Accept and Embrace Your Role as Chair

by R. Kent Crookston

In a recent survey of America’s academic chairs (see Crookston, 2010), more than one thousand participants indicated they were struggling to accept their role as chair, to embrace and make the most of it. Females noted this 20% more often than males did. A quote from one chair respondent represents the frustration if not the despair that sometimes accompanies chairing: “I do not feel that anything has worked well for me [personally]. Practically I am throwing all my time into the job, my own research is the victim, and I could add my family too. Why do I do it? As demanded by the majority, and as a service, and I am glad to see that we have accomplished a lot so the efforts pay, and also since I do believe that I am the best for the job (given the options we have).” This person asked and answered an important question: Why do I do it? In this article I share a few survey quotes that acknowledge the hard job of chairing, the pressures and demands that hinder an individual’s career, the frustrations of nonconforming and underappreciative colleagues, and the sometimes-negative impact on family and other priorities. Given this recognition, I encourage optimism by recommending an important mindset: I accepted the position, and that has made all the difference.

“All the Difference”

In “The Road Not Taken,” one of America’s best-known poems, Robert Frost describes a time when walking through a yellow wood he was confronted with two diverging roads and had to choose between them. The last two lines of the poem are: “I took the one less traveled by, / And that has made all the difference.” A common interpretation of these lines is that the less-traveled road was perhaps more rigorous, more demanding, and by taking it Frost (as could be the case for anyone who does not take the easy way out or go with the crowd) was a better person than if he had taken the more-traveled road. My interpretation is different.

Note that the one road is described “as just as fair,” having “perhaps” the better claim, although they were worn “really about the same” and “equally lay” before him. It is my conclusion that Frost was writing about how our common decisions, whatever they be, make all the difference in our lives. Had he chosen the more-traveled road, it too would have made all the difference. And, he knew that one day he would likely be second-guessing that different opportunity he passed up.

Kiechle (2005) points out that “Once an alternative has been selected, the other alternative that has been rejected will have to be mourned. People frequently overlook this need for mourning” (p. 76). He continues, “... anyone who makes a decision needs to have the courage to say yes to a situation” (p. 77). As one chair responded: “I
recognize that I will not be publishing as long as being chair involves working 12 months.” Kiechle counsels us to “Mourn the possibilities you ignored as well as the opportunities you missed. Your life is a path of letting go and dying. If you accept life to be this way, you will be able to commit to relationships more easily and become more content” (p. 118). At least one chair chose not to let go and returned to his former life: “What helped me the most was resigning and focusing on my own scholarship.”

The following comment comes from a chair who found that a few mental adjustments were in order and was encouraging others to do the same: “Do an introspective self-study, and know your strengths and weaknesses, and within reason, modify your inclinations.” In any new and demanding position there will be disappointments, frustrations, and setbacks. We should anticipate conflict and arguments, and we may need to lower the expectations we have of ourselves and others in the new situation, as well as “modify our inclinations.” Consider this comment from one chair respondent: “If you cannot adapt to feeling abused or victimized by colleagues with lifetime problems with authority, and if you cannot realize that they usually are upset with your position (not necessarily you as a person), then you will not survive as Chair. Also, have or make a life outside the department, take vacations, and try to have a sense of humor about the divine comedy of it all.”

Gunsalus (2006) counsels that once we become an administrator it is vital to our success that we acknowledge any misgivings we may have about our fate and find constructive ways to accept it. She has surveyed thousands of department chairs regarding their reactions for doing this job and has boiled their answers down to four (p. 12):

- To give something back (often initially presented as “It was my turn”).
- Because I was a better alternative than anyone else (or, less benignly, “To keep X from doing it and destroying the department”).
- To grow in a new dimension (a way to stretch creatively or intellectually).
- To make a difference.

Reflections and Goals Setting

Gunsalus (2006) also encourages all chairs to take some careful time to do a little soul searching and determine why they said yes to the job. She then recommends identifying no more than two or three specific goals for their term of service and writing these down—goals for themselves, not for the department. She counsels that chairs should refer back to these goals as often as once a week to remind themselves what matters most, and to stay centered amidst distractions. Gunsalus wisely recommends keeping such goals to oneself and proceeding cautiously about airing them.

I have found that this kind of goal setting can be done quite easily by noting what bothers me about myself, or about the department. I have learned that a criticism or complaint is actually a statement of value (important to remember when colleagues come carping—listen to them and discover, with them, what it is they value and what they recommend). Once I know what I would like to see changed I can decide whether to commit myself to effect that change. It is my experience that as I am committing in writing my resolve to act differently, there often comes to mind several good ideas about how to proceed.

The next survey comments document the different kinds of answers chairs may find following such reflection: “I’ve just completed my first year as chair, and I am happy to have survived. I have no great words of advice except ‘avoid becoming chair.’ This job is not for those who want to think creatively about mathematics and/or teaching. It is full of incessant, annoying interruptions. I see this job as pure torture. (Clearly, I need to learn how to ‘embrace and make the most of’ the job.” Conversely, another respondent who at first cringed from her chair responsibilities then embraced them and found them to be the highlights of her work: “Once I accepted the institutional power inherent in the role of department chair, I was more effective at using that power effectively and appropriately. Two examples are the faculty evaluation process and budget. I cringed the first time I did faculty evaluations because I didn’t want to sit in a judgment role over people I considered my peers. Once I realized the faculty evaluation process is a two-way conversation and an important way for me to stay in contact with my peers, I accepted the responsibility and it is now a highlight of my work each spring. A second example is control over budget. Some department chairs don’t want to manage their budgets, but knowing where the money is gives the department chair important access to influence the work of the department and a way to advocate for the department at dean and provost levels.”

This last comment documents how one chair found satisfaction in “sacrificing” for the good of the whole: “My model of leadership is service. I sometimes say my real job is to go to meetings, do paperwork, and solve problems so my colleagues can do what they know and love better and with less frustration. If that’s what my job is about, I can see concrete ways every day in which my efforts make a real and positive difference. And that’s enough to make it possible to do it all over again the next day.”

Finally, consider the reflections of John Conway (1996), who wrote: “I have never met anyone who was truly forced to become a head or a dean. I have met people who have become heads out of a sense of duty and who would rather have been left alone to do their research and teaching. Nevertheless, the notion persists that no one becomes a head unless they are forced or bribed to do the job” (p. 11).

DOI:10.1002/dch
Hitting the Ground Running: Making Strategic Changes

by John Paxton

I stepped into the department head role unexpectedly in August 2007 when the former head accepted a dean’s position elsewhere. The challenges that the department faced at the time were declining student enrollments, relatively low research productivity, and loose alignment with the university’s vision to be more interdisciplinary. Since then, the department has made significant improvements in five different strategic areas: curriculum, research, space and facilities, development, and public relations. I believe that there is a honeymoon period during which people in an organization are willing to give a new leader some latitude and try new things. Thus, it is important to hit the ground running.

Curriculum

Structural changes. Three structural changes were made. First and most significantly, we split our bachelor of science degree into two options: a traditional professional option and a new interdisciplinary option. The interdisciplinary option allows a student to pursue a minor of choice. During a student’s senior year, a capstone project that relates computing to the selected minor is undertaken. This option caters to students who have interests outside of computing and aligns with our institution’s vision to be more interdisciplinary.

We also made our minor more flexible and added a courses-only option for our masters’ students to better cater to employees of local industry such as RightNow Technologies and Zoot Enterprises.

Course changes. One new course to highlight is an interdisciplinary Web design course that was first offered in the spring 2009 semester. We developed and now team-teach the course in equal partnership with the art department. The course has attracted one hundred students from diverse disciplines in each of its first three offerings and is likely to serve two hundred students per semester now that it has an “arts” core designation.

Instructor enhancements. Because our faculty is fairly small, we have hired industry practitioners to teach certain regular offerings (such as software engineering and computer security) and special onetime offerings (such as user interface design). Students have responded favorably to being taught by industry practitioners and being exposed to cutting-edge industry tools.

Results. Student enrollments in regular computer science courses have increased by more than 10% and the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology cited the interdisciplinary option as a strength of our program.

Research

The strategy used to increase research expenditures is twofold. First, incentives were aligned with desired behavior by articulating a standard teaching load (two courses per semester), a course buy-out policy (providing one-ninth of one’s salary), and general standards for promotion using research as the area of excellence. Second, good hires were made in this area.

Results. Funded research has increased 150% from fiscal year 2007 to fiscal year 2010. One of our faculty members won an NSF Career Award.

Space and Facilities

It is important to understand the space that your department controls and to ensure that it is being used effectively. To this end, our department has made three significant changes.

First, eight graduate student areas were largely reorganized. Graduate students who work with the same professor or on related research projects are now seated in the same room. In addition, many of the graduate student rooms have been named (e.g., Data Mining Lab) to foster future grant applications.

Second, an underutilized room has been converted into a space that functions as a robotics laboratory and small classroom. In order to make computer science more appealing, some of our
early courses now incorporate a short robotic unit, and we have added new elective courses in the areas of robot vision and robot navigation. The room doubles as a showroom for prospective students.

Third, an underutilized student lounge was given a facelift. The room is now used for student club meetings, by students between classes, by students studying together, and even by the occasional student who wants to nap on the sofa!

Development

When I first became department head, development was the area that I least understood. Two and a half years later, I understand that development, if done successfully, greatly enhances an organization.

Advisory board. A strong advisory board can provide critical feedback on current directions and future opportunities and assist the department in better understanding current industry needs. This in turn can provide ideas for development opportunities.

Our advisory board has been updated with nine new members since 2007. In general, advisory board members who can contribute incisive feedback to the department and who are in positions of leadership within their companies have proven especially valuable.

Industry Affiliates Program. Our department began its Industry Affiliates Program in 2007. Industry Affiliates members pay a yearly membership fee (currently $25,000 to join at the gold membership level and $15,000 to join at the silver membership level) in return for various benefits. Presently, we have three members in our Industry Affiliates Program and hope to grow this number once the economy has better recovered. The annual revenues that we receive ($55,000 in 2009) enable us to hire a half-time associate research professor in an area of critical need (software engineering).

RightNow Technologies Distinguished Professor. In 2006–2007, the department had failed on a faculty search that included a generous three-year start-up package provided by RightNow Technologies. After discussions with key people, the search criteria were reformulated to cast a wider net. The resulting search was successful and allowed us to hire a midcareer researcher from Johns Hopkins University for the fall 2008 semester.

The success of this search was critically important from a development standpoint. Making an impactful hire not only allowed the department to benefit from the start-up monies, but also makes it more likely that this company will continue to support us in the future.

