Institute for Academic Leadership
Department Chairs Workshop 2011

The Essential Department Chair
This Evening’s Focus
Positive Academic Leadership

How to Stop Putting Out Fires and Start Making a Difference
Goals

- To explore the concept of positive academic leadership
- To introduce a few practical alternatives to common administrative practices
- To encourage you to develop your own strategies of positive academic leadership
- To learn how our results can be positive even when we’re not feeling all that positive
The Chairperson is the chief administrator of the department and the primary representative of the academic discipline to which he/she belongs. This places the Chairperson in the unique position of fulfilling administrative responsibilities assigned by the Dean and Provost, maintaining standards of the discipline, and meeting the professional expectations of the departmental faculty. Among the specific administrative duties for which the Chairperson is responsible and accountable are:

https://academicaffairs.cmich.edu/chairs/duties.shtml
What Chairs Are Supposed To Do
Central Michigan University, 2 of 3

- Communicating departmental needs and desires to the Dean and Provost;
- Communicating and interpreting College and University decisions to the faculty;
- Maintaining open lines of communication among specializations within the Department, and encouraging appropriate balance;
- Encouraging the development and improvement of the departmental curriculum, and seeing that the proper curriculum forms are submitted on schedule;
- Insuring the preparation of catalog information and schedules of class offerings in accordance with deadlines;

https://academicaffairs.cmich.edu/chairs/duties.shtml
What Chairs Are Supposed To Do
Central Michigan University, 3 of 3

- Supervising the departmental budget, record keeping, and the requisition of supplies, equipment, materials, and other instructional needs;
- Developing and following procedures to assign faculty to classes, laboratories, studios, and other responsibilities;
- Reporting undesirable or potentially hazardous conditions with respect to the physical plant;
- Coordinating and supervising the departmental programs, reviews, accreditation and departmental evaluations, and other reviews; and
- Cooperating with departments, college, schools, and other units in the accomplishment of their tasks.

https://academicaffairs.cmich.edu/chairs/duties.shtml
Aspects of Being a Chair

- Big Picture
- Interpersonal Relations
- Minor Details
So, how can we work more effectively to ...?

1. Achieve more of our high priority goals?
2. Lead our departments with greater vision?
3. Reduce our expanding workload?
“... a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities.”

The Difference

Traditional Approach
- disease
- repair
- eliminating sadness
- bad → good
- → reactive

Positive Psychology
- health
- improvement
- increasing happiness
- good → excellent
- → proactive

How might we apply a similar approach to academic leadership?
Two Resources


Hope-Centered Leadership

Kaye A. Herth

- Developing a sense of hope: Positive perspective
- Minimizing the factors that inhibit hope
- Instilling a sense of hope in others
A Case Study in Perspective

A faculty member who works in a very rare specialty comes to you on the day before classes begin for the term. The faculty member has just been informed that he or she’s been awarded a major, prestigious, international award. The award will make the faculty member’s career and bring an incredible amount of positive attention to the department and university.

BUT ...
A Case Study in Perspective

The faculty member will need to leave immediately for at least one full year to meet the terms of the award, and you have no one else available to cover this professor’s courses.

1. Identify five reasons why this situation is a disaster.
2. Identify five ways in which this situation is a wonderful opportunity.
Minimizing the Factors That Inhibit Hope: Crisis Leadership

Sherman’s Lagoon, Jim Toomey

Fillmore (turtle)
Hawthorne (crab)
The Crisis Industry

Declining by Degrees
Higher Education at Risk

Failed Grade
The Corporatization and Decline of Higher Education in America

Quiet Crisis
Peter Smith

Crisis on Campus
A Bold Plan for Reforming Our Colleges and Universities
Mark C. Taylor
You can see it as ...

- hearing complaints
- absorbing frustration and hostility
- solving one problem after another

or as

→ making other people’s dreams come true
In the hallway one day, you meet a new faculty member in your academic area. Even though you say no more than a single sentence in passing, how might you phrase your comments in such a way that:

... you absolutely destroy that person’s morale and motivation (at least temporarily)?
... you positively increase that person’s morale and motivation (at least temporarily)?
Instilling Hope in Others

“Hope encourages reaching out into the future and celebrating the small steps along the way” --Kaye Herth

Past

• What professional experience of your life would you most want to re-live, if given the chance?

