Schedule

- Overview & Introduction
- The role of the Department Chair
- Short break
- Small group discussion of scenarios
- Report back, discussions
- Wrap-up, suggestions for follow-up
Promoting Student Success: What Department Chairs Can Do, Schuh & Kun

“Highly performing colleges and universities are never quite satisfied. They are imbued with a positive restlessness.”
Introductions

- How long have you been Chair?
- Why did you agree to become Chair?
- Are there changes that you hope to enact?
Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail, Kotter

“"A vision says something that helps clarify the direction in which an organization needs to move....In failed transformations, you often find plenty of plans, directives, and programs but no vision.

Real transformation takes time, and a renewal effort risks losing momentum if there are no short-term goals to meet and celebrate. Without short-term wins, too many people give up”. 
Role of the Department Chair

- Hybrid – legally a faculty member but with administrative roles
- Fireman
- Administrative
- Interpersonal
- Resource Development
- Leadership
Fireman

- Often the first responder to institutional and actual emergencies
- Prepare
- Have a back-up
Administrative

- How do finances work at your campus? Is there a uniform model?
- Scheduling of Classes. Is inertia the best guide?
- Develop Reports
- Supervise Staff
Administrative (cont.)

- Know your Dean, manage upwards
- How can you help the Dean with College level issues?
- Be a proactive, collaborative problem solver
- Privileged communication
Interpersonal

- “Being a Department Chair is like herding cats”
- Counselor – maintain confidentiality
- Coach – encourage, provide resources to help develop talent
- Mediator – Stay calm when others are upset, listen well
Resource Development

- Understand campus resource metrics to ensure your department is being treated equitably
- Are there more efficient ways to utilize resources?
- Enable faculty grant writing
- Today’s students are tomorrow’s alumni
The Chair’s Role in Facilitating a Collegial Department, Cipriano

“Share power... reach out to the faculty and obtain their thoughts and ideas. Faculty members should recognize that the Chair makes decisions predicated on the needs of the department.

Resist the temptation to get even and punish a faculty member (by giving them) a dark, windowless, asbestos-filled office in the basement of the maintenance building”.

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Leadership

- Developing a shared vision
- Setting a professional tone, leading by example
- Mediating between different constituencies
- Leading curriculum development and revision
- Moving from a Tenure Track faculty world view to being able to advocate for adjunct faculty and support staff
Leadership (cont.)

- Seek to understand individual motivations and rewards
- Monitor climate
Leadership (cont.)

- Seek to understand individual motivations and rewards (e.g. for some faculty, having a schedule that avoids 8 am classes due to child care constraints may be more important than a salary boost or a corner office).

- Monitor climate
Leadership (cont.)

- Women students have complained to you about a faculty member who often uses images such as women in bikinis playing volleyball in his classes.
Leadership (cont.)

- When you speak with him, he states that he is just trying to liven up the discussion of projectile motion and that he has academic freedom to structure his classes as he believes best.

- How do you respond?
“I am sometimes asked what one thing I have done to increase diversity and to improve the climate in my department.
Improving the Status of Women in Physics (and Astronomy) Departments, Bertschinger (cont.)

- It is to show respect
Respect others by listening to them, especially those whose voices have not been heard. Respect them by addressing their concerns. Show respect by learning best practices. If you try instead to produce or work from a checklist, you are on the wrong course. There is no substitute for caring leadership.”
Basic Advice

- Set measurable goals (personal and for department)
- Listen to everyone
- Think Win-Win
- Delegate
- Groom leadership talent, including your successor
- Take care of your health and relationships, go for a walk at lunch, or join a health club, etc.
Overloaded Circuits, Hallowell

“...overworked managers who suffer ... from a very real but unrecognized neurological phenomenon which I call attention deficit trait, or ADT. Caused by brain overload, ADT is now epidemic in organizations. The core symptoms are distractibility, inner frenzy and impatience.”
Basic Advice (cont.)

- Manage your time. *(The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Steven Covey)*
Basic Advice (cont.)

- Manage your time. Does e-mail always need to be on?

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### Basic Advice (cont.)

- **Manage your time.** How do you spend your time each week?

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Basic Advice (cont.)

- Manage your time. E-mail does not always need to be on.

