, especially through difficult discussions. This statement helps to shape decisions and also build common group dialogue.

Beware of the quick fix. This happens when the time becomes more important than the decision. The temptation will be to make a decision based on the first suggestion. You need to ensure that faculty have genuinely brainstormed all options before making a decision.

We live in a society where individuals are expected to have their voices heard without invitation. This means some faculty members will be more vocal than others. A chair should be alert to those faculty who struggle to share input because they cannot get a word in. Genuine dialogue means acknowledging them and giving them a chance to speak. You might sum up a monopolizer's words and move the discussion by asking others what they think. You also need to be assertive when, in the

heat of an issue, voices get raised and civility is put at risk. Again, focus faculty back to the issues. You might even need to remind people of the time and the importance of keeping statements short. Always remember to acknowledge feelings and move the discussion forward. Summing up key points in the discussion keeps everyone focused. It is human to get distracted. Summarizing is also a way to build consensus.

Remember, not every issue needs to be resolved. Time is a powerful tool for decision making. You might want to table issues until a future meeting so that faculty have time to reflect or until some of the intensity can be assimilated or disseminated. Allow yourself and the faculty to have disagreements. You can have more intense issues discussed by a subcommittee. Time can help build consensus. You never want to risk authentic dialogue.

One element of the process that is often forgotten is follow-up. Faculty can spend much time in discussion, but often decisions get lost because no one was selected to implement new policy. It is important for the chair to identify deadlines and a chain of accountability, whether it be the chair or another department meeting where individuals will be designated to report outcomes (Bens, 2005).

Most importantly, chairs must remember that true dialogue emerges when all faculty share leadership roles. Allow faculty to disagree, and don't feel the need for the final word. At the same time, responsibility for the meeting's success should not rest solely on the chair.

Sometimes you need to raise issues and wait for another day to reach resolution or even to have an open discussion. The chair needs to constantly build trust by allowing each voice to be heard. Don't be afraid to admit you didn't hear or understand a suggestion. No one can be attentive to everything. Sometimes this can be a slow, painful process. This also involves showing your authenticity in areas where you are unsure and asking faculty for input on how to move to the next steps.

After each meeting I try to seek out individuals, not always the same people, and ask for feedback on how the meeting went. This way I can continue to learn from the faculty and I can have further input on issues from people who still have concerns.

Christopher Lynch is chair of the communication department at Kean University.
Email: clynch@kean.edu

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The Top Ten Things a Dean Wishes Chairs Would Remember

by William Richardson

A healthy chair-dean relationship has value in several ways. Given the dean's experience in academe, he or she is a valuable resource to consult when problems arise and one who can aid the chair's professional development. Because the dean is normally the bridge between departments and top administration, a cordial chair-dean relationship can enhance the department's standing in the eyes of the top administrators. Thus, a good reputation there can pay dividends in many ways. With that in mind, I offer the following observations.

1. Take Budget Constraints Seriously

On a visit to Central Michigan University, I was pleased to view their new state-of-the-art health professions building. A highlight of the tour was an introduction to their "million-dollar classroom." The computer capabilities and the huge screens across the front of the room were impressive. The control room for the entire building with its worldwide

networking capability resembled not only space-age technology but spaceship accouterments. The visiting group of deans were duly impressed. However, installing, maintaining, and upgrading the information technology of today's delivery systems poses challenges for our budgets like nothing we have previously imagined: "Quite simply, total costs for information technology are increasing at a rate that exceeds the ability of colleges and universities to pay" (Spicer & Deblois, 2004, p. 14). Consequently, how we apportion and work within budgets is a huge administrative issue.

In the budgeting process, chairs can best determine department equipment needs, convention travel, and adjunct faculty requirements. Chairs are the only ones who know the difference between their wish list, their need list, and their must-have-or-we're-dead-in-the-water list. But once that negotiation has been worked out with the dean, living within the resultant constraints is absolutely essential. A little overage here or there used to be winked at, but no longer. Budget constraints are not just nice suggestions.

2. When Dealing with People, Good Communication Is Crucial

At all levels of administration, that which takes the greatest toll on our time and nervous energy is the many-faceted issue of personnel. If the three most important rules of real estate are location, location, location, the three most important rules for dealing with people must be communication, communication, communication. Accordingly, you should make it a practice to keep the dean, and your faculty, informed of significant departmental developments.

Deans oversee anywhere from ten to twenty departments ranging from music to physics to nursing to physical education. Given such diversity, it is simply not possible for the dean to be a well-informed advocate for your department without up-to-date information. A periodic memo or email of recent developments can be an efficient communication tool. And be sure to check frequently the accuracy and

attractiveness of your department website. It is the most easily accessible information for most students.

3. High on Your Job Description: Morale Officer

There is a clear correlation between a department's positive, upbeat environment and its productivity. But that environment rarely just happens—it is the result of effort. It is usually the chair's effort that counts the most. Furthermore, in times of tight budgets, good morale is especially important, but unusually strained. Admittedly, the person with the bigger picture, such as a chair or a dean, often has less to smile about, and a fixed smile can be a sign of mental instability. Nevertheless, a congenial work environment is contagious to both faculty and students and thus conducive to creative teaching and learning.

Keep in mind the value of management by walking around. While we do most of our communicating these days by means of our little blue screens, the personal touch will never become obsolete. You may feel far too busy to make visits to colleagues' offices, but adding that personal touch to your communication can gain rich rewards in morale.

4. Dean as Consultant, Not the Answer Person

When problems get sticky, having a person with all the right answers would be a great convenience. But that person is not the dean. Remember, the dean is probably a former chair who was drawn into the dean's position when the search committee couldn't attract anyone who could walk on water or part the Red Sea. As a result, while the dean can draw on a reservoir of experience, he or she is not an encyclopedia of solutions where, if you look carefully enough, you will find the precise answer to your problem. Just as we don't smile on a student who plops down in our office with a blank schedule and asks which classes he or she should take, the dean is less than thrilled when a chair says something like, "Professor Painankle has once again refused to attend our department meeting. What should I do?" It is preferable for the chair to add, "I have two or

three options I would like to try, but first I wanted to run them by you to see what you think.” In other words, seek a consult, not an answer.

5. High-Maintenance Chairs May Get High-Maintenance Assignments

The dean is pulled in many directions and so must budget time wisely among the needs of many chairs. Consequently, the chair who consults the dean for virtually every decision, large and small, is a nuisance. Educated people are often driven people who have more goals than time to fulfill them. But the dean doesn't need frequent reminders that you don't have enough time to be chair, teach, and do research and serious writing while working in the crummiest building on campus where the equipment budget hasn't increased since 1985. If the dean has repeatedly heard such a litany from Professor Voluble, when that midyear, unwanted committee position opens up and the dean is asked for his recommendation, guess whose familiar face pops up on his or her mental screen? This doesn't mean that the dean is necessarily petty, just that he or she is human.

6. Make the Advancement Process Clear to Junior Faculty

One of the most stress-producing aspects of a career in higher education is the advancement process. Every year, excellent young teachers view the rigor of advancement in rank as the one thing that could make them choose a different career. This is especially true in some of the health, business, or engineering professions, where pay raises are not dependent on the kind of discipline that other systems of rank promotion require. In a survey conducted by Southern Connecticut State University, 99% of respondents indicated that classroom teaching was the most important issue of faculty performance (Cipriano & Beatty, 2004). Yet most institutions put research as the top priority for advancement. Although the process varies somewhat from university to university, you should remind junior faculty of the sacred mantra of teaching, research, and service, emphasizing the element that figures most prominently at your school—usually research.

7. Be Sure You Know Your Faculty

Chairs should be well aware of their department's health, and that means taking its pulse periodically. This can happen at regular department meetings and at the annual faculty evaluation interview. Student-teacher evaluations can also provide clues to what is happening in the classroom, and classroom visits are another evaluative tool. You have an obligation to know the overall performance of your team and you have a right to expect a certain level of excellence and cooperation as you work through the evaluation process. Throughout that process, you must find that elusive middle ground between being a control freak and someone who requires absolutely no accountability.

8. Dean as Advocate, Not Adversary

It is to most deans' advantage to maintain a smooth-running school. Accordingly, he or she is normally a supportive colleague, not an enemy. Because the dean must be the gatekeeper of issues such as the budget, academic accountability, and fairness of resource distribution, he or she may come across as slightly curmudgeonly. But that is the nature of the job, not necessarily the nature of the dean. You may have received word that equipment or travel budgets have been slashed. But don't be afraid to challenge the rumors—not by careless spending, but by cogently making your case to the dean. You may discover that he or she has a contingency fund for worthy cases such as yours. If the dean seems to be unavailable or unresponsive to your emails, don't assume that he or she is avoiding you. More likely, you're not even on his or her radar screen—not because you are unimportant, but because he or she is preoccupied with another department and hasn't had time to check email messages.

9. Delegate, Delegate, Delegate

Although it isn't always true that two heads are better than one, the wisdom of several minds often exceeds that of one mind. So take good advantage of the collective wisdom of your team—which in most cases

is impressive. Most faculty are well educated, creative, and independent thinkers who will not hesitate to tell you how you can improve. Don't be intimidated or feel threatened by the extra bright ones. Even if they seem to prod you, it is not likely that they are after your job. Spread the work and the responsibilities around. It will not only enable you to be a more effective chair, it can help protect you if the positions taken are controversial. Occasionally, it is very convenient to be able to say, "The department voted," rather than "I did it."

10. Be Passionate About Your Department

Beat all the possible drums for your department. The dean expects you to speak of your department as the one without which no student can possibly succeed in life. Of course, you must expect your fellow chairs to be equally passionate about their departments. If you are not an aggressive, enthusiastic promoter of your department, the dean might wonder if the fire in the belly has gone out and if it might be burning more brightly elsewhere. Some chairs are downright flamboyant in their promotional rhetoric, to the dismay of some of their colleagues. But deans are reasonably intelligent people who have had some experience doing triage to sort out the extravagant claims that mask mediocre content from those that are both enthusiastic and true. So whether it is for upgraded equipment, an endowed chair, or a new building, think big, let your enthusiasm show, and trust that the dean will be trying very hard to reward such enthusiastic work with generous resources.

