

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

FOR ACADEMIC LEADERS

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Change Management

by *Daniel W. Wheeler*

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Executive Summary

Departmental chairs and their departments face a range of external and internal forces that challenge academic traditions and expectations. Critics suggest that departments are either unwilling or unable to respond. Chairs play a significant leadership role in initiating and facilitating change processes to make necessary changes.

External and internal forces for change in departments are described. Three types of changes are identified: (1) adaptations in which people make adjustments only to changes that are in place, (2) innovations or major changes in which new ideas and procedures are implemented, and (3) change creation in which organizations make priority changes to be on the cutting edge. The changes occur at the individual, group, and departmental level.

Change can be managed in a number of ways and is usually driven by an implicit or explicit model. This briefing suggests that an eight-stage model is a useful guide. The eight stages are (1) establishing a sense of urgency, (2) creating a guiding coalition, (3) developing a vision and strategy, (4) communicating the change vision, (5) empowering broad-based action, (6) generating short-term wins, (7) consolidating gains and producing more change, and (8) anchoring new approaches in the culture.

No matter what model is adopted, chairs are both managers and leaders of change. It is suggested that leadership is particularly crucial to the change process, because it is driven by vision, motivation, and meaning-making. Chairs should also play the roles of gadfly and facilitator.

Resistance to change is part of the change process. Concerns should be surfaced and addressed so that people can move through the change process. Kinds of resistance identified are tradition, self-interest, lack of skills or competencies, change mandated from the top, flavor of the month, not invented here, complacency, and faculty nearing retirement.

A number of strategies to address resistance are suggested. They include demonstrating empathy and understanding for those in the change process; tying initiatives to the vision, mission, and values of the department; showing that the proposed change is consistent with the academic traditions and expectations; building on previous successes; and communicating often and in a variety of ways.

In this briefing I describe eleven effective practice principles to guide chairs in their change efforts: (1) respect the people and traditions, (2) make decisions and processes transparent, (3) keep one eye on the present and one on the horizon, (4) value involvement in the life of the department, (5) involve faculty and staff in the what and how of decisions, (6) recognize that change management has a human side to it, (7) understand the difference between

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management and leadership, (8) have a short list of what is really important, (9) invest in having everyone be successful in the change process, (10) be sincere and authentic in whatever you do, and (11) make change management a priority.

Change management is critical to departmental success today and will be even more so in the future. Department chairs need to take the lead in this process.

TO CHANGE OR NOT TO CHANGE?

Academic chairs continually face the possibility of change in the life of the department. Some voice the often-heard perspective that the only constant is change. Yet higher education is accused of being slow to change or even incapable of making necessary changes. To the extent that these charges are true, why is change a particularly difficult proposition for departments?

The context of the chair's work is complex. Because there are competing responsibilities, endorsing or initiating change can be difficult. The chair is the keeper of the standards of the department, which include protecting academic values and traditions. He or she must maintain and encourage disciplinary rigor and integrity. The chair is also expected to meet the needs of the institution, which may require responding to new initiatives and clientele. These responsibilities may conflict when faculty members are reluctant to accommodate the needs of the institution, putting the department at risk (i.e., experiencing a decrease in students, producing fewer credit hours, being seen as unresponsive to changes). Often without a quick response from the chair and his or her faculty, the opportunity to make meaningful change is no longer possible.

Given this dilemma, the chair must often find ways to make changes that are within the academic values and traditions of the department or reframe the issues so that they can be consistent with the culture of academe. To do so often requires creative thinking and consulting with faculty to make the changes work. If departments are to stay responsive and move forward to meet institutional and societal needs, chairs must be the academic leaders who find ways to work with their faculty to make important changes. Departments that embrace the status quo only get further behind. Higher administrators expect that the chair will work with the faculty to move forward to meet institutional and societal needs. Thus, sitting on the sidelines or simply serving as a caretaker while waiting for the next rotating chair to replace you is a formula for disaster for both you and the department—you are the person expected to make a difference.

The chair is in the key position to make the leadership difference because of a confluence of sources of power. These are legitimate or position power, expert power, referent power, and personal power. Let us examine each of these in more detail to see how they add to the leverage of the chair:

- *Position power.* Chairs have the legitimacy to set, or at least strongly influence, the agenda and are expected to do so by administrators and faculty. Others may disagree on how they accomplish their goals, but they are expected to be influential players.

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- *Expert power.* Faculty members who are chosen for the position of chair are usually highly respected for their research and teaching. Search committees emphasize the primary importance of candidates being successful in academic endeavors, even though such success may not involve the entire skill set necessary for success in an administrative position.
- *Referent power.* Groups have considerable influence in setting the expectations and norms of situations. Chairs can tap into and reinforce the need to conform and the desire for excellence of an identity group—in this case the members of the department.
- *Personal power.* Faculty members chosen as department chairs usually have the ability to connect with and to be trusted and liked by their colleagues. Chairs often draw on that personal power to convince faculty members that they have their interests and well-being at heart.

Taken together, these sources of power or authority suggest that the chair begins with considerable leverage that can and should be translated into leadership to position the department for the future. This briefing asks two questions: How does the chair help the department protect its culture in the face of pressures for change? and How does the chair work with the department to move it out of its complacency and fear of change to embrace new directions? As the chair sees ways of bettering the department, he or she must be ready to initiate change even where there are no clear pressures to do so. The task is not only to make the department more responsive to changing conditions, but also to fulfill its own

sense of mission more successfully. Thus, department leadership involves seeing where things need to be framed and done in new ways, whether it is changing the curriculum, collaborating with others, becoming more engaged, increasing a research profile, or redirecting resources within the department. The chair who is a leader has a vision or guides the department to develop a vision of where the department should go and what changes are necessary to implement that vision. If a chair squanders the power of

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his or her position and influence on maintaining the status quo or dealing with insignificant issues, then we have to ask, Did the chair lack the courage and foresight to make things happen? The chair, as leader, is expected to frame, shape, and move the department forward.

