EFFECTIVE PRACTICES
FOR ACADEMIC LEADERS A Stylus Briefing

Becoming a Department Chair: To Be or Not To Be

by *Irene W. D. Hecht*

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Editors

Executive Summary

This briefing is an exploration of the path an individual might take in deciding to become a department chair. It gives advice concerning the challenges, rewards, and strategies for success and survival to prospective chairs (and their deans). It discusses some basics about the job, and the motivation expressed by chairs as they undertake this responsibility. It asks: "Do you really want this job?" and explores that issue through a series of questions. It also looks at steps to take once you have said, "yes."

INTRODUCTION

Department chairs often take up their responsibilities with a sense of obligation. However, even in such cases—perhaps even more urgently in such circumstances—prospective chairs should give careful consideration to the nature of the work they will be taking on. The thoughts shared here derive from twelve years of work with the American Council on Education (ACE) Department Leadership Program. This paper is the distillation of insights gained from department chairs over informal "breakfast conversations" and "table topic" lunch meetings and through questionnaires used at each workshop.

WHAT AM I LETTING MYSELF IN FOR?

Why Be a Department Chair?

It is estimated that there are 50,000 department leaders in higher education institutions in the United States (Keller, 1983). Typically called chairs, heads, or directors, they oversee academic departments, programs, and divisions. The purpose of this exploration is to offer assistance to prospective candidates as they consider accepting the position of department chair, and to give advice concerning the challenges, rewards, and strategies for success and survival. For the purposes of this discussion, I will use the term "chair," understanding that in fact it encompasses important variations in title, responsibilities, and authority.

Chairing an academic department is arguably the most challenging leadership position in higher education. As my colleague Walt Gmelch is fond of observing, "Where else do you take on a new set of responsibilities while continuing to carry all your old assignments?"[1] While an appropriately pointed question, it suggests that the only "takers" must be certifiably mad!

Having worked with department chairs in American Council on Education (ACE) leadership workshops for more than a decade, my experience tells

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me that when asked for their motivations, chairs' answers fall into three general categories:

- The desire to be the good citizen taking a turn at doing an unenviable task
- The conviction that one can do something beneficial for the department
- The lure of personal growth as one meets new challenges

The first motivation is most relevant in the case of small departments. Ten or fewer full-time faculty appointees is a standard for a small department. We find consistently that roughly one-fifth of chairs attending ACE national chair workshops are leading small departments. If a department is small and the chair position has term limits established in print or by custom, it is likely the position will be filled rotationally.

The second motivation, that of doing something beneficial for the department, can be a potent attraction—and it can certainly be combined with the "good citizen" motive of taking your turn. Institutional context and departmental history and climate affect the possibilities, which can range from the desire to stave off serious problems, the hope of healing destructive conflicts, or the wish to seize perceived opportunities. As motivation, the desire to do something beneficial is congruent with the concept of servant-leadership. You could even describe it as the "good citizen" model endowed with vision.

Those who answer "the call" on this basis are often induced to accept as a result of external pressures. These can come from departmental colleagues who are anxious about the evolution of their department and identify a particular colleague as the key problem solver. Or "the call" can literally come from a dean who is convinced that important changes need to occur in a department. When the external pressures match up with an individual drive to do something useful and the conviction of knowing how that might be done, you have a chair ready to take office.

The third category—a search for new challenges—can be a powerful motivation. Becoming a chair can be highly attractive at that point in a career when you need "something new" to do, after tenure, promotion, and the achievement of other academic goals. (However, it is surprising to find that higher education is also populated with untenured chairs.) Motivation can encompass the desire to be obliging, a desire to "do good," and the exhilaration of facing a significant challenge.

Clarity concerning one's motives for becoming a chair is certainly desirable. But it is also vital to have a grasp of the realities of the position. What are the challenges and rewards of being a department chair?

What Is the Job?

A chair is responsible for organizing a defined group of people around a particular curriculum or instructional purpose. There are managerial tasks that must be performed and leadership functions to be exercised. Fiscal and physical resources need to be overseen. Recruiting, supporting, and reviewing the performance of faculty and staff are expected. There may be the need

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to arrange staffing to fulfill the department's instructional purposes. Issues affecting students need attention, as do reports requested by deans or other administrative personnel. For some departments, the border between the institution and its community may dissolve because of new instructional approaches like service learning. In such departments, the chair will be drawn into active work with the external community.

THE CHALLENGES OF CHAIRING

Should you decide that chairing is an adventure on which you wish to embark, what challenges might you expect to meet? The challenges can be organized into three categories: the opportunity to think in new dimensions; the imperative to hone new skills; and the need to restructure one's human relationships.

Thinking in New Dimensions

Reconfiguring Your Concept of Time

The work overload alluded to in Gmelch's description of the chair's job as simultaneously combining a new job with the obligations of the old one is only one facet of the challenge. That chairs experience extreme time pressure is certainly well known. It is more surprising to hear chairs say that they now think of time in totally different dimensions. For teacher-scholars, time is regulated by the rhythms of the daily schedule, the organization of the week, and the temporal posts of papers and exams that define the term or semester, punctuated by periodic downtimes of short or long vacations. There is the tornado of opening a term or the bleary-eyed reading of exam papers and the filing of grades. Like a classical symphony, the movements for faculty members are clearly defined and the patterns predictable.

For a chair, the phenomenon of time loses its symphonic clarity as it is stretched into diverse dimensions. One needs to think not just about semesters, but about the academic year. It becomes important to *think in terms of consequences.* How will a decision taken today affect events days, weeks, or even years from now?

When you work with a broader range of individuals within a campus, it does not take long to perceive that a variety of clocks are ticking. Administrative time is heavily influenced by budget cycles. While departments may worry about this year's budget, those in administration chronically look at a three-year spread: the budget that just closed to see how the institution fared; the current budget, which is necessarily a dynamic entity needing constant attention and adjustment; and the next year's budget, which must be planned in the light of past experience, current decisions, and future expectations. For these tasks there exists a recognized rhythm—recognized, that is, by the practitioners involved—but bearing little congruence with departmental time patterns.

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Deans and provosts are very aware of the budget timetables, but they are also heavily affected by the rhythms of boards of trustees and/or legislators. To meet calls for information or to feed their presentations, deans call on chairs for help. As a chair you soon learn that these administrative calls are rarely well attuned to the time patterns of departmental life.