When you feel that you’re lost ...

go back to the last place where you felt “found.”
Instilling Hope in Others

“Hope encourages reaching out into the future and celebrating the small steps along the way” --Kaye Herth

Past

• What professional experience of your life would you most want to re-live, if given the chance?

Present

• What do our core values tell us about the type of person we are? What do we love most in life, and what sort of things we should pursue in order to be happy and fulfilled?

Future

• How are you working towards what really makes you happy and fulfilled? If you feel you are moving away from this goal, how might you regain and redirect your focus?
Learned Optimism

Setbacks and disappointments
- temporary
- manageable
- exceptional

Achievements and successes
- normal
- usual
- expected
Learned Optimism
If you’re not naturally an optimist

What would an optimist do in this situation?
Tell me about three good things that happened today.

How can we work together to put your core values into action today?

What would it mean to you to make a real difference in our program?
Putting Herth’s Ideas into Practice

- Turn to someone near you.
- Each of you in turn will state a complaint, disappointment, problem, or frustration in your job right now.
- See if there’s a way to shift perspective or re-examine the situation to regard it in a more positive manner.
Resilience: The ability to maintain core function under the widest variety of operating conditions.
The best chairs we have worked with are joy-filled chairs. They breathe excellence into their faculty and programs, they approach their jobs with a sense of purpose and respect for their faculty, they appreciate the uniqueness of their department members, and they are able to match faculty strengths with departmental needs.
Mallard and Sargent’s Elements

- Sense of Purpose
- Respect
- Appreciate Uniqueness
- Match Strengths with Needs
Sense of Purpose

- your **own** core values
- philosophy of leadership
- mission and vision of the department
- constructive goal-setting
Philosophy of Leadership

- What do you hope to achieve during your term as department chair?
- Why is that goal important to you?
- What does leadership mean to you?
- How would you like others to remember your leadership?
Constructive Goals
To Create a Clear Sense of Purpose
The 3 P’s

Positive
Less reactive. More proactive.

Present
I will ... I am ...

Precise
Someday ... By next fall ...
A Dream Is Just a Dream

A goal is a dream with a deadline.

Harvey Mackay

*Swim With The Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive* (2005) 57
I wish our department would stop getting side-tracked by “ancient history” and minutiae at our faculty meetings.

I’m preparing a more detailed agenda for today’s curriculum meeting so that we spend the greatest amount of time on our highest priorities.
1. Students come second.
2. Attributes outrank surface credentials.
4. It’s not just about salary.
Wiley’s Findings

- Salary
- Appreciation
- Job security
- Opportunity for promotion
- Interesting work
Morale and Motivation

Recognition
• Intangible

Reward
• Tangible
Invest in People

100 Ways to Energize Employees

“THANK GOD IT’S MONDAY!”

Empowerment Self-Directed Teams

Continuous Improvement

Inspiring Personal Initiative & Risk

BY BOB NELSON

Author of the bestselling 1001 Ways to Reward Employees

READ BY THE AUTHOR

100s OF NEW WAYS TO PRAISE!

REVISED UPDATED EDITION

Low-Cost and No-Cost Ideas

Contests Achievement Awards

OVER 1.5 MILLION COPIES IN PRINT

BY BOB NELSON

Foreword by Ken Blanchard, coauthor of The One Minute Manager
Bob Levoy, president of Success Dynamics, Inc., reports: “I’ve asked more than 2,500 doctors to rank on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = never, 5 = always) the following statement: ‘I let my employees know when they’re doing a good job.’ Their average response is 4.4. I then asked their staff members to rank this statement: ‘The doctor lets me know when I’m doing a good job,’ and their average response is only 1.7. This response between what doctors say they give and what employees say they get is often the underlying cause of employee resentment, diminished productivity, and turnover. This ‘feedback gap’ is present in almost every manager-employee relationship.”
Chair notes achievements (group and individual)

