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The DEPARTMENT CHAIR

A RESOURCE FOR ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATORS

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Assessment: How to Survive It and Benefit from It

ROBERT A. BLUMENTHAL

Assessment of student learning outcomes is something with which every chair must grapple. Colleges and universities are under increasing pressure from the various regional accrediting agencies to demonstrate that students are, in fact, learning what we claim they are learning. This requires that each degree program identify a set of desired outcomes, design a means of assessing each outcome, determine a desired standard of achievement, report the results of the assessment, and interpret the results.

All too often, faculty see this exercise as just another hoop through which to jump in order to satisfy the requirements of accreditation. As a result, it becomes a mindless activity for the purpose of satisfying what are felt to be arbitrary bureaucratic regulations. This then becomes an unfortunate waste of time and energy on the part of those faculty members who were unlucky enough to have been asked by the chair to serve on the department's assessment committee. Everyone concerned feels put out, and the department has derived no benefit from the enterprise.

It doesn't have to be this way. It is essential that a department give some thought as to how it might benefit from an assessment strategy. Regional accrediting agencies generally allow a great deal of flexibility with regard to assessment strategies and their implementation. Departments must take advantage of this flexibility to devise assessment mechanisms that will truly enable them to obtain a better understanding of their degree programs and ways to improve them.

In my department, we have struggled with this for several years, and we have moved from a climate of compliance for the sake of satisfying institutional and accreditation regulations to a genuine appreciation of the value of an assessment mechanism that has been constructed for the purpose of program improvement. This article discusses that evolution. The aim is to provide guidance to department chairs on how to meet some of the challenges associated with assessment and to achieve faculty buy-in, as well as to offer some suggestions for constructing and implementing a meaningful assessment plan.

My department offers one degree program, the BS in mathematics. For this program we have a mission statement, a set of goals that speak to the mission, and various student learning outcomes that address these goals. It is these learning outcomes that are the focus of the assessment of our major program. For example, we feel it is important that our students acquire appropriate communication skills, and so one of our learning outcomes is: *The student will communicate mathematical ideas with clarity and coherence through both writing and speaking*. Our assessment task is then to determine if our students are in fact achieving this outcome as well as the other learning outcomes we have identified for our major program.

A few years ago, we addressed an issue that had become increasingly apparent to us during several cycles of the assessment of our student learning outcomes. Namely, our assessment efforts were needlessly complicated and not

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as useful as they might be due to the fact that our major program had ten learning outcomes, which was far too many. Further exacerbating this matter was the fact that some of these learning outcomes were essentially not measurable, and so there was no way to determine if the outcome had been met. After a careful review by our department's assessment committee and in consultation with the faculty, we revised the learning outcomes to focus on what we consider to be four essential outcomes, all of which are measurable. This was a valuable exercise that involved careful consideration by the faculty of the outcomes they consider essential to our program. The sense of ownership of the outcomes that resulted from this led the faculty to be much more interested in determining if we are in fact meeting those outcomes. This, in turn, has led to greater faculty buy-in with regard to our annual assessment process.

In order to construct a coherent and useful assessment process, a department must come together to identify a set of learning outcomes that it deems essential to the program, that are measurable, and that are relatively small in number (my suggestion is three to five). For each outcome, the department must devise a means of assessing that outcome. For example, with regard to the communication learning outcome stated earlier, we chose a course that is required of all of our majors and embedded some problems into the final exam on which students will be evaluated not only for the correctness of their solutions but also for the clarity of their mathematical writing. A 0–4 scaled rubric was developed that is used by the department's assessment committee to assess the quality of this written work. For the speaking portion of the outcome, students are required to present the results of their senior research papers at our annual department student conference. The assessment committee evaluates the quality of these oral presentations using a 0–4 scaled rubric created for this purpose.

Once a means of assessment has been determined, the next step is to give some thought to the level of achievement the department desires. For example, in the case of the communication outcome, the assessment committee determined that the desired standard of achievement is that at least 75% of the written solutions to the embedded problems will be rated 3 or higher. For the evaluation of the presentations, the desired standard is that at least 75% of the students' oral presentations will be rated 3 or higher. The committee felt that in each case this level of achievement would indicate that a clear majority of the students are meeting expectations.

Assessment of student learning outcomes is something with which every chair must grapple.

Once the data are collected and analyzed, the committee will easily be able to determine if the results indicate that the outcome was met. Either way, the next step in the process is the crucial one—the interpretation of the results. This is important for the purpose of institutional compliance with the requirements of the regional accrediting agencies, but even more so this step enables a department to gain a better understanding of the program and to develop meaningful strategies for its improvement. In assessment parlance, this is known as "closing the loop." The department needs to analyze the data and undertake a consideration of which program changes or modifications will be made as a result of the analysis of the assessment data. The department might determine that no changes are needed, but this determination will have resulted from an intentional process as opposed to just letting things go on as they have without examination.

The interpretation of the results is not the sole province of our assessment committee. We bring the whole department together to analyze and discuss the assessment data. These conversations have proved to be very fruitful, and out of them have come some useful ideas and strategies for improving our program. This has led to a high degree of faculty buy-in to our assessment efforts and to the use of assessment data as the primary driver of curricular change.

While this approach has greatly assisted our assessment efforts, there is still work to be done. Although each annual assessment report gives us meaningful information about our major program, we feel that each one represents a kind of isolated snapshot and that what is lacking is a sense of continuity from one year to the next. The reports do not allow for easy and natural comparisons from year to year. We want our assessment efforts to take a broader view that will allow us to monitor various important aspects of our program over time. As a result, our most recent assessment plan was constructed in such a way as to lay the groundwork for a more consistent approach to annual assessment with the aim of being able to track progress over an extended period. This approach will focus on a small set of key courses in the major and on the means of assessment that are consistent from year to year to enable us to track progress over a multiyear period. For each student learning outcome, the plan will provide annually a set of bullet points regarding possible future action based on the results of the assessment of that outcome. Subsequent assessment reports will address the effect of any such changes that were made.

There are many ways to construct an assessment mechanism from which a department can derive useful information about its program. No two departments are alike, and what works for one may not work for another. Here are some guiding

questions, based on an assessment evaluation rubric we use at Georgia College, that may be helpful to chairs as they work with their faculty to develop a system for annual assessment of student learning outcomes:

- Do the learning outcomes describe the knowledge, skills, and dispositions the department wishes the students to acquire?
- Is the number of outcomes relatively small?
- Are all of the outcomes measureable?
- Has the means of assessing each outcome been clearly described?
- Has a desired level of achievement been identified for each outcome?
- Does the assessment report "close the loop"? Does it provide evidence that assessment has led to program improvement?

It is hoped that a careful consideration of these questions will help departments produce assessment mechanisms that will facilitate continuous program improvement based on the annual analysis of data. It is important to involve the faculty in key stages of the process, including:

- The identification of the program's student learning outcomes
- The determination of the desired standard of achievement
- The analysis of the assessment data
- The use of this data in formulating and implementing program modifications
- The analysis of subsequent data to determine whether the program changes have been effective

This process will help remove some of the negative associations that faculty have regarding assessment. Instead, faculty will come to appreciate that the assessment of student learning outcomes is an indispensable part of any academic program and that a well-constructed assessment plan provides an excellent faculty-driven mechanism for sustained and continuous program improvement. ▲

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Mindful Leadership Development: Investing in the Academy

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While universities need leaders capable of initiating and sustaining change, few institutions provide the requisite training and development programs that equip academic administrators to effectively lead departments. According to Gmelch (2013), only 3% of higher education institutions offer formal leadership training. Faculty are often placed into leadership positions after spending years focused on their teaching, research, and service responsibilities, leaving little opportunity to cultivate the leadership and management skills needed for academic administration.

Rather than taking a hit-or-miss approach and leaving success to chance, we offer a comprehensive approach to leadership development that addresses the needs of faculty across the university. Under the auspices of the Office for Faculty Success and with support from the provost's office, the programs described here provide academic leaders, including chairs, deans, and senior administrators, with the resources and support needed to be successful in their complex roles at the University of North Texas (UNT).

Faculty Leadership Fellows

The Leadership Fellows program targets individuals who have shown interest in or talent for academic leadership. The overarching goal is to develop a cadre of leaders who are capable of catalyzing and sustaining change both at and beyond the university. Participating fellows include current university leaders who are relatively new in their roles, such as the department chair, associate chair, assistant chair, and assistant dean, as well as faculty who have been identified by their deans as having leadership potential. Candidates for the program must be nominated by their dean, with the support of the faculty member's home department. Selection of faculty fellows is coordinated centrally and is based on a record of scholarship, significant university service, and/or strong leadership potential.

The program supports both individual and organizational skill building where fellows meet monthly with the vice provost for faculty. Specific activities include training workshops, executive coaching, book discussions, and opportunities for self-reflection. Faculty fellows engage in better understanding of their personal strengths and how these relate to their leadership styles. Fellows also meet with key university leaders, including the president and provost, to gain insight into strategic planning and budget priorities. Perhaps one of the most positive outcomes is the opportunity for fellows to visit one another's departments to learn about the successes and challenges that exist across campus. With the demanding schedules of many chairs, they may never leave their department home. This exposure promotes leaders who can work toward consensus and compromise as well as collaboration. As a cohort, fellows also attend the Academic Chairpersons Conference, where they can select sessions to aid them in further development as leaders.

The program has resulted in leaders with increased self-awareness and confi-

dence, broader systems thinking, relationship building skills, and interdisciplinary collaborations, as well as the ability to address many of the day-to-day and longer-term challenges that university leaders encounter. The intimate nature of the program, with seven to ten participating faculty members per year, provides a long-lasting group of colleagues to consult and collaborate with well into the future.

Institutional Training

The Chair Academy is offered year round, providing a venue for chairs to explore contemporary issues and best practices through engagement and collaborative dialogue. The overarching goal of the academy is to accelerate the development of leadership. The academy meets monthly throughout the calendar year and hosts a retreat at the beginning of each academic year. Examples of programming include best practices in evaluating teaching effectiveness, conflict resolution, legal issues for chairs, tips for using institutional data, and effective scheduling.

Academic Leadership Workshops reach a larger cohort than the Chair Academy, including deans, associate deans, department chairs, and vice provosts. Half-day workshops, held two to five times yearly, focus on critical issues affecting the institution across all levels of administration. The overarching goals are to communicate a common understanding so that information is delivered and received in the same manner. Topics have included budgeting, working with colleagues, and faculty evaluation; often, external speakers are brought to campus for these events.

Administrative Internships

UNT is further supportive of comprehensive leadership training experiences, placing several faculty in internship roles in the provost's office. Recently, faculty interns have worked with senior administrators on topics including policy development, data-driven assessment of faculty and programs, and a broad range of subjects targeting faculty development and recognition. The internships provide faculty with a greater perspective on the roles of senior leadership at the university, strategic planning, decision-making processes, management, and leadership at the helm of the university, which requires careful balance between informed decision making and leading by consensus. Recent interns have been engaged in the Provost's Council, a regular meeting of the university's senior leadership on the academic side, including all deans and vice provosts, and in university-wide leadership programs for department chairs and upper administration. The interns are provided with valuable advice and career and leadership development consultation by upper administration, with opportunities to gain one-on-one advice from the provost and vice provosts. Several previous administrative interns have successfully transitioned into permanent senior administrative roles at UNT.

An investment in leadership is critical to the success and future of the academy.

Off-Campus Opportunities

The UNT president, provost, and vice provost for faculty have supported faculty leadership development in many ways. They have a rich legacy of supporting faculty participation in Leadership Texas, the foremost leadership training program in Texas. This program targets a broad spectrum of women leaders for opportunities to advance leadership skills and engage with top women leaders across the state in industry, academia, and government to learn from one another. The program has facilitated long-lasting leadership networks, with some of our UNT leaders maintaining leadership networks going on twenty years. More than twenty faculty members have participated in this program. UNT has a Leadership Texas alumni group, which meets occasionally to discuss how the program continues to influence them in their careers. Other opportunities include support for faculty to participate in the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education and the ACE Fellows Program. Both have provided excellent leadership training specific to critical management and strategic decisions in academia. Beyond these institutional programs, leaders are supported through mentoring networks and executive coaching.