A chair may also run into the time patterns of the recruitment process. Admissions offices need to move vigorously to attract new students, and many would like these applicants to visit the campus and appropriate departments. Chairs may get the calls to host or interview students, knowing that the department is already stretched to bursting with its own routines. In research institutions, chairs are also involved in the recruitment of graduate students. They can mitigate these stresses by being prepared for the timing of these requests and obligations and by preparing department colleagues to understand, anticipate, and respond positively.

Registrars need grades to post. The catalog needs text. Physical plant needs lead time for projects. Each and every constituency has its rhythms and its points of crisis. To get the department's work done a chair may need to connect to more than one time field. You may even need to help disconnected "time groups" interact effectively to get the department's work done. Either you will learn to operate simultaneously in several time zones or you will experience untold frustration.

An Expanding Universe

As a faculty member it is possible to exist within a clearly delineated world of institutional work framed by the department and its students. A faculty member may be able to remain detached. Some faculty choose to operate with far broader horizons, but that is not routinely required by their professional functions. A chair, on the other hand, cannot be optimally effective without the ability to enlarge his or her universe of concerns within the institution and even beyond. In the world of "once-upon-a-time," chairs could con-

ceive of their main responsibility as advocating for their colleagues and their departments. While that remains an important responsibility, it cannot be pursued ignoring the ramifications of the department's stands on others within the institution and even on the external community.

Interdepartmental Activities

Higher education has been moving steadily towards increased interdisciplinary collaboration. Science departments, for example, have been demonstrating how it is possible to rethink concepts of space and curriculum. Motivated no doubt in part by a need to use finite resources to the greatest effect, they have designed laboratories to be supportive of more than one course or even more than one department.[2] While these changes in thinking have to involve entire departments, it is chairs who need to lead such changes in thinking.

Chairs need to think of the possibilities of interdisciplinary collaboration and ask the following questions:

- *Whose students does the department serve beyond your majors?*

  Any chair who reviews the departmental provenance of nonmajor enrollees in its courses can expect to see long-lived patterns. There may even be courses popular to a broad audience as electives. In those instances where your courses are either required or recognized as electives in another department, what is the history of contact between the two departments? As a chair, it behooves you to visit with your chair colleague. Both of you may wish to encourage further contact either between specific faculty from each of your departments or between the entire departments. Look for creative new collaborations.
- *Which departments provide key courses to your majors?*

  The reverse process is appropriate with the departments that provide either service courses required in your curriculum or electives that you recognize in your major. As with the departments yours serves, it is appropriate to build planned linkages, both programmatic and human.
- *To what extent is interdisciplinary study attractive and/or possible?*

  As fields of knowledge expand, disciplinary boundaries may become impediments. In other cases, the boundaries may stand, but new questions cannot be answered without contributions from more than one specialization. An appropriate question for a chair to raise is whether there are collaborations not yet used that could advance the intellectual growth of both faculty and students. In the case of existing cooperative ventures, are there steps that would make their impact even more productive?
- *When recruiting new faculty, what collaboration might be possible with other departments, or even other institutions?*

  In this era of fiscal constraint—a situation that promises to be enduring—there is a premium on creative hiring. Where there is a specialty that your department regards as important, but which it cannot persuasively justify in numerical terms, look for the opportunity for joint appointments within your institution or even between your institution and another in your geographic neighborhood. Do not drop such an idea if it suggests collaboration between differing styles of institution; for example, between a public and a private or a two- and four-year college. Although they are not crossed often, even these boundaries are becoming permeable.

  Collaboration with other departments or institutions may also be a viable approach to meeting spousal or partner needs when, as is increasingly the case, a potential faculty member is part of an academic couple.

One of the challenges for a faculty member taking on the role of department chair is creating a new identity.

Creating a New Identity: Seeing Yourself as a Leader

Leadership Styles. One of the challenges for a faculty member taking on the role of department chair is creating a new identity. The sequences of academic and personal life have taken all of us across a series of identity transitions. We have advanced from high school to college to graduate school. Each move embodied an identity shift marked in time and often in terms of shared ceremonies. We have become faculty members by progressing through a graduate school apprenticeship to a first appointment through tenure review. Each of these transitions has some tangible moment of transfer to remind us that "we have changed."

You may be able to point to a moment when you "became a chair," but the transition to *being responsible for others* may not fall into place without some self-reflection. A facet of that responsibility is that you need to exert leadership. What does that mean for you? Does that mean being forceful?

Does that mean becoming the department's chief decision maker? Does it mean becoming a consensus builder? How does one build cohesion among a group of individuals? How can you support the emergence of a shared vision for the department's role in the institution?

Many different styles of leadership are being practiced within the walls of the academy. You can find departments functioning under a "command" structure, but my experience is that you are more likely to be lodged in a department that works on the consensus principle. While consensus can produce powerful and effective decisions, the need for consensus can also stall decision making. That will happen if chair and colleagues collude in permitting a "blackball" system to rule. In some unfortunate cases a chair may be faced with a dysfunctional department whose members have lost the capacity to work together.

The Department Context. What is the departmental context in which you must lead, and how do you envisage manifesting your leadership? Are you most comfortable holding key information and making suggestions with the expectation that your colleagues will adopt your ideas? Are you comfortable in the role of consensus builder? Do you see yourself as someone who empowers others? Alternately, what would you do if you disagree with a consensus decision reached by your faculty colleagues? What is your tolerance for ambiguity and disagreement, which can extend into conflict? Do you think that your leadership instincts mesh well with the traditions of your department and colleagues? If not, do you intentionally wish to redesign the culture of your department? There is no "right answer" to these questions. The answers you find, however, will go far to suggest your comfort in the position of department chair and may point to the places where you will meet resistance—or great success.

Developing Skills and Mastering New Tasks

Time Management

If "go with the flow" has been your time management mode as a faculty member, it will quickly become clear that you need to change if you are to survive in your new role. It will become vital to plan time tightly. Students dropping by will need to learn to get to the point quickly. It can be effective to maintain some open door time for faculty and students, but you will need to schedule even that, contradictory as that may sound.

. . . supervision may be a topic to which you have not given any thought. While the word implies directing others, the role for a chair is more complicated than that, involving as it does staff, faculty, and students, none of whom may take kindly to overt "supervision."

