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This chapter identifies a number of resources that department chairs can use in their professional development.

The Professional Development of Department Chairs

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The process of rethinking the role of the department chair stretches back to the 1970s, when two markers signaled that interest. One is the publication in 1975 by the American Council on Education (ACE) of Walzer's *The Job of Academic Department Chairman: Experience and Recommendations from Miami*. The second, also under the auspices of ACE, occurred in 1979 with the launching of a department chair training program sponsored with funds from the Kellogg Foundation.

The Walzer work, now nearly thirty years old, identified many of the same issues that affect department chairs today. Walzer clearly pointed out the range of chair responsibilities that include departmental affairs, academic affairs, faculty affairs, student affairs, external communications, budgetary affairs, office management, and personal professional performance. Walzer may not have mentioned current responsibilities like fundraising and space management, but these emerge quite logically from his existing list of tasks. Nor does he explicitly address what is now a current institutional move to push responsibility down through the administrative ranks of institutions. But he pointedly remarked that "the academic department is where the action is" (p. 6), and he warned that "the job of academic department chairman must not be underestimated by the University administration, the faculty members, or those who hold or seek the job" (p. 6).

The Kellogg chair project, which had focused on a small group of campuses, evolved into a self-supporting system of workshops with the termination of the grant. That initiative has continued through several stages and is now available as an annual national program offering workshops three times a year in different regions of the country.

However, for most department chairs, the learning process has been limited to on-the-job-training. Chairs who might want to devise a more reflective process could by 1981 consult the first comprehensive volume on the work of department chairs, Allan Tucker's *Chairing the Academic Department*. A second edition was issued in 1984, and a posthumous third edition was released in 1992.

A more recent contribution to a comprehensive review of the work of department chairs was published in 1999, also sponsored by the ACE. *The Department Chair as Academic Leader* by Hecht, Higgerson, and Gmelch picked up from the last edition of Tucker's work to bring the universe of chairs forward into the context of new challenges to higher education.

Meanwhile, attitudes toward the work of department chairs have been undergoing rapid change. Organization charts may still depict departments as the last little cubes in the institutional pyramid. In terms of the role played, however, departments have moved into the vortex of institutional management, and what for lack of other vocabulary we call "the administration" now realizes the importance of having competent and effective chairs with a capacity to lead their faculty colleagues.

That changed attitude was first visible in the 1990s as the publications devoted to department chairs expanded rapidly. It is exploding as we enter a new century with the availability of the World Wide Web. It is now possible to find materials on what campuses are doing on the Web. A good place to initiate such a search is to look at www.acenet.edu/resources/chairs/, a Web resource site organized through a Lumina Foundation grant to the ACE.

Other signs of the new interest in the work of department chairs are events like the annual Academic Chairpersons Conference sponsored by Kansas State University, which began in 1983, and the 1991 launching by Maricopa Community College of its annual meeting for department chairs of community colleges. Disciplinary and institutional associations have also launched programs for department chairs.

Nevertheless, the reality is that becoming an effective department chair is largely a process of self-education. Being a chair who leads effectively requires both enthusiasm and the vision to inspire combined with the hard-nosed understanding of practical management. The intent of this chapter is to provide resources for chairs so that they can engage in professional development activities with which to address the challenges of their work.

In answer to the question, How do I learn the ropes of chairing an academic department? chairs must develop a basic command of information to use in their work.

Know Your Institution

Most chairs emerge from the faculty ranks and have been at their institution long enough to be awarded tenure. That being the case, you may assume you already know your institution. Certainly to an extent you do.

However, the knowledge you need as a chair is more complex and invites reflective thought.

One way to begin is to list all the people on whom you as chair and your department as a unit depend or with whom you and the department interact in accomplishing your mission. Among the people who will certainly turn up on the list are the dean and provost. The offices with which you are likely to interact will include the registrar (or whatever office in your institution posts grades and arranges classroom space); the admissions office (from which you may receive calls for assistance); the budget department (which forwards budgets to you and processes purchase orders); student services (which should include the office working with foreign students); physical plant (including those responsible for maintenance, repairs, and janitorial services); security (on whom you may call concerning property or danger to persons); and human services (to which you will need to turn if you need a new secretary or faculty member). You may possibly need to work with the university development office and even the college attorney, but these contacts may be mediated by the dean or provost. If you need help in those areas, you are addressing issues that have the potential to affect the institution, which means the dean needs to be informed before you contact these resources.

Know Your Human Universe

The people who comprise the department will be the major resource you have. It is imperative to develop strong working relationships with each of them.

