

The

DEPARTMENT CHAIR

FALL 2021 | VOLUME 32 | NUMBER 2

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A RESOURCE FOR ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATORS

What's Your Motivation?

MICHAEL THRASHER

As campuses continue the process of repopulating following the disruption of the pandemic, department administrators have a unique opportunity for thoughtful reflection on their roles. While times of measured consideration always offer valuable benefits, the experiences of the past year may provide a distinct vantage point and perspective. Certainly the pandemic has revealed aspects of academic leadership that few could have imagined. Although academic leaders quickly grow familiar with curricular, personnel, and fiscal issues, most were quite unprepared for matters such as HEPA air filters and bioaerosol dispersal patterns.

Perhaps the most fundamental question facing any academic leader relates to one's underlying motive pattern. Simply stated, given the complexities of the job, why would someone want to serve as a department academic leader? What would compel someone to accept such a role, particularly given the depth and range of responsibilities? On a personal level, what has led you to pursue, accept, or continue in your academic leadership role?

Anecdotally, the profession has suggested a variety of motivating factors. For example, some hold that department leadership may present a new challenge, particularly for those who have accrued many years of faculty experience and want to seek new opportunities to grow. Perhaps others approach the role out of a sense of responsibility—a desire to give back to the broader unit. In some cases, new administrators accept the position simply because they were asked or because no one else seemed willing to accept the assignment.

More nefariously, instances may exist in which new administrators assume leadership

roles for self-centric reasons. For example, scenarios could be imagined in which one desires a leadership role in order to exert more control over resources or individuals. Some may actively pursue a leadership position to preempt someone else from ascending to the role.

Much of the literature on this topic treads lightly around the subject of remuneration. However, as a matter of practice, a desire for financial advancement may serve as a motivating factor for some department administrators. For such leaders, salary adjustments can manifest themselves through administrative stipends or supplements or through increased contract lengths (e.g., ten-, eleven-, or twelve-month contracts). Although administrative supplements may be modest, they do provide an opportunity to enhance the salary of a faculty member who might otherwise remain at a relatively stagnant level. Longer contracts may have a more significant effect on annual income, although such adjustments may not represent a raise per se, due to the additional work commitments involved.

For some, an additional motivating factor might be a natural inclination to accept greater responsibility for those who gravitate willingly toward leadership roles. Consider the person who is quick to accept a new task, a new initiative, or an additional responsibility. While some eagerly and naturally respond in such ways, others may feel more comfortable working within the bounds of established, familiar patterns.

Finally, some individuals seek department leadership from a desire to see a broader palette and to view the work of the organization in a more ecumenical way. As academics, faculty tend to be highly specialized experts with a profound understanding of their specific



disciplines. After years of such work, some may desire to see the big picture and to view the work of higher education more broadly than through the lens of an individual specialization.

Does one's motivation for pursuing and accepting an academic leadership role really influence one's effectiveness in that role? In other words, does your motivation for leadership directly affect your ability to be successful as a leader? According to the literature, that may be exactly the case. In *Ethical Dimensions of Leadership* (1996), Rabindra N. Kanungo and Manuel Mendonca speak specifically to this issue. They describe two contrasting motive patterns: the *egotistic* motive pattern and the *altruistic* motive pattern. As might be imagined, egotistic leaders pursue their roles out of selfish, self-centric reasons. Consequently, they tend to focus on personal rewards (such as a better office or more travel funding) rather than on the good of the broader organization. They may seek to insulate themselves from difficult decisions, take steps to protect their position, or pursue personal priorities rather than addressing the real challenges and opportunities facing the organization.

Conversely, those who approach leadership from an altruistic motive pattern seek the role out of a desire to benefit others—to have a positive effect on the students, the faculty, the institution, and the profession. Such motivation manifests itself in a substantially different manner. Altruistic leaders are driven to achieve broad organizational success, and they prioritize the needs of the organization as a whole. They confront the difficult issues, exhibiting a willingness to make personal sacrifices in order to achieve the greater good. As Patrick Lencioni wrote in *The Five Temptations of a CEO* (1998), these leaders view organizational achievement as the real measure of their own personal success.

Altruistic leaders also tend to consider such matters as succession planning and the long-term needs of the organization. While self-centric egotistical leaders seek to consolidate their authority or to position themselves for personal career advancement, the altruistic leader may be more concerned

with “working themselves out of the job” by investing in the next generation of leaders. This is also a characteristic of the transformational leadership style, in which leaders actively mentor and nurture followers, serve as role models, and develop the latent leadership potential that exists within the organization's hierarchy (see, for example, Bernard M. Bass and Ronald E. Riggio's 2006 book, *Transformational Leadership*, for a thorough exploration of this topic).

At this profound moment in the history of higher education, leaders at all levels might do well to pause and thoughtfully ponder these questions on an intimate, personal level. Why do we do this work? Why do we aspire to leadership roles? What keeps us continuing in this work through the months and years, through the cycles of prosperity and recession, through the winding patterns of stability and disruption? Have we commenced this work for primarily egotistical reasons, or do we desire to make a positive impact on others? Are we willing to make personal sacrifices in order to advance our stakeholders, or are we more focused on the accoutrements that accompany the role?

Although some internal motivation is natural and not necessarily a detriment, leaders must carefully and honestly explore their primary motivations for accepting the mantle of leadership. As described by Bass and Riggio (2006), the altruistic, transformational leader will do the following:

- Stimulate and inspire stakeholders, empowering members of the organization and challenging them to grow and advance.
- Serve as role models for stakeholders, exhibiting integrity and competence.
- Promote creative thinking by soliciting stakeholder contributions to the foundational challenges and opportunities facing the organization.
- Invest in stakeholders by coaching, mentoring, and supporting their well-being.

As is readily evident, each of these behaviors emanates organically from the altruistic motive pattern. This makes clear that leadership effectiveness relies not only on what the leader does but also on *why* the leader does it. The question of internal motivation should never wander too far from our thoughts and reflections as leaders. As you reintegrate into your campus community in the months to come, take a moment to answer the question: What's your motivation? ▲

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Chair Tip

What's the hardest part about being a chair?

Any decision you have to make that affects someone's career and livelihood is something that will keep you awake at night. The stereotype of the administrator is the person who relishes being able to say no to people and derives a perverse delight from standing in the way of what others want. But the reality is quite different. Chairs who have to let someone go are frequently more nervous and upset than the person they're firing. Negative decisions about promotion or tenure are never easy. Even deciding not to renew a short-term contract of a part-time staff member can be unsettling. There are very few ways to make any of these difficult decisions easier. Always be sure that you've followed all your institutional policies and consulted with the human resources office (and, where necessary, with legal counsel). Remind yourself that these situations are the ones that require all your skills and compassion. Remember, too, that acting in the best interests of your program is frequently difficult but necessary in the long run.

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Promoting an Equity Mindset through the Inclusive Professional Framework for Faculty

DONALD L. GILLIAN-DANIEL,
WENDY G. TROXEL, AND SEAN BRIDGEN

Academic chairs play a critical role in establishing and promoting a positive department culture (character and personality) and climate (perceived atmosphere and ambiance). The culture and climate in turn have profound implications for faculty, staff, and students. For example, creating a climate in which all students feel a sense of belongingness is critical to their academic success, as belongingness is a key predictor of success and persistence for undergraduates (Murphy and Zirkel 2015). Similarly, creating a culture and climate of inclusion—one in which diversity is both respected and celebrated—is essential for departments hoping to recruit, hire, and retain a diverse faculty.

The Inclusive Professional Framework for Faculty (*IPF: Faculty*) is a holistic approach to professional development that focuses on awareness, knowledge, and skills that are transferrable across a variety of student-facing faculty roles (including teaching, advising, and mentoring in a research setting) as well as peer and colleague-facing roles (including collegiality and leadership).

Developed by the National Science Foundation Inclusion across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science (NSF INCLUDES) Aspire Alliance (Aspire), the *IPF: Faculty* articulates key foundational concepts (or domains) that are common across all faculty roles. By leveraging the awareness, knowledge, and skills associated with the domains of identity and intercultural awareness, individuals can develop an equity mindset. They apply the awareness, knowledge, and skills associated with the interpersonal relational domain to

put this equity mindset into practice.

This article briefly explores the *IPF: Faculty* through two lenses. First, an inward-focused lens examines how the framework can help academic chairs to navigate effectively and equitably the responsibilities of their own role. Second, the outward-focused lens supports academic chairs to leverage the *IPF: Faculty* to foster a more equitable department culture and climate by promoting professional development for their faculty, staff, and students.

Aspire's Inclusive Professional Framework for Faculty (*IPF: Faculty*)

The NSF INCLUDES program seeks to address challenges of broadening participation in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) at scale. Aspire, an INCLUDES Alliance, aims to diversify STEM faculty nationally through professional development that is focused on building a more equitable STEM faculty coupled with institutional change to address systemic policies and practices that support student and faculty success (see www.aspirealliance.org/national-change/inclusive-professional-framework-for-faculty).

Aspire has developed a curriculum that is grounded in the *IPF: Faculty*; that is immersive in its programming, such as the week-long Aspire Summer Institute (see www.aspirealliance.org/national-change/national-change-events/aspire-summer-institute); and that pairs individual and group reflection with practice to reinforce learning. For example, developing a deeper understanding through reflection and discussion about one's social and cultural identities, and one's students' social and cultural identities, can

provide a basis for building equity-based relational skills that underpin successful teaching, advising, and mentoring in a research setting. This same understanding can support development of the equity-based collegial relationships that are critical to the development of a department-wide climate of support for faculty from groups historically underrepresented in the faculty. Finally, the equity mindset applied to inclusive practices of leadership at departmental and institutional levels creates a more inclusive institutional system.

Practice-Based Professional Development

Aspire's professional development curriculum pairs reflection and discussion with hands-on skills practice to reinforce learning. For example, an inward-focused scenario might be presented to participants to learn how the *IPF: Faculty* can help them more effectively navigate the responsibilities of their individual role, as follows:

You are new to your role as chair after having been a faculty member for the past ten years in the same department. At a recent faculty meeting, the discussion between two colleagues (both tenured) becomes heated following a comment by a tenure-track faculty member that only half the room hears. People look to you to step in and address the situation. Prompts:

- *How do you intervene?*
- *What do you say?*
- *Consider how your social and cultural identities influence your positionality in this situation.*
- *How does this in turn affect your response, if at all?*

An *IPF: Faculty*-centered response might sound like this:

Sam, Alan, I'm going to ask you to both stop and take a breath. Your discussion sounds like it's getting heated. I also don't think everyone in the room knows what's going on. If you'd like our feedback on the issue, won't you please reframe it for the rest of us? I also want to remind everyone about the operational agreement we adopted for these meetings at the beginning of the semester and, in particular, point number three, which reads,

“Differentiate between opinion—which everyone has—and informed knowledge, which comes from sustained experience, study, and practice. Hold your opinions lightly and with humility.” I’m going to invite everyone to think about that as Sam and Alan take a step back, reframe the issue so that we can all contribute to the conversation, and try this discussion again, but differently.

Importantly, Aspire’s professional development process involves using an applied improvisation approach (Gillian-Daniel et al. 2020). In pairs (either in person or synchronously online) participants practice a response to the scenario. The first person takes one minute to suggest a response to the situation. Next, the second person does the same and “borrows” language they like from the first person’s response. Then the pair debriefs their responses and focuses on the positives of the communication (e.g., what they thought was effective at addressing the situation in an equitable way; what they want to explore more deeply). Next, the pairs come back to the larger group and debrief, using it as an opportunity to further crowdsource effective responses.

The framework can be used to amplify and influence the types of faculty development academic chairs do at their institutions. The framework can be leveraged to connect the things that may not have appeared connected before.

