

fact find, gather opinions, test the waters, and call the shots is a sign of a good administrator. The capacity to take the heat and move on is a sign of an excellent administrator. The same can be said of managing conflict. Being called upon to help resolve conflicts is a daily occurrence.

Capacity to take criticism and personal sacrifice. Faculty members learn in graduate school to be good critics. Much graduate education is dedicated to critiquing theories, research, and manuscripts. The administrator is blessed with many critics, many suggestions for a better way of managing, many ideas for where money should be spent, and many sideline coaches in the faculty lounge. The criticism can be strong and deep. Likewise, there are hundreds of great ideas that others think you should magically implement and cannot imagine why you were so foolish not to. From parents to the press, everyone has an opinion. Also, stepping into the public eye means sacrificing personal space, time, and prerogative. Administrators become the parents for the university family—always on call, always responsible, always an example.

Understand that politics is part of life. Politics is about the use of power—

how to influence others. Leadership is also about the use of power. To moan about campus politics is to moan about people working together and decisions being made. Coming to grips with the use and abuse of power and the political nature of administration is essential to effectively managing the job. Political naivete means not being able to effect change or garner resources needed for the faculty and others served. It is also important to learn diplomacy; otherwise, you will spend too much time in damage control.

It's finance, stupid. Financial acumen includes the capacity for bringing in resources, allocating resources, and managing resources in a fashion directed by the accounting system of the institution. Knowing how to obtain resources, bargain for resources, cut budgets, and discriminantly assign funds must be masterful to get the most from what you have. The budget is about long-term investments, short-term gains, stimulation of the curriculum, and reward of personnel. It is also much more than dollars and cents and the bottom line. Creative budgeting is administration at its best. ▲

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ties. However, budget awareness among faculty and staff can contribute to harmony and collegiality. Budget awareness includes understanding the essential concepts: the components of a budget, the principals used to develop the budget, the priorities, the approval process, and the procedures for distributing the funds.

In general there is a perception among administrators that anything related to a department's budget is exclusively a privilege of the chairperson. Some chairpersons believe that faculty budget awareness and involvement implies loss of authority and budget control.

When members of a department are ignorant or misinformed about the budget process, spending procedures, and availability of funds and priorities, they cannot correlate the chairperson's decision with their request for funding. They might even develop the perception that the chairperson does not care or that he or she doesn't promote his or her initiative, thus developing negative feelings which promote a negative attitude. Studies have revealed that a positive attitude is a contributing factor in quality and productivity in the workplace, and chairpersons need to pay attention to the attitudes of their department members and the effect that attitude might generate within the work environment (Goleman, 2002).

We strongly suggest not only educating faculty on budget principles but also including them in budget discussion, preparation, and spending decisions. They become more thoughtful and responsible in their requests for funding. This approach promotes faculty involvement in budget decisions during its preparation, not only after its approval. With this approach faculty exercise the principle of Full-Return-of-Investment (FROI) on everything they buy and they engage in identifying the most effective and efficient avenues to use the department's resources. One of the most significant benefits of this approach is that faculty who contribute

Creating an Environment for Minimizing Conflict Between Faculty and the Department Chairperson

by Stefanos Gialamas, Abour Cherif, and Sofia Hilentzaris

Research has pointed to three main areas as a source of distrust and conflict that may arise between faculty and their chairperson: budget, teaching assignments, and transparency in faculty performance evaluation. The goal of this article is to discuss the areas of possible conflict, provide strategies for minimizing the conflict, and explore

possibilities for developing a positive climate fostering growth, creativity, and fairness.

Budget

In most institutions of higher education budget development and management are a major component of a department chairperson's responsibili-

to budget decisions become equally responsible for effective utilization of the available funds. Of course, there will always be those who complain, no matter how inclusive and clear the budget processes are made.

The following are two approaches that can be used to engage faculty in the budget process: Departmental Budget Committee (DBC) and the Mushroom Budget Approach (MBA).

The Departmental Budget Committee (DBC). To maximize the success of the DBC the following elements must be taken into consideration:

- There should be a clear statement of the committee's function, including its responsibilities and authorities, if any. Therefore, prior to its establishment, it must be clarified whether it is an advisory or decision-making committee.

- Faculty representation at the DBC should reflect the diversity and nature of the department, such as including senior and junior faculty with diverse professional interests that are in alliance with the department's mission.

- The process for either assigning or electing members for the DBC must be clear and must be followed.

Faculty submit their funding request for individual professional development needs directly to the DBC as well as other departmental committees (technology, curriculum development, etc.) and faculty who might have additional departmental responsibilities (program coordinators, course sequence leaders, faculty developers, etc.).

The members of the DBC meet and prepare a draft of the budget that will be submitted to the chairperson and distributed to the faculty. Depending on the nature of the DBC (advisory or decision making) the submitted budget will represent either a compilation, with possible prioritization, of all submitted requests or the first level of a filtered budget proposal.

The chairperson submits the department budget to his or her supervisor and provides a copy to the DBC. A

copy of the approved budget is distributed to the DBC and also is available to all faculty.

The Mushroom Budget Approach (MBA). In the Mushroom Budget Approach to the department budget process faculty and all other committees submit their requests either directly to the chair or to their intermediate individual supervisor (program coordinators, course sequence coordinators, etc.). The chairperson then takes under consideration the proposals of all parties and makes his or her decision on the submitted budget. We suggest that the chairperson provide access to the budget to all included parties for a final review and comments before it is submitted. Once approved, the chairperson makes the budget available to all department members.

Teaching Assignments

Teaching assignments constitute most of the faculty work load in many colleges or universities and can be a source of distrust and conflict between faculty and their chairperson. Therefore, teaching assignments and schedules must become a joint responsibility between faculty and the chairperson and include consideration of several important factors such as students' needs, availability of facilities, and faculty expertise.

The chairperson, designated staff members, and/or a department scheduling committee (if such exists) identify the courses and number of sections that the department needs to offer and distribute to faculty a course offering template.

With a clear understanding of the needs of the department, faculty submit a request for a preferred teaching assignment with several alternatives and an explanation. The department chair and/or the committee record the faculty requests together with the actual assignment. Any compromise or unfulfilled request by a faculty member will be considered in the future.

The chairperson and /or the committee make the final assignment deci-

sions, taking into consideration the following factors:

- The nature of each given course (discipline)
- The requirement of each course
- The facilities needed for each course
- Students' retention strategies
- The cost of operating each course
- The demand for the course
- The goals of the department
- The mission of the college or university, the policy, and the vision of the chairperson
- The interest of the faculty

The chair provides the goals, the vision, and the policy of the department on which the committee should operate. For example, the chairperson might require that at least one or two senior faculty teach evening classes or Saturdays, teach introductory courses, or be the leaders of a sequence of courses.

With this process the chairperson conveys a strong message to all faculty that the development of teaching assignments is an important task based on fairness, thus minimizing faculty perception of favoritism and unfair practices.

Transparencies in Faculty Performance Evaluation

The criteria for faculty performance evaluation must be clear, concrete, and explained to all, particularly new faculty. At the end of the academic year (or for new faculty in the beginning of the academic year), the chair must work with each faculty member to design a yearly accomplishment plan based on the department's performance evaluation criteria. If, for example, the evaluation includes the areas of teaching, service, and professional activities, then the design of the accomplishment plan should outline what the goals will be in each category and how the accomplishment will be measured. Thus, faculty will have a better understanding of the objectives and how he or she will accomplish them. For example, one might clarify professional activities as

presenting in a conference, publishing an expository article, or publishing a research article.

If in the evaluation process a teaching portfolio or a self-evaluation report is required, the chairperson should provide examples and appropriate support. The chairperson and each faculty member should develop a plan for assessing faculty progress in meeting the objectives. The frequency and the length could vary from case to case. If this process is successful the first year, then other related issues will be resolved. In other words, the compilation of each year's faculty performance evaluation will be a strong and sufficient portfolio for tenure and promotion. Faculty will minimize their extra efforts for creating a promotion portfolio during the consideration for yearly promotion.

A lack of agreement between a faculty member and his or her chair could evolve during the development of an assessment plan. Because of the high possibility of a condition such as this, it is important that additional avenues be available to both the chairperson and the faculty member. Creation of a Faculty Performance Departmental Committee, consisting of elected senior and junior faculty or tenure and nontenure faculty as well as the department chair, can help minimize conflict and distrust

within the department. Indeed, a number of studies have indicated the usefulness of committees such as this in clarifying faculty assessment plans and in helping faculty correlate their plans with the mission and goals of the department. When chairs and members of the Faculty Performance Departmental Committee work together toward a common goal such as making teaching more effective and learning more productive, conflict and distrust begin to vanish.

Conclusion

Each department must accomplish its mission, and in doing so, take into consideration the changes and challenges society faces. It must prepare students to become successful professionals and productive citizens who will be capable of positively contributing to society. A departmental environment that fosters and promotes collegiality, harmony, honesty, collaboration, openness, and respect contributes immeasurably to accomplishing its mission. ▲

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become a contentious matter, but we believe that careful administration and a series of checks and balances has mitigated hostility which, spoken or not, arises when judgment calls are made about quality and quantity of work performed in an academic environment.

Merit pay is a cornerstone of the recognition system enjoyed at UConn. Several years ago, when the state called for a wage freeze, the AAUP proposed renegotiating the system in order to finance part of a university budget deficit and preserve the merit system. It was recognized that "skipping" a year would adversely affect confidence in the merit system and overlook achievements of many faculty during that particular year. Merit is independent of the basic cost of living index. The AAUP has made it a policy that merit should not be a demerit system, taking from some to give to others. Over 1,200 individuals are covered by the AAUP merit system, with another 150 or so given the benefit of the average cash equivalent because of unique employment evaluation aspects (they are unit members without academic rank).

The merit system at UConn has been a selling point in the lobbying effort for support of the collective bargaining contract at the State House. Connecticut law requires that the legislature approve, as well as fund, collective bargaining agreements. It is hard to argue against merit pay in promoting excellence.

Merit pay must be seen as essentially fair, even if not always agreed with in result. The merit pool usually is between 25% and 33% of the aggregate raise. Of that, 70% is reserved for departments (it is calculated as a percentage of aggregated department salaries); deans and the chancellor share the remaining 30% of the pool.

To accomplish this pillar of acceptability of the UConn merit system, several basics have been maintained:

- The plan has three tiers: departmental, dean's level, and chancellor's level.
- At the departmental level, expectations and weighting of meritorious

Fair Pay and Fair Play: Accountability in Merit Pay at the University of Connecticut

by R. James Holzworth, Edward Marth, and Fred Maryanski

The University of Connecticut (UConn) and the faculty union, the UConn chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), have had a collective bargaining relationship for over 25 years. During this time the parties have had a merit component to the salary increases. The role of merit in a unionized environment has

had unusual impact on the administration of the university. The UConn board of trustees has had a policy of extending raises negotiated by the AAUP to members of the administration and to faculty at the law school, which is not covered by the labor agreement.

Merit pay in a unionized environment always has the potential to

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Inside

INTERVIEW ▲ William F. Massy p. 4

The Responsive Campus:
Nine Ways to Weaken Faculty
Commitment to the University
by William G. Tierney p. 7

Imagination, Conversation,
and Academic Leadership
by John B. Bennett p. 9

Strategies for Successful Chairing:
Public Work
by N. Douglas Lees and
David J. Malik p. 13

The Emerging Role of the
Department Chair in Development:
Creating a Development Plan
by Gil D. Brum p. 15

Is a Vice Presidency in the Cards?
by Susan Kupisch p. 19

Creating an Environment for
Minimizing Conflict Between Faculty
and the Department Chairperson
by Stefanos Gialamas, Abour Cherif,
and Sofia Hilentzaris p. 21

Fair Pay and Fair Play:
Accountability in Merit Pay at
the University of Connecticut
by R. James Holzworth, Edward
Marth, and Fred Maryanski p. 23

Evolution of a Pharmacy Faculty
Development Plan
by June Felice Johnson
and Raylene Rospond p. 25

Living the Good Life:
Administratively, Happily,
and Productively
by Joseph S. Rabianski p. 27

Review p. 30

Top Ten Issues for Department Chairs

by Deborah Hirsch

American higher education today is characterized by a rapidly changing environment with multiple pressures for curricular change, demands from more diverse internal and external constituencies, increased expectations for accountability, as well as expectations to do more with fewer resources. Within any college or university, the academic department is the locus for educating students and carrying out the institution's academic mission. The department chair is increasingly being recognized as the key to providing leadership for implementing change on any number of institutional initiatives.

Several years ago, the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE) began to convene faculty in a think tank to discuss the pressing issues that they face in their roles as department chairs. Members participate in thoughtful discussions of the issues and then develop strategies derived from their experience to address these issues. The following topics have emerged as their top ten list of issues that chairs must be equipped to address.

#10: Rethinking scholarly work and faculty roles and rewards. Ernest Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1990), perhaps the most widely distributed and read publication on college campuses, was probably the single most important catalyst for reframing faculty work to incorporate broader notions of scholarship, including advancing knowledge through research

in one's field, integrating knowledge in the curriculum, transforming knowledge through teaching, and applying knowledge through outreach and service. Eugene Rice, in *Making a Place for the New American Scholar* (1996), his follow-up to Boyer's work, identified four major changes that need to be made in thinking about faculty careers: 1) a shift from a primary focus on teaching to a focus on learning, 2) a shift from emphasizing professional autonomy to an increasing involvement in institution building, 3) a shift from highly individualistic ways of working to more collaborative modes, and 4) a change in perception of colleges and universities as remote and isolated to greater faculty responsibility for public life and democratic participation. These shifts call for a transformative approach to the way faculty work and to the structure of the academic career. Rice describes the work of the new American scholar in which learning continues to be the central element, but is related more directly to the diverse scholarly tasks professors are called upon to perform in their institutions and society. These shifts in thinking about scholarship as different from the traditional production and dissemination of knowledge have implications for the way in which faculty work as well as the ways that students are taught. In this new model, research as well as teaching and learning are not necessarily one-way, passive, isolated, or solitary activities.