Faculty. Even twenty years ago, the chair's human universe centered on the faculty, and by faculty we had in mind full-time tenured or tenure-eligible colleagues. Today that model borders on Oz, a fantasy land existing only in our imaginations. The most obvious change is the growing presence of part-time or full-time nontenurable faculty. An added concern in departments with graduate students is the status of a group that floats between the world of student, which implies subordination, and colleagues-in-waiting, which implies parity.

The full-time faculty may remain the chair's central concern, but even if they can be subsumed under one label, they can present diverse challenges. With the graying of the professoriate, the age profile of the department may be affecting your department and how it works. Does the department operate with the tacit assumption that longevity brings privileges in the form of passing certain chores, like the introductory course, to younger scholars? Do senior professors arrange schedules for themselves that enable them to be entirely absent for a segment of the academic year? If you find yourself chair of such a department, it may be necessary to create a strategy for changing the working assumptions of colleagues.

If you have colleagues who are moving toward the age when retirement is an option, you may need to plan not only for their gracious retirement but also for the department's plans for replacing them. That can be a complex bit of orchestration requiring a meshing of the department's goals with those of the institution. In a period of budgetary stringency, which has every prospect of being long-lived, it is dangerous to assume that authorization for replacing a position is ensured.

If the department has members who are mature in their careers but not yet contemplating retirement, thought needs to be given on how to help sustain their professional growth. Posttenure review programs increasingly are common. How your institution has approached that matter will make a marked difference in the possibilities for working with mature colleagues. Some posttenure review programs take a summative approach, looking for an assessment of what the tenured faculty member is producing as both a teacher and a scholar. Other programs take a formative emphasis, looking for ways to keep the creative vigor of their faculty. In the former case, the chair will be cast as a judge and in the latter as a coach. Does your institution define your role in that regard? If not, it is still incumbent on you to think about how to help support the professional evolution of midcareer colleagues.

Age is not the only variable that shapes the human dimensions of departments. Faculties are no longer just white males along the lines of the mythical Mr. Chips. The GI Bill opened higher education beyond the old social elites. Women who had played an indispensable role at home during the war years pressed on and increased their numbers to a point where today they represent more than half of all institutions' undergraduate students. The civil rights movement helped add people of color to the faculty ranks, although their numbers are not proportional to their presence in the general population. If your department is itself diverse, there may be challenges of varying values and assumptions ranging from behavior to pedagogy to the very purposes of the department's discipline.

The presence of part-time faculty adds yet another dimension to the human composition of the department. Once, departments looked for a part-time replacement for an absent faculty member or someone to fill sudden enrollment pressures. No one assumed that these relationships would be long term or numerous. Community colleges became knowledgeable in this matter very quickly, but the construct of their curricula often was loose, reacting to community demand rather than being designed around the assumptions of a discipline. Now departments with baccalaureate degrees often are depending on adjunct faculty to deliver core parts of the curriculum on a regular basis. From a student perspective, a professor is a professor, and his or her employment status is not something about which they are likely to take an interest unless that professor is very popular and the college decides not to renew his or her appointment. From the department's viewpoint, the adjunct instructor can be a liability if that person is not well briefed on the values and curriculum of the department. Inconsistencies in grading policies, office hours, student standards, and curriculum requirements are things that students quickly notice. If there is a gap with the standards students have been told prevail in the department, they will be crowding your office with complaints.

With the growing presence of adjuncts, chairs are finding they need to give thought to how they integrate these colleagues into the existing department. What facilities should the department provide in order for the adjunct to be effective as a faculty member? Is office space available? Is it perhaps shared? Does the adjunct get a telephone number and e-mail address? Does the adjunct know where to turn to solve basic questions that may be as mundane as where to get more chalk for the classroom? What degree of social integration is necessary, and what might be appropriate? Do adjuncts have the right to attend department meetings if they are available, and if they do, what rights do they possess either to speak or to vote? Many of these questions need to be sorted out within the department, but it is the chair who needs to bring up the topic and guide the discussion.

If the department is facing major retirement turnover, mentoring and acculturating new faculty is a major issue. Ideally, this process should flow seamlessly from the search process itself. During the search, the faculty candidate should have been thoroughly briefed by the chair on the department's expectations and hopes regarding this particular hire. Once this person is on site, the chair should be sure that the department is organized in such a way as to acclimate the new colleague successfully. This is both a matter of social acculturation into the mores of the department and providing a good grounding in university procedures. At the department level, there are the details of daily living that range from the processing of telephone messages to the availability of any secretarial or student help.