In addition, departments that employ primary role academic advisers would be well served by including these professionals in professional development that is built around the *IPF: Faculty*. Primary role academic advisers often have insight and expertise that can add depth and richness to professional development programming. For example, primary role academic advisers are often educated about multiple advising approaches (e.g., proactive advising, developmental advising, learning-centered advising) and are skilled at choosing which approaches to employ depending on a given student’s needs and circumstances. NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA) has several resources related to equity and inclusion as well as opportunities for membership in the Faculty Advising

Community and the Social Justice Advising Community (see <https://nacada.ksu.edu> for more information).

Recommendations

Here are some recommendations and questions to consider for developing a plan for integrating an IPF-based skills training into professional development for current and future faculty on your campus. The goal of the *IPF: Faculty* is to promote community-building activities that are designed to model fostering a sense of belongingness for students:

- What goals do you have for your department or campus to promote faculty preparation to effectively support the academic success of students from underrepresented groups?

The equity mindset applied to inclusive practices of leadership at departmental and institutional levels creates a more inclusive institutional system.

sented groups?

- Who or what units on your campus offer programming to prepare faculty to effectively support the academic success of students from underrepresented groups?

- What types of programming are offered (e.g., workshops, sustained engagement, faculty learning community, other), and what types of topics are covered?

- Are there disciplinary differences in faculty engagement in these types of programs?

- List resources and programming that are already available from a department or program outside of yours that will allow you to build inclusion.

- How do these resources and

programming align with the domains in the *IPF: Faculty* (i.e., identity, intercultural, and relational/communication)?

- How can you use the domains to make connections between resources and programming and to help other faculty find these resources that build more broadly applicable skills across their roles?

- List the names of individuals outside of your area to contact to discuss your ideas.

By using the *IPF: Faculty* as a way to connect seemingly disparate types of professional development, institutions can provide faculty with transferable skills that are grounded in equity and inclusion and that in turn build their local institutional capacity to promote change. Considering, then, the outward-focused lens of the department chair, the benefits can directly support the academic success of students, particularly those from underrepresented groups. ▲

This article is based on a presentation at the 38th annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 3–5, 2021. The authors wish to thank Bipana Bantawa, NiCole Buchanan, Chris Castro, Emily Dickmann, April Dukes, Levon Esters, Robin McC. Greenler, Gretal Leibnitz, Louis Macias, Ebony Omotola McGee, Robin Parent, Shannon Patton, Christine Pfund, and Kecia Thomas for contributions to the intellectual development of the Inclusive Professional Framework for Faculty (IPF: Faculty). This material is based on work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant Nos. 1834518, 1834522, 1834510, 1834513, 1834526, 1834521. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

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Tackling Higher Education Adaptive Leadership Challenges

JILL CHANNING

Adaptive challenges are novel and are challenges for which there are no readily available solutions and for which leaders are not prepared to address using their past experience, authority, or expertise. Adaptive challenges ultimately require people to alter their beliefs, values, and roles in an organization. Adaptive leaders develop capacities to cope with these significant changes; they are follower-centered and recognize the complex social environments in which they interact with others (Northouse 2019). Taking the time to step away from the challenge, adaptive leaders analyze, using research and data, adaptive challenges such as organizational restructuring, workplace drug use, homophobia, and sexism in the workplace; reflect on their own beliefs and values to ensure that their ideas are well thought out; and determine responses that account for followers' emotional responses to change. Adaptive leaders empower others to engage in developing solutions and listen to people at all levels in the organization (Nicolaidis and McCallum 2013). They create environments where employees can confront their own beliefs and priorities and feel comfortable with changes in the status quo.

Methodology and Participants

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the ways that community college leaders navigate leadership challenges, power, politics, and communication in their contexts. Twelve community college administrators were interviewed from February 2020 to September 2020, sharing their experiences navigating power, politics, and communication in their own contexts. Four participants identified as women and eight as men. Two identified as Black, and ten identified as white. Interview transcripts were coded using a first- and second-order

coding technique. The codes developed provided a foundation for the development of several key themes. These themes include reflection and dissociation from the problem, responses to followers' emotional responses, and the use of data to diagnose challenges and to influence others.

Reflection and Dissociation from the Problem

Northouse (2019) discusses leaders using a balcony view to dissociate from the problem and to see the bigger picture. This balcony stance enables leaders to diagnose issues, to reflect, and to step away from the problem yet not totally disengage from it. Andrea recognized this balcony view and reported that leaders can prepare themselves better by realizing "that there's always a bigger, higher meaning for why things are happening. And while you may not always agree with it, you need to learn it's not personal and to try to always separate out those pieces." In separating out those pieces, leaders dissociate from problems so that they can better diagnose them.

Mary selectively chose very few people to confide in and used a balcony view to analyze problems. She similarly reported, "That is probably the hardest part about this because you are very, very isolated. And that whole cliché—it's lonely at the top kind of thing." Mary also described taking the time to reflect on a decision, and when doing so, she "put a face to that student" that may be influenced by her decision. She said, "Sometimes you forget to see the face of the decision that you made ... You don't see what it's like for that student who has to walk in that decision that you made, and sometimes we need to see that. I need to see that because then I know if I screwed up or not. And we learn from that."

Leadership positions often require

solitary study and reflection, and this detached view enables these leaders to see adaptive challenges in unique ways.

Nicolaidis and McCallum (2013) describe the situation leaders find themselves in when confronting adaptive challenges as contending with resistance, personal attacks, and understanding the big picture while still developing a vision for needed change. They discuss this balancing act in terms of "the analogy of moving from the dance floor to the balcony" (249). The balcony, a lonely but critical space, is where leaders can interrogate gaps between the ideal and the status quo, diagnose issues, and evaluate assumptions and patterns in current systems. The balcony is also a reflective place where leaders refocus on their institutions' purposes and contend with uncertainty.

Trust, Emotional Responses, and Communication

Fernandez and Shaw (2020) contend that adaptive leaders must be strong servant leaders, put others' needs above their own, and possess high levels of emotional intelligence and emotional stability. These leaders build and maintain relationships and help their constituencies manage their emotions through challenging and uncertain times. Many of these leaders built strong relationships with followers and fostered trust, which helped them later when dealing with challenges or change.

Dolores "took the approach of really spending a lot of time with everybody." She had coffee with faculty and other employees to get to know them. She reported, "I spent time with each and every one of them, even in the hallways. If I run into one of them, I'll stop and talk and I know grandchildren and things like that." Through this, she demonstrated that "I'm not better than anybody here. It's the modeling that is important for leaders ... And we do things together." Dolores did much to create a sense of community, and she believed this helped in cases when leaders had to deliver any difficult news. For example, adaptive challenges often require people to do things in new ways, which may threaten followers' identities. Organizational changes tend to

stir up people's emotions, and leaders who have developed strong relationships with their followers can help them cope and thrive better (Northouse 2019).

Research and Analysis

When facing challenges, adaptive leaders use data in multiple ways. They diagnose the issue by listening to others, researching it, and studying similar decision-making processes (Northouse 2019). They use data to explain how decisions are reached so that their constituencies understand that the decisions are not made arbitrarily or thoughtlessly. Andrea found that although leaders often use "gut instincts" to execute plans and strategies, it is essential to use "the data to help move [goals] forward." Tony contended with a particularly challenging situation regarding low pay that resulted in mistrust between faculty and administration. He reported, "Our pay is low compared to high schools ... If I got as much money per student as they were given, I would absolutely give you more money ... So you'd be up front and transparent with any of these groups." Data was the factor that changed emotional minds about this issue. As Tony said, "It's amazing how data changes their mind, because ... this is how much money we have. Here is a copy of the budget. Read through it ... So that's the kind of thing—data, data, data is one of the things that we use to convince people."

As a part of diagnosing adaptive challenges, using research and data, leaders must be transparent with this data to help their constituencies adapt to change and challenges. Bauer (2020) contended, "Leadership therefore requires the diagnostic ability to recognize ... the predictable defensive patterns of response that operate at the individual and systemic level" (3). Tony recognizes the defensive patterns in faculty's responses to the low salaries at his institution and uses data transparently to respond to challenges related to pay, even though the data does not reveal the information that faculty would like to hear.

Empowering Others

Northouse (2019) describes the adaptive leader as "standing by" and giving guidance

and support" (269). The ultimate goal is to mobilize followers "to confront the decisions they need to make" for change and innovation (269). Because the adaptive leader involves followers in problem-solving, they empower "people to decide what to do in circumstances where they feel uncertain, expressing belief in their ability to solve their own problems, and encouraging them to think for themselves rather than doing that thinking for them" (269).

Craig empowered his followers during COVID-19 to make things happen. He explained, "It's amazing how everything can be done virtually, which is what I had asked them to do before COVID-19, [and they] just couldn't figure out a way to do it, but miraculously, we are now virtual in everything that we do."

Craig gave his followers an alternative to rethink their positions and their roles to serve students. They quickly adapted to the circumstances, going virtual effectively, which has become a permanent practice and a strategy to save their jobs.

Many of the leaders described ways that they empowered their subordinates to make decisions and implement goals. Louis empowers his direct reports as well as other personnel. He described his approach as wanting "decisions to be dealt with at the lowest possible level." Mary uses a similar approach when employees ask about an issue. Her first question is: "What does your direct supervisor say?" If she gets a no or an indication that the supervisor had not been consulted, she says, "I'm not weighing in on them, making a decision ... That was not my decision to make; that is between you and your department chair, between you and your vice president."

These styles are the opposite of micro-management. Rather, followers are given responsibilities, and they are trusted and expected to complete goals successfully and manage their areas well and without interference from those above them in the leadership hierarchy.

Conclusion

Leaders may not be able to spontaneously develop adaptive leadership skills. However, as suggested by these participants, they can

engage in observation of and consult other leaders to assist their decision-making. They can systematically diagnose problems by stepping away from situations, engaging in reflection and using data and assessment to inform next steps in response to significant change. By communicating about data, they are able to explain why changes are needed or how decisions were derived. Adaptive leaders use active listening skills to understand and diagnose the challenges they face. They listen to others to build relationships and trust that later help them when they must make difficult decisions. Transparent communication lends itself not only to building trust but also to helping followers work through their own emotions as both the organization's and the followers' roles change. These leaders empower their followers to make decisions and to execute goals. They saw empowerment as particularly important during COVID-19 because of the need to transform working conditions and to operationalize many quickly formed plans. Importantly, they trust, support, and empower others so that they may successfully fulfill their roles and accomplish goals related to their colleges' missions. ▲

This article is based on a presentation at the 38th annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 3–5, 2021. The author acknowledges the East Tennessee State University Research Development Committee's Small Research Grant for funding this research as well as research assistants Joan Ondari and Alexandria Craft.

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Racial Microaggressions in Higher Education, Part 2: Guidelines for Conducting Dialogues

KEVIN R. KELLY

The preceding article in this two-part series defined racial microaggression (RMA) as an expression of oppression, described microinsults and microinvalidations common within higher education, and discussed their negative effects for individuals and academic units. Beyond understanding RMAs and their deleterious effects, chairs must recognize that RMAs occur in their departments. No academic unit is immune. The purpose of this article is to share information and guidelines to enable chairs to respond competently and proactively to RMAs as a form of racial oppression. This article addresses three topics. First, background knowledge is presented to prepare for difficult race dialogues. Second, specific guidelines for conducting RMA dialogue with aggressors are introduced. Third, recommendations are made for reducing RMAs and ameliorating their negative outcomes.

Preparing for Dialogue

Chairs should understand that RMAs originate from a variety of sources within the academic ranks. Regardless of their rank and power within the hierarchy, RMA perpetrators share some common characteristics: limited awareness of white privilege, lack of sensitivity to perceptions of faculty of color, and reluctance and lack of skill to prepare for dialogue.