Strategic Succession Planning

Although leadership training is critical to the development of academic leadership, one of the most important steps as a leader is succession planning. It is important to the university, as well as to the department, college, or other unit. Because future leadership often comes from within a department, chairs should help to preserve their own legacy by identifying potential leaders via observation, nomination, and self-selection. Possible strategies for engaging these future leaders are to provide them with increasing lines of responsibility for projects that have real value and holding regular one-on-one mentoring meetings to consult on projects, strategies, planning, and decision making. Other important steps as a leader are being available to prospective chairs in their future leadership opportunities as an advisor and sounding board, staying out of their way, and avoiding public criticism in order to help ensure their success and the success of the academic unit, thus preserving their own leadership legacy.

Conclusion

An investment in leadership is critical to the success and future of the academy. The strategies discussed here have proven effective at UNT, a large student-centered public research university. Depending on the complexity of the institution and resource

availability, departments should consider adapting these formal and informal programs to meet their unique needs. Without question, developing future leaders requires a strong commitment in terms of preparatory experiences and resource allocation. Regardless of experience level, administrative leaders must be mindful of their own development and that of the next generation of leaders in their unit. ▲

This article is based on a presentation at the 32nd Annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 4–6, 2015, Austin, Texas.

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Trends and Issues for Chairs: An Eight-Year Study

ROBERT E. CIPRIANO AND RICHARD L. RICCARDI

We have been surveying chairs for the past eight years (2007–2014) in an effort to determine the challenges they face, the demonstrated competencies they indicate are needed for them to be effective, the characteristics of people serving in this unique leadership position, how satisfied they are, and those tasks that are pleasant or unpleasant. Following trends over a period of years allows us to inspect those items that remain fixed over time (e.g., an ability to communicate has been rated as the most important skill a chair needs throughout each year of the study) and those that have changed (e.g., departments are becoming larger). As we persist in exploring the distinctive roles that department chairs serve, we will continue to provide data to inform our colleagues and, we hope, to demystify the important components of chairing a department.

2007 to 2014

Over the eight years of this study, a total of 4,515 surveys were sent to chairs from across the country; 1,710 people responded, a 37.9% return rate. The respondents' characteristics that have remained consistent throughout the duration of the study follow:

- Most chairs have a doctoral degree.
- Respondents are employed at a public college or university.

> Stress associated with the job is becoming more of a challenge to chairs.

- Most hold the rank of full professor, although the number of chairs who are associate professors has crept up in recent years.
- Most are tenured; however, in three of the years more than 20% were not tenured, and the percentage of tenured chairs has generally trended downward over the years of the study.
- Most chairs serve an average of five years.
- Ninety-six percent of chairs have not been trained for or educated in the role.
- Most chairs (more than 83%) have not been educated in formal management training.
- Many chairs (greater than 44%) will go back on faculty when their term as chair ends, but others are considering a career in administration or retiring (almost 15%, respectively).
- Most chairs are either satisfied (54%) or very satisfied (28%) with being chair.
- The top four reasons people remain as chair has stayed the same throughout the study: (1) to make a difference, (2) to shape the department's direction, (3) career advancement, and (4) no one else will do it. The top two far outweigh any of the other options in the survey.

To summarize, the average respondent is a tenured full professor working in a public college or university who is satisfied in his or her role as chair, who took the job to make a difference, and who has not been trained or educated to serve in the chair role.

Essential Skills and Competencies

Chairs are in the most strategic position to know which skills and competencies they need to be effective. The following are the top eight skills that chairs stated were the most important:

1. Ability to communicate
2. Character/integrity
3. Leadership skills
4. Trustworthiness
5. Decision making
6. Interpersonal skills
7. Problem solving
8. Organizational ability

Skill numbers four through eight have swapped positions over the years of the study, and even the second and third skills have changed order a few times, but the skill of effective communication has consistently been the number one item each

year of the study. Another consistent, albeit intriguing, skill that has remained the least important throughout each year of the study is fundraising ability. One would think that in an era of shrinking budgets the ability to raise additional resources would be a needed competency.

Challenges of the Chair Role

Like any longitudinal research, the answers from our initial surveys prompted more questions, and we began to investigate not only the current status of department chairs but also the future hurdles they would encounter. Based on focus groups with chairs in 2010, we introduced questions concerning their challenges that year, and those questions have since remained a part of the survey. Chairs indicated that they face the following challenges, listed in priority order:

1. Dealing with noncollegial faculty
2. Lack of adequate resources
3. Excessive workload
4. Dealing with bureaucracy
5. Lack of time for individual research
6. Working with unmotivated faculty
7. Stress associated with the job

The first three challenges have remained at the top of this list, in the order presented, in the five years this topic has been addressed in the study. Dealing with bureaucracy has been rated as high as number two and as low as number five. Lack of time for individual research has changed places with dealing with bureaucracy on a few occasions. Working with unmotivated faculty has remained the sixth biggest challenge to chairs. Stress associated with the job is becoming more of a challenge to chairs. For example, it was rated as the eleventh most important challenge in 2013 and the sixth biggest concern in 2014. This trend will, logically, continue to grow in importance as we move forward in the years ahead.

Pleasant and Unpleasant Tasks

Chairs are required to perform a myriad of tasks. Some tasks are by their very nature pleasant, while others are unpleasant but still must be addressed.

Pleasant tasks. The following is a listing, in priority order, of those tasks that chairs deem to be pleasant:

1. Interpersonal communication tasks
2. Representing the department at professional meetings
3. Interacting with the administration on behalf of the department
4. Encouraging professional development of department faculty
5. Developing and initiating long-range department programs, plans, and goals
6. Recruiting new full-time faculty

All of these tasks were rated as pleasant by at least 74% of the 1,710 respondents. The two top rated tasks have remained steadfast throughout the study. Numbers three, four, and five have all been reported in the top five rated tasks, although they have changed positions somewhat. Recruiting new full-time faculty replaces retaining untenured faculty. This may have to do with the fact that fully 70% of college and university courses are taught by adjunct faculty. Perhaps chairs look at an ability to recruit a new full-time faculty member as a gift from above.

Unpleasant tasks. Ten tasks were reported as unpleasant by 43% or more of the chair respondents. This is not a surprise in view of the fact that more than 80% were either satisfied or very satisfied with their position. This finding is consistent with data from each of the eight years of this study. The following unpleasant tasks are listed in priority order:

1. Terminating part-time adjuncts
2. Terminating full-time faculty
3/4. Terminating nonteaching personnel
3/4. Maintaining morale and reducing conflict among faculty
5. Requesting additional resources from administration
6. Evaluating full-time faculty
7. Monitoring the department's budget
8. Evaluating nonfaculty personnel
9/10. Developing department budgets
9/10. Evaluating part-time adjuncts

To further quantify these tasks, a "pleasant factor" was determined for the 27 tasks, using a +1 for pleasant tasks and a –1 for unpleasant tasks, and then summing these values. The satisfaction by year with the calculated pleasant factor is shown in Table 1.

The "totally unsatisfied" category has only had one or two respondents in any given year, so the results from 2014 can be attributed to a data anomaly, but the results have normally revealed an unsurprising conclusion: Department chairs who enjoy the tasks they perform are significantly more satisfied than those who do not. But 2014 revealed a shift in the data, wherein chairs not satisfied had a slightly higher value than those who were satisfied. Furthermore, the values of those two categories, as well as those who were very satisfied, were relatively low compared to other years in the survey. This section of the survey will bear watching in the years to come. Is this a numerical blip on the ra-

Table 1. Satisfaction by Year, Calculated with a Pleasant Factor

Satisfaction	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Overall
Very Satisfied	6.77	7.61	9.10	7.47	10.52	7.38	8.77	5.15	*8.49*
Satisfied	3.95	1.99	5.86	4.01	4.65	5.28	5.05	2.04	*4.79*
Not Satisfied	–1.83	0.60	1.05	2.18	1.17	–0.36	–0.82	2.20	*0.61*
Totally Unsatisfied	–6.00		1.67	–6.50		0.00	0.00	7.00	*–0.55*

dar or a shift in attitudes, where chairs are not as pleased with the tasks they perform but are still satisfied with the overall job? Have the pressures of the job's requirements turned some chairs sour on the job itself, but with the opportunities to "make a difference" in the lives they touch continuing to outweigh these negatives?

Collegiality

Cipriano and Riccardi (2013) conducted a separate, national survey of chairs to begin to investigate the pervasiveness of incivility and lack of collegiality. One question that 528 chairs responded to was: "Have you ever had an uncivil or noncollegial faculty member in your department?" Eighty-eight chairs (16.7%) said no and 440 (83.3%) said yes. From 2010 to 2014, we have included the following question on the survey: "Should collegiality be the fourth criterion for tenure and personnel decisions?" We received a total of 573 responses to this question: 412 chairs agreed that collegiality should be the fourth criterion; 66 disagreed that collegiality should be a fourth criterion for tenure and personnel decisions. It is interesting to note that 95 people answered that they were not sure if collegiality should be used for personnel decisions. Each year of the study, more people responded in the affirmative to this question. The second most frequent response was that they were not sure, followed by chairs stating that they did not believe this was needed. The most common reason for answering "not sure" is the belief that collegiality is an ambiguous term. Cipriano and Buller (2012) developed a Collegiality Assessment Matrix that reflects the observable behaviors that are regarded as most highly related to the ways in which collegiality is demonstrated in an academic setting. Many colleges and universities in the United States, as well as Saudi Arabia, are currently using the matrix to determine an individual's collegial behavior.

Conclusion

In classical music, a fugue is a composition where a short melody or phrase (the subject) is introduced by one part and successively taken by others and developed by interweaving the parts. Throughout the eight years of this study, the "subject" of department chairs has consistently been to "make a difference" in every moment of every day, in every interaction with every person. And the fact that 96% of chairs can perform their collegial concertos without a single music lesson continues to make us shake our heads in disbelief. The countermelodies of larger departments, excessive workloads, and noncollegial colleagues have gained in strength, not to mention the bassoons (or is that buffoons?) of bureaucracy. These increasing challenges, in a concert hall filled with the tunes of "more with less" and "is a college degree worth it," make one wonder if department chairs will eventually be relegated to a different theme song: "The Sound of Silence." But the beauty of a fugue is that, regardless of all of the extraneous notes that develop throughout the composition, the theme is constant, prevalent, and even stronger at the end in the final recapitulation. Chairs have repeatedly overcome challenges as both the cornerstone of their departments and the linchpins of their universities. They not only shape their departments' direction, but they change the lives of their students and colleagues, and in many ways their efforts are both immeasurable and priceless. This is the song they sing every day. May it be a song that never ends. ▲

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The Challenges of Chairing Today

DOMENICK PINTO

The chair role has become increasingly managerial and administrative whereby we are now often intimately involved in strategic planning (department, college, and university), budgeting, fundraising, managing conflict, student retention, motivating and encouraging faculty to achieve academic excellence while maintaining scholarship and research, and leading change while maintaining our own standards of excellence in the classroom and in research. This article will emphasize three specific areas of great importance to chairs:

1. The ability to manage conflict.
2. The desire to become entrepreneurial and creative in undertaking new areas of study, new delivery systems, and, in many cases, new student populations.
3. The skill of managing time well.

Conflict Management

There are many areas from which conflict can arise: student dissatisfaction with a particular class, professor, or grade; faculty who disagree on fundamental department matters or who become too political; problems that arise within the administrative structure of the academy; and budget restrictions.

The following are all helpful tools to use in conflict management involving faculty:

- Be willing to listen to the faculty member.
- Avoid using the word *you*; try to use *we* instead.
- Ensure that the faculty member understands the "department's" position.