Department and university procedures, particularly those that provide data for eventual summative evaluation, need to be made particularly clear. For example, does the department (or institution) have minimum standards for holding office hours? When are grades due, and how are they to be submitted? What university-wide meetings should the newcomer expect to attend?

Who are the people to whom you should introduce the new faculty member? At the top of the list should be the department secretary. The newcomer needs to be introduced to the department's student assistants too. If during the search process, the new faculty member did not meet each person in the department, be sure introductions are made. Determine what issues might arise where the faculty member would need to call for assistance and advise whom to call when problems occur.

By the same token, if retirees are leaving the department, it will make a great difference to the morale of remaining faculty to have those colleagues depart in a dignified manner and with a real sense of accomplishment and collegiality. As chair, you need to determine whether you want to encourage the retiree to return to teach. Identify the public events sponsored by the department to which it is a courtesy to invite an emeritus professor and with the department secretary set up a reminder system to include the retiree in public events or parties sponsored by the department.

Students. Just as faculty have become a more diverse body, so have the students. The classroom now holds more women than men. The ethnic mix presents departments with a remarkable range of human material. And students at the undergraduate level are no longer all between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two. Instructors may be facing students their grandparents' age or former employers. Just as chairs are facing the challenge of knitting together a community of faculty holding dramatically different points of view grounded in their cultural experience, they are doing so with students as well, and the challenges can be very interesting. Anglo students may be used to doing their homework individually; students from other racial and ethnic groups may take for granted that work is accomplished collectively. If differences in cultural assumptions are not explicitly addressed, they may generate misunderstandings about academic standards and practices.

Adult students are yet another challenge. With life experience perhaps even longer than that of their instructors, adult students may question their instructors' statements. For adult students, efficient use of time is a must, and they can become impatient with make-work assignments or wasted class time. The mixing of adult and young students can be invigorating or lead to classroom discomfort.

Staff. Many departments are thinly staffed, so staff relationships may be limited to the department's secretary (or shared secretary). Whatever the case, the department secretary is a key player in the work of the department. If the secretary has been in place for a number of years, she or he will be an invaluable depository of departmental lore and will also know the rhythms of the institution. One of the first persons a chair should consider interviewing is the department's secretary. Get an idea of how the secretary organizes the department's affairs. Ask where the pinch points are in the department or institution calendar and what the most common problems are that the secretary faces. If you have not had secretarial assistance previously, you may need to consider learning new skills. It is tempting to see the possibility of delegating tasks as a cure-all for any sense of overload. The availability of someone to take care of chores, run errands, place telephone calls, and schedule meetings may appear to be a gift from heaven, and in fact it is. However, even secretaries have limits. A major pitfall to avoid is the habit of making "emergency" requests. No secretary is going to thrive with a chair who regularly flies in with work that is demanded within the hour. An occasional emergency is sustainable. A steady diet of these requests will destroy any secretary's ability to bring the volume of work under control.

Discuss with your secretary how he or she likes to work. Decide whether you will start with a daily meeting to go over the day's work or whether the secretary is used to setting an independent pace and can work with you through a once-a-week planning session. Ascertain whether the secretary is bombarded with conflicting requests from members of the department. This can be one of a chair's most important roles: organizing a priority and triage system for general office work.

Think also about what the secretary can do to help you be more efficient. Do you want all telephone calls forwarded to you immediately? Do you want all complaining students ushered into your office whenever they appear? Do you propose to run your office with a scheduled open door policy, or do you want all visits by appointment? These are details a secretary can help you manage, making you both more productive and your life as chair less frantic. Ultimately, if you can create good teamwork with your secretary, you will both enhance your pleasure in coming to the office each day and make yourself a successful chair.

Besides the secretary, departments may have student assistants and technical personnel such as laboratory assistants. Managing their performance is a task that also may fall to the chair. In the case of student assistants, daily management may be in the hands of other faculty or the department's secretary. Policy questions, however, are the chair's responsibility. While students may not be able to perform more than the most routine of tasks given that they are available intermittently, nonetheless it is important to give them the sense that their work is important to the smooth operation of the department. That means taking time to explain the importance of the routines they are asked to maintain.

Technical staff are critical to any department that has laboratories or studios. Although these persons may not enjoy faculty status, the effectiveness of their support can be critical to the work of the faculty. Anyone provisioning a chemistry stockroom must have a good working knowledge of the material handling and the safety precautions that need to be taken. Purchasing and storing materials is an important part of those responsibilities, and the safety of students and faculty is affected by the competence of such people. Television and radio stations require technical personnel who are critical to the functioning of media programs. Art and photography studios are filled with potentially hazardous materials. Personnel managing those areas are important members of the academic team, even if they lack academic status. Theater departments may have technical staff working with set production and stage maintenance.

The bottom line is that departments are composed of more than tenure-track faculty. The faculty itself is a complex body, and its work takes place in a human context that includes students and staff members. It is important that all be recognized as components of the department's life. The chair has the ability to make sure that all understand that they are important and respected contributors to the life of the department.

Administrators and Other University or College Personnel. Another component of a chair's human universe are other institutional personnel. It is worth the time to make a rough list of all the people you may need to call on to accomplish the work of the department. The dean will probably be at the top of that list. That is the person to whom most chairs report, although in large universities an associate dean could be assigned to coordinate the work of a set of conceptually related departments. There is an unfortunate ethos prevalent in many institutions that posits that the interests of the administration (represented at the department level by the dean) and the interests of the faculty are at odds. This will be the case on some occasions, but if this is the paradigm for interaction between chairs and deans, neither party is going to succeed, and they will probably endure a good deal of misery as they attempt to work together.

Determine what the governing attitude is in your institution, for it will affect your interactions with the dean, regardless of your stance on the matter. If the relationship is defined as confrontational and you wish to change that dynamic, you will need to work consistently and persistently to make any change. The dean may well be caught in an adversarial paradigm. If the governing attitude is one of teamwork between chairs and deans, your task will be to master that art as practiced by your colleagues as quickly as possible.

A good place to begin work with the dean is to ask for an hour's appointment to review the dean's expectations of you and for you to lay out your goals as chair. This should be done as soon as possible after your formal appointment. In fact, it is possible that before you accept the responsibility of leading your department, you may wish to review your goals and plans, particularly if your success is in any measure dependent on support from the dean. Be sure to gain as much clarity as possible about the dean's expectations. One of the more astonishing bits of anecdotal data from department chairs in the ACE department chair workshops is the rarity of any conversation between chairs and deans about their mutual expectations.

Whether you have contact as a chair with personnel above the dean will be largely governed by institutional practice. In some institutions, the provost meets occasionally with the chairs. Depending on the size of the institution, presidents may seek occasional contact with department chairs. These contacts are often ceremonial in nature. The important point to keep in mind is that at no time should you ignore the organizational chart and seek solutions to problems from those to whom your dean reports. This will not endear you to the dean any more than you would be pleased to have any of your faculty go to the dean to solve problems that are in your domain.

There is a broad range of individuals at the institution to whom you may well need to turn for help. One way to begin identifying these important people is to work with the department secretary to map out the sorts of issues that come up during a given year that either of you may need to handle—for example:

- Questions about purchasing or repairing equipment
- Visa or other crises with foreign student majors or advisees

- Maintenance of office and teaching space
- Health, safety, and security problems
- Hiring needs for positions ranging from faculty to student aides
- New technology requiring you to ensure the availability of instruction and support
- Course scheduling
- Adjusting room locations to accommodate enrollment
- Managing physical facilities
- Student counseling issues
- Student records (grades, requirements, graduation procedures)
- Curriculum planning
- Catalogue development

You may be the recipient of requests from offices seeking the department's assistance. Admissions may have prospective students they wish to have visit classes and facilities. The provost or president may need reports for board meetings. Cognate departments may seek you out to propose collaboration or to request different scheduling for support courses. Parents or alumni may drop by for visits.

If you began the inventory looking at the issues that may come your way, the next step is to describe the challenges you might face and identify those to whom you would turn to solve a given problem. That will give you a "visiting" list. Although you will undoubtedly face totally unexpected situations that will demand solutions on the spot, crises will be less difficult if you already know the players with whom you need to work.

For example, a call to the physical plant office to repair a sudden leak can be more effective if you can address people by name. To follow up on that example, if you know who takes the calls, how calls are processed and triaged, and the possible repair personnel, you will stand a better chance of getting help. In addition, if you understand the procedures used in these situations, you can be less anxious about whether the request will be taken care of. Once the leak has been repaired, thank people, starting with the receptionist who took the call.

For each of the issues listed that may affect you and your department, try a similar exercise, describing potential problems and then setting up a visit to the appropriate unit. At some of the visits, you may want some instructional assistance. Budget management is an example. If you are not familiar with budget procedures, use your visit to learn the basics. Other visits will have as their objective simply knowing whom you might need to talk to when you need help solving a problem. Learn as much as you can about the procedures in a given office so that you can deliver your request with some sense of the context and an understanding of the constraints others will face in helping you.