Other ideas. Development benefits range from scholarships for students, to support for an adjunct instructor to teach a course, to being given the use of a boardroom for an annual retreat. Development is an area where outside-the-box thinking can be very effective. It is important to remember that development is an ongoing process and does not stop when a gift is made. Remember to thank your donors.

Public Relations

Stakeholders want to be associated with an organization where positive things are happening and information regarding the organization is easy to obtain. To reach our stakeholders more effectively, we have turned to our departmental website and other communication tools.

Website. In summer 2007, our website was out of date, incomplete, and difficult to maintain. Our system administrator recommended porting our website to Drupal, an open source, content management platform that allows nontechnical users to make changes to the website using a relatively straightforward editing system. During the spring 2008 semester, two students undertook an independent study project to make a shadow copy of the current website using Drupal, and we went live with the new version in summer 2008.

Whether it is recruiting a new faculty member, allowing a prospective student to more easily learn about our curriculum, recruiting a new member for our advisory board, or letting a potential donor know more about our organization, having an up-to-date and informative website is crucial.

Other ideas. We have promoted our department members by applying for various awards at both the college and university levels. In the spring 2009 semester, department members won three College of Engineering awards and one university-wide award. Winning awards acknowledges outstanding work being done by department members and sends a positive message to the outside world about the quality of the organization.

Conclusion

Although I work differently as a department head than I did as a faculty member, I am enjoying the challenges of the position greatly. I enjoy working with the organization’s stakeholders to improve it, learning new skills, and meeting new people.

In order to make strategic changes, here are a few final suggestions for new department heads: understand your context, seek buy-in, be patient but persistent, seek opportunity in adversity, utilize students when practical, be willing to do some of the work yourself but also be willing to delegate, choose your battles carefully, read relevant literature (e.g., Gardner, 1990; Sample, 2002), and finally, celebrate wins whether they are big or small.

This article is based on a presentation at the 27th annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 11–12, 2010, Orlando, Florida.

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DOI:10.1002/dch
Every learning institution needs great leadership.

To that end, The IDEA Center has developed unique online instruments to provide feedback for administrators:

**IDEA Feedback for Department Chairs**

**IDEA Feedback for Administrators**

“We continue to use the IDEA Feedback system for our department chairs, Dean, and other administrators. The secure and confidential system works well for our faculty, which translates into exceptional response rates. The system itself provides for rich data on how our faculty and staff view our administrative team and where we can continue to improve.”

Charles R. Phillips  
Assistant Dean of Assessment  
Drake College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

The tools are designed to provide feedback to guide performance improvement and effectiveness. They can be used early in one’s career or later when the information is helpful in developing an overall summary evaluation along with setting performance goals. The high-quality feedback provided by The IDEA Center’s instruments will help you and your institution reach your goals.

“As Vice President for Academic Affairs, I found the IDEA Administrator Feedback Instrument invaluable to my growth and professional development. It served as an ongoing probe as to how I was meeting the needs of my deans, my staff, and the institution as a whole...The nature of the instrument encouraged frank discourse in areas critical to effective academic leadership.”

Sheryl Ayala  
Marian University

For information on these and other products and services visit www.theideacenter.org

The IDEA Center  
211 South Seth Child Road  
Manhattan, KS 66502-3089  
Phone: 800-255-2757
Fundraising 201: What To Do After You've Learned the Basics

by Jeffrey L. Buller

Department chairs at every type of college and university understand that institutional advancement and the acquisition of external resources will be part of their responsibilities today. As a result, there are several sources of information that chairs can use to learn the basics of fundraising. But what do you do after you’ve mastered the basics of how to conduct an annual fund campaign, how to cultivate a potential donor, how and when to make the “ask,” and what most donors expect in the way of appropriate stewardship? And what are some best practices for accomplishing your development goals within the already-burdened schedule of today’s department chair? This article will address how to plan for a large development project and the benefits of employing moves management.

How to Plan for a Large Development Project

Most initial fundraising ventures involve individual gifts: personal contributions to the annual fund or single, even if very large, grants from foundations that you can use to equip a new facility, endow a scholarship, or achieve a similar long-term goal. As your fundraising work continues you’ll eventually want to take on the type of project that is not feasible within the framework of a single gift, even a large one. For example, you want to pursue a series of diverse, but ultimately related goals, not all of which are likely to appeal to any one donor or foundation. One option is to create a “mini-campaign” for your department. This activity will require you to develop what is known as a gift pyramid—a strategy for attaining a large fundraising goal with different levels of giving identified and with a minimum number of prospects that you’re likely to solicit at each level. Because most large funding projects will receive more gifts in small amounts than large contributions, the overall shape of this plan ends up looking like a pyramid. At the department level, a suitable gift pyramid might include:

- The amount of each giving level
- The total number of gifts that you’ll require at that level
- The probable number of prospects you’ll need to cultivate to achieve the required number of gifts
- The percentage of your overall goal that you’re trying to raise at each level

A rule of thumb is that you should always be able to identify at least four to five times the number of prospects you’ll need for each gift at each level, with additional prospects needed in difficult economic times or for projects likely to have a limited appeal. To see this process in operation, let’s suppose you wish to pursue a major project that will require $10 million in external funding, but you know that the largest individual gift made by any of your program’s donors to date has only been about $2 million. You may be able to persuade one of these donors to consider a slightly larger gift because of the great importance and excitement of the project you’re proposing, but none of them will likely be able to fund the entire endeavor. In such cases, you might construct a gift pyramid similar to that shown in Figure 1.

Of course, you’ll need to modify your gift pyramid according to your knowledge of your donor population and the type of project you’re considering. For example, you may be working in an environment that is financially very bimodal. In other words, while gifts of $1 million or more are sometimes possible, there are very few prospects who can afford gifts in the $100,000 or $500,000 range. In this case, your gift pyramid might become something more like a “gift hourglass,” with most of the funding derived from the very highest and very lowest ranges. Regardless of its shape, the value of a gift table is that it helps you develop a more realistic understanding of the number of contributions and prospects you’re likely to need to achieve your overall goal.

A gift pyramid also demonstrates how important the top two or three levels of giving tend to be for almost any major project. Moreover, people tend to give financial support to a project that they believe others are also backing. They understand that, with broad support, the project is much more likely to be realized, and they feel as though they’re joining a “winning team.” If you can persuade one of your larger donors to sign onto the project early, that donation becomes your lead gift: the contribution that helps inspire others to back the cause. Donors who provide lead gifts frequently become part of your inner circle in persuading other prospects to join them in lending support. They don’t want their gift to be wasted and, by taking ownership of the project, they can make the very forceful argument that “I’ve already given a great deal of support to this campaign because I really believe in its importance. Won’t you join with me in contributing at whatever level you can?”

Remember that you don’t have to reinvent the wheel every time you want to create a gift pyramid. Several formulas and calculators are available that can make your planning of a mini-campaign simple. Just enter your target amount into a gift range calculator and it develops an initial gift pyramid, which you can then adapt to your individual situation. For examples, see Gift Range Calculator (www.blackbaud.com/company/resources/giftrange/giftcalc.aspx), Gift Table Calculator (www.alexandermacnab.com/CapGiftCamp/2Calculator2.htm), and Fundraising Campaign Pyr-

DOI:10.1002/dch

**How Moves Management Can Help Departments**

The second fundraising strategy for chairs to master is known as moves management—the process by which fundraising professionals help develop potential donors to donors and donors to prospects for major gifts. At the department level, you might consider adopting a moves management system by asking three fundamental questions:

- How would we define our current relationship with each of our external constituents (friends, potential donors, one-time donors, and multiple gift donors)?
- As realistically as possible, what would we like that relationship with each donor to be?
- What are the steps that are most likely to move that person from number one to number two?

Moves management encourages you to think creatively about how to get people who support the department’s basic mission to attend more of its events, those who attend its events to make contributions to its annual fund, those who contribute to the annual fund to pledge at a higher level, those who pledge at a higher level to consider a major gift, and those who contribute major gifts to leave a legacy. It also involves recognizing that certain people, while they can always be counted on to attend departmental activities and raise awareness of your programs in the community, are simply unlikely to provide you with financial support. Best of all, it deals with each friend of the department individually, considering that person’s unique personality, desires, and needs. In this way, you avoid alienating community supporters by “nagging” them for a contribution they aren’t likely to give anyway, while focusing the right kind of attention on other prospects.

Although any fundraising approach involves identifying and cultivating potential donors, moves management does so in a way that provides you with a plan and a timetable. To initiate a moves management approach in your department, begin by establishing a fixed schedule for a moves meeting: Small departments might do this once or twice a month; larger departments should try to meet weekly. At each meeting, you and any faculty or staff members who are assisting you go through the list of prospects name by name, identifying a specific action and goal for each potential donor and reviewing what you’ve done since the last meeting. The notes resulting from a departmental moves meeting may look something like this:

- **Prospect A**: Currently contributes $100 a year to the department; goal is $1,000 a year. Sent personal invitation to this week’s guest lecture one week ago. Follow up call by chair scheduled for Thursday.
- **Prospect B**: Contributed $100,000 to scholarship fund three years ago. Goal is similar gift this year. Casual lunch with chair and eminent scholar set for Friday.
- **Prospect C**: Provides $10,000 annually to scholarship fund. Has clearly stated unwillingness to increase giving level due to other priorities. Dislikes frequent solicitation. Allow to lie fallow this year.

DOI:10.1002/dch

**Figure 1. Sample Gift Pyramid**

![Gift Pyramid Diagram](image-url)
• Prospect D: Frequent attendance at departmental events, but no gift to date. Personal email from chair suggesting small initial annual fund gift will be sent next week. If no response, remove from active prospect list for one year.

• Prospect E: Steady annual fund gifts of $1,000 or more each year for several years. Chair will discuss possibility of $10,000 gift in area of prospect’s choice within two weeks.

The idea of the moves meeting is always to incorporate cultivation, stewardship, good community relations, and targeted planning into a comprehensive strategy that will improve the department’s access to external funding sources.

The advantage of the moves management approach is that, by providing regular updates and setting realistic goals, it keeps you on track toward meeting your fundraising objectives. In addition, by consistently discussing each prospect individually, you’re more likely to discover appropriate strategies that fit the unique needs and desires of the donor than if you adopt a one-size-fits-all approach. Different donors might respond in completely different ways to cultivation that focuses on:

• Tax advantages. Prospects with substantial resources may be most interested in how their philanthropic gifts can help them achieve an important social goal while also reducing their tax liability. In a business administration or accounting department, you may have faculty with this expertise readily available. Otherwise, your school’s institutional advancement office may be able to help. By providing information about the tax advantages of trusts, deferred gifts, gifts-in-kind, and other types of philanthropic activities, you may be able to offer a useful service to the donor at the same time that you benefit your own department’s long-term objectives.

• Prestige. Other prospects are more interested in seeing their names on buildings or scholarships and in establishing a legacy. You’ll need the close cooperation of your development office (and possibly even your president and governing board) if you’re pursuing a naming opportunity as large as a building, permanent scholarship fund, or your entire department. But there may be smaller naming opportunities that are entirely appropriate for you to pursue as chair. For instance, you could explore the possibility of a donor having the naming rights to a specific event (“The Jordan P. Wright Lecture in Multimedia Studies”), an award (“The Jordan P. Wright Prize in Entrepreneurial Achievement 2012”), or a scholarship (“The 2013 Jordan P. Wright Fellow in Applied Linguistics”). Alternatively, your institution may allow you to pursue naming rights for a particular studio, lab, or classroom for a limited period of time. Naming rights should never be sold too inexpensively, however, and all contingencies should be explored. For example, you should always have a backup plan for what would happen to the name of a donor-funded department if the unit splits or is otherwise reorganized, dissolved, or absorbed by another department.

• Benefits. There are donors who are most interested in renewing or increasing their contribution because of special favors or services your department

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### Percent of Faculty and Staff With Tenure by Type of Institution

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Source: U.S. Department of Education
could provide. A Frequent Friends Program for donors who have contributed to the annual fund for at least ten consecutive years could offer a listing of their names in the program of each departmental event, special seating and opportunities to meet the speaker for each major lecture, and escorted transportation from a reserved parking space to departmental activities. Benefits can be increased based on the length of the donor's affiliation with the program, the size of the gift, the number of times the donor's level of giving has increased, or any other factor deemed appropriate for your program.

**Legal Issues in Faculty Evaluation: Avoiding Problems**

*by Jon K. Dalager*

*This first article in a two-part series on legal issues in faculty evaluation provides advice for chairs on how to properly conduct evaluations. The second article will focus on how to deal with problematic evaluations.*

Evaluations have become a part of academia. We are evaluated by our students, by our department chairs, by our deans, and by RateYourProfessor.com. But when we become a department chair or dean, we must then evaluate our faculty. Because these evaluations involve people's careers and their livelihood, as well as the quality of the department and institution, it is essential that the department chair be conscientious, informed, and prepared to do it well.

**Procedures**

Every institution has its own way of doing things, so the department chair or dean needs to find the procedures for evaluation. Don’t just wing it; that will lead to trouble. The procedures and criteria will typically be included in the faculty handbook or policy manual, or in the collective bargaining agreement. The chair should also examine the faculty member’s contract, which may list the rank, tenure status, and general responsibilities of the individual. There may be unique duties to consider, especially in the case of non-teaching faculty.

In most cases, however, the handbook or collective bargaining agreement will have incorporated the American Association of University Professors’ statements and recommendations. In any case, the chair is encouraged to review the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, the 1958 Statement on Procedural Standards in Faculty Dismissal Proceedings, and the 1968 Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure.

**Criteria**

The department chair must be aware of the criteria for evaluation and the weight given to each factor. Small liberal arts colleges typically give more weight to teaching effectiveness, and large research institutions will emphasize research productivity, publications, and grants. From a general perspective, however, the criteria will include teaching, scholarship, and service. A fourth criterion, that of collegiality, has sometimes been applied, but it has also engendered more controversy. The AAUP has argued against collegiality as an evaluative factor, but the courts have generally supported an institution’s use of collegiality as a criterion. I would suggest that if lack of collegiality was the only reason for termination or denial of tenure, it may be closely examined by the court to determine whether it is a pretext for what may have been illegal considerations (i.e., discrimination).

**Conclusion**

The use of techniques such as gift pyramids, lead gifts, mini-campaigns, moves management, and donor support programs usually involves only institutional development officers. But for chairs who have already proven their skill at fundraising, these activities—appropriately implemented and in full consultation with the institutional advancement office—also hold great potential for departmental development efforts.

Jeffrey L. Buller is dean of the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College at Florida Atlantic University; his latest book is *Academic Leadership Day by Day* (Jossey-Bass, 2011). Email: jbuller@fau.edu

**The Chair’s Role**

The faculty handbook, collective bargaining agreement, or the employment contract should describe the chair’s role in the evaluation of department faculty. It may range from providing only a cursory review of the individual faculty member’s self-evaluation to a thorough evaluation resulting in promotion, tenure, or termination. In either case, the chair’s input may have an impact on the final decision.

**What Not To Do**

Note that as an evaluator you are not protected by academic freedom. There are limits to what chairs can do and what they can consider as they evaluate department faculty. They are not allowed to discriminate against someone in a protected class, they may not retaliate for the exercise of a constitutionally protected right, and they may not engage in falsification of matters to justify a decision.

**Discrimination.** Because many universities are public institutions, and because many private institutions are recipients of state or federal money, they find themselves affected by a wide variety of laws and regulations. Specifically, state and federal officials have enacted several provisions concerning discrimination in employment. In addition, the courts have interpreted the...
U.S. Constitution and its amendments broadly to guarantee equal protection and due process in matters involving protected classes or involving fundamental rights such as employment. Department chairs (and other evaluators) are strongly encouraged to avoid considering any of these factors when conducting the performance evaluation:

- Race, color, or national origin
- Sex
- Religion (an exception exists for private, religious-based schools)
- Age (against those forty or older)
- Disability status
- Sexual preference (only in some states)

**Retaliation.** It is also improper to take action—that is, a poor evaluation or recommendation for denial of promotion or tenure—as retaliation for legally protected conduct. If a faculty member engages in constitutionally protected activities, such as free speech, practice of religion, or petitioning the government, it is a violation of his or her rights to adversely affect their interests because of that exercise. For example, if a faculty member campaigns for a presidential candidate, it is impermissible for the department chair to recommend a denial of tenure because of that activity. Similarly, a faculty member should not be punished for expressing views that are controversial or contrary to the views of the evaluator when such expression is within his or her First Amendment rights.

A retaliation claim may also arise from other protected activity, such as filing a discrimination or sexual harassment claim, reporting a work-related injury, or filing a grievance. The elements of a retaliation claim are that the employee engaged in a protected activity, the one accused of retaliation knew about the protected activity, the employee then suffered a negative consequence such as a poor evaluation, denial of tenure, or loss of work-related benefits, and there is a causal connection between the protected activity and the negative consequences suffered by the employee.

Similar to retaliation claims are actions that fall under state or federal “whistleblower” statutes. These laws protect employees who report illegal activities by their employer. Such whistleblower laws would protect a faculty member from being terminated or denied tenure because he or she reported fraudulent accounting practices, illegal recruiting methods, or any other illegal conduct.

In many states, the whistleblower laws are designed to protect state employees from reprisals from their public employers, but some analysts contend that such statutes may be interpreted to affect any private organization that contracts with the state or any subdivision. Other states, such as California and Connecticut, apply their laws to any employer, public or private.

**Recommendations for Chairs**

Evaluation of faculty by the department chair is typically a duty that is included in the terms and responsibilities of the position. When fulfilling that role chairs must not engage in any form of discrimination, nor must they retaliate against a faculty member for any protected activities. Finally, chairs must focus on the criteria set forth by the employment contract, the faculty handbook, or the collective bargaining agreement.

According to *Good Practices in Tenure Evaluation*, an AAUP publication, many faculty up for tenure were unaware of the requirements for tenure and weren’t aware of their deficiencies. The senior faculty and department chairs did not sufficiently explain the tenure requirements to their junior colleagues. The authors of *Good Practices* encouraged candor in evaluation at all stages and issued this warning: “An institution is vulnerable to challenge if it gives short shrift to any of the elements of candor. Particularly dangerous is the situation in which the institution has offered a candidate glowing evaluation for five years but then denies tenure on the basis of some inadequacy that no one ever communicated during the entire probationary period” (p. 20). Clearly, problems may be avoided with open communication between the chair and the faculty. However, not all department members will meet the standards for tenure or promotion. What can the chair do to avoid problems?

In truth, a candidate who has been denied tenure will not be very happy with the decision and may be willing to challenge that outcome by all means available to him or her. In that case, the chair’s best defense is good preparation. As an attorney, I have advised my clients to document everything and to retain all relevant items. I would also suggest that they write down the basis for the decision at the time the decision was made by either a letter to the employee or as a dated note to the file. For example, if it’s poor teaching, keep a record of the student evaluations, missed classes, or faulty syllabi, and make a note on how you considered it in your recommendation. If the main reason for recommending denial of tenure is a lack of research productivity, list the expectations for faculty, note the quantity and quality of the research, discuss the significance of the journals in which the candidate published (if any), and so on. I believe that documentation of the evidence supporting the decision, made at the time of the decision, is far more valuable and persuasive than trying to recollect reasons for the recommendation several years later.

On the other hand, some attorneys prefer that their clients do not keep any records or documentation at all in order to avoid the “smoking gun” that would reveal discriminatory intent or some other illegal reason for the denial of tenure. I disagree with that approach and encourage department chairs to do the right thing in the first place and to document that choice, thereby creating a solid defense.

If the standards and expectations are made known to all department faculty early on, and if the evaluation
is conducted fairly, then in the case of a denial of promotion or tenure or a dismissal, the university will still get sued, but the case will be disposed of quickly and be less traumatic for the department chair.

This article is based on a presentation at the 27th annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 11–12, 2010, Orlando, Florida.

The Subtle Role of Stereotyping in Personnel Decisions

by J. Andy Karafa

“A”n American excels at math.” “African Americans are irresponsible.” “Women are too emotional.” It seems safe to assume that most readers of this article recognize these statements as stereotypes and do not, therefore, espouse them. Unfortunately, our occasional, conscious acknowledgement of stereotypes does little to minimize their influence.

It is largely because of the nature of stereotyping that racism and sexism continue to exist into the twenty-first century. Although social norms have made racism and sexism undesirable in most social settings, members of society generally hold many of the same stereotypes and thus many of the same expectations about people based on race and sex. As acts of “traditional” racism and sexism (e.g., expulsions from “sun-down towns,” blatant hiring discrimination, etc.) have become less common, discrimination continues. Although discrimination occurs in just about every social setting, its prevalence and impact in the workplace has received much attention.