• Make certain that you understand the faculty member's position.
• Help resolve the issue; compromise may be needed.
• Be firm and strong if needed without showing anger.
• Always show respect to your fellow colleagues.

The Entrepreneurial Chair

Declining student populations have forced universities to significantly increase their "base." Recruiting international and nontraditional students, adding nontraditional courses of study, and exploring new delivery methods are all part of the new "entrepreneurial" chair position. Embracing an entrepreneurial role as chair is vital. If a program has low enrollment or is a drain on the financial health of the institution it may not survive. In order to be a "player" in the contention for resources you must be on the lookout for new, innovative courses, majors, minors, certificate programs, or graduate programs that will be beneficial to students as well as financially successful.

The following strategies will help you to develop an entrepreneurial mind-set:

• Know your resources or potential resources.
• Discuss potential new programs or additions to your current programs with your senior faculty and dean before you begin the planning process.
• Once you have decided to pursue a new program, acclimate admissions, recruiting, and senior management to the idea.
• Pitch the idea to existing students and conduct a market analysis.
• Commit to the idea and move forward, but remember that it may not necessarily be a success.

Time Management

Not everyone inherently possesses the ability to manage their time well, and this can be one of the most challenging parts of the complicated chair role. The following strategies have proven helpful to me in my twenty-eight years as chair:

• Make task lists and update them regularly.
• Try to include tasks that are easily done with the more challenging ones.
• Erase or cross off tasks when completed to help mark your achievements.
• Prioritize—a lot.
• Do lunch—get away from your desk.
• Be willing to spend a day in the office when very little is going on in your area.
• Check email often.
• Delegate.
• Take vacations away from home if possible.

Conclusion

Department chairs are expected to take on many roles. Contention for resources, tightening budgets, and calls for more measurable outcomes as well as competition from competing schools for students all play a large role in deciding where chairs spend their time. Couple that with the usual dose of conflict management and teacher–student complaints (grades, assignments, etc.) and we see our roles stretched well beyond what they were even a decade ago. As the chair's role continues to evolve, conflict resolution, entrepreneurial skills, and time management will become increasingly vital to the position's success. ▲

This article is based on a presentation at the 32nd Annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 4–6, 2015, Austin, Texas.

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Informal Support Groups for Chairs

EMILY DETMER-GOEBEL

I began an informal support group for the department chairs at my midsize comprehensive university that meets weekly for lunch, and this gathering has become a valuable resource for each of us. Sharing many characteristics of peer mentoring, an informal lunch group may be worth the effort of creating for many chairs.

Background

There were three new chairs and one second-year chair in my building that housed the disciplines of English, history and geography, world languages, and a combined department of sociology, anthropology, and philosophy. I offered an open conference room on my floor and we began meeting for casual conversation and lunch twice a week. When we mentioned this gathering to new chairs from across campus, three other new chairs also joined. Many universities conduct new chair training that includes formal mentoring, and this lunch group does not seek to replace those programs. Instead, the group provides less formal but still helpful questions and feedback.

Benefits

As with any support group, we often help one another with immediate questions. Being able to bounce ideas off other chairs is immensely beneficial. We honor confidentiality, but more often than not, we never mention names so that the others don't bear the burden of remembering what is public knowledge and what is not. For many issues, "I have a faculty member who is asking for X or is concerned about Y" is all that is necessary to receive useful feedback. There is great value in having quick access to a sounding board to address our daily challenges and quandaries, one with more than one voice and set of experiences.

Multiple viewpoints also help us develop a nuanced way of seeing a problem or issue. A recent case in point occurred when all departments were faced with serious budget cuts to our operating and

instructional (adjunct) costs. We each lamented the difficult decisions that had to be made, but it was also helpful to see how we could not *and should not* all deal with the budget cuts in the same way. Hearing how one chair needed to make a difficult cut in one area helped me keep my cuts in perspective as well. We all also had to deal with faculty who were upset with the changes, but we gained insight into a range of responses when we could share our individual experiences.

By meeting regularly and informally with chairs from a variety of disciplines, we came to recognize that in some ways we don't all have the same job. For example, I gain great perspective from the fact that other chairs have more grants to read, approve, and oversee; some have more donors to court and more outreach programs that require chair input and oversight. But we all have enough common ground that we can support one another in each of our endeavors.

Another benefit of the weekly lunch meetings is that it helps remind us of deadlines and upcoming projects. One chair will offhandedly mention tackling an upcoming report, and others will chime in about their progress. Inevitably, one of us will have forgotten the deadline and we are gently put back on track by the informal conversation. Given the many requests for information and reports that chairs must generate for the dean's office, the lunches help to verify that we read a request correctly. If there is enough confusion among the seven of us, we know that it is time to follow up with the dean's office for clarification.

Every chair has days that feel like a crisis. The members of this group are individuals who we now know very well and can reach out to at any time, in person, over the phone, and via email. Again, the group does not replace formal mentoring relationships, but given that there is much that a chair cannot share with his or her faculty, it is incredibly important to have a trusted support network with which to discuss difficult problems. At times when we have felt overwhelmed with challenges or "opportunities," someone will call with good news. Stopping the current stream of negative feelings to take stock of a recent publication by one of our faculty or a positive report about a program that reaches an underserved student population raises our spirits and has a beneficial effect on our ability to do the job.

Of course, not everyone can attend each lunch, but the group has found that collaboration is easy even if we don't see one another every week. For example, one of my fellow chairs thought that our various departments could benefit from getting together for a meeting to discuss shared concerns and build community among the different departments in the humanities and social sciences. Our first meeting of faculty and staff from these disciplines—perhaps the first of many—was successful and in this way benefited from the collaborative friendship of the chairs; it fostered a relationship among faculty and staff from across many departments and has led to several positive outcomes.

Support groups bear a striking resemblance to peer mentoring.

Encouraging Others

Because staying positive as a department chair can sometimes be a struggle, I share my experience here to encourage others to develop their own informal support group. Evidence suggests that such informal support groups aid in attending to burnout for academic chairs (De Oliveira et al. 2011). As Benoit and Graham (2005) recommend, support groups that meet at least monthly can possibly "maximize exhilarating experiences and minimize frustrating ones." Why else might a chair want to exert the effort to create an informal group? Support groups bear a striking resemblance to peer mentoring, which we chairs openly value for our own faculty. Shouldn't we value it for ourselves? While peer mentoring (as a concept) may be more formal than what I have described here, a lunch group shares many of the benefits associated with peer mentoring, including mutual career development and support that can increase one's sense of confidence and competence and solidify the chair's identity.

Conclusion

My chair colleagues and I have learned with one another on the job and are confident that we will continue to do so. But our standing lunch is not always about chair business. We have a strong support system that often offers great friendship, timely insight, and hilarious laughter. Our standing lunch, in many ways, keeps us standing. ▲

Emily Detmer-Goebel is chair of the department of English at Northern Kentucky University. Email: detmergoebel@nku.edu

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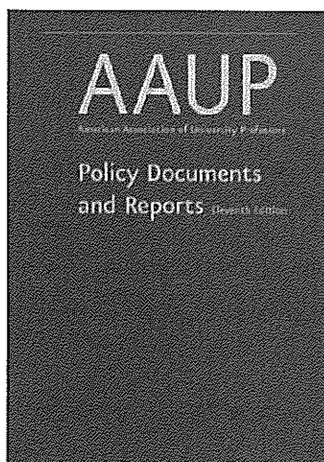

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Technology Survival Tools for Chairs

PAMELA D. WASH

With the surge of 1:1 computing and Bring Your Own Device initiatives, faculty are inundated with professional readings and conference presentations on how to integrate technology into the classroom. But what about tools and strategies to assist those in educational leadership roles, such as department chairs, to streamline tasks and potentially increase efficiency and even effectiveness?

As a relatively new—and technologically savvy—department chair, faculty from the nine degree programs for whom I serve have shared that they appreciate my command of various technologies that allow me to organize, communicate, collect, analyze, and report in a more efficient manner, thus making their jobs a little easier. The following are several examples of the tools and strategies I have employed during my first year as a department chair that you may find helpful in your own role.

Blackboard Organization

Most of us are familiar with Blackboard (Bb) for instructional content management and delivery; however, did you know that your Bb administrator can create for you a Bb organization? The advantages of creating and using an organization versus a standard course design are that you can assign it a unique title (like your department name) and it appears on the Bb landing page after login independently of your courses, making it easier for faculty to locate and access. Once your organization is established, you will enroll or add all of your full-time and part-time faculty as users to your organization.

After all faculty are enrolled, you can then customize the left navigation menu to include a *Document Sharing* link (see Figure 1). Within this link, you can create "assignments" to collect all required documentation needed throughout each semester, such as syllabi, annual reports, current vitae, and scholarship plans. By using this method of document collection, you can quickly assess which faculty have submitted their documents as well as download all documents under a specific assignment into one zipped folder for easy transfer to a server location for archiving or emailing to others. You can also set up a content area where you can post important documents for faculty to access that may not be available via your website or other public locations. All of these documents are secure and can only be accessed by those enrolled and through their own institutional login credentials.

> For more serious, perhaps even controversial voting matters, an anonymous means of voting is preferred.

SignUpGenius

Do you need to meet with faculty to discuss and sign annual evaluations? Is advising students part of your duties as chair? If either of the aforementioned applies to you, then you may want to consider using SignUpGenius (signupgenius.com). This Web 2.0 tool allows you to establish set dates and time increments representing your availability over a period of time. After entering your availability, share the generated Web link with the applicable members. They simply select their preferred date and time, type in their name and email address, and click *submit* (see Figure 2). This will reserve that date and time for that individual only. As the creator of the sign-up chart, you can then print out the full list of appointments or download the information into an Excel spreadsheet. In addition, the program will auto-email the signees of their upcoming

Figure 1. Sample Blackboard Organization Menu

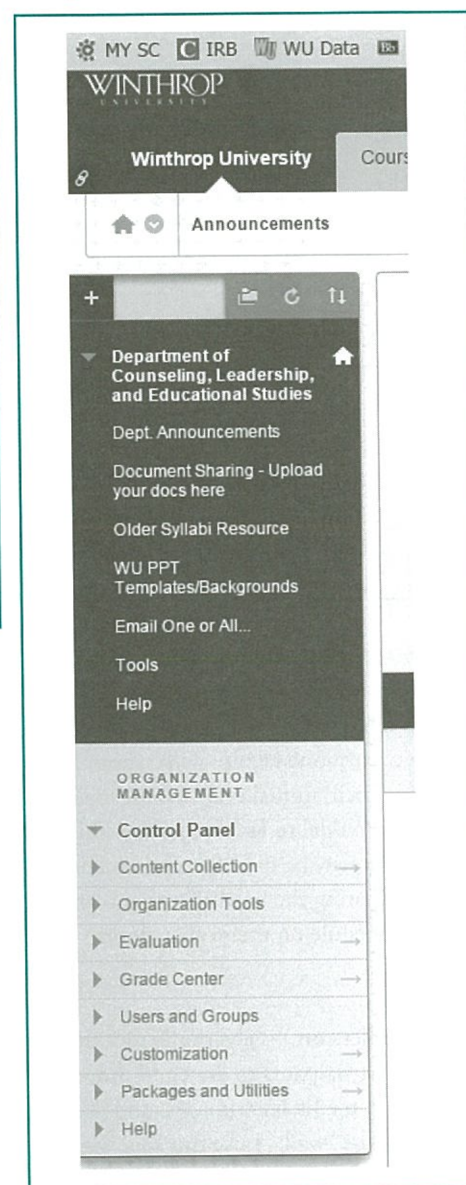

Figure 2. Sample SignUpGenius Schedule

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Qualtrics CoE Data page WU CMS Login EDCORE WU Banner VMWare

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Please sign up for a time for us to meet t
Thank you, Pam

LOCATION: WITH 204

CREATED BY: Pamela Wash CONTAC

Date	Time	Available Slot
4/2/2015 (Thu)	9:00AM - 9:30AM	Annual Report Meeting
	9:30AM - 10:00AM	Annual Report Meeting
	10:00AM - 10:30AM	Annual Report Meeting
	10:30AM - 11:00AM	Annual Report Meeting
	12:30PM - 1:00PM	Annual Report Meeting
	1:00PM - 1:30PM	Annual Report Meeting
	1:30PM - 2:00PM	Annual Report Meeting
	2:00PM - 2:30PM	Annual Report Meeting
	2:30PM - 3:00PM	Annual Report Meeting
4/3/2015 (Fri)	9:00AM - 9:30AM	Annual Report Meeting
	9:30AM - 10:00AM	Annual Report Meeting
	10:00AM - 10:30AM	Annual Report Meeting
	10:30AM - 11:00AM	Annual Report Meeting
	11:00AM - 11:30AM	Annual Report Meeting

Submit and Sign Up

appointment one day prior to their scheduled date and time.

This tool worked well to establish times for the twenty-one faculty with whom I met regarding their annual evaluations. It also served as a model to faculty on how this tool could easily be used for advisement, thus eliminating the need to post a blank sign-up schedule on their office doors.

Padlet

Padlet (padlet.com) is a versatile tool that allows all participants to drag and drop documents, media files, images, and Web links onto the "wall." I use this tool with my courses, but I also use it with faculty. If you are conducting a faculty search in your department, you can establish a Padlet wall, use the settings to define a secure password, and post all received candidate vitae and letters of intent. This allows secure, quick, and easy access to the materials for all committee members (both internal and external to your institution). Padlet can also be used for document sharing, collaborative writing, brainstorming, and even organizing a potluck luncheon because everyone can see what others are bringing.

Google Forms

Google Forms, available through a Google account (accounts.google.com/signup), are easy to create and can be used for a variety of purposes. In my role as chair, I have employed various Google Forms to collect survey data from committees, gather menu item selections for luncheons, and even for faculty to submit their project assistance requests for the four available graduate assistants assigned to our department. All data collected are stored online in your Google account and are available for download into Excel as well as for future access.

Socrative

As a chair, voting on critical issues during department meetings is part of the culture. For most voting issues, a simple verbal expression of yay or nay is acceptable. For more serious, perhaps even controversial voting matters, an anonymous means of voting is preferred. In these cases, the electronic response Web 2.0 tool Socrative (socrative.com) can be used in lieu of paper ballots. The chair or designee will create an account and assign a "room number," which is how faculty sign in to access the voting session. After establishing an account, you can create questions using multiple choice, true or false, yes or no, and even short response formats.

When ready to call for a vote, faculty will need an Internet-accessible mobile device to either access the Socrative website or use the downloadable app. Faculty click on the *student account* login button and type in the room number you have provided; they are then ready to vote when you start the session and display the first issue. Data submitted are instantly collected and can be immediately displayed or hidden for later use. All data are stored under the account and can be downloaded into Excel for archival purposes or for use in the meeting minutes.

Adobe Acrobat Professional

How many times has someone sent you a PDF or even a Word document to complete, but it either will not allow you to type in the form or it distorts the existing formatting? Most, if not all, institutions hold a site license for Adobe Acrobat Professional (not to be confused with

Acrobat Reader). If this is the case with your institution and you do not have this software installed on your machine(s), you will want to consider doing so. I use this program daily to convert read-only forms into fillable forms (in minutes), create forms from scratch, securely sign PDF documents electronically, extract selected pages from a PDF, type and edit a PDF, repaginate a document, delete identified pages from a document, and much more. It is user-friendly and a must have if you are comfortable with word processing.

Conclusion

The chair's role is multifaceted and requires creativity to accomplish the volume of day-to-day duties and recurring annual tasks. Through the use of available tools and strategies such as those described here, many of our responsibilities can be systematically streamlined, thus increasing our efficiency. ▲

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Things I Miss (and Not) About Being a Chair

N. DOUGLAS LEES

As a chair, ask yourself which things you like about the position. You should be able to come up with a few items, but you are a busy person with little time to reflect on the best attributes of the position. The more negative aspects are almost certainly easier to identify. Having exited the chair role, it seems that there is a direct, but not always obvious, relationship between what one enjoys about department leadership and what one actually misses after leaving the role. While some things were anticipated, others were not. As a caveat, what one does after serving as chair (retire from the academy, return to the faculty, etc.) can modify both lists. For me, the transition was to a faculty member and assistant to the interim dean where I worked to acclimate the new chair and contributed to targeted, school-level projects. Ten months later I was appointed to my current post (associate dean) by a new dean. Thus, after leaving the chair position I have remained actively engaged with my department and the School of Science.

Things I Miss

Recruiting new faculty and guiding their early careers. The chair is identified as the most important person for faculty at this career stage, so the responsibility is high, but the rewards of effective mentorship are most gratifying. When new faculty come into the department and I see them achieve great success, I can say that I truly miss being part of those one-on-one conversations.

> The rewards of effective mentorship are most gratifying.

Having the title of "chair." There are several aspects to this, the first of which involves my interactions with other chairs. While chair, I collaborated with chair colleagues in my school, across campus, and beyond on a wide variety of initiatives. While my present position has me working closely with chairs (developing packages for newly recruited faculty, planning faculty and staff deployment, defining faculty workloads), I am well aware that I am no longer a card-carrying member of the chairs' club. A second aspect, and one that manifested itself in the ten months when my title was "professor," is that being a chair facilitates securing audiences with important people, earns some deference, and results in most people listening to you at least ten seconds longer. Finally, there is the ceremonial part of the title. As chair, one is expected to participate in many functions that highlight the accomplishments or contributions of faculty, staff, and students. While these occasions can cause personal inconvenience from time to time, there is something very special about shaking the hands of each graduate at commencement or bestowing faculty awards on Honors Day. While your role in the individual milestones may have been small, as chair you represent the efforts of the entire department and can rightfully take pride in having created an environment where others can be successful.

Conducting some faculty annual reviews. These are with the faculty who are well organized, balanced in their sense of responsibilities, and ambitious in their goals. They come to the face-to-face meeting with concrete plans, sometimes with contingencies, and seem to have the ability to foresee the timing for completion and the nature of the outcomes of their efforts. What is truly remarkable about these individuals is that they deliver on their goals across all levels of faculty responsibility.

Being earlier in the campus information flow. This was quite a change during my ten months as a faculty member. As a chair, one receives such information about new initiatives, salary pools, resignations and hires, and new trustee policies earlier than the average faculty member. There is even information made known to a chair that is never released to the faculty. For example, chairs may learn from the dean that there is external pressure to eliminate salary increments in a given year, but the university is working through the appropriate channels to allow salary

increases. Chairs may be alerted to the possibility of no raises so that they can formulate an announcement to faculty, but they are told not to divulge anything until a final decision has been made. There would be little sense in lowering faculty morale unless the decision on no increments is final. This information-flow issue was addressed with my current appointment, but being the last to know what was happening was disconcerting.

Participating in campus-level initiatives. While faculty can and do serve on such groups, many are constructed to represent an array of disciplines, and the chair's name is often the first one to come to mind when developing potential rosters. Missing the opportunity to serve on another council or task force may seem odd as many chairs find these added responsibilities to be an unwanted burden or a distraction relative to their local work. However, I found them to be learning experiences, some of which enabled other opportunities, including national exposure.

Things I Do Not Miss

Being confronted by an angry, upset individual. The complaint can be academic (grade, academic or course policy, missed deadline) or personal (against an instructor, staff member, another student, or you) and can come from a student, parent, faculty or staff member, or administrator. While taking complaints and moving rapidly and fairly to resolve them is an accepted part of the job, those that are brought in loud, threatening ways with the expectation of immediate resolution are incidents that we could all do without. Occasions such as these were rare during my time as chair, but those few incidents, in addition to the experiences of chair colleagues, puts this clearly on the list of things I do not miss.

Conducting some faculty annual reviews. These are reviews with faculty who explain their lack of productivity and accomplishment with statements such as "true excellence takes time," "the students are not up to the task," "excellence and relevance should be redefined," "devoting too much time to teaching," "too many committees," and so on. Faculty in this category fail to plan or set benchmarks, are easily distracted from their primary work, and come to reviews with excuses or with the attitude that they are doing just fine and the fault lies with the unrealistic expectations of the chair. More often than not this behavior continues over the years such that reviews of these individuals are not eagerly anticipated by the chair.

Bringing bad news to department faculty and staff. While the justifications for some of these items are easy to understand and articulate, they can have devastating effects on morale. It is a real challenge to put an uplifting spin on an announcement that there will be no salary increments for the year or that the search for a new or replacement position has been cancelled. The salary issue, although paramount to some, is often easier to deal with than the loss of personnel. When new faculty are not brought on board there can be lingering long-term effects, such as increased workloads for those who remain, an inability to meet student demand in a quality way, and scuttled plans for new directions or initiatives. Consequences of this nature erode the professional psyches of faculty.

Setting merit pay for faculty. Although I believe that salary increments should be awarded using this model, I do not miss this annual event. This was especially true in my latter years as chair when the salary pools were meager and when the final stage came to deciding who received the "pizza" (i.e., where the final $25 went). No matter the care one brings to this delicate process there will always be a few faculty (usually the same ones) who do not like their increase or do not approve of the increases of others (friends or "competitors") and who are not reticent about letting you and everyone else know about their displeasure.

Dealing with paperwork and compliance bureaucracies. I do not think I need to expound on the former, but the latter has grown tremendously over the last twenty years. Compliance issues are ones that are met by individuals (conflict of interest, sexual harassment, ADA accommodations, human subjects, etc.), but the chair is often called on to ensure that all faculty and staff have taken the steps to be cleared (completed forms, conducted online tutorials, training, and tests). Beyond these universal issues there are others that those in science disciplines must deal with (general laboratory safety, recombinant DNA, toxic substances, pathogens, animal use, etc.). Failure to comply can result in the ineligibility to apply for external funding, the inability to conduct some types of research, or the inability to offer undergraduate laboratory courses. It is not the policies themselves but rather the time and effort it takes to track down noncompliers and remind or "convince" them to take care of the missing documentation that makes this item worthy of listing here.