Once a request has been filled, say thank-you. This does not need to be an elaborate ritual, but it should not be forgotten. A thank-you note for supplying the chalk you requested is goodwill in your account for your next request. A quick e-mail or telephone message or word in passing will be sufficient to indicate that you recognize and appreciate what was done. The same can be said for routine work. There is no harm in telling the housekeeping staff that you appreciate how well they clean the department's classrooms. Negative feedback can be appropriate too. But it is important to deliver that in a manner that does not imply that you are charging someone with incompetence. If you really do think work is substandard, address that complaint to the person's supervisor.

Community People. Another set of people to cultivate purposefully are individuals and organizations within the community. Many disciplines have introduced community internships or service projects into their curricula. If your department is one of them, you will need to follow up on established contacts, letting people and organizations know that you are the new chair. Before making such a visit, it would be wise to review the department's experience with placements. Are there aspects you and the department think need to be changed? Is further development of a particular program desirable? Is cooperation between the department, the placement, and the students smooth? If not, how might you improve the interactions? Are new placements needed? Where can you begin to cultivate broader contacts within the community?

One point to keep in mind is that you do not want to present the department as perpetual beggars for favors. Look for ways that agencies and individuals furnishing internships or service-learning opportunities can see the results on campus. If students are required to give public briefing on their experiences, it is desirable to invite the community contributors to see the effect of their support on your students.

Graduates, Parents, and Friends. Another important group that chairs should cultivate are the department's graduates, parents, and friends. Although a chair cannot expect to become a full-time development officer, the department collectively can do a great deal to maintain contact with graduates. What a chair does need to do is review the department's system for keeping in touch with graduates, and if no system exists, see to it that one is organized. A favorite strategy is a departmental newsletter. Someone does need to take responsibility for maintaining such a publication, but it is a task that can be shared with majors and executed by work study students. Furthermore, every faculty member can contribute by sharing alumni news when they receive such communications. The department secretary can add to the news gathering by filing a note whenever an alum drops by the office for a visit.

The same medium used to keep graduates informed about the department's activities can be extended to parents and friends. The appropriateness of involving parents will vary according to the kind of institution and the kinds of students enrolled. Liberal arts colleges enrolling traditionally aged students will cultivate parent contacts. Colleges or universities serving mostly independent adult students are unlikely to find parent contacts appropriate.

Nor should friends be forgotten. They can range from retired faculty, to faculty widows and widowers, to retired long-term employees, to individuals who have taken an interest in the department's activities for whatever reason. They can include important donors who may have contributed in a substantial way to the department. It is important not to forget such supporters after their gift is received and absorbed. Such people need to be kept abreast of departmental development. Then there are all the community contacts the department has developed through student internships and service-learning opportunities.

The point to remember is that people thrive on individual attention. Look for ways that the department can manifest that attention. You may be surprised at the rewards that can be reaped through human courtesies.

Know Your Institution's Procedures

Another vital category of knowledge that a new chair should cultivate is a sound knowledge of institutional procedures. Some are set out in handbooks and policy statements. Others are embedded in institutional traditions and practices. A good starting point that both chairs and deans usually bypass is an understanding of the job of chair. If your institution has a handbook expressly for chairs, it typically contains specifics on the process of choosing the chair, task expectations, and an indication of whether chairs are evaluated. If there is no handbook, then it is a wise step to clarify to whom you are responsible. If the choice of chair is based entirely on departmental choice, then it is your colleagues with whom you need to hold a conversation on their expectations of you. In turn, you need to make clear to them your goals, how you plan to proceed with departmental governance, and what limitations you need to set around your duties.

Current practice, however, is likely to involve the dean. That involvement may range from rubber stamp approval to active participation or even exclusive privilege of choice. Whatever the role of the dean is in the process of choosing a chair, no chair can operate successfully without establishing a good working relationship with this person. Hence, it is wise even before accepting the assignment, and certainly immediately after accepting it, to make an appointment with the dean to review mutual expectations. If the institution has a formal handbook for department chairs, review it before this appointment, bring it with you, and discuss what you see as critical sections of the document. The goal is to clarify that both of you are working with the same assumptions and interpretations. This introductory appointment is also a good moment to brief the dean on your view of the department, its current issues, and your work goals at least for the academic year. Ascertain how the dean would like to work with you. Should you set up routine appointments, and if so at what intervals? How does the dean work with his or her secretary or administrative assistant? Does the dean expect you to brief that person on the details of the appointment? In cases of emergency, can the dean's office staff contact the dean promptly even when he or she is out of town? Is there a regular meeting of chairs called by the dean? If so, what contributions are expected from you?