FORCES FOR CHANGE ON ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

Few institutions or departments are insulated from external forces for change, nor can they maintain complete control

over their internal processes. External levers for change include

- Changing student demographics (fewer traditional-age students, more diversity)
- More options for students through technology and new ways of delivering courses and programs
- Legislative/federal mandates and initiatives (many unfunded)
- Accreditation (much greater emphasis on student outcomes and other output factors)
- Job market demands
- Reports from expert panels (many highly critical)
- Funding pressures, including the lessening of state support as well as increased competition for outside grant funds

Internal levers may include

- New leadership (new presidents, provosts, or deans attempting to impact their institutions or colleges)
- Institutional initiatives (assessment, diversity, general education)
- Reorganization (often one of the first moves of a new administrator)
- Student demand
- New collaborative programs (joint programs with other institutions, colleges, or departments)
- Increases or decreases in departmental funding (usually based on the number of student credit hours or number of majors)
- Pressures on faculty members to take on new teaching roles and/or generate outside grant and contract dollars to support their own as well as institutional research initiatives

Given these forces for change, faculty members, and sometimes chairs

themselves, often express a sense of “change fatigue,” that is, frustration with the resultant increasing work demands and lessening of control over the use of discretionary time, which they would like to devote to the most important items on their agenda. A productive attitude for the chair is to identify how to use these forces, whether internal or external, to make changes that will improve programs and position the department for a better future consistent with the department’s vision. For example, if there is a general decline in college enrollment and departments are being pressured to increase their enrollments, rather than just try to add more students to the traditional or standard program, these departments should take advantage of the opportunity to identify new majors, minors, programs, or offerings that can prepare students for evolving careers or new needs within professions. Such an orientation also helps the members of the department believe they have some control and internal motivation to make changes that not only solve an institutional problem but are value-added for the department as well.

GENERAL KINDS OF CHANGES FACED BY CHAIRS AND DEPARTMENTS

Academic departments often face three general kinds of change possibilities: adaptations, major innovations, and what can be called “priority changes.” Each is briefly discussed next.

Adaptations

We are required to make many adaptations simply to survive. We can think of this as making minimal adjustments to new or existing arrangements. For example, if a new student-tracking system is initiated, you will have to learn how to use the new system or find

someone who knows how to use it. Similarly, class sizes may increase, e-mail communications may expand, your course may be scheduled in a new room in a different building, an electronic platform may be adopted by the institution (e.g., BlackBoard or ACT!), or the submission requirements for annual performance review may change, all of which will necessitate some measure of adjustment. At the least, an attitude adjustment is necessary in these situations.

Let us take the example of the use of BlackBoard. On some campuses, every

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course is set up to use BlackBoard or some other online course-management system. Consequently, students have come to expect professors to use it in their courses and to understand the subtleties of the system, particularly when students encounter problems. Professors can choose a number of ways to respond to the use of BlackBoard. They can learn the system inside and out. They can learn enough to be able to use it to supplement their established instructional patterns and have enough understanding of the system and its support personnel and proto-

cols to ensure that students are successful in the course. Or they can choose not to use the system and take the position that there is no reason to incorporate it.

The faculty member’s choice may have significant implications for the students’ learning and the credibility of the teacher. In the first situation, the student has an integrated experience, and BlackBoard becomes critical to learning. The professor’s credibility is demonstrated through his or her use of technology, which is a central part of learning for today’s students. The second situation suggests that the faculty member understands how the system creates improved opportunities, and he or she is learning with the students—at least making some adaptations. In the last situation, students will conclude either that their professor is out of date or that he or she simply will not spend any effort on adapting his or her methods in a changing teaching environment. Students who learn best through technology will feel cheated and disadvantaged. It is the job of the department chair to help faculty members understand the implications of the choices that they make when asked to adapt to change and, with guidance and support (including technological support), to see them through the difficulties of making the right choices for their students and their relationships with them.

Major Innovations

Major innovations can occur at the individual, group, and department or college levels. Each of these levels requires different strategies by the chair.

Individual Changes

In the course of a career, faculty members need to adapt to small changes and opportunities as well as to make

major changes in their own careers and agendas in response to a continually changing environment. Most of today's faculty members have witnessed the diversification of the student body; the introduction of applied learning techniques; shifts in their research portfolio in response to changes in funding streams or disciplinary needs; the increasing development of outreach consulting services; and changes in their scholarly interests, teaching expectations, and academic roles in different stages of their careers.

In leading change, the department chair has the responsibility not only of overseeing the department's large change initiatives, but also of supporting and facilitating changes in a faculty member's professional life. Perhaps all that a faculty member who refuses to adapt to BlackBoard needs is an institutional support system to alleviate his or her fears and uncertainties when faced with the new technology. In a similar vein, suppose a faculty member is asked to retool to deliver online courses, even though he or she has no experience in this area. In this case, the faculty member may have a steep learning curve, often with much trial and error, even with support from knowledgeable colleagues and staff. A more ideal situation would be for the department chair to arrange for the faculty member to have time to work with another colleague during the previous semester, so that he or she could learn and refine the online teaching materials and strategies before actually teaching the course alone. The faculty member would be better prepared and more confident and would be likely to have a more positive attitude about online education. This example involves the department chair in intentional, planned change for an individual faculty member.

Group Changes

Chairs also deal with change management issues with respect to disciplinary or functional groups within the department in areas such as recruitment, advising, or undergraduate teaching.

Changes may also be needed in developing or structuring department groups, task forces, or teams, especially as interdisciplinary work in teaching and research areas expands or the need to conduct searches arises. Changes in research funding may force a principal investigator to restructure

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an existing research team. Similarly, the expansion of start-up costs in support of research may have a major impact on teams of faculty researchers. Redefining a departmental vision can result in new roles and services for some faculty members. New technology may necessitate changes in courses to prepare students for their upcoming jobs. All this takes departmental leadership.

As these examples suggest, groups of department faculty and staff may have to make changes to address needs or maintain an edge for the unit. For

example, in one department a group of faculty members, with encouragement from the dean and department head, sensed that opportunities existed to develop a distance-education degree that would increase enrollment and funding for the department. Senior and junior faculty together developed a master's-level program that has made a significant difference in the department's viability and reputation across the campus and nationally.