A chair needs to inventory the appalling variety of tasks that need to be performed, organizing them into at least two general categories: those that are predictable and those that arise unexpectedly. In the first category fall all those institutional routines, like submitting class schedules, conducting faculty reviews, and preparing your budget. In the second are all the human events ranging from student complaints to family crises among colleagues.

You may very well want to adopt a double calendar. One can be reserved to map out the predictable institutional tasks, for which you will certainly receive reminders, but rarely in a time frame that permits the advance planning you need to meet the deadline. You will fare best by adopting the task of advance planning as your responsibility, so that when the predictable directives arrive you are ready for them

Your other calendar will probably be the same one you have kept for years, outlining each day's appointments. Avoid filling it to capacity, for you can be sure the unexpected will throw your careful organization into chaos on many days. Leave gaps in your day as a buffer for absorbing the unexpected. Do not think of your personal time for planning, preparation for teaching, and research as "negotiable" time. Schedule it. Buffer time should be exactly that: time you have not allocated to any specific task. It should represent the time you have kept for the unexpected.

Supervisor—A New Role?

The Supervisory Role with Staff. If, like many chairs, you assume your role as chair from a position as a full-time faculty member, supervision may be a topic to which you have not given any thought. While the word implies directing others, the role for a chair is more complicated than that, involving as it does staff, faculty, and students, none of whom may take kindly to overt "supervision."

For example, the department probably has an executive secretary. Often, this person is a long-term institutional employee who knows far more than you do about institutional routines. Chairs need to work in collaboration with staff, but they must also take responsibility for providing directions and maintaining accountability. Experienced secre-

taries can markedly lighten the burdens of department chairs who take the time to develop effective working relationships with them.

At the same time, however, it is appropriate to keep in mind that some decisions belong to the chair, and a chair who fails to pick up that responsibility places extra burdens on a secretary. An alert chair will not leave a secretary to arbitrate between colleagues' time demands. When there is "bad news" to deliver to a faculty member, a chair should not leave that task to the secretary.

The Supervisory Role with Faculty. There are also quasi-supervisory tasks that pertain to the department's faculty. All institutions are awash in deadlines, be they for submitting course descriptions, promotion and tenure documents, or annual performance reviews for faculty and staff. While a chair may not wish to "give orders" for the completion of tasks, it is a part of the chair's role to keep colleagues alert and accountable to deadlines. If the task seems unpalatable, remember that the activities of individuals affect the reputation of the department, and the department, in turn, has obligations to students and to the institution. Those obligations may be met through the work of faculty as individuals, but it is the accumulation of individual activity that creates the quality (or lack thereof) of the entire department—and departmental quality is the responsibility of the chair.

Supervisory Obligations with Tenure-Line Faculty. Special supervisory obligations pertain to new, yet-to-be tenured faculty and to the growing body of temporary faculty. It may be tempting to think of this as primarily a mentoring function. However, chairs need to be careful about assuming the role of a mentor unless they also remain alert to the obligations of assessing untenured faculty and their work. One of the more difficult responsibilities of a chair is that of making judgments. With new tenure-track faculty, the chair will eventually need to write a letter either supporting or opposing a tenure application. It is wise to maintain enough professional distance so that you can perform that task objectively. Do not forget that if unhappy news is to be delivered, as chair you will have the most visible role in announcing a negative decision.

The possibility of playing a contradictory role can be mitigated if as chair you define your task as ensuring that good mentoring is taking place.

For some departments resource management may not venture beyond a modest operating budget. However, the trend toward decentralization has made resource management increasingly complex.

Leave the actual mentoring to a colleague who does not share the ambiguity of your position. On the other hand, a chair should play a direct role in explaining the review routines to untenured faculty members. As chair, you can also provide guidance on how a new faculty member should allocate time: What committee assignments should be accepted; which refused? Where can a novice find help in improving his or her teaching? In addition, a chair can protect untenured faculty members by assuming responsibility for refusing extra tasks on their behalf, such as institutional committee work. The chair can also assist a novice by arranging teaching schedules to allow adequate time for preparation of new classes and a margin for continuing research.

Responsibility for Adjunct Faculty. The chair has an even heavier responsibility with temporary or adjunct faculty. This segment of the faculty has been growing steadily, with the national average of non-tenure contract faculty reaching 40 percent. A chair cannot afford to forget that as far as the department's students are concerned, a faculty member is a faculty member. Their expectations concerning standards of instruction and availability of counsel do not take into consideration institutional contracts. As chair you have the responsibility to ensure that temporary faculty know the curricular rules of the department and perform their duties according to the standards of the department and institution. You also need to support integration of part-time faculty members with their full-time colleagues. Last, you need to ensure that part-time faculty are treated ethically and humanely.

Resource Manager

Budgeting. For some departments resource management may not venture beyond a modest operating budget. However, the trend toward decentralization has made resource management increasingly complex. In some departments, for example, the entire adjunct budget is placed as a lump sum into the annual operating budget of the department. This certainly provides a significant degree of flexibility to the department, but it also gives the chair additional responsibility for husbanding resources to cover the department's needs for an entire academic year. Fall profligacy can engender a spring crisis, without much possibility of securing a rescue package from the dean.

A new chair can be faced with monitoring the operating budget of the department without any prior experience in fiscal management beyond balanc-

ing the family checkbook. The institutional budget office may provide a formal crash course on the ins and outs of budget categories, the rules for shifting funds, and the process of encumbering monies. If not, a prudent chair will secure training from someone in the budget department. If your department is blessed with its own budget manager, ask for instruction as promptly as possible. Remember that it is the chair who is responsible, and it is the chair who must make certain decisions, even if divested of the burden of daily fiscal management.

Some institutions have moved into totally computerized management, avoiding the chore of printing monthly budget summaries. The advantage to fiscal management is that you are working with up-to-the-minute information. The disadvantage can be the complexity of a budgeting system with which you need to become familiar.

Fund Raising. As fiscal resources have tightened, all institutions are looking for new sources of revenue, and in pursuing that search more and more players have been pulled onto the fundraising team. So now the department chair is responsible not only for the careful expenditure of fiscal resources, but for finding those resources as well. Giving departments more responsibility for fundraising is a logical step. Major donors are frequently the alumni of an institution, and the tie that keeps their interest is their connection to specific faculty members—often in the graduate's major department. In many cases individual faculty members are the first to know of the good fortune of their alumni.