In retrospect, none of things I do not miss came as a surprise; I knew at the time that they were not pleasant chair activities. On the other hand, some of the things I did miss were unanticipated. My recommendation to current chairs is to carefully reflect on the aspects of your work to identify some satisfying things that fly below your radar and take the time to savor them while you can. ▲

N. Douglas Lees is associate dean for planning and finance at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis and author of *Chairing Academic Departments* (Jossey-Bass 2006). Email: nlees@iupui.edu

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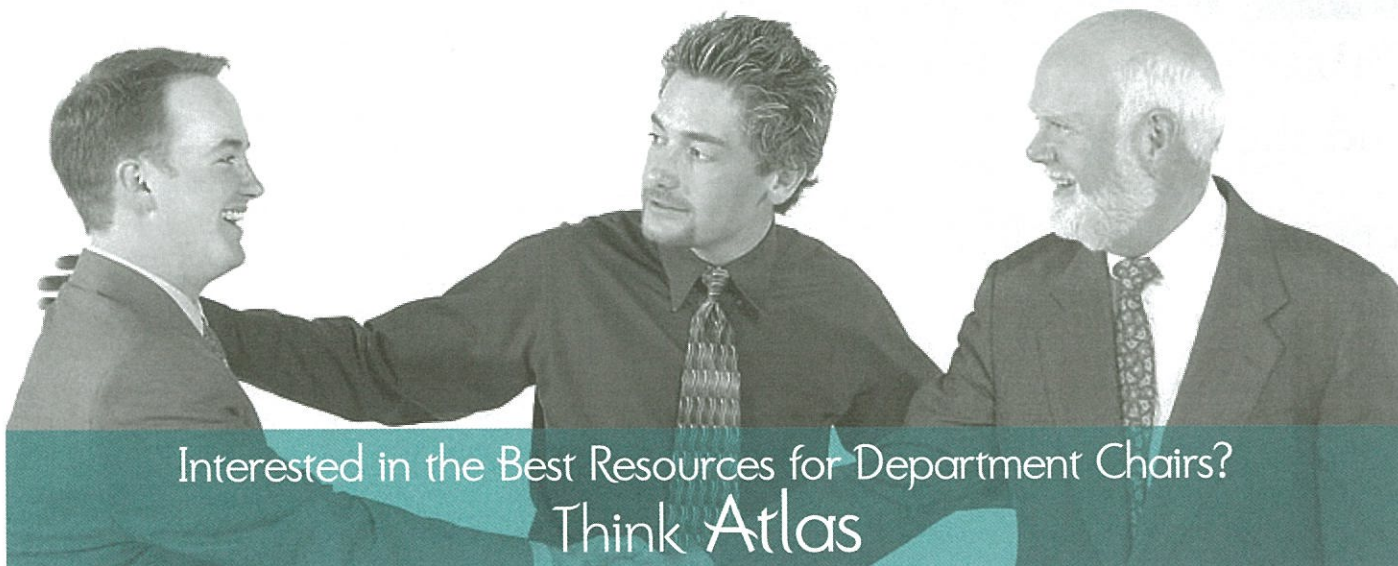

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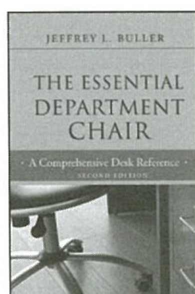

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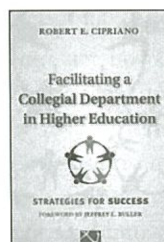

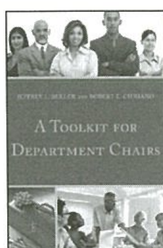

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Unbundling, Disruptive Innovation, and the Chair

JEFFREY L. BULLER

It should come as no surprise that higher education is in the midst of significant changes—it's *always* been in the midst of significant changes. After all, one of the major publications about higher education, a periodical that bills itself as "The Magazine of Higher Learning," is called, simply, *Change*. Likewise, books on higher education with the word *change* in the title are almost a cottage industry.

Recently, however, there's been a new theme emerging about change in higher education: the notion that colleges and universities won't merely have to adapt with the times but be so wholly transformed that they may no longer be recognizable. Ryan Craig's *College Disrupted* (2015) suggests that the college experience of the future will be "unbundled": just as one can purchase cell phone or landline service, telecommunications hardware, and home wiring from any provider of choice, so (it is argued) will students soon have the option of acquiring instruction, textbooks, tutoring, advising, residential life, access to athletic programs, certification, and all of the other currently "bundled" aspects of the undergraduate experience from any provider of their choice.

Kevin Carey's *The End of College* (2015) speculates that many students will elect to skip college entirely, getting the information and skills they need from free online courses and commercial products such as Rosetta Stone and the courses offered by The Teaching Company. Clayton Christensen and Henry Eyring's *The Innovative University* (2011) speculates that new technologies are becoming a "disruptive innovation" to higher education: just as calculators didn't merely improve on slide rules but utterly replaced them, so will MOOCs and other developments yet to be seen utterly replace the traditional, residential college experience. Classrooms and ivy-covered walls will soon be the vinyl records of the future, products with a "retro feel" that are appreciated by hipsters and diehard aficionados but largely ignored by the general population.

> Higher education has never been an either/or proposition.

What are we to make of these ideas at the department level? The message at many higher education conferences these days seems to be "get out of the profession as soon as you can and try to find a new line of work that doesn't cause people to take on massive debt with an appallingly low return on investment." But is that really the conclusion we should be drawing? Will most undergraduate students soon be taking their courses in, say, Shakespeare or organic chemistry from "the best professors at the best universities in the world" rather than from an instructor standing only a few feet away from them?

There's reason to be skeptical about the sweeping statements that higher education is undergoing a change so significant that it'll be all but unrecognizable within a few years. First, we have to remember how often disruptive innovation is countered by an opposing force: the sleeping giant. When television began to become a widely adopted technology in the 1950s, there were those who believed that it would make radio and film obsolete. Why would you only listen to a broadcast when you could also see it? Why would you travel somewhere and pay to see a movie when you could get it for free in your own home? But radio and the movies are still with us. As industries, they turned out to be sleeping giants that could make the case that they still had an important role to play. Radio is the preferred medium for people who are driving, at work, exercising, or engaging in other activities where sound alone rather than pictures combined with sound allows them to multitask more easily. The movies demonstrated that, as an entertainment option, they provided experiences that television and radio couldn't: larger screens, emotions shared with dozens or even hundreds of other people, access to food and drink (that you didn't have to prepare yourself), and the sheer opportunity to be away from home and to escape from your day-to-day environment.

Higher education has an opportunity to be exactly that kind of sleeping giant. Particularly for traditional-aged college students, the residential academic experience offers them an opportunity to develop social skills, experiment with their identity, live semi-independently, and grow into maturity that can't be paralleled by taking classes online at home. Many of the alternative technologies discussed by the advocates for disruptive innovation and unbundling are excellent ways for at least some students to gain knowledge and develop skills. But they don't replace the holistic college experience that seeks to give students not just information but also an opportunity to see the world and themselves in completely different ways. Very few college professors view college education as just passing on facts and formulae to a new generation. They see it as a transformative experience that helps people distinguish the simple from the complex, opinion from theory, and stating

a point a view from making a persuasive case. That's a return on investment that goes far beyond the salary someone earns after graduation.

Sleeping giants survive because they learn from innovations that claim to be disruptive. Taxi services are learning from companies like Uber and Lyft how to make their services more readily available through cell phone apps, electronic funds transfers, and pre-negotiated fares. Residential colleges and universities are already learning how to adopt some of the successful practices of MOOCs and computer-based learning into their courses. They're moving information transfer out of the classroom and replacing lectures with experiential, immersion activities in which that information is then applied to real-world situations. They're adopting successful strategies from video games—such as frequently "leveling up," opportunities to work in teams, availability 24/7/365—to make the college experience as enjoyable as it is beneficial. And they're enhancing the services they offer to college students so as to provide them with experiences they simply can't get online or at home.

Second, we have to remember that by unbundling experiences for college students, we'd be creating environments in which they could opt out of certain activities that are beneficial to them whether they know it or not. With unbundled phone service, I don't have to have a landline if I don't want one. And I don't have to have a data plan if I'd prefer to keep a flip phone without the ability to send text messages, download email, and access the Internet. Similarly, if we unbundle the college experience, some students will elect not to join clubs, live in the residence hall, attend athletic events, or meet with an advisor. In the traditional college environment, we require certain courses and activities—that is, we "bundle" them—because students need them even if they don't believe they do and would prefer to spend their time in other activities. As every department chair knows, most students would take a very narrow range of courses if allowed to do whatever they want. They'll focus on what they're good at now and what they enjoy rather than on what they could potentially become good at and may well enjoy if only they give it a chance. Unbundling college has the potential of giving people only what they want; the complete college experience, however, provides the broadly educated with the preparation they'll *need* in order to flourish in a complex and rapidly changing world.

Third, the concepts of disruptive innovation and unbundling the college experience come perilously close to eating our seed cord. How will the students of tomorrow even have a chance to study with "the best professors at the best universities in the world" if we eliminate the pathway that led those professors to be the best in the world? People don't become star teachers simply by knowing more than others do. They reach their level of success by understanding how to present what they know effectively, being able to interact with different kinds of people with different kinds of backgrounds, and adapting their form of instruction to the students in their classes. These are the attributes one develops through the traditional college experience, not through online courses and recorded lectures. People skills require experience in dealing with the messy, awkward, often frustrating interactions that come from dealing with people face-to-face. Is there any wonder why, despite the huge attrition and failure rates that MOOCs consistently have, the few people who complete the courses successfully are largely traditional college students? They've learned how to be a student. Even more important, they've learned how to adapt to dealing with people, including their professors, in many different settings: in person, online, and through any medium one can imagine.

As leaders in our disciplines, we ought also to be suspicious of the very idea of "the best professors at the best universities in the world." The best professor for Student A is likely not going to be the best professor for Student B. When there are a thousand or more students in an online course or as customers of a commercial product, it's difficult to give that nuanced attention to individual students in the classroom that the professors in our departments do every day. Besides, disciplines don't grow and develop if everyone receives the same introductory course taught by the same professor in the same way. Fields change when there are thousands of different introductory courses with few of them taught in the same way. We learn what's important as new instructors try out new content and ideas. For an idea that is represented as symptomatic of change in higher education today, the notion that more and more students will be taught by fewer and fewer "master teachers" seems, ironically, likely to slow down educational change, not accelerate it.

What, then, should be our response as department chairs when confronted by the concepts of unbundling, disruptive innovation, and the wholesale revision of higher education? It should be to remind our stakeholders—students and prospective students, parents, faculty members, and upper administrators—that higher education has never been an either/or proposition. It's always thrived on pursuing the both/and scenario. Community colleges didn't replace state colleges. Professional and applied programs didn't replace the liberal arts and sciences. There's a time to learn about Paris by watching a video online, but there's also a great deal to learn by actually going to Paris. As chairs, our duty is to cast our disciplines as sleeping giants that can greatly benefit from all of the technologies now available and someday to be developed while still leading students to worlds beyond themselves in our classrooms, studios, and labs. ▲

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CATS: A New Take on "Herding" Faculty

R. KENT CROOKSTON

Most of us have come across the expression "Leading faculty is like herding cats." A friend and mentor of mine named Phil, who was a veteran department head, shared a practice that gave me a new perspective on the word *cats* in reference to chairing. Phil used CATS as an acronym, and he practiced CATS daily. He started by putting four small stones in his right pocket; each stone was about the size of a thin lima bean. Phil's goal was to transfer each of the stones to his left pocket by the end of the day. He could move a stone only when he qualified, and to qualify he had to interact with someone (faculty, staff, students—or anyone for that matter) and either "C" compliment them, "A" apologize to them, "T" thank them, or "S" serve them.

C

Phil became very good at paying sincere compliments based on something specific. Instead of "nice job," he would point out to a colleague which aspects in his or her presentation evidenced solid scholarship and how the organization and delivery were strong. I observed him telling his student receptionist how her cheerful smile and pleasant greeting were a bonus for the entire department.

A

Phil's apologies were genuine and never jaded. He owned and expressed regret for his omissions, substandard manners, or social missteps, and then asked for forgiveness. Rather than saying, "I'm sorry you were offended by my actions," Phil would characteristically call a person by name and say something like "[Arthur], I owe you an apology. What I said yesterday was thoughtless and unkind. You have earned, and deserve, better from me. I value your friendship and would like to keep it. Will you forgive me?"

T

Phil was known for writing short personal thank-you notes and sending them through campus mail. "To be effective, 'T's have to be well planned," Phil said. "A simple 'thanks' doesn't count."

S

A typical act of service for Phil was to nominate someone for an award or recognition, or to go out of his way and walk with someone from the parking lot to his or her office and carry half of the load the person had brought that day.

Phil didn't necessarily employ all four components of CATS every day. If circumstances called for three apologies or three compliments in a row, he went for it and moved three stones. "You have to watch for and respond to CATS opportunities," he said. "You can't invent them."

Once, when I had been away from campus for a while, I met Phil and greeted him with, "Hey Phil, how are you?"