Total Departmental Change

Significant departmental or college changes may include a reorganization of existing disciplines or subdisciplines, a merger between two or more departments, or responses to major increases or decreases in funding.

In some departments, a changing environment may require the development of a new vision and mission to guide decisions and planning. This effort often involves the chair engaging the entire faculty in a meaningful dialogue about a preferred future, which will be more than one person's vision. To truly dialogue about the future requires time, patience, and openness; it is not a onetime discussion or task. Many academics have a low tolerance for prolonged planning activities, preferring instead that the chair responsibly reflect their expectations in the departmental plans.

Priority Changes

In *Field Guide to Academic Leadership*, a good source for chairs and other leaders on managing change in an academic environment, Lick (2002) says that academic leaders must embrace critical changes to stay relevant to institutional and societal needs. He suggests that "change may be called a silent juggernaut—a persistent, irresistible force. It permeates everything, with no respect for person, profession,

organizations, or faculty, academics, parents, communities or higher education” (p. 31). Chairs and their departments not only have to adapt to a myriad of changes over which they may have little or no control; they must also make judgments about which aspects (trends, external and/or internal forces, and probable/preferred future scenarios) need primary attention. This is a large order for many who would like to be left alone to work on their individual agendas, and who often see change factors and possibilities as interfering with their real work. Chairs must help faculty members set priorities in dealing with the most critical areas of change for their departments. Examples include the oncoming retirement of senior faculty, the creation of a new degree program, and the building of a new facility.

ROLES OF DEPARTMENT CHAIRS: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Chairs play a variety of roles in the change process. Sometimes these roles are divided into management and leadership, both of which are important. Kotter (1996) suggests that “management is a set of processes that can keep a complicated system of people and technology running smoothly. The most important aspects of management include planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling and problem solving” (pp. 25–26). More specific management tasks include appointing and providing oversight on a search committee, preparing the annual budget and allocating resources, seeking outside funding in support of academic programs, providing student scholarships, managing facility and space needs, and maintaining the various databases and reporting systems needed to document and support departmental functions.

(For a more complete discussion of the management functions, see Hecht, Higgerson, Gmelch, & Tucker, 1999; and Leaming, 1998). Kotter believes that “leadership is a set of processes that creates organizations in the first place or adapts them to significantly changing circumstances. Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles” (pp. 25–26). The following example provides a picture of how all encompassing an effort must be to achieve wide-ranging departmental redefinition and redirection.

A changing environment may require the development of a new vision and mission to guide decisions and planning. This effort often involves the chair engaging the entire faculty in a meaningful dialogue about a preferred future, which will be more than one person’s vision.

A new chair from outside the department was hired to shake up a department that had become complacent and a concern to higher administrators. The department was composed of almost 40 percent professors, 20 percent associate professors, 20 percent assistant professors, and 20 percent temporary faculty. The chair was told that the department needed to generate more students and research dollars because the department and college were on the verge of slipping further down the slope to nonviability. The chair had a sense of urgency, but many of the faculty—particularly senior faculty—wanted to continue the same activities until they finished their careers. The university had just raised

tenure and promotions standards with greater expectations for the classic academic products.

The chair thought through her strategies for creating a sense of urgency, a vision for the future, and a group of faculty members she could engage who would become advocates for the changes. Her first act was to speak individually with faculty members to assess their sense of reality and their hopes for the future. Through these conversations, she was able to determine which individuals in all ranks had influence and could serve as advocates for moving forward. Based on this information, the chair proposed a vision and direction for the future that would be addressed in a departmental retreat.

The vision retreat was a success, particularly because the planning group was well coached to suggest “what ifs,” building on the present and encouraging others to find ways to be a part of the vision. In addition, the ground rules were devised so that barriers or concerns were set aside, but still in sight, to be addressed at a later time if necessary. This preliminary work led to the identification of strategies to move toward the vision.

As time went on, the chair and the guiding coalition described the successes in terms of program and personnel. The chair also used management tools (new promotion and tenure guidelines, professional development funds, and external funds for bigger changes) to encourage continual movement toward the vision.

The results included senior professors developing several new courses and revising old ones; associate professors moving in new directions in their research; and assistant professors having a better picture of both the direction of the department and the expectations for teaching, research, and service by which they would be measured. A few people also retired or left the institution; they either did not wish to go in the proposed direction or were not ready to make any changes.

As the example demonstrates, leadership skills are key to a chair’s success

in leading change, but he or she must also have the management tools to provide the concrete means to implement a vision.

Specifically, Kotter's (1996) research in business organizations has demonstrated that in successful transformations leadership activities account for 70 to 90 percent of the success, and management efforts about 10 to 30 percent (p. 26). Even though his research is about organizational changes in businesses, chairs should take note. Leadership involves what is sometimes described as "the soft skills" such as visioning, motivating, meaning-making, and defining fundamental values.

Chairs should recognize that they have many opportunities in their roles as communicators to emphasize and reinforce the department's direction and priorities. Written materials (memos, e-mails, relevant articles, or news pieces), celebrations, the selection and hiring of new faculty and staff, meetings and informal gatherings (lunches and social gatherings)—these are all tools at the chair's disposal. The chair also has the opportunity to reinforce important activities through praise, both written and verbal, as well as by providing incentives and rewards (monetary and status). For a number of ideas on how to be more effective in various communication venues and with particular faculty, see Leaming's (2003) *Managing People*.

WAYS TO MANAGE CHANGE **Kotter's Eight-Stage Process**

Most change management models or theories describe a series of steps or phases that leaders must implement to ensure successful change. A three-, five-, or eight-step model can be used, depending on your tolerance for complexity and specificity. All of the models have some advantages and disadvantages.