Chairs must be prepared to respond to the unconscious assumption that *your racist experience is not my problem* in two ways. First, understand that you may be initiating a difficult dialogue because white aggressors are unlikely to be fully aware of the racist connotations and implications of their words and actions. Those confronted with discrepancies between their conscious values

and their actions are likely to experience anxiety and distress, which interferes with the processing of emotion-laden information. Nonetheless, the chair is responsible for validating the complainant's experiences in the aggressor's presence. Effective dialogues do not end with a resolution to agree to disagree. Do not initiate RMA dialogues until you are prepared for a fraught

Before initiating
a dialogue,
familiarize
yourself with your
institution's policies
for reporting racial
bias incidents.

conversation in which you are responsible for validating the perceptions of the victim of an aggressive act. If you are not comfortable going it alone in your initial dialogues, recruit the support of a skilled staff member from your human resources or diversity, equity, and inclusion offices.

Second, be aware of the broader experience of faculty of color in higher education before you are approached with the report of an RMA. Consider the following four points. First, RMAs are communicated at all levels of the institution, from top administrative offices to classrooms to cafeteria food lines. An RMA can come from any direction at any time. Second, RMAs are not uncommon, particularly at predominantly white institutions (Nadal et al. 2015). It is likely that your complainant has experienced

more than one RMA before turning to you for help. You may not have more than one chance to get it right. Failing to act competently and supportively may make you part of an alienating, unwelcoming, or hostile campus climate. Third, although there are exceptions, faculty of color do not perceive white faculty or students as generally skilled in race dialogues. In previous interactions, faculty of color may have experienced white faculty and students as having limited awareness of racial issues and their complex manifestations. Therefore, many faculty of color avoid reporting RMAs out of fear of poor outcomes that, rather than validating their concerns, may increase their stress, anxiety, and feelings of isolation and alienation. Fourth, anyone reporting an RMA has been insulted or invalidated—told that they do not belong or that their perceptions do not count. Some faculty of color are willing to share their perspectives on aggressive encounters to create interpersonal harmony and a greater sense of community. These are generous acts. However, faculty of color are not participating in dialogue solely to enlighten the initiator of the insult or invalidation. Ultimately, all injured parties expect and deserve an apology.

Guidelines for Conducting the RMA Dialogue

There are nine guidelines for engaging an aggressor and victim in a dialogue.

- Before initiating a dialogue, familiarize yourself with your institution's policies for reporting racial bias incidents. Understand the boundaries between mandated reporting of acts of overt racial bias and RMAs. Further, make yourself aware of institutional resources at your disposal to support both complainants and aggressors.

- The chair is responsible for creating the opportunity for dialogue, not the faculty member who experienced the RMA. Reach out to both parties to schedule that dialogue. Urge complainants to prepare a description of the RMA and how it affected them. Ensure that aggressors understand the topic of the dialogue at the time it is scheduled; ask this person to come to the conversation with an open mind and readiness to

consider their colleague's perceptions.

- Do not allow the aggressor to deny or minimize the complainant's perceptions and experiences. Even though aggressors may insist that their intentions were positive or benign, chairs must require accountability for the injurious effect of their words. Be prepared to counter denial as it arises. Respond to "That's your point of view" with "I share Professor Smith's perspective." Respond to "You're making a big deal out of nothing" with "Professor Smith is describing an insult, which is important." Respond to "Don't be so sensitive" with "Professor Smith isn't being sensitive. I've learned that many faculty of color would feel the same way."

- State your expectation for the aggressor to express some awareness of how their words or actions have insulted or invalidated their colleague.

- Ask your complainant to state expectations for future behavior that match the RMA. Consider the following examples of stating expectations: "I ask that you no longer refer to me as an affirmative action hire." "Don't continue to question my credentials to teach or conduct research beyond Asian studies." "Don't ask me to comment on African American culture, history, and customs or expect me to speak for a whole group." "Ensure that you include me in all program meetings." Aggressors deserve to know the specific remedies for their RMAs.

- State your expectation for an apology for the RMA. It is not realistic to expect all aggressors to immediately validate the complainant's perceptions and offer a sincere apology. You may have to schedule a follow-up meeting for the aggressor to express understanding of the RMA and apologize. It is the chair's responsibility to follow up with both parties until this satisfactory resolution has been attained.

- Both parties should exit your office at the same time. Continuing to meet with either the complainant or the aggressor after the other has left may suggest that you are not equally supportive of both parties, which could undermine the power of the messages you communicated during the dialogue.

- It will not always be possible for the chair to conduct a productive dialogue; do not initiate a meeting in which the RMA victim may suffer further insult or invalidation. In such cases, the chair should meet with the aggressor to identify the RMA and the nature of the insult/invalidation, describe the negative effects of the RMA, engage the aggressor in dialogue to ascertain that the nature of the aggressive act is comprehended, state the expectation that repeated RMAs will not be tolerated, and express the expectation that a verbal or written apology be offered. Verbal apologies should be expressed in your presence.

- You may feel awkward in your first attempts to initiate dialogue to confront RMAs. That's okay. You have latitude for awkwardness and imperfection as you increase your skill in pursuing the twin goals of affirming the perceptions of faculty of color related to workplace racism and communicating the expectation that white department members increase their awareness of and responsibility for racially aggressive words and actions.

Reducing RMA Frequency and Mitigating Their Negative Effects

Reducing RMA frequency. White faculty, staff members, and students are perceived as lacking skills for racial dialogue (Pittman 2012). Fortunately, your institution is likely to have training resources to better prepare your department to engage in dialogue. Although some in your department have already sought such training, it is likely that a gap remains between the collective skills of your department to respond effectively to RMAs as they occur. Consider taking the issue of the skills gap to your faculty, staff, and student representative groups to determine the next steps for your department in increasing its knowledge and skills for understanding RMAs. Your first challenge is to win broad support for the goal of collective skill building. After consensus is achieved, coordinate efforts to attain resources and training options for faculty, staff, and students. Creating opportunities for white faculty, staff, and students to

achieve greater awareness of how RMAs affect faculty and students of color is a good place to start training programs.

Mitigating the negative effects of RMAs. As you become more aware of the prevalence of RMAs in your department, your next priority should be to assess how covert racism may be affecting the professional development of your faculty of color. Ask yourself the following six questions about your faculty of color:

- Is their department visibility limited to race-related issues in instruction, advising, and service? Faculty deserve to be recognized for the salience of their professional accomplishments and pursuits.

- Have you facilitated formal and informal mentoring opportunities? It is difficult for some departments to meet the need for mentors internally. If a sufficient number of mentors is not available, consider lobbying your institution to create a richer mentor network.

- Have you reviewed the cumulative service work (e.g., unit and university committees and task forces; student advising, recruitment, and mentoring) of your faculty of color? Many institutions have policies requiring participation of faculty and staff of color on search committees, which may result in disproportionate service burdens. If necessary, take steps to offset service overloads for faculty of color, including reduction of department service to compensate for additional university-level service.

- Faculty of color frequently teach courses related to diversity and race or ethnicity. Are class evaluations for diversity-related courses lower than the norms for other department courses? If so, examine how these lower course evaluations affect the performance evaluations of faculty of color.

- Do you know the promotion/tenure and turnover rates for your faculty of color? If not, work to collect this data and share your findings.

- Do you know the merit raise histories of faculty of color since hiring and promotion? Do you know how these percentages compare to those of white faculty? If not, work to collect this data and share your findings.

Greater awareness of the presence of unconscious racism should elicit questions about your faculty's professional development and advancement. Greater capacity for engagement in racial dialogues should be accompanied by broader accountability regarding the work assignments, performance evaluations, and resource allocations of faculty of color. ▲

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Before Your First Weeks as Chair: A Preparation Checklist

DON CHU

In a perfect world, incoming chairs have been fully prepared for their new jobs. In the real world, however, research shows that most new chairs have had little formal training before they become responsible for managing the department's personnel, financial, and political issues as well as getting the department through the organized chaos of a new academic term. When time is short, what can chairs do to quickly prepare for their new role?

Learn the Background to Do the Job

Chairing is vastly different from being a professor. There's a new language to learn, new people to work with, lots of chores and stressors week after week, and a calendar largely set by others that's packed with meetings running every hour on the hour. With time so short before taking over management, the first order of business is getting the background needed to do the job. Here's a checklist of the information that chairs need to excel.

Calendar the reports, meetings, and other events that you will be responsible for as chair. Setting up the year's calendar gives new chairs an overview of what they will be expected to do and how to prepare

for their responsibilities. Consult with your administrative assistant and look at previous chair calendars to determine what and when you will be responsible for as they relate to regularly expected chair duties.

____ What meetings will you need to attend? Chairs are usually expected to attend meetings with the dean, other chairs, committee meetings, ceremonies such as graduation, and meetings with the department advisory board and the like.

____ Calendar your own meetings. When will you hold department meetings? When will you schedule meetings in support of your own initiatives, such as curriculum vitalization and mentoring both new faculty and those faculty still working their way up the tenure and promotion ladder?

____ What reports will you have to write, and when are they due?

____ Schedule time to get the background to write reports. Chairs typically need to write personnel reports, reviews of department accomplishments, accreditation reports, proposals for new curriculum, and budget requests. What policy manuals, executive memos, and previous reports do you need to read? Who should you talk to for the information you require? When should

you schedule meetings with those sources of information? What are the key phrases and definitions for which you need to know the meanings?

____ Schedule time for your own scholarship, teaching, and time for renewal. When will you be teaching your own classes? Make sure to schedule course preparation time. Do you want to block off time for your own research? How about time for a walk, exercise, or coffee with colleagues and friends to recharge your battery?

Enrollment history is often most important to schools. What are your department's enrollment trends? For the last three to five years, learn the following:

____ Your department enrollment history (department summary and for each program).

____ The enrollment histories for each faculty member.

____ The enrollment histories of comparable departments for comparison.

____ The institution's enrollment history and of each school or college.

Budget history will give chairs an idea as to funding trends and areas that need attention. For the last three to five years, look at the following:

____ The centrally allocated department budget by expenses and income categories.

____ The department's end-of-year spending summary by expense category.

____ The department's history of income from noncentrally allocated sources: grants and contracts, donations, continuing education, special events, and other sources.

____ The institution's budget history.

____ The school or college year budget history.

Personnel history provides the background needed to guide personnel requests and decisions. For the last three to five years, look at the following:

____ The number of department faculty (tenure and nontenure track) at each rank.

____ The workload of each faculty member.

____ The years at rank for each tenure-line faculty member.

____ Recent performance reviews for each tenure-line faculty member.

____ Requests and outcomes of new faculty requests.

____ The background of chairs in your school or college.

____ The dean's résumé.

____ The academic vice president's résumé.

____ The president's résumé.

Prepare Yourself Mentally

New chairs need to anticipate what they will face and how they should react to each day's challenges. The following is a list of mental notes that chairs should be mindful of before their first week as the department's official head.

____ *You are a member of the college's leadership team.* You are no longer only a faculty member but also a member of the institution's leadership team whose words and actions reflect on the department, school, and institution.

____ *Think before you do.* Because you are filling an important legal and public role for your department and your school, be cognizant of everything you say or do. Be prepared for every meeting before it starts. Learn about each agenda item. What should be your department's position on each item?

____ *Don't make off-the-cuff comments.* Don't publicly agree or disagree with positions until you have thought through the possible repercussions for your department.

____ *Be aware that you represent your department.* In your body and your actions, you now publicly represent your department, and how you fulfill your role will be interpreted by others and reflect not only on you but also on the department and subject matter that you have devoted your career to build.

____ *Don't make hasty decisions.* Situations requiring snap decisions are rare. Although you may be tempted to make a decision so that you can get an issue off your back, don't be in a hurry. Most issues don't have to be addressed right away. Take the time to get the information you need before deciding.

____ *Beware of the do-you-have-a-minute meetings.* Chairs should be careful during meetings where they are pigeonholed and

caught off guard. Don't make snap decisions. It is always safer to say something like "Let me look into that."

____ *Don't play favorites.* The job is hard enough, so don't make it harder. Be fair. Go on the evidence. Decisions must be based on the best case and the best evidence.