Even if there is no handbook specifically addressed to department chairs, you can anticipate that your institution does have a faculty handbook. It contains the procedures that govern faculty employment, the conduct of searches, standards for performance review, and procedures governing retention, promotion, and tenure. You must understand the employment procedures of the institution thoroughly. Legal entanglements are most likely to surface around employment issues, and those conflicts usually involve accusations of a failure to observe institutionally promulgated procedures. Courts avoid making rulings about the wisdom of institutional policy. They do review prescribed procedures, and when they are violated by any representative of the institution, it is the complainant who will win. Never forget that you are not just a faculty member. When you participate in employment reviews, you speak as a representative of the institution. If you compromise the institution's governance standards, you compromise your position with the institution and may implicate the institution in ways that are ultimately very costly. If you believe that institutional policy is faulty, you need to address that through the appropriate governance body. When you act as the institution's representative, you must follow the prescribed procedures as precisely as possible.

On unionized campuses, your responsibilities for employment procedures will be governed by the union contract. Although your involvement may be much more circumscribed, grievance procedures may involve you in employment conflict. Unless you have been a union officer and gained expertise in the contract system and grievance procedures, it is a good idea to confer with appropriate institutional officers to make sure you know what you can and cannot do.

Other important matters you need to know about are the institution's sexual harassment policies and the expectations concerning annual review. These may be described in the faculty handbook, or they may appear as stand-alone policy documents. Sexual harassment may involve student-to-student problems, student-faculty conflict, intrafaculty complaints, and staff-faculty problems. Two things need to be kept in mind. First, problems caught in their earliest phase can often be solved through informal intervention. Second, never belittle or dismiss a complaint of sexual harassment. Vigilance is a good place to start. For example, if some faculty members entertain students at home, be sure to advise them that they should never permit themselves to be put in a position of having a student as solo visitor in their home. Those visits should take place at the campus office, and if the faculty member has any concern about the student's possible conduct, a good practice is to leave the office door open. If you perceive staff, faculty, or students teasing in a sexually explicit fashion, remind them that what is a joke to them may be anything from bad taste to highly offensive to their interlocutor, and this could be perceived as creating a hostile environment. Should anyone complain to you about sexually offensive or harassing conduct, follow the institution's procedures promptly. Never assume that having ventilated the issue, the complainant has solved the problem.

Annual reviews are an important chair responsibility. The need for such meetings is probably included in the faculty handbook. As chair, you need to know when these formal interviews should be conducted and what documentation needs to be prepared before or after such a meeting. It is usual for the chair to write a summary of these conversations. If that is done, a copy should go to the reviewee, who should read and sign indicating that he or she has read the document. A reviewee who disagrees with the judgments or statements should append a separate note. All such documentation needs to become part of the person's personnel file, available for retention, tenure, and promotion reviews.

The writing of those summaries can be a challenging task for any chair. It is vital that the statements be factual. It is also vital that what is written is consistent with what is exchanged verbally. If you have been reluctant to give negative feedback in the face-to-face meeting, you will be sowing immediate trouble by making negative statements in the written summary. Expect the reviewee to challenge you. Even worse is to deliver negative messages orally (in the hope that the reviewee will correct the problems you have identified) and then fail to mention these same matters in the written summary. If you do so and later in a tenure decision dredge up the negative comments you have delivered orally, you cannot expect personnel committees or deans (or lawyers) to uphold your judgments if they diverge from the written summaries. You could, in fact, be letting the institution in for a long, nasty, and expensive lawsuit.

There are other important matters that may or may not find their way into print. The institutional calendar is an example. Catalogues specify when classes begin and end, when the exam periods are scheduled, and when graduation will take place, but other deadlines may not be easy to identify. The dean's office may circulate a list of critical dates. If that is not the case, make sure to construct a calendar for yourself. This is an area where a department secretary with any longevity can be invaluable. Among the most important of those dates are those relating to personnel decisions. This will necessitate an inventory of various reviews, including annual reviews, retention deadlines, tenure review deadlines, and posttenure review schedules. In the case of tenure reviews, you need a grasp of the timetable for all the steps in the procedure, not just those that require action.

Other deadlines important to conducting the department's business are the timing for proposing new courses and filing the schedule for classes. Catalogue deadlines are also important. In order for the department to fulfill its responsibilities to students, you need to know the due dates for filing grades, the schedule for class registration, dates for dropping classes, and timetables for filing graduation requirements. Your task in regard to these items is to be sure that all department members are informed and that you arrange the agendas of faculty meetings to handle required business to meet institutional schedules.

In creating your deadline calendar, it is helpful to do two things. Although you must record the date when actions must be fulfilled, you also need lead time in order to meet various deadlines. This is another place where using your secretary as a team member can relieve you of a lot of detail work. For example, once you have listed the people you need to meet for annual review purposes and know the date for completion, you can delegate the task of scheduling those interviews to your secretary. Discuss with this person how many interviews you can handle in a day or week, and indicate how long each visit should be. Let the secretary take over from there, knowing that all the visits will be completed by the final date.

Once you have gone over the review procedures with faculty being considered for tenure and promotion, you can delegate the task of reminding faculty that they need to file particular documentation by specific dates. The same is true for due dates for curriculum revision, catalogue copy, and student grades.

The most fluid area of the calendar are those dates pertaining to college and university traditions. In private liberal arts colleges, events such as founder's day are important. In large universities, the football schedule may frame the social activities of the campus. There may be significant campuswide conferences or lectures as well as social and cultural events. Weekends may be set aside for visits from prospective students, parents' day, student festivals, and, of course, graduation. Although you will not attend all such events, you do need to be aware of their existence. Furthermore, you may wish to review some of these with the department and determine collectively when and where the department needs to be represented. Keep in mind that each of these activities is important to someone. The question then becomes whether you as chair or the department as an entity needs to support a given group and its activity.

Know Your Institution's Mission and Problems

In becoming a chair, you need to make two important adjustments in focus. You no longer just teach classes, advise students, and engage in scholarly activities. You are now responsible for and answerable to faculty colleagues. You have become the leader of a collective enterprise. The other change in your position is that as a chair, you have become part of the institution's leadership team. This shift from individual to leader within the department requires you to think about the collective good of the department and discipline. Your shift from faculty member to the leader of that entity moves you into an institutional framework in which you need to be aware of the other departments and chairs. Even if you do not move to the level of coordination and active collaboration with other chairs, you will have little success in advancing your department if you proceed oblivious to the needs, interests, and goals of your colleagues. You will also make little headway with your dean if you remain ignorant of the pressures and demands across the institution. You can even make your department look foolish if you persist in pursuing a departmental mission that is contrary to that of the institution.

Skills

It should be no surprise that as a chair, you may need to cultivate new skills. Three areas are particularly important: the ability to work with groups, the art of decision making, and management of people and resources.

Working with Groups. Twenty or thirty years ago, it was possible to see the work of department chairs as focused primarily on supporting the career development of individual faculty. Although that remains important, there is a concurrent need to make departments successful as collaborative, corporate bodies. This need places a premium on the ability to help groups work successfully together and means that chairs need to become ethnographers. Some people seem to have that as an innate skill. Others need to develop that skill consciously. Observing and analyzing department meetings is a good place to start this educational process. Assuming you have been a department member for some time, think systematically about past meetings and perhaps review the minutes. Are there patterns to the items discussed? Are they generally routine and informational, or does the department periodically review its mission and its success? Do they discuss curriculum as a departmental matter or courses as individual enterprises? Do they ever talk about pedagogy or observe each other's classes? Do they discuss the extent of their students' successes? Who speaks in department meetings? Do tenured faculty dominate all discussion and impose decisions? Who comes to department meetings? Who is absent? Do you judge your department to be collectively successful? Are any practices in need of change? If the answer is yes to the last question, you as chair must initiate that process.

Decision Making. The obligation to make decisions certainly is part of a chair's territory. Decisions you make as a chair are much more fraught than those you made as an individual faculty member. For one thing, the number of people potentially affected by these decisions has multiplied exponentially. Furthermore, the most important of your constituents, faculty colleagues, will have no compunction about telling you exactly what they think of your choices, especially if they do not like them. You also may find yourself in a "damned if you do and damned if you don't" situation. Although your colleagues will be content to have you take over all sorts of routine tasks, a decision that anyone sees as impinging on his or her self-interest potentially will precipitate an immediate response. The trouble comes when you have difficulty in differentiating the decisions your colleagues will see as routine from those in which they will demand a voice. In some instances, the divide will not be obvious. You can provide yourself some cover by routinely asking, “When I make this decision, who am I possibly affecting?” That self-inquiry may reveal a disconcerting network of connected interests. But it is better to see that before you take decisive steps rather than suffer later from lack of forethought.

Another category to which you will want to remain alert is that where you could make the decision, but for it to be effective, you need a buy-in from other constituencies. When this is the case, take the time to educate those who could derail a perfectly sound decision. Similarly, you may want to build a sense of responsibility in your department, and one way to do that is to include faculty in the decision-making process even for some items you could dispose of yourself quickly and effectively.

Certainly any decision you expect will precipitate significant conflict needs to be approached by involving all the key parties. This will slow action, but in the long run, it will produce more effective results than avoiding conflict in the short term.

Budget and Resource Management. With a trend toward increasing decentralization, especially in larger institutions, department chairs are taking on far more responsibility for budgeting and resource management than would have been true twenty to thirty years ago. The extent of budget responsibility has expanded for many departments. At one time, departments were not given any control over salary monies. Today, many chairs are handed an annual budget for hiring part-time faculty. It becomes the chair’s job to stretch that resource over the entire academic year. Barring a sudden change of circumstance, a chair should be reluctant to approach the dean with a request for supplemental funds. The sum allocated presumably is a reflection of the chair’s initial estimate for part-time needs. Faulty estimates can only deplete the chair’s reputation for competence.

Monitoring the budget is an important responsibility. The institution may still provide you with printed budgets, or you may be asked to do all budget management with electronic records. Whatever the system used, be sure you understand the organization of the budget. If you do not, find someone in the finance office who can explain how to read the budget reports. If you are supervising expenditures electronically, be sure to put a note on your schedule regularly so that you do not forget to monitor expenditures.

You also need to establish some understanding of your department’s expenditure rhythm. Some departments spend a similar amount each month, usually for items like photocopying. Other departments, such as laboratory departments, may have large expenditures within the first month of a semester. There is no need to be concerned about the dramatic differences in the rate of expenditure in your department. What you do want to understand is the nature of the pattern to see if there were specific budgetary trouble spots.

Managing physical resources also may fall to the chair. This is inevitable in some disciplines such as the sciences, the arts, psychology, computer sciences, and engineering. The responsibility can encompass whole buildings and equipment. It can easily involve you in issues of physical safety. This is an area in which there is a major lack of written material addressed to chairs, making the need for self-education particularly imperative. Learn as much as you can from your predecessor and colleagues at other institutions. Get to know the staff in the physical plant department. Know the institution's safety procedures in case you are faced with spilled chemicals, injuries, or fires. If you are responsible for an entire building, you may find a need for major renovations. In that case, you need to work with the dean and get authorization to work with the institution's development office. You may need to learn about the method for launching and funding capital improvements.

Educate Yourself as a Chair

As long as you are a chair, keep yourself informed about your institution and its challenges as well as the community and how its status may affect your institution and perhaps even your department. Those needs can be met by maintaining campus networks and reading the local newspaper.

Also keep abreast of national trends and issues. Among the publications relevant to any chair's work are the *Chronicle of Higher Education; Change,* the magazine of the American Association of Higher Education; the newsletter *The Department Chair,* which is addressed specifically to chairs; *Academic Leader,* which publishes articles of general administrative interest; and *Perspective,* which specializes in legal questions.

If possible, attend national meetings relevant to chairs. Among the options are the American Council on Education's three annual national workshops for department chairs and deans and the Council of Independent Colleges' regional sessions for department chairs. Some disciplinary associations also hold workshops for department chairs. Consider attending a meeting sponsored by the American Association of Higher Education, which focuses its work on the teaching responsibility of faculty, issues of technology development, and the work world of faculty.

Personal Issues

Having looked in some detail at the work of a department chair, it is appropriate to look at yourself and your interest in taking on this complex work. Take the time to ascertain your motivation. Chairs are more successful if they become chairs for intrinsic interests that include the opportunity to make a difference and the excitement of taking on a new challenge. Chairs who take the job for extrinsic reasons—their colleagues were insistent; the dean appointed them; the concept of prestige, course relief, and perhaps a bit more pay were compelling—are likely not to like the job and drop it as soon as feasible. Being honest with yourself is important. The task is too burdensome to take for the wrong reasons.

If you do go forward, do not forget to take care of yourself. The person who directs all attention and energy toward others is in high danger of burnout and, worse, failure. How you care for yourself will depend on your interests. Is physical exercise important to your sense of balance? If so, be sure to reserve time several times a week, and preferably daily, for that activity. Create "sacred time." This may be time spent at home one day a week in order to plan classes, read professionally, continue your research, or engage in whatever else you need for intellectual sustenance. Or your sacred time may be spent at the office with the door closed. Your secretary can be invaluable in helping you maintain that time. You may also need to educate your colleagues to understand that you too are a professional and scholar and not just the departmental problem solver.

Finally, do not forget to take vacations. Your department will muddle through without your presence, and you will return refreshed, renewed, and eager to tackle the daily challenges of leading your department.

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