William Richardson is dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Andrews University. Email: billr@andrews.edu

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SECTION THREE

Managing Conflict

The Chair's Role in Resolving Departmental Conflict

by David Matz

An academic department chair will often feel like middle management in any organization: frustrated. Demands from the faculty and from the dean will pull in opposite directions, or, to put it differently, chairs will feel greater responsibility than authority.

Indeed, being an academic chair is harder than most middle management jobs, and this is particularly true when it comes to handling intradepartmental conflict. To explore this, let us look first at why it is harder, and then what a chair can do about it.

What Makes Academic Departments Different?

- Tenure provides faculty with insulation from certain kinds of pressure. Some of that pressure is what a corporate midlevel manager can use to manage conflict. For a chair there are great advantages to faculty with tenure, but ease of management is not one of them.
- The amount of time faculty need to be on campus is modest, and they have great latitude in the way they carry out

professional duties. Few salaried jobs have this much internal freedom.

- Outside forces impinge on the tasks of a department chair. Faculty have centrifugal loyalties to disciplines, scholarship, consulting, and/or lethargy; unions have legal and political incentives to play a role in some departmental issues; and deans can be supportive, obstructive, or irrelevant.
- Faculty, once tenured, rarely move to other institutions. Academic turnover is low. Long-term relationships are common, and a long future together—good and bad—is fairly predictable.
- Notwithstanding the rhetoric about pursuit of truth and service to students, most conflict among faculty is based on power, status, convenience, and money. The institution ordinarily uses the rhetoric of quality and ordinarily rewards on the basis of quantity: number of students enrolled, research dollars brought in, number of journal articles published, ranking in *U.S. News & World Report*.
- The chair is rarely selected with a thought to aptitude or desire for the task. It is common for the chair, at least rhetorically, to disparage the job's political and bureaucratic obligations, obligations that are often at the heart of doing the job well.
- Universities move slowly: Real emergencies are rare, deadlines tend to be arbitrary and are often easily evaded. Leadership can try to rush things, but it is difficult.

Conflict in a Department

From these departmental characteristics, one can make some inferences about conflict. Chairs have rather little hierarchical authority. There are usually not many carrots that a chair controls, and using them as incentives in managing conflict will be inhibited by fear of failure or of giving offense, results that can reverberate through the department, the

university, and faculty members' families. Inhibition is enhanced by the anxiety that a future chair will do the same unto the current chair.

Most organizational units are conflict averse, but academic departments are especially so. The centrifugal pattern of faculty life dilutes contact, and the constant breaks in the teaching year tempt chairs to hope that summer months or someone's upcoming sabbatical will take the problem away. Sometimes the conflicts do go away. But many conflicts recur, and their occasional virulence is often related to a failure to intervene at an earlier stage.

Though there are many conflict patterns in an academic department, two predominate:

- The department can't make a decision. The desire to avoid confronting conflict explains why many decisions linger.
- Intradepartmental bitterness, friction, and faction make meetings nasty, keep colleagues from dealing with each other, and define battle lines for many other issues.

What a Chair Can and Can't Do

Before assaying the repertoire of what a chair can do, let's be clear about what the chair cannot do.

- The chair can't use the jerk theory: "If it weren't for that jerk, everything would be fine." Though this statement will on occasion be true, the theory carries with it the fatal weakness that there are usually too many jerks around. Worse, it is just not possible to remove most jerks. We have tenure.
- The chair is not authorized to perform a personality transplant. Neither wishing nor persuading will alter the way in which most faculty see the world. Whatever the chair's suspicion about just how many bricks a faculty member will need to acquire a full load, the chair is not a therapist and speculations about the number of those bricks are better kept unuttered.

- The chair cannot make tenure, the union, or the dean go away. They are givens.

What, then, can a chair facing conflict in the department do? In preparing to cope with conflict, a chair can try to learn something about the management of conflict. This may mean learning some of the skills mentioned next, such as negotiation or mediation. And it may mean learning something about conflict itself. In recent decades, many fields have developed several important ideas about how conflict works and how it can be managed, many of them not automatically obvious. Here are two examples:

- The ultimate attribution error says that when we (those on “our side”) do something good it is because we have a choice and we choose the good; when we do something bad (painful to others, punitive, or just plain wrong) it is because external circumstances leave us no choice. The reverse is also true: When they (those on the “other side”) do something good they do it only because they have no choice; when they do something bad they have a choice and still choose to take the bad path. There are several enormous implications of this insight, and one of them is this: When the phrase “I had no choice” springs to mind, think about whether this convenient and perhaps hardwired response is really true, and whether on reflection there really are alternative paths to follow.
- The anchor error arises when we define the “fair” solution of a dispute by comparing that definition with another event (the way it was done last time, the way it was done in another department, what you would “really” like the outcome to be), without adequate thought for why that other event is the proper point of comparison. Many a dispute has failed to reach agreement because the point of comparison, which began its role in the conflict only as a tool conveniently at hand, evolved into a holy standard against which all real possibilities for agreement were consistently found to be wanting.

How, then, might chairs approach the kinds of conflicts that arise in departments? A starting analysis would ask two questions: Who are the parties? What are the issues? The parties might be two faculty; one faculty member against some or all of the rest; two faculty factions, based in ideological or other differences; the chair and one or more faculty. Typical issues will include scheduling (of classes, meetings); curriculum change (small steps or large); faculty hiring; choice of the next chair; allocation of salary, leave time, or travel money.

Deciding on the parties and the issues will be influenced by how the conflict presents itself to the chair. This is not solely an objective matter. It is also a creative matter. Most conflicts can be defined in different ways (all consistent with the generally accepted facts) and the choice will depend largely on the chair's sense of what to do and where to begin. That is, the chair's own repertoire of conflict-handling skills, and his or her confidence in using them, will have a good deal to do with how the chair sees the conflict.

Thus, different people will see the same conflict in different ways, and the chair's self-interest will influence what he or she "sees." Both the ultimate attribution error and the anchor error previously described are additional reasons for this difference of perception. As the chair gets to know the conflict better, the nature of the conflict, in his or her perception, will evolve.

The chair's preliminary thinking about parties and issues will be based on the facts as he or she knows them at that point, and on which conflict management tools are available. There is a rule of thumb, usually wise, that suggests starting with the least intrusive, and the following list is presented in that order.

The chair can negotiate with individual faculty. Though the issue may be between two faculty in the department, it is possible that the chair can work out something with one of them. Negotiation involves skill, some art, and a particular attitude. It is complex, but if I had one minute to teach its most important component, I would say: Never assume, listen. This is advice we start getting in third grade, but for most of us, the older we get and the more authority we take on, the harder it is to do. And the

less we are aware of how badly we do it. Evidence of how badly professionals listen is ample. This may be fairly obvious, but what is not so obvious is that the act of listening itself makes us more persuasive.

The chair can seek out an informal peacemaker. Is there someone inside or outside the department, faculty or staff, whom the parties will trust and who has the temperament and intelligence to work with both sides? Peacemaking is not in their job description but it does seem to be in their DNA. Most organizations have such a person, or several of them. Can the chair find a way to engage this peacemaker to work with the parties?

The chair can mediate between the parties. This is risky because the chair may have his or her own idea of the “right” outcome and this may become apparent; or, equally problematic, one party may come to believe that the chair has his or her own agenda—and thus they will lose confidence in the chair’s fairness. On the positive side, the chair will know the problem and the range of possible solutions better than any outsider, and if the chemistry with the parties is acceptable, the chair can have more impact on the parties and the issue.

If the issues involve all the department’s faculty, the chair may wish to consider building a coalition in support of a particular outcome. Building one ally at a time can begin to convince the unallied that joining is a good idea. Coalitions are fragile, building them can take a lot of time, and the chair runs the risk of appearing conspiratorial. But the chair is also doing the essential political work of finding consensus, in this case one person at a time.

If the parties to a conflict are a large part of the department, the chair may want to consider providing negotiation training for all. Negotiation skills are learnable and may help the department members become more skillful in dealing with their own differences, taking some of the burden off the chair.

Facilitating the department’s decision-making process is a major tool (or set of tools) that the chair can use. For example:

- Setting the agenda for meetings can be influential. Don’t overcrowd the meeting; leave time for good discussion.

Don't put the hot topic last; the department will be tired and drift away.

- Speak with some faculty before the meeting so there are fewer surprises at the meeting. It may also be possible to be more persuasive with them in private.
- Keep the meeting topic on focus, and, if other topics slide onto the table, make clear when the group can discuss them at a later point. This is not easy. Faculty feel entitled to make long speeches, to use relevance with great elasticity, and to be academic in the most pejorative sense of the word.
- Reiterate the alternative choices facing the group, urge the group to consider each of them, and make sure they understand the implications of failure to decide.
- If possible, find or make deadlines with real consequences.
- Faculty and chairs often fall into the trap of letting the chair decide. This sounds like a good way to avoid the conflict, but most often it just postpones it. The conflict becomes invisible, it does not go away. Try to keep the decision with the department.
- Flip charts, PowerPoint slides, or computer projections are helpful for keeping the faculty eye on the target. Food is useful for sugar level and morale.

One final note on expectations. There is no such thing as a harmonious academic department. There are dead ones and live ones. The dead ones don't argue, and they don't do much else as a department either. The live ones argue, and they usually do a lot else. As faculty have substantial autonomy, a chair's ability to resolve departmental conflict is inherently limited. That said, there is still much one can do.

David Matz is with The Mediation Group, and is founder of the Graduate Program in Dispute Resolution at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Email: David.Matz@umb.edu

Strategies for Managing Difficult Personalities

by Harry Petersen

Familiar to all is the stale observation, often (if inaccurately) attributed to Henry Kissinger, about why academic politics can get so nasty. A less perfunctory though comparably wry explanation is found in a 2002 essay by Stanley Fish, which describes the toxic environment of a department in which “every turf battle, imagined slight, baseless jealousy, and ungrounded anxiety is . . . guaranteed eternal life” (p. B20).