____ *You have a fiduciary responsibility to the department.* Whereas faculty's primary interest is their own work and students, chairs have a legal and ethical responsibility to act in good faith and trust to protect the assets and the good name of the entire department.

____ *Protect everyone's rights.* You have a professional responsibility to protect the rights of all your faculty and staff.

____ *Maintain confidentiality.* You have an obligation to maintain confidentiality. As soon as faculty become chairs, they will have access to privileged information. No information should be shared with the admonition, "I'll tell you, but you must promise not to tell anyone else."

____ *Earn the trust and respect of the dean.* Your ability to forward the interests of your department largely depends on your relationship with the dean and how much the dean is willing to help you. Give deans what they need to provide the support you need. Make progress toward a stronger department. Strengthen enrollments. Stay within the budget. Keep your issues within the department if possible. Be a good campus citizen and a credit to the school and institution. Be a team player. Understand the dean's issues and help if possible.

____ *Your most important asset is your credibility.* Do what you say you'll do. Keep your promises. Be consistent. Don't change your tune depending on what you think each audience wants to hear.

____ *Look for options.* Very few issues have only one or two options for response. Use your intelligence, research skills, and creativity to understand situations, progress toward resolution of issues, and find multiple options for responses.

____ *Prepare for the stress.* Prepare yourself for the stress that comes from so much to do and what will seem like too little time and money to do it all. Also prepare for the stress of sometimes having to choose between bad choices and worse choices.

____ *Prepare for the pace.* The rhythm of your workday will be very different from when you were a professor. It will be much more harried. Your daily schedule will largely be controlled by others.

____ *Give your full attention to whomever is in front of you.* When faculty, staff, and students meet with the department chair, it is often the most important thing they will do that day. Show your faculty and staff that you care. Be an active listener.

____ *Recognize that department meetings are a chair's public performance.* How chairs manage meetings speaks volumes to faculty about a chair's efficiency, fairness, organization, direction, and leadership.

____ *Schedule an interview with your dean.* During this meeting, the key idea to keep in mind is to listen. Ask your dean the following questions: What are your observations about my department? What are your goals for our college/school? What can my department do to help you achieve your goals? ▲

Don Chu is a former professor, chair, and dean. This article is excerpted from the author's book *The Department Chair Field Manual: A Primer for Academic Leadership* (2021). Email: donchuphd@gmail.com

The Dean's Thoughts

Keeping Confidences

As academic deans, we're often exposed to confidential information. Keeping confidences can be difficult (we may feel awkward, secretive, discriminatory, etc.), but it's critical—for our own credibility and for the welfare of individuals, our unit, and the institution.

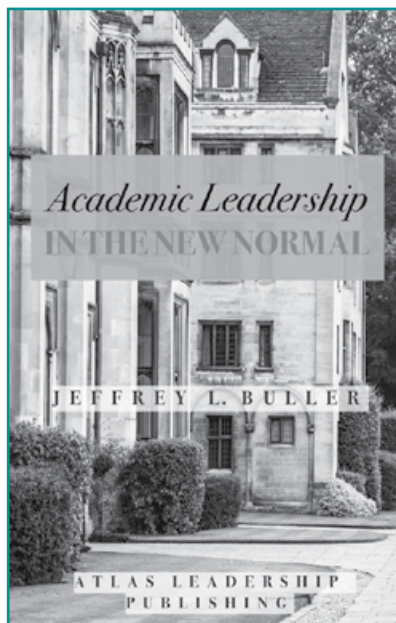
—**R. Kent Crookston** is former professor and director of academic administrative support at Brigham Young University.

News from ATLAS!

Academic Leadership in the New Normal

The global pandemic. The assault on the U.S. capitol. Climate change. Toxic polarization. These and other factors have created what many in higher education now refer to as “the New Normal,” a period when many of our former assumptions about colleges and universities are being called into question. How can administrators and faculty members lead most effectively in this altered landscape? What has really changed, and what has remained relatively untouched by recent events?

In *Academic Leadership in the New Normal*, ATLAS offers academic leaders a roadmap through the terrain of higher education today. Useful both for individual study and for administrative retreats or workshops, the book challenges academic leaders to question their assumptions and to begin preparing for changes they cannot yet predict.



Available in paperback for \$12.50 and in ebook format for \$4.99, *Academic Leadership in the New Normal* may be purchased from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Apple Books.



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Faculty Job Dissatisfaction in the New Normal

ROBERT E. CIPRIANO AND

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Since the global pandemic began in late 2019, substantial changes occurred that affected all aspects of higher education. Many students and faculty were forced to switch from in-person to online classes. Administrators were compelled to supervise employees who were sometimes hundreds, even thousands, of miles away. Parents increasingly questioned whether the high cost of college tuition was really worth it when their children were not getting the advantage of meeting with their professors face-to-face, networking with their fellow students, and participating in a full range of cocurricular activities.

Even before the arrival of COVID-19, researchers had been observing how changes in higher education were having a negative effect on faculty morale and job satisfaction, particularly among the growing numbers of nontenure-track college professors. As François Furstenberg reported in a 2021 article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, “Alarming, a survey undertaken by [the Johns Hopkins University] School of Public Health revealed that roughly 25 percent of junior faculty and an even higher percent of mid-career faculty would seriously consider leaving academe entirely. For an institution that has struggled to diversify its faculty in recent years, the mass departure of junior faculty—whose profile was notably more female, and more diverse, than the senior faculty—would set the university’s strategic hiring back by a generation.”

In light of these concerns, senior partners at ATLAS: Academic Training, Leadership, and Assessment Services set out to measure current levels of job satisfaction among those who work in higher education and to consider what, if anything, department chairs might do to improve the satisfaction

levels of their teams. In March 2021, the authors surveyed 1,806 faculty members at a broad cross section of colleges and universities throughout North America and then compared these results to the findings of a study conducted shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic began (Cipriano and Riccardi 2018). That earlier study had found that 71.3 percent of respondents said they would definitely pursue a career in higher education if they had to do it all over again, 20.0 percent said they would *probably* do so, 4.3 percent said they were not sure, and an identical 4.3 percent said they would *probably not* pursue a career in higher education, with no one saying that they would definitely *not* enter higher education if given that choice today. Would similar results be found in the new normal?

The ATLAS Study

The overall results of the ATLAS study are summarized as follows:

- In general, are you satisfied with the career choices you have made? *Yes*: 90.3 percent; *No*: 9.6 percent.
- If you are *satisfied* with your career choices, how satisfied are you? *Highly*: 56.6 percent; *Moderately*: 39.1 percent; *A little*: 4.3 percent.
- If you are *not satisfied* with your career choices, how dissatisfied are you? *Highly*: 9.0 percent; *Moderately*: 54.5 percent; *A little*: 36.5 percent.
- In general, if you had to choose a career path all over again, would you still pursue a career in higher education? *Yes*: 76.9 percent; *No*: 23.0 percent.

The most intriguing aspect of these results is that although only 9.6 percent of faculty members expressed dissatisfaction with their careers in higher education, a *full*

23.0 percent said that they would make a different decision if they had a chance to do it all over again.

Compared to the 2018 Cipriano/Riccardi study, therefore, the ATLAS survey suggests that there has been a sizable *increase* in the percentage of faculty who are dissatisfied with their decisions to follow a career in higher education (4.3 percent to 23.0 percent). Nevertheless, most of those who are dissatisfied expressed only moderate or minor dissatisfaction.

The typical respondent to the ATLAS survey self-identified as a woman in her forties who had earned a PhD, was tenured at the rank of full professor, and had been working in higher education for twenty-one years. But when survey results were cross tabulated with demographic information, a few clear distinctions began to emerge. For example, only 8.82 percent of the women said that they were dissatisfied with their career choices versus 11.1 percent of the men, but the women’s level of dissatisfaction was significantly greater. Roughly a third of female respondents who declared themselves dissatisfied with academic life were *highly* dissatisfied, with the rest being *moderately* dissatisfied. For the men, however, there was nearly an even split between those who were *moderately* dissatisfied and those who were *only a little* dissatisfied, with no male respondent saying that he was *highly* dissatisfied with academic life.

Moreover, the vast majority of those who expressed dissatisfaction with their career choices were neither very young (under the age of thirty) nor very old (over the age of seventy). Only a single respondent below the age of forty and a single respondent over the age of sixty said that they were dissatisfied with academic life, the former being *highly* dissatisfied and the latter being *slightly* dissatisfied. No other demographic groups—such as race, highest academic degree earned, or current tenure status—resulted in any statistically significant differences among levels of satisfaction.

The Causes of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

Survey respondents were given the

opportunity to offer any comments they wished, and approximately a third of those who completed the survey did so. The following comments are typical of those who said that they were satisfied and would continue working in higher education even if they had a chance to make the choice all over again:

- Tenure-track male assistant professor between the ages of fifty-one and sixty: “I made a midlife career change, and I must say it’s the best professional move I’ve ever made. As a college professor, I’ve been given tremendous opportunities to engage my skill set, and I’ve reached the highest level in higher education that I personally wish to achieve. For future growth, I’m looking for lateral moves within the professoriate as opposed to seeking higher-level positions.”

- Tenured female professor between the ages of fifty-one and sixty: “As a young faculty member, I literally remember thinking, ‘I can’t believe they are paying me to do this!’ Since then some of my biggest dissatisfactions arose because of changes in department leadership (poor communication, perceived favoritism). And once I myself became a department chair, I experienced a different kind of dissatisfaction (internal arguments, pushback on *every* decision), but I’m still happy with my choices.”

- Tenured male professor between the ages of sixty-one and seventy: “I am very pleased with my career outcomes, but if I could change one thing, it would be to have had more mentors. Mentoring just wasn’t an option some thirty-five years ago, and in retrospect I realize I have missed many outstanding opportunities because I did not have a seasoned mentor available.”

- Tenured female professor between the ages of fifty-one and sixty: “I spent twenty years as a practicing speech-language pathologist, got my PhD while working part-time during the last five years of that period, and now am really enjoying teaching in the discipline of communication sciences and disorders. For me, moving from practitioner to professor to chair felt like a natural progression.”

Those who said that they would probably choose to pursue a *different* career made

such observations as the following:

- Tenured male professor over the age of seventy: “Academe has drastically changed in recent years, for the worse as far as college professors are concerned. Tenure is being attacked, workload has increased significantly, academic freedom is being challenged, and adjuncts are being overused.”

- Tenured female professor between the ages of sixty-one and seventy: “I am not sure if in today’s climate I would choose to be in education if I were now making that decision. We are moving backward in terms of self-segregation and expression of opinion. For that matter, we often find ourselves unable to present evidence that counters the ‘acceptable’ narrative.”

Many of the reasons for job dissatisfaction among college professors today are either broadly systemic or narrowly personal.

- Tenured male professor between the ages of forty-one and fifty: “There’s no money in higher education. To add insult to injury, parents, politicians, and the media treat college professors like garbage.”

There were also several respondents who said that they were happy with their career choices but still had significant reservations about the direction that higher education is currently taking. These comments included the following:

- Tenured female associate professor between the ages of forty-one and fifty: “I love teaching, and I thoroughly enjoy my career, but the career expectations are that your *job* must be your number one priority, not your family, yourself, or anything else. This expectation is not sustainable. Moreover, the ‘bean counting’ business model of

higher education today forces professors to push as many students forward as possible, regardless of those students’ level of preparation, potential for success, or even likely return on their tuition. I find this trend disheartening.”

- Tenured male professor between the ages of fifty-one and sixty: “How can we work within the university system to effect real change? That is, how can we as professors possibly steer this monster-sized ship?”

- Tenured female professor between the ages of sixty-one and seventy: “Attempting to lead/guide people who are toxic is a daily challenge. Leadership above me is highly supportive, which makes the position mostly worthwhile, however.”

