

## **Brief Highlights for Chair Development: compiled by Maureen O'Brien**

### **Highlighted points from Bolman and Gallos, *Reframing Academic Leadership***

- Strategies for reframing (from Chap. 2):
  1. Embrace the life of a reflective practitioner
  2. Be aggressive in seeking growth opportunities
  3. Actively and regularly solicit input from others
  4. Anticipate and practice the future through data gathering and scenario building
  5. Step outside your comfort zones and "break frame"
- Habits of learning for leadership effectiveness (from Chap. 3):
  1. Be proactive and persistent in seeking feedback from others
  2. Test assumptions and attributions
  3. Work on balancing advocacy and inquiry
  4. Learn about your theories-in-use (ie., internal rules that guide our behavior)

### **Key points from chapter on "Department Meetings," from Chu, *The Department Chair Primer***

1. The chair's performance at meetings helps communicate his/her values and abilities publicly; e.g., how chair frames questions, shows unbiased attitude, summarizes discussions, etc.
2. The chair establishes the meeting agendas; thus the usefulness of the meeting is dependent on how the chair plans and runs it; e.g., whether items are introduced that are of greatest importance to most faculty, relegating less important items to committees and information reporting
3. Critical importance of how the chair moderates discussion: "must be knowledgeable on the issues, unbiased, good listeners, capable summarizers of discussion, and turn department approval into action. Good moderators know when discussion is necessary and also when it is just continuing to beat a dead horse" (57)
4. Chairs need to provide relevant information and viable options for faculty to consider in making decisions; needs to present in unbiased way, be knowledgeable on issues, have the confidence of those from whom he/she must obtain information
5. Department meetings are expensive in the use of faculty time! Therefore: use every minute wisely, have equipment working properly, send an electronic agenda beforehand and provide hard copies at meeting, handle housekeeping items outside the meeting
6. Meeting regularity varies across departments; be sure to schedule meetings when relevant constituencies can attend them
7. Set a good ambience for meetings; e.g., language used, seating arrangement, whether to have refreshments Make department minutes the official record of meetings; unbiased parties should take them, send to department for review, be officially approved at the next meeting and kept in department archive

8. Committees should regularly report on what they do, and/or send minutes to entire faculty; strive for transparency without necessarily doing oral committee reports at meetings unless important for department deliberation
9. Convey kudos to faculty and staff with notable achievements at meetings
10. Have familiarity with *Robert's Rules of Order*
11. Especially with difficult discussions, consider the use of a "speakers' list," i.e., keeping track of those raising their hands to allow all those to speak who wish to do so and keep discussions on track
12. When it becomes apparent that items being discussed need more study and thought, assign to task force, ad hoc or standing committee to research and report back to department
13. Make sure that committees have credibility through adequate representation of department constituencies; it's vital that meetings be conducted transparently and that there be a fair and open nomination and election process for them
14. For contentious issues, use techniques such as inviting faculty input on departmental e-list or submitting written comments
15. When department decisions are made, the chair needs to ensure an action plan to realize these decisions
16. "The perception of the chair as objective is perhaps the most critical requirement for the job" (60); if the chair has a position on an issue, he/she may need to appoint another faculty to lead the discussion
17. Important to ask faculty and staff in advance if chair wants them to report or otherwise contribute at a meeting; "It is important that a culture of excellence be created in the department" (61); make clear to the presenter in advance what kind of information is desired, length of presentation, at what point in the meeting, whether they'll need to address questions, the item's context relative to the participants' positions, etc.

### **Recommended Books**

Allen, David. *Getting Things Done*. New York: Penguin, 2001.

Bolman, Lee G., and Gallos, Joan V. *Reframing Academic Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011.

Chu, Don. *The Department Chair Primer*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012.

Gmelch, Walter H., and Miskin, Val D. *Leadership Skills for Department Chairs*. Bolton, MA: Anker, 1993.

Stone, Douglas; Patton, Bruce; and Heen, Sheila. *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*. New York: Penguin, 2010.