Though characteristically incisive and provocative, Fish doesn’t fully explore the role that archetypal personalities often play in provoking this unhappy state of affairs. And while no responsible administrator would claim an unerring ability to manage such personalities, seven years of chairing a department of forty full-time faculty has led me to devise strategies for minimizing or forestalling some of the more predictable conflicts. The following scenario, largely hypothetical, provides an illustration.

Paul, the most talented and accomplished scholar among our senior faculty, is about to retire. Doug, a colleague with a distinguished, if controversial, record of professional leadership, has recently endowed an annual research award and wants Paul to be the initial recipient. Doug’s request seems reasonable, and, given Paul’s popularity with colleagues, I feel no apprehension in vetting the idea in an email to my advisory committee.

My complacency is short lived.

The first committee member to register disapproval is the departmental Platonist. The Platonist operates under the childlike assumption that all administrative decisions, upon stern ethical analysis, can and must be reduced to antithetical choices between right and wrong. In the present instance, guidelines for the research award specify that it is to be given in the fall semester, not at the end of the academic year. The fact that

these guidelines were written by the donor, who has nominated Paul for the award, is brushed aside. The Platonist further reminds me that the award is intended to support an ongoing project by a *current* rather than a *former* faculty member. I point out that Paul is still engaged in research; and, giving the Platonist a taste of his own literal-minded medicine, I note that Paul will remain a current faculty member until his retirement takes effect ten days from now. This last parry is a tactical blunder because Platonists seldom recognize and never appreciate irony.

The next person to express concern is the ambassador for the People's Republic. The ambassador declares no overt agenda; she merely facilitates the exchange of diverse opinion by voicing the concerns of unnamed "people" who are too timid, vulnerable, or inarticulate to speak for themselves. The ambassador worries that nearly half the department will feel, for one reason or another, that giving this award to Paul is inappropriate. I know better than to ask the ambassador which half of the department she is referring to or whether she agrees with them. Far too judicious to reveal her own opinions, the ambassador will, when pressed, always reaffirm the chair's preconceptions—at least for the moment. She only wants to help.

Close on the heels of the ambassador for the People's Republic comes the dramaturge. He, too, speaks for unnamed others but, unlike the ambassador, lays no claim to impartiality or disengagement. Erring instead on the side of unvarnished narcissism, the dramaturge—who is probably one of the people for whom the ambassador has already spoken—foresees calamitous fallout from any proposal initiated by a colleague he doesn't like. Paul, he asserts, will be offended by the insincerity of this patronizing gesture. Two days later, when I have ascertained that Paul is actually very gratified by Doug's proposal, the dramaturge takes a different tack: To give Paul an award named for "someone whose values are so contradictory to his" would be a travesty. Although I detect the odor of professional envy, I keep my suspicions to myself. And when the dramaturge suggests that we honor Paul instead by creating a special one-time award, I resist the urge to ask why this would seem any less insincere or patronizing. Dealing with the dramaturge is a test of self-restraint.

How, then, does a chair negotiate the challenges posed by these difficult personalities? Sarcasm, though tempting, is always counterproductive: The Platonist lacks a sense of humor, the ambassador will view sarcasm as cruel and unjust, and the dramaturge will pounce on any lapse of diplomacy, weaving it into another operatic production, the chair playing the role of Snidely Whiplash.

Probing ulterior motives is a better starting point. None of the three provocateurs covets the research award or considers Paul fundamentally unworthy of it. Both the ambassador and the Platonist, however, have an eye on the forthcoming election of a new chair—one of them obsessed with demonstrating concern for colleagues as frequently and conspicuously as possible, the other eager to prove, yet again, that a clear head and a strong will are the only important qualifications for the job. The motives of the dramaturge are more complex. An intense competitor for Best Portrayal of a Selfless Colleague, he can be remarkably skeptical of the benevolent impulses of others. Also a relentless martyr, the dramaturge seizes every opportunity to show how much he cares about the department and how little he's appreciated.

Analyzing motivation, however, goes only so far. Few people like to have their motives exposed, especially if the analysis is penetrating or aggressive. One could, for example, taunt the Platonist by reminding him of past instances in which he's benefited from other remissions of departmental policy: "Suppose I'd held to the letter of the law last year when you asked me to adjust your teaching assignment so you could finish that book, eh?" A more effective approach is to appeal to the Platonist's self-perceived rationalism by asking him to explain exactly what he thinks is at stake. Our Platonist eventually came to recognize that he was so preoccupied with the theoretical implications of offering Paul the award that he hadn't given much thought to the pragmatic consequences of *not* offering it to him. I wish I could say that this recognition led to an epiphany, but I content myself with engaging difficult personalities without trying to fix them. Our Platonist may never develop a capacity for self-deprecation no matter how tactfully I alert him to his foibles or how

cheerfully I acknowledge my own; neither is it likely that he will ever grant the legitimacy of pragmatism as a *modus operandi*.

There are various ways to handle the ambassador for the People's Republic. In some instances—when the issue at hand is particularly trivial or when the ambassador has begun to lose credibility with colleagues—the chair may safely ignore her input. It is never wise, however, to ask the ambassador to identify those for whom she speaks or to recommend that she encourage them to speak for themselves. Doing so will only seem to validate her self-appointed mission to protect the vulnerable. Another risky strategy is to ask the ambassador how she has responded to the concerns of unnamed colleagues: “What did you say when they expressed these views?” One might, on the other hand, suggest that she talk with Alice, Ben, or any of a dozen other level heads to get a slightly different take on the issue. However, the best approach is to redirect the ambassador's supposedly benevolent motives: “I think it would help if you explained to people that I don't want to antagonize the person who's funding this award and that, contrary to what they may have been led to believe, Paul will be honored to receive it.”

Less circumspect than the ambassador, the dramaturge is more likely to name names—a destructive tendency that no department chair wants to encourage. The best short-term strategy is to say: “I appointed you to the advisory committee because I thought you'd offer perspectives that might not occur to me. So I appreciate the trust you're expressing in me by voicing these concerns candidly.” Sooner or later, though, I'll have to tell the dramaturge that I've given a lot of thought to this decision and ask him to accept it and move on. Although this will not be well received, I've learned that appeasement is futile in the long run.

Finally, the strategies I've devised carry two important caveats. Any department chair who dismisses difficult colleagues as contestants in a penny-ante poker match does so at his or her peril. These are the very people I choose to serve on my advisory committee because their being there will either broaden their perspectives or at least expose their intractable solipsism to others. But more importantly, I must continually

remind myself that no colleague is merely an archetype. Archetypes never change; difficult people sometimes do. The department chair who abandons any hope of this is no longer capable or worthy of leadership.

Harry Petersen (a pseudonym) chairs a department at a university in the South.

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Legal Issues in Dealing with Challenging Colleagues

by *Barbara A. Lee*

Business organizations have been dealing with challenging employees for decades, but academe has lagged behind in its attempts to regulate behavior in the workplace. Academic administrators may fear lawsuits if they attempt to punish faculty for unprofessional or uncollegial behavior. Although a lawsuit is always a possibility, the courts generally defer to administrators' attempts to deal constructively with challenging colleagues.

What Standard of Conduct Is Appropriate for Faculty?

Colleges and universities have rules and regulations for their employees. These rules, or codes of conduct, are the "internal law" of the institution. When a dispute arises concerning whether an employee has violated a particular rule or regulation (or whether the institution, in dealing with an individual, has itself violated a rule or regulation), a court will examine whether the rule or code appears fair, whether it appropriately noti-

fies the employee of the type of behavior that is expected (or forbidden), and whether the institution followed its own rules or code in dealing with the alleged misconduct. It is unusual for a court to strike down a rule or a provision of a code of conduct unless it believes that the rule is so vague that an employee isn't really on notice of what is expected, and thus any form of punishment would be unfair.

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has promulgated a *Statement on Professional Ethics* that, even if it has not been adopted by a college or university, may be used as guidance for faculty behavior (www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/statementonprofessionalethics.htm). The statement provides that faculty members treat their colleagues and students with respect, refrain from harassment, and limit classroom speech to topics that are germane to the subject matter of the course. Courts have ruled that the *Statement on Professional Ethics* is a standard guide to faculty conduct and may be used to evaluate whether a faculty member has violated the profession's ethical and conduct standards in a disciplinary or termination hearing.

There are numerous cases in which institutions awarded tenure or promotion to a faculty member despite strong reservations about that individual's conduct and professionalism. Many institutions do not include collegiality or professionalism as criteria for achieving promotion or tenure, yet courts have ruled consistently that collegiality and professionalism are legitimate criteria for employment decisions and, even if "unwritten," may be used to evaluate individuals. For example, a court upheld the denial of tenure to a professor of management in part on the basis of his lack of collegiality. His department colleagues said that the professor was "two-faced," had a "superiority complex," and engaged in "tactless and inaccurate self-promotion," among other faults. A professor was nonreappointed at Kent State University in part because she had filed numerous grievances that were viewed as frivolous. And a tenured professor was terminated for extreme noncollegial behavior, including making false accusations against colleagues and the department chair, calling the chair a liar and refusing to speak to him at department meetings, and refusing to follow institutional policies and procedures. The courts upheld all of these decisions.

Conflicts with Administrators

Although department chairs and deans are usually tenured faculty, the courts view them as “management” and require that faculty members comply with reasonable requests and appropriate rules and regulations. Courts have upheld discipline, and termination, of faculty who refuse to meet their classes, harass students or colleagues, or commit research misconduct. But they have also upheld discipline or discharge of faculty for what in any other context would be called “insubordination,” a word that is typically not used in an academic setting. For example, in a case against the University of North Carolina, a tenured faculty member made unsubstantiated accusations against department colleagues, engaged in a physical altercation with another faculty member on at least one occasion, and engaged in “improper conduct” with department faculty, staff, and students. Although all the senior faculty in his department recommended that he be discharged, the university transferred him to a different department. The faculty member challenged the transfer as a violation of his academic freedom rights, but the court ruled that he had lost no pay or other benefits and thus the transfer was completely lawful.

Even if the difficult faculty member has engaged in speech that could be considered protected by the First Amendment, a transfer or other nonfinancial penalty for speech that interferes with the efficient operation of a department or institution is usually upheld. For example, several faculty members challenged their transfer from the agricultural engineering department to the agriculture department at Auburn University. The faculty members had written a report criticizing their previous department as “dysfunctional” and had publicized its contents. The court ruled that the transfer did not deprive the faculty members of any benefits, prestige, or potential employment opportunities, and found for the institution.

Conflicts with administrators over grading usually end badly for the faculty member. A tenured engineering professor at the University of Illinois refused to submit his grading materials as required by new departmental policies on uniform grading in multisection classes. The dean

barred him from teaching, withdrew his research funds, and removed him as the engineering school's webmaster. The court ruled that the dean's actions were in response to the professor's misconduct, not an attempt to suppress his speech, saying that "a violation of an employer's lawful rules does not become an improper basis for decision just because the employee makes his position known to the public."

Public institutions may need to tread carefully if the faculty member has taken his or her dispute with colleagues or the administration to the press. In general, speech (or writing) will be protected by the First Amendment if the topic is a matter of "public concern." Therefore, a faculty member who speaks or writes publicly about his or her own personal grievances with the institution will generally not be protected, but a faculty member whose concern is broader than personal issues—for example, the quality of the curriculum, the appropriateness of an institutional art exhibit, or the university's budget—may very likely be protected by the First Amendment. For example, a tenured art professor at Northern Kentucky University was quoted in a local newspaper criticizing his department for an art exhibit that he found offensive. His department colleagues censured him, and the professor challenged the censure as a violation of his First Amendment rights. The court allowed the case to go to trial, ruling that the remarks were on a matter of public concern and did not disrupt the efficient operation of the university.

Conflicts with Colleagues

How should institutions respond to faculty who are involved in frequent and divisive conflicts with colleagues? Counseling or other proactive strategies are one approach. In some cases, however, the institution may decide to impose discipline. Documentation of the misconduct, several informal attempts to resolve the problems, and careful adherence to institutional policies and procedures should help the college or university defend against a lawsuit challenging the imposition of the discipline for noncollegial behavior.

In many of the lawsuits involving faculty disciplined for noncollegial or aggressive behavior, the plaintiff faculty member has alleged that the conduct for which he or she was punished was protected by academic freedom. In virtually all of these lawsuits, the judges have rejected this claim. Academic freedom protects faculty members from interference in their teaching, research, and service obligations, but also requires faculty to follow institutional rules, treat their colleagues and students with respect and dignity, and refrain from harassment or mistreatment of them. The AAUP *Statement on Professional Ethics* makes it very clear that academic freedom does not condone behavior that is disruptive, noncollegial, or inimical to the efficient operation of the college or university. Disputes over grading standards, teaching philosophies, or curriculum are protected by academic freedom only to the extent that the faculty member behaves in a cooperative manner and engages in respectful dialogue with colleagues and administrators. Those who do not will receive little sympathy from the courts and may find themselves removed from teaching certain classes or even dismissed.

How to Respond to Challenging Colleagues

- Ask for training on the institutional policies and rules that you must enforce.
- Find out which sanctions are available for failure to comply with policies and rules, and don't be afraid to use them.
- Respond promptly and firmly to noncollegial or abusive behavior.
- Enlist the support of other department faculty who are unhappy with the problem behavior.
- Begin with an informal discussion, identifying the problem behavior and discussing ways to resolve it. Listen to the faculty member's concerns and address them if they are legitimate.
- If the problem behavior persists, escalate to the next level of sanctions.
- Ensure that the next level of administration will support your decision to deal with the difficult colleague.

- Consider using progressive discipline if it is not required.
- Document all discussions and communications with the difficult faculty member.

Barbara A. Lee is professor of human resource management at Rutgers University and counsel to the law firm of Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge, LLP. Email: lee@smlr.rutgers.edu. This article is adapted from a presentation at the Legal Issues in Higher Education conference sponsored by the University of Vermont, October 13, 2008.

Mediating in the Academic Bully Culture: The Chair's Responsibility to Faculty and Graduate Students

by Barbara M. De Luca and Darla J. Twale

Faculty incivility can rear its ugly head at various levels within higher education institutions. It can surface at any one of the many administrative levels with administrators being the bullies, or it can be found within the faculty ranks with faculty members bullying each other. Interestingly, students can also be victims of uncivil behavior. Administrators, faculty, and students can play different roles in the bully culture: perpetrator, victim, or mediator. This article focuses on faculty incivility with the department chair as mediator, as well as faculty incivility to students, particularly graduate students.

The Chair as Mediator

Although chairs can be involved in bullying as the bully, as the one bullied, or as the mediator in a departmental bullying situation, this section will focus on the chair as a mediator between faculty members. This job

responsibility often creates consternation in department chairs. At the same time they are trying to build camaraderie among faculty, they are also facilitators who are responsible for carrying out the institution's mission, liaising between the department faculty and higher administration, and making merit and promotion and tenure recommendations. These tasks can often be in conflict with one another.

Because chairs have a major impact on the future of individual faculty members, they must be able to recognize when a faculty member is being bullied and intervene to stop the bully while simultaneously respecting the privacy, professionalism, and integrity of the faculty member involved. Recognizing a bullying situation means chairs must be aware of the indications of a bullied faculty member as well as the traits of a bully.

Indicators of a bully include showing disrespect toward a faculty member and continually promoting him or herself. Chairs should also be aware of a faculty member who makes a habit of "secretly" informing them of departmental matters, be they manufactured or bona fide. That is, the bully will repeatedly initiate and/or perpetuate rumors. He or she may continually break the confidences of other faculty members and reveal highly classified committee proceedings. The chair must recognize this for what it often is: the bully's attempt to ingratiate him or herself to the chair in order to continue bullying without reprimands from the chair. It's an I'll-take-care-of-you-but-I-expect-you-to-take-care-of-me-in-return situation. A bully is also difficult to recognize because his or her behavior is frequently disguised as concern for the department in some way while it is actually promoting the bully's own personal agenda. Aside from ignoring the rumors and confidences shared by the bully, the chair must avoid contributing to the sharing of confidences. This will essentially "grant permission" to the bully to continue his or her inappropriate behavior. The chair must learn to recognize such behavior and not succumb to it. Not supporting the bully ultimately renders him or her ineffective.

The chair must learn not only to recognize bullying behavior but to discern the indications of a bullied faculty member as well. If a faculty member approaches the chair with assertions of being bullied, the chair

must not ignore the individual. Bullying is frequently very subtle, and bullies are good at disguising their behavior in public settings. Often, the chair believes that the bullied faculty member is being paranoid, when, in fact, there is a genuine problem. If the chair is uncertain, he or she should avoid immediately dismissing the claim, but rather carefully watch for other indications that the faculty member is being bullied. The chair must recognize behavioral changes in the faculty member. Bullied faculty members frequently isolate themselves. They remain in their offices and talk with no one during the day. Because they often feel marginalized (and, in fact, may actually *be* marginalized) they rarely volunteer for service opportunities, be they departmental committees or other activities, and seldom engage in departmental discussions. They rarely participate in social activities with colleagues, even when sponsored by the department or institution. The work effort of previously productive faculty who are bullied may suffer. Research productivity may noticeably decrease, and once above-average student evaluations of teaching may suddenly drop. The constant pressure of being bullied might manifest itself as aggression by the bullied. The aggressive behavior will be misdirected, and this will be the clue for the chair that something is amiss. Bullied faculty members are likely to avoid the office and work at home more than usual. Any one or all of these changes should be an indication to the chair that something is wrong.

Among many other responsibilities, the chair must address bullying issues in the department. All faculty must be able to trust the chair, believe that their work will speak for them, and that rewards will be allocated based solely on productive work, evaluated both for quality and quantity. To prevent or minimize bullying, chairs must be focused on their department, not on themselves or on matters outside the department or institution. Chairs must be very careful not to inadvertently reward bullying behavior. At the beginning of each academic year the chair should establish a code of behavior encouraging courtesy and respect and discouraging yelling and arguing and promulgating rumors. If rumors do circulate, the chair is responsible for seeking the truth and thwarting the gossip. The bully must be confronted and reprimanded.

The chair must be knowledgeable about internal grievance procedures and share workplace harassment policy with new faculty. The chair's job is to ensure that faculty work together to understand the institution's policies and procedures and to develop departmental policies and procedures. This cannot be done without establishing common ground within the department. If bullies in the department are only concerned with their own welfare, the goal of common ground or community will be impossible. The chair must protect the tenured as well as nontenured faculty. It is a mistake to believe that bullies go after only nontenured faculty. Faculty members who have only their self-interests in mind and are not concerned with the successes or accomplishments of other faculty will bully anyone they feel is in their way, be the person tenured or not. Above all, the chair must be cognizant of the signs of bullying and be willing to address the behavior as a problem.

Faculty Incivility and Graduate Students

Faculty incivility does not contain itself just to faculty and administrative ranks. It often spills over to involve graduate students and, more often, graduate teaching and research assistants. Faculty can not only take advantage of their colleagues but their students as well. A power relationship that faculty have over students makes it easy to control them overtly and covertly for several reasons.

Graduate students are reluctant to speak up about faculty who fail to meet minimal obligations to them in terms of teaching, job supervision, or directing doctoral research. Power imbalances of faculty over students coupled with the student's desire to complete the degree typically silence the acts and the student. Furthermore, because students are in this precarious position, they avoid complaining or confronting and instead retreat as a coping strategy and means of survival. Meanwhile, the student's inaction can be seen as an invitation for perhaps another encounter.

A culture of silence explains why other faculty, administrators, and student peers tend to be unaware of or oblivious to these problems. Some are unable or unwilling to intervene on behalf of a student based on the perception that no one would know how to remedy the situation. Con-

sidered unprofessional, faculty would be unlikely to criticize colleagues' judgment regarding the oversight of graduate students or their dissertation research. It is possible that the administration knows of certain faculty who poorly supervise and advise their graduate students, and yet they do nothing. What is worse, they tend to cover it up, find plausible excuses for it, and disregard further complaining by disgruntled students. Thus, anything untoward that faculty supervisors and advisors do becomes acceptable by default, supports an insular, protective stratum, and perpetuates the culture of silence.

Few departments and chairs, however, prepare themselves to sanction faculty over this potential form of control or manipulation. If a star professor has already been placed on such a pedestal (or placed him or herself there), the professor may choose to further self-aggrandize to the detriment of the student. Should the student choose to complain, the department would be unlikely to reprimand the professor and more likely to cast dispersions on the student. The faculty member remains above reproach and, furthermore, regards his or her behavior as appropriate.

To overcome this culture of silence, students may benefit from an open forum conducted periodically by a neutral party, such as an ombudsman or human resources manager, especially if the department is unwilling to intervene. Students would be permitted to express problems in oral or written form, whichever is more comfortable, and know that their concerns are being heard.

Graduate students evaluate faculty teaching in the aggregate, but typically students seldom rate faculty supervision of their assistantship or dissertation research. This supports the realization that graduate students are not recognized as part of a community of learners or a community of scholars.

Furthermore, at no time is feedback from this supervisory aspect of academic life factored into faculty promotion, tenure, or post-tenure review. Without a feedback loop, some students will encounter or be assigned to faculty members who exploit their student labor and/or fail to socialize and usher them effectively into the profession. Because some students expect faculty to initiate contact and professors rarely do, students perceive faculty as unsupportive, intimidating, and/or uncaring.

An opportunity for the department chair to inquire into the one-on-one relationship between student and faculty member, either separately or as a dyad during a performance appraisal, is essential. Maintaining the sanctity of a strong advisor/mentor/supervisor relationship between faculty and student should be a top priority.

Educating faculty formally in the supervision of students and academic work and research should be considered a professional development necessity. Discussing the expectations of the faculty/student relationship could begin the graduate student socialization process. Consider a stated contract of ground rules and expectations between student and supervisor, student and dissertation chair, student and advisor, and so on, explaining the duties and responsibilities of each party to the other, the time to be allotted, and the outcomes to be realized, instead of relying on unstated implications. This approach would be helpful to both parties and should be initiated by the department chair. Colleagues seldom choose to police boundaries with another colleague and often decline to condemn, sanction, or remedy the situation; a contract stating expectations may avert that uncomfortable task.

Without a clear policy statement that reaches beyond a stated or implied ethical code of conduct, little can be done to break the silence. Policy discussions may begin with initial research obtained from student exit interviews, alumni interviews, and separate focus groups of current students and faculty and proceed to subsequent drafts from a policy formulation committee that is comprised of faculty and students. Without recognizing that problems exist, there will be no first step toward averting them. This undertaking may be perceived as an arduous task by the chair, but it is one that is worth the effort.

Conclusion

Although we have discussed two different levels of incivility in this article, the indicators of victimization and the solutions for the prevention of bullying are the same regardless of who is being bullied and who is doing the bullying. Victims of bullying, be they faculty members or

graduate students, generally retreat into their own world. They become silent, fearful of repercussions or being seen as a whiner or troublemaker. Providing an environment in which the victim feels comfortable to share what is happening is the first step toward minimizing bullying behavior. Another major step is to establish formal policies against bullying, including the actions to be taken to eliminate the behavior. The policy must also include a process by which the bullied can seek help without fear of retribution by the bully. Finally, the policies and processes contained therein must be made available to everyone, even discussed with new faculty and graduate students, so they feel comfortable in the environment and confident that someone will intervene if incivility occurs. The department chair plays a pivotal role in facilitating this process.

Barbara M. De Luca is an associate professor in the Department of Educational Leadership, and Darla J. Twale is a clinical professor in the Department of Counselor Education and Human Services, both at the University of Dayton. Email: barbara.deluca@notes.udayton.edu, darla.twale@notes.udayton.edu

SECTION FOUR

Helping Faculty and Students Thrive

Building Faculty Resilience: The Key to Successful Change in the Academic Department

by Cynthia Schubert-Irastorza and Suzanne Evans

Change is inevitable in the academic environment and resilience is a vital survival skill during times of change. Higher education enrollment patterns and student demographics are shifting, competition for students is increasing, and new technologies are transforming the face of education. Experienced faculty are confronted with multiple changes and challenges as new programs emerge and old programs close, as new delivery formats appear, and as online enrollments outpace on-ground offerings. Faculty responses to these changes differ significantly.

Some faculty, the resilient ones, are adjusting well, adapting or developing new courses, learning new skills and teaching strategies, finding innovative ways to use the new technology tools. Some are not. Unwilling to adapt to new circumstances, a few faculty members resist, perceiving change as a loss. Holding on to the old ways rather than moving forward, they seek sympathy rather than solutions. Resilience makes the difference.

Resilience is the ability to “bounce back” from unwelcome change; the capacity to adapt, survive, and even thrive in the face of adversity,

coming out better and stronger for the experience. Resilience is not the absence of adversity in life, but having the capacity to deal with it successfully. Resilience means seeing change as a challenge and an opportunity for growth.

Department chairs are regularly called on to help individual faculty members accept and adapt to institutional changes in a constructive manner. We believe that developing faculty resilience is the key to implementing successful change.

In Search of Resilience

A call from a lead faculty member alerted me to the negative effect of change in our department. Alarmed by her colleagues' responses to a proposed school-wide reorganization plan, she reported that the faculty at her center were so worried and preoccupied about how the changes would impact their jobs that nothing was getting done. Morale was sinking fast, work was piling up, and enrollments were dropping.

Recognizing a widespread problem, my colleague and I began researching resilience. Following the suggestions of medical scientist and psychologist Joan Borysenko (2009), we developed a workshop presentation on building professional resilience. Workshop feedback confirmed our initial belief that many faculty need assistance in dealing with issues involving change in the workplace. One participant, faced with departmental reorganization, was overwhelmed with her workload but reluctant to complain. Another, with reduced responsibilities, felt professionally diminished and feared her job was in jeopardy. Yet another, with sinking student evaluation scores, needed help adapting to the needs of online learners.

Five Factors Influencing Resilience

We cannot require people to be resilient but we can model and reinforce the positive attitudes required for coping successfully with the unavoidable stresses of life in the world of education. Current research suggests

that resilience is a learned behavior and that an individual's level of resilience is strongly increased when they (1) experience a feeling of connection with others, (2) believe they are in control of themselves and their environment, (3) view change as a challenge, (4) use creativity in dealing with change, and (5) feel competent to handle the change.

Think about the individual faculty members in your department. Do they exhibit resilient behaviors and attitudes? Are they proactive and solution oriented? Do they look forward to the future? How about you? Are you a role model for resiliency? How well do you deal with unexpected changes?

Connection: Relating to Others

Resilient people get along well with others and have a strong support network. We all feel better and work better when we have positive relationships at home and on the job. At the workshops and in the literature, the most frequently cited source of strength during times of personal and professional setbacks was the support of family, friends, and coworkers. Are you making connections with and among the faculty?

Are you aware of which faculty members are struggling with change? Do you seek them out? Do you listen to their concerns and follow up with action? Do you encourage friendships and collaboration among faculty in your department?

Control: Assuming Responsibility

Resilient people avoid becoming victims and take responsibility for both their actions and reactions. We all want to maintain a sense of control over ourselves and our environment. We may not have the final word about workplace decisions that affect us, but we do have control over how we respond to that decision. Can you maintain your sense of humor and purpose, even when things don't go your way?

How do you communicate with faculty about changes under way in your school or department? Do you anticipate how they will interpret

these changes? Do you try to help faculty deal constructively with decisions made at a level beyond their (and your) control? Honest discussion about the reality of “what is” can lead to creative solutions and restore a sense of self-decision.

Challenge: Seizing Opportunity

Resilient people adapt quickly to change and enjoy the process of proving they can meet the requirements of a new situation. A young professor, faced with the cancellation of her class due to low enrollment, organized and taught an innovative Web-based class that was broadcast over the Internet from her center but included additional students from several smaller locations. Seizing the opportunity, she managed to preserve her class and create an innovative model for boosting enrollment.

Every change creates new opportunities; the trick is finding them. Those who are overly preoccupied with their own problems or perceived losses generally have trouble finding solutions. Successful problem solving requires hope, positive intention, and optimism—the belief that there is a solution.

When you hear colleagues complain, do you try to initiate a discussion based on solutions? Do you regularly meet with faculty in groups or as individuals to discuss ways of resolving ongoing departmental issues? Do you keep the hope and optimism going?

Creativity

Resilient people use creativity to cope with change. Creativity involves imagination and the ability to envision new ways of doing things. A group of faculty faced with declining enrollment recently used their collective creativity to generate an impressive list of outreach ideas that are now being implemented with promising results.

What creative activities are your colleagues doing in teaching, research, and scholarship? Are they receiving recognition for their efforts? Creative ideas are catching and tend to multiply.

Competence

Self-confidence is the cornerstone of resilience. Resilient people believe they are competent and will be successful in meeting the challenge. Resistance to change is often based on lack of knowledge or fear of failure. “Will I be able to learn this new technology application, and if I can’t, will everyone think I’m stupid?” Psychologists and resilience experts Reivick and Shatte (2004) note that self-confidence does not build competence. It is the other way around. Competence builds self-esteem. When you are doing well in the world, you feel good about yourself. As competency increases, so does self-confidence.

Are you encouraging your colleagues to increase their competencies? Which competencies need development? Is it technology, teaching or research skills, knowledge of curriculum development procedures, or understanding of assessment systems? Do you publicize conferences and resources in areas of faculty need and interest? How about mentoring programs for faculty who need assistance? Are you learning new skills yourself and setting the pace for ongoing competency building?

Conclusion

Suggestions are only worthwhile if they are acted on. Thinking back to the five factors influencing resiliency, which ones stick in your mind as something you might implement? Is it seeking out individual faculty members or being really clear about communicating information? Is it making more of an effort to seek faculty input, encouraging and promoting creative ideas, or making sure to acknowledge and reward faculty accomplishments?

The most important thing that I have learned from our study of resilience is that encouraging colleagues to build resiliency skills means taking the time and making the effort to help others feel positive about themselves and their ability to deal successfully with change—and ensuring that you do the same for yourself.

Cynthia Schubert-Irastorza is chair of the teacher education department, and Suzanne Evans is associate professor in the Department of Community Health, both at National University. Email: cschubert@nu.edu, sevans@nu.edu. This article is based on a presentation at the 28th annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 10–11, 2011, Orlando, Florida.

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Creating Time and Space for Faculty Reflection, Risk-Taking, and Renewal

by Deborah Chang Lechuga and Roger G. Baldwin

Faculty today must stay up to date in their fields and energetic in their classrooms or they cannot provide the quality education that students deserve. However, as faculty duties expand and their personal lives become more complex, it is increasingly difficult for faculty to find the space and time necessary to grow professionally and support their institutional communities. Frequently, faculty are overextended in their personal and professional roles while trying to maintain their stride on the academic treadmill. In this climate, institutions must try to find places within the lives of faculty that enable them to reflect on their work, take risks, and reenergize themselves and their academic careers.

In this article, we share the insights we gained by studying the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's Faculty Career Enhancement program. The Mellon Foundation sought to promote the development of faculty across the

academic lifecycle by providing support to selected institutions to design programs tailored to the distinctive needs of their faculty members.

Identifying the Need

The issues that the Faculty Career Enhancement program addressed were identified by the institutions themselves. These included (1) the need for faculty professional and personal balance, (2) the need for intellectual and social community, and (3) the need for experimentation, risk-taking, and innovation.

Professional and personal balance. The Mellon-sponsored institutions spoke of the need to create time and space for faculty to concentrate on priority faculty duties, to better integrate their competing faculty roles of teaching, scholarship, and service, and to achieve greater balance in their personal and professional lives.

Intellectual and social community. Many colleges sought to foster an environment that stimulates both intellectual and social community. These institutions recognized that a healthy and vibrant community is an important factor in sustaining faculty across their careers but that space and time to nurture community have diminished in recent decades as faculty lives have become more complex and siloed by their disciplines and competing roles.

Experimentation, risk-taking, and innovation. Several institutions wanted to promote faculty experimentation and innovation. Keeping faculty current in their fields and invigorated in their teaching and research are essential to maintaining institutional change. Professors take risks and innovate by adding new material to their established courses, developing new courses, revising their instructional strategies, moving into interdisciplinary fields, and exploring new research problems.

Creating Time for Faculty

Semester leaves. Semester leaves provided by many of the Mellon-sponsored initiatives gave faculty blocks of time to work on research projects, course development, or professional learning endeavors. Many

faculty members said finding time is critical to their productivity or to their professional renewal. Mellon-sponsored institutions found a variety of ways to provide faculty with time to concentrate on priority concerns. For example, semester leaves were used to expand one-semester sabbaticals to help faculty complete important research projects.

Summer leaves. These were another way some institutions gave their faculty concentrated time to focus on a specific project or priority. For example, some faculty received modest summer support to define new projects or to do the preliminary work needed to get a new project up and running.

Course releases. Course releases are a more modest tool some institutions used to free up time for faculty to work on research or to take on an invigorating new project or assignment. For example, faculty received partial- or full-course releases to develop new courses or to update and revise existing courses. Others received released time to start new research projects.

Student assistants. Several institutions helped free up time for faculty by providing support for faculty to hire student assistants. Faculty could apply for a student assistant or a recent graduate to help with an ongoing research project or to lay the groundwork for a new research project, new course, or an important professional development activity.

Creating Space for Faculty

Reading and discussion groups. Some institutions used a portion of their Mellon funds to create “space” (and time) for intellectual dialogue as well as social community on their campuses. Some faculty created reading or discussion groups organized around a common theme or academic issue as the basis for dialogue. A key goal of these gatherings was to encourage more faculty interaction across fields and academic generations.

Co-mentoring opportunities. Co-mentoring is based on the idea that mentoring relationships can be beneficial to all parties involved, not just the junior partner. Mellon-sponsored institutions offered co-mentoring

opportunities by providing resources to encourage junior and veteran faculty to work together on a project related to teaching, research, or curriculum.

Collaboration support. Collaborative initiatives were designed to encourage cross-generational and cross-disciplinary faculty projects that support faculty across the academic lifecycle. These collaborations also nurtured intellectual community by providing “space” for colleagues to work together on a mutual interest.

Conferences and workshops. Several institutions supported a variety of field- and interest-based workshops and conferences designed to bring together faculty with common interests to exchange information, foster creativity, develop networks, and promote collaboration. Some of these activities connected colleagues in the same field or specialty from other Mellon-sponsored institutions. Others focused on broader interdisciplinary themes and brought faculty together from different disciplines and different institutions to exchange ideas, learn from each other, and spark one another’s professional renewal.

Cohort-based and career-stage groups. Several institutions offered activities and programs to address specific faculty career-stage issues and themes. These included orientation programs and retreats for new faculty, dinners and discussions for faculty over fifty, and meetings and support for emeritus faculty. These activities enhanced community while they helped to sustain faculty in various demographic cohorts and career stages.

Promoting Intellectual Community, Program Innovation, and Faculty Renewal

Although the Mellon Foundation provided financial support for the activities just described, many strategies to create time and space for faculty community, risk-taking, and renewal do not require large amounts of financial support. Department chairs can help to find space and time for renewal activities if they are creative, flexible, and willing to exercise their leadership potential. A few ideas chairs may consider trying include:

Time

- *Reordering faculty course assignments* to free a block of time to concentrate on a new course, research project, or professional development goal.
- *Assigning course releases* for a well-defined project that will benefit a professor and the professor's program or institution.
- *Reducing committee assignments or other service obligations* in exchange for focus on an important renewal activity or other challenging task.
- *Providing low-cost student assistants* (awarded competitively) to help faculty start or advance new learning, course development, or scholarly projects.

Space

- *Encouraging discussion and/or reading groups* that support professional growth while encouraging community.
- *Providing incentives for team teaching and other forms of faculty collaboration* to promote professional growth and productivity.
- *Promoting co-mentoring* by helping faculty across generations and specialties to identify mutual interests and learning needs.
- *Forming cohort groups* that address the special interests and needs of subgroups (early/mid-career faculty, women faculty, faculty of color).
- *Hosting seminars and workshops* that bring departmental colleagues together to learn from each other and from colleagues at other institutions.

These ideas are not exhaustive. Creative department chairs can find many additional ways to help their faculty discover precious space and time in their busy lives. Chairs can play a key catalyst role when faculty need space and time for community, reflection, and renewal. To find space and time within the constraints of academic schedules and resources, chairs should encourage faculty to plan their work and professional growth opportunities carefully. Chairs should be flexible with faculty work

assignments, allowing equitable arrangements that open blocks of time for professors to concentrate on priority goals. They should promote collaboration and teamwork that brings faculty together to learn and support each other's professional well-being. Finally, department chairs should use their discretionary funds, however modest, to aid the search for space and time in the lives of faculty members. They can provide small grants to aid mentoring or collaborations. They can provide refreshments or a small amount of funds for books or other materials that faculty groups may request to facilitate conversation and learning. We learned from the Faculty Career Enhancement program that food helps to support socialization and idea generation. By providing small amounts of financial support, chairs convey the message to faculty that their time and professional development are valued, important, and a worthwhile investment.

Conclusion

Every good department chair knows that time and space are very limited resources that are extremely valuable to faculty. Thoughtful and creative chairs can work closely with their faculty colleagues to define or reserve space and time that will help professors to reflect on their work, engage in fruitful dialogue, experiment with new approaches, and support one another's professional growth and vitality.

Deborah Chang Lechuga is a research associate at the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning at Texas A&M University. Roger G. Baldwin is professor of higher, adult, and lifelong education at Michigan State University. Email: dlechuga@tamu.edu, rbaldwin@msu.edu

Mending a Fractured Department: Strategies for New Chairs

by *Randall McClure*

Despite the efforts to better prepare faculty to assume the responsibilities of the chair role and in doing so provide stronger leadership for their academic units, new chairs only really learn their jobs by doing them. In stable academic departments with established policies and accepted practices, a strong sense of identity and community, and adequate support levels, learning on the job is likely a manageable if not enjoyable task for most new chairs.

But what happens when the new chair has to learn on the job in a fractured, troubled academic department? Where the environment is rich with tension and conflict is the norm? Where policies are nonexistent and procedures are essentially absent? Where budgets and morale continue to spiral in the wrong direction? Where the day-to-day uncertainties and management realities are far from the new chair's dreams of vision and leadership?

In this article I offer strategies for chairs leading troubled departments, particularly for new chairs who are tasked with repairing the fractures of a department whose faculty have experienced, among other things, constant turnover in the chair's office. The turmoil created by such turnover often leaves departments in pieces, with some faculty fleeing for other, more stable units and institutions, with those left behind subject to uncertainty and wavering morale. I believe that the only way to mend a fractured department, for a new and even an experienced chair, is to combine a series of strategies that work along several fronts common to the challenges of academic departments and, most importantly, to make a serious investment in people.

Communicating Like Crazy/Listening Loudly

When communicating with faculty in a fractured department, share every little piece of good news. Faculty in fractured departments might not be able to see their colleagues across the lines that divide them, but

alone and in their factions they are likely doing some good things in their research, service, and teaching. New chairs need to celebrate these achievements across lines, perhaps through an email listserv dedicated to good news. Even in more cohesive departments, faculty tend to be incredibly busy, and rarely do they have the opportunity (save for meetings) to see their colleagues for any extended period of time, not to mention learn about their successes. Good news is one way to unite faculty in the work in which they share.

While new chairs need to communicate like crazy with faculty and be as transparent as possible in that communication, listening to faculty is just as important. In departments that have seen their fair share of leadership turnover, it is safe to assume that previous chairs have been, at least to some extent, communicating with them, sharing their visions for moving forward. When they quickly exit stage left, however, faculty often feel that they have been chasing rabbits, working to move the department down one road, only to find with the new chair that the road has changed.