- Tenured female associate professor between the ages of forty-one and fifty: “It has taken me some time and serious reflection to understand that the way in which people approach their academic roles isn’t always the same. There are many different paths to being a successful college professor, and no path is better or worse than any other; it’s simply *your* path. I will say, however, that the longer I’ve been in an academic role, the more frightened I’ve become about what *could* happen in the future. That fear of higher education’s current direction is beginning to weigh on me quite a bit.”

- Tenured female professor between the ages of forty-one and fifty: “My satisfaction would be significantly improved if there were more options for career advancement in my role.”

Other respondents noted that they liked their *careers* but not the *institutions* where they worked, enjoyed their *students* but not their *colleagues* or supervisors, and so on.

What Can Chairs Do to Increase Faculty Job Satisfaction?

As these comments reveal, many of the reasons for job dissatisfaction among college professors today are either broadly systemic (political polarization, a sense that one cannot express one’s views due to so-called political correctness, a disconnect between faculty and the broader public about the ultimate purpose of higher education) or narrowly personal (an unsupportive supervisor,

an uncongenial work environment, disappointment at being passed over for career opportunities). Chairs can do little to effect change in these areas. Nevertheless, there are certain steps that chairs *can* take to help improve job satisfaction among college professors.

Pay attention to the needs of newly promoted associate professors. Many campuses have extensive programs designed for new, untenured faculty members. But once faculty are tenured and/or achieve the rank of associate professor, many are left to fend for themselves. The ATLAS survey indicates that the single largest cohort of dissatisfied faculty members were associate professors between the ages of forty-one and fifty. This is precisely the group that is most likely to ask, “Is this all there is to academic life?” and “Should I consider other options while it’s still possible for me to do so?” Chairs can help increase job satisfaction by providing associate professors with meaningful leadership opportunities, discussing career and life goals with these faculty members, and making it clear to them that their contributions are indeed recognized and appreciated (see Buller 2021, 44–49).

Understand the challenges that female faculty still face. Even though some progress in gender equity has been made in higher education, many female faculty still experience intense societal pressures to prove themselves in their careers at the same time that they bear most of the child-rearing responsibilities at home and may also be caring for elderly parents. Tenure stop-clock policies are often well intentioned, but they can have the unintended consequence of a career-long loss of income. Chairs can advocate for *income-neutral* tenure stop-clock policies: systems that enable those who extend their probationary periods to recover all the raises they would have been entitled to if they had been promoted at the customary time. Chairs can also ensure that all faculty in the program are aware of the services available to them under the institution’s Employee Assistance Program and their local social services office.

Help faculty understand that although

the landscape of higher education is indeed changing, some of these changes are beneficial. In a 2021 article titled “Tenure’s Broken Promise,” the *Chronicle of Higher Education*’s Scott Carlson wrote, “In the 1970s ... nearly 60 percent of academics working in the sector were tenured or on the tenure track; today, only about a third are granted those coveted positions, as higher education relies more on part-time instructors and underpaid adjuncts. That austerity coincides with the end of mandatory retirement in 1986 (which was applied to tenured positions in 1993) under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. Since then, older professors have been allowed to stay in positions indefinitely, further locking up the job market for incoming and up-and-coming scholars and teachers.” Many junior faculty see such statistics and think, *All these changes work against me. I not only have less of a chance today of being offered a tenure-track position but also that chance becomes even lower because older faculty members can refuse to retire.*

Chairs can play a vital role in helping put these changes into perspective. The same laws that protect older faculty members today will protect younger faculty members later in their careers. The same stringent expectations that now make it more challenging for applicants to be offered a tenure-track position

also increase the likelihood that those who *do* become our colleagues will be as self-motivated and dedicated as we ourselves are, less likely to make our jobs harder by proving incapable of pulling their own weight, and colleagues that we all can be proud of. This is not to say that there will not be changes in higher education that faculty and administrators join forces in resisting but merely that some changes actually do improve the quality of higher education. If chairs wish to improve faculty satisfaction in their areas, they can help those in their departments see the advantages that may yet arise from what often appear at the moment to be little more than insurmountable obstacles. ▲

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Chair Tip

Is all conflict bad?

Conflict is inevitable. Being disrespectful, mean, and uncivil is a conscious choice. It is the result of competing ideas or options. There are many positive consequences of conflict in a department. Enhanced problem identification is one of the important results of conflict. This helps to catalyze thoughts and creates new opportunities. Group cohesiveness can also be increased. Working through conflict in a positive manner creates trust and productivity. People are also bounced out of their comfort zones—a reality adjustment—and can view it as an opportunity for change. Conflict also causes the consideration of new ideas and strategies. Conflict can be used as a vehicle to identify solutions to problems, and it can result in a clarification of important problems, challenges, or issues. Conflict can aid in reducing stress because challenges are brought into the open. These potential positive benefits to conflict cannot be realized, however, if the conflict is ignored or poorly handled. Just as it is true that you cannot work effectively with others with clenched fists, it is also true that you cannot smile conflict away: It must be managed. If conflict is not managed, it becomes detrimental or even destructive.

—**Robert E. Cipriano** is a senior partner in ATLAS: Academic Training, Leadership, and Assessment Services.



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The Chair's Role in Counteracting Generational and Ageist Framing in Institutional Processes

EDNA CHUN AND ALVIN EVANS

With the dramatic decline in funding that occurred during the pandemic, colleges and universities have been faced with difficult choices, including layoffs of contingent and even tenure-track faculty that can reflect ageist assumptions. The restructuring and downsizing that has occurred at many institutions has reinforced the need to create age-inclusive academic environments. For the most part, however, diversity strategic plans do not address the importance of multigenerational diversity in the academic workforce and the advantages of an age-inclusive talent proposition. Yet clearly intergenerational talent at both ends of the age spectrum is a driver of knowledge creation and innovation in research and teaching. The perspectives of different generational groups can enhance problem-solving and collaboration and foster what has been termed as *cross-boundary collaboration* (Casciaro, Edmondson, and Jang 2019).

Chairs play a crucial role in defusing ageist and generational framing in both the climate and the culture of the department and within organizational processes. As scholars have noted, ageist stereotypes are the precursor of more serious behaviors, actions, and organizational outcomes that affect individuals. A process-oriented perspective can reveal how dominant group members seek to preserve privilege through actions of social closure and how minoritized groups resist these efforts at stratification (Roscigno 2007).

It is important to recognize that generational and ageist framing is a holistic phenomenon that encompasses behaviors, images, biases, stereotypes, labels, and narratives. Such framing can involve both positive and negative stereotypes, assumptions, and images. For example, more senior

faculty can be viewed as more loyal and committed while ageist views suggest that they are resistant to change, less motivated and productive, have memory issues, require greater use of health benefits, and are less interested in professional development. Yet in contrast to this perspective, a recent study of over 167,000 tenure-line faculty found that senior faculty who had held their PhDs for thirty-one or more years publish as much as their junior counterparts. These faculty exceeded their junior counterparts in production of longer-format works such as books or book chapters that focus on the evolution of ideas (Savage and Olejniczk 2021). Similarly, stereotypes of younger faculty often challenge their competence and expertise, level of maturity, and sense of entitlement while more positive views recognize their openness to learning, risk-taking, level of engagement, and technological expertise.

In our research for our new book, *Leveraging Multigenerational Workplace Strategies in Higher Education* (Chun and Evans 2021), a major theme that emerged from our interviews with faculty and academic administrators was the intensification of experiences of ageism in organizational culture and processes for women, people of color, and LGBT individuals in higher education. Eleanor, an African American female faculty member observes that ageist stereotypes are less likely to be applied to senior white male faculty. She indicates that these faculty can be credited with greater stature or political clout because they are seen as wise men and “wear jackets with patches on their sleeves.” In contrast, female faculty tend to be subject to greater ageist pressures to modify their appearance to look younger.

Ageism acts as a compounding factor in experiences of marginalization and

discrimination that in turn affect organizational outcomes. As Diana, a white female sociology professor in a private university observed, “I think, for example, female scholars of color are more likely to experience a dismissive approach at both ends of the age scale. It compounds the already existing stereotypes and discrimination. I think [ageism] is a compounding contributor: it’s in some ways so embedded that ... often, it’s just almost like the way things work, and so then you always have to be working against what you know are the underlying operating processes.”

In her view, ageism compounds the invisibilizing of minoritized faculty in day-to-day interactions. But it can lead to hypervisibilizing when it comes to promotion and tenure processes when both more junior and more senior faculty are subjected to increased questioning.

One of the most significant ways that chairs can counteract ageist and generational framing is in the hiring process and through committee assignments and other significant roles. The “lump of labor” fallacy often affects perceptions of older workers who are seen as consuming valued resources and opportunities that could be given to others (North and Fiske 2016). For example, Katherine, a white female faculty member in a private university, describes the pushback she received when recommending more senior faculty for committee assignments due to the perception that these faculty might retire. As she explains, “I have had my higher-ups pretty much suggest, ‘We don’t want him in [that role] because I think he is about to retire; I think he is on his way out.’” She notes that people often leave an institution for different reasons, and “sometimes we shoot ourselves in the foot by using some of these assumptions a priori.” As a result, Katherine concludes that offers are not extended because of underlying ageist assumptions.

Similarly, Jon, a white male administrator in a southwestern research university, reflects on questions that come up in the hiring process that suggest ageist assumptions, such as “How much longer would it be likely that he or she would stay before they

retired?” He recounts how a dean in a staff meeting spoke explicitly of the need to bring new blood into the department through the retirement of older faculty: “The dean actually said, ‘I wish we could find a way to get these old guys to retire.’ I vividly recall that because I told him that what he had just said was illegal.” Even though chairs often shut down such conversations, Jon notes that these stereotypes can linger in people’s minds. Veronica, an African American female administrator, recalls discussing the interview of a female applicant in her late fifties or early sixties with a search committee that wanted to ask the applicant if it was her last stop before retiring.

In terms of tenure and promotion, age hurdles coupled with other minoritized identities can undercut a faculty member’s accomplishments for both senior and junior faculty members. Michael, a white male director of an innovative teaching and learning center at an elite university, indicates that questions can arise in promotion to full professor when faculty of more advanced age have spent extended periods of time at the associate professor level. As he relates, “I have heard a lot of discussion about the longer that goes on, the more bias there is against the people. Why they are so late to be going up for full, or what’s wrong with them, that kind of thing, if they’re fifty years old and still an associate professor, that kind of talk.”

But the most egregious form of ageist pressure exerted on senior faculty can be covert and overt demands to retire. An older white female faculty member, Susan, describes how her white male chair overloaded her with teaching assignments for undergraduate required courses and kept her out of the graduate course rotation for five years. He then accused her of refusing to work with graduate students and subsequently undertook a surveillance technique in an effort to charge her with misconduct: “He would pace in the hall and listen to everything I said to the students. So I was under constant visual and auditory surveillance by him every time I had office hours ... He had a lot of hours to pace in the hall in front of my office and try to catch me

doing something illegal, which he never did ... I had to experience that for a long time ... It was incredibly stressful.”

Based on the problematic experiences described here, what actions can department chairs take to dispel ageist and generational framing in institutional processes?

Evaluate how ageist framing can influence committee and course assignments, scholarly and grant opportunities, sabbaticals, and delegation of other tasks within the department.

The perception that faculty are close to retirement can affect opportunities offered, such as support for grant applications and even course assignments and scheduling. In this regard, Samantha, a more senior

Generational and ageist framing is a holistic phenomenon that encompasses behaviors, images, biases, stereotypes, labels, and narratives.

white female faculty member, describes being passed over for opportunities because she is not viewed as part of the “faculty of the future.” Further, Valerie, a white female associate dean for research, notes the reluctance to grant sabbaticals to individuals in their sixties due to the perception that they might retire and not return to teach for at least two years after the sabbatical. As she explains, “They don’t question whether a forty-year-old is going to leave in two years ... but they question it when you are in your sixties. I see that happen on a yearly basis. I just kind of intercept and say, ‘You can’t ask those kinds of questions unless you ask everyone.’ The situations I have experienced all pertain to females.”