Personally, I like the Kotter (1996) model, which provides the following eight-stage process:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency
2. Creating a guiding coalition
3. Developing a vision and strategy
4. Communicating the change vision
5. Empowering employees for broad-based action
6. Generating short-term wins
7. Consolidating gains and producing more change
8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture (p. 21)

As Kotter suggests, each of these stages requires careful attention and action. The model suggests that with-

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out a sense of urgency in the first three stages—a vision or picture of where the organization is going and people to champion the effort—nothing is going to happen. A sense of urgency communicates that the change is high on people's agendas—not just something to address when time permits. If we are asking people to give up something in order to commit to a major new initiative, then they need a picture or direction that they can further develop by adding details and shaping their roles. Ideally, the whole group—senior faculty, junior faculty, staff, and students—should support and help each other to understand how they fit into this vision of the future. However,

chairs should realize that many who want the change often think that change is not happening fast enough, and those against it may perceive it to be happening too fast. If the chair is hearing both of these viewpoints and he or she can see that steady progress is being made by moving toward the vision through small steps as well as occasional breakthroughs, then the change effort is probably on track.

Stages four and five require constant reiteration and interpretation, collectively and individually, of the vision and encouragement that people need to decide their pathways and of the motivation to accomplish what is needed. Too often administrators believe that if they describe the vision once to faculty members ("they are smart people"), that will be sufficient.

Stages six and seven suggest that, given the ambiguity and anxiety often experienced with change, successes should be highlighted and the next benchmarks identified. Without this feedback, people can become lost in their own change process and believe that no progress is being made. The more progress is tracked and celebrated in the organization, the more powerful the effect.

Stage eight is about imbedding the change in the culture: the values, habits, and ways that things are done. This is an important step in institutionalizing the change.

Developing a Shared Vision

An example of developing a shared vision may be instructive.

The dean of a public university faced with implementing greater student outcome accountability decided that the only way to obtain commitment was to lay out the problem and have faculty members decide how to solve it.

Even though the dean knew what had to happen, he encouraged the faculty members to help determine their vision of accountability and to be champions for the vision. This was accomplished through a faculty committee, composed of leaders in the college, that developed a comprehensive plan with an underlying philosophy of assessment, a perspective on what data are to be collected, examples of collection methods, a determination of who will see the data, and a decision on how data will be used for improvement and reporting. Because collective data were to be reported and individual data provided to faculty for improvement of teaching and learning, faculty members believed that their needs were considered within the vision framework.

Additionally, the dean and the faculty committee identified short-term gains, such as published cases of success and their use in promotion and tenure materials. The more the other faculty members observed these successes and saw their applicability to their lives, the easier it was to make the needed change. It is clear that the dean understood that it was important to identify a guiding vision in association with faculty leaders. The work had a sense of urgency but the faculty members saw that they could strongly influence what happened. They were pushed but they also had the time and insight to figure out how to make assessment work for them and the institution. The example of those who became champions for the effort encouraged others to become involved.

This example suggests that change management is not a single event, but a process linked to how people have experienced change, to the confidence that they sense in their ability to make changes, and to their trust in the system. Many faculty members and staff understand that changes have to be made, but how change is accomplished is important. I have sometimes heard

administrators say that the reason they did not consult with people is that it would not have changed the decision. However, efforts to achieve change are most successful when those who are impacted by the change share ownership of the process, when they are treated with respect and courtesy by being involved, and when they can share their insights and concerns. Department chairs should also realize that some of their own hesitancy in involving others may reflect their desire to avoid what can be emotionally painful conversations. People often become angry and

The effective chair has done the political groundwork with higher administrators and faculty leadership to accomplish important changes. Chairs use a variety of means to ensure that significant players understand their goals and how those goals fit with the institution's mission and goals.

emotional because they care about whatever it is that will be changed, and their first reaction may be that the change has the potential to upset their patterns. However, successful change managers understand that meeting resistance is often part of the process of involving others in decision making and that their role is to mitigate that resistance as they convince others to join the change effort.

Politics of Change

The politics of change often does not get enough attention. All change oc-

curs in a context in which various players are affected by institutional and departmental history, relationships with others, and alignment of forces to achieve successful change. The effective chair has done the political groundwork with higher administrators and faculty leadership to accomplish important changes. Chairs use a variety of means to ensure that significant players understand their goals and how those goals fit with the institution's mission and goals. They use written as well as face-to-face opportunities to reinforce their direction and goals. The larger and more complex the institution, the more work the chair has to do to inform and influence these various constituencies. For a more in-depth discussion of the "push" and "pull" factors, see chapter 3 in Seagren, Creswell, and Wheeler (1993).

Leadership Influence Strategies

Chairs may wish to become familiar with the following leadership influence strategies:

1. Consultation
2. Rational persuasion
3. Inspirational appeals
4. Ingratiation
5. Coalition
6. Pressure
7. Personal appeals
8. Upward appeals
9. Exchange tactics
10. Legitimizing
11. Collaboration

In higher-education situations, tactics such as consultation, rational persuasion, and collaboration are most frequently used. Leadership research suggests that almost all of the eleven tactics are more effective with subordinates and peers than with upper-level individuals. Rational persuasion is the

only tactic that has been demonstrated to work consistently with upper-level leaders. Another finding that chairs should consider is that the “soft” tactics (inspirational appeals, personal appeals, consultations, ingratiation, upward appeals, persuasion, and collaboration) are usually more effective than “hard” tactics (e.g., reduced resources for travel and professional development, smaller salary increases, increased workload, and other disincentives). The hard tactics can and sometimes must be used, but they often have undesirable consequences, leading to demoralized faculty members who either become committed to further resistance or simply tune out the department completely

Applying Kotter’s Model to Address the Human Side of Change Techniques

No matter what model or process is used, leading change is more than a technical or engineering process. There is a human component that is messy and sometimes emotional, because people are invested in what they are presently doing. A goal of having people commit to, not just comply with, change is also necessary for success. Acting out of fear or a mandate will gain only compliance. Commitment will require authentic involvement and a sense of ownership from those affected. Let us look at an example of a department that has garnered a reputation for being insular, for seeing itself as responsible only to itself, and for resenting anything it perceives as outside interference.