"I'm nice," he said, with a teasing smile as he patted his stone-holding pocket. While mentoring me as a new department head, Phil had stressed the importance of proactivity: "If you publicly declare what you are, even if it's really only something you're striving to be, it will usually come true." Few people knew about Phil's stones; lots of people knew how nice he was. ▲

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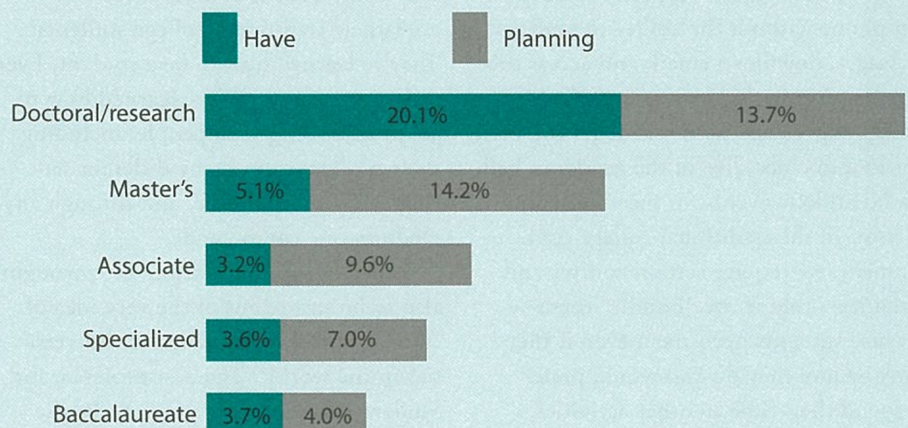

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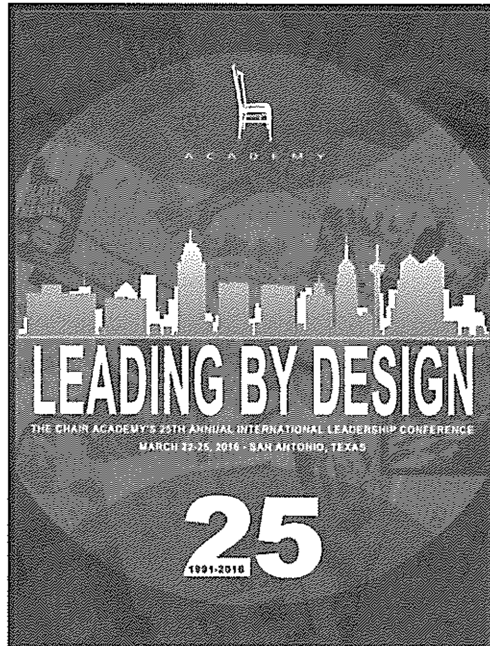

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Special Topics: Department Culture

Strategies for Enhancing Diversity in the Academic Department

EDNA CHUN AND ALVIN EVANS

What concrete steps can academic chairs take to create more diverse learning environments for the department's students? As the first research-based study of the chair's role in diversity, our book, *The Department Chair as Transformative Diversity Leader* (Stylus 2015), provides specific strategies for creating a diverse academic department from recommendations by chairs across the nation. Surprisingly, few leadership resources even address the pivotal role of department chairs in diversity. The action-oriented strategies shared by chairs in our book represent the first wave of a diversity transformation. Such transformation is both urgent and necessary in light of the changing demographics of student populations with the doubling of minority college student enrollment between 1976 and 2010. At the same time, chairs recognize that they often face opposition from both within and without the department. Because diversity represents cultural change and a movement away from the status quo, it is often a contested topic, fraught with the potential for debate, backlash, and polarization.

Contrary to the common assumption that administrators bear the primary responsibility for diversity transformation, we argue that chairs are uniquely positioned to leverage diversity change because they are situated between the faculty and the administration, and the academic department is the primary site of interaction with students. However, a demographic imbalance continues to exist in this important leadership role. Data from the survey and interviews we conducted of department chairs across the nation indicate that roughly 90% of chairs are white, and the majority of these individuals are male.

Our survey findings also indicate that substantial barriers still exist for women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) chairs operating within the normative context of the white, male, heterosexist hierarchy in their institutions. As a result, the most significant step an institution can take is to increase the pipeline of women, minority, and LGBT faculty for the department chair role. In addition to the benefit provided by diverse perspectives in research, scholarship, and classroom approaches, the creation of a critical mass of chairs from nondominant groups will provide needed psychosocial and career support to diverse faculty and serve as role models for diverse students in the process of identity development.

> Chairs are uniquely positioned to leverage diversity change.

Consider how a white female chair of women's studies in a public Midwestern college describes the effect on student identity development provided by minority and LGBT faculty in her department:

> We get really positive feedback about [identity development]. Our faculty are not as diverse ethnically or racially as they could be. . . . We have one African American person who works for just women's studies, and among our affiliated faculty members, we have one African American woman and another Latino woman. We have a couple of women faculty who are identified as part of the LGBTQ community. So we have some diversity. And I know that their presence helps our students, because I know that probably the most "out" of the lesbian faculty members does do a lot of mentoring of students. And that a lot of our lesbian students come to her and possibly some of the gay male students come to her as well, that I am not sure about. But I know that she plays that role.

Because the diversity journey still remains a largely uphill battle in many departments, both direct and indirect approaches are needed to overcome internal resistance, ambivalence, or simply a level of inertia due to work overload with regard to diversity progress. Several key strategies suggested by chairs for consideration are included in the following discussion.

Build a critical mass of faculty from dominant and nondominant groups to lead and support diversity progress. A white male chair of economics in a public southwestern university explained the importance of obtaining a critical mass of faculty to take concrete action in support of diversity:

> The chair has to take the leadership role, has to be proactive, has to get a critical mass of people on his or her side to try to take the proactive measures that are necessary. Obviously a chair or a dean . . . who simply gives lip service to diversity but doesn't do anything concrete to make it happen is not going to make any progress.

Minority chairs in predominantly white departments may be viewed as pushing

a particularistic agenda, making their leadership of diversity initiatives more problematic. For example, a female Asian-American chair indicates that other faculty could view her promotion of diversity as driven by personal, selfish interests. And a female African-American chair reported a challenge she has faced in promoting diversity due to "misunderstandings as well as perceptions about 'why' I'd promote diversity." These observations underscore the heightened vulnerability of minority chairs in predominantly white institutions when they promote a diversity agenda.

Recognize that white faculty may also face challenges to their legitimacy or authenticity in leading diversity efforts. A white male chair of modern languages and literatures in an eastern urban, private, religiously affiliated university explains how his legitimacy as a diversity advocate can be questioned:

> I am a white male and therefore privileged, in some sense, just by being who I am; I think I get an airing for my views with certain constituencies. So I acknowledge that I have used my position of privilege to try to work towards this goal and that my privileged position has been an advantage for doing so. At times, though, I think also the fact that because I am a white male, there are those who might question my legitimacy as an advocate for diversity simply because I don't "have an understanding of" or I "don't necessarily" come from a diverse background.

Focus on the value that diversity brings to group decision making when overcoming objections to hiring diverse candidates. A white male psychology chair in a Midwestern urban university has advanced consideration of diversity in recruitment by focusing on the value that diversity brings to group decision making:

> In terms of hiring, a common approach that people adopt is to pursue the best scholar. And I was pushing us to consider the importance of diversity and one of the things that I did was I gave our faculty research showing that groups that are diverse actually make more effective decisions than groups that are not diverse, to promote diversity as a positive attribute that's value added. It's not just diversity for diversity's sake. Making your faculty more diverse will improve the quality of faculty, it will improve the quality of decision-making of the group.

Appoint faculty equity advisors for each academic department. The vice chancellor for equity and inclusion at the University of California, Berkeley, has established an infrastructure of equity advisors located in each academic unit. Advisors are active senate members at either the associate or full professor level and designated by the department chair or dean. Primary duties include assistance with faculty hiring and advancement and graduate recruitment and retention. Equity advisors also participate in strategic planning for the academic unit to ensure that diversity is an active and meaningful part of the plan.

Conclusion

While department chairs play a boundary-spanning role between the faculty and the administration, they often must navigate without clear support or resources in the area of diversity and inclusion. One of the key findings reported in our study is the rapid turnover of provosts and deans, accompanied by changes in direction and level of support for diversity. As one chair wisely advised, policies and practices are the infrastructure necessary for institutions and chairs to be able to address issues in a positive and preventive way before they arise. As a result, structural and demographic changes are critical in reshaping the landscape for diversity in higher education. In this process, academic chairs represent the link in operationalizing the institution's strategic vision of diversity through the creation of inclusive learning environments to meet the needs of a diverse democracy. ▲

Read a review of the authors' book on page 30.

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Academic Leaders Shaping Work-Life Culture

LAURA KOPPES BRYAN AND CHERYL A. WILSON

In the summer of 2013, the American Council on Education announced a challenge to presidents of higher education institutions to become involved with a national campaign promoting faculty career flexibility. College and university leaders were invited to sign a statement of support for expanding workplace flexibility that includes the following conviction: *We believe that supporting flexibility must become a core leadership competency to enable our faculty to meet the increasing demands of twenty-first century workplaces and to meet their personal and family responsibilities* (see www.acenet.edu/leadership/programs/Pages/National-Challenge.aspx). This recent challenge is

somewhat surprising given that corporations have been responding to employees trying to effectively manage work and family responsibilities (i.e., work-life) for more than forty years. Indeed, corporate leaders have long recognized that demographic changes over the past four decades, such as an increase in the number of women working full time, the rise of dual career and single-parent families, and the expansion of an aging population, have resulted in an increasingly diverse workforce and a greater potential for individuals to face work-life conflict and stress.

Colleges and universities are not immune to these demographic and societal changes. Giving birth, adopting a child, and caring for children are the primary reasons that women faculty, in particular, leave academe or do not achieve tenure and/or promotion. As men become more engaged with child caregiving, they, too, have reported increased conflicts from managing faculty and family responsibilities. In addition, elder care is rapidly becoming a significant concern for both men and women, and many faculty fall into the "sandwich generation," caring for both children and elders. Recent research indicates that 46% of women and 40% of men who are caregivers also have children under 18 at home. Moreover, dual career support and assistance has become more prevalent. Increasingly, faculty are seeking a high quality of life, family-friendly campuses with leadership support, flexibility, personnel dedicated to work-life and family issues, and formal policies and official procedures to support work-life satisfaction. Work-life satisfaction is defined as a "positive feeling that individuals develop when they feel they are successfully meeting the demands of work and personal life" (Valcour 2007, 1513).

In a recent COACHE survey, faculty members provided an average rating of 2.81 on a 5-point scale (1 = very dissatisfied; 5 = very satisfied) in response to this statement: *The balance you are able to strike between professional time and your personal or family time* (Trower 2012). A Bright Horizons (2012) survey revealed the implications for faculty who do not experience work-life satisfaction:

- Nearly 80% of all faculty members would consider leaving their current work situation for a more supportive work environment.
- Sixty percent would consider leaving their current institution to spend more time with their families.
- Thirty-five percent would consider leaving to help with elder care.
- Twenty-five percent would consider leaving because of childcare conflicts.

We believe that academic leaders play an important role in shaping work-life culture, a culture in which academic leaders recognize that professional and personal lives are not mutually exclusive and acknowledge that faculty and staff want to be appreciated for being professionals and understood as human beings with life obligations. Department chairs in particular are integral to promoting a culture that can foster work-life satisfaction for staff and faculty because they are often on the front lines of such issues. The chair is the gatekeeper of policies, procedures, and processes that may enhance the work-life satisfaction of faculty and staff. Supporting a work-life culture has myriad benefits for both individuals and the institution, including the following:

> **Give voice to a sense of shared purpose about work-life balance.**

- Improved recruitment, retention, and advancement
- Enhanced diversity and equity
- Enriched productivity
- Cost savings
- Risk management
- Quality of employee well-being (stress/burnout)
- Compliance with state and federal laws

What can a chair do? To begin, consider the work-life needs of your department. Are you aware of the demographic breakdown of your faculty? Their childcare or eldercare responsibilities? Upcoming retirement transitions? Faculty engagement in the community? Becoming familiar with the work-life needs of your faculty can help you advocate for and support them in their work-life needs. Some of the most common work-life issues facing faculty include dependent care/caregiving, paid and unpaid leave, dual career assistance/support, and retirement transitions.

In addition, it is essential for chairs to be aware of the policies in place at their institutions in order to support their faculty. Some of the most common policies used by faculty include the Family and Medical Leave Act, tenure clock extensions, modified duties, dual career assistance, and phased retirement. At the department level, chairs can alleviate many of these challenges by promoting flexibility for their faculty through such means as scheduling classes or meetings to accommodate caregiving needs, creating opportunities for modified duties, or providing referrals for partner hires.

We have compiled several strategies to help academic leaders begin to shape a work-life culture in their departments (Koppes Bryan and Wilson 2015). The following are some specific steps that chairs can implement:

- Give voice to a sense of shared purpose about work-life balance.
- Know and understand faculty and staff work-life challenges.
- Work with other chairs, human resources, and/or academic affairs to create a toolkit that provides best practices and strategies for facilitating a work-friendly unit.
- Implement small changes that you are able to control within your unit (e.g., scheduling).
- Ensure that policies and practices are not biased against caregivers.
- Know the legal do's and don'ts.

- Communicate with transparency.
- Be flexible.
- Demonstrate commitment to supporting success.
- Understand how work-life fits within the mission: strategic imperative.
- Know and provide resources and/or referrals.
- Provide funding opportunities.
- Establish clear expectations.
- Implement creative and consistent policies.
- Make your own work-life visible.

We hope that this article will inspire chairs to proactively foster a culture where faculty and staff can flourish. ▲

This article is based on a presentation at the 32nd Annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 4–6, 2015, Austin, Texas.

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New Faculty Induction: More Than Orientation

MARY C. CLEMENT

Early in the fall semester, new faculty may feel that a storm is lashing out at them. The storm's thunder, lightning, and rain are the new teaching assignments, the maintenance of a research agenda, and the demands of service to the institution. Systematic induction is the umbrella that shelters faculty from the storm, and induction is much more than new employee orientation. A viable induction program begins with orientation at the start of the school year and includes ongoing support seminars and mentoring for new professors for at least one year and potentially longer. The chair's role in this program is critical.

The need for support at the beginning of a career is crucial. New professors have generally been at the top of their class, yet these bright, newly minted PhDs may find their new jobs overwhelming. Keeping high stress at bay, learning to balance work and life, and improving at the crafts of teaching and research are essential for a long-term career in higher education. In the most practical sense, a strong induction program saves time and money for the institution as successful new hires are retained, thus lowering the rate of constant hiring searches.

> Induction is much more than new employee orientation.

Orientation

Generally offered at the university or college level, new faculty orientation provides an overview of the institution and covers the essential nuts-and-bolts issues. In these meetings, faculty are welcomed and then receive information about everything from keys to safety, insurance to academic calendars. Essential to a successful orientation is to provide just enough information to get the new hires started without smothering them in unneeded minutia. All too often, new faculty spend the orientation thinking about getting the water turned on in their apartment, or wondering why they have to hear from six different administrators about the status of the institution. Department chairs must know what the institution is covering in the orientation and should have a chance to provide input into the agenda.

Ongoing Support Seminars

Depending on the size of the institution, ongoing support seminars can be offered at the department, school, or college levels. At my small college, I teach the support seminars, offered on a monthly basis, with a free lunch included. Attendance is voluntary, but when good information is provided, new faculty tend to join regularly. A sample of the topics from these monthly seminars include:

- Who are the students at our college and why did they choose us? What are their expectations of us?
- Fair and equitable grading: How to establish grading scales and systems that are simple to implement and that students understand.
- Instructional strategies that work: How do you get students to read? Does flipping the classroom work?
- Teaching with technology, using the college's learning management system, and blended learning in classes.

- Stress and time management: Finding a balance among teaching, research, service, and a life.
- Earning tenure and promotion here or at any institution.

Another key to support seminars is providing the opportunity for camaraderie to grow. As the director of these seminars, I do not report the stories I am told; I am not a chair or dean or evaluator. In fact, because of the work I do to support new faculty, I recuse myself from the promotion and tenure committee. After the mini seminars, much time is allowed for questions and discussions. New faculty often find writing partners as a result of the support luncheons. Some may choose to use grading systems, assignments, or strategies learned from one another. I am available to observe their classes to provide feedback on their instruction that is not shared with their administrators. First-year faculty appreciate the lunch seminars where a panel of second-year faculty talk about the differences between the initial and second years.

Mentoring

When done well, mentoring can be extremely helpful to both the new hires and the mentors themselves. However, mentors need training, support, and general guidelines. Training for mentors stresses the parameters of their roles and what to do if a tough issue arises. Mentors need an orientation for how to observe another instructor's classroom in order to be an effective collegial observer. The ability to teach well, and the ability to help someone else learn better teaching strategies, are indeed two different skill sets. If the institution does not offer annual mentor training, the department chair may need to provide these guidelines.

The chair plays a crucial role in making the mentor/new faculty member pairing. Based on what the chair knows about both the new hires and the veteran faculty members, the chair can solicit a volunteer to serve as a mentor. In some institutions, released time or a stipend may be considered. What if a mentor/new faculty member pairing is not working? Plan for an escape valve, a way that either party can sever the relationship with no penalties. Of course, many new hires find their own personal mentors just by getting to know those in the department or college. Some administrators find that pairing a new hire with someone outside of the department also works well.

Should the chair take on a mentoring role? This varies from institution to institution as the chair provides both support and evaluation. The chair should be observing the new hire's classes and providing opportunities for ongoing professional conversations. The chair needs to know what a new hire's strengths and interests are while providing guidance and support as needed. Of course, the chair must become acquainted with the faculty member to know how much, and what kind, of support and guidance are needed. It takes time to build this relationship.

Conclusion

Do you remember your first full-time year in a professorship? What type of help, support, and guidance did you receive? In retrospect, what did you really need, and what would have helped you more? What were the surprises, and what did you learn the hard way? One of the best philosophies for building an induction program is to reflect on your own career and to improve on the way you were inducted into higher education. Keep the best examples from your past and add things that were not offered to you but that will help the next generation of professors. Remember that induction is a process with multiple steps, not just a day of orientation. ▲

Mary C. Clement is director of the Center for Teaching Excellence at Berry College. Email: mclement@berry.edu

Institutions That Granted the Most Bachelor's Degrees, 2012

1	U. of Phoenix-Online	32,432
2	Arizona State U.	13,210
3	Ashford U.	11,583
4	U. of Central Florida	11,514
5	Pennsylvania State U. at University Park	10,970
6	Ohio State U.	10,926
7	Texas A&M U. at College Station	9,073
8	U. of Texas at Austin	8,821
9	U. of Florida	8,601
10	Michigan State U.	8,221
11	U. of Washington	7,887
12	Florida State U.	7,860
13	U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	7,727
14	U. of Minnesota-Twin Cities	7,617
15	U. of South Florida	7,610
16	U. of California at Berkeley	7,526
17	U. of California at Los Angeles	7,391
18	Indiana U. at Bloomington	7,284
19	Florida International U.	7,238
20	Purdue U. at West Lafayette	7,064
21	U. of Maryland at College Park	7,043
22	Brigham Young U.	7,026
23	U. of Georgia	6,861
24	Rutgers U. at New Brunswick	6,843
25	U. of California at Davis	6,738

Source: U.S. Department of Education

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Lawsuits and Rulings

DISCRIMINATION

Multiple Complaints Overwhelm Former Professor's Discrimination Suit

Case: *Austen v. Weatherford College*, No. 12-11070 (5th Cir. 04/18/14)

Ruling: The U.S. Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit, affirmed a summary judgment in favor of Weatherford College.

Significance: Stated reasons are not pretextual if a college legitimately relied on them.

Summary: In 2007, Weatherford College hired Karen Austen as a professor and chair of its Department of Kinesiology. Not long afterward, an assistant coach formally complained that she had made improper comments to him regarding his physique, initiated confrontations with him, and often secretly took photographs of him as he was working out. In addition, a department secretary filed a police report alleging that Austen had showed inappropriate photos to her daughter. The secretary also alleged that Austen had belittled her, threatened her, stalked her, and created an unrelenting hostile work environment.

The following year, the athletic director alleged that Austen was aggressive and confrontational toward another department secretary. A few days later, a vice president reprimanded Austen for allegedly storming out of his office and interrupting an ongoing meeting. After Austen continued to receive reprimands or complaints, she was demoted.

In 2010, a coach complained that Austen had made false accusations about him and forced his students off treadmills during class time; an adjunct faculty member claimed that Austen had yelled at her, shut a door in her face, made inappropriate comments, and made her feel harassed when signing payroll notifications; another department secretary complained that Austen had forced her to do an assignment that required her to leave her desk, even though her boss had instructed her to stay to answer an important phone call.

In addition, a student reported that Austen had made an inappropriate sexual comment to her when she was working out. Other students complained that Austen threatened to fail them if they did not stay after class. Finally, several witnesses reported that Austen told a black student that a bookstore cashier did not wait on black people and a Hispanic student that the store charged Hispanics 20% more than non-Hispanics.

In May, the president recommended nonrenewal of Austen's annual contract because of unprofessional behavior. Austen was represented by counsel at the nonrenewal hearing. After the Board of Trustees voted not to renew her contract Austen filed suit against the college, claiming Title VII discrimination.

The trial judge granted summary judgment against her. On appeal, Austen argued that a jury could find the college's stated reasons for nonrenewal were pretextual because each of the underlying complaints was false. However, it was irrelevant whether those complaints were accurate because the issue was whether the college legitimately relied on them in deciding to terminate Austen, according to the appellate court. In light of the overwhelming number of documented, legitimate reasons for termination, the panel ruled that Austen failed to show pretext sufficient to defeat the trial judge's summary judgment. ▲

FACULTY

Court Rejects Professor's Bid to Rescind Formal Resignation

Case: *Ashraf v. Boat*, No. 1:13-cv-533 (S.D. Ohio, 08/06/13)

Ruling: The U.S. District Court, Southern District of Ohio, denied a tenured professor's motion for a temporary restraining order seeking to enjoin a university from accepting his resignation.

Significance: Under Ohio law, a public employee's resignation is irrevocable once the public entity accepts such resignation.

Summary: Muhammad Ashraf was a tenured professor who taught at the University of Cincinnati's College of Medicine for thirty-five years. The terms of his employment with the university were governed by a collective bargaining agreement.

In August 2012, the university decided to conduct an investigation into whether Ashraf committed self-plagiarism or other research misconduct. Dean Thomas Boat formed an investigative committee pursuant to university rules to investigate allegations of research misconduct against Ashraf. At the end of the academic year, Ashraf informed Boat via email of his intention to resign his position at the College of Medicine. That same day Boat sent a written reply by email accepting Ashraf's resignation.

However, upon the university's refusal to relinquish National Institutes of Health grants garnered by Ashraf, he sent Boat a new email withdrawing his resignation. Boat refused to accept Ashraf's withdrawal. Subsequently, Boat sent a letter to Ashraf informing him that he was being recommended for dismissal as a result of alleged research misconduct. In response, Ashraf's counsel sent a letter to the university reiterating Ashraf's intent to remain employed at the College of Medicine and to exercise his right to challenge the university's research misconduct charge.

Ashraf filed suit asking the court to enjoin the university from accepting his resignation and issue a temporary restraining ordering. The court described the issue as whether a tenured faculty member who resigns his position voluntarily, without conditions, and whose resignation is formally and fully accepted in writing by the dean, can change his mind thirty days later, revoke his resignation, and require the university to terminate him only for cause.

The judge ruled that the resignation could not be rescinded. He reasoned that acceptance of a tender of resignation from public employment occurs when the public employer, or its designated agent, initiates some type of affirmative action, preferably in writing, that clearly indicates to the employee that his resignation is accepted by the employer. The court concluded that the university clearly did so in this case. Accordingly, the court denied Ashraf's motion for a temporary restraining order. ▲

Colleges That Enrolled the Most Students on the GI Bill, 2012

Rank	Institution	Enrollment of veterans using GI Bill	Type	Graduation rate
1	U. of Phoenix-Online Campus	28,261	for-profit	19.0%
2	American Public U. system	14,133	for-profit	21.4%
3	Ashford U.	12,000	for-profit	21.5%
4	U. of Maryland University College	11,576	public	4.3%
5	Embry-Riddle Aeronautical U.-Worldwide	11,332	private nonprofit	n/a
6	Liberty U.	6,593	private nonprofit	45.7%
7	Grantham U.	6,300	for-profit	n/a
8	Kaplan U. at Davenport (Iowa)	6,162	for-profit	6.9%
9	Central Texas College	6,017	public	10.7%
10	Strayer U. at Arlington (Va.)	5,948	for-profit	32.8%
11	Tidewater Community College	5,768	public	14.1%
12	Saint Leo U.	5,479	private nonprofit	43.5%
13	Columbia Southern U.	4,923	for-profit	33.7%
14	Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana	4,738	public	8.0%
15	Park U.	4,725	private nonprofit	40.9%
16	ECPI U.	4,678	for-profit	39.6%
17	Troy U.	4,430	public	34.8%
18	Columbia College system	4,309	private nonprofit	41.8%
19	U. of Phoenix-San Diego Campus	4,281	for-profit	14.4%
20	Webster U.	4,219	private nonprofit	64.1%

Source: National Survey of Student Engagement

Statement of Ownership

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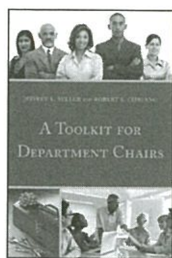
Book Reviews

A Toolkit for Department Chairs

Jeffrey L. Buller and Robert E. Cipriano

Rowman & Littlefield, 2015
156 pp., $25.00 (plus $5.00 s/h)



When you reach into your toolkit, you want to be confident that your resources are flexible enough to do just about any job. Buller and Cipriano's collaboration, *A Toolkit for Department Chairs*, offers pertinent advice and a variety of practice exercises—giving you immediately useable tools for just about any situation academic leaders face.

Drawn from a study of more than 4,000 chairs along with the authors' wealth of experience, the case studies address the top seven areas in which chairs indicate they need more training. The number and variety of cases provided also offer a wealth of strategies and tactics to address a wide range of issues and challenges chairs (and institutions) face in the ever-shifting educational landscape.

With an average of six different cases/scenarios per chapter, Buller and Cipriano showcase real-life challenges confronting chairs. Each chapter is also interspersed with concise guidelines and general practices, creating a text that is an accessible and valuable resource. It's this combination of activity and application that creates a format to promote self-reflection.

The authors conclude the book with personal reflections and four final tools that are the core of the book—remembering that actions have far-reaching consequences, asking the right questions, gathering data from all involved in an issue, and having (and following) written policies to allow you to better handle situations equitably and consistently. To maximize these tools and engage with the challenges posed throughout the book, the epilogue might make the perfect starting point.

With the tools presented in the epilogue in mind, the detailed lists of questions following each case will help readers work toward understanding the core of the myriad issues that may affect individual situations. Maximizing the book as a learning tool, each series of questions will also help readers pull out realistic complexities and tensions in the situations and understand which alternatives might exist to address the challenges. The authors also offer a glimpse into outcomes and resolutions—an appealing element, as we are often anxious to solve a problem. Some may be inclined to skip ahead to learn if the issues were resolved. However, the resolutions are more than "just the rest of the story." By using the challenge questions and examining the choices made along the way, each outcome provides another opportunity to analyze the strategies and the processes used. As much as many people want a single solution or right answer, your outcome or resolution will depend on the elements of your own unique situation. Most situations are more complex than what can be developed in the space of a few pages. The detailed questions help keep each individual (and institution-specific) situation at the forefront of analysis.

Chapters 1 and 2 establish the groundwork for some of the most critical skills that affect a department—the hiring and mentoring of faculty. The guidelines the authors establish for hiring decisions (broaden people's vision; search for fit, not perfection; and trust your instincts) offer chairs an opportunity to build consensus during the process. Each case offers a very real challenge and a variety of institutional complexities that can shape and confront the hiring process. The practical guidelines outlined in Chapter 2 (pp. 26–27) present a concise overview of how to create and structure an effective performance plan. In addition to the functionality of the list as a quick reference, the principles Buller and Cipriano use (setting clear goals and deadlines and using concrete language) are reinforced by the process (questions) as well as resolution of the cases and scenarios. Finally, some of the unique aspects of mentoring within higher education are addressed. For example, Case 2.3 considers the issue of mentoring a former mentor—a very possible situation as a chair may be appointed on a rotating basis—and with faculty longevity you may become the chair in a department where the former chair hired and mentored you.

The cases in Chapters 3 (Promoting Teamwork and Collegiality), 4 (Communicating Effectively), 5 (Managing Conflict), and 6 (Making Decisions) offer detail and depth to showcase the need to dig a bit deeper and really confront how much you know about the complexities of the personalities and the aspects of your own environment. These chapters allow readers to practice and apply the *how* and the *why*. In addition, the practical guidance (you can't avoid conflict but you can manage it, the role of mission in developing department expectations, decisions made in the framework of the mission, and the importance of transparency in the decision-making process) helps develop confidence when working within one's own unique situation.

The scenarios and cases use descriptive code names like Dr. Blindsider, the Department of Cliques and Factionalism, and Dr. Conspiratorial. These identifiers remove the temptation to assume that the authors are talking about someone specific and also serve as helpful reminders that any destructive behavior (however labeled) can distract from and derail the issue, whether it is being blindsided in a meeting (pp. 58–60), dealing with departmental factionalism (pp. 79–82), or being bribed or threatened (pp. 102–104).

Finally, departmental and institutional conflict often centers on finance. Throughout the book, each case comes

with its own set of challenges; however, many of the budget cases rely on the tools developed in the previous chapters. The cases in Chapter 7 (Budgeting) challenge readers to recognize that budget decisions are rarely about budget alone. Given the pressure some face to raise extramural funds, chairs might find the scenario of the Department of Penury (pp. 117–120) helpful for working out the choices that may resolve a problem favorably.

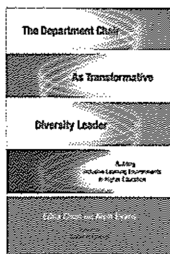
A Toolkit for Department Chairs delivers on its title, offering practical advice through cases and reflections to help equip chairs with insight into how to weigh options and apply the best tools to create a stronger department. ▲

Reviewed by **Teddi A. Joyce**, assistant professor in the Department of Media and Journalism at the University of South Dakota and former vice president for enrollment management at Western State College of Colorado. Email: teddi.joyce@usd.edu

The Department Chair as Transformative Diversity Leader: Building Inclusive Learning Environments in Higher Education

Edna Chun and Alvin Evans

Stylus, 2015
222 pp., $32.50 (plus $5.00 s/h)



In a time when issues of race, gender, sexual orientation, and immigration have become front and center in the news and part of daily conversations in communities across the nation, one can be certain that similar discussions are occurring among faculty, students, and staff on university campuses, though most likely in private and with no planned outcome. Given this possibility, higher education as a microcosm of the larger society and community can no longer ignore the implications, nor can our colleges and universities continue to attend to diversity strictly from a theoretical perspective. While most institutions address the matter through their mission statements that reference the preparation of students for the 21st century and life in a global society, the work of actualizing the mission is expected to be addressed by faculty, including issues of diversity. Given this assumption, department chairs become the critical factor in terms of influencing faculty by translating the institution's mission and making such statements as "preparing for the 21st century" concrete and meaningful. In response, chairs need concrete and meaningful ways to address diversity on a daily basis. Chairs are not only responsible for affecting this change but must also work to diversify the faculty as well as retain and graduate diverse students. However, they are often given little direction about *how* to effectively proceed.

The Department Chair as Transformative Diversity Leader by Edna Chun and Alvin Evans offers chairs clear and rational information for responding to diversity using empirical research and supporting evidence gathered through a survey of and follow-up interviews with department chairs. The premise of this book is that real responsiveness to diversity should be action oriented in a context of inclusive excellence. The authors methodically identify ways in which chairs can be the change agents in this process, especially because they are best positioned to effectively transform higher education in terms of diversity. Clearly, chairs have a very challenging role in academia working most closely with faculty while implementing institutional mandates that must be faculty driven.

Given that mandate, one of the most notable things about this book is the approach to change taken by the authors of not "adding" to chair duties and workloads. Instead, they have developed an impressive process that describes meaningful ways in which chairs can integrate diversity as part of the work they already perform.

The book's foreword, along with Chapter 1, clarifies and emphasizes the ways that chairs can effectively transform their work environments so that they become diversity leaders. Furthermore, the authors define the role of chairs in advancing diversity. Based on the data they gathered, the authors provide a conceptual definition of diversity that chairs can employ in their work. "Of special relevance to the themes of this book is the emphasis of inclusive excellence on student learning and success . . ." (p. 12). More specifically, inclusive excellence is the centerpiece of *why* diversity transformation is critical in higher education, and *why* department chairs would be the most logical leaders to engage faculty and others in this transformation. Inclusive excellence is a framework designed to help campuses (and in this case, department chairs) integrate diversity and quality efforts. Chapter 1 ends with a diversity self-assessment tool that helps chairs contextualize and incorporate diversity into department settings.

Chapters 2 through 7 provide strategies and examples, along with actual commentary by chairs, about effectively transforming the department (and the university) and developing an environment in which diversity becomes an integral part of faculty work. Each of these chapters ends with a section titled "Concluding Perspectives and Strategies" and an extensive reference list for further reading. The chapter strategies are reasonable, concrete, and realistic.

Chapter 2 develops a sense of urgency for change in how chairs approach their work in terms of diversity. Emphasis is placed on retooling the way work is done, which helps to remove the thought of including additional "must-do work."

In Chapter 3, the reader is reminded of the commonalities between chair duties and tasks regardless of the type of institution and/or its location. While there are unique features for chair leadership that are tied directly to the institution where one works, wherever it might be, all department chairs work closely with faculty and students and in most cases serve as the liaison between institutional administrators and faculty.

Higher education's organizational structure and its effect on how chairs and

faculty function is the focus of Chapter 4. The structure and *how* those holding leadership positions interact with chairs can affect *how* diversity is addressed in the department.

Chapter 5 reflects on formal and informal chair exchanges with faculty and administrators and how these interactions can be beneficial in advancing diversity. For example, in the recruitment of new faculty, diverse applicants must be in the pool to even be considered for a faculty position. Chairs can work informally to help expand candidate pools so that they are more inclusive and diversely representative. As described in Chapter 5, chairs might bring diverse faculty to campus as speakers and consultants so that more senior faculty get to meet and know diverse persons (who might later become candidates for future positions).

Providing a welcoming environment for students is critical to student success and eventual program completion. For students from diverse backgrounds, this is of even greater importance. Chapter 6 provides insights into how chairs might transform the climate for students and faculty by taking steps that positively bridge them together. Chapter 7 includes helpful tools for building a department diversity action plan.

The final chapter, Chapter 8, effectively summarizes what was addressed throughout the book and closes with institutional recommendations.

This book is the one and only of its kind written specifically for department chairs. Chairs who are sincerely interested in diversity can potentially be transformed into a diversity leader with the assistance of this book. It is both timely and a must read—and use—for department chairs. ▲

Reviewed by **Bernice Bass de Martinez,** chair of foreign languages at Sacramento State University. Email: bbdem@csus.edu

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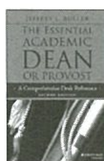

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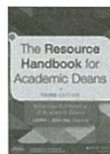

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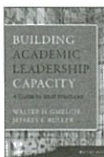

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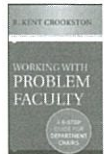

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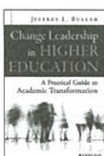

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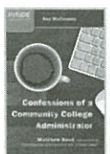

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