As a result, active intervention by the chair is necessary when questioning of the need for professional development, sabbaticals, or committee assignments can occur based on ageist considerations. In this way, chairs can ensure that opportunities are offered equitably for faculty in different career stages.

Disrupt ageist stereotypes that may arise in recruitment and hiring processes, in promotion and tenure, and through the imposition of normative career expectations. The example of Jon’s intervention in the staff meeting with his dean illustrates the direct involvement that can be required to counteract ageist considerations in formal processes. Further, Michael’s observation about the tendency to impose normative career expectations in the promotion process indicates that chairs have an important role to play in counteracting such perceptions and supporting faculty colleagues.

Model practices of collaboration that foster an understanding of the value and contributions of intergenerational talent. Through intergenerational committee assignments, encouragement of cross-generational collaboration, and mediation of rifts between different cohorts, chairs can help overcome presumptive ageist and generational framing. During staff meetings and formal events, chairs can highlight the contributions of faculty from different generational cohorts and recommend opportunities that promote cross-boundary knowledge transfer and collaboration.

Conclusion

As can be seen from the examples shared in this article, it is clear that department chairs serve in a pivotal capacity to promote equitable and inclusive outcomes throughout the course of the faculty career. During the processes of recruitment and hiring, tenure and promotion, course and curricular development, and professional development, chairs can mitigate against prevailing ageist and generational assumptions, biases, and stereotypes and may need to actively intervene in some instances. The creation of a department climate that fosters synergy

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among different generational groups will enhance intellectual accomplishments, collaboration, and knowledge transfer. Clearly, chair leadership is an essential factor for building a multigenerational faculty talent proposition that enables colleges and universities to capitalize on the breadth and depth of faculty expertise to promote student learning.

Edna Chun serves as chief learning officer and **Alvin Evans** as higher education practice leader for HigherEd Talent, a national human resources and diversity consulting firm (higherEdTalent.com). Email: consult@higherEdTalent.com

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Intersectional Identities and the Woman Chair's Experience

CAMILLE S. JOHNSON

Programs to create an environment that fosters the well-being and success of a broad range of faculty may neglect to consider the needs of chairs from historically excluded groups and their intersectional identities.

Everyone holds multiple identities that arise from gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, nationality, generation, or other affinity group (e.g., a Giants fan). Intersectionality is a framework for understanding how those different identities overlap and influence a person's experience of the world (Sanchez-Hucles and Davis 2010). For example, a woman's experiences in a classroom might differ based on her age and race. Notably, the challenges that come from intersecting identities are not additive. That is, it is not that a woman has challenges from Set A and a Black person has challenges from Set B and therefore a Black woman has challenges equal to Set A + B. Instead, identities can combine to eliminate and create new challenges, yielding a new Set C. A previous article in this publication discussed the challenges faced by women in general (Johnson 2021). The present work will describe some

of the challenges experienced by chairs who identify as women and the intersections with race/ethnicity and context.

BIPOC Women Chairs and Stereotypes to Be Navigated

Membership in historically excluded or stigmatized groups subjects women to an array of stereotypes, and the intersection of race, ethnicity, or other characteristics generates additional archetypes and expectations for BIPOC women (Rosette et al. 2016). Such archetypes inherently include comparisons and descriptions of BIPOC women in relation to white women. This is because white cisgendered women are the default image when people imagine who fits the category of "woman." Therefore, women who have other identities are defined in comparison with white women. For example, if white women are considered "usual" and "normal," then BIPOC women are considered "deviant," "unusual," or "exotic." From this subcategory of women, unique stereotypes and expectations emerge.

For example, relative to white women, women of Asian descent are stereotyped as

passive and competent. If they assert authority, which violates part of the stereotype while supporting another part, they may be labeled a "dragon lady" or "tiger mother." These archetypes invoke suggestions that they are unfriendly, conniving, ruthless, and overly achievement oriented. Similarly, while white women may be stereotyped as emotional, Latina women may be stereotyped as extremely emotional and passive. When they express negative opinions, they may be labeled as "fiery," suggesting a level of angry emotion that overcomes competence. Black women may be stereotyped as dominant and strong and face archetypes that may suggest that they should also be selfless, smiling caretakers. When they express dissatisfaction with how they are treated, they may be labeled as an "angry Black woman," which suggests that they are dominant, strident, and irrational (Rosette et al. 2016). Beyond race and ethnicity, other identities can provoke stereotypes. A transgender or lesbian chair may face stereotypes around their relative masculinity. Similarly, women with accents may be perceived as outsiders and therefore less knowledgeable or intelligent.

These archetypes affect women chairs in several different ways. First, as with any stereotype, once a woman is categorized as a member of a stereotyped group, all the traits of that group will be applied to her. That is, once a woman is labeled a dragon lady because she has acted in an authoritative way, the traits of ruthlessness and slyness may be applied to her. In addition, any ambiguous behavior, such as failing to include someone in a communication thread, may be interpreted as a conspiratorial act.

Perhaps more significantly, awareness that one is a member of a stereotyped group creates an extra emotional and cognitive burden. Stereotype threat is the burden created by knowing that you are a member of a negatively stereotyped group and that actions you take could confirm those negative stereotypes as true (Hoyt and Murphy 2016). That threat leads women to spend more time and effort considering the possible interpretations of their behaviors and suppressing negative thoughts and doubts,

which results in physiological stress. For example, a Latina department chair may expend greater effort considering whether a response to a situation might be interpreted as overly emotional and experience greater stress while making the decision than a white woman or a male department chair, for whom emotionality is not a concern. Moreover, stereotypes of irrationality, coupled with increased institutional surveillance and a lack of institutional credibility, particularly for Latina and Black women, leave them vulnerable to gaslighting and other attacks on self-confidence (Sweet 2019).

BIPOC Women Chairs and Performance Expectations

The stereotypes with which BIPOC women chairs must contend influence performance expectations and consequences. For example, while all women are judged more harshly than men for making the same mistake, Black women are judged more harshly than white women for making the same mistake. However, because Black women are viewed as more masculine than white women and are expected to be more dominant, they are not evaluated as negatively for agentic behavior as white or Asian women (Rosette et al. 2016). Similarly, because of stereotypes about passivity, Asians partners are preferred for cooperative tasks and white partners for competitive tasks. These disparate performance expectations, as well as consequences for failure, can negatively affect the success and well-being of BIPOC women chairs.

Intersectionality and Invisibility

Given the historical exclusion of women and BIPOC from academia and leadership roles, it is likely that BIPOC women chairs will find themselves in the numerical minority in most work-related groups. They may be the first woman and/or the first BIPOC to receive tenure or serve in a leadership role. As such, they may bear the burden of being a standard bearer and feel responsible for representing the needs and viewpoints of both the gender and their racial/ethnic group. Ironically, BIPOC women might also find that their intersectionality makes them invisible. For example, Black women may find that initiatives related to race and

ethnicity focus on issues more relevant to Black men, because the prototypical Black person is a man, and that initiatives related to gender focus on issues more relevant to white women, because the prototypical woman is white. Asian and Latina women may find themselves completely left out of the discussion (O'Brien 2008).

Recommendations

Although it is not within the power of any one individual to dismantle these stereotypes, and certainly women chairs are not to be held responsible for the societally conveyed biases against them, there are methods for reducing stereotype threat, increasing the likelihood that BIPOC women will feel and be successful, and ensuring that appropriate support mechanisms are created.

- Deans and institutions should convey to BIPOC women chairs the belief that the chair role is something that people grow into.
- Deans and institutions should be careful in conveying expectations of BIPOC women chairs, both to the chairs and to others. This means being cautious in describing the decision-making authority and the expected organizational citizenship behaviors of the chair via email and presentations and when speaking of the chairs in public and private.

- Deans and institutions should validate the challenges experienced by BIPOC women chairs that arise because of their intersectional identity.

- Deans and institutions should examine support programs to ensure that the diversity of challenges and experiences within historically excluded groups are addressed and represented. ▲

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The Dean's Thoughts

Preparing for the Next Step

Most chairs whose service ends before permanent retirement return to the faculty. Preparing to move to the level of dean is another option and one that will likely mean changing institutions. Thus, chair accomplishments in the present institution must be clearly visible to search committees. Effective management skills are basic requirements but not the sort of evidence that will stand out and earn an interview. Chairs should be cognizant of the need to engage in high-impact projects that have positive outcomes. There are choices regarding the nature of discretionary work a chair might elect to do, and those planning an administrative career should select projects that effect significant institutional change. Leadership in student recruitment or retention strategies, external engagement, diversification of the faculty or the student body, increasing external funding, philanthropy activities, and innovative academic programming are all examples that will attract attention. Chairs should not only document the projects and the data on their outcomes but also the reasons they were started and the rationale for the process that was used to generate buy-in and promote successful implementation. All these aspects should be recorded at the time of the work, as memories of past environments and thought processes fade with time.

—**N. Douglas Lees** is professor and chair emeritus of biology at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis.

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Department Head and Faculty Collaboration during the COVID-19 Pandemic

JEFFREY WARD

In our School of Music, Theatre, and Dance, I collaborated with faculty to prepare for our fall 2020 classes in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee assigned areas of responsibility, determining how performing arts could be taught in a variety of reopening scenarios and the tasks to enact those scenarios. The faculty served as chairs for different areas of our preparation: facility and supply preparation (including transit maps, personal protective equipment, and cleaning supplies); social distancing and masking guidelines; course scheduling; live and virtual performance; and communication to faculty, students, and stakeholders. At weekly meetings, faculty shared their progress, receiving feedback and recruiting assistance from colleagues. As department head, my roles in working with this committee were that of a middle manager, facilitator, and policy implementer.

As a middle manager, I communicated university policies to the committee and ensured that decisions complied with policy. In addition, I communicated to the dean, provost, and registrar how our school implemented policies within our facilities, classes, and performances. Because of the scope of adjusting the schedule, implementing transit maps, and communicating to our community, we created an internal planning deadline one month before classes started. This deadline preceded some university-level decisions, so I predicted university policy and communicated the need for flexibility if these predictions were inaccurate or if the university shifted back to all-remote teaching due to infection spikes in the region.

As a discussion facilitator, it is essential to consider all perspectives, particularly in a unit with multiple programs like ours. You must listen more and speak less, particularly

early in the process. Although some faculty may have no concerns about expressing their views, other faculty may be reticent to share their opinions if they differ from the stated view of the department head. The department head, therefore, should refrain from sharing their views in initial discussions. This approach not only allows for a freer discussion of ideas but also lets the department head challenge a majority view to ensure that all angles of an issue are explored.

Although I worked with the committee to develop our school's policies, it largely falls on the department head to implement policy and to ensure that policy is followed. It is important to consider the rationale for policy and also to anticipate possible objections. While the committee had varying levels of agreement on decisions, consensus was built through committee discussions for which our entire faculty and students did not directly engage, so making clear, frequent, and varied communications was vital to garnering support from the entire community.

The dissonance between the need to keep our community safe while trying to maintain activities to ensure that students would enroll was debated by the committee in the summer and was a source of much faculty concern in the fall. I received emails from faculty sharing first- and secondhand accounts of their colleagues not following our policies. This put me, as the department head, in a difficult situation to ensure policy compliance without damaging faculty collegiality and morale. If not handled delicately, the situation could dissolve in faculty blaming their colleagues if they or our students became ill. I handled this through one-on-one conversations with faculty regarding concerns of compliance.

Lessons Learned

Our faculty-led reopening committee is an excellent example of the importance of faculty governance and the varying roles of a department head. Through this experience, many leadership principles can be generalized.