A new dean is hired and challenges the department to create interdisciplinary curriculum and scholarship and to become more visible contributors to the university at large. The following set of practical steps that the chair can

use to achieve the desirable change is based on Kotter’s model:

1. *Establishing a sense of urgency.* The chair needs to convey the seriousness of the situation in a way that the faculty understands the need for action instead of simply being defensive about its “culture.” He or she needs to indicate what opportunities have been lost by the department’s current mind-set and what might be gained by change. The dean could be invited into a department meeting to discuss how the department is perceived by the university and why it needs to change, what is at stake if it continues down its present path, and what new opportunities may be available to the department if it embraces the dean’s challenge. The chair could also invite to a department meeting representatives from other departments who have achieved the connections and visibility that the dean seeks, to discuss what their departments have accomplished and how those accomplishments have benefited them.
 2. *Creating a guiding coalition.* The chair could begin with a retreat or a session to discuss the situation, perhaps breaking the faculty into small groups to consider possibilities. Additionally, the chair could lead a discussion of how to create working groups to develop some plans.
 3. *Developing a vision and strategy.* Plans need to be developed from a vision, and the chair needs to work with the department to provide that vision. A vision statement could say something to the effect that the department will seek coalitions and opportunities to form alliances with other departments and disciplines, will seek opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and research, and will become known for its achievements and its contributions to the college and university at large. One strategy could be to establish interdisciplinary foci for research, with particular suggestions for where they might be by considering department strengths and the human resources in other departments.
- Another strategy could be to seek grant support for the vision’s specific ideas with specific suggestions as to where to look and what ideas might be funded. Perhaps ideas concerning team teaching involving other disciplines could be developed. A faculty member or a committee could be assigned to develop packets and nominations for faculty members for university teaching and research awards so that their achievements will become better known. Perhaps a department newsletter could be developed. Additional visibility can be achieved by a commitment to have department faculty members serve on college and university committees, or run for the faculty senate.
4. *Communicating the change vision.* To become more visible the department needs to seek as many ways as it can to make its efforts and achievements known. Suggestions could include, in addition to the aforementioned newsletter, an e-mail listserv, visits to other departments, communications with alumni, and discussions with the research office staff and other higher administrators who can encourage and support the new connections and activities.
 5. *Empowering employees for broad-based action.* The chair should identify resources to support faculty engaged in activities to implement the vision strategies. The more the strategies can be supported by wider university structures, the more faculty members will become engaged and their efforts will become known. Moreover, the department’s new priorities must be reflected in the department’s reward structure.
 6. *Generating short-term wins.* An important question is, What initiatives can be achieved in the short term or be measured by early progress, so that the department feels progress is being made and stays with the program? Strategies for conveying progress might include support by new partners and clientele, the use of project management charts or other tools, celebrations of faculty achievements that fit the new vision, and re-

wards that suggest the importance of the progress made.

7. *Consolidating gains to produce more change.* Each step forward should pave the way for the next step forward. For example, groups that successfully develop an interdisciplinary curriculum can naturally move toward collaborative research and publication, and their successes in either area would put them in position to make a case for hiring possibilities that could bring in new faculty who would help to consolidate and increase their gains.
8. *Anchoring new approaches in the culture.* Once the new approaches are developed, the department chair should show that they are not changes being imposed from the outside that undermine department culture but, rather, are natural extensions of the department's developing culture and how it wants to see itself in the future.



RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Is resistance to change a cause for concern? As part of the change process, it is to be expected and is necessary to commitment. Reflect on situations in which you did not wish to make a change. You may find that you had many reasons for not desiring to make the change. For example, you did not have time, it really was not a better way, you did not know how to do it, you were planning to retire in the next few years, or your way had always worked just fine. So often it is easier to endorse change for others than for ourselves. As a former colleague of mine, an effective change agent, said, "I love change for others but I have a lot of problems when it is for me." Being honest with ourselves captures our true feelings about change.

Resistance to change is to be expected, and leaders of change need to recognize where it exists so that they

can understand and address the issues that are involved. In so doing, they must also understand the underlying reasons that people often find change difficult. For example, what they are being asked to give up doing may be something that they have done for years and see as highly valued. Fulfilling a new role may involve adjusting their professional image of themselves, which can be a difficult transition.

Many kinds of resistance to change are observable in academic departments. Following are examples with suggestions about how to deal with each of them in a proactive, constructive fashion.

Tradition

We have all heard this typical response to a suggestion for change: "If it isn't broke, why fix it?" However, sometimes people just need more information on the trends to be convinced that something has to change. For example, if the enrollment figures are static or in a downward trend, faculty members need to understand the implications if the present pattern continues (increased teaching loads, elimination of positions, use of more adjuncts). A possible response is to analyze and compare past, present, and future enrollment projections for their accuracy and significance, citing trend lines. In addition, groups of faculty could be sent to observe successful programs, or representatives from those programs could be brought to campus, and the data from flourishing programs shared with the faculty.

Another strategy is to help the department see how the situation can be reframed within the tradition. For example, if the department is resistant to a new emphasis on theory in the discipline because it has a history of strong application, then it is crucial to

demonstrate how theory can result in even better practice. Or if a department is leery of engaging in online education because it believes that there has to be a personal connection with students, then the faculty needs to discuss how to keep that personal connection tradition even in a more technological context.

Self-Interest

Economists point out that people vote their self-interests. You often hear from faculty members that they will do only things for which they are specifically rewarded. Thus, a common refrain is, "It's not in my job description." Some might say today that everything is in their job description, because the workforce is shrinking as the work continues to expand. Academics often advocate for the status quo because they do not believe (in some cases legitimately) that the change is in their best interests. They may focus on what will be lost rather than what might be gained. Moreover, they may have spent their entire careers developing a specialty that can be extinguished with the stroke of a pen. Chairs should help these faculty members understand that they will continue to play an important role in the department by describing how significant and valued their new roles and skills will be in helping the department move in new directions.

The chair may also need to allay faculty fears concerning the impact of change on their routines and well-being. For example, they may worry that curricular change will take away their seminar, or make them change the books that they have been using for years and have thoroughly underlined for teaching. To get support for change, the department chair may need to visit faculty members office by office to address their personal

concerns. This may mean showing that if curricular change results in eliminating a course that a faculty member has been teaching as a requirement, the faculty member can still teach it as an elective, or he or she can develop a new course even more closely related to his or her research interests. It is paramount that the message be, as far as possible, that they will not be personally disadvantaged by the change.

As has been suggested, resistance from self-interest can also be addressed by tying participation in the change effort to the extrinsic reward system. Finally, it has been demonstrated that the most powerful way of overcoming the resistance of self-interest is to present a compelling, motivating vision of the future, coupled with reassurances to alleviate individual concerns and fears and the prospect of tangible rewards for participation and achievements in the change effort.

Lack of Skills or Competencies

In today's technological age, many faculty or staff, particularly at the later stages of their careers, may not have the skills to meet new expectations. Department leaders should recognize that it will take time and possible missteps along the way for some faculty to develop the skills necessary for their new work. My experience is that new techniques or minor adjustments in roles can often be integrated in one year or less, but major role changes require two to three years to become integrated. Strategies to address these needed changes include training programs and sabbaticals, short-term leaves, and released time to allow faculty members to concentrate on developing new courses or roles (for more information see Lunde and Hartung, 1990).

Change Mandated from the Top

In a historically collegial environment, a change mandated from the top is often resisted. Faculty members expect to be consulted in some way, particularly if the change is going to impact their academic roles and traditions. If the change is something that has to be done on a short time line for the survival of the institution, then it needs to be carefully explained and justified. At the very least, faculty should be involved in how the change is accomplished. Over the years, I have observed that if most decisions have a high degree of involvement with a resulting high degree of trust, then in a few situations, people in the depart-

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ment will accept that the process has to be compressed. Without that trust, every decision will be examined with a critical eye.

One strategy is to ask people to look beyond the mandate to see how, while serving administrative goals, the mandated change might serve their goals as well. In this way, the mandated change may lead to faculty and staff taking ownership of the change initiative by examining their own needs and motivations. For example, assessment has often been mandated from the top or by an accrediting body, so the initial reaction is usually negative, and assessment is seen as an add-on to faculty work. However, when

faculty members discuss how the assessment can be done within their present structure and how it can improve teaching and learning, resistance dissipates.

Flavor of the Month

Faculty members understandably do not like to have change imposed on them by administrators, particularly when they feel that they are simply following administrative trends. When an administrator suggests implementing a new program or process, a common reaction by faculty members may be, "What conference has he or she attended?" accompanied by a good dose of skepticism about why this is a good idea, and questions about why it is being brought to campus and whether the administrative mindset really understands the faculty sensibility. For example, in the 1990s, total quality management (TQM) was a hot topic among administrators. Faculty, however, resisted the movement, reacting strongly to the term *management* and to the idea that others outside higher education had invented "quality." Before any concepts in TQM could be applied in the collegiate environment, the term itself had to be adjusted for a faculty culture (to, for example, CQI, or continuous quality improvement), or dropped altogether, and now the term is rarely heard at all. However, many institutions have adopted the principles behind TQM. (How often do you hear of cross-functional groups charged with studying and making changes to such processes as recruitment, admissions, or retention with a continuous improvement orientation?) The institutions that benefited most from continuous improvement were those that initially involved faculty members in studying it and deciding whether it had any merit for their specific situations. A lesson

here is that ideas must be examined carefully in terms of how they fit in higher education and, if they have merit, how they can be adapted, but that this is best done when faculty and administrators work together in a change effort in which they understand and respect each other's culture and expectations.

Some strategies for faculty and administrators to adopt as they examine the viability of new change initiatives are to examine the potential for both short-term and long-term results and to pilot efforts before implementing them on a large scale.

“Not Invented Here”

If resistance can be born from a perception that a change initiative is being imposed from outside one's culture, it can also emerge simply from the fact that the idea was “not invented here.” For example, a new dean talked incessantly about how things were done in his previous institution but felt that he was not making any headway with the faculty. Only after one faculty member got up the courage to tell him that the faculty members were tuning him out because he was coming across as an outsider speaking from the context of another university did he become an effective dean by grounding his experience and his rhetoric in his current institution. Happily, this dean was not like the derailed managers studied by McCall and Lombardo (1983). Their research suggests that some managers do not know how they are perceived by followers and do not learn from feedback when they get it.

Many worthwhile ideas are ignored because institutions may be restricted by comparisons only to their peer institutions. Consequently, an innovation or process at a different kind of institution may not be seen as appropriate in this situation. This happens especially in

situations in which institutional leaders are obsessed with rankings.

Sometimes, the “not invented here” resistance can be overcome by good benchmarking procedures, whereby best practices at other institutions (and they are not always found at peer institutions) can be identified and their benefits and successes made clear. Here again, site visits can help sell faculty groups on the viability of the best practice, and they can return from such visits as advocates who help the faculty members to whom they report understand the benefits of the practice and take ownership of the change initiative.

Complacency

In some academic departments, faculty members may appear to be unconcerned about the possible impact of change, or the need for change, on their immediate roles or responsibilities. They may adopt an almost complacent attitude toward responding or adapting fully to change. Strategies for dealing with complacency may include sharing information in a timely manner on how changes will affect faculty members' professional decisions, reinforcing department norms for dealing with change, and offering modest incentives or rewards for change.

Faculty Nearing Retirement

Senior faculty members who may be within five years or so of retirement can become forces of resistance because they do not see themselves playing an important role in any change process. Perhaps they have a sense of change fatigue because changes being suggested are not new at all, but return the department to positions held in earlier years, and they have little desire to help the wheel spin again. On the other hand, they may feel that they

are being asked to enter new territory, but that it is meant for another generation. I have heard such faculty members say that they would rather retire than learn the new technology needed for communication or teaching.

For the chair, the challenge is to use the change initiative as a way of helping these senior faculty members leave on a high note. One strategy is to appeal to their pride by asking them to use their experience to make their contribution to the change initiative part of their legacy. Depending on the change initiative, the department chair may, for example, ask them to take the lead in developing a capstone course, or integrative research, or an overarching outreach project. In this way, these faculty members can move toward retirement, not with a sense that their work is ended as the department moves in new directions, but with a sense that they are still central to the department, and their final legacy is to play a significant role in helping it to move into the future.

APPROACHES FOR DEALING WITH CHANGE

The following sections summarize key strategies that chairs should use in leading department change.

Understand Personality Types: The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

Chairs with knowledge about personalities can help individual department members adjust to change. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a commonly used personality instrument that provides a common reference point to discuss four aspects of personality. Sixteen personality types can be formed from combinations of those four aspects: Extroversion (E) or Introversion (I), Sensing (S) or Intuition (N), Logic (T) or Feeling (F), and Judging (J) or Perception (P). No one type is described

as better than any other type—just that the types have different gifts.

As a person who has developed numerous change efforts for groups and individuals, I have found that nearly everyone will make changes if the situation and conditions are right. For those who are excited about taking on a new challenge or role, the chair's task may be to help them work through the transition and identify the necessary steps to achieve their goals. On the other hand, those who are hesitant to enter an ambiguous situation or a new role may need a definite sequence of steps and a job description to feel comfortable. Some of these patterns are personality driven. For example, the MBTI describes "Intuitives" as being motivated by challenges; if they are provided a new opportunity, they want to develop it in their way. They often do not want or need a job description, nor do they wish to or need to follow someone else in the position. However, "Sensing" types want defined structure and specifics. The tactics for helping those with these two different type preferences are different.

Knowledge of the MBTI can therefore help chairs think about how to move the department as a whole toward a major change. In forming committees and work groups, the chair should involve "Intuitive" types of individuals in the task of defining the vision and big picture, and "Sensing" types in developing the necessary details to move to the vision and goals. In the process as a whole, "Sensing" types may become more comfortable with their intuition and "Intuitives" may become more in touch with their senses. What each of these types must understand is that both perspectives are crucial for achieving the desired change. Too often departmental discussions involve a power struggle between

these two perspectives, when in fact they need each other. Adroit department chairs use this basic knowledge to understand differences, respect perspectives, and move forward.

Demonstrate Empathy and Understanding for Those in a Change Process

Chairs and colleagues should show that they understand that changes, even positive ones, generate stress and anxiety. Individuals will deal with these anxieties in their own ways, and they should be encouraged to work through the transition. If some faculty members appear to be stuck (i.e., focusing on the same issue continually), then it is appropriate to

If a chair is attempting to move in a totally new direction, outside of the vision, mission, values, and traditions of the department, then he or she is unlikely to be successful.

intervene and try to move them forward. Chairs should understand that often it is not the fear of the change itself that is bogging the person down but, rather, the inability to handle the process of transitioning to it. (See Bridges, 1984, for a discussion of the differences between changes and transitions.) It may be necessary to give individuals who are having difficulty moving forward with the change permission to let go of some activities and responsibilities. Keeping a foot in existing activities may not allow the separation needed to move on to the new role. I am reminded of the proverbial situation in which a person is getting into a boat from a dock and the boat is not tied.

The person has one foot on the dock (familiar ground) and one in the boat. If the person continues to keep one foot on the dock, he or she is going to get dunked in the water. However, if the person puts both feet in the boat, he or she can head to new horizons.

Tie Change to Vision, Mission, and Values of the Department

If a chair is attempting to move in a totally new direction, outside of the vision, mission, values, and traditions of the department, then he or she is unlikely to be successful. Without question, if change decisions can be tied to the core mission of the department, it will be easier to implement the change. If the vision and mission have changed in recent years, those who are against making the change to the new vision and mission may well continue to protest any changes in the department. An effective recourse for the chair is to focus on the areas of emphasis that have been determined through agreement of the majority of the faculty members while recognizing that in any change situation there will continue to be a minority of people who will be against the change (often suggested to be as much as 30 percent; see Rogers, 1995).

Be Consistent with the Academic Traditions and Expectations

Once again, if the change is conceived in the context of academic traditions, it is more likely to be successful. For example, if a new degree program is introduced, applicants should demonstrate an ability and aptitude level expected by faculty. If the background of the applicants is less academic than the previous norm, then red flags will be raised. At the same time, faculty should be challenged to think about why the traditions are important, and ways that changes can be consistent with tradi-

tions or how the traditions can change to be appropriate in today's context.

Build on Previous Successes

As is the case with many other professionals, faculty members are proud people who have spent many years perfecting their expertise. They resent a leader coming into their environment and suggesting or implying that work they have done in the past was insufficient or poor quality. A useful strategy is to build on the foundation of success—perceived and real—to generate faculty involvement and commitment. Then the leader's role is to move to the questions, Where do you want to go? and How can I help you get there? (see Creswell, Wheeler, Seagren, Egly, & Beyer, 1990).

Communicate Often and in a Variety of Ways

Effective change management requires conversations in both formal and informal situations to understand others' needs, interests, hopes, and fears (Creswell et al., 1990). Chairs suggest that some of their most meaningful conversations occur in neutral or informal sites (hallways, bathrooms, brown-bag lunches). This has been dubbed "management by walking around." Those who stay in their offices, have a minimum of face-to-face meetings, and rely wholly on communication by e-mail are not as likely to be successful change managers.

CONCLUSION: PRINCIPLES FOR LEADING AND MANAGING CHANGE

We can extract from the discussion of this briefing the following principles for leading and managing change:

Respect the People and Traditions

You may not easily understand reasons for the positions or behaviors evidenced by faculty or staff; you may have to

probe, sometimes gently, sometimes more deeply, to discover attitudes and reasons for resistance. This is important work. Whatever you do, be genuine and have the other person's interests in mind.

Make Decisions and Processes Transparent

Sometimes leaders covet information as a source of power or a way to protect people from having to deal with difficult or too many issues. For department members to be nimble and up-to-date, leaders must share information with them about the rationale for processes and decisions. Information sharing is also fundamental to building and maintaining trust. In any case, with high-tech systems and tools, people can ferret out most things themselves, and the leader must be able to head off rumors and alleviate fears, particularly when they involve the uncertainties that people feel about impending changes, by communicating early and clearly.

Keep One Eye on the Present and One on the Horizon

The department chair needs to stay on top of everyday processes and activities while keeping an eye on the future. Faculty and staff share in this responsibility. It should be kept in mind that some faculty members will be good at addressing the concrete, everyday items, whereas others will be good at looking at trends and alternatives. The MBTI will provide clues as to what energizes the department members.

Value Involvement in the Life of the Department

Much of the change process can be handled in everyday conversations by asking questions, suggesting alternatives, encouraging and promoting new ideas,

and suggesting "what ifs." Not only does this build a foundation for decisions; it encourages continual dialogue and openness, which can lead to addressing differences, and possibly even mediating them, before they become polarized. I once asked a faculty member of a well-run department what the chair does. His reply was that the chair "talks to us for a living" (in addition, the chair is a good listener).

Involve Faculty and Staff in the What and How of Decisions

Ideally, faculty and staff are involved in decisions that impact them, as well as in how the decisions will be carried forth. Unfortunately, at times decisions are made at a higher level (e.g., freezing positions, retrenchments), and departments just have to adjust. However, even in these cases, those affected should be asked to consider how to make the decisions as workable as possible in the department. It is crucial in terms of long-term morale that department members see that they have some effect on the decision-making process.

Recognize That Change Management Has a Human Side to It

Chairs should never forget that change management has a human side, that it is never just a technical process. In some cases, changes are going to be painful to those involved. People need to be encouraged and supported, and given empathy, understanding, and room to grow into a changing situation when they find change difficult.

Understand the Difference between Management and Leadership

Leadership has been described as doing the right thing, management as

doing things right. Management can provide the structure, monitoring, and planning for how things will happen, but in a change process, leadership is about inspiring, encouraging, and meaning-making. Management takes care of accountability and the concrete (the countable), but leadership inspires and sets direction. Effective change masters never forget that.

Have a Short List of What Is Really Important

Great leaders have a short list of priority items. They communicate this list and encourage others continually to prioritize what is on their short lists (important changes should be on both lists). It is paramount that addressing change, whether individual, group, or departmental, be at or near the top of the list.

Invest in Having Everyone Be Successful in the Change Process

Unhappy faculty and staff can demoralize others in the department when they are not carrying their share in the process of renewal or change. The leader's challenge is to help all members understand the reasons behind the change initiative and to enlist their support and involvement

Be Sincere and Authentic in Whatever You Do

A leader who is perceived as authentic is one who acts with integrity, with a clear sense of principle or purpose. Such a leader's behavior promotes trust among both faculty and staff.

Make Change Management a Priority

Finally, today and even more in the future, the department chair's ability

to initiate, facilitate, and manage change at the individual, group, and departmental level is crucial. Not only must departments adapt to numerous changes, but they must scan the environment and clarify priorities to be successful in the future. Chairs should be courageous and focused on the future. Nothing is of greater importance to departmental success.

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Bridges, W. (1991). *Managing transitions: Making the most of change*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

The author provides a process model to think about personal change. The stages of "beginning, in the process and ending" provide benchmarks for what is happening. Bridges suggests numerous ways to work through the process and, in his middle stage, suggests that people are in limbo and have to "wander through the wilderness." Often metaphoric pictures and sometimes a guide can help.

Creswell, J. W., Wheeler, D. W., Seagren, A. T., Egly, N. J., & Beyer, K. D. (1990). *The academic chairperson's handbook*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska.

This book, based on interviews with more than 200 chairs in a variety of institutions, focuses on the chair's development, strategies to develop the culture of the department, and specific strategies to address faculty issues (getting started, teaching, research, career renewal and redirection, and personal issues). Although a small book, it offers numerous ideas and resources.

Diamond, R. M. (Ed.). (2002). *Field guide to academic leadership: A publication of the national academy for academic leadership*. San Francisco: John Wiley.

This guide offers a summary of findings drawn from summer workshops sponsored by the National Academy for Academic Leadership on important roles and issues in higher education. For example, there are chapters that speak to the roles of presidents, vice-chancellors for academic affairs, deans, chairs, and faculty representatives. The book identifies resource people and contains information on a rich array of resources, including books, articles, and electronic materials.

Gmelch, W. H., & Miskin, V. D. (1993). *Leadership skills for department chairs*. Bolton, MA: Anker.

This book addresses two major areas for chairs: deciding why one should be a chair

and planning for the department. Included are various checklists, scales, and frameworks for making assessments and establishing benchmarks. The self-evaluation of the four chair roles of leader, manager, faculty developer, and scholar are quite useful and integrate a wide range of roles from previous work in the field.

Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.

The author, who possesses extensive experience with businesses all over the world, has identified eight stages in his change model. The model has considerable face validity (easy to see its relevance) and simplicity. It provides clear images of what a chair could do to implement a change or address an important issue.

Leaming, D. R. (1998). *Academic leadership: A practical guide to chairing the department*. Bolton, MA: Anker.

The author addresses a number of the administrative processes relevant to departments, including selection and evaluation of staff, selection and retention of students, and management of resources. This book presents many practical ideas and is one of the few resources that specifically address management functions.

Lucas, A. F. (1994). *Strengthening departmental leadership: A team-building guide for chairs in colleges and universities*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

The author suggests that the department chair is the team leader and builder of the department. The book contains many suggestions on developing a nurturing culture, building teaching unity and interaction, and planning for team outcomes. Many of the examples provided are generic enough to apply to other situations.

Nanus, B. (1992). *Visionary leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This reference provides definitions of visioning and many examples of how to develop a vision. The author has also provided a companion workbook that takes one through a detailed sequence of activities in the visioning process (see Nanus [1995] *The Vision Retreat*, also from Jossey-Bass).

Schuster, J. W., & Wheeler, D. W. (Eds.). (1990). *Enhancing faculty careers: Strategies for development*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This book describes effective faculty renewal and development at various institutions across the country. Examples are programs that address career counseling, employee assistance, retraining, and wellness. The book also contains a wealth of written resources.

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Academic leaders and scholars interested in preparing an issue for *Effective Practices* should contact the editors with their proposals. We also welcome your feedback, suggestions for future topics, and names of authors you might recommend. Please e-mail Robert Secor (rxs2@psu.edu) or Timothy J. Delmont (t-delm@tc.umn.edu).

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