Members of the department invited to note one another’s achievements

Members of the department invited to note their own achievements
Invest in People
Thanks, Praise, Recognition

- Monday: Faculty
- Tuesday: Staff
- Wednesday: Students
- Thursday: Donors
- Friday: Others
Thank a Professor

- Web form
- Letter or Certificate
- Names monthly on web
Appreciate Uniqueness: The Golden Rule

THE PLATINUM RULE
DISCOVER THE FOUR BASIC BUSINESS PERSONALITIES—AND HOW THEY CAN LEAD YOU TO SUCCESS

“Full of take-action strategies. A learning and earning tool for the times. Don’t underestimate the power of this fine book.” —Harvey Mackay, author of Swim with the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive

Tony Alessandra, Ph.D., and Michael J. O’Connor, Ph.D.
Remember that a department is a system. Not every member of a system has to do the same thing.

- ecosystem
- information system
- the body as a complex system

The goal is rather to build an effective unit in which all components function together effectively.
Match Strengths with Needs
Mentoring Strategies

The Institution
- General policies
- Resources
- Opportunities for development
- Opportunities for evaluation
- Criteria for evaluation

The Person
- Teaching
- Research
- Service/Academic citizenship
- Political environment
- Personal issues
- Career goals
As a mentor you must have an:

- Personnel Matters
- Administrative Policy/Procedure
- Department or College Management
For these areas of responsibility:

**Faculty**
Research, grants, retention, promotion, sabbatical leave, investigations, grievances, termination

**Personnel**
Hiring, evaluation, compensation, retention, leaves of absence, discipline

**Department**
Program initiation, program review, program elimination, department meetings and governance, budget authority, contracting (supplies, events)
Managing the Process

Take control of communication
- Put communications in writing
- Use instructional forms
- Insist on a timely response
- Indicate consequences

Build a solid foundation

Set concrete expectations and consequences

Mean what you say

Follow-through

Keep good notes

The value of notes:
- To remember what occurred
- To remember when it occurred
- To remember who was there

What should be in notes?
- Recording of issues
- Recording of agreements or decisions
- General impressions and conclusions

Should you retain your notes?
- Will they be converted to another form?
- Will you want a record?
- Would you mind if someone saw them?

The value of notes:
- To remember what occurred
- To remember when it occurred
- To remember who was there

What should be in notes?
- Recording of issues
- Recording of agreements or decisions
- General impressions and conclusions

Should you retain your notes?
- Will they be converted to another form?
- Will you want a record?
- Would you mind if someone saw them?
Two faculty members report to you. One teaches courses that, by the very nature of the material, tend to be popular, well evaluated by peers, and conducive to the student’s earning high grades. The other teaches courses, that by the nature of the material, tend to be resisted by students, regarded as problematic by peers, and often result in many students receiving low grades.
Case Study: Mentoring

- What advice might you give the faculty member whose courses are difficult and resisted?

- How do you evaluate the teaching effectiveness of each professor fairly?

- What are some of the best practices that can be used to measure the effectiveness of instruction while controlling for the difficulty or popularity of the course material?
True leaders
are hardly known to their followers.
Next after them are the leaders
the people know and admire;
after them, those they fear;
after them, those they despise.

To give no trust
is to get no trust.

When the work’s done right,
With no fuss or boasting,
Ordinary people say,
Oh, we did it.
The conductor is the only person in the orchestra who “doesn’t make a sound. He depends for his power on his ability to make other people powerful.”

*Benjamin Zander, music director of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, 2008 TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) conference in Long Beach, California*
Finally
Positive Leaders Invest in Themselves

Time to Recharge

Time to Reflect

Time to Refocus
Resources


Please Remember

*The Essential Department Chair*
*The Essential Academic Dean*
*The Essential College Professor*

*All published by Jossey-Bass.*
Just Released

One idea a day

September to May

Focused on positive chairing
HARRIET L. WILKES
HONORS COLLEGE
FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY™