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Inside

Learning to Lead by Anne V. Massaro	p. 5
The Emerging Importance of Interim Chairs by William F. Rayburn	p. 7
The Chair as Coach and Referee in Tenure Applications by Christopher Gould	p. 10
Fostering Faculty Friendships by Cynthia Schubert-Trastorza	p. 12
Promoting Departmental Community and Civility Through Covenant Development by Carol A. Mullen	p. 13
Creating a Chairs Council by Jeffrey L. Buller	p. 16
Campus Computing 2009 Survey	p. 18
Implementing Service Learning Across the Curriculum: A Catalyst for Change by Marie Thielke Huff, Carol Burton, and Linda Seestedt-Stanford	p. 20
Integrating Globalization into the Academic Department: Keys for Chairs by Karl E. Anderson and Michael T. Miller	p. 22
Transitioning Traditional Programs to Online Programs by Mindy Haar	p. 24
What Is Unique About Chairs? A Continuing Exploration by Robert E. Cipriano and Richard Riccardi	p. 26
Lawsuits and Rulings	p. 29
Review	p. 30

Rethinking the Chair's Roles and Responsibilities

by Judith M. Gappa and Andrea G. Trice

Department chairs occupy key decision-making roles within their colleges and universities. They are the pivotal midpoints of the administrative and communications systems as information and instructions flow up and down, and to and from, individual faculty members, faculty governance bodies, deans, provosts, and, ultimately, presidents and governing boards. Thus, chairs are simultaneously respected peers in the senior faculty where they serve as spokespersons for their concerns, and front-line administrators responsible for implementation of campus missions and policies within their departments.

The significant growth and diversification of faculty members and faculty appointments today have increased the complexity of the department chair's role. The total number of faculty members in the United States doubled from 686,000 in 1980 to 1,371,000 in 2007. Much of this growth was in part-time faculty who now represent 49% of all faculty members (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2008). By 2003, only 24% of all faculty were tenured, and only 11% were on the tenure track. Nineteen percent of all faculty members occupied full-time, nontenure-track positions, but the largest group of faculty (46%) held part-time, temporary positions (Curtis & Jacobe, 2006). During this

period, the representation of women also increased substantially (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Snyder, Tan, & Hoffman, 2004). Today, 4% of all faculty members are women; however, they occupy a disproportionate number of full-time off-the-tenure-track positions (38%) compared to males (26%) (Snyder et al., 2008). The representation of ethnic minority faculty has also increased. They currently make up 17% percent of faculty members, with blacks representing 7%, Hispanics 4%, Asian Pacific islanders 6%, and American Indian/Alaska Natives 1% (Snyder et al., 2008).

These shifts in faculty appointments and demographics call for rethinking faculty workplaces and careers: What do all faculty members need today to do their best work? How can departmental governance and decision making contribute to faculty productivity? And how can chairs successfully recruit and retain enthusiastic and talented faculty while also fulfilling their other responsibilities? This article looks at the impact on the chair's work of the changes that have occurred in faculty appointments and roles, then suggests some possible answers to the larger question of how chairs can successfully cope with the changes in their faculty members' demographics and appointments.

Expanding Roles and Responsibilities of Chairs

Many of a chair's traditional roles have not changed significantly in recent decades. Chairs remain a critical person in the daily lives of all department faculty members. They orient new faculty to the department, foster collegial environments, provide support services and office space, determine faculty assignments and workloads, and oversee peer reviews of faculty performance. They also guide faculty members in their careers and help them find appropriate professional development opportunities to increase their skills and knowledge.

But what has changed in most departments is the number of faculty members for whom the chair is responsible as departments increasingly rely on nontenure-track, largely part-time faculty to fill teaching needs. These changes in faculty appointment types coupled with the willingness of faculty to relocate (Xu, 2008) require academic departments to engage in a continuous cycle of faculty hiring and orientation in order to create and maintain a nimble, flexible workforce. In turn, this necessitates more frequent searches for faculty, more faculty orientations, and continuous redistributions of faculty workloads, all of which require more of the department chair's time and attention.

Ensuring faculty satisfaction and productivity is only one part of the chair's overall job. Chairs also must wrestle with budget cuts, declining enrollments, required productivity reports, mandated accountability measures, fundraising, and changing technologies. For chairs to be successful in this demanding (and often part-time) position they, along with their institutions, must establish a realistic and comprehensive understanding of each of the chair's roles and responsibilities and what it will take in resources to fulfill his or her duties. To do this, the institution working with the chair must ensure that:

- The responsibilities of the chair assignment are clearly understood and agreed on, and a sufficient time base has been designated for the chair to accommodate these responsibilities.

- Chairs are selected, trained, supported, and rewarded in keeping with their complex responsibilities.

- Chairs have the tools and support they need to accomplish their assignments including opportunities to participate in chair training programs at campus, system, state, and national levels.

Given the new and increasing responsibilities of the department chair, it also may be time to rethink current academic organization. As presently structured and supported, the chair's roles of academic leader and administrator, on a part-time and rotating basis, may be a weak link in ensuring that faculty work and workplaces are properly supported throughout the organization. Continuous decentralization of some administrative functions (e.g., processing travel requests, overseeing regulatory aspects of faculty hiring) may be unnecessarily time consuming for chairs to perform. More centrally located support staff and professionals with requisite skills and knowledge could release significant time for chairs' roles as academic leaders. One example of services that are already typically handled centrally is technology infrastructure planning and decision making. Why not consider others?

Essential Elements of Faculty Work Today

At the same time that the chair's role has increased in complexity, external pressures on higher education institutions have led to cost savings and mandates for increased faculty productivity within academic departments. The need to fully utilize the skills and expertise that all faculty (full- and part-time, tenure and nontenure-track) bring to their departments becomes essential in this environment.

Chairs must focus on their current faculty members' productivity and on the recruitment and retention of new faculty who contribute enthusiasm and talent to their academic departments.

Our research on faculty roles indicates that the presence of five Essential Elements in their work and the workplaces puts all faculty members in a position to do their best work. These essential elements are employment equity, flexibility, professional growth, academic freedom, and collegiality. Colleges and universities must ensure that these elements are embedded in institutional policies and practices for *every* academic appointment, whether tenured, tenure track, renewable contract, or temporary.

The foundational requirement for these five essential elements is respect—the basic human valuing of each and every faculty member for who they are and what they uniquely contribute. Departments must ensure that every faculty member, regardless of appointment type, feels welcome and respected. Thus, for example, all academic titles used for faculty appointments should convey respect. We prefer “fixed-term faculty member” to “contingent” for temporary appointments, and “contract-renewable” to “nontenure-track” (a blunt, negative statement of what these faculty are not) for continuing faculty without referencing the time base of the appointment. Respect also means fostering a culture of inclusion. By including *all* faculty members across various appointment types in orientation programs and department faculty meetings, social events and informal hallway conversations, recognition and awards programs, and positive publicity about the institution, departments can ensure that all faculty are fully participating members of the academic community.

The five essential elements that are critical for faculty productivity are

built on this foundation of respect. Although we briefly address only three of these elements here, we discuss all five in depth in our book *Rethinking Faculty Work: Higher Education's Strategic Imperative* (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007).

- *Equity:* We have defined equity as the right of every faculty member to be treated fairly, to have access to the tools necessary to do his or her job, and to have status as a full-fledged, albeit necessarily different, member of the faculty. For faculty in fixed-term and contract-renewable appointments, employment equity requires rethinking policies and practices at each college and university. For example, every faculty member should be evaluated regularly and given performance feedback. Compensation should be based on an institution-wide salary system and include a defined package of appropriate fringe benefits. And, all faculty members should have sufficient office space, equipment, services to support their work, and sufficient flexibility to simultaneously manage their professional and personal lives.

- *Professional development:* Faculty members, regardless of their appointment type, need opportunities to grow professionally. Providing faculty with the opportunity to complete challenging and creative work, with enough ownership to experience a sense of accomplishment from their work, will help them to stay engaged and make significant contributions to their unit.

- *Collegiality:* As faculty members and their appointment types become less homogeneous and their individual priorities and circumstances become more complex, collegiality and the sense of belonging to a community of scholars take far more time and attention for department chairs to develop and support.

Maximizing the potential and the contributions of all department faculty members requires that each of them,

regardless of appointment type or time base, experience respect and these essential elements in their work and workplaces. To what extent are these essential elements present in your department?

Rethinking Faculty Assignments and Responsibilities

Shifts in faculty appointment types discussed earlier have had a profound effect on faculty responsibilities for student advising and other departmental duties traditionally handled by tenured faculty. These responsibilities require significant faculty time.

Thus, we suggest approaching departmental planning in a much more holistic and inclusive way. Rather than assign departmental responsibilities first to tenured and tenure-track faculty, why not look holistically at the department's total needs? Which courses would be best taught by full-time professionals working in the field who teach part-time in the department? Would students benefit from having a seasoned faculty member teach an introductory course even though that is not how the course traditionally has been staffed? Regardless of appointment type, who is in the strongest position to network and identify new internship opportunities for students? Who among the tenured faculty has chosen to focus little effort on research in recent years but could contribute to the department in important ways through increased administrative or committee work or additional teaching responsibilities? Asking these and other questions, as well as surveying all faculty members about their talents and interests with regard to departmental service and academic assignments, might very well enhance departmental planning and accomplishments.

Conclusion

The significant shifts in faculty appointment types and demographics

require department chairs' thoughtful attention to creating respectful, supportive environments where the individual strengths and experiences of all their faculty members contribute to the department's work. And, simultaneously, the multiple roles, responsibilities, and rewards of chairs today need review by central administrators. After all, department chairs are the key figures in ensuring the well-being and productivity of their faculty, and thus, of their college or university. ▲

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Learning to Lead

by Anne V. Massaro

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

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

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

Given these challenges, and more, there are cognitive shifts and behavioral strategies that can help a new academic leader transition smoothly and reach a level of productivity in a fairly quick time frame. “Over night” is not the equivalent of “a fairly quick time frame.” Transitioning, learning, and listening should be the primary responsibilities for the new chair’s first month. With the right support mechanisms in place, and an intentional focus on learning from the start, a new chair should consider using the three-month mark as a time to begin actively leading.

Shifting Thinking

Integrating new practices into one’s daily routine is difficult; many require shifts in thinking and doing. Some may

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

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

Building Relationships

Meeting with department faculty and staff is a must for new chairs. Depending on the size of the department this task alone can be a big time commitment, but it is critically important

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

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

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

Meeting one on one with the dean should be another high priority for the new chair. Understanding the dean’s style and preferences and obtaining information about the dean’s direction

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

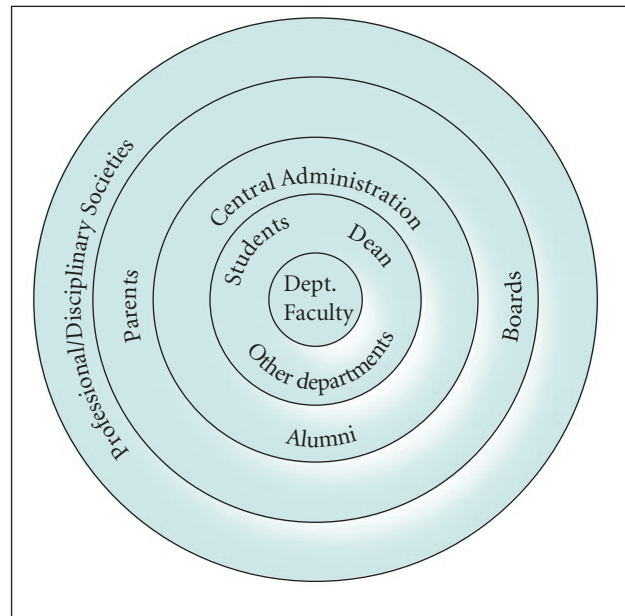
The dean's vision for the future of the college, and the chair's department in particular, will influence the department goals the new chair sets. In some cases the dean will have very specific expectations for the chair's department. The more explicit these expectations are, the more likely the chair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

It has been suggested that the new chair meet with department faculty and staff as well as the dean. There may well be additional stakeholders the new chair will want to meet with in the first three to six months. Reflecting on departmental priorities and functions, the new chair should consider making a list of additional stakeholders and deliberately planning conversations with each person or group on the list over the course of six months. Wergin (2003) offers a stakeholder framework that may be helpful to new chairs as they engage in this reflection about key constituencies (see Figure 1).

Understanding Culture, Structure, and Governance

There are exact and inexact ways to discern the department's current culture, structure, and governance mechanisms. Both approaches are recommended. The easiest and most tangible way to learn about how decisions are made, and by whom, is to carefully review the existing pattern of

Figure 1. Stakeholders' Circles



Source: Wergin (2003).

administration for the department. This document should describe the department's committee structure, faculty meetings, key processes, and communication patterns. It is as important to understand what is not written as it is to comprehend what is written. This is the imprecise, or intuitive, way of learning. For example, one department chair perceived a deep lack of trust between the faculty and the previous chair given the length, infinite detail, and depth of description in the current pattern of administration for her new department. Having this insight helped the chair gain credibility and carefully approach process changes.

Learning Administrative Tasks

Learning the administrative and technical aspects of the chair's role can occur in three ways. Many universities offer workshops and online tutorials related to budgeting, hiring, and evaluating. New chairs who take advantage of these opportunities gain new

knowledge and, more importantly, learn about campus resources. If these types of structured learning opportunities are not available to new chairs, seeking out and meeting with those who are accountable for various university processes is equally valuable. A new chair might discover the person responsible for fiscal affairs, assemble a list of questions, meet with this person to express an interest in understanding fiscal matters, and acquire from his or her point of view what a new chair needs to learn. A third option for learning about the budget and other fiscal matters is to identify a seasoned peer who is highly proficient in this area. The dean will likely be able to point the new chair in the direction of a veteran chair who has mastery in a specific area.

Reflecting with a Trusted Partner

Identifying a trusted partner is highly recommended for new department chairs. This partner might be a friend, peer, mentor, or coach. This is someone

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

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

Conclusion

Transitioning into the department chair role is much more than learning how to do new tasks. While the new tasks may be daunting and require fast attention, it is the building of relationships and understanding the current culture that are the real foundations for success. Securing a relationship where the chair can confidentially reflect on relationships and the circumstance leads to

greater personal health and satisfaction. Getting to know the department faculty and the dean, as well as accurately assessing the current state of affairs, is worth delaying changes and postponing new directions or programs. Rushing to perform or produce results without understanding the people and the situation can damage a new academic leader beyond repair. First impressions are lasting. A new chair who asks questions, seeks input, fosters collective inquiry, and plans thoughtfully will be highly regarded and will be in a more stable leadership position for stretching the department in new ways. ▲

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a time of transition. Although being an interim chair may appear to be a thankless burden to some, many view this service as an opportunity to strengthen and solidify their leadership skills.

Such an appointment has long been undertaken by university presidents or deans to fill gaps, and the literature is limited about interim chairs and their qualifications. The recent academic literature about interim chairs is reviewed here to assess the frequency of interim appointments and to offer recommendations in preparing such leaders to be effective during this time of transition.

Prevalence of Interim Chairs

For a typical medical school with twenty-four departments, one might expect two departments to be searching for a new chair at any given time. To plan for this constant turnover, deans and certain chair societies are now working more closely to identify and train individuals with futures in academic leadership. Opportunities for those persons to shadow successful chairs either at their institution or at other schools are often offered to self-assess their interest, expand their administrative capabilities, and acquire skill sets for potential temporary or permanent employment as a chair.

A subsequent, more detailed review of interim chairs, using data collected longitudinally from the Association of Professors in Gynecology and Obstetrics, disclosed that a median of five interim chairs are appointed nationally in obstetrics and gynecology at any time. Of note, fewer women were named as interim chairs, leaving them without the benefit of chair training before accepting a permanent position. When including the many other departments, it would be anticipated that more than one hundred interim chairs would be present nationally at any time.

The Emerging Importance of Interim Chairs

by William F. Rayburn

How long should a department chair serve? Despite an impression that a prolonged tenure may be desirable, the expectation of a chair to remain for a lengthy period is less realistic. For example, retention of medical school chairs in both clinical and basic science departments has declined from 9.9 years for those whose appointments began in 1979 through 1983 to 8.0 years for the most recent cohort of chairs (Rayburn, Alexander, Lang, & Scott, 2009). The annual turnover rate of chairs in medical schools (average 8.2%, range 6.3% to 9.9%) is remark-

ably similar between clinical and basic science departments.

Interim chair is the term commonly used for the individual appointed to the leadership role when a search is being conducted to replace a prior department chair with one who is new and permanent. It is not to be confused with being an acting chair, where the person assumes administrative tasks while the permanent chair takes a temporary absence before returning. The administrative roles are assumed to be the same as for any chair while providing stability during

Succession Planning

Transitions in department leadership are often unpredictable, resulting from serious illness, death, or abrupt resignation rather than from retirement. Some form of succession planning would, therefore, make sense. Identifying individuals, preferably from within the department, who are poised to assume the leadership role in case of an anticipated or unexpected loss of the permanent chair promotes organizational stability and performance efficiency. Mallon, Grigsby, and Dupont (2009) published an excellent monograph on developing and managing a “talent bank” and focusing on organizational and talent assessment.

Selecting an interim chair who is likely to be the next permanent chair offers the advantage of already knowing the institution’s rules, norms, and culture. Moreover, interim chairs do not face hardships associated with relocating to a new residence or managing family transition. In contrast, an interim chair who does not wish to be permanent but instead pass the baton serves to assist external chair candidates and the subsequent permanent hire to question existing policies and bring a fresh perspective to the department’s work.

If succession planning seems logical and is common in nonacademic business settings, why is it not encouraged more or discussed more openly in academic departments? There is not much evidence about succession planning in academic departments. Several issues are to be considered when identifying any individual who is poised to assume an interim leadership role:

- What if more than one faculty member would qualify to be an interim chair? Would this be a set up for favoritism?
- What if a preexisting vice chair is not considered to be the interim chair?
- At what stage of a chair’s tenure is it best to begin considering or determining a succession plan?
- Will a succession plan affect the relationship between the current chair and the university president or dean?

- What if a faculty member falsely believes he or she is worthy of being an interim chair? Is it the department chair’s responsibility to candidly discuss that person’s limitations and to coach that person?

Skills to Acquire

What skills are necessary before being appointed or while functioning as an interim chair? Quillen, Aber, and Grigsby (2009) evaluated the skill sets of eighteen interim chairs at the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine. Establishing clear expectations from the dean and cultivating mentors among fellow chairs or senior administrators (e.g., associate deans of academic affairs) were essential first steps. Providing stability was the common theme by promoting core values (trust, fairness/equity, accountability), minimizing negative thoughts, dealing with difficult faculty, and communicating openly and often while seeking others’ assistance. The steepest learning curves for many interim chairs were in negotiation skills and in department finances. The department would benefit during times of transition from a SWOT analysis (identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) and from

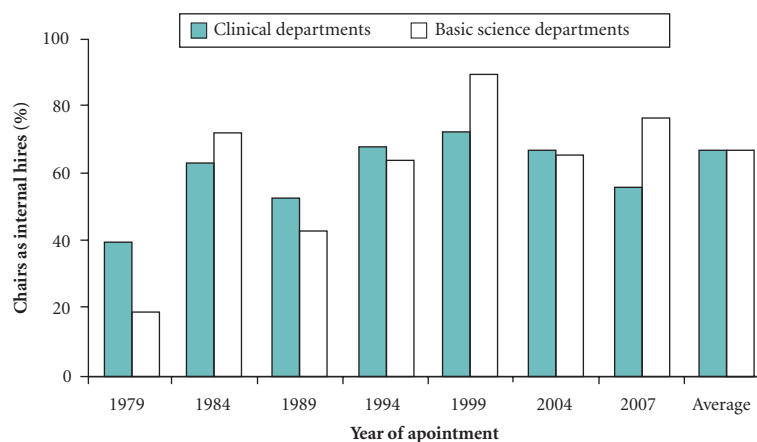
a reexamination, and revision if necessary, of the department’s mission, vision, and shared values statements.

An Internal Candidate as Permanent Chair

Being an interim chair is no guarantee of becoming the next permanent chair. An interim chair is, however, invariably the preferred internal candidate from his or her department. Therefore, this position is extremely important as two-thirds of medical school department chairs are internal hires (Rayburn et al., 2009). As presented in Figure 1, the percentages of new chairs are shown who were internal hires in either basic science or clinical departments at all U.S. medical schools between 1979 and 2007. This percent increased before remaining fairly stable at 65% after 1994.

It is unknown what proportion of interim chairs really wish to become the next permanent chair. We reported on 254 chair turnovers in academic departments of obstetrics and gynecology from 1981 to 2004 (Rayburn et al., 2006). An interim chair who served for at least one year was found in 110 (43.3%) instances. Half of those interim chairs became permanent chairs (1981–1988: 7 of 34, 20.6%; 1989–1996: 19 of 39, 48.7%; 1997–2004: 18 of 36,

Figure 1. Percent of First-Time Chairs Who Were Internal Hires in Clinical and Basic Science Departments at U.S. Medical Schools, 1979–2007



50%). Most interim chairs remained at their institution, while few became chairs elsewhere (7 of 110, 6.4%).

Who is likely to be a more successful department chair—one who is an interim chair and internal candidate or one who is an external candidate? Most likely, this is an individual matter. Murray (2009) conducted a survey of twenty-one nonmedical department chairs at Georgia Southern University. Little difference was noted between internally and externally hired chairs in terms of the ease with which they undertook tasks and of their perceived effectiveness during the first year on the job. External chairs rated themselves slightly higher, most probably because of greater or more varied leadership experience. No mention was made in the report, however, as to whether the internal candidate was an interim chair. We compared internal versus external hires for department chairs at all U.S. medical schools (Rayburn et al., 2009). First-time chairs who were hired externally were more likely to be retained by five years (80% vs. 64%) and by ten years (57% vs. 40%), even after including the time served as an interim chair.

Time Needed to Select a Permanent Chair

A common perception of any search for a permanent chair is that it takes a long time, especially for academic medicine than for other professions or industries. Searches may be more drawn out than expected because of difficulties in scheduling search committee meetings and chair candidate interviews and in lengthy negotiations with the top candidate. This delay may be purposeful to permit an interim chair to develop requisite skills and to allow for healing if there was unrest under the prior chair's direction.

Mallon et al. (2009) reported on the perspectives of executive search consultants about the search process of department chairs. Their findings indicated that the average length of a

search for department chairs and center directors was 11.9 months. The average search for clinical chairs lasted 12.5 months when medical schools did not use a search firm compared with 9.5 months when using a search firm. Searches for basic science department chairs took the longest time, averaging 13.5 months.

Conclusion

The loss of a department chair can create instability and may negatively impact the organization. Interim department leadership is now common, especially at medical schools. Some form of thoughtful succession planning by the dean with the current department chair is a sensible, proactive move rather than being reactive, especially when chair changes are now more frequent and sometimes unanticipated. An interim chair position represents an opportunity to promote women and underrepresented minority faculty if they are prepared for the role and likely to succeed. The emerging role of an interim chair is of great importance because interim chairs are often empowered to act by demonstrating skills and leadership abilities that are the same for a permanent chair. For many, being an interim chair is a remarkable opportunity for professional growth and for consideration as an internal hire for the permanent department chair position. ▲

This article is based on a presentation at the 120th annual meeting of the Association of American Medical Colleges, November 7–11, 2009, Boston, Massachusetts.

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The Chair as Coach and Referee in Tenure Applications

by Christopher Gould

While the process of applying for tenure varies from one institution to another, one feature remains fairly constant: The role of the chair is pivotal and complicated. Tierney and Bensimon (1996) explain, “As a go-between for the candidate and various committees . . . the chair is more coach and confidant than evaluator. At the same time, the chair is often the one who evaluates a candidate’s [record] and expresses his or her opinion to the committees at large, which in turn, will use this information to reach their decision” (p. 33). In the latter role, the chair adopts an impartial stance, while in the former role—as coach and confidant—the chair prepares a junior colleague to meet the expectations of the various individuals and groups who review applications for tenure. Successful chairs manage these conflicting roles in ways that advantage qualified candidates while elucidating the consensus of the department’s senior faculty.

The Chair as Coach/Confidant

Recognizing that classifications can harden into stereotypes, department chairs are understandably hesitant to classify their colleagues. Bearing that hesitancy in mind, however, I propose that most pre-tenured faculty members can be placed into one of four categories based on two intersecting axes: performance and self-confidence. Members of each group benefit from a distinct type of coaching as they prepare to apply for tenure.

First are candidates who combine strong performance with high self-confidence. Typically, these are low-maintenance colleagues who quickly internalize expectations and manage to meet or exceed them with a minimum of angst. Having submitted annual reports throughout their probationary

appointment, they have usually developed productive habits that prove beneficial when applying for tenure:

- Maintaining and continually updating electronic records of teaching, research, and service
- Starting on the document early, allowing time for feedback and revision
- Listing and explaining relevant accomplishments without replication
- Following prescribed formats and editing meticulously

A second type of candidate also exemplifies strong performance, but without commensurate self-confidence. These colleagues need and expect frequent reinforcement. Coaching them presents more of a challenge.

My first piece of advice to these colleagues is to review the criteria for tenure. At my institution, they are “proficiency and a pattern of growth in . . . teaching, scholarship and research/artistic achievement, and service.” I emphasize key words and phrases: *proficiency* (not unqualified excellence) and a *pattern of growth* (not an uninterrupted record of top-tier student evaluations, prestigious publications, and similar accolades). Excellence should, of course, be noted; this is not the time for unwarranted modesty. On the other hand, evidence of conscientious reflection and improvement can go a long way; moreover, it is likely to stand out among applications that list a welter of nugatory or irrelevant accomplishments. Candidates who bear this in mind are less likely to over-document.

Between the extremes of puffery and diffidence lies the golden mean of thorough documentation and clear explanation. I offer the following advice to all qualified tenure applicants:

- Make sure that course objectives and learning goals appear prominently in sample syllabi.

- Highlight relative strengths and areas of improvement in student evaluations.

- In the case of a published book, tell where, how, and by whom it has been reviewed.

- For articles, cite information about circulation, acceptance rates, and the reputation of the journals.

- Present available information about where and how often publications have been cited.

- Explain the circumstances of coauthorship.

- Clarify roles in grants (e.g., evaluator or principal investigator).

A third type of tenure applicant is the inexplicably self-confident colleague who, year after year, falls short of expectations. In these unhappy cases, nonperformance arouses denial, while denial rationalizes nonperformance. When ultimately denied tenure, this faculty member may allege that the chair, senior colleagues, the dean, or members of the review committee have not followed due process. If allowed to bully or wheedle his or her way to tenure, the self-confident underperformer can become a detriment to departmental morale for years to come. In these cases, the chair’s best strategy is to follow published policies and procedures throughout the probationary appointment, leaving a paper trail of admonitory annual evaluations.

A final type of tenure applicant combines uneven or subpar performance with disarming humility. This colleague is often popular with senior faculty members, who may be inclined to grant him or her the benefit of any doubt. In these cases, the leadership and discretion of the chair are put to the test. A convincing case for tenure must present a plausible rationale for believing that this candidate’s track record does not augur future performance. As coach, the chair must help the candidate understand that this is not an easy argument to make.

Fortunately, some of the most common extenuations—illness, disability, parental obligations—lie within the

scope of the Family and Medical Leave Act. (Like many other institutions, my university extends the reach of FMLA to guarantee postponement of tenure.) Junior faculty members, sometimes reluctant to avail themselves of these benefits, must be reassured that doing so will not jeopardize their prospects for tenure. The chair may also have to educate senior colleagues who want to raise the bar for candidates who “have been given extra time.”

There are, of course, instances in which postponement is unavailable to the underprepared tenure applicant. These cases demand careful deliberation, bringing the chair’s role as referee to the forefront.

The Chair as Referee

Characterizing the chair’s role as referee in tenure decisions is complicated by procedural variations among institutions. I speak as one whose university adheres to perhaps the most common arrangement: The department’s senior faculty present a

collective recommendation (sometimes binding) to the chair, who articulates the case for or against tenure in a letter to the dean or a review committee. The most challenging cases usually arise from a close vote or indecisive recommendation by the senior faculty. Following are two hypothetical scenarios:

Professor J was hired to build a new program from the ground up. This popular degree option has stemmed an ominous decline in undergraduate majors. While growing the new program, however, Professor J has neglected his research, and his cumulative record does not clearly and unequivocally meet departmental expectations for tenure. Complicating matters is the fact that despite the chair’s admonitions to reduce his service commitments so as to publish more, J has voluntarily undertaken responsibilities usually assigned to tenured

colleagues who are no longer research active. Senior faculty members have voted in favor of tenure and promotion by the narrowest of margins.

Professor F is a gifted teacher with a more-than-adequate research record. Tenure would be assured were it not for a series of ill-considered disputes with colleagues, during the course of which F has made exaggerated—and, in some instances, unfounded—accusations. After vigorous debate, senior faculty members have approved tenure and promotion with substantial dissent.

Each scenario offers a plausible rationale for denying tenure. Professor J, having disregarded the chair’s written admonitions, should have little cause for complaint. Although Professor F presents more of a dilemma, case law has affirmed the use of collegiality as a criterion for tenure and promotion,

Earned Doctorates, 2007

	All fields	Education	Engineering	Humanities	Life sciences	Physical sciences	Social sciences	Other fields
Doctoral degrees conferred	48,025	6,428	7,734	5,103	10,617	8,028	7,186	2,929
Median number of years from bachelor's degree to doctorate	9.4	16.5	7.9	11.3	8.6	7.8	9.6	12.2
Median number of years from enrollment in graduate school to doctorate	7.8	12	6.9	9.3	7.1	6.8	7.9	9.3
Proportion of doctorates who attended a community college	13.80%	23.80%	6.40%	13.30%	15.00%	9.40%	16.20%	14.20%
Proportion with a master's degree in any field	73.60%	89.30%	78.10%	85.50%	52.80%	65.50%	81.90%	83.80%
Proportion with a master's degree in a related field	53.30%	35.70%	61.10%	69.60%	38.30%	54.30%	66.70%	62.20%
Sex								
Male	54.50%	32.60%	79.30%	50.70%	48.60%	71.90%	41.30%	49.20%
Female	45.50%	67.40%	20.70%	49.30%	51.40%	28.10%	58.70%	50.80%
Citizenship								
United States	27,568	5,199	2,242	3,674	6,523	3,488	4,912	1,530
Non-U.S. permanent visa	1,832	136	290	243	420	338	243	162
Non-U.S. temporary visa	15,115	602	4,579	795	3,028	3,662	1,472	977
Unknown	3,564	492	634	397	659	549	564	269

Source: National Opinion Research Center

though only when breaches of collegiality have a demonstrable impact on a department's mission in teaching, research, or service. In both instances, however, there is enough ambiguity to give most chairs pause, especially with the affirmative vote of senior faculty members.

In such cases, a chair may be tempted to write a lukewarm, equivocal, or even inscrutable letter of recommendation—a dereliction of duty certain to antagonize deans and review committees, who expect and deserve informed professional guidance. Instead, the responsible chair/referee should be prepared to write a cogent argument for or against tenure, undeterred by the possibility that there is an equally plausible argument to the contrary. So resolved, the chair might consider the following advice derived from eight years of refereeing:

- Get the bad news out in paragraph one. If obliged to cite a numerical vote, do so candidly.
- End the first paragraph with a succinct, unequivocal recommendation (e.g., Though obliged to report the reservations of a minority of my colleagues—and I acknowledge the legitimacy and sincerity of their views—I want to make it clear that I support tenure wholeheartedly.).

- Present the counterarguments of senior colleagues fairly and accurately before attempting to refute them; demonstrate that you've listened to and weighed opposing views (e.g., These concerns are not easily brushed aside. Nevertheless, I must point out that . . .).

- Reaffirm your recommendation in a brief concluding paragraph.

Conclusion

In sports, coaches and referees have one thing in common: No one ever comes to the game to watch their performance. Both operate outside the spotlight until they make the atypical bad call. The best coaches and referees need to have the strongest, which is not to say the biggest, egos on the playing field. Department chairs do well to follow their example. ▲

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ensure productivity during these difficult economic times while, I hoped, becoming a better department chair in the process.

The extensive benefits of positive, caring work environments are confirmed in Rath's comprehensive study of friendship that he conducted for the Gallup Organization during 2006. In order to reap those benefits, we need to support, facilitate, and encourage the development of personal linkages with and among faculty serving in all academic departments . . . and anywhere else that we can. As a believer in the power of positive relationships and as a department chair, I'm committed to fostering faculty friendships and ensuring a positive work environment in our department.

Rath (2006) describes the eight Vital Roles that workplace friends fulfill for each other as builder, champion, collaborator, companion, connector, energizer, mind opener, and navigator. From the perspective of a department chair, the capacity to assume at least some of these roles for our colleagues significantly influences our ability to meet faculty needs and create positive working relationships. Which of the vital roles do you assume for the faculty members in your department? Which do you avoid?

Eight Vital Roles

Consider the following descriptions of the vital roles that workplace friends assume for each other and reflect on your responses to the following questions.

The builder believes in you and genuinely wants to see you grow and succeed. Do you hold high expectations for everyone you work with and communicate a sincere desire to see others succeed? Can you genuinely celebrate the success of others? Do you go out of your way to help create opportunities for faculty to develop, display, and gain recognition for their accomplishments in teaching, scholarship, and service? Builders do not compete, they give credit and they help others succeed.

The champion sings your praises and defends you when necessary. How

Fostering Faculty Friendships

by Cynthia Schubert-Irastorza

Increasing accountability, shrinking resources, and a shaky economy are taking a serious toll on faculty morale and motivation. Maintaining a positive attitude becomes a daily challenge and it's getting harder to help fellow faculty keep the spark alive. This article explores effective strategies for ensuring productivity, building motivation, and promoting job satisfaction by creating positive workplace relationships throughout the academic department. Content focuses on strategies and

behaviors that foster the development of faculty friendships.

People who have friends in the workplace are happier, more productive, and more engaged in their work. They are more likely to stay in their jobs longer and enjoy better health. These observations from Tom Rath's book *Vital Friends* (2006) were "mind openers" for me and set me on a course to discover how I could use his friendship-building ideas and strategies to boost faculty morale and

frequently do you communicate with your faculty members? Are you fair, honest, and equitable in evaluating the performance of all faculty? Do you make the effort to recognize and publicize the achievements of individual faculty while protecting their privacy? Do you always get the faculty member's side of the story before coming to conclusions based on student or coworker complaints? Champions hold high expectations and encourage others to fulfill them.

Collaborators share your interests and want to work with you. How open are you to new ideas and suggestions from faculty? Are you currently providing mentoring assistance to any of your faculty? Are you involved in community outreach efforts? Do you encourage teamwork? Do you participate in work teams yourself? Collaborators demonstrate that sharing resources and pooling individual efforts produces maximum results.

Connectors put you in touch with others and help you build your resources. How frequently do you organize meetings and activities that promote meaningful faculty interaction? Do you encourage department members to participate in outreach activities? How often do you introduce individual faculty members to new contacts within the department, school, university, or community? Being a connector means knowing how to bring people together for everyone's benefit.

The mind opener expands your horizons and challenges you to make positive changes. How often do you engage department members in serious conversation about their interests, activities, goals, and values? Are you active in implementing positive change? Do you stay current in your field? Do you promote activities that focus on innovation and positive change in all areas of education? The mind opener leads by setting a positive example and keeping an open mind.

The companion is trustworthy and is always there for you. When the need arises, do you take the time and have

the patience to listen to others and hear what they are saying? Are you willing to be a friend? Do you know both the areas of strength and those of needed growth for each faculty member? Do you keep confidences and follow up on the commitments you make? A companion is a friend, someone you can trust. Companions care about your welfare and they cover your back.

Energizers are fun to be with and get you moving. Do you project a positive attitude? Can you maintain your sense of humor, even in times of stress? Do you make an effort to cheer people up when they need it? How frequently do you go out of your way to send a written thank-you note or compliment to faculty members on a specific task or action they have completed successfully? Energizers make success an enjoyable experience.

The navigator provides a reality check and helps keep you on course. How skilled are you at confronting problems? Can you deliver constructive criticism honestly and effectively? Do you regularly monitor faculty performance? Are you aware of individual faculty teaching, scholarship, and service activities? Do you encourage faculty members to discuss their performance with you? Navigators provide guidance, help steer the ship, and stay the course.

Applying the Concepts

Accepting these concepts, agreeing with them, is only a starting point.

Applying them to your everyday challenges is what counts. A good way to begin is to think back, recall situations and individuals you have worked with where you were called on to assume one or more of the vital roles. How did you perform? Think about your response to the faculty member who needed assistance with a research problem or how you handled an emotional request for personal leave. Did you assume any of the vital roles in dealing with a curriculum dispute, resolving a student-faculty issue, developing a new program, or announcing a faculty award? Would you, could you, have done it differently or better?

Moving into the future, think about how you can strengthen your capacity to provide faculty with the kind of help and support represented by the vital roles and you will be taking another step forward in fostering faculty friendships. ▲

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

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Promoting Departmental Community and Civility Through Covenant Development

by Carol A. Mullen

Department chairs struggle to foster community and civility within their academic units. While leading community-building initiatives, energy is unfortunately directed at negative behaviors. Bullying, for example, is common—it undermines individuals'

work and self-esteem. De Luca and Twale (2010) provide insight into this delicate topic. Many of us would prefer to sweep this intensely uncomfortable, litigious subject under the carpet. However, students and junior faculty, women and ethnic minorities, are particularly

vulnerable to abuses disguised as academic freedom. Harassment occurs in subtle and devious ways, as in rumors that both isolate and discourage faculty. Thus, mean-spirited acts must be carefully monitored and prevented.

A complex web of incivility infests our workplaces with dynamics that can thwart efforts to create a vibrant community of scholars. Not discussed much is bullying upward—that is, the undermining of administrators and faculty supervisors whose intentions are selfless and community oriented. More attention is also needed on the role of top administrators in supporting department chairs to promote civility and community. Middle managers are expected to shoulder this responsibility but it does not belong to the domain of any one leader. Because all leaders' perspectives and resources are inevitably circumspect, and because department chairs can themselves become the target of bullying, solutions should be sought that are community based.

Covenant as Lighthouse

One initiative that can redirect negative energy while promoting positive energy is the departmental covenant. Faculty members who create a covenant together make their expectations, beliefs, and values transparent. Alongside my faculty I have produced a covenant that guides our core beliefs and embeds our group's conscience, cultural values, and professional aspirations.

In my highly diverse unit, we are mindful about working against personal isolation and social competitiveness. Historically, in major cities covenants were legally binding agreements that restricted housing occupancy to white, U.S.-born Protestants. Contemporary covenants are a type of political work giving cultural minorities and immigrants access to crucial networks, opportunities, and resources. Deep participation of all faculty members in academic community development can change negative behaviors,

class structures, and deficit views of traditionally disenfranchised groups.

Community life and faculty civility are inextricably linked. The covenant practice is not contradictory to policies of ethical conduct. I do think, however, that the covenant may offer more of a boost for promoting cultural care and nurturance of one's fellow colleagues, for enabling faculty peers to see themselves in relation to others, and for imagining pathways for self-improvement. Policies are probably more aligned with an ethics of justice that some faculty may associate with administrative oversight and punitive controls.

Our departmental covenant is a living document and lived process. Standing the test of time, it offers a lighthouse for our private struggles and vigorous challenges that arise in daily living. Covenants should not be abandoned once developed, so we rethink ours. We don't want to succumb to having ours become a monolithic artifact that fails to guide actions and decisions within complex situations. Our document addresses who we are and what we are about as social justice advocates who seek to make a difference through scholarship, teaching, and service. We have articulated similarities in our viewpoints and differences across status, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality. Faculty and administrators who agree to live by their expressed tenets will have made an enduring promise to one another. Such groups may have given themselves a lifeline for modeling human civility and even celebrating social success.

We think through our philosophical and personal tenets side by side—tenured and tenure-earning faculty, clinical and part-time faculty, male and female, white majority and ethnic minority, U.S.-born and international alike. We refer to the product of our joint reflection as a "Statement of Commitments." We use our covenant as a guide for expressing our ideology of inclusiveness, openness, and accept-

ance within an institution that has changed from a teaching environment into a high-stakes research culture that values quality teaching and engaged community work. We have had to rethink our covenant to fit the university's changing tenure and promotion policies. Actually, we were required to undertake approval via our dean, university provost, and university attorney. Our covenant received endorsement as an official set of promotion and tenure guidelines. We received constructive feedback at these levels and sought input from the department chairs serving in our school. As a team, we addressed the input received to ensure departmental consistency with university policy.

Covenant as Social Capital

Covenants are a form of social capital. They are a type of diverse peer network and resource for supporting individuals and groups. The covenant that is developed by faculty members, or alternatively by supervisors with their student advisees, can be used as a map for overcoming human incivilities problems (e.g., bullying) and attitudinal deficits (e.g., disillusionment). Covenants that facilitate navigational capital enable people to find their way in academic cultures. As resistance capital, covenants promote a critical capacity for challenging systemic and human inequities that deviant behaviors worsen.

In our department, we have used the covenant as a strategy for faculty to think beyond the classroom and make promises to each other that shape our community in desirable ways. We developed the covenant in person as a whole group, with members of all statuses actively involved. For example, together we placed emphasis on individuals' continuous growth through such means as improved experimentation with one's pedagogy and demonstrated articulation of that growth. After agreements were made, we continued to gather to explore feelings of

uncertainty and confusion where our internal departmental values seemed inconsistent with institutional values. Efforts to write the covenant to address all technical, linguistic, and legalistic issues was handled via email, with specialists among us in politics, law, and mentoring taking the lead at this stage. A key motivation for aligning the promotion and tenure guidelines with the school and university guidelines and for incorporating our own guidelines into the covenant was the reality that almost half of our department faculty (and recent hires) were in need of just such a document. They sought explicit and detailed guidance on the expectations of their peers and school.

This covenant consciously informs our major decisions and activities and ethical approaches to organizational effectiveness. We believe that professionalism through integrity is a quality that should permeate everything leadership stands for and everything we do within our community. For example, the programmatic advising guides we recently developed summarize our social justice ideology and specify navigational capacities that students need for success in their programs. As another example, in our position advertisements we embed values from our covenant. We state that we are searching for people who, like us, seek to understand and change the norms, policies, and practices that are enacted

in educational and cultural contexts. We also indicate that we value democratic participation, compassion, and educational quality and seek candidates who will add to the diversity of the department through such means as race, gender, and academic specialty. Our department is the most culturally diverse in our school, which is a direct reflection of the social capital our covenant has accrued.

Covenant: More Applied Dimensions

In our department we share Albert Einstein's view that "not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." Our stance on promotional success is countercultural in that academic norms prioritize the quantification of one's publications and other contributions over the quality of these.

To meet our commitments, the department is dedicated to a mentoring culture that nurtures the growth of tenure-earning faculty and graduate students. Effective mentoring can remedy negative faculty behaviors and provide direction to tenured faculty who share responsibility in the success of their junior counterparts. The mentoring culture that is envisioned in the covenant has materialized in faculty mentorships, shared research inquiries, published coauthored writings, joint presentations, and more.

Tenure-earning faculty and their mentors have produced scholarship on such topics as culture, politics, and capital within learning communities and demographically changing schools.

Underscoring the assessment pertaining to promotion is our cultural expectation of collegiality. Because collegiality can be misused by powerful individuals, in our covenant collegiality is viewed as necessary in a community of intellectual peers for the betterment and collective governance of the department. To us, collegiality means being present, cooperative, and available for colleagues and students. It also means displaying civility in dialogue while supporting the careers and lives of other faculty by offering and encouraging opportunity, communicating accurate and appropriate analyses of career progress, and providing information as required for unit decision making and reporting.

Collegiality also represents to us a reciprocal and respectful relationship among colleagues that enables the progress and success of its academic mission, good citizenship, and professionalism. We seek relationships with colleagues who are willing to work respectfully, courteously, and productively with faculty, staff, and administration while fostering a healthy environment where colleagues and students can thrive.

Growth in Undergraduate Enrollments by Type of College

	2007	1997	10-year increase
Public, 4-year	5,813,773	4,902,034	19%
Private nonprofit, 4-year	2,436,841	2,048,469	19%
Private for-profit, 4-year	735,536	191,175	285%
Public, 2-year	6,323,810	4,951,167	28%
Private nonprofit, 2-year	33,486	21,764	54%
Private for-profit, 2-year	260,325	121,855	114%
All degree-granting institutions	15,603,771	12,236,464	28%

Source: U.S. Department of Education

Examples include peer reviews of one's teaching, co-teaching, and course development and program improvement. Collegiality through service is demonstrated by the mentoring of students, volunteer participation in activities and events, and follow through on assigned tasks.

Conclusion

If the negative aspects of departmental cultures are to be changed, entire faculties must commit to the vision of becoming a community. Vision requires

collective work and professional integrity. Covenants can help facilitate this change process. ▲

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promotion and tenure across units, and addressing other issues of shared concern. Most department chairs find that a council of their peers also provides them with a critical support group when they need the advice of those who have faced similar challenges.

A chairs council is a convenient conduit for information that must be exchanged between the institution's upper administration and its faculty members, but only when the conduit operates in both directions simultaneously. In other words, councils that are expected to serve largely as the mouthpiece for policies set by the president, provost, and dean are likely to be as ineffective as those that view their role primarily as a way to pass the concerns of faculty members to higher levels. Department chairs are well placed to understand both the practical, day-to-day needs of individual disciplines and the larger, more global issues that affect the institution as a whole. In this way, they can help faculty and administrators alike understand how the "big picture" and "life in the trenches" intersect.

Chairs councils can help individual departments avoid reinventing the wheel each time a new policy, procedure, or proposal needs to be developed. Even if one's fellow chairs have not already dealt with that same issue in their own areas, they probably have access to colleagues at other institutions who can offer useful suggestions. The chairs council thus becomes a mechanism for the dissemination of experience and best practices while it prevents chairs from feeling that every challenge they face must be met alone.

Effective chairs councils can be structured in many ways. The chairs council at Iowa State University, for example, includes chairs drawn from every academic department in the university. This provides the best possible type of representation, but it sometimes proves to be too large a group for nimble response to rapidly developing situations. For this reason, a subset of the council, the Department Chairs

Creating a Chairs Council

by Jeffrey L. Buller

One limitation of many colleges and universities is that individual units too frequently operate in silos. One department or college may not know what another is doing and can develop inconsistent policies as a result. Despite all the improvements that have occurred with rapid electronic communication, much of academic administration operates within an information vacuum. The consequences can be inefficiency, duplication of effort, frustration, lost opportunities, wasted resources, and unnecessarily high workloads. To help remedy this situation, most institutions try to develop at least three different kinds of organizational structures: vertical groups (where individuals at different levels of the same unit or program meet) such as a department meeting or college assembly, horizontal structures (where individuals on the same level in different units or programs meet) such as a dean's advisory committee or chairs council, and cross-functional teams (where individuals on different levels and in different units or programs meet to address a shared task or problem) such as a committee where students, faculty, administrators, and staff from across the institution meet to develop the academic calendar.

Chairs councils can be extremely important in breaking down the silo mentality of an institution. Chairs councils can be developed within individual colleges or established university wide. Their purpose may be simply to share information and offer advice, or they may have specific responsibilities assigned to them by their institution's bylaws. However these groups are configured, many schools discover that chairs councils work best when they meet together on a regular basis with regular tasks assigned to them. Committees that gather only as needed are difficult to sustain as schedules become increasingly crowded year after year. Committees that do not have clear-cut missions tend to waste time debating what their mission actually is. In some institutions, chairs councils promote interdepartmental cooperation in a manner that is difficult to attain through other structures. They can explore interdisciplinary possibilities and prevent the likelihood that a course offered by one department duplicates too closely the material covered by another. They can also play an important role in promoting faculty development, offering academic leadership training, maintaining comparable standards for

Cabinet, includes one member selected from each college and four members elected at large. The Department Chairs Cabinet meets monthly, keeps the rest of the council informed about important issues, and periodically establishes subcommittees and taskforces (Iowa State University, 2008).

A committee of the whole that meets periodically with a smaller group that can act as a steering committee is particularly common at large institutions that employ numerous department chairs. For instance, at California State University Northridge (2009), the “Council of Chairs consists of all department chairs from the eight Colleges at the university, and representatives from the University Library and the College of Extended Learning. An Executive Committee made up of one representative from each College, the Library and Extended Learning serves the Council.” Smaller colleges tend to favor structures where chairs from all departments meet regularly as a committee of the whole, sometimes even expanding the group by including other types of directors or unit heads. The result is a structure that broadens the range of perspectives heard when discussing academic issues while still maintaining a committee size that is manageable.

Just as the composition of a chairs council can vary widely, so can its charge or mission. Rowan University’s Chairs Council plays a significant role in mentoring new chairs and providing the chairs’ perspectives on tenure and promotion, sabbaticals, the evaluation of upper administrators, curricular matters, and scheduling, but does not have the authority to make any final decisions in these matters (Mosto, 2004). Many chairs councils similarly view their role as advisory and informational rather than as executive or operational.

But this is not always the case. Consider the approach taken by the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) at Georgia Southern Univer-

sity. There the CLASS Advisory Council, consisting of all the unit’s chairs and associate deans, serves as the college’s official curriculum committee and is authorized to render final decisions in college-level appeals of promotion and tenure cases (Georgia Southern University, 2008).

Most chairs councils keep regular minutes of their meetings. Those files can provide useful records whenever it is necessary to recall precisely what a recommendation was, when a certain matter was discussed, why a particular policy was adopted, or who was consulted when a specific innovation was being considered. It is all too easy for many committees to vote to approve the minutes of past meetings without carefully reading them. Such a practice, inadvisable for any group, can be particularly problematic for chairs councils. Because so much of the work of chairs councils consists of offering recommendations and suggestions, the meeting minutes often serve as the medium by which these proposals are shared with others. It is not uncommon for the minutes of chairs councils to be posted on a website or distributed via email, and these documents may be read very carefully by faculty members and other administrators who are looking for a reliable source of information about future proposals that may affect their lives. A misleading or ambiguous set of minutes can easily divert energy from more productive activities into chasing down problems that don’t really exist. Chairs council meeting minutes are invaluable methods of communication and deserve widespread distribution, but they must be very carefully written and thoroughly vetted before they’re disseminated to others.

Department chairs who serve at an institution without its own chairs council have several good reasons for creating one. To get started as quickly as possible, the group could begin as a periodic informal gathering of chairs to discuss issues of common interest

and to provide mutual support. If these informal discussions prove fruitful, the group might consider developing formal bylaws, establishing regular meeting times, and following a plan for securing official recognition within the institutional structure. Then, as the council is being developed, several important questions will need to be answered:

- What should be the scope of the group? Is it more beneficial to include chairs from across the entire institution or to restrict the group to chairs from a particular college, school, or division?
- In addition to academic department chairs, are there other individuals who should be considered for membership (such as assistant and associate deans, program directors, or division heads)?
- If the entire group becomes so large that meetings are difficult to schedule and inclusive discussions would be a challenge, should we establish a steering committee of elected chairs that meets frequently while the entire council meets only once or twice a year?
- Will the council be authorized to make decisions on any issues or will it be merely an advisory body? If it will have formal responsibilities, which permissions might need to be obtained or which bylaws may need to be revised? If the committee serves only to provide advice and recommendations, how will those suggestions best be conveyed to others?
- Do we need to establish a formal assessment process to ensure that we are achieving our goals?

Because chairs councils exist at so many different types of institutions, it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel when creating one. A few calls to colleagues at peer institutions or a bit of skillful Internet sleuthing should produce useful examples of bylaws and duties that you can easily adapt to suit the needs of your own college or university. ▲

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15% of the survey respondents' votes. And five other issues—supporting on-line/distance education, upgrading ERP systems, IT staffing, instructional integration, and user support—each polled about 10% of the votes.

“The absence of a clear ‘single most important issue’ in the 2009 survey suggests that institutional IT officers are fighting lots of ‘digital fires’ on their campuses,” says Green.

Budget cuts may also be a catalyst for reorganizing IT units. Almost two-fifths (38.8%) of the survey respondents report that their campus has reorganized academic computing in the past two years. Another fourth (25.2%) anticipate the reorganization of academic computing in the next twenty-four months. Moreover, fully a sixth (15.8%) of the survey respondents indicate that their campuses did reorganize academic computing in the past two years and expect to do it again in the next two years. The numbers are similar for administrative computing units: 34.4% have reorganized, 23.6% expect to reorganize, and 14.8% have done it once and expect to do it again.

Some campuses have found a little relief from budget cuts in the federal stimulus funds. Approximately a third of the survey respondents from public universities, public four-year colleges, and community colleges report that “federal stimulus funds will help sustain IT resources at my campus.” However, their counterparts in the private sector are less sanguine about the benefits of stimulus money: Less than a fifth (18.0%) of CIOs in private universities and just 5% of IT officers in private four-year colleges report any benefit from stimulus funds. “While the relief is welcomed at many institutions, the short-lived federal stimulus money is not a long-term solution to the need to maintain IT budgets and to retain IT personnel,” says Green.

The survey indicates that campuses continue to invest in notification systems. A new item on the 2009 questionnaire reveals that more than

Campus Computing 2009 Survey

For the second time in the current decade, campus IT officers are struggling to deal with the rising demand for IT resources and services even as their budgets have experienced significant cuts, often followed by mid-year budget rescissions. Almost half (48.0%) of the institutions participating in the 2009 Campus Computing Survey report budget cuts for the current academic year, compared to less than a third (30.6%) in 2008 and just 13.1% in 2007. Concurrently, the proportion of campuses reporting increased funding for central IT services fell from 49% in 2008 to 21.4% in 2009. Public institutions have been hardest hit by the current cuts: Fully two-thirds (67.1%) of public universities reported budget cuts for central IT services for 2009, as did almost two-thirds (62.8%) of public four-year colleges. In contrast, just over a third (36.9%) of community colleges experienced central IT budget cuts this year. Among independent institutions, more than half (56.9%) of private research universities and two-fifths (41.9%) of private four-year colleges also reported reduced resources for central IT services for the current academic year.

“These budget cuts wreak havoc with efforts to respond to the rising

demand for IT resources and services,” says Kenneth C. Green, founding director of the Campus Computing Project, the nation’s largest continuing study of computing, eLearning, and information technology. “College and university IT units were just beginning to recover from the budget cuts that came early in the decade. No question that the current round of IT budget reductions has consequences for infrastructure, instruction, and support services for students and faculty.”

The budget challenges confronting campus IT officers are reflected in the annual polling about the “single most important IT issue confronting my campus over the next two to three years.” In past years the polling provided a clear “leader”—an issue that might garner the votes of a clear plurality of the respondents. In the early part of the decade, survey respondents identified the instructional integration of information technology as the single most important issue confronting their institution over the next two to three years. More recently, IT security concerns emerged as the leading issue among survey respondents. However, in 2009, two issues—financing IT and the replacement/upgrade of the campus network—each received about

four-fifths (83.6%) of campuses participating in the survey contract with commercial firms for campus notification services, often software and services that integrate and facilitate concurrent voice, text, and email messages to students, faculty, and staff. Yet as noted in last year's report, the effectiveness of these systems is probably limited by the fact that most campuses (73.5%) have an "opt-in" registration policy for the notification service—that is, students, faculty, and staff must register for the service.

The 2009 survey data point to small gains in the number of campuses that are in compliance with the broad terms of the P2P provisions of the Higher Education Act of 2008. For example, 84.2% of public universities report that as of fall 2009 they "have developed plans to effectively combat the unauthorized distribution of copyrighted material," up from 80% in 2008. But beyond the mandate for plans, campuses may have opted to wait for the recently announced HEA regulations on P2P ahead of developing institutional policies or committing funds in response to actual or inferred federal mandates. In this instance, just a third of private research universities (32.6%, up from 23.8% in 2008) report that "current campus plans [to stem P2P] include the use of a variety of technology-based deterrents" as mandated by the HEA legislation. More challenging for most campuses will be the mandate from the 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act to "offer alternatives to illegal downloading or peer-to-peer distribution of intellectual property" given the demise over the past year of many of the commercial music services that were targeting the campus market and offering institutional licenses. Moreover, as noted in the 2008 Campus Computing Report, compliance with the P2P mandates cost real dollars: For 2009, public universities estimate that they will spend, on average, more than \$62,000 to address P2P compliance,

compared to more than \$78,000 in private universities, \$28,000 in public four-year colleges, and approximately \$13,000 in private four-year colleges and community colleges.

Campus IT officers seem somewhat bullish on the future of eBooks, according to the 2009 survey. Fully three-fourths (76.3%) agree or strongly agree that "eBook content will be an important source for instructional resources in five years." Moreover, the survey numbers are fairly consistent across all sectors from community colleges to research universities. However, the survey respondents appear slightly less confident about the role of eBook platforms: Just two-thirds (66.0%) agree that dedicated "eBook readers will be important platforms for instructional content in five years."

Begun in 1990, the Campus Computing Survey is the largest continuing study of computing and information technology in American higher education. The 2009 report is based on survey data provided by senior campus IT officials, typically the CIO, CTO, or other senior campus IT officer, representing 500 two- and four-year public and private/nonprofit colleges and universities across the United States. Survey respondents completed the questionnaire in October 2009. ▲

Copies of the 2009 Campus Computing Survey are available as either print documents (\$37.00, plus \$2.00 shipping and handling) or as PDF site license files. The report can be ordered from the Campus Computing web site: www.campuscomputing.net. Reprinted with permission.

Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.
—John F. Kennedy


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Implementing Service Learning Across the Curriculum: A Catalyst for Change

by Marie Thielke Huff, Carol Burton, and Linda Seestedt-Stanford

Service learning is an experiential approach to education that connects students with the community through meaningful service activities that are designed to enrich and enhance students' learning experiences and promote civic engagement. It combines education, action, and reflection to enable students to understand the connection between what they learn in the classroom and their future careers. Research suggests that students often do not see a relationship between their coursework and real-world application. By participating in service-learning activities, students can begin to integrate their classroom learning experiences with real community problems and solutions.

Although traditional academic programs may require students to participate in volunteerism or fulfill community service hours, service learning is a more systematic way to enhance learning. It is more than episodic volunteerism or a community service requirement added onto an existing curriculum. Service learning is unique because it is linked to academic content and standards and includes structured time for students to reflect on their experiences through discussions or writing. Not only do community agencies and their clients and consumers benefit from the service activities facilitated by the students and their academic programs, service learning can extend learning outside the classroom and promote a sense of empathy and caring among students.

There is a growing interest in higher education to provide service-learning opportunities to help bridge the gap between the classroom and the community as exemplified by the Carnegie Foundation's new classifica-

tion on Community Engagement. The Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, established in 2006 and issued a second time in 2008, defines community engagement as "the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity." The Carnegie Foundation values the importance of engaged learning and the integration of activities inside and outside the classroom. Because of its emphasis on service learning and reaching out to the community, Western Carolina University (WCU) is one of 196 institutions that received this classification in 2008.

Universities that want to encourage faculty to implement more service-learning opportunities within their classes can provide support in several ways. For example, WCU emphasizes the importance of synthesis of learning in its Quality Enhancement Plan (qep.wcu.edu), a major component of its reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Faculty are encouraged and rewarded through the tenure and promotion process to participate in service-learning activities that help students synthesize their curricular and outside college experiences to help prepare them for life after college.

Faculty, students, and staff charted a course to enhance the undergraduate experience at WCU by developing the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) *Synthesis: A Pathway to Intentional Learning* in 2007. Defining synthesis as "the ability to integrate seemingly unrelated parts of experience from different areas into an original whole" (WCU, 2007,

p. 3), the university embarked on a coordinated approach to reduce the academic and administrative silos that frequently characterize the collegiate experience and to institutionalize efforts that foster integrative, engaged learning. Institutional data, faculty feedback, and student survey responses indicated that students tend to view their academic and co-curricular experiences as comprised of disparate elements and lacked the skills and opportunities to integrate their undergraduate education into a holistic university experience. The QEP serves as the "framework for infusing synthesis intentionally and systematically within the broader curricular and co-curricular frameworks" (WCU, 2007, p. 4).

Four curricular initiatives explored in the QEP emerged as examples of methods that enhance synthesis and integrative learning: service learning, undergraduate research, study abroad, and internships. Derived in part from Kolb's (1984) model of learning, service learning is an experiential education approach that targets discipline application (grounded in theory and concepts) merged with social issues of the greater community; students must synthesize their educational preparation using concrete, real-world experiences. Structured reflection is a key aspect of synthesis and of service learning; students make the connection between in-class and out-of-class learning by engaging in formal reflection processes and creating artifacts such as research papers, professional reports, and formal presentations. The result is that students enhance their intellectual, social, personal, career, civic, and academic development while concurrently addressing community needs (WCU, 2007). Of the five global learning outcomes identified in the QEP, three outcomes are most closely linked to service learning: (1) integrate information from a variety of sources, (2) civic engagement, and (3) clarify and act on purpose and values, each of which we define here.

- *Integrate information from a variety of sources:* Students will make connections between personal interests and abilities, general education, academic majors, general electives, experiential learning opportunities, and co-curricular activities, and relate the implications and value of these connections to real-world scenarios.

- *Practice civic engagement:* Students will identify their roles and responsibilities as engaged citizens by being involved in the community and by considering the public policies that affect their choices and actions, by recognizing commonalities and interdependence of diverse views and values, and by acting responsibly to positively affect public policy.

- *Clarify and act on purpose and values:* Students will examine the values that influence their own decision-making processes, take responsibility for their own learning and development in a manner consistent with academic integrity and their own goals and aspirations, intentionally use knowledge gained from learning experiences to make informed judgments about their future plans, and act on those plans.

Faculty incorporate QEP learning goals at the program, individual course, and co-curricular (e.g., in professional clubs and organizations) levels. Service learning occurs at program, individual course, and institutional levels and WCU supports service learning in a variety of ways. For example, the Center for Service Learning was moved from student affairs and is currently imbedded in academic affairs under the supervision of the provost's office. Each college has a Service Learning Faculty Fellow who receives either a course release or stipend to serve as a liaison between the Center for Service Learning and the college to support faculty who choose to develop and implement service-learning activities within their courses. Service-learning activities facilitated by faculty are acknowledged in both the faculty

member's annual evaluation and the tenure and promotion processes. The Center for Service Learning recognizes both students and faculty by giving annual service-learning awards. In addition, WCU has "service-learning designated courses" that are noted on students' official transcripts.

Service learning offers numerous advantages for students by providing an intellectually stimulating learning environment where students "learn by doing." Students can explore various majors and career options as they hone their knowledge and skills in a particular area. Service learning also encourages lifelong community engagement and helps prepare students for professional work as they begin to network with other working professionals. For example, students in an emergency and disaster management course, under the direction of their professor and consistent with the objectives of the class, worked with a local community to review, analyze, and revise components of their dated community disaster plan. Students presented a formal report to the community board with their recommendations. This activity provided links between classroom learning and real life, connected students with community leaders, and provided a much needed service to the citizens of the area.

Faculty benefit as they engage in reciprocal relationships with the community by applying scholarly activities to help solve real problems facing the region and state. By using a scholarly approach faculty can measure the effectiveness of their interactions, which may result in opportunities for scholarly papers, grants, or products that will count toward tenure and promotion. To illustrate, a faculty member in environmental health, whose research focus has been on an encephalitis carrying mosquito, recently wrote a grant to support the community in reducing the risk of contact with this insect. Students participate in the program as

part of their service learning in the course, collecting specimens, analyzing environmental conditions, and providing information to community members. Data is being compiled regarding the efficacy of the program in reducing this insect menace. Upon publication this research will support the faculty member in the tenure and promotion process and may become a model of mosquito eradication for the region.

Motivating faculty to facilitate service-learning activities can be a challenge because these activities may require an increased investment of time, resources, and energy. Faculty need the support of their university as well as their department chairs in order to successfully integrate service learning into their courses. Some specific strategies that chairs might use to encourage faculty to incorporate service learning into their courses are:

- Make service learning and engagement a part of the department's mission statement, goals, and strategic plan.

- Sponsor a service-learning workshop or invite speakers who can share information about how to effectively implement service-learning activities within the curriculum.

- Acknowledge and celebrate service learning within the department.

- Work with administration to formally integrate service learning into the department's tenure and promotion process.

- Designate a portion of the departmental budget to support service-learning initiatives.

- Provide and encourage opportunities for interdisciplinary service-learning projects. Faculty can share the workload and increase the number of students involved with a particular project.

- Provide opportunities for faculty to showcase their activities in departmental and institutional meetings or open houses.

The benefits of integrating service-learning activities into the curriculum, for both chairs and their departments, are plentiful. If done well, these activities can bring visibility to the program through media releases and announcements. With visibility often comes additional resources in the form of community partnerships and grants, research and consulting opportunities, increased enrollment, and overall better connections with the community.

Although WCU's QEP was initiated as part of the university's bid for reaffirmation, it is now in its third year of implementation and its sustainability is directly correlated with the degree to which the plan expands beyond the accreditation boundaries; faculty support and student engagement are critical to the plan's institutionalization and its ultimate success. Establishing faculty development, rewards, and

evaluation processes for adopting service learning are critical for sustainability and success. ▲

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

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Integrating Globalization into the Academic Department: Keys for Chairs

by Karl E. Anderson and Michael T. Miller

Few colleges and universities in the world have been untouched by the trend to internationalize higher education, and many have worked diligently to incorporate different aspects of globalization and multiculturalism into their curriculum and communities (Schoorman, 2000). Colleges have increased their global perspective by intensifying the use of study abroad, faculty exchanges, revising curriculum, international grant and contract work, and developing partnerships that include elements as varied as shared websites, recognition of academic credit, and travel tours that provide brief exposure to other institutions. The problem many department chairs face is the lack of clarity about existing partnerships, their use and formality,

and the role of different organizational units within the university's responsibility for and oversight of partnerships.

To identify some of the challenges and opportunities for higher education leaders working with international partnerships, we surveyed fifty land-grant universities and found that more than half reported they maintained over one hundred international partnerships, and two-thirds received no funding for their maintenance. The most common types of partnerships identified in the study were, in order:

- Study-abroad arrangements
- Academic curriculum agreements
- Administrative related
- Recruitment/student articulation
- Faculty exchanges
- Research collaboration

The most common advantages of engaging in globalization activities through partnerships were identified as:

For faculty

- Enhancing research
- Better understanding of other cultures
- Better understanding of global relationships and perspectives
- Networking
- Global interrelationship understanding
- Professional development
- Professional competence

For students

- Global perspective and understanding
- Opportunity to study abroad
- Research collaboration
- Foreign language exposure and application
- Networking

The majority of advantages associated with international partnerships were identified as being for faculty and students (rather than for administrators), and this suggests that department chairs and faculty members find themselves on the front line of working with these arrangements. Yet there are seldom clear guidelines about how to develop partnerships, and many partnerships are initiated and reliant on singular faculty members. Further, we found that international affairs offices were often the most common location identified for coordinating these activities, even though they have no oversight for faculty, research, academic programs, or travel. Based on the conclusions of our study, we have identified the following key recommendations for chairs.

Five Keys for Chairs

1. Make international partnerships everyone's business. The most common partnerships are developed by individual faculty members who have an interest in some particular country or part of the world—often developed through personal exposure.

When partnerships are based on individual effort, they rarely survive beyond the faculty member's energy level (or tenure at an institution—and this applies to the partnering international institution as well). For departments to make partnerships last, they must engage multiple faculty who are willing to put the effort into the collaborative arrangement. This particularly challenges the chair, who must temper individual enthusiasm with the best interests of the larger unit.

2. Find real advantages for students and faculty. For a partnership to be successful, there must be multiple, real advantages in order for different constituents to reach consensus on the partnership arrangement. These advantages can take the form of real curriculum change, financial incentives for teaching or working abroad, or even the simple opportunity to visit international locations. And considering the growing trend of documenting student learning, assessment measures that can demonstrate the real advantages of international partnerships become increasingly important and are vital to basic formation of a partnership.

3. Partnerships should have academic relevance. As many partnerships are developed by individual faculty members, there is a need to have a strong, rational cause for engaging in the partnership or agreement. For example, with growing immigration from certain countries such as China, India, and Mexico, there is a real academic need for practitioners in certain fields to have exposure to other cultures, expectations, and influences. Although there is a tremendous tradition in the United States of celebrating the northern European heritage, many international destinations that are considered desirable for travel may not make the most sense for departments to invest limited resources. In addition, international collaboration that stresses increased and ongoing global integration will have a better chance at

survival than those based on personal travel desires.

4. Funding mechanisms are fundamental to longevity. For international partnerships to survive, there must be some initial consideration of the protocols that will enable the arrangement to function financially. Ideally, for partnerships to be meaningful and effective, each arrangement or contract should recognize the need for continued, long-term funding with a specific budget agreed on by all constituents involved in the partnership. In addition, an annual assessment should be conducted to assure the funds are being allocated and spent according to the partnership agreement. Many institutional partnerships are based or arranged on external grants or contracts, and if the term of the grant is for a specified time period, the formal arrangement or contract might be best served if it is similarly scheduled to begin and end according to the terms of the grant. Also, ending international partnerships can be awkward and can potentially damage the opportunity for additional work in the future. Therefore, care should be taken when negotiating the conclusion of the partnership so that the possibility of future partnerships can be preserved.

5. Consider interdisciplinary support and collaboration. To develop a critical mass of expertise and interest, department chairs may best be served by exploring tangential disciplines, disciplines in area studies, or disciplines with a deliberate international focus, such as international relations or international business. This can diffuse the workload of hosting guests or finding volunteer faculty members to visit other countries, and it can provide a significantly larger potential body of students to participate in a study-abroad program or work collaboratively with students in other countries. As a side note, American terminology does not always translate easily with many cultures, and interdisciplinary

work can improve the chance that student, faculty, and institutional needs are met.

Future International Partnership Issues

As a concluding component of our survey, we asked senior international affairs administrators to indicate what they believed would be the most important future issues facing international partnerships. The most commonly identified issues were:

- Increase in joint/dual-degree programs abroad
- Partnerships that are more focused and specific to a particular area
 - Growing numbers of partnerships
 - Increased number of partnerships in critical/dynamic regions of the world
- Increased number of formal research collaborations
- Multiple institutions participating in partnerships
- More rigorous partnership assessment
- More short-term exchange and study abroad
- Increase in online and distance learning partnerships

All of these future issues have direct relevance to the academic department. Chairs must recognize that they are indeed the front line in institutional representation. They must build criteria for engaging in partnership formation and be increasingly intentional in assessing and maintaining partnerships. ▲

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Transitioning Traditional Programs to Online Programs

by Mindy Haar

As online courses offer students increased flexibility and convenience, more institutions and departments are considering increasing their number of virtual offerings. This decision is sometimes made to accommodate growing student interest in successful programs or, conversely, to bolster faltering programs. Having overseen the conversion of a traditional MS in Clinical Nutrition program to a totally online format over a two-year period, many lessons learned in this process can be shared.

Faculty Needs

Training to teach online. Lecture notes and PowerPoint presentations from traditional face-to-face (F2F) classes cannot just be transferred online and the course conducted in a similar way. Training must be given that includes clarifying differences in educational theory underlying traditional and online education, strategies and approaches appropriate to online education, as well as the technical instruction needed to create and manage an online course. Most institutions require some certification as an online instructor. New York Institute of Technology formerly required a one-day eight-hour course, but due to developments in the complexity of online platforms, this has been expanded to two days.

Ongoing technical and pedagogical support. Colleges offering online programs must have some technical support available, although at some schools this may only be during the hours of nine to five. Informal mentoring within departments can fill in the gaps in current university support infrastructure. Departments wishing to increase online offerings should be prepared to help from within. If the in-

troductory of an online program is to grow revenue, consideration must be given to increased support costs.

Dealing with the expectations of traditional program hires. Faculty who expected upon hiring to teach only F2F may be leery of switching to some or all online teaching. In our case, the only viable option for continuation of our graduate program was transitioning to fully online access to increase student population. The college has attempted to expand faculty enthusiasm with the development of the Center for Teaching and Learning, which provides resources, monthly workshops, and one-on-one mentoring.

Recognizing a faculty member's time investment for launching a course. The first time a faculty member develops a course for online delivery, he or she is paid for an additional credit. The issue that has developed and still has not been rectified is that faculty creating several online courses at once have had to reduce their scholarly output, ultimately affecting them in terms of reappointment and tenure decisions. Some schools have elected to recognize online course development as scholarly activity (Moore, 2008).

Setting appropriate levels of student/instructor interactivity. The instant response students expect from emails to faculty multiplies in online courses that use discussion boards and other venues for interactivity. Most online courses include more written assignments, with students having unrealistic expectations for assignment return. This often leads to a sense of faculty exhaustion and overload. Informing students at the outset of each semester as to expected response time

and assignment return time and trying to maintain some consistency across the department can help.

Institutional Infrastructure

Traditional registrar and bursar processes in an online world. In our college, first-semester students register in person with an advisor who signs their form for submission to the registrar. After the first semester, the advisor's approval can be submitted electronically and the student can register online. Although a future change is planned, presently this system remains the same for our online students, with the first-semester registration sheet needing to be faxed, in some cases, back and forth across the country. Some bursar transactions require visits to campus as well. For schools implementing more online programs, all procedures should be reviewed for complete online access.

Student evaluation of courses. In F2F courses, student course evaluations are handed out in class toward the end of the semester and completed by most students. In online courses, where the maximum population is twenty students and our department's courses average ten, students are requested by email to click on a link and complete a form. The response rate is usually too low for the Office of Institutional Research to process, and these missing evaluations have become an issue for faculty seeking reappointment and tenure. Consideration of an incentive system for students to fill out online evaluations is important.

Instructor evaluation. In many schools the evaluation of instructors uses an instrument approved by the union. This form may not be completely appropriate for evaluation of an online instructor, and consideration should be made to adapt present instruments to better reflect the virtual environment. In addition, the evaluating faculty should have some familiarity with the online environ-

ment. Due to the structuring of some departments, this may not always be the case, to the detriment of the online instructor.

Orienting Students to the Online Environment

Helping students deal with time management issues. As many students erroneously perceive online classes to be easier and less time consuming, there is a tendency to take on too many courses. We have become much more aggressive in our advisement of students against overload. We recommend they take out their calendar and plot out time for jobs, family, and school, with the expectation that a three-credit graduate course can amount to twelve hours of work per week.

Disproportionate number of incomplete grades. Not being in class and seeing the instructor allows greater tendency toward procrastination. As a department, we have found that consistency in clearly communicating expectations at the outset, enforcing penalties for late work, and reminders about due dates and cutoff dates where late work is no longer accepted has dramatically reduced our epidemic number of students asking for incompletes.

Importance of “live” faculty support. Students need to know that there are set times when they can speak to a live person as opposed to email, discussion board, and chat rooms within the course. With full-time faculty members holding regular office hours in our Long Island, New York, campus providing this support, students have reported increased satisfaction and this has ultimately resulted in program retention.

Marketing Issues

Defining your target audience/advertising issues. As we have defined our target population of students, we’ve narrowed our advertising specifically to that niche. We’ve advertised in several nutrition journals and have had

booths at specific conferences. Each time an inquiry for information came in by phone or email, we made sure to track the source of information. Other programs have used different phone numbers or contact persons in ads so that the source is known without having to ask. More expensive or larger ads have not always correlated with increased response. Some college public relations departments will cover publicizing a new program while others expect all expenses to come out of the department’s budget.

Researching your competitors’ programs and tuition differences. In these tough economic times, many students’ selection of programs will be made based on price. In our college, as our tuition was significantly higher than all competitors, our CFO agreed to reduce the tuition for new online programs starting from zero enrollment. In our transitioning program, this tuition reduction would present an immediate drop in revenue that may not be justified by projected increased enrollment.

Distinguishing your program from other similar programs. Each year the number of programs similar to ours has multiplied but we have tried to distinguish ourselves by smaller classes and more personal attention. Having different admissions requirements can open certain niches as well.

Developing Best Practice Models on a Departmental and Institutional Level

Integral and optional elements. Already established lists of best practices can be used without reinventing the wheel. In deciding which elements are critical and must be included and which are just icing on the cake, consideration must be made of making the workload palatable to faculty.

Synchronous versus asynchronous activity. In courses that are asynchronous, there may be times

when the instructor wants to present a synchronous activity on a weekly or occasional basis. Students must be informed of these times in advance of registering. As programs expand nationally and even internationally, finding a mutually acceptable time for students in different time zones can become almost impossible.

New technological enhancements. Newer versions of Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Blackboard have additional features including an alert system where students are automatically sent a text message if they don’t log into the course based on a formula set by the instructor; they also include space for journals and blogs. In addition to these LMS features, there are options to purchase synchronous tools such as Elluminate and Marratech, allowing for instructor and class presentations and interactions. Purchasing the next LMS version or other components are budgetary decisions made with projected possible enrollment increases.

Conclusion

Aside from our own experience, many of the issues described here are considered in two recent reports by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities in conjunction with the Sloan Foundation (McCarthy & Samors, 2009; Seaman, 2009). Attention to these issues at the earliest possible point in the planning process can maximize the ultimate success of an online program. ▲

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

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What Is Unique About Chairs? A Continuing Exploration

by Robert E. Cipriano and Richard Riccardi

There has been a dearth of information regarding the roles and responsibilities, demographics, and characteristics of those who serve as department chairs in our nation's 3,600 colleges and universities. We have been surveying chairs across the country for the past three years using a survey designed to elicit responses about demographics (gender, highest degree held, academic rank, etc.), personal information (degree of satisfaction in serving as chair, plans after term as chair ends, etc.), perceptions of the skills and competencies needed to function effectively as chair, and the tasks chairs need to perform that are deemed pleasant or unpleasant. In 2007 we surveyed department chairs (N = 203 respondents) from one university system on the past, present, and future aspirations of chairs (see Cipriano & Riccardi, 2008). In February 2008 we conducted a follow-up study that broadened the responses to chairs across the country (see Cipriano & Riccardi, 2010). We mailed a total of 317 surveys in 2008, and 150 were returned; a 47.3% return rate. In 2009 we conducted a larger study (900 surveys mailed, 374 returned; 42.0% return rate). We have a combined total of 727 responses (43.1% return rate from 1,686 surveys) from chairs from the three studies. We will report the combined three-year findings in a subsequent issue of *The Department Chair*.

Here we highlight salient responses of the 2009 survey and look in-depth at one interesting reply that was missing from both the 2007 and 2008 survey responses. The 2009 study also compared responses from both current chairs (N = 314) and former chairs (N = 60). This article will only report those differences that are significantly different between and among these two cohorts.

Demographics

1. Gender: 64.6% were male; 34.9% were female.
2. Highest degree held: 9.7% held a master's degree, 2.4% held a sixth-year degree, 74.3% held a doctoral degree, and 11.5% held a postdoctoral degree.
3. Academic rank: 3.8% were assistant professors, 23.1% were associate professors, and 70.5% were full professors.
4. Age when first became chair: 47.
5. Current age: 54.
6. Total years as chair: 6.
7. Tenure status: 87.1% were tenured; 11.8% were not tenured.
8. Consider self as a member of the faculty or the administration: 71.6% considered themselves a member of the faculty; 24.1% considered themselves a member of the administration.
9. Came to the position: 31.4% were appointed, 22.3% were elected, and 45.8% indicated a combination of appointed and elected.

10. Number of full-time faculty in department: 2.9% had 1–3 members, 8.0% had 4–5 members, 13.4% had 6–8 members, 11.0% had 9–10 members, 23.9% had 11–15 members, and 39.9% had 16 or more members.

11. Formal training in becoming a chair: 2.4% had formal coursework in becoming a chair during their graduate degree programs; 96.2% had no formal coursework in chairing departments.

12. Formal management training in chairing a department: 18.0% had management training in chairing a department, 80.7% had no such training, and 1.6% did not reply.

13. Term limits: 18.8% had term limits, 80.4% did not have term limits, and 1.1% did not respond.

14. What will you do after serving as chair:

- 16.4% indicated they would retire—19.4% of current chairs selected this response, and no former chairs indicated they would retire.

- 16.1% reported they would go into administration—7.0% of current chairs and 63.3% of former chairs reported this option.

- 15.5% indicated they didn't know.

- 49.3% indicated they would go back to the faculty—52.9% of current chairs, and 30.0% of former chairs.

- No respondent indicated an interest in leaving higher education.

15. Overall satisfaction as chair: 35.4% were very satisfied, 51.7% were satisfied, 8.3% were not satisfied, and 0.3% (1 person) were totally unsatisfied.

Pleasant and Unpleasant Tasks Performed by Chairs

A review of the literature revealed that there are 27 tasks and responsibilities that department chairs regularly perform. Table 1 summarizes the pleasant tasks chairs perform, and Table 2 presents the unpleasant tasks chairs perform.

Evaluating non-faculty personnel (e.g., administrative assistant) was reported as an unpleasant task by 48.0%

Table 1. Pleasant Tasks Performed by Chairs

Tasks (Pleasant)	Overall	Former Chair	Current Chair
Interpersonal communication	91.7%	95.0%	91.1%
Encouraging professional development of faculty	88.7%	98.3%	86.9%
Developing and initiating long-range departmental programs, plans, and goals	82.3%	83.3%	82.1%
Interacting with administration on behalf of the department	82.3%	88.3%	81.2%
Representing the department at professional meetings	81.0%	90.0%	79.2%
Recruiting new full-time faculty	79.4%	85.0%	78.3%
Encouraging faculty research and publications	79.4%	91.7%	77.7%
Departmental organization	77.2%	76.7%	78.0%
Retaining untenured faculty	77.2%	81.7%	76.4%
Planning/reviewing curriculum, academic programs, and courses	72.4%	70.0%	72.8%
Assigning courses, research, and departmental duties to faculty	65.4%	63.3%	65.8%
Attending meetings for chairs with administrators	62.2%	61.7%	62.3%
Participating in committee work with colleagues	59.8%	68.3%	58.1%
Justifying the department's viability to administration	54.4%	43.3%	56.5%
Developing the department's budget	51.7%	48.3%	52.4%
Monitoring the department's budget	49.9%	46.7%	50.5%

Note: Bolded items are at the 5% level of significance.

Table 2. Unpleasant Tasks Performed by Chairs

Tasks (Unpleasant)	Overall	Former Chair	Current Chair
Terminating adjunct faculty	76.7%	78.3%	76.4%
Terminating non-teaching personnel	73.2%	66.7%	74.4%
Terminating full-time faculty	68.4%	63.3%	69.3%
Maintaining morale and reducing conflicts among faculty	58.4%	63.3%	57.5%
Requesting additional resources from administration	53.9%	61.7%	52.4%
Evaluating full-time faculty members	49.9%	58.3%	48.2%

Note: Bolded items are at the 5% level of significance.

of the respondents. Fifty-five percent of former chairs and 46.6% of current chairs rated this as an unpleasant task. It appears that terminating faculty and staff, evaluating department members, reducing departmental conflicts, and requesting added resources are the most unpleasant tasks chairs are required to perform. In the existing climate besetting higher education, it is logical that chairs will be asked to cut budgets (i.e., terminate full-time and/or part-time faculty), adhere to stricter evaluative criteria for department members, and make due with less in the form of additional resources. Further, there is the risk that

all this will lead to a less collegial and civil environment, thus causing more conflicts both within and external to the department.

It was edifying to analyze the tasks that chairs indicated they did not do, of which there were only two that were noted by more than 35% of the respondents:

1. Raising external funds: 50.1%
2. Obtaining and managing grants, gifts, and contracts: 36.5%

Skills and Competencies Needed by Chairs

Chairs wear many hats, given the particular circumstances they are faced

with. The one-size-fits-all chair position does not exist with any degree of regularity. A multitude of skills are displayed on a habitual and consistent basis. An examination of the literature indicated that there were 16 competencies that chairs should possess. Ninety-five percent or higher of the respondents rated the following nine competencies/skills as necessary to function as a chair:

1. Trustworthiness: 99.7%
2. Ability to communicate effectively: 99.5%
3. Interpersonal skills: 99.2%
4. Problem-solving ability: 99.2%
5. Leadership skills: 98.9%
6. Character/integrity: 98.9%
7. Decision-making ability: 98.9%
8. Organizational ability: 97.6%
9. Planning skills: 96.5%

Only two of these indicated skills (trustworthiness and character/integrity) are innate. In fact, the other seven skills/competencies that chairs reported are the most important can be taught to new, aspiring, and experienced chairs to aid them in leading their respective departments. It is noted and emphasized that more than 96% of department chairs have never

Table 3. Reasons for Becoming a Chair

Reasons	Overall	Former Chair	Current Chair
Make a difference	85.8%	95.0%	83.8%
Shape the department's direction	83.1%	90.0%	81.5%
Career advancement	39.1%	43.3%	38.2%
No one else in the department will do it	35.9%	31.7%	36.6%
More money	31.1%	16.7%	33.8%
Ability to hire faculty	24.7%	26.7%	24.2%
Reduced teaching load	17.4%	16.7%	17.5%
Control of the budget	12.6%	11.7%	12.7%
Prestige	12.1%	13.3%	11.8%
Summer pay	11.5%	10.8%	15.0%

Note: Bolded items are at the 5% level of significance.

taken a course or been trained to serve as chair.

In an effort to further distill the skills deemed necessary by the respondents, we asked them to rank in order of importance the five most crucial competencies needed. We weighted the scores according to the responses. For example, a rank of 1 was awarded 5 points, a rank of 2 was awarded 4 points, and so forth. The top five highest ranked skills/competencies, as reported by the respondents, were:

1. Ability to communicate effectively: 593 points
2. Character/integrity: 489 points
3. Leadership skills: 437 points
4. Program /course innovation and development: 356 points
5. Interpersonal skills: 308 points

A Seismic Change

To digress back to the 2007 and 2008 studies, we found that the number-one reason chairs indicated they remain as chair was “that no one else in the department will do it.” At a recent full-day conference presented by one of the authors, workshop attendees were interested in this response. During and after the workshop, informal focus groups were held with chairs who attended the conference. First-year chairs, as well as veteran chairs, soul-searched and shared their private thoughts on this subject with their new

colleagues. A consensus began to infiltrate the discussion—they became chairs because they wanted to make a difference. People expressed their thoughts and beliefs that department chairs were in an enviable position to be change agents, serve as legacy builders, and construct lasting excellence within their departments and their disciplines. Upon return to our home campus, we elicited fellow chairs' comments regarding this question. They were also in agreement that making a difference was a key factor in becoming a chair. Therefore, we added the following three items to the question of why people remain as chair: (1) career advancement, (2) make a difference, and (3) shape the department's direction. Responses to the question “Reasons for becoming a chair” are displayed in Table 3.

Conclusion

There are myriad challenges confronting higher education, not the least of which is the fact that 40% of the 595,000 full-time faculty members are 55 years of age or older. The average chair serves for six years. Twenty percent of chairs leave the position each year. A further confounding variable is that more than 96% of chairs have not been trained in the position's varied roles. The chair is a pivotal position in higher education, one that

bridges the gap between administration and faculty. More research is needed regarding the distinct roles that department chairs play in the academy. It is hoped that this study will help us discern with a little more clarity the important components of who a chair is, which aspects of the position are meaningful, and the requisite skills and competencies needed to perform the job effectively. ▲

Robert E. Cipriano is chair of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, and Richard Riccardi is director of the Office of Management Information and Research, both at Southern Connecticut State University. Email: ciprianor1@southernct.edu, riccardir1@southernct.edu

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Lawsuits and Rulings

FACULTY TERMINATION

Professor Loses Job in Bumpy Transition from Administration to Faculty

Case: *Marks v. Smith et al.*, No. 83, 603265/04 (N.Y. App. Div. 09/15/09)

Ruling: The Supreme Court of New York, Appellate Division, modified a trial court's denial of summary judgment to both parties in this breach-of-contract lawsuit. It granted Fordham University's motion and dismissed Janet Marks' claims.

Significance: When an employment contract does not specify compensation, courts will establish the amount by looking at salaries paid to employees in comparable positions.

Summary: Marks was appointed to a two-year, tenure-track associate professorship in the Faculty of Business at Fordham University in 1996. However, her contract contained a proviso suspending its terms while she served as associate dean for academic affairs for the Faculty of Business. Her salary would be paid as an administrator—not as faculty—until such time as she assumed full-time faculty status.

Marks resigned the associate dean position in March 2002 to assume teaching duties. However, no teaching positions were available for several months. The university told her that her annual salary as a professor would be \$70,000 and payment would begin as soon as she began teaching.

She refused her teaching assignments for the fall of 2002. Marks claimed that her faculty salary should have been paid as soon as she resigned the associate dean position. She asserted that although she was not teaching, she was performing other faculty duties, including research. She also claimed that the proposed faculty

salary violated the terms of her contract.

The university fired her. It claimed that by refusing the teaching assignments, she had effectively abandoned her job. Marks sued for breach of contract. After the trial court denied both parties' motions for summary judgment, both filed appeals.

The appellate court found that the contract failed to specify a salary for either an administrative or a faculty position. Therefore, the panel held that, absent other evidence of a greater obligation, the contract required compensation at a rate that was reasonable in comparison with compensation customarily paid to holders of comparable faculty positions during the same period.

The court ruled that the university's evidence showed that the salary offered was reasonable. Marks did not come forward with any evidence to support her claim that the university, in setting her salary, breached any contractual obligation left unstated in their written agreement, the court noted.

She also failed to identify a basis for a determination that the university was required to continue paying her a salary after she voluntarily resigned her administrative position and before she assumed full teaching duties, according to the court.

The appellate court modified the trial court's ruling. It granted the university's motion for summary judgment and dismissed the complaint. ▲

FACULTY TENURE

Court Will Not Rule on Quality of Professor's Work

Case: *Tori v. Marist College*, No. 08-5143-cv (2d Cir. 09/02/09)

Ruling: The Second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed Michael

Tori's claims of discrimination against Marist College.

Significance: To allege that a negative tenure decision was influenced by illegal bias, a plaintiff must rely on evidence other than a disagreement over the quality of his scholarly work.

Summary: After Marist College denied his tenure application, Tori filed suit alleging that he was subjected to discrimination on the bases of race (white), gender, marital status, and religion.

The college claimed that his application was rejected because his scholarly work was unsatisfactory. But Tori argued that by publishing two articles in peer-reviewed journals, he fulfilled the tenure requirements as set forth in the *Faculty Handbook*. He alleged that the scholarly work requirement was an objective standard disregarded by the peer review committee. He also asserted that two independent experts in his field had reviewed his articles and found them of excellent quality.

Tori appealed the district court's summary judgment for the university. But the Second Circuit affirmed the ruling. The panel noted that when an employer asserts a legitimate nondiscriminatory reason for an adverse employment action, the plaintiff has the burden of proving that it is a pretext for discrimination.

The court explained that "tenure decisions in an academic setting involve a combination of factors which tend to set them apart from employment decisions generally." Courts are "understandably reluctant to review the merits of a tenure decision," the panel added.

Therefore, when a professor alleges that denial of tenure was influenced by an unlawful, discriminatory bias, evidence regarding disagreement over his scholarly work is insufficient to show that the college's proffered reason was a pretext for discrimination. ▲

Review

FERPA Clear and Simple: The College Professional's Guide to Compliance

by Clifford A. Ramirez

Jossey-Bass, 2009
336 pp., \$40.00 (plus \$5.00 s/h)

In the age of reality television, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and dozens of other social and professional networking sites, it seems that people are searching for more exposure and more connections than ever, rather than trying to seek more privacy. As a result, more and more personal data ends up in the public sphere. However, there are real concerns about the improper uses of these data. The U.S. Federal Trade Commission estimates that as many as nine million Americans have their identities stolen each year. Identity thieves then engage in a multitude of crimes such as credit card or bank fraud, and use the identities to illegally obtain government benefits.

Do we have a right to privacy that can protect us? The U.S. Constitution does not specifically mention a right to privacy, but the Supreme Court has interpreted various provisions to find some protection. In *Olmstead v. United States* (1928), Justice Louis Brandies argued in his dissent that the framers “conferred, as against the government, the right to be let alone” (277 U.S. 438, 478). In *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), Justice Douglas, writing for the majority, ruled that a right to privacy did indeed exist: “The foregoing cases suggest that specific guarantees in the Bill of Rights have penumbras, formed by emanations from those guarantees that help give them life and substance. . . . Various guarantees create zones of privacy. . . . We deal with a right of privacy older than the Bill of Rights—older than our political parties, older than our school system” (381 U.S. 479, 484).



Unfortunately, these decisions concerned the individual's protection *from* the government, essentially placing limits on what the government could do. But what about the protection of our privacy from public release by the government or by others? There is no national law protecting the privacy of personal information, but since the 1970s Congress has acted to protect certain kinds of information. In 1974, Congress enacted the Privacy Act, which limited the use of information collected by government agencies, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which was intended to protect the privacy of educational records. It should be noted that FERPA applies to every institution of higher education that accepts federal funding.

Clifford Ramirez, a private consultant and registrar at Claremont Graduate University, has created a comprehensive guide to understanding FERPA and its application. Although written with college registrars in mind, it may serve a useful purpose for department chairs. Designed as a reference book (but it can also be read from cover to cover), *FERPA Clear and Simple* is broken into six chapters. Chapter One not only serves as an introduction to FERPA, it also provides a brief history of privacy law in the United States and a very thorough background on the creation of the FERPA legislation. Many of the details of those events may be irrelevant for today's application of the law, but it does make for interesting reading. To add color to what essentially is a discussion of regulations, Ramirez adds “feature” boxes that include such interesting tidbits as a biography of Senator James Buckley, the history of Social Security numbers, and a description of the evolution of the U.S. Department of Education. All in all, his description of the development and

passage of the law does enhance the reader's understanding.

With the foundation laid, Ramirez uses Chapters Two and Three to provide a detailed explanation of the law: what is protected, who it applies to, how it should be enforced, and the remedies for noncompliance. It should be noted that the record keeper targeted by the FERPA legislation is typically the registrar, but if an academic department maintains its own educational records of its students, then those are protected by FERPA. Departments that require comprehensive exams, major field tests, or track grades of its majors must comply with the recordkeeping requirements of FERPA. In addition, the privacy provisions also apply to any employee of the institution who has access to the records. Accordingly, a faculty member may not reveal a student's grades to third persons without following the provisions of FERPA.

These two chapters are likely to be the ones most referenced by those looking to answer a question about how to handle a certain academic record. But, as expected with any regulatory scheme, there will be exceptions, and Ramirez uses Chapters Four and Five to fully explain the myriad of exceptions, including access by parents of dependent children to disclosure of information to law enforcement officials concerned about the safety of the student or others. Ramirez includes feature boxes to provide background on the events spurring relevant legislation such as the Columbine High School massacre, the Jacob Wetterling and Adam Walsh abduction cases, and many more. In addition, Chapter Five deals with exceptions necessitated by the U.S. Patriot Act and other national security concerns. The discussion of the law and its exceptions in these chapters is quite accessible to all segments of higher education administration, even for those without a

law degree or years of bureaucratic experience.

Chapter Six provides useful strategies for institutions to follow in order to comply with the requirements of FERPA. Ramirez includes several compliance checklists that may prove useful to records administrators as they create policies and procedures in line with the FERPA requirements. Perhaps what I find most useful in this volume are the appendixes: the FERPA legislation (20 USC Section 1232G) and the FERPA regulations (34 CFR Section 99). As an attorney, I like to check the original text of the law or regulation to verify the interpretation presented in any discussion of the law, and this can easily be done with the appendixes. Most department chairs may not be interested in the law itself, and for them, the discussion in the chapters should suffice.

After reading through *FERPA Clear and Simple*, I contacted several registrars to learn how they dealt with FERPA issues. Virtually all of them relied on publications and Internet sources provided by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. Although some

were not interested in anything other than AACRAO materials, one registrar admitted “you can never have too many sources on topics such as this!” Another summarized my advice regarding this book: “I think a large reference book would especially be helpful to those administrators who are not as educated on the issues as are people in the records offices.”

Ramirez has put together a very nice reference book that will be useful for department chairs who maintain student records in their offices, whether they be class grades, portfolios, major field tests, qualifying exams, or other records of performance. *FERPA Clear and Simple* is indeed clear and simple and will be helpful for training staff and/or new department chairs. I would suggest, however, that if there are real concerns or questions about compliance with FERPA, then university counsel should be consulted. Laws are subject to change and are subject to different interpretations by the courts. ▲

Reviewed by Jon K. Dalager, J.D., professor and chair of the Department of Political Science at Georgetown College. Email: jon_dalager@georgetowncollege.edu

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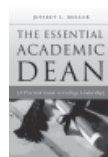
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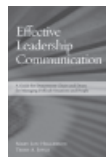
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