The chair's role in any fundraising activity is critical, and the need for careful coordination with the university development office is of paramount importance. Individual entrepreneurial activity can undercut the institution's overall effort if mistimed or misapplied. At the same time, any chair who sets off seeking new funds for the department can benefit from the organizational expertise and knowledge of the development office. Furthermore, it is the chair's responsibility—once again—to ensure that individual faculty do not go off on private fund-raising sprees disconnected from the department and the institution.

Physical Plant. Beyond the matter of managing money, many departments now have major responsibilities for managing portions of the college's physical plant. Some of those departments are in the arts: music departments, with their auditoriums and practice rooms; art departments, with their studios; theatre departments, with their performance spaces. All of these represent highly specialized venues with exclusive patterns of use. In some instances, psychology departments occupy an entire building. Language departments may also occupy their "own" spaces. Then there are the natural sciences with their need for laboratories and lecture-demonstration halls. We have already alluded to the important change in the planning of laboratory space, which is now being designed collaboratively for multipurpose use.

It is important to keep in mind that your professional conduct toward your colleagues may also need to change.

Whatever the disciplinary specialty, departments—as part of the devolution of responsibility from central administration—increasingly must manage their physical resources. This ranges from responsibility for daily maintenance to planning for annual upkeep, from periodic investment in improving aging facilities to, in the most extreme cases, playing a major role in planning a new building.

Restructuring One's Human Relationships

While you may expect to meet new challenges in terms of tasks and time management as a new chair, the transformation of human relationships can be a shock. These redefinitions include the following:

- Relationships with colleagues
- Relationships with students
- Relationships with staff
- Relationships with the dean's office
- Professional relationships beyond the department
- Personal relationships

Relationships with Colleagues

Comments by enrollees in the ACE national workshops for department chairs reveal that for some chairs changes in attitude, particularly on the part of their colleagues, comes as a cruel blow. The jokes about "going to the dark side" are hard to brush aside when behind the humor you sense a seriousness of intent. It is not funny to be thought of as something akin to a traitor at the very moment you have accepted complex responsibilities from the noblest of motives. To add to your misery, you may find that conversation with your colleagues has become more formal. You may not feel welcome at the Friday night wine bar or tavern stop. To your astonishment, you may start knowing sides of your colleagues of which you were unaware, as they come to you with requests and complaints that they expect you to tend to—with the solutions they want. Some will even try to pressure or maneuver you to become a party (on their side, to be sure) to quarrels that in the past you have ignored.

It is important to keep in mind that your professional conduct toward your colleagues may also need to change.

While you were a faculty member, you probably had at least one colleague whom you were in the habit of avoiding. As chair, you cannot continue such conduct. You are obligated to maintain the same standards of fairness and professionalism toward every member of the department, regardless of your personal preferences. That does not mean you tolerate unacceptable, disruptive behavior, or that you turn a blind eye to the neglect of professional duties. It does mean that every colleague deserves an objective hearing and courteous responses. If a colleague needs to hear a tough message, it must be delivered without personal invective or humiliating scorn.

Dealing with your departmental friends may pose an even greater challenge. A chair who is perceived as playing favorites sows dissension in the department. The result over time will be a dysfunctional group of colleagues. Once you realize that you need to re-align your attitudes and behaviors toward your colleagues, you can begin to see their "cold shoulder" as a normal—and desirable—realignment of relationships that serves your interests as you strive to create, preserve, or enhance your department's quality.

Relationships with Students

In all likelihood you will continue to teach. You will have your undergraduate majors or graduate students whom you are seeing through to the completion of their studies. You may have enjoyed an open-door policy, whereby students dropped by at will for a chat. As chair you will find that precious spontaneity curtailed.

Meanwhile, you will find yourself the arbiter over requests for exceptions from departmental requirements. It is you whom students will seek out with their complaints. When those concern the conduct of your colleagues, you can quickly find yourself dealing with awkward problems you wish had never arrived at your door. Remember whenever you are listening to a compelling narrative that there are always at least two sides to any story.

Do your best to concentrate on listening and asking questions without giving any sign of agreement with a complainant's presentation. Hunt down facts mercilessly. If you believe the complaining student can take appropriate steps to solve the problem, direct him or her to do so. Insist upon a report on the results. If the issue is beyond the student's ability to rectify, state clearly the investigative steps you will take, and set a time for the student to return. A good motto is "Don't let real problems fester, but do not permit yourself to be run in circles by trivia." One of the keys to success is sniffing out the difference between the two.

At every point at which your department is dependent on others for services, there will be a person with whom you need to establish an effective working relationship.

Relationships with Staff

Department Staff. In a small department, staff relationships may initially involve only a department secretary. In larger departments, staff may include several secretaries and fiscal, communications, technology, human resources, or student services professionals, some or all of whom may report directly to the chair. The importance of a well-grounded relationship and the obligations of a chair toward a department staff person have already been discussed.

University Staff. However, with the expansion of the chair-universe, you may well have interactions with many other university staff. There are the building janitors; the institution's maintenance staff; campus security; and office personnel throughout the campus. At every point at which your department is dependent on others for services, there will be a person with whom you need to establish an effective working relationship. Keep in mind that everyone wants to take pride in what he or she does, and you can contribute to that sense of pride by recognizing what is being accomplished on your department's behalf. With a sense of respect established, your department will fare much better when it needs special assistance.

There are also all the college or university offices—from admissions, to finance, to the registrar, to the dean and provost and president—on whom your department either depends or from whom it receives requests for support. In the process of expanding your horizons, it is wise to gain at least a basic understanding of the responsibilities and timetables that govern the work of the other branches of the institution on which your department depends for support and to establish relationships with the people in those offices. It is far easier to work out accommodations if you are willing to understand the demands others are required to meet.

The Relationship with the Dean

One of the most important figures in a chair's expanded universe is the dean to whom he or she reports. This is a special relationship deserving focused attention. Seek to know something about who your dean is and what expectations the dean has for you. What

has been the historic relationship between your department and the dean's office? If your department and the dean have been at odds, how might you resolve existing issues? If your goal is to change the relationship between department and dean, think carefully about how that might be done.

It is also important to gauge how this dean likes to work. What is your desired ideal? Do you want to "run your own show," keeping the dean apprised of your plans, decisions, and actions, but functioning autonomously? Or are you a chair who hopes to create a mentee relationship with the dean?