Therefore, I suggest you take the time to listen to faculty, staff, and students before making any significant directional changes, and continue to listen to them as you change. For example, I regularly meet with different faculty, staff, and students groups, from our growing cohort of lecturer faculty to our new majors and minors. I am interested to know why they are part of the department and what ideas they have for making it better. If you are a new chair who feels like an army of one, find a systematic way to open up conversations inside and outside your department and focus those conversations not so much on your ideas, but on the needs, concerns, and suggestions of others. Communication is key, but listening more than talking seems to be the critical element for chairs learning to communicate with those they serve.

Family First

“Family first” is really as simple as it sounds. It is far too easy for those of us in academic leadership positions to bury our heads in institutional sands, to become so invested in our work and that of the units we lead,

that we forget our units are made up of people, many or most of whom have lives outside the department that are just as, if not more, important to them than their lives inside of it. When the work day is done, it is our families we return to, and the health and well-being of faculty and staff should not be undervalued by department chairs.

I am not saying that new chairs need to be friends with everyone in their units, but we must find ways to acknowledge the lives of our colleagues and students outside the academy. Whether it's supporting the faculty member whose mother is living out her final days, the student who is trying to stay in school despite being in the last trimester of her pregnancy, or the staff member battling depression, our units are made up of people, and putting family first can help strengthen a unit perhaps not at the point of the unit's challenges, but within the people who are needed to help meet them.

Benching the Chair

“Benching the chair” is a strategy intended to get the chair off of his or her island. I advocate that new department chairs form a leadership team with a combination of staff and faculty across ranks and including at least one at-large representative chosen by the faculty. This leadership team or advisory council can help new chairs vet ideas before taking them to the faculty or other administrators, to lean on the experience of the collective group. Particularly for a new chair coming in from another unit or university, a leadership team provides a richer understanding not only of institutional culture and history, but also a more robust approach to shared governance and transparency critical to the success of most academic units.

Sharing the Responsibility

Any chair would concede that some work in which departments engage is tedious, mundane, and unexciting. Tasks such as verifying course codes in the online registration system, processing curriculum forms, and

troubleshooting fixes in department facilities can eat away a chair's time, taking him or her from addressing the major challenges confronting the unit. Unfortunately, many new chairs have a difficult time asking others, whether faculty or staff, to help accomplish the small day-to-day tasks and troubles.

In most instances, chairs need to find ways to make faculty and staff work meaningful, yet there is no reason that chairs should handle all of the daily issues and responsibilities by themselves. If new chairs find ways to share in unit governance, perhaps through forming a leadership team, then they should be able to find ways to share the smaller tasks, turning them into responsibilities. Some strategies might include making curriculum forms the responsibility of the curriculum committee or appointing a faculty member to serve as a classroom or technology liaison. Every unit I have been part of has at least one faculty member who loves the forms and processes that make colleges and universities tick and another who reports every glitch and shortcoming in the department's classrooms and facilities. Assigning these individuals as point persons for such things and recognizing them for their efforts not only shares the work, but acknowledges that even the little things matter.

Advocalization

Many new chairs have a difficult time finding ways to lead their units out, to advocate for them with audiences beyond their departments or colleges. Three strategies that may help new chairs advocate for their units are forming an advisory board, leveraging the affordances of Web 2.0 tools, and developing community partnerships.

Much like a leadership team or advisory council within the unit, an advisory board of students, emeritus faculty, and community members can provide new chairs with a broader, more robust perspective on the units they lead. Work with board members can also help extend the department into the community it serves, and the visibility and energy that often results from such community projects and partnerships should

not be undervalued. For example, my unit has partnered with the local arts center as well as with the regional library to offer events for local residents.

In addition to engaging in face-to-face activities, new chairs should find ways to leverage Web 2.0 tools to their advantage, to extend their units beyond the brick and mortar structures that house them. Creating a “friends of [department name]” email list, having a department Facebook site, and publishing an e-newsletter or hosting a department blog are just some ways chairs can leverage technological tools to “advocalize” for their departments.

Little Giants

Some challenges facing academic departments are problems of their own making, their own “little giants.” For example, my unit has existed for more than a decade without a constitution and bylaws or even a collected set of policies. Without any organizing documents and with different chairs enacting their own policies over the years, many faculty are often confused about what is the “current” policy. Therefore, new chairs should find ways to tackle their little giants. In this case, working with faculty to write a constitution and collect its policies has helped to mend fractures of its own creation.

Other strategies include streamlining annual review processes, equitably distributing faculty teaching and service loads, and finding ways to help faculty integrate teaching, scholarship, and service. We often see our challenges as external to our units, and frequently they are, but we also must acknowledge and respond to problems we allowed to become our own giants.

Picking the Right Kinds of Fruit

It is often advocated that new leaders pick the low-hanging fruit to quickly remedy a problem on which most everyone agrees. While I acknowledge the value in doing so, particularly for the positive gains reaped

in the short term, I believe that new chairs stand to benefit more if they look at this strategy somewhat differently. Picking the low-hanging fruit, more than getting those quick wins, can send a mixed message to those in your department, leading after the accolades die out to a “so what are you going to do with the high-hanging fruit” and later to a “what have you done for me lately” mentality.

Although it is important to acknowledge the problems and solutions to which nearly all agree, it is more important for new chairs to gain a sense of the whole fruit tree and to work with their colleagues to develop a plan and timeline for addressing low, middle, and high priorities. Low-hanging fruit can certainly be picked, but I suggest that it must be part of a comprehensive plan and vision for the department in order to sustain and build momentum over time.

Making Work Meaningful

Chairs must find ways to make faculty and staff work meaningful. This can include ensuring that department meetings have a focused agenda, are held only when necessary, and end on time. This can also include setting annual charges and clear goals for committee work, encouraging curricular and classroom innovation not just at the point of innovation but later on in review processes, and holding realistic expectations for research and service. If faculty and staff see their work as clearly contributing to their own professional development as well as the growth of the department, it is easier to work collaboratively with them to address the challenges of the unit and mend the fractures in it.

Conclusion

These strategies are taken from my first two years as a department chair. I recognize that most new chairs will continue to learn on the fast and furious fly, and that the only real way to learn something is by doing it. Hopefully by implementing some of the strategies I suggest here, however, new chairs will help their units take flight quickly and prevent the

crash and burn not just for themselves, but for the departments they have been entrusted to lead.

Randall McClure is chair of the Department of Writing and Linguistics at Georgia Southern University. Email: randallmcclure@georgiasouthern.edu. This article is based on a presentation at the 28th annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 10–11, 2011, Orlando, Florida.

Administrator as Interposer: Helicopter Parents Versus Alleged Malevolent Professors

by H. W. Elmore

One of the more undesirable tasks to befall college and university administrators is dealing with a complaint by an angry student, irate spouse of a student, or outraged parent accusing a faculty member of unfairness, cruelty, or misconduct. Allegations of professorial malevolence can be lodged at all levels of the administrative chain. They are typically referred down the chain from the president, provost, dean, and associate dean to the chair who has the unenviable task of addressing the problematic accusation and communicating with the alleged offending professor.

Assessing the Magnitude of the Complaint

Sifting facts from allegations and the ensuing remonstrance by the accused professor is both challenging and time consuming. The variety of issues formulating the basis of the grievance cover the gamut and include alleged unfair grading, sexual harassment, discrimination, unreasonably strict enforcement of class rules, arbitrary imposition of penalties,

unjust interpretation of the syllabus, or mean and hateful professorial demeanor. The socioeconomic status of the complainant, political affiliations, race, sexual orientation, religion, or issues of civility may complicate the discussion and impact the volume and tenor of the complaint being voiced. Immediate attention may be required to defuse the situation, quench emotions, and expedite a resolution while allaying damage to grades, faculty reputation, public relations, recruitment, retention, and giving by present and future alumni. In extreme cases the emotional intensity may necessitate vigorous intervention to obviate violation of laws against person or property. Although worst-case scenarios are infrequent, the potential for them to occur is ever present and may be influenced by the personality and attitude of the complainant and the faculty member as well as the unique nature of the assertion of impropriety against the faculty member.

Helicopter Parents May Embroider Details

Increasingly, complaints about treatment of students arise from parents. The term *helicopter parents* has been in use for more than a decade to describe parents who are overly concerned and protective of their sons or daughters in their interaction with educational institutions. This increasing tendency of parents to hover over their children has developed for parents representing the later portion of the baby boom. Helicopter parents impose themselves in college interviews and freshman orientation and attempt to intercede on behalf of their offspring in the interchange of communication between the student and professor when problems arise. Although parents may seem overly dramatic about the injustice to their college-age child and appear to exaggerate the claims surrounding the events, their emotional claims cannot be summarily dismissed because they may be well founded. All allegations should be taken seriously. The administrator must treat every case as potentially substantive and be perceived by the complainant as responding with proper, sincere consideration. Even though emotional levels may rise during the course of the discussion in which the details of the complaint

are enumerated, the administrator must remain cognizant of privacy laws and operate within them. Therefore, the extent to which the administrator can speak regarding the student is very limited unless the parents and the student are present, and the student is willing to set aside the right of privacy.

Be Prepared for Complaints

It is imperative that the administrator understand the reasons behind the complaint, know the faculty, and possess the skills to resolve conflicts. An advanced state of administrative readiness to deal with complaints efficiently must be maintained. The following contribute to preparedness for both routine and extreme complaints:

- Establish a channel for the receipt of complaints.
- Implement a standard means of documenting complaints.
- Keep student and faculty handbooks accessible.
- Maintain ready access to course syllabi.
- Seek training in dealing with difficult people and conflict resolution.
- Broaden your understanding of potential student problems, including health and mental stress.
- Gain more thorough knowledge of privacy laws and other campus-related legal issues.
- Encourage faculty sensitivity training.
- Keep the phone number of security or campus police by the phone.

