

# New Chairs Workshop

## June 18, 2020

*Monika Kress, San Jose State University*

*Michael Jackson, Millersville University*

*Bob Hilborn, AAPT*

*Ted Hodapp, APS*

# Agenda for the Workshop

- 11:00 Introductions
- 11:05 Characteristics of Highly Effective Chairs
- 11:30 Four breakouts by type of institution
  - Discussions about typical issues chairs face
  - Please rename: Select a number, full name, and institution
- 12:00 Reports from breakouts – one “nugget”
- 12:15 Q&A and discussion
- 12:30-40 (or so) Adjourn
  
- Information about additional resources will be sent via email

# Characteristics of Effective Chairs

- Seven Habits of Highly Effective Physics Chairs – Bob
- EP3 Guide Selection on Effective Chairs – Mike
  - Manage conflict and deal with difficult people and situations – Mike and Monika
  - What I wish I had known when I first became chair – Monika

- **Habit 1: Develops good people skills**, including emotional intelligence, being a good listener, and serving as good mentor for both faculty and students. The chair appreciates and publicly recognizes talent and hard work and knows when to park the chair's ego.
- **Habit 2: Is a good (and fair) negotiator.** The chair is decisive and good at conflict resolution. The chair is known for exercising good judgment, being fair, and using problem-solving skills to resolve disagreements.
- **Habit 3: Develops and utilizes communication skills.** Understands and can articulate how the department's academic specialty works, both in education and research, and is knowledgeable about the context in which the discipline is done.
- **Habit 4: Displays enthusiasm for the discipline and education in the discipline.** The chair serves as the local cheerleader for the discipline with the institution's leadership, with other department chairs, and with students.

- **Habit 5: Serves as a skilled organizer and flexible leader.** The chair is good at developing and implementing a vision for the discipline at the college or university and is good at getting faculty members to work together and to contribute their best to the department's efforts.
- **Habit 6: Is knowledgeable about administrative functions and procedures.** The chair understands budgets and accounts, finding and managing resources, and is knowledgeable about university procedures. The chair works effectively with higher level administrators as well as with departmental faculty and staff. Develops and demonstrates excellent time management skills, the ability to multi-task, and the ability to delegate.
- **Habit 7: Reflects, Assesses and Plans.** The chair reflects on the current state of the department and its programs, encourages the assessment of the effectiveness of those programs, and leads strategic planning for the department based on evidence.

# Effective Practices for Physics Programs (EP3) Guide Please visit *ep3guide.org* for more information

## Chapters:

- Introduction, how to navigate, and use the guide
- **How to be an Effective Chair**
- Program Review: Preparing for a Departmental Review
- Program Review: Advice to External Consultants
- Departmental Culture of Continuous Self-Improvement
- Assessment of Student Learning
- How to create and sustain effective changes in your department or program
- Effective Practices (~25 “sections”)
- **Ancillary material:** Creating foundational documents; examples of student learning goals and program learning goals; assessment instruments; additional resources

# Draft structure for the *How to be an Effective Chair* chapter

- Managing daily operations of a chair
  - Effective communication
  - Working relationships and management
  - Manage the job
- Leading a 21<sup>st</sup> century department
  - Departmental Culture and Climate (linked here and below)
  - Equity, Diversity, Inclusion
  - Creating and Sustaining Effective Change (linked here and below)
- Resources: People and Money
  - Hiring
  - Faculty Professional Development (linked here and below)
  - Managing and Arguing for Resources for your Department

# Using the EP3 Guide content: Example

## Working relationships and management

- Develop positive working relationships with senior institution officials
  - Promote the department and institution by informing appropriate offices and individuals of key successes of faculty, students, and alumni.
    - *Use the required annual report to create a newsletter for alumni, donors, friends of the university, and members of the administration.*
    - *Regularly collect and submit department 'Points of Pride' so administrators (including University Marketing) know the accomplishments **THEY** are facilitating.*
- 1. Peruse the guide, reading a particular chapter/section/theme of interest.
- 2. Reflect on potential actions based on the theme/actionable practice/implementation strategy – it is not a 'to do' checklist.
- 3. Discuss (with the dean, other chairs, department, physics community, etc.):
  - a. Conference panels and presentations;
  - b. Workshops at APS, AAPT and other conferences;
  - c. Workshops at specialized meetings (e.g. bi-annual APS/AAPT Department Chairs Meeting);
  - d. Online community;
  - e. EP3 Departmental Action Leadership Institutes (DALIs).



# Using the EP3 Guide content: Example

## Effective Communication

- Manage conflict and deal with difficult people and situations
  - *Have, know, and use written processes to manage conflicts and difficult situations (e.g., performance issues, complaints, interpersonal conflicts).*
  - *Allow sufficient time to reflect when responding to challenging emails and conversations, being careful to accurately represent various perspectives.*
  - Reflect on an individual's perspectives, their history on a particular topic, and enter discussions without a predetermined result.
  - Settle divisive issues with conversations, not by email.
  - Recognize that difficult problems can be solved by negotiation rather than a decision, identifying alternative solutions that leave everyone feeling that they have gained in the interchange.
  - Acknowledge concerns quickly and update as appropriate if the situation cannot be resolved immediately.
  - Discuss challenging situations with confidential allies to better understand your role and possible biases.
  - Promote an inclusive culture by recognizing and respecting cultural differences in how individuals interact.
  - Document interactions, discussions, and decisions concerning sensitive issues.
  - Begin discussions on performance issues well in advance of any formal review process, identifying issues and tracking progress in formal review documents.

# Using the EP3 Guide content: Example

## Effective Communication

- Manage conflict and deal with difficult people and situations
  - *Have, know, and use written processes to manage conflicts and difficult situations (e.g., performance issues, complaints, interpersonal conflicts).*

***Implementation Strategy you may need more information for***

# Using the EP3 Guide content: Example

## Effective Communication

- Manage conflict and deal with difficult people and situations

- *Allow sufficient time to reflect when responding to challenging emails and conversations, being careful to accurately represent various perspectives.*

***Implementation Strategy you can immediately use***

# My Tips for New Chairs

- Keep diversity and equity issues top of mind (tomorrow's session)
- ASAP: Identify the most significant problems/issues facing your department.
  - Don't rely on the perspectives of senior faculty
  - Seek input from contingent faculty, TA's, tech staff, admin/coordinators,
- Identify things that are going well in your department (handy bragging points).
  - For my dept: successful faculty recruitment, strong faculty research, high URM graduation rates, excellent student evals of contingent faculty
  - For you: e.g placement of grads into PhD programs, student research, awards & prizes

# Pay extra attention to non-tenure-line faculty

- They are easy to overlook
- They are grossly underpaid for the work they do
- They have limited career development opportunities
- They appreciate when you ask for their input on department issues
- They appreciate thoughtful feedback and evaluations

Make sure they know they are valued colleagues!

# More tips

- Survey faculty, students and staff to get feedback of what issues and problems they face, and what is going well for them. (This is 1<sup>st</sup> step of the strategic planning process.)
- Have a list of everyone in your department: tenure-track, admin/tech staff, TA's, contingent faculty. Post where you see it regularly. Make sure to meet everyone personally ASAP, even if just to say hi.
- Try to keep up with your grads: where are they and what are they doing.
- Celebrate accomplishments of students and faculty (particularly contingent faculty). Establish department awards, if none exist.

## Discussion and Q&A

LINK to EP3 Effective Chair Chapter:

<https://ep3preview.netlify.app/sections/how-to-be-an-effective-chair#prioritize-areas-to-evaluate-and-improve-101>

### Next Steps

- Move to breakout rooms
- Discussion: Leading questions and topics of interest to the group
- Identify one “nugget” from the group’s discussion and select individual to report out on this.
  
- Reconvene at noon for further discussion and Q&A!





*How to be an effective chair* chapter in EP3 Guide; draft excerpts are below and were sent by e-mail

- **Effective communication:** A skilled communicator builds trust and support, creating opportunities for constructive dialog, enabling the department to achieve its fullest potential while transparently navigating difficult conversations and issues.
- **Manage conflict and deal with difficult people and situations**
  - Have, know, and use written processes to manage conflicts and difficult situations (e.g., performance issues, complaints, interpersonal conflicts).
  - Allow sufficient time to reflect when responding to challenging emails and conversations, being careful to accurately represent various perspectives.
  - Reflect on an individual's perspectives, their history on a particular topic, and enter discussions without a predetermined result.
  - Settle divisive issues with conversations, not by email.
  - Recognize that difficult problems can be solved by negotiation rather than a decision, identifying alternative solutions that leave everyone feeling that they have gained in the interchange.
  - Acknowledge concerns quickly and update as appropriate if the situation cannot be resolved immediately.
  - Discuss challenging situations with confidential allies to better understand your role and possible biases.
  - Promote an inclusive culture by recognizing and respecting cultural differences in how individuals interact.
  - Document interactions, discussions, and decisions concerning sensitive issues.
  - Begin discussions on performance issues well in advance of any formal review process, identifying issues and tracking progress in formal review documents.

- **Working relationships and management:** Positive relationships help build teams with diverse talents and perspectives that enable the department to leverage strengths and meet challenges.
  - Develop positive working relationships with senior institution officials
    - Be concise in asks and responses, following all meetings with a summary of decisions and actions.
    - Ask respectfully for needed resources, but appreciate available resources may be limited.
    - Know and respect the culture of communications used at your institution (e.g., appropriate individuals who handle specific issues, being cautious to not “go around” individuals, time of day to send messages).
    - Promote the department and institution by informing appropriate offices and individuals of key successes of faculty, students, and alumni.
    - Communicate with officials and offices beyond the dean and provost (e.g., alumni relations, admissions, fundraising) so they understand what the department has to offer and its needs.
  - Develop a positive, collaborative relationship with the dean
    - Provide financially viable and data-driven solutions to challenges faced by your department.
    - Invite the dean to department meetings and functions on an occasional and targeted basis.
    - Provide prompt, concise feedback to requests.
    - Schedule regular meetings with the dean/provost to keep them apprised of department successes and challenges.
    - Come to the dean only with substantial, solvable problems that are within their purview.