Seek to find out your dean's preferences. Deans are as harried as chairs, and yours may not have the margin to function as a sounding board or mentor. If you need a mentor and your dean is not willing/able to fill that need, be sure to find another source of advice. What you can usually count on is that the dean wants to be kept informed of your department's activities and problems in the interests of not being blindsided or shown up as not "knowing what is going on." Do not be surprised if your dean prefers that you present recommended solutions simultaneously with a problem you bring to her or his attention.

Professional Relationships beyond the Department

In parallel with the expansion of your universe there is an expansion—and transformation—of human relations and connections beyond the department. You may find yourself with many new stimulating and personally satisfying professional connections. But keep in mind that these professional connections are held together by the glue of your mutual responsibilities. If the professional identity of either of you changes, the relationship may rapidly fade. Be prepared to distinguish between a true personal friendship connection and a professional friendship, and do not take offense if changes in circumstances or responsibility sever what was a professional friendship.

Personal Relationships

It can be unsettling to find that while your professional universe enlarges, your personal universe is in danger of shrinking. There can be a sense of exhilaration from the new associations, but they cannot substitute for personal friendship. In fact, you may need to give most particular attention to nurturing your personal network at the very moment when your human contacts are multiplying. A safe human space where you can "let down your hair" is a common need. For those with managerial responsibilities, it is crucially important. New chairs may need to consciously redesign such personal human space.

You may, in fact, need two categories of friends. It is helpful to have at least one professional friend with whom you can safely air your irritations, frustrations, and bafflement as a department chair. A sympathetic interlocutor who will challenge your inspirations and visions is invaluable. The other category of friends is for those who are not entwined in your professional universe. Spouses and "significant others" often fill that role. Do not dilute their ability to nurture you by recruiting them to be your professional sounding boards. That should not imply a taboo on talking about work; it does mean that you want to be sure that your friend and family conversations are not overwhelmed by your work world.

THE REWARDS OF BEING A DEPARTMENT CHAIR

If there are challenges in being a chair, there are also rewards. Feedback from chairs attending several of the ACE workshop programs is particularly emphatic on three points:

- They enjoy seeing "good things happening" in their departments.
- They are excited about their contact with a bigger world.
- They get pleasure from mastering new challenges.

Seeing Good Things Happen

It is not unusual for people to "get a buzz" from seeing themselves as successful problem solvers. For department chairs, the problems solved benefit colleagues, students, staff and even the institution at large. There is one peculiarity to this satisfaction: It may not be recognized by any one but yourself! In fact, a savvy chair will often ascribe the success to the efforts of colleagues. Thus, within this "payoff" there is also a challenging "price." As a faculty member, your sense of success was based largely on your own achievements, but the success of a chair is more likely to be embodied in the success of others.

Being a creative, effective chair is not guaranteed to win you personal praise. It may not even earn you recognition. That fact is a hard pill for some to swallow. If it is a major obstacle for you, think twice about accepting the position.

Where and how does a chair see good things happen? They can happen in many different areas, depending on the immediate context and challenges facing your department. Examples may include the following:

- A once highly successful department may be seeing its majors decline in numbers. Helping that department succeed could mean halting the decline.
- A department may be struggling with a merger with another depart-

ment. Here success could be measured by the ability to bridge and meld two cultures.

- A department may be going through a period of demographic turnover. Colleagues may be retiring; new faculty may be joining. Here the challenge is to orchestrate dignified departures and the preservation of important intellectual and curricular legacies, while also welcoming and encouraging the creativity that new people bring.
- A department may be living with a stagnant curriculum. While the discipline has entered new paths of inquiry, a department may be on autopilot, teaching with the assumptions current twenty years ago. Here the challenge is to stir colleagues into re-examining the curriculum and its connections to the discipline in terms of current practice and lines of inquiry.
- A department may be experiencing a decline in scholarly production and reputation, which can be usefully addressed through strategies focused on hiring, faculty development, and reward mechanisms.
- A department may be at an evolutionary crossroads where curricular review, retirements, and restaffing all need to be rethought. Not only do departmental colleagues need to be brought together, but also, perhaps with the involvement of the dean's office, there may be the additional challenge of navigating the wild waters of institutional committees, allocations of personnel lines with their effect on budgets, and even a need to rethink space needs.

The key to "seeing good things happen" is to establish your focus for what you want to see happen. Then think about how to make "good things happen.

The Chair's "Power"

Chairs often complain that they have immense responsibilities and no power, a notion that bears examining. If power is measured by command of money, the chair's power base may be thin indeed. However, it is not entirely absent. As part of your exposure to a larger universe beyond your department, you may hear of sources of funding of which you were previously ignorant. Your riches may lie in the information to which you have access rather than the budget lines you control, and your largesse can manifest itself in your willingness to share information.

Keep in mind that you have enormous influence in two particular areas: the organization of time and the organization of the departmental dialog.

If power is measured by the force you command, unless you are in a military establishment, holding rank above that of your colleagues, you are quite bereft. At times, faculty may be imbued with hierarchical views, but these do not readily translate into abiding regard for the authority of the department chair. While chair influence may be significant, it is most often derivative and ascriptive. You have the power your colleagues are willing to confer upon you. What are the foundations of such power? They are predominantly your character, your perceived reliability, your integrity, your knowledge, and the respect you have earned in your discipline.

How can you use the ephemeral, moral power conferred upon you to help "good things happen?" Keep in mind that you have enormous influence in two particular areas: the organization of time and the organization of the departmental dialog.

The Power to Organize Time

Of all the resources available, time is the one and only artifact that is neither replaceable nor fungible. Money can be created; material objects can be replaced, but time cannot be stopped, stored, or rerun. Why is time a source of power for chairs? Quite simply, they can affect how their colleagues spend their time and how efficiently they are able to use it. Chairs can organize teaching schedules to find the balance between student and institutional needs and faculty desires. This means knowing and taking an interest in the professional goals of all members of the department. They can help novice faculty who will be standing for tenure to create a balanced schedule, so that they can perfect their teaching and continue their scholarship. For mature colleagues there may be crucial developmental moments when they need an easier schedule in order to produce a new course, serve on a major committee, or finish something for publication.

Optimizing Student Time

Chairs can also play a role in optimizing student time. Students' ability to complete a curriculum is much affected by the scheduling decisions made by departments and by individual faculty. Whose needs should come first? Presumably those of the students, since the purpose of the institution is to offer them the education they seek. There can be tension between student needs and faculty goals. Sometimes meeting the time needs of students may impose hardships on faculty trying to maxi-

mize efficient use of their time for teaching, research, and writing. In these instances, the nature of the institution will affect the equation. In a teaching institution, student needs will trump faculty convenience. In a research-focused institution, faculty needs may be given more consideration. When these student-faculty tensions arise over scheduling, a chair may find that the only sane role is that of benign autocrat. That role will sit more easily on your shoulders if you have articulated in advance clear standards upon which you will base your decisions.

Time Organization and Governance Practices

There is yet another area where as chair you can organize the department's time effectively. Examine the department's governance practices. Does the department meet regularly? How frequently, and under what circumstances do you think it should meet? The criteria for that decision should be whether meetings are effective in advancing decisions and whether they are getting beyond information to address serious substantive matters affecting the department.

The other area of major influence is the power you hold over the department's dialog. Certainly when beginning as a chair, and even periodically thereafter, you will want to examine the patterns of dialog in the department. Here you need to adopt the methods of an ethnographer, as suggested by Bensimon (Bensimon & Newmann, 1993). Make notes on what is talked about in the department and periodically take the time to chart the process of dialog. Who speaks; what is the tenor of their speech; how long do people speak; who speaks to whom; what is the tone of the dialog? Are the topics discussed substantive or informational? Are there issues the department persistently avoids but which are important to advancing the department's agenda? Are questions periodically recycled without any decisions being made? How in fact, does the department make decisions? Should you pursue this ethnographic tack, you may be amused to see the predictability of the conversation.

The interesting thing about programmed dialog that has become repetitive and destructive is that if someone steps in with an unexpected assertion, the pattern can be disrupted. This means that, should you find yourself leading a dysfunctional or only marginally productive group, you can do a great deal with small interventions that push the dialog into new grooves. The process may take persistence, particularly if the old habits are deeply ingrained. As change in the pattern of dialog begins to take place, take care that old negative behaviors do not reassert themselves or that new ones are not invented. On the other hand, if you are working with colleagues who are highly effective collectively, do your best to understand and support their existing process of dialog.

In addition to the structure and process of dialog, as chair you can wield enormous influence by guiding the selection of topics on which the department will focus energy. In reviewing the dialog patterns of your department, decide whether the topics aired are informational or substantive. How long does the group spend on information (and trivia) and how much time is devoted to major issues of importance to the development of the department? Housekeeping details are important. If not taken care of, a department's work can unravel. However, a department that does not devote substantial time and energy to conceptual questions will not thrive. As chair you can have a major role in ensuring that the balance between details and principles is appropriate.

Seeing a Bigger World

Most chairs also enjoy the opportunity to interact in a larger universe. There can be enormous stimulation and pleasure in "seeing how things work," viewing the institution from a novel perspective, and understanding the connections between its varied parts. By observing and working with the dean, you can see the concerns of someone responsible for the college budget and for integrating and coordinating the college's curricular processes in the context of the entire institution. You will begin to hear about concerns at the provost and presidential level. You will begin to appreciate the impact of trustees and legislators. There may be eye-popping revelations when you find that there are questions you never even imagined, which are all-consuming to administrators.

As a chair, you can also access almost any part of the university structure that either interests you or seems potentially important to the workings of your department. Your position, modest though you may think it, can open the door to any office you wish to visit.

Beyond the Campus

Another pleasure of chairing can be the opportunity to stretch beyond the campus. With today's emphasis on service learning and community internships, there is ample reason to make contact with members of your local business community. If those contacts have not already been established, you can pursue them. If the contacts already exist, keep them alive by making the appropriate calls and visits. Remember also that these external connections may be valuable to your faculty colleagues.

The ability to connect them to external resources in terms of research opportunities, sabbaticals, internships, or information is part of your stock of largesse and empowerment.

In addition, to the extent that your institution may rely on departments to do some of their own fundraising, you may find yourself seeking external financial assistance for your department. These initiatives must be coordinated with your university development office; otherwise, you run the risk of sowing confusion and embarrassment between the institution and its supporters. If you are involved in a major call for support, you will be part of a visit team that has a representative from the development office.

The riches you bring to the process are the project proposals and the direct connection to faculty who will carry out the work and to students who will benefit. Donors want to know what their dollars will accomplish and you need to present convincingly the potential benefits of their gifts.

Mastering New Challenges

The third major area of satisfaction cited by chairs attending the ACE chair workshops is the personal satisfaction of mastering new challenges. Enough has already been said about the skills you will need; the tasks you will handle, some for the first time; and the human realignments that will require new responses, to indicate that there is plenty of room for gaining a sense of satisfaction through taking on new tasks. The source of that satisfaction will vary according to what you find most challenging and what you determine is most deserving of your attention. However, there is no doubt that you will feel stretched in this complex job.

IS THIS THE JOB I WANT?

Perspectives on the Job

Your View of the Job

Whether the job "comes to you," or you go seeking it, it is important to ask if you really want the responsibility. A good place to start that inquiry is to seek out the definitions of the job. In some institutions the faculty handbook contains a formal description. While it is important to review that, it is likely to be all-encompassing, describing expectations from developing grand plans for your department to administering its daily operations. However, at least as important is to review your own expectations of what the job should be. Then explore the expectations of your colleagues and those of the dean. If there is a serious disjuncture between your expectations and those of colleagues or dean, acceptance could be a mistake you will regret. If you see basic compatibility—or its potential—then being chair could be one of your professional highpoints.

The ability to connect your faculty to external resources in terms of research opportunities, sabbaticals, internships, or information is part of your stock of largesse and empowerment.

In assessing your expectations, think about the day when you step down as chair. What have you wanted to accomplish? How do you want to see your department having developed? What legacy do you want to leave to your colleagues? Take a clear professional look at your department. Do you think your goals can be accomplished within the current context of your department and institution? What support will you need from your colleagues? What support will you need from your dean?

Your Colleagues' View of the Job

Once you have your own concepts clearly in mind, seek a conversation with your colleagues. Ask them collectively and individually what they want from a chair. Let them hear what your ambitions are for the department. Listen carefully to their responses. Do they grasp what you need from each of them? In your judgment, will their support be forthcoming or are you getting polite answers just to encourage your candidacy?

