

Excellence in Leadership  
Leading the Academic  
Department:  
A Short Training for Chairs

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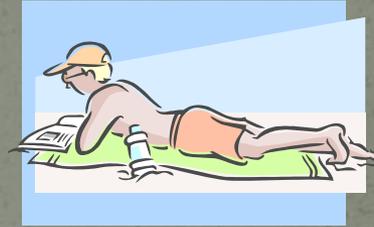
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**THE HARD STUFF IS EASY,  
THE SOFT STUFF IS HARD**

Sure, there are budgets, operations, policies, etc., but that's comparatively easy, compared to people issues.

# FOUR WAYS MOST PEOPLE APPROACH WORKSHOPS LIKE THIS

- 1. SOMEONE ON VACATION
- 2. SOMEONE WHO IS IN PRISON



# FOUR WAYS MOST PEOPLE APPROACH WORKSHOPS LIKE THIS

- 3. SOMEONE WHO ACTS LIKE THEY KNOW IT ALL



- 4. SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO LEARN\*

- \*highly recommended

# Goals for today\*:

- INTERESTING
  - INFORMATIVE
  - USEFUL, and
  - FUN
- 
- \*It will take all of us to accomplish

• NO FEEDBACK

- How did you feel during that?

# What does all that show?

The Importance of Listening, yes, AND—more interestingly, the importance of

**“LEAVING ANXIETY  
WITH ITS PROPER OWNERS”**

(which happens to be one of the top Survival Principles of Successful Leaders).

CHOOSE YOUR LEADERSHIP “STYLE”

FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF YOU

EVERY MOMENT COUNTS

SO CREATE YOUR OWN “WAY”

FOUR ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR  
THEORIES AND SOME IDEAS FROM EACH  
FOR CHAIRING AN ACADEMIC  
DEPARTMENT

# CLASSICAL THEORY

- PIECE RATE
- Reward the kind of production you want.
- DIVISION OF LABOR ACCORDING TO SKILLS AND EXPERTISE
- Delegate more, not less.

# HUMAN RELATIONS

THINK OF “THE PERSON”

ADAPT YOUR LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR TO EACH  
EACH FACULTY MEMBER (BUT BE EVEN-HANDED)

# HUMAN RESOURCES

- YOUR FACULTY ARE YOUR DEPARTMENT'S MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE (AFTER YOUR STUDENTS)
- USE PARTICIPATORY/DEMOCRATIC WAYS OF DECISION-MAKING (WHEN APPROPRIATE!)

# CULTURE

TO THE EXTENT YOU CAN, CREATE THE CULTURE YOU WANT, THROUGH

- YOUR COMMUNICATION AND BEHAVIOR
- CLARIFYING YOUR EXPECTATIONS AND
- CREATING SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECIES
- REWARDING WHAT YOU WANT WITH PRAISE (and whatever else you've got that is rewarding to folks)

# SOME IDEAS ABOUT PRAISE

- PRAISE OFTEN BUT SINCERELY
- LOOK TO CATCH SOMEONE DOING SOMETHING RIGHT
- PASS ON PRAISE FROM OTHERS
- USE BANK SHOTS (WITH OTHER PARTIES THERE) TO PRAISE
- SPECIFIC PRAISE IS BETTER THAN GENERAL

# MY TOUGHEST DEPARTMENT CHAIR MOMENT: A GROUP EXERCISE

- THREE PERSON GROUPS (HOW TO ARRANGE?)
- ONE AT A TIME, DESCRIBE YOUR “TOUGHEST DEPARTMENT CHAIR MOMENT” (1 min. or less)
- TWO LISTENERS EITHER JUST LISTEN, OR, DISCUSS, ADVISE, ETC. (1 min. or less)
- SEE IF ANYTHING IS LEARNED!

# BEST PRACTICES (or at least some)

See handout

# AND FINALLY....

- BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES (see handout)
- FINAL WORDS...
- QUESTIONS....

## RESOURCES with COMMENTS

There are tens of thousands of articles and books on leadership and many thousands on chairing the academic department. How much time will you have to peruse any of them is a question. Below are some comments and some of the best resources.

In my view, the single best publishing house in leadership, as well as chairing the academic department (and some other areas of social science) is Wiley/Jossey Bass. (The former bought out the latter in 1999).

### **Two Strong Books** (not as “out of date” as they might seem):

1. Buller, J. (2012) *The Essential Department Chair: A Comprehensive Desk Reference*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
2. Chu, D (2012) *The Department Chair Primer: What Chairs Need to Know and Do to Make a Difference*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

### **Best Online sources:**

1. [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/\(ISSN\)1936-4393](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/(ISSN)1936-4393)

This site is called “The Department Chair.” Here you will find dozens of articles, including titles such as “Dealing with Difficult Faculty: A Combination of Prevention and Thoughtful Action,” and “CYA: Documentation for Department Chairs.”

2. <http://www.acenet.edu/leadership/Pages/default.aspx>

Excellent source on academic leadership and more. You could spend forever if you chose.

3. <https://www.eab.com/>

Education Advisory Board. A classic standby.

4. <https://www.chronicle.com/>

The Chronicle of Higher Education is so classic, its website doesn't need further clarification of its name! Highly informative about higher education.

## **SOME ADDITIONAL BEST PRACTICES FOR CHAIRS\***

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1. **“If you take the job, do the job.”** Do what chairs must do, even if it’s painful (such as writing out a poor evaluation, letting someone know that they are behaving poorly, or even making a decision that will result in firing).
2. **Meet with each of your faculty.** Have lunch (or a more formal meeting) with every department member once a year, even with the ones who don't like you. If you want them to rise above petty dislikes, you need to do the same.
3. **Ask how you can help** them reach their goals, or is there one thing I can do to make your work better.
4. **Distinguish between urgent tasks and important tasks.** An urgent matter is not necessarily an important one and an important one is not always urgent. You must deal with both but don't let the “tyranny of the urgent” overtake the important. Delegate tasks that you can! Make time for tasks that are important but not urgent (mentoring junior faculty, coordinating grants, working on long term planning, etc).
5. **Wait and Count to Ten.** Think through how you want to respond to a flaming e-mail, an upsetting phone message, an unexpected and unwanted result. Wait and think through the best response. OK. Now respond.
6. **Remember the Pelz Effect.** Your downward influence (with faculty) is at least somewhat related to your upward influence (with your Dean and Provost). Minimally, do not be on an “obstructionist list.” You don't need to polish apples, but be a trusted, reliable subordinate who comes through for your boss.
7. **Be open to feedback.** Listen (of course) but make sure you encourage disagreement; information and idea-testing; even criticism. If you think you've got everything right, you won't be learning anything new.
8. **Be compassionate with yourself,** as if you were a family member for whom you care deeply. Give yourself a break when appropriate. Being hard on yourself doesn't always serve...

\*Some of the above ideas adapted from Munger, M.C. (April 8, 2010) *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Sherri Hughes, Director of Leadership at the American Council of Education, said, "One law we know about faculty life is that it can be made or broken by the chair." Who can deny it?

And: "According to a study cited in *American Higher Education*, 67% of department chairs receive zero training. Of the 33% who did, a third of them received under ten hours, and all of them reported that it wasn't sufficiently adequate to prepare them, and they wanted more.

So, congratulations to all of you for getting started!

One last stat from that study: 89% of the chairs said they would do it again!" I hope that's true for all the OIT chairs.