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<td>Set aside ½ day each week for reading and planning</td>
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<td>Delegate, reduce or defer</td>
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Managing Oneself, Drucker

- How to answer the question:
  “What should my contribution be?...
- What does the situation require?
- Given my strengths, my way of performing, and my values, how can I make the greatest contribution to what needs to be done?
- What results have to be achieved to make a difference?”
Break Time
Scenario 1

- Two students come in with a complaint about a faculty member. The students state that the faculty member’s lectures are rambling and disorganized and that he takes a month to grade and return material. The students attempted to talk with him but say that they were shouted out of the room.

- What do you do?
Scenario 2

- An elderly faculty member who was formerly productive has not published in many years, does not contribute to committees that he is assigned to, and has been using the same lecture notes for over a decade and is now getting very weak teaching evaluations.

- Do you discuss retirement with him?
Scenario 3

- You have some heroic faculty members who are excellent teachers, research mentors and dedicated in service. But others make only minimal service efforts in order to avoid being asked again.

- How do you develop an equitable service assignment process?
Scenario 4

- You had many plans for what to do as Chair, but a budget deficit has lead to cutbacks. Your prior experience has just been managing your NSF grant, but now you are balancing salaries, equipment budgets, ICR funds, etc.

- A new faculty member has come to you with a great idea for curricular reform.

- Will you pay for it?
Scenario 5

- A faculty member tells you that a student in her lab has complained privately about sexual harassment from another student and has requested confidentiality.

- What should you do?
Scenario 6

- A staff member has been coming in late, has missed deadlines and looks pale and haggard.

- How should you respond?
Scenario 7

- You are in the last stages of a faculty search and are negotiating with a new condensed matter experimentalist who would be a great addition to your department. But her requested lab space is larger than you anticipated. You know that the Chemistry department has two faculty with large labs who will be retiring this year.

- How do you proceed?
Scenario 8

- Your college has a new Dean who points out that your annual assessments for faculty and staff have not been performed for several years. She asks you to set up a new process that will actually be performed each year.

- How will you assess performance, give feedback, and recommend merit increases?
Scenario 9

- Your Tenure Review Committee has provided a review of a new Assistant Professor that seems sloppy and is silent on some issues that you think will be of concern to the Dean.

- How do you structure the Chair’s review of the candidate?
Scenario 10

- A faculty member calls you to say that a student who is failing his classes this term has sent him an e-mail making references to suicide.

- How do you respond?
Wrap-up: Advice from Quinton

- You are there to serve the faculty, staff and students. Put others before yourself.
- People are your most valuable asset; treat them with respect and courtesy.
- Be consistent and fair in your treatment of others.
- Give your position the respect it deserves.
- Develop people and support their aspirations and they will support you and appreciate your efforts as their leader.
Wrap-up: Advice from Kay

- The department may be all about physics, but leading it is all about people.

- Identify mentors: it's a new job needing new skills.

- Get buy-in: the best of visions will go nowhere if nobody follows your lead.

- Build community: Facilitate open (civil) and substantive discussion on non-polarizing topics - better ideas, stronger consensus, group ownership.
Wrap-up: Advice from Steve

- Know your supports in advance (e.g. campus safety office, registrars office, etc.)
- Learn the difference between actual institutional policy vs. inertial practice
- Delegate and empower
- Chairs often get to set the agenda, but often have just one vote
- Show respect and say thank you
Suggested Reading (Handouts Available)

- Promoting Student Success: What Department Chairs Can Do, Schuh, J.H. & Kuh, G. D. (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research)

- Leading Change, J. Kotter (Harvard Business Review)

- The Chair’s Role in Facilitating a Collegial Department, R.E. Cipriano (book chapter)

- Improving the Status of Women in Physics (and Astronomy) Departments, E. Bertschinger (AAS Newsletter)

- Overloaded Circuits, E.M. Hallowell (Harvard Business Review)

- Managing Oneself, P. Drucker (Harvard Business Review)
Next Steps

- Peer Support - Campus council of Chairs?
- Keep Learning - Workshops on conflict resolution? How does accreditation work for your campus? Which departments on your campus seem to be especially well run?
Next Steps (cont.)

- What will your legacy be when you step down from the Chair position?
Thank you!