Be a good, empathetic listener and an effective discussion facilitator. Being a good listener is not only saying less and listening more but also perceiving verbal and nonverbal communication and being empathetic to the speaker. This is true in both individual and group discussions. When creating a committee or discussion group, department heads should consider the following:

- How well versed are participants on the topic? This does not mean that everyone must be experts (part of your or the committee chair's job is to provide background and context), but engaging people who have thought about or are invested in the issue is vital to coming to the right decision.
- Are all affected areas and programs represented? We often think about faculty committees, but there are many times when we should engage a wider spectrum of stakeholders, including students, staff, alumni, and university constituents.
- Will participants think beyond their respective programs? If committee members are solely focused on their own programs, the conversation will quickly turn to a turf defense rather than to finding solutions that will help the larger community.

In listening, a department head must facilitate an atmosphere in which all people in the discussion are comfortable expressing their perspectives. This form of active listening requires the department head to be aware of what is said, how it is said, and what is not said. The discussion facilitator must prevent one or two participants from dominating by proactively asking all attendees to share their views. Department heads must allow participants to express their views and ideas before offering their own. Nothing ends a conversation quicker than when the academic leader expresses their view of the "best course of action," particularly when participants are nontenured faculty, students, or staff who may be concerned about disagreeing with the

chair. The department head may also express alternative views that are not being discussed or at times advocate contrarian views so that the group explores a variety of solutions.

Consider the diverse needs of students in all decisions. We must consider the diverse needs of students in our decisions. As the work of our reopening committee occurred in the summer, there was no student voice on our committee, so communicating and updating our students on our deliberations was vital. This communication began with an electronic brochure highlighting our policies, followed by a Zoom town hall for student questions. Although I co-led the town hall with a student leader, all members of the reopening committee responded to questions.

Understand university processes and resources. Department heads must invest time in learning the priorities and processes of central administration to align unit-level decisions. In the case of my university, two priorities communicated by the provost were the health of our faculty, students, and staff and the financial health of the institution. Based on these priorities, faculty were given agency to choose the delivery method of their coursework. I communicated these priorities to bolster faculty morale in a time of great concern for their own health.

Communicating university processes was also important to faculty who felt that guidelines restricting live performance were inappropriate and potentially harmful to our ability to recruit and retain students. It allowed me to be empathetic to their concerns but also to stress the need to follow university protocols.

The department head should connect faculty with resources across the university. While we often think of fiscal support, the department head must be aware of training and material support as well. During the pandemic, this support included the process for acquiring personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies, classroom cameras for remote teaching, and funding for student equipment. We also found resources to support faculty in online teaching, including community-building and assessment strategies.

Build consensus. Building consensus

informally and formally is key to discerning the best pathway. Without investing the time necessary to build consensus through discussion, decisions may be myopic and lead to unintended, negative consequences. Building consensus also leads to more faculty buy-in. If faculty are asked to follow guidelines or participate in a task in which they feel they had a voice in creating, they will be more invested and will work to see it through. This level of cooperation will be diminished if faculty are completing tasks because they are being forced to or because they are implementing the “great idea” of an administrator.

Make timely decisions. Although building consensus is important, timely decisions are essential. Even though the decision may result from the work of multiple people, the responsibility of the decision falls on the academic leader. Thus, the department head will be held accountable

both by the dean and the provost and by the department faculty (even if faculty members were a part of the discussions).

Final Thoughts

As academic leaders, we have the greatest resource in making good decisions: our colleagues. We don't need to have all the answers, but we do need to be able to manage the people and resources at our disposal to discover the best path forward. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we complete our work in higher education. Department heads will continue to play a pivotal role in collaborating with their faculty colleagues and with college and university leaders as we move beyond the pandemic. ▲

This article is based on a presentation at the 38th annual Academic Chairpersons Conference, February 3–5, 2021.

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Organizational Culture: Shifting Toward a Culture of Self-Care

MARY MULLINS

Culture is a shared way of living based on common attitudes, mindsets, beliefs, traditions, and norms. The overarching university culture is important, but the bureaucratic distinctions within individual departments create the culture of the everyday working environment for each faculty and staff member. Many faculty spend a significant amount of time in their roles, and the lines often blur into the personal realm due to the nature of the position. Being a faculty member is the hardest job that I have held in my life, and finding a work-life balance can be daunting with budgetary, student, tenure, promotion, and leadership demands often taking the attention from balance and well-being.

The purpose of this article is to share one department's shift in culture over a period of time. It will outline the steps taken with new leadership to transition the culture from a dominant leadership-driven culture to one

that is more focused on shared governance and on the engagement and well-being of faculty and staff. This department never lost sight of the overarching demands of budgetary issues and even embraced a shift during the pandemic. Time, patience, and critical reflection were key elements in transitioning culture. Culture takes time to evolve; thus, it takes time to shift culture in small ways.

Analysis of the Department at the Outset

For eight years, I was a member of a department that slowly created a culture of dominant leadership and passive compliance among faculty. The staff were just standing by. There was no cohesion with regard to the department's functioning and no clear role delineation other than the chair telling us what was coming next and what we were to do. It created a culture of burnout for some and a culture of passivity and distrust for

all. Over time, new members were brought into the culture without proper orientation or training but with significant growth demands. There was no cultivation of professional development or life balance. A culture of job security awareness kept many working endlessly on a growth agenda. Conversations about quality were highly censored.

Turnover was inevitable. This added to the workload demand of orienting new faculty to classes and an abundance of adjunct faculty. We seemed to be in an inevitable cycle, but those faculty who were invested in the department were overwhelmingly compassionate and committed to taking care of each other. This unique feature allowed for and opened the way for change.

The Shift

A significant shift in energy occurred within this department. Swift actions resulted in my appointment as chair. The shift came at the beginning of summer, which allowed some time for planning and preparation. Those months were spent rallying the program directors into a leadership team. The key word was *team*. We had not experienced a team to this point in the department culture, at least in the past decade. Camaraderie and good working relationships were created during the summer, and I soon started planning for the return of all faculty for the fall semester. This involved a series of team-building and trust-building exercises. As a team, we created some of the basics of a culture of self-care that would be introduced to all department members at the beginning of the fall semester.

The team focused on role clarification, which is essential in a culture of self-care. Group members must clearly understand their role in the organization and define it for others in order to create clear boundaries for communication. Communication was a critical point that was delineated simultaneously with role clarification.

The first faculty and staff meeting focused on identifying the department's values. I wanted to set the stage by identifying the values that were important to department members so that we could build from there. The values identified by the department include the following:

- People and relationships
- Integrity and honesty
- Quality
- Balance and self-care
- Diversity service
- Personal and professional development
- Professional behavior

The identified goals were very insightful given the past culture. It was obvious that department members were distrustful yet optimistic about how the environment could be. It was a starting point that set the stage for the future.

Over the coming year, I focused on developing a stable environment that was transparent with information flow and attentive to the initial value development. I heard the message from the department members and quickly developed plans to establish better relationships and flow of information, concentrate on quality, find balance, and give attention to professional development. All this was accomplished with a focus on professional behavior. Despite the heavy workload that comes with being a department chair, I planned within my schedule, and surprisingly, faculty and staff began to shift in attitude and mindset.

During the year, my focus was on the following:

- Regular department meetings to disseminate information from above
- Transparent communication
- Individual faculty meetings to discuss workload balance and equity
- Individual focus on professional development
- Emotional check-ins
- Goal setting as a department
- Talking about self-care
- Coaching leaders on principles of self-care

• Coaching members on work-life balance, attention to stress, and time on tasks

Unfortunately, before the year had ended, the pandemic struck. This brought new challenges and opportunities. With everyone working remotely, a need for connection and balance became more evident. Department members were beginning to present with trust in the workplace, and they were transitioning to remote teaching and working quite well. The first year was filled with

patience and continuous reflection for me. I realized how slowly the culture was shifting and the need for individual attention and relationship building. Those needs seemed to exacerbate as the pandemic continued.

As a department, we began weekly virtual check-ins. It started as a time of information sharing to stay on top of the day-to-day changes in university guidance and planning. This evolved to more strategic planning for the weekly meetings. At the beginning of our second year, faculty requested to continue the weekly meetings, and our schedule alternated between the following activities: department meeting, program meetings, professional development, and a curriculum review. Throughout the course of the year, faculty commented on how they felt more connected as a department due to the frequent meetings. They also appreciated the intentional purpose of the meetings. As a department, we were able to stay connected and to complete a full curriculum review for both our undergraduate and our graduate programs.

I administered an anonymous survey seeking feedback at the conclusion of the second year. I had spent the final faculty meeting reviewing the concerns stated by faculty two years previously and then followed with the actions or behaviors that had been implemented during that time to address each of the concerns. Much of the professional development meetings had focused on teamwork and better communication in the workplace. Thus, the survey allowed members to share what they would like me or their colleagues to stop, start, or continuing doing.

Shifting the department culture is challenging and takes time to show results. However, the outcomes of the department's improved functioning have been worth the effort. We have been productive and are able to plan with an intentional vision. This was accomplished by fostering collaboration and shared governance around setting values and priorities. Each department member has benefited by having a clear understanding of their roles and workload expectations, and they have also found a voice in decision-making. ▲

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Lawsuits and Rulings

AGE DISCRIMINATION

Case: *Edelman v. Loyola University Chicago*, No. 16 CV 07971 (N.D. Ill. 05/17/19)

Ruling: The US District Court, Northern District of Illinois, refused to dismiss a suit against Loyola University Chicago.

Significance: The Age Discrimination in Employment Act prohibits employers from discriminating against workers over forty because of their age. To prevail on an ADEA claim, a plaintiff must prove that their age was the cause of an adverse employment action. It isn't enough to show that age was merely a motivating factor.

Summary: In 2010, Loyola University Chicago hired the plaintiff for a nontenure-track position to teach Spanish and Latin literature. In 2012, Loyola posted an advertisement for a tenure-track position as an assistant professor of Spanish. The job posting stated that the minimum qualifications required for the job included a PhD in Latin American literature.

The plaintiff applied for the position, stating that her qualifications included a PhD in romance languages and literature, with a specialization in Latin American literature. She was fifty-five at that time. The former department chair wrote a letter recommending her.

In January 2013, the plaintiff learned that she hadn't been selected for even the first round of interviews. Believing that she was more qualified than the finalists, the plaintiff complained to the department chair about the search process.

The department chair sent an email to the search committee asking why the plaintiff hadn't been selected as a finalist because she had more teaching experience, an established publishing record, and excellent student evaluations.

The committee chair responded by stating that "the search committee was not interested merely in quantity of publications or length of experience. If this were the case, then we would simply hire the oldest person

and be done with it." He also said that the plaintiff's scholarship didn't measure up and that she demonstrated "astoundingly unprofessional behavior."

The plaintiff filed a suit claiming that Loyola violated the ADEA. The university filed a motion for summary judgment.

The district court judge decided that the committee chair's response could be interpreted to mean that it was specifically interested in hiring applicants younger than the plaintiff. He acknowledged that scholars were usually in the best position to make the highly subjective judgments related to scholarship and university service. However, he denied the university's motion after concluding that a jury could reasonably decide that the plaintiff was passed over for younger candidates who did not possess the advertised qualifications for the posted position. ▲

DUE PROCESS

Case: *Valencia v. The Board of Regents et al.*, No. 1:17-cv-509 (D. N.M. 11/04/19)

Ruling: The US District Court, District of New Mexico, refused to dismiss a suit against the University of New Mexico.

Significance: A professor accused of sexual harassment is entitled to notice and the right to be heard.

Summary: The plaintiff became a University of New Mexico anthropology professor in 2012. The department chair allegedly told him without elaboration in June 2015 that "some students filed a complaint against him with the Office of Equal Opportunity."

The plaintiff purportedly didn't learn any more about the accusations until the OEO told him in September that one student had accused him of sexual orientation discrimination and another had accused him of sexual harassment and gender discrimination.

Although the OEO decided that both complaints lacked probable cause, it chose to launch an investigation into the entire

anthropology department. The OEO allegedly violated university policies during its inquiries by refusing to provide the plaintiff with notice of any adverse claims, give him an opportunity to respond to any adverse claims, and allow him to identify favorable witnesses. In addition, the OEO investigated accusations against the plaintiff that were over a year old, without identifying good cause to resurrect the stale claims.

In 2016, the OEO found probable cause that the plaintiff had engaged in discriminatory conduct based on sexual orientation and gender identity and created a hostile academic environment.

The plaintiff was eventually terminated, and he filed a suit. One of his claims was a lack of due process. The plaintiff alleged that UNM had subjected him to several adverse employment actions without providing proper notice, discounted evidence helpful to his defense, unreasonably prolonged the proceedings, failed to follow its own policies, and had not provided him with an opportunity to present witnesses.

The university filed a motion to dismiss. The judge denied the motion, ruling that the plaintiff had successfully alleged a lack of due process. ▲

CALL FOR PAPERS

We invite our readers to submit articles for possible publication in *The Department Chair*. The subject should be relevant to department chairs, and the focus should be on practical applications and strategies. We also welcome ideas for subjects of interest to academic leaders that we should develop into articles.

Articles submitted for consideration should be 1,000 to 1,500 words and can be sent as email attachments to editor-dch@wiley.com.

Book Reviews

Academic Leadership in the New Normal

Jeffrey L. Buller

ATLAS Leadership, 2021

259 pp., \$12.50 (amazon.com)



Regarding Jeff Buller's newest compendium of information, ideas, thoughts, and strategies that addresses the academy across the board, I will limit my commentary

to what is most relevant for department chairs. Departments differ immensely by discipline, nature of the institution, mission, size, internal dynamics, and current challenges. No prescriptive rules fit even two seemingly exact matches. I will speak about what resonates to my particular situation. Extrapolations beyond that are nebulous. To provide specific context, I am chair of a five-person combined department of history and politics, in a humanities division, at a small private liberal arts college (until 2021 a women's college and also rebranded as a university) with almost a dozen master's degrees and a new doctorate program. I have been a college professor for fifty years, forty-four at this place, and a chair for thirty years. Like every other institution and individual circumstance, we are unique, and my reading and remarks on this treatise reflect this voice. I've been a part of a lot of change, and in some senses, the more that things change, they still remain the same.

First, let me quibble with the underlying metaphor of the book, utilitarian as it may be. There is no new normal because there is no normal—in the past, present, or future. The academy has been in constant flux during my fifty years, although the pace of change is hastening. The coronavirus has expedited this, but the driving force has been more accelerating evolution. As the author himself states, strategic plans for the future are of limited value because the context has changed before the plan is even completed. It might have some validity for a couple of

years but not much more. Things are different, but what is normal is ever shifting—a product of technology, society, cultural and political environments, and values. The next tectonic shift will follow closely on COVID-19's heels. The ultimate truth of this book is that rapid change is constant, the world that we knew only years before—or yesterday—is passing, and we must prepare for what we can only surmise. I've taught baby boomers, as well as Generations X, Y, and Z, and we are probably into the next iteration that we haven't identified yet. Both the continuities and the upheavals are an ongoing yin and yang. This is the normative, not the new.

I can touch on only a few of the author's multifarious warnings, admonitions, possibilities, hopes, and predictions, some of which he champions and others he laments. His colorful pop-culture terminology—one of the more prosaic being the fourth and fifth industrial revolutions—provides an upbeat read. A few brief declarations. Be wary of the popular canard of data-driven practices. Metrics are a tool, not a god. Planning is overvalued, overhyped, and underfulfilled. The sacred cows of the fifty-minute class, the in-seat environment, the traditional-length semesters, and the four-year student college tenure (even if fulfilled over varying numbers of years) are dying. Student admission decisions reflect new institutional values. Diversity is not just a buzzword; it shapes. Academic credits will be presented in alternate modes and modalities, with certificates of various kinds growing possibly at the expense of diplomas. Departments around disciplines are potential casualties, as is tenure. The currently popular business model, espoused by trustees and administrators who lack a true understanding of an educational environment, may undermine us all.

The author intones flexibility, resilience, and the ability to shift quickly to new realities. Fifty years ago, long before any new normal, that was the mantra of the

institution where I began. I once quipped, "I am so flexible that I am limp, but I can adjust on cue." As department chairs, I contend that we must hold to our values (however they differ significantly) in whatever period or configuration that we find ourselves. For me, it is the unstinting commitment to the liberal arts as preparation for a meaningful life, not just employment. Historians look back to deal with change over time, but we also deal with the present, as the past is the future. The humanities are committed to the value of eternal verities. One would hope that Buller, a student of opera, would proclaim its superiority, diversity goals or popular trends aside, over 1990's grunge or hip-hop.

In a discipline threatened by position losses to professional development or present popular majors of the day (which may shift tomorrow—as the author implies, even those wrought by popular culture), I am not selfless to sacrifice to whatever program covets one of my department's slots to address their numbers crunch. Beyond the maintenance of a proper educational foundation for future students, my responsibility as a chair is to protect my discipline and my department members' livelihoods in principle and in practice.

Contingent faculty, adjuncts, limited-term contracts, and department adjustments may indeed be efficient for the institution's sustainability at any given time, but we are not in the business of mass output of degrees merely to serve society's wants. We consider our products as works of art lovingly honed as unique and distinctive creations of our craft. The mantra of "the business model" has serene allure, but, as the author points out in another context, the foreseen, not to mention the unforeseen, consequences can be ruinous. The demise of tenure is a popular concept in some circles, and reform may be necessary. But this is a systemic issue that will require a revamping of the academy and inflict unacceptable damage on those who do not have the opportunities to move

in and out of the university at their own or others' will. Quality requires stability. That said, I doubt that tenure as we know it will survive the next few decades.

This is a book that inspires a lot of thought and should engender conversations. As chairs, we are affected by decisions made at much higher levels and by systemic economic, social, and cultural adjustments. As Yogi Berra pontificated, "If you don't know where you are going, you might end up somewhere else." Buller offers counsel on some of the places that we are headed. Knowledge and anticipation are our tools and armor. To ignore, to wish otherwise, or to be unduly compliant is at our peril. ▲

Reviewed by **Joe P. Dunn**, chair of the history and politics department at Converse University. Email: joe.dunn@converse.edu

Preparing for Tough Conversations: How to Set the Stage for Major Change on Your Campus

Lee Gardner

The Chronicle of Higher Education,
2019
28 pp., \$79.00 (chronicle.com)



Preparing for Tough Conversations by Lee Gardner was shared with me on January 6, 2020. COVID-19 began dominating conversations

on and off campus just two months later. I soon realized that this easy-reading publication is ahead of its time. Gardner's 2019 report is premised on the assumption that major change is coming to campus and that college leaders may benefit from practical advice on how to prepare for tough conversations with a variety of campus stakeholders. Here I'll highlight some key takeaways, why they matter, and how you might begin employing them today.

Gardner starts by emphasizing the importance of laying the groundwork for tough conversations by training like an athlete. If leaders are intentional about putting in the work up front, they will be much better prepared come race day when they must

have those tough conversations. Gardner then leads readers through the process of how to best make your case, and he finishes with how to commit to the changes that need to be made. Woven into each section are institutional profiles that give helpful examples of how different campus leaders handled tough decision-making. Gardner also includes useful data throughout the reading to further illustrate and back up his claims.

The first major takeaway is the importance of involving faculty as early as possible in making tough decisions. As modeled by Lori Varlotta, president of Hiram College, this practice made an enormous difference for her faculty because they felt that they played a major role in helping to overcome the challenge of low freshman enrollment on their campus. Varlotta successfully involved her faculty by frequently delivering clear and consistent messages, holding countless campus meetings in which she shared data and other evidence of the need for change, and creating a strategic planning team from faculty she had the dean appoint to represent the different departments. Although many programs had to be cut and several faculty were let go, faculty as a whole trusted and had great confidence in their leader because they understood the process and felt that they were a part of it. In contrast to this success story is how the leadership team at the University of Wisconsin managed their tough decision-making. In this case, certain decisions and proposals were made from higher up and then, on separate occasions, this information was leaked. Thus, faculty felt a large amount of anxiety and mistrust concerning their leadership; they'd been left in the dark and didn't understand the process of how decisions were made. Campus leadership later tried to counter the uproar by holding weekly committee meetings, but many felt that it was a waste of time and that there was no real consideration of changing any of the plans. These contrasting examples show the importance of ensuring that there is clear, consistent, and open communication between leadership and faculty from the start of a challenge. The more that faculty

are given opportunities and are empowered to be involved in the process of change, the more they will be invested in and understanding of the outcome, even if it involves very difficult decisions that must be made.

The second takeaway is the importance of listening. Gardner mentions the significance of gaining insight from other leaders and from those who may have more knowledge in specific areas. In the case of Varlotta at Hiram College, she was willing to hear from the different departments and to allow them to submit new ideas and proposals. Her advice to leaders is to listen to all criticism. It is inevitable that leaders will face criticism for any proposals or decisions that are made. Leaders can either choose to ignore all the criticism and filter what they want to hear or to see the criticism as possible insight into where improvements or changes need to be made. It's important for faculty to know that they are being heard and taken seriously. In the case of the University of Wisconsin, many faculty felt that they had no say in any of the important decision-making that would greatly affect them. Another clear example of listening can be found with Timothy E. Trainor, who took over as president of Mount St. Mary's University after his predecessor made controversial statements about struggling freshmen who he hoped would drop out to bolster the university's retention statistics. Trainor saw that the leadership, faculty, students, and community needed to heal from the trauma of what had happened, so he decided to simply listen. He didn't try to counter arguments or take sides; he merely wanted to let people process while he absorbed everything they were saying. He used what he learned to better understand the university and then to rebuild its brand and finances, along with creating a new strategic plan. You want to gain the trust of and have good rapport with your campus community early on so that when the tough conversations do have to take place, they will have full confidence in you.

The last takeaway is the importance of showing empathy. Gardner stresses how critical it is to know your audience and to keep in mind how they will be affected by

the changes that are being proposed. How will they benefit? Faculty, staff, and students will be much more willing to buy in to change if they can clearly see the positive effects that the changes will have for them, not just how they will benefit the university. Gardner mentions that it is important to be honest and open but also to be sensitive to what your audience can tolerate when deciding what and how much to share. When needing to make tough decisions, Varlotta of Hiram College modeled empathy well by offering a summer stipend to those faculty who were putting in the extra effort to help create the university's strategic plan for an academic redesign. She also stressed the importance of letting faculty know that they weren't just cutting but rebuilding. This can make all the difference in how your audience views the change as a positive and not just as something that is being ripped away from them. With the University of Wisconsin, faculty had a hard time seeing past programs being cut and faculty being let go. At Mount St. Mary's University, Trainor

showed great empathy by not jumping in and trying to manage things the way he saw best; instead, he took the time to listen and be supportive. From this he was able to build strong relationships, gain the trust and confidence of the faculty and the campus community, and learn from those most knowledgeable about the university.

Now more than ever, higher education institutions are facing incredible shifts and changes. Campuses have already had to make many tough decisions in the face of the coronavirus, and they are just now beginning to see major changes occurring in the aftermath of the pandemic. *Preparing for Tough Conversations* is a useful and relevant guide in considering how to best prepare for and manage tough conversations. There is a lot of hard work and intentionality that needs to be done at the front end of making big decisions, but that is what truly makes the difference in the end. ▲

Reviewed by **Trey Guinn**, associate professor and chair of communication arts at University of the Incarnate Word. Email: tguinn@uiwtx.edu

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THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR (Print ISSN: 1049-3255; Online ISSN: 1936-4393) is published quarterly by Wiley Periodicals LLC, 111 River St., Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774 USA.

Periodicals Postage Paid at Hoboken, NJ and additional offices.

Postmaster: Send all address changes to *THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR*, Wiley Periodicals LLC, c/o The Sheridan Press, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331.

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