Stereotypes and Subtle Bias

It appears that the human mind endeavors to make sense of its social environment by categorizing stimuli into conceptual networks called schemas. These cognitive structures provide a quick, efficient, and largely unconscious means of determining what a stimulus is and what might be expected of it. Rather than carefully analyze every object or situation we come across while navigating our social environments, the mind activates schemas. For example, when we meet someone, we immediately call up schemas that inform us about sex and gender, thereby providing us with expectations about how the person will behave. In cases such as this, when the schema is a social category, we call it a stereotype.

One way of understanding the purpose of schemas is to imagine our day-to-day functioning without them. Without schemas, we would be required to use effortful thought every time we needed to identify a stimulus (e.g., person, object, action, etc.). Without the efficiency of schemas, we would be exhausted within two to three hours of beginning each day. In addition, if we took too much time identifying threatening stimuli (e.g., an oncoming bus), we would probably not live too long. (This helps explain why many of us have had the experience of driving into the school parking lot, only to stop short when we do not recall much of the drive. Processes, such as schema-driven thought, worked beneath awareness while we thought of other things, such as an upcoming meeting or lecture.)

It appears that schemas are important, seemingly necessary components of social cognition. They are typically activated (primed) automatically and work beneath awareness, allowing people to quickly make sense of the world around them without using up too much of their cognitive capacity. Unfortunately, these advantages come with a price: They often lead to prejudice and discrimination.

Many academic institutions, especially those that are state assisted, are facing challenging times. In recent years, colleges and universities have been asked to do more with fewer and fewer resources. Therefore, it is crucial that academic institutions make good personnel decisions, especially when investing in tenure-track positions or long-term adjuncts. Toward this end, department chairs and search committees must be wary of prejudices that might derail the hiring process and lead to hiring someone other than the best candidate.

Universities and colleges, like any organizations, can struggle with creating environments that lead to nonbiased hiring. In particular, the processes at academic institutions can be relatively chaotic when compared to other organizations. For example, although search committees are typically made up of subject matter experts (in this case, job incumbents), professors generally have limited human resources experience and/or training. Furthermore, many of the proven measures used by other organizations (e.g., tests of cognitive capacity) do not lend themselves to hiring someone with an advanced degree. As a result, academic hiring decisions are necessarily left to largely subjective measures (e.g., interviews, letters of recommendation, etc.).

Stereotypes can bias the hiring process in several ways. First, stereotypes impact our thought processes and memory. Specifically, stereotypes encourage us to see the world in ways that fit the assumptions associated with them. We tend to best notice and remember the assumptions associated with them.

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References

stereotypes. If we are faced with information that threatens the veracity of the stereotype, we are likely to find ways of interpreting it so that the stereotype is maintained. One way of doing this is to assume that there is something unique or unusual about a person; therefore, we can accept, for example, the apparent work ethic of a job candidate, but still assume that most of those belonging to that social category are lazy.

Second, stereotypes affect more than just the way we think; because of the expectations they generate, they impact our behavior. For example, self-fulfilling prophecies lead us to behave toward others in such ways as to subtly encourage stereotype-consistent behaviors. For example, let us assume that we unknowingly harbor a stereotype about a candidate that leads us to perceive her as being less intelligent than other candidates. Because of this expectation, we might simplify our interview questions. In turn, because the candidate is asked relatively uncomplicated questions, her answers are not very complex. The end result is that we believe our expectations have been proved correct; we shrug, and put her application materials aside.

Minimizing the Impact of Stereotypes

Because of the automatic nature of stereotypes, we are typically unaware of their impact on our thinking, even when we are trying to engage in objective, fair decision making. This is exemplified by a 2005 study by Uhlmann and Cohen that found that self-perceived objectivity predicted biased hiring appraisals.

If stereotypes are so insidious, what can we do? One basic way of weakening the effects of stereotypes is to teach those involved in hiring faculty about them. (It is my hope that this article provides a start.) Seminal research published in 1989 by Patricia Devine suggests that people can replace the automatic thinking (e.g., stereotypes) with conscious thoughts (e.g., personal beliefs), hence reducing the sway of stereotypes. This would seemingly require, however, repeated refreshers on the topic, to keep it fresh in peoples’ minds; otherwise, most would fall back to relying on stereotype-driven autopilot. (Kawakami, Dovidio, Moll, Hermsen, and Russin, 2000, have developed an intriguing process that helps to counter stereotypic associations by training people to associate nonstereotypic traits with social categories, such as gender.) The efficacy of any training program would likely be moderated by the attitudes of those being trained (e.g., perceptions of diversity-related programs), the organizational climate (e.g., institutional support for fair hiring practices), and the way in which the training was marketed to participants. Regarding the latter, anytime we are forced to do something, we tend to rebel against the requirement; this is called reactance. (Kawakami, Dovidio, and van Kamp appear to have found this in a study reported in 2007.) Therefore, obtaining buy-in is likely essential.

Adding structure to the hiring process is another way by which we can hinder stereotyping. For example, by using structured interviews, where everyone is asked the same set of questions, we can more clearly differentiate job candidates. Without such structure, the comparison process becomes ambiguous. In their 2000 investigation of aversive racism, Dovidio and Gaertner found that subtle racism is most likely to impact personnel decisions when a candidate’s qualifications are ambiguous. Structured interviews should also limit the frequency of self-fulfilling prophecies.

The use of hiring criteria is also driven by structure. Although most search committees develop a list of criteria before the position is advertised, the relative importance of each is often not considered until the review of applicants begins. This creates at least two problems. The first is one with which most of us can identify: committee member disagreement. If the relative weight of teaching experience and research production is not agreed to in advance, each member of the search committee is likely to judge each differently. Second, this leads to ambiguity, which allows the subtle influence of racism and/or sexism to creep in. The research by Uhlmann and Cohen (2005) suggests that search committee members are likely to shift the weights of hiring criteria in such ways as to favor the “right” candidate. Specifically, in one study, participants were asked to evaluate ostensible male and female job candidates for a women’s studies professor position. They found that women were more likely than men to rate certain characteristics as more important when the female candidate had them, thereby exhibiting favoritism.

Conclusion

Most of us have stored in our heads stereotypes that influence our decisions, day in and day out. It is important that we recognize the role of stereotypes in our own thinking, help others understand these processes, and put into place processes that minimize the sneakiness of stereotypic thinking.

Caveats: I focused on hiring for two reasons. First, most of the research examining racism and sexism in personnel processes has focused on selection. Second, and likely related to the first, is that it is easiest to conceptualize the influences of stereotyping during hiring. However, stereotyping can impact all sorts of personnel decisions, including those related to tenure, promotion, and committee assignment.

This article is based on a presentation at the 27th Annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 11–12, 2010, Orlando, Florida.

J. Andy Karafa is chair of social sciences at Ferris State University. Please contact the author for the full conference paper or the full list of references on which the article’s ideas are based. Email: JosephKarafa@ferris.edu

DOI:10.1002/dch
References


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**Top Fund Raisers, 2007–2008**

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Source: Council for Aid to Education
Recruitment, Retention, and 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.

Alexander 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 like 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 question-

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 to 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 post-secondary 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 the academic, 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 like 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.

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- 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 Office of Admissions 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. Furthermore, 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’
Leadership and Personality: What the NEO Five-Factor Inventory Tells Us

by Christopher Gould and Len Lecci

Most educators acknowledge some correlation between an individual’s personality and his or her suitability for academic leadership. Clearly, there are traits and aptitudes that contribute to the effectiveness of department chairs and deans. Some of us, however, may hesitate to list specific personality traits among the criteria used in recruiting and screening applicants for such positions, and, in fact, there have been legal challenges to this practice (e.g., Macy, 1965). Perhaps the assumption that intelligent, functional people do not consciously control their personalities seems overly deterministic, or perhaps we’ve seen someone grow into a position that initially looked like a poor fit. Moreover, we recognize that amateur analysis of personality often relies on the glib assertions and dubious formulations of pop psychologists and other self-help gurus. Likewise, popular conceptions of leadership are influenced by books and reality shows about corporate celebrities like Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, and Donald Trump. And while psychological inventories are more reputable, the most familiar of them, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, is not particularly valid or reliable (Pittenger, 2005). Thus, while most of us understand, at least intuitively, that personality correlates with leadership, some may shy away from adopting it as an explicit criterion in administrative searches—one that might rule out otherwise qualified candidates.

The question that we, a clinical psychologist and an experienced department chair, wish to explore is how an academic unit can appropriately consider personality traits in selecting a leader and, by extension, how individual faculty members might gauge their own aptitudes for leadership. We begin by defining academic leadership as the ability to build and maintain a highly productive department, college, or university while sustaining morale. Although personality is a more elusive term, we define it here as a pattern of cognition, affect, and behavior that is stable over time and across situations. (The italicized clause is noteworthy as we have all encountered job applicants who interview well because they adopt appealing behaviors during a campus visit without actually possessing the corresponding, more durable personality traits.) Of the various psychological metrics that assess personality, the one most clearly demonstrated to predict leadership, among other important outcomes, is the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 2003), which measures the “Big Five” components of personality: adjustment (Neuroticism), social potency or sensation-seeking (Extraversion), curiosity and vision (Openness), social charm or friendliness (Agreeability), and diligence or perseverance (Conscientiousness).

Some correlations between NEO-FFI scores and leadership support widely held beliefs. For example, effective leaders tend to score high in Conscientiousness, exhibiting reliability, self-discipline, punctuality, organization, and ambition (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Likewise, there is an inverse relationship between leadership and Neuroticism. Those who score high in this area are more susceptible to negative emotions such as depression, anxiety, or anger, and are therefore more vulnerable to stress, insecurity, low self-esteem, indecision, and emotional instability (Costa & McCrae, 2003). Equally predictable is the correlation between leadership and Openness. Persons who score high in this area tend to be curious, versatile, and creative (Harter et al., 2002).

Other relationships seem counterintuitive. There is no correlation between leadership and Agreeableness (Harter et al., 2002)—a dismaying consideration for outside searches because this is the easiest trait to assess during a relatively brief, superficial encounter. Even more surprising is a negative correlation between leadership and Extraversion (Harter et al., 2002)—surprising, perhaps, because of the popular perception of extraverts as persons who are focused more on other people than on themselves. Psychologists, however, define extraverts as individuals who thrive on frequent, often intense sensory arousal, sometimes induced by loud music or chemical stimulants, though more typically through

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 DOI:10.1002/dch
social interaction (e.g., Eysenck, 1990); significantly, extraverts so defined are not usually prone to empathy. Persons who score low in Extraversion, on the other hand, are more often perceived as humble, sincere, tolerant, respectful, and open-minded. The practical difficulty in assessing extraversion, however, arises from the social advantages of appearing humble; in academe, as elsewhere, people often feign humility.

Given these correlations between personality and leadership, some of them intuitive, how do academic units manage to choose ineffective leaders when personality is, almost inescapably, at least a covert or subconscious consideration? The two following scenarios help to explain.

When the long-time chair of the English department resigns abruptly, the dean asks faculty members to choose a replacement from within. Professor Dither, fair and conscientious, seems the obvious choice. Meticulous, prompt, and efficient, he enjoys the kind of paperwork that colleagues shun. Having no enemies, Dither is elected unanimously.

After a brief honeymoon, Dither’s shortcomings as an administrator begin to surface. Overly cautious by nature, Dither spends much less time hoping for the best than preparing for the worst. Interviewing prospective hires, he dwells on the precariousness of state funding and deplores the inadequacy of medical benefits. Requesting a new faculty line from the dean, he offers a glum assessment of departmental morale and points to a gradual decline in research productivity as evidence. Courting a donor who may want to endow a new scholarship, Dither laments the dwindling number of undergraduate majors. Dither’s earnest candor is perceived differently in a leadership role. What colleagues aptly discerned as Conscientiousness comes, in this case, with an equal measure of Neuroticism.

In the second scenario, the same department is authorized to conduct an outside search to replace the hapless Dither. Among three candidates brought to campus, Professor Gregario makes the best impression. Interviewers admire his receptiveness to change, brought out in innovative suggestions for recruiting majors. Gregario’s first two months on the job proceed swimmingly. The donor whose enthusiasm was stifled by Dither’s negativity is charmed by Gregario. Weekly drop-ins at the chair’s house bring together colleagues who have barely spoken in recent years. Interdisciplinary initiatives lead to a new faculty line, which colleagues attribute to Gregario’s vision and persuasive acumen.

Reservations begin to arise after two unusually contentious department meetings that address proposed revisions to the curriculum. When two senior colleagues express concern, Gregario assures them that such “robust” discussions were the norm at his previous institution. In subsequent meetings, Gregario proposes new criteria for tenure and promotion, a reduced teaching load for the most research-active faculty members, and a revised merit-pay formula. He is clearly exhilarated by what others regard as rancorous debate and seems unfazed by or unaware of their discomfort. Privately, Gregario tells worried colleagues not to take things so seriously, that everything will be fine once the department becomes accustomed to his style. What seemed like dynamic leadership now looks more like solipsism. During his interview, Gregario was correctly perceived as high in Openness and low in Neuroticism—a strong antidote to the despondency induced by Dither’s inept leadership. Where interviewers erred, however, was in mistaking Agreeableness for humility and empathy. Like many other proficient interviewees, Gregario temporarily adopted behaviors that obscured a personality not wholly suited to leadership.

What, then, can a department or hiring committee do to avert such missteps? We begin with these recommendations:

- During internal searches, don’t buy into sentimental narratives (e.g., the fantasy that the self-effacing Dither will metamorphose into a philosopher king).
- During external searches, exercise due diligence in consulting references. Remember that what we usually see during a campus visit is behavior, which can be manipulated, especially in the short term. Those who have worked with an individual over time can better assess personality, a pattern that is stable over time and across situations.
- Resist the impulse to privilege a candidate whose personality seems the antithesis of a predecessor’s. Dither’s saturnine disposition was bad; Gregario’s extreme extraversion may be worse.
- Be suspicious of any candidate who can’t or won’t appraise his or her personality or set goals: “Where I lead you will depend on where you want to go. I have a flexible ego.” Be equally suspicious of any candidate who seems preoccupied with self-analysis.

Finally, there are interviewing strategies that can bring leaderly attitudes to the surface:

- Ask questions that are likely to reveal personality:
  - Describe an administrator whose leadership you would like to emulate (or one who is a negative role model).
  - Tell about a time when you have seen an administrative decision especially well (or poorly) handled and speculate on what made it so.
  - Which kinds of tasks do you prefer doing alone? Which do you prefer doing collaboratively?
  - Include at least some questions that invoke scenarios:
    - Research productivity is notably uneven in the Department of X. Which kinds of rewards or inducements might improve, sustain, or threaten morale?
    - You have just conducted what you took to be a very productive department meeting during which faculty members have expressed conflicting opinions candidly. Afterward, two colleagues approach you privately to...
complain about a lack of civility during this meeting. How do you act?

There are obvious problems with reifying personality as a fixed, stable attribute. Personality, however defined, evolves over time and is not impervious to change. Nevertheless, staking the morale of a department, college, or university on the malleability of a prospective leader whose qualifications do not include humility, openness, and personal adjustment is a risky bet.

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The Chair Loop: Zoom to Doom—How Long Is Long Enough?

by Walter H. Gmelch and Val D. Miskin

What is the lifespan of a department chair? How long is long enough? Chairs normally serve six years, after which they typically follow one of two paths: Approximately one in five chairs move upward in academic administration and complete the full transition from faculty to administration. However, most chairs (65%) do not continue in administration, but return to faculty status where they remain until retirement.

Do long-serving chairs feel plateaued at some point? After four years? Six years? More? There is no set formula, but just being competent is not enough to be productive and keep the fire alive. Staying too long in the chair role results in losing interest in the job, failing to stay current in your discipline, falling behind on your scholarship, and possibly entering a performance plateau—a chair doom loop as portrayed in Figure 1. New chairs enter Quadrant I with a steep learning curve as they learn new skills and find new interests. The “new chairs” progress to the “good chairs” as they become committed to the position and competent in their duties (Quadrant II). The confident chairs, now in Quadrant II, are careful not to go over the edge and down the slide to becoming a “damn chair” (Quadrant III) or a “doomed chair” (Quadrant IV). Chairs talk about the conditions that influenced the feeling of being plateaued in their position: the repetition and routine of tasks where the scenery starts looking the same, the diminishing rate of return on their investment of time and energy, a decline in their learning curve, an atrophy in their skills, and after time in the office for five or six years a feeling they were not making a significant difference.

How do long-serving chairs keep their interest alive and stay on the edge of advancement? Several tactics can be useful to chairs.

• Tinker tactics can be used to stretch new skills and learn new ideas through new assignments, committees, commissions, team members, and faculty. Many chairs focus on retreating challenges inside the college and institution rather than retreating to another institution.

• Other chairs practice toehold tactics by searching outside the department, college, or institution for new challenges from professional associations, national organizations, and interdisciplinary connections.

• Zigzag chairs explore mosaic tactics to look for greener grass in other professions such as national and state agencies or full-time consulting.

• Some chairs use exploration tactics when they reach the top of their administrative mountain and realize being a department chair is not enough, so they think about changing mountains—seeking a deanship.

Chairs can search inside, outside, across, and beyond their current position and institution to prevent plateauing and keep their fire alive.

Academics enter the academy not to be administrators but to engage in the academic enterprise, teaching and creating scholarship. After entering the academy chairs find that they are requested, required, or interested in “serving” their colleagues and institution. They engage in servant leadership and do not consider this a career move.

Seven Survival Skills

Seven survival skills can help keep chairs alive in their jobs.

• Communicate in all directions—to the dean and central administration, faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders.

• Realize that being a chair is “not about me” but about serving others.

• Know yourself by seeking feedback and expressing your values and beliefs to others.

• Enhance leadership and learning through seminars, conferences, reading, and exploration.

DOI:10.1002/dch
The Leader Loop: “Zoom to Doom”

- Relate well to others, especially your dean.
- Hallucinate, get a vision.
- Love being a chair, or leave it. Life is too short to do it for the perks, if there are any!

**Leaving Your Legacy—Did You Make a Difference?**

Inevitably all chairs leave their positions. Is your destiny to go back to scholarship or on to higher levels of management? Before you leave, you may want to reflect on whether you made a difference. You may find it interesting to answer the following question: When you leave the chair position, what do you hope others in your department will think you have accomplished? Hundreds of chairs from our studies across the United States reflected on this question and collectively viewed their accomplishments in the following light.

**Productive climate.** Chairs wanted to be known for developing a sense of academic excitement, providing faculty with opportunities for gratification and satisfaction, enhancing faculty professional life, reducing faculty stress, and restoring peace and fostering growth among faculty.

**Collegial atmosphere.** Many chairs hoped their faculty felt an improved sense of collegiality where conflicts could be healed, the level of civility was increased, morale was enhanced, and some peace and order was brought to the department.

**Program advancement.** Many chairs aspired to build a national program, bring the department into the twenty-first century, focus the department area of concentration, enhance the department’s reputation, increase the department’s status within the university, upgrade the department’s teaching and research, build better relations within the field, and modernize the curriculum and physical facilities.

**Quality staffing.** Many chairs wanted to leave their legacy by recruiting and developing competent faculty, especially by promoting women and minorities and nurturing young faculty members.

**Quality leadership.** Chairs reflected on their personal qualities and hoped they would be respected for their honesty, openness, fairness, justice, and altruism. They also sought to provide the vision and strategic direction needed to advance the department’s mission into the next century. As a summary note, when we surveyed several hundred department chairs in Australia, three themes emerged from their legacy statement: “(1) We advanced our programs—we are in a better place than before, (2) we advanced people—faculty and staff were promoted, and (3) we did it with decency!”

If you had to write your legacy today, what would it be?

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DOI:10.1002/dch
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**Purposeful Change of the Chair's Role for Competitive Success**

*by John Groves*

The culture of American higher education is rapidly changing, with demands extending across the continuum from adjusting to transforming procedures and curricula. The public wants accessibility and rigorous accountability. Government agencies are designing centralized curricula related to economic success. Funding sources are requiring measurable outcomes aligned with standards for both the academy and for our graduates. Adding to these demands are changes within our environment:

- Career-oriented knowledge and skill sets are dictating instructional focus.
- A large segment of the faculty is approaching retirement.
- Operating costs are nearing or have reached levels that are not sustainable.
- There is an increasing call for international programs.

The need to be more accountable, the demand for standards-based instruction, and the expectation to be nationally accredited while being more consumer oriented has generated competitive forces within a traditionally cooperative environment. The focus is on curricula and instruction while ignoring the cultural shift emerging as institutions evolve toward greater capacity to compete with one another. This limited focus creates a vulnerability to change being imposed or occurring without purposeful review and discourse. The department chair is in the middle of these increasing demands and changing expectations. The chair lives with growing pressures to change this role while operating with an impression that nothing is being altered.

The department chair continues to fulfill traditional functions while being strongly pressured to accept new demands to meet changing conditions within the academy. Traditionally, the chair is a tenured faculty member trusted to calmly operate the department. Performance is strongly influenced by the eventual return as a professional peer within the department. The traditional chair was accepted as a faculty member managing logistical and student complaint issues and was not perceived as an administrator or as an administrative leader. These perceptions have not altered.

Today the department chair is viewed as an essential leader expected to advocate for the dean and for faculty colleagues, frequently at the same meeting. The new chair has increasing supervisory and administrative responsibilities, including creating high-quality instructional programs, responding to market opportunities and pressures, and providing instruction in a diversity of formats and locations. These changes create enormous differences in expectations between the chair and his or her colleagues. Acknowledging that program design is increasingly in response to market pressures is a new perspective for faculty members, and one that is not always appreciated. However, for the chair, the priority is not which faculty influence program design but getting the project done and implemented within a given timeline.

The need to respond quickly, efficiently, and with faculty support often places the chair in conflict with existing department procedures and members. These conflicts frequently involve university committee procedures, department operations, and new expectations for faculty competence with various delivery formats. The chair will be held accountable by the dean for successful implementation of the new programs within a specified timeline. Often, the chair has only limited authority to accomplish these goals.

It is important to address this need to shape our cultural changes. The emerging department chair is, or soon will be, working with conflicting demands, with limited authority to achieve goals, and with potential to damage his or her career due to meeting, or not meeting, the dean's demands. Faculty members and administrators must acknowledge this changing role, clarify responsibilities and reporting lines, and identify protections and opportunities after leaving the position.

An increasing concern is the lack of discussion about these pressures and, consequently, of the processes needed to best cope with them. This void frequently leaves the department, college, and university unaware of cultural changes and confused about how best to achieve important goals while preserving valued characteristics of the academy. The lack of discussion, with a willingness to both sustain and modify policy and procedure, creates a void that the academy must address or else external forces will dictate our culture.

The critical question becomes: Who will direct higher education culture?

Our traditions suggest that we study the issue, review the outcomes of our study, and make recommendations. Our traditional faculty role will accept that our work has been completed because we are experts in review, study, and discussion. We do not expect to take action, which is an administrative role. However, our immediate history suggests that time for discussion and review may be short. There are many who believe they know best how to “reform” higher education. The conflicts surrounding how to use time and who provides problem resolutions continue to fester quietly. The conflicts exist, yet acknowledgement of them appears invisible. Meanwhile the consequences of drifting toward an unknown future increase.

The issues need to be discussed at all levels, with acceptance of multiple models for adjusting to these new demands.
There is no role within the academy that will remain free of change as we move from a cooperative academy to competing institutions within the same arena. University presidents and provosts must direct their institutions toward this new perspective of competition. Deans need to be agile operational specialists capable of moving between planning and rapid implementation. All of these administrators will place increasing pressures on the department chair, who must become an operational expert with significant leadership authority and skills. Once again, the chair becomes the lynchpin directly responsible for achieving strategic goals.

As these administrative issues are being shaped, faculty roles are also being influenced. Our culture cannot alter from a cooperative emphasis into competitive success without changing those who deliver our central message. The valuing of fast and high-quality program design accompanied by effective and quick implementation can only be achieved with faculty engagement and support. The immediate person who must manage that engagement and support is the department chair.

The successful adjustment to a competitive culture will demand changes in promotion criteria, with new factors being added and traditional variables being modified or removed. It will take commitment from everyone to achieve a civil discussion, to identify the best strategies for our individual schools, and to implement as we redefine ourselves. We do this, or we will have it done to and for us. We need to discuss these issues so that all of us have opportunities to influence our culture. We must assist the department chair by acknowledging the changes and by giving credence to the new pressures chairs experience. We must begin discussing these changes in our culture.

The purpose for writing this article is not to raise alarm because our culture is changing or to direct changes toward specific qualities or characteristics. Our traditions have helped create an outstanding history of success and, therefore, need to be valued and reviewed thoroughly before acceptance of significant change. The goal is to focus attention on the need to evaluate the changes being presented and imposed on higher education. There have always been multiple avenues available for institutions to achieve success. That diversity represents development of individual identities for our colleges and universities. We need to preserve that diversity and to sustain our successes. It is the department chair who serves the essential role for that success. Open review of the changes within our financial and political environments in relation to our emerging institutional cultures is the best way to achieve success.

Let us, at every institutional and professional level, begin the discourse on how best to shape our culture. Let us help our profession, our institutions, and our students by helping department chairs realize and prepare for the difficult assignment they face. It is the trained administrators who must help the elected managers achieve purposeful change within our culture. It will be the department chairs who provide the daily how-to of this cultural evolution. It is appropriate that change be public, acknowledged, and directed by those within the academy.

This article is based on a presentation at the 27th annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 11–12, 2010, Orlando, Florida.

John Groves is dean of the College of Education and Human Services at Clarion University of Pennsylvania. If you are interested in joining the discussion presented in this article, or if you’d like a list of resources related to this topic, please contact the author. Email: jgroves@clarion.edu

Leveraging Your Library: Partnerships for New Possibilities

by Laurel Littrell

There may be experts on the college or university campus that department chairs do not realize exist. The college or university library offers more than just books or a place for students to study. Library colleagues may be the perfect partners for many types of projects that can further the teaching and research goals of departments. Librarians are experts at matching scholars with the information they need, including often creating the content themselves in partnership with teaching and research faculty. Collaborating with the library can benefit departmental budgets by sharing costs and maximizing resources that may already be in place on the home campus.

Typical Functions of the Academic Library
The main functions of academic libraries typically include developing information resources that support the curricular and research areas of the institution. These resources include online content, print books and journals, media, and other alternative formats. Because of the wealth of information available, an important service the library provides is organizing the information in such a way that researchers can locate relevant sources quickly, with librarians providing assistance in navigating and pinpointing exactly what the students or faculty members need. Libraries also offer students a place to study and access to computers and other technology.

Aside from these widely understood functions of the academic library, there are many other aspects that can be explored that are not so traditional or obvious to other faculty members and department chairs. These contributions add significantly to the scholarly out-
Libraries as Partners in the Teaching Process

In the wake of the “information explosion,” libraries offer important services to students and faculty in locating learning and research information. There is a large quantity of information at students’ fingertips, but finding quality information is quite a different matter. Librarians can teach students how to evaluate resources and avoid questionable or outdated sources. Responsible use of information is also important, as libraries will teach students how to cite information and comply with copyright requirements. As libraries work with students, information can be gathered to include in assessment of student learning outcomes, especially in the areas of critical thinking and ethical reasoning. Librarians can partner with teaching faculty to maximize the quality of student work and assess the effectiveness of that partnership.

Libraries focus extensively on offering quality customer service, and in so doing gain expertise in working with many different types of students. Librarians can offer assistance in working with various populations, including international students, nontraditional students, students with disabilities, first-generation students, and students of various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Librarians are experts at locating information of the appropriate complexity for the students’ projects and have organized resources from general, easy-to-navigate basic information to detailed graduate- and faculty-level research disciplines.

Department chairs should remind their faculty to consult with the library regarding courses they are teaching to ensure that the library is prepared to offer appropriate information relevant to the course, especially if a course or degree program area is new to the university. Remembering to let the library know about changes or new developments in an academic area can increase students’ chances for success in new courses and programs and allow the library the time and opportunity to make certain good resources are available. Working side by side with teaching faculty will help the librarian pinpoint the most effective time in the semester for introducing library research methods when students will need the information and therefore be more likely to remember. Traditionally, faculty bring classes in to the library at the beginning of the semester for a tour, but by the time the research paper is assigned, weeks later, the students have forgotten those instructions in the flurry of starting a new semester. Timing the library tour and instruction right when the assignment is made, or even closer to the time it is due and students are beginning to actually do the assignment, will make the library instruction much more relevant and useful and will result in a better end product from the students.

Libraries as Partners in the Research Process

Many librarians have strong backgrounds in various academic fields; many hold masters or doctorates in other disciplines as well as library science. These librarians are eager to continue their research interests and often seek opportunities to work with colleagues in related departments on grant proposals, research projects, and artistic collaborations. Not only can librarians contribute to information resources pertinent to a project, but they can perform research, contribute original works of art, and participate in any type of collaborative endeavor with faculty across campus, particularly at institutions that offer librarians faculty status and have research and scholarship expectations from these library faculty. Many librarians focus on library-related topics for scholarly work, but for those with advanced degrees in other fields, working with faculty in those areas is tremendously rewarding for all involved and provides enhancement to the scholarly contributions of the university.

Libraries as Partners in Grants and Budgets

With the drastic inflation rates on library subscriptions in the last decades, one does not ordinarily think of the campus library system as a way to save money, but it is entirely possible to do so when working with the library on certain projects. Many libraries are working to digitize collections to provide online access, enhanced finding aids, and in some cases to archive the content of deteriorating materials. Often other departments on campus are also interested in similar projects, such as digitizing, cataloging, or archiving image sets, databases, citations, and other information they want to make more widely available or to preserve. By pooling resources, departments can save money by using digitizing equipment and software that may already exist in the library rather than having to purchase and maintain a separate digitizing laboratory. Not only can libraries offer the equipment and software, but possibly even more importantly they can offer expertise in setting up such systems and cataloging information in a way that will make it efficient and easier for users to locate and navigate. In addition, libraries are happy to help publicize these collections, should they be made available for use by the broader academic community or the public. Libraries also have the expertise and equipment to assist in preserving delicate materials.
Specialized technology is often available for students and faculty on the entire campus to use through the college or university library. Many libraries have advanced computing equipment available for multimedia editing, scanning, and storage, including equipment for use in the library or in the classroom, laboratory, or field. Making use of these available resources can save departments considerable funds because they will not need to purchase these items themselves and the library or information technology units bear the cost of maintenance as well.

Not only can students save money on specialized technology resources, but the library can provide a critically important role in saving student money on textbooks. More and more teachers are placing course materials on reserve for students to share rather than having to purchase more expensive and quickly outdated textbooks. For texts and other materials that are used peripherally in a class, or to make sure all students have an opportunity to fairly share library resources on a particular topic, course reserves collections provide access for students in a much more affordable fashion.

Beyond the Book

Libraries have much to offer that one may not consider at first. One often hears claims that libraries are irrelevant and will soon be obsolete. Most people who say this are thinking in terms of yesterday’s library, not realizing how much the modern library has changed in the Information Age. Libraries still collect print books and other physical objects, but increasingly the information collected is online, with ownership or access purchased by the library, often in cooperation with groups of libraries to leverage costs. Not only do libraries purchase or lease information, they also generate information themselves through digitizing and publishing information created by the home institution, including the research and creative activity of the librarians themselves.

In this time of limited resources, department chairs should consider options available from the campus library or library system. The benefits from working collaboratively beyond the department with others on campus include increasing the visibility and scope of projects, improving morale, and enhancing the teaching and research environment for all.

This article is based on a presentation at the 27th annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 11–12, 2010, Orlando, Florida.

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The Chair’s Role in Managing Departmental Accreditation

by Suzanne Fischer Prestoy

Accreditation is an indicator of program quality. Consequently, institutions have increased participation in seeking program accreditation. A department’s “self-study” of high quality is required, and often chairs are called on to lead this accreditation.

The department chair is in the best organizational strategic position to lead the accreditation for a successful outcome, considering that the roles of leader, resource developer, administrator, and coach/mentor are attributed to the chair (Graham & Benoit, 2004).

The task of accreditation needs to be conceptualized as both a scholarly and an administrative service. Quality improvement and future planning are essential in the process, which is referred to as third-generation thinking (Alstete, 2004).

“Good to Great” Framework

The “Good to Great” framework (Collins, 2001) provides a process for the systematic analysis needed to understand what the department was, is, and will become. The organizational wisdom and practices identified by Collins helped frame the project within a leadership and quality perspective. Achieving greatness meant receiving a full eight-year reaccreditation.

The Good to Great findings applied the principle “First Who . . . Then What.” It’s important to have the right people do the right job, and those faculties were matched to their abilities and interests. For example, two professors who had been with the department for an extended time were asked to address the criterion describing physical aspects of the university. In addition, faculty who had special interests in the curriculum, and who served on the curriculum committee, were asked to analyze and discuss the program’s curriculum plan. The chair wrote about criteria specific to the chair’s role, such as resource allocation, mission, and governance.

Collins pointed out that successful, great companies, when faced with adversity, reflect a pattern noted among prison camp survivors (POWs) as the Stockdale Paradox. Interestingly, the most optimistic POWs did not fare as well as the more pessimistic POWs. The Stockdale Paradox offers the explanation that when difficulties arise, the more pessimistic individuals have a plan for addressing adversity, referred to by Collins as “facing the most brutal facts” of the reality they faced. The Stockdale Paradox was applied to our nursing department in the following manner: In 2006, five out of nine full-time tenure-track professors, including the chair, were either in new positions or were new to the university. Two full-time faculty left the university in the summer of 2007 (including one
## Projections of College Enrollment, 2009–2017

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<tr>
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<td>47,100</td>
<td>49,200</td>
<td>54,400</td>
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</table>

Source: U.S. Department of Education
of the newly hired). Their departure meant that the remaining faculty would need to add additional departmental and self-study responsibilities to their workload. Realizing there was much to be accomplished, faculty faced this new reality with resolve, confronted the “brutal facts,” and moved forward.

Collins describes the “Culture of Discipline” in successful organizations as one without tyranny. Being mindful of this finding, a disciplined approach to obtaining data, writing, and clarifying confusing issues was undertaken in a systematic, orderly, and disciplined manner. The chair was positive, motivating, and never critical, belittling, or harsh.

Another pattern Collins observed in successful companies is called the “Flywheel Effect.” In this principle, with small steps forward, the buildup of momentum, and the accumulation of visible results, people develop increased enthusiasm for a project. As our accreditation process moved forward, the department members did in fact display more enthusiasm for the project. The self-study took on a life of its own, and faculty took on more and more ownership of the project.

Using the “Hedgehog Concept”—determining an organization’s passion, what that organization is best at, and what drives the company’s economic engine—faculty defined themselves as passionate nurse educators who excel at providing excellent undergraduate education. The department was also able to identify where it was the “best,” having achieved the distinction of being the “Best Student Nursing Association Chapter” that year. Analyzing what “drove the department’s economic engine,” the nursing program realized it was primarily comprised of basic students seeking both an RN license and a bachelor of science degree.

Another finding in Good to Great companies was that technology can accelerate and organize the process. An online learning program, WebCT, was used to accelerate and organize the process. Sections of the self-study were placed on WebCT so professors could access data and other documents for review prior to meetings, which reduced meeting times. Email communication and reminders also helped accelerate the process.

Collins’s observation about effective leadership was also applied to the project. Good to Great leaders were found to be hardworking and nonflamboyant. They were committed to the success of the company. So too, the department chair/project coordinator was committed to the goal of attaining reaccreditation, and spent considerable time in its pursuit.

Leadership Considerations
A transformational leadership style is recommended, as well as the use of strategies to motivate and develop faculty. Faculty were acknowledged for their contribution to a positive environment. Attending to details, such as room availability and temperature of the meeting room, comfortable seating and work tables, adequate light, and general faculty comfort are the leader’s responsibility. When meetings lasted longer than three hours, food was available and provided by the department.

The department needs to become a cohesive team devoted to the reaccreditation. However, creating a faculty team is an interesting challenge. In many ways, team behavior is a contradiction in an academic milieu where individual excellence, not group performance, wins the highly esteemed tenure and promotion rewards. University departments are rarely defined as “teams” and professors teach “their own” courses and conduct “their own” research. Academic freedom provides considerable autonomy to these independent thinkers. For the most part, the life of a university professor involves many solitary activities. Professors might also be drawn to the field because of the independence.

Having observed academic work and interpersonal styles, the chair felt that any activity promoting a sense of “we” could promote team development. Team-building activities, including a picnic at the lake, creating time for shared lunches, and holiday parties, helped faculty to become a cohesive group. As relationships developed among the faculty, they became more willing to work together on the self-study required for reaccreditation.

Management Considerations
Project management skills are crucial for a successful accreditation process. The chair must identify and understand what exactly needs to be managed. The following are examples of questions the chair can ask at the beginning and then throughout the preparation for the accreditation: What resources are needed? Who will coordinate the process? What do faculty need to participate effectively? How will the report be written? Is the current department committee structure adequate for this task? How can committees participate? Who should be assigned to which committee? Is the meeting space conducive to achieving the goal?

Committee assignment recommendations were based on Collins’s principle of “First Who . . . Then What.” Faculty also had the opportunity to comment on committee assignments. Their likes and dislikes were taken into consideration. Faculty were also welcome to volunteer for the various committees.

Time frames and target dates should be set and meeting dates established, with attention to faculty availability. All times and dates must be mutually agreed to by faculty. Meeting space and room comfort is a specific management consideration. All faculty need to be held accountable for completing their assignments in the identified time frame, with flexibility and understanding that faculty face numerous professional and personal responsibilities.

Time management generally revolves around a two-year time frame.

DOI:10.1002/dch
for completing the study. The department’s unique composition was taken into account. A resource needs assessment should be undertaken, identifying which resources are available, and a list of the resources needed, including human, physical, and learning needs. Human resource needs include who will coordinate how much time. The accreditation coordinator should receive at least three credit hours per semester release time over a two-year period.

Administrative assistance is also a resource need. If the department has only one full-time secretary, a ten-hour-per-week graduate assistant can help with the accreditation process by obtaining data and statistics as well as attending meetings, meeting with the chair and committee chairs, and word processing the document. An additional human resource need will be an editor. Because several writers may contribute to the report, it is necessary to obtain an expert editor who can read the report and make specific recommendations to maximize its clarity. The written self-study should address all criteria identified by the accrediting body. The report should be logical and accurate. Faculty knowledge, capability, and educational needs should be assessed. Accrediting bodies often offer training for “self-study” development. The chair and selected faculty need to attend these sessions to have up-to-date information.

An analysis of physical resource needs should be completed. Questions regarding the general department environment include: Does the department present well? What is the first impression of the department? Do faculty have adequate office space? Do they have a technology need? Are the classrooms technologically current and have adequate seating? Do students have adequate space and opportunities to meet with faculty?

The involvement of key stakeholders in the university and community is essential. Representatives from student services and enrollment services, as well as the dean, provost, or president, are key individuals. Community members may be representatives from clinical agencies or other service-learning partnerships. Alumni and other academic members of the university can be important allies in this process. Invite them to meetings, and keep them informed as the study progresses. Ask key individuals for their comments and recommendations.

Careful planning of every detail of the accreditation visit is critical. Assess nearby hotels and restaurants. Always adhere to your accreditation organization’s housing requirements. The hotel or motel should be business class, and of a high quality. Accreditation visitors are volunteers and highly esteemed colleagues. Visitors should be comfortable. Meals, snacks, and rest periods should be available. Drivers and escorts for the visitors should be identified. The department must make every effort to be a gracious host.

Lessons Learned
The department chair conducting an accreditation visit will have an enormous responsibility for delivering a successful reaccreditation. As the point person, the chair will devote many hours to this process. Although success requires a team effort, the personal effort of the leader is fundamental for success. The chair should be prepared to write and rewrite sections of the report as needed, to work tirelessly out front but also behind the scenes. As difficult as the chair’s work is, remember that everyone’s contribution must be acknowledged, both privately and publicly.

Coordinating an accreditation process will be an important learning and life-altering experience. Chairs will enormously increase their knowledge of the university, community, and department.

This article is based on a presentation at the 27th annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 11–12, 2010, Orlando, Florida.

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References

The Toxic Workplace Test

by Dean Dad

I’ve come up with a one-question quiz to determine whether your workplace is toxic.

1. When Smith attacks Jones in public in dirty, ad hominem, and generally unprofessional ways, and Jones responds by taking the high road, what happens?
   a. Jones would never take the high road. Nobody ever does. It’s on!
   b. Jones takes the high road out of town.
   c. Jones is viewed as the loser, since the high road is interpreted as weakness.
   d. Onlookers divide into warring camps, and others do the dirty work for Jones.
   e. Smith is viewed as the loser, having been decisively outclassed.

If the answer is anything other than e, you have a toxic workplace.
From an administrator’s perspective, changing a culture that would answer d into one that would answer e is a real, and incredibly important, challenge. (Ideally, of course, the attack wouldn’t happen in the first place, but to count on that would be foolish.)

It’s difficult because the benefits of the high road usually take time to show up, but the emotional satisfaction of a sucker punch is immediate. Worse, many of the benefits of the high road are contingent upon others recognizing it for what it is, and appreciating it. (Yes, virtue can also be its own reward, but sometimes we need more than that.) That takes a certain confidence in your expectation that others will understand what you’re doing. In the absence of that confidence, the high road can feel like unilateral disarmament. Part of the job of campus leadership is setting a climate in which people can be reasonably confident that they won’t have to resort to frontier justice to defend themselves. If an expectation develops over time that it’s possible to disagree in public without getting personal or nasty, then those who violate that expectation will start to find themselves isolated. I consider that a good outcome.

In my early, naive days of deanery, I thought that setting the example would be enough. It wasn’t. The lead-by-example thing wasn’t enough, because too many people didn’t notice or get it. To the small-minded thug, in the short term, the high road can look like weakness. It also didn’t address the reality that no matter how a particular situation unfolded, different people had different slivers of information about it, and interpreted it accordingly. Missing a key piece of information, or placing it in an unrelated context, could lead even well-meaning people to mistaken conclusions.

Instead, I’ve slowly come to realize that if you want to give people confidence that the high road will work, you have to take several steps.

First, obviously, model it yourself. This isn’t enough by itself, but without this, you’re sunk.

Second, explain what you’re doing and why you’re doing it. If you model the behavior but trust that it will speak for itself, you’ll often fall victim to weird interpretations. Put your interpretation out there, preferably several times. If you can manage a “before, during, and after” approach, all the better. And for heaven’s sake, be consistent.

Third, acknowledge when you fail. Everybody does, from time to time, but some people just can’t bring themselves to admit mistakes. If you let slip an ill-considered comment in a moment of frustration, don’t try to justify it or pretend it didn’t happen; admit it, apologize for it, and renew the commitment to higher ground.

One of the benefits of this approach is that it shifts the locus of authority from the individual to the ideal. That’s very much of a piece with separating the speaker from the speech, which is the basis of civility. It shows respect for others, without which there’s simply no basis for taking the high road seriously. I’ve found over time that people who feel respected are usually much less likely to escalate conflict to unproductive levels.

Finally, be patient. Some people will catch on more slowly than others, and a few never will. Trust is built slowly and lost quickly, so you have to be willing to stick with it for a while before seeing the results you want.

The tragedy of the middle manager—I know, boo-hoo, but stay with me—is when you follow all of these assiduously, only to be undercut from above. I’ve lived through that more than once, and I can attest that it’s demoralizing at a really fundamental level. Sometimes, the high road can only lead out of town. But if you have leadership that actually enables the high road, stick around. You’ll miss it when it’s gone.


### Average College Costs, 2009–2010

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Source: The College Board

DOI:10.1002/dch
PLAGIARISM

Court Upholds Student’s Dismissal for Plagiarism

Case: Mawle v. Texas A&M University–Kingsville, et al., No. CC-08-64 (S.D. Tex 04/20/10)

Ruling: The U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas, dismissed Abhishek Mawle’s claims of due process violations and discrimination against Texas A&M University–Kingsville.

Significance: Courts may not over-ride the judgment of college officials on an academic decision unless it is such a substantial departure from accepted academic norms as to demonstrate that the person or committee responsible did not exercise professional judgment.

Summary: Mawle was an international graduate student at Texas A&M University–Kingsville College of Business Administration. In fall 2007, he received an “F” in two classes based on a Turnitin report indicating that his term papers were mostly plagiarized.

Mawle wrote to the dean of the college, claiming that he did not plagiarize the material and alleging that the professors discriminated against him because of his national origin and religion. Mawle was from northern India and affiliated with the Hindu religion.

In January 2008, a female student filed a report with university police alleging that she was being sexually harassed by Mawle. He denied the allegations, claiming that the complainant had publicly made derogatory comments about his nationality.

In February 2008, two separate complaints were filed with campus police alleging that students overheard Mawle say “I understand why people shoot up or bomb schools in America” while discussing the plagiarism charges.

University officials understood Mawle’s comment as a terroristic threat and placed him on probation. Mawle was expelled in May 2008 for plagiarism. He was afforded a lengthy appeals process during which he was represented by counsel. He then sued the university and three faculty members alleging that they denied him due process, discriminated against him based on his national origin, and retaliated against him for filing a grievance.

The District Court dismissed his claims. The judge held that the defendants had a legitimate basis to conclude that Mawle plagiarized the papers and should be expelled, and they used their professional judgment in making those decisions.

Dismissing Mawle’s due process claim, the court noted that he had been afforded more procedural process protections than required by federal law. The court also dismissed the discrimination claim. It held that Mawle did not assert any facts to contradict the defendants’ alleged reason for his dismissal.

CAMPUS SAFETY

College Was Not Liable in Student’s Off-Campus Death

Case: Guest v. Hansen, et al., No. 08-4642-cv (2d Cir. 04/20/10)

Ruling: The Second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed summary judgment for Paul Smith’s College of Arts and Sciences in a negligence lawsuit arising from Kristine Hansen’s accidental death while visiting the college.

Significance: Generally, colleges and universities do not owe students a duty of care, nor do they have a general duty to supervise or control their students’ off-campus conduct.

Summary: Kristine Hansen and Joshua Rau died in an accident involving a snowmobile on the lake at Paul Smith’s College of Arts and Sciences. The lake, although within steps of the college’s residence halls, was state property and outside the college’s jurisdiction.

Hansen, who was a student at Quinnipiac University, was visiting Rau at Paul Smith on the day of the accident. They were celebrating his birthday and had been drinking alcohol along with about one hundred other students at a party on the lake.

Hansen’s estate sued Rau’s estate, the college, and its director of residence life, Toni Marra. The plaintiff alleged that the college defendants acted negligently by failing to intervene in the party and insufficiently enforcing the college’s policy against underage drinking.

The defendants moved for summary judgment, arguing that they did not have any duty to supervise or control Hansen’s activities, and they were entitled to immunity from liability for snowmobiling injuries under state law.

The record showed that Marra and the college’s head of campus safety intervened several times during the party and admonished students about the risks associated with their activities.

The District Court granted the defendants’ motion for summary judgment holding that they did not owe Hansen a duty of care. The judge noted that New York courts have held that colleges do not have a general duty to supervise or control their students’ conduct. Nor did Marra or the College assume a duty when Marra went out to the lake, because by doing so she did not “place [Hansen] in a more vulnerable position than she otherwise would have been in,” the court added.

The Second Circuit affirmed the judgment on appeal. The panel noted that even assuming that the college had the ability to control off-campus social activities, it did not have the obligation to do so. In addition, the fact that Marra knew students were congregating on the lake did not mean that she was required to ban their activities.
Is being a leader in a community college sufficiently different from being a leader in private liberal arts college or in a research university to warrant its own book? Leadership is leadership, right? Zenger and Folkman’s book, which I refer to often as a community college leader, has nothing to do with community colleges specifically nor education generally; it is based on research in the private sector and touts the U.S. Marine Corps as an exemplary organization for leadership development.

Pamela L. Eddy’s Community College Leadership: A Multidimensional Model for Leading Change deserves our time for two simple reasons: first, the multidimensional model for leading change transcends community colleges and is applicable broadly within and beyond education; and, second, the author’s thoughtful inclusion of vignettes and case studies provides the day-to-day grounding to make her model relevant to readers of all professions.

Yes, community college readers have the advantage of knowing many of the leadership challenges firsthand and will be more interested than most in sections such as “Challenges of Community College Leadership,” but this book adds sufficiently to leadership literature that it should find itself on the bookshelves of professionals across education and the private sector.

The thesis of the Community College Leadership is that “leadership is not composed of a prescribed list of traits or skills. Rather, leadership is multidimensional, with the various dimensions existing on continua that reflect the evolution of a leader’s understanding of what it means to lead, as well as his or her ability to respond to leadership opportunities in new ways” (p. 2). Eddy is wonderfully clear in the first chapter about how she will develop this thesis throughout the book. No guesswork here on what this book is about and how the author is going to fill the remaining pages, an approach we former English faculty admire and all readers appreciate. She even advises different types of readers on how to approach her book: those focusing on leadership theory, for example, may wish to skip straight to Chapter Seven. Readers heeding her advice, however, risk missing leadership insights found in every chapter.

After prefatory discussion in Chapter Two on leadership context, development, and philosophies, Eddy presents an overview of multidimensional leadership, including its foundational propositions: “(1) There is no universal model for leadership, (2) multidimensional leadership is necessary in complex organizations, (3) leaders rely on their underlying cognitive schema in making leadership decisions, (4) leaders often adhere to their core belief structure, and (5) leaders are learners” (pp. 32–33). Chapters Three through Six explore leadership concepts (e.g., career paths and career planning, communication, leadership competencies, and gender and leadership), and Eddy ends these with each chapter’s topic tied directly to multidimensional leadership.

Department chairs, and other leaders who are not college presidents, should not be put off that the vignettes used so effectively by Eddy in Chapters Three through Six and expanded as case studies in the appendix have community college presidents as their protagonists. Most of the challenges faced by these presidents exist within the department and other environs as well, and leaders of all types will be able to draw from the challenges faced by these presidents. The “Sensemaking on Campus” vignette (pp. 68–71), for example, describes how five different presidents lead their campuses through major organizational changes. Different approaches by these presidents in different institutional cultures provide Eddy with abundant opportunities for leadership analysis and permit readers to visualize leadership in action—for good and for bad.

With the foundation laid, the author develops her model of multidimensional leadership in depth in Chapter Seven. It is this fully developed leadership model that readers generally and department chairs specifically will want to study carefully and be prepared to reference when they are at their leadership crossroads.

Most faculty begin leadership roles such as that of department chair with little to no formal training in leadership theory. While the fact that they have risen to such a role should indicate they possess leadership skills (at least in the eyes of a few), some have...
never reflected on themselves as leaders and most have never been challenged to articulate anything close to a comprehensive leadership model, leaving them vulnerable when daily leadership challenges cascade into leadership crises.

In her multidimensional model, Eddy does not serve up neatly wrapped leadership fortunes: If you are such and such a leader, then you lead such and such a way and all will be well in your world (see your lucky numbers on the back). Instead, she emphasizes that there is no one preferred way to lead, and, as such, her model looks different for each person. A leader considers herself or himself along a continuum of options for each of five leadership concepts (leadership, schema, gender, communication, sensemaking and framing, and competencies; additional concepts may be added if situations warrant), and it is this collective consideration that provides the context for effective leadership. As a leader learns and as situations change, a person’s understanding of himself or herself along each continuum may change, indicating the dynamic nature of leadership, which this model embraces.

Within the leather portfolio I carry with me at my college is a small age-worn copy of the graphic representation of Zenger and Folkman’s leadership model, which I have referenced for years, especially when tense situations challenge my professional balance. I recently added to my portfolio a small copy of Eddy’s graphic representation of multidimensional leadership (see page 147) to remind me of the ongoing importance of learning as I lead. ▲

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