An interview with the dean is critical. In many cases the dean makes the appointment. Even if that is not the procedural practice in your institution, a good working relationship with the dean is vital both for you and for the department. Make an appointment, requesting enough time for the two of you to listen to each other. Does the dean expect you simply to act as the mouthpiece from administration to faculty? How interested is the dean in helping you pursue the goals you have defined for yourself and for the department? How does the dean want to work with you? Does he or she leave it to you to schedule appointments for problem solving as needed, or does the dean want to see you on a regular basis? Is a meeting of chairs held at regular intervals with the dean? How are these organized and what is their purpose—the sharing of information, the exploration of issues, the solving of problems, the establishment of institutional principles? How do all these answers fit with your aspirations as chair?

It may not be easy to ferret out what in fact your colleagues expect of you, but their views in this matter will determine whether your tenure is uplift-

ing or a miserable burden. Some faculty groups want the chair to take care of all the departmental housekeeping, leaving them to pursue their individual interests. This variety of faculty may not even want to interact much with each other.

While a chair cannot avoid managing a large "to do" list, playing the Dutch boy with his thumb in the dike, holding back the sea, is not only a lonely task, it is an unproductive one, both for the department and for the chair. You need to have some assurance that your colleagues will be on hand to help with the work of running the department and sustaining and expanding its quality. At a minimum this will require the willingness of your colleagues to work together as a group in exploring opportunities and carrying out appropriate actions.

In the process of working out relations with your colleagues, be sure to clarify how you intend to do your chair work and when and how you will make yourself available to them. If you have been an "open door" person, you will definitely find that you need to schedule your time more closely than you have heretofore. You will need to work out the tricky balance of being available to your colleagues with your need for time alone as a teacher, a scholar, and a human being. That may mean specifying times when you are not available short of a missile attack or a tornado. As long as you are clear, predictable, and reliable in meeting your obligations as a general supporter of your colleagues, you should expect them to respect your needs for individual time.

The Dean's View of the Job

Three things will affect how you work with the dean: your assumptions about the relationship, the dean's assumptions, and the history and context of your institution. There are a number of questions to consider as you reflect on these issues.

How Do You View the Dean? Here are some questions to ask yourself about your relationship to the dean:

- Do you assume that your relationship with the dean will be hierarchical? That is, do you see the dean as your "boss?" Will you be reporting to the dean as subordinate to superior?
- Do you see the dean as a potential partner? Do you look forward to working in collaboration with the dean? Do you see this person as an important source of support and encouragement?
- Do you see the dean as a probable adversary? Do you anticipate having to maneuver to get what you want? Do you assume that the first answer you will get to any proposition will be a negative?

It may not be easy to ferret out what in fact your colleagues expect of you, but their views in this matter will determine whether your tenure is uplifting or a miserable burden.

It is important to bring assumptions to the surface, because your own conduct may induce the behaviors you dislike or fear. Think about the difference in service you receive when you approach people with a scowl in contrast to what happens when you address them with a smile. There is no reason to think that a dean will respond much differently.

What are the Dean's Assumptions? But what of the dean's assumptions? It is certainly easier to establish an effective and rewarding working relationship with a dean who receives you as a supporter or collaborating colleague, than with one who receives you with an air of suspicion, on guard against any request for assistance. If you are faced with an antagonist rather than a cooperative colleague, you still have the choice to engage in battle or to work at turning aside the thrusts. Refusing to engage in battle can be difficult, but jumping into the skirmish can be destructive for you and your department.

What are the Hierarchical Assumptions of Your Institution? The third factor that affects the orchestration of your work with the dean is the hierarchical habits of your institution. The structure of many of our colleges and universities is basically pyramidal, a pattern that encourages hierarchical relationships—the boss model alluded to previously. However, there is a strong counter movement toward flattening the administrative structure in many institutions. The result is the transfer of greater responsibilities to chairs, giving them stronger roles as leaders and enlarged opportunities for independent initiative. At the dean level it requires seeing chairs as part of the institutional leadership team.

What you talk about, when you talk, and how you problem-solve with your dean will be shaped by those three factors: your assumptions, those of the dean, and the hierarchical habits of your institution. While it is important at the outset to get as clear a fix as you can on those three elements, once into the job don't assume that the existing patterns are immutable. If you detect habits that you see as counterproductive, you still have the choice of adapting or of trying

to influence movement toward a more effective modus operandi.

What Do You Not Want to Give Up? Protecting What is Important in Your Life

The Personal Dimension

Time management was discussed earlier in the context of handling the myriad tasks demanded of a chair. It is also important to focus on time management as it affects the personal dimension of life. In seeking to keep the multiplicity of tasks from disintegrating into a sea of chaos, a specific niche for nurturing yourself is vitally important. That niche needs to have both a daily dimension and a cyclical pattern. Physical exercise is a desirable component, whether it is vigorous walking or a game of squash. The activity can vary from day to day, but it is important to keep it close to daily in your routine. There is no harm in doing something totally unproductive occasionally, ranging from a nap to watching Monday night football.

There are so many people in the life of a chair that there is a risk of neglecting those who are personally important. Time needs to be reserved for them, whether it is time to help a child with homework or time to spend with the significant other in your life. It is easy to think that what you are doing is so important that you fail to take vacations even when the academic calendar permits you to do so. Not only should you take appropriate vacations, but it is also vital to set aside personal time when you are "present on the job."

Continuing a Research Agenda

Closely intertwined with the loss of command over time is the inability to continue meaningful scholarship. Many chairs cite this as one of their primary personal frustrations. Much of the problem derives from the incompatible time demands of the universe of a faculty member and that of a chair. For a chair, time tends to become highly fragmented. Scholarship, by contrast, needs swaths of uninterrupted time. However, looking more closely, faculty time can also become shattered into small bits. The difference is that faculty who do research also feel entitled to block out times when they either shut their office doors or disappear into labs, libraries, or their home studies. There is no reason that as chair you cannot do the same thing. The one difference is that as chair you may need to make a public declaration concerning that reserve of time and you may need to go through a training period with colleagues and staff so that they will respect your time boundaries. There is still the danger that departmental crises or summonses from your dean may cut into that "sacred" time, but you will have to live with that. However, you should find it possible to preserve some time for scholarship, though you cannot expect to keep the same research pace.

There are so many people in the life of a chair that there is a risk of neglecting those who are personally important. Time needs to be reserved for them, whether it is time to help a child with homework or time to spend with the significant other in your life.

Another gambit is to examine your research agenda carefully, considering whether you can build it into any seminars you may teach, or whether you can create some student research that can feed your longer term research objectives. Last, if you are pursuing the kind of investigation where a paid student intern could keep your work advancing, think about negotiating the monetary assistance you might need as part of your job agreement with the dean. You might also discuss the possibility of a mini-sabbatical as you conclude your chair assignment, in order to pick up your scholarship and teaching.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YES?

If the answer to undertaking the chair position is "Yes," how can you prepare yourself for actually "doing" the job? You need to gain some mastery at two different levels: getting to know your institution and learning about the literature of department chair leadership.

Know your Institution

Understanding Personnel Matters

You need to be sure you have a good grasp of the institution's rules, particularly in the area of personnel matters. You are now not only a faculty member, but also a representative of the institution. Chairs can create incredibly costly difficulties for their institutions if they make personnel pronouncements that do not conform to the policies in the faculty handbook. Faculty members whom you have put at risk because you have misled them about review procedures will certainly be angry. The danger to the institution comes when that anger is translated into a lawsuit.

Read the faculty handbook. You don't need to memorize the volume, but you should know the nature of its major topics. You should also know how to find information in your institution's policy statements. When you are not sure of an answer to a procedural question, make sure you reread the

rules before responding. If the question is muddy, consult your dean and/or the institution's attorney.

Understanding the Budget

Know how to "read" your budget. Learn the basic rules of what monies can be spent in what manner. Find out how and when funds can be transferred within your allocation. If the department secretary is handling the daily details, remember that the person ultimately responsible is you, so be sure you know and understand what is going on with your department's funds.

Acquainting Yourself with Other Offices

Take the time to establish connections with those offices with which you will be working or will depend upon for assistance: the budget office; the institutional office that schedules classes and assigns instructional space; the physical plant, responsible for repair and maintenance of departmental space; the dean's office and its staff; and the development office.

Wherever you visit, do not forget to note whom you meet and how they fit into the operations of that department. You stand a better chance of a friendly hearing when you are able to address people by their names. Do not forget to express personal appreciation after being assisted.

Literature of Leadership and Leadership Training Pertaining to Department Chairs

During the process of training in a discipline, we learn about the journals in our field, do a great deal of bibliographic work in our specialty, and go to conferences and the annual meeting of our relevant disciplinary association. Chairs willing to see that role as a professional undertaking should make similar efforts. They should read some of the basic texts of the field, many of which are described in the annotated bibliography on page 16. Some disciplines have annual conferences for department chairs, some with orientation sessions for new chairs.

Chairs should also have some understanding of general trends in higher education. One way to keep abreast of those matters is to read *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Change* magazine. ACE has developed a Web site specifically for department chairs, where you will find web links, PDFs of articles, and bibliographic references divided across four large topics: the chair as leader, the chair and faculty, legal issues, and resource management. For information about the *The Chronicle, Change* magazine, and the ACE web site, see the annotated bibliography on page 16.

CONCLUSION

When you get to "yes," know that you have taken on a remarkably complex challenge, but one which has the potential of impacting your department—and through it, your institution—well beyond your term of tenure. Handled well, being a department chair can be exciting, energizing and highly satisfying, bringing with it the promise of a long and productive legacy.

ENDNOTES

1. Paraphrased from comments by Walter H. Gmelch, Dean, School of Education, University of San Francisco, at multiple ACE Chair Leadership Programs.

2. Visit the ACE web site, www .acenet.edu, section on Managing Resources, Physical Plant, for information on space design in higher education institutions. See especially data about Project Kaleidoscope, an ongoing effort funded by the National Science Foundation.

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ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Change Magazine

The Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation publishes this bimonthly. Each issue focuses on a topic of particular interest in higher education. A subscription can be arranged by calling 1-800-365-9675.

The Chronicle of Higher Education

This is higher education's newspaper, merchandise mart, and bulletin board. News coverage includes news-of-the-week items on higher education as well as special sections on athletics, philanthropy, education overseas, and an opinion section. Subscription information for online and hard copy versions of *The Chronicle* is available at http://chronicle.com.

Hecht, I. W. D., Higgerson, M. L., Gmelch, W. H., & Tucker, A. (1999). *The department chair as academic leader.* Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.

Designed as the successor to the late Allan Tucker's *Chairing the Academic Department,* this volume looks at the leadership challenges facing department chairs as their institutions come to rely on them more and more heavily to solve the academy's problems.

Higgerson, M. L., & Rehwaldt, S. R. (1993). *Complexities of higher education administration.* Bolton, MA: Anker.

An excellent compendium of case studies that reflect the new challenges in education administration.

Higgerson, M. L. (1996). *Communication skills for department chairs.* Bolton, MA: Anker.

In this volume Higgerson describes the work of chairs as falling into three areas: cultivating the department culture; working with faculty; interfacing with external publics. Theory and practice are conjoined through case studies, giving chairs the opportunity to be guided by theory that they can apply to cases that can serve as a chance to perform "dry-run" solutions to the particular problems they may face.

Holton, S. (Ed.) (1998). *Mending the cracks in the ivory tower: Strategies for conflict management in higher education.* Bolton, MA: Anker.

Following a brief introductory essay, this volume furnishes insights from a range of authors on a number of conflict points in higher education. And most of those conflict points impinge on the work of department chairs!

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

Coming from a combined background in both psychology and management, Lucas's volume looks at the familiar topics of chair responsibility, including roles and responsibilities, motivating faculty, supporting good teaching, encouraging scholarship, and team building, through the lens of a trained psychologist and manager. The volume is particularly helpful in giving concrete guidance for dealing with some of the more perplexing—and important—issues involved in leading others both as individuals and as members of a group.

Lucas, A. (2000). *Leading academic change: Essential roles for department chairs.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This volume comprises a series of chapters on the subject of academic change provided by a number of well-known scholars. These are arranged under three headings: Leading Change; The Collaborative Role of the Chair in Departmental Change; and Leading Innovative Change in Curriculum and Teaching.

Walvoord, B. E., Carey, A. K., Hoke, L. S., Soled, Suzanne W., Way, P. K., & Zorn, D. E. (2000). *Academic departments: How they work, how they change,* ASHE-ERIC, 27(8).

This monograph focuses on the issue of change, relating that to the character of the department. The authors are cognizant of the variations in institutional design and emphasize the importance of context to the work of chairs and the process of change.

CALL FOR PAPERS AND FEEDBACK

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

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