Corrective Measures and Desired Outcomes

After gathering and sorting information regarding a complaint, the allegations should be explained to the instructor, preferably by the chair. Based on my experience, when confronted with a statement that the faculty member behaved in a hateful, mean, spiteful, or malicious manner,

the individual's response is usually one of surprise. The faculty member then tends to express one of the following positions:

- Placing the blame for the problem on the lack of student effort and perseverance
- Denial of the circumstances surrounding the allegation with claims of attempted character assassination

Professors—particularly those who are “old school”—feel that students exhibit a lackadaisical attitude toward their education and are to blame for their own problems. Professors may be so closely associated with the discipline that they believe their enthusiasm should be shared by all students. However, the reality may be quite different, and students may not share the professor's zeal for the subject matter and regard the demands for assignments and class participation as beyond the boundary of reasonable limits. Allegations regarding the level of the student's intelligence, drive, and purpose in life can follow, which could be the origin of some complaints. This should be easily resolved by close examination of the syllabus and an analysis of the correlation between requirements stated and those actually made in the classroom. If the problem is the infraction of a rule or provision of the syllabus, simply pointing out the existence of the requirement or standard to the student or professor should suffice.

The tendency to render an immediate judgment regarding accusations against faculty must be avoided. If it is available, physical evidence or corroboration from independent sources must be secured and considered. For routine problems it may suffice for the chair to speak to the faculty member to obtain a resolution. However, if the faculty member crossed the line and violated the accepted standards of professorial behavior, a reprimand of the proper magnitude would be in order. In extreme cases where allegations are thoroughly supported by independent sources, expression of chagrin by an accused professor at students' claims and vehement denial of overly rude or malicious actions that might have prompted the complaints suggest the faculty member is oblivious to the image he or she projects to others. In the most severe cases involving

repeated similar complaints against a problematic faculty member who has tenure, it is difficult to eliminate the problem. When a rare, extreme situation presents itself, perhaps the best solution would be the sequestration of the faculty member to a role with the smallest impact, minimizing his or her contact with students. Certainly, if laws were broken, legal council may need to be involved, or, in the case of criminal acts, the police must be notified.

Conclusion

It is impossible to predict the variety of complaints and nature of events that might unfurl on any day in the life of an administrator. It is good foresight to prepare for the worst while hoping for the best. There is no prescribed path that will lead to ideal outcomes in the execution of all the varied duties associated with the job of an administrator. The best course of action may be to strive to maintain awareness of legal boundaries under which those in higher education work and to engage colleagues at all levels in training courses and seminars dealing with potential problems, volatile issues, and best practices. Above all, vigilance must be maintained, awareness honed, and resolve upheld to solve all conflicts and complaints equitably and fairly while resisting demands and withstanding the onslaught of accusatory statements by parties on both sides of the abyss.

H. W. Elmore is associate dean of science at Marshall University. Email: elmore@marshall.edu

Student Recruitment and Retention and Faculty Professional Development

*by Katherine Frank, Maureen Murphy,
William Withers, and Winnie Yu*

In a time of declining resources, department chairs from all disciplines need to think carefully about ways to leverage work in order to protect departmental functionality and boost faculty morale, maintain quality teaching and learning, and continue to grow student enrollment with an eye toward a more hopeful future for higher education. This article addresses these challenges by focusing on the complex issues of student recruitment and retention and how to leverage work in these areas in ways that build capacity within departments and engage and support faculty development through the process.

Enrollment Management Plan

The main focus of an enrollment management plan (EMP) is how to best recruit and retain students; however, the outcomes can also lead to improvements in department relations and faculty morale.

The EMP and the implementation process can take many different forms depending on the composition and goals of the specific department. One way to ensure that department efforts are aligned with those of the larger institution is to create an EMP that considers elements of the institution's existing strategic plan. Doing so builds institutional knowledge; establishes a common language for communicating department decisions, needs, and successes to stakeholders; and creates manageable and measurable goals plotted along a realistic timeline. When developed in this way, an EMP can be used to accomplish more than simply recruiting students in order to grow enrollment; the process of

drafting the plan can be used to foster collaboration and communication, encourage research and inquiry into the state of the discipline, consider the strengths and weaknesses of existing programs, establish and revise program goals, examine teaching and learning strategies, deepen understanding of institutional circumstances, and even develop professional goals at the individual level. Leveraging an initial plan to manage enrollment can lead to authentic, relevant, and applicable professional development and foster a culture of inquiry and improvement.

Recognizing implementation of the EMP as a process is essential to its longevity. Immediate successes of work on the plan might include increased faculty engagement, improved collaboration and communication, a common focus on goals, the sharing of information, and greater understanding of the relationship between the department and the larger institution. However, immediate challenges might involve sustaining communication, understanding enrollment management as a process, fostering a long-term investment in the work, and embracing the ongoing revisions and updates required of the EMP process. Making the work a topic of and tool for providing authentic and relevant professional development opportunities is essential to the future of the EMP itself as well as the health and growth of the department.

Considering Student Attributes

In these times of limited resources, colleges and universities are under pressure to be accountable and to articulate value-added assessments. Graduation and retention rates are often used as yardsticks in assessing institutional performance. Developing strategies on complex issues of student recruitment and retention would not be complete without a discussion on how to evaluate the impact of these policies.

Astin (1997) explained that it is a flawed concept to assess institutional performance by means of comparing absolute retention rates. An effective first step in assessing a baseline on retention begins with understanding and taking into account the important effect of student inputs. Based on national longitudinal retention data on 52,898 students attending 365 baccalaureate-granting institutions, Astin developed a

regression model to project an institution's expected retention rate based on its average student attributes such as high school grades, admission test scores, gender, and racial composition. By comparing an institution's actual retention rate to its expected rate, the institution can improve understanding of its recruitment and retention performance unique to its given setting and student body. With this understanding, colleges and universities can develop enrollment management policies that are focused and specific to the student population.

Considering student attributes, particularly on a longitudinal scale, can offer valuable information on strategic enrollment and retention management. A longitudinal study with a snapshot of retention rates before and after a policy is put in place will provide a reasonably good measurement of the policy's effectiveness. Though it is only a critical first step and not an end, a close look at different categories of student attributes can also reveal important enrollment trends. In academic areas such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, where gender and minority representation is less balanced, this retention knowledge can provide valuable context and insight into the shaping of recruitment, retention, and enrollment management approaches. Regarding all disciplines and institutional practices, such knowledge will lead to a deeper understanding of the student population and ways to improve teaching, learning, and overall communication in order to best connect with students.

A Multimedia Approach

Recruiting students through traditional channels has changed dramatically, especially as it relates to that demographic referred to today as Generation Y and its successor demographic, Generation Z—those yet-to-be-fully-defined college prospects born mid-1990s through today. Instant communication technologies are making it possible to reach prospects via email, texting, instant messaging, and social media vehicles such as YouTube, Facebook, and MySpace. At the same time that these technologies improve communication with prospective students,

they engage current students in the recruiting process and thereby aid retention as well as demonstrate to faculty the relevance of these communication methods.

The use of an outside service provider can allow departments to not only reach “next gen” college students in ways in which they are accustomed but also enjoy real-time analytics whereby new data is gathered from prospects and open and click-through rates are measured as part of the overall online campaign: Both are valuable benefits in times of finite resources and questionable returns on traditional media such as direct mail. In fact, one hypercasting message sent to prospects after their first visit to Wartburg College featuring currently enrolled students delivering a thank-you message enjoyed a 51% open rate and a 38% click-through rate, with another 13% of the students providing much valued additional information to college admissions counselors via feedback portals.

Other ways of communicating effectively with students and their families include strategically placed video kiosks on campus, view books in online “flipper” formats, and mixed traditional media messages pushing prospective students and families to the Web.

Select, currently enrolled students can be encouraged to more fully utilize Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter in positive ways that better promote the college and students’ experiences and showcase departments and programs. Keeping students involved in this way can help strengthen their investment in their institution and specific degree programs.

The ROCK Method

Focusing on relationships, outcomes, communication, and kindness (ROCK) can lead to an increase in student enrollment in departments as well as enhanced student-faculty engagement, improved faculty morale, increases in student retention, and the development of professional relationships between the secondary and postsecondary sectors. The ROCK method combines traditional and new media approaches to recruitment, retention, and faculty development.

- *Relationships*: Build them. Distribute information on prospective students each week. Faculty can then initiate a relationship with each assigned recruit during key campus events, visits to area high school classrooms, or community happenings. Faculty members can then continue to develop these relationships by “telling their own stories”; following up each meeting, conversation, email, or dinner with a communication; and attending summer orientations to greet and advise students they met earlier.
- *Outcomes*: Display and promote them. Analyze departmental outcomes, acceptance rates to graduate/professional schools, employment in the field, internships gained, summer research pursued, and the like for the past several years. Develop brochures and advertising flyers with the admissions office touting outcomes, celebrating student successes, and featuring student photographs and testimonials.
- *Communication*: Make consistent and diverse. Use Facebook or other forms of social media as a recruitment tool by posting photographs of all departmental events and activities as soon as they occur. Consider sending special occasion cards with handwritten messages to prospective students. Never underestimate the power of student-to-student communication: Creating a student ambassador program and/or simply taking college students on high school visits is productive as they provide valuable information about college life. Create opportunities to bring high school students, teachers, counselors, and family members to campus for department-sponsored/focused events.
- *Kindness*: Goes a long way. Send high school graduation cards with personal congratulations and summer postcards from faculty-student travel tours and other department events to all prospective students interested in the major or undeclared. When students arrive on campus, ask faculty

to meet and greet students at a departmental gathering or reception.

These consistent methods can be adopted to fit the needs of any department or campus program and have led to gains in recruitment, retention, and faculty morale.

Conclusion

With professional development linked to recruiting and retention efforts, faculty become more informed about prospective and current students' needs, connected with the larger campus community, and knowledgeable about tools to improve communication with millennial learners both inside and outside the classroom. The main objective is not to give faculty more to do, but rather to leverage existing resources and the work already under way in order to improve the educational experience for all involved.

Katherine Frank is chair of the Department of English and Foreign Languages at Colorado State University–Pueblo. Maureen Murphy is head of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Huntingdon College. William Withers is Price Department Chair of Communication Arts at Wartburg College. Winnie Yu is head of computer science at Southern Connecticut State College. Email: katherine.frank@colostate-pueblo.edu, maureenm@huntingdon.edu, william.withers@wartburg.edu; yuw1@southernct.edu. This article is based on a presentation at the 27th annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 11–12, 2010, Orlando, Florida.

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