

Encouraging, Documenting and Recognizing Excellence in Academic Leadership

Overview

Like many other institutions, Rutgers has a significant challenge when it comes to recruiting and retaining faculty members for leadership roles in our academic programs, departments, centers/institutes, and schools.

A study group composed of a number of faculty members who currently or formerly served in academic leadership roles (as chairs and directors) was formed to consider the issues involved and to identify possible solutions. The discussions were coordinated by the Center for Organizational Development and Leadership (ODL).

It was the consensus of the group that the single most significant reason for the reluctance to serve in academic leadership roles, such as that of a department chair, is the lack of recognition and value that is perceived to be associated with this work by the university. No formal methods are in place for documenting, evaluating, or recognizing contributions that leaders may make to advance the research, teaching, and/or service in their units, or to contribute to the overall excellence of their departments, institutes/centers or schools.

The study group came to the view that academic leadership is a significant academic activity, and recommends that Rutgers should develop mechanisms to acknowledge such contributions more explicitly beginning with an addition of a section in Form 1A to permit the listing of academic leadership roles, responsibilities and contributions, and their potential consideration in salary and promotion consideration.

A number of institutions have begun to address this issue in various ways. Two institutions that have moved in this direction are UCLA and UC-Berkeley, both of which have developed language that permits leadership contributions by faculty serving in leadership roles to be documented and recognized. (See *Appendix*). Might not Rutgers follow in a similar path, by adopting a statement such as the following?

Service as a chair, director or dean should be recognized as a shift in the type of academic activity pursued by the individual rather than a shift away from academic pursuits. Therefore, it is entirely appropriate to award a merit, accelerated increase or promotion primarily for demonstrated excellence as a chair, director or other faculty administrator accompanied by continued productive involvement in scholarly and instructional activities.

Adopting such language, combined with the addition of “Leadership Roles and Contributions” to the Form 1-A, annual faculty survey, and similar documents would provide a mechanism for documenting chair, director, or other academic leader’s contributions, and also provide a foundation for evaluating and recognizing significant contributions in salary and promotion deliberations, as warranted.

Summary of Discussion Group Dialogue

The shared perception is that faculty are reluctant to step into academic leadership positions because academic leadership is not valued nor appropriately recognized at Rutgers; the pervasive feeling is that the university does not highly regard, nor meaningfully acknowledge academic leadership, i.e., it doesn't "count." Identifying new and more effective strategies to recognize superior academic leadership could help shift the culture, campus-wide. The major discussion points, strategies and meeting outcomes are summarized below, as are specific recommendations.

What motivates someone to become chair?

- Desire to build something; contributing to department development
- Sharing in others' success
- Freeing up *other* faculty to do research
- Helping to improve department reputation and quality
- Pride upon being nominated by peers
- Mentoring junior faculty
- Ability to rally faculty around important issues
- Entre' into a community of scholars around a new set of challenges
- Leadership role - outside of academy - has meaning
- Opportunities to learn decision-making
- Altruism: unselfishly concerned for or devoted to the welfare of others

Department Chair Challenges

- **Time** – major commitment needed to do the job; sacrificing research time for service; loss of personal opportunities-funding; 25% spent on time management issues; term-current seems too little, what is too much? (Do we need 3-5 years with 1.5 year overlap component?); day-to-day frustrations (water leaks, renovations, electrical problems, etc.)
- **Budget** – no ability to make needed staffing hires; need to go to VP for everything; lack of ability to promote; shared services by default (\$ vs. loss of knowledge and accountability)
- **Leadership** – chair as forced advocate for issues he/she doesn't believe in; mandate vs. faculty sentiment; change issues (anticipating, introducing, discussing sensitive issues); dealing with “we have always done it this way;” managing people who have tenure; managing PTL's; dealing with SEBS; medical school merger; continuing good work of previous chair; retirements of long-term director/chair; candidate consideration (What makes a good chair?); managing information flow; the process vs. the information itself
- **RU culture** – lack of acknowledgement of value; lack of focus on education—research is clearly first, education and service not recognized equally-this occurs at dean, SAS and RU levels; “vague promise that consideration is given to service;” SAS too big (departmental needs and challenges differ); no culture of service at RU; issues of centralized vs. decentralized; getting anyone to do the job (who is both willing and able given challenges and lack of reward)
- **Authority needs to match responsibility** – inadequate staff support; fundraising role; decision making in capital improvement projects; consistency issues across departments; Central has expectations but departments have the responsibility
- **Consistency and communication from administration** – promises not realized (infrastructure, new building, hires); hiring blocked by deans; no real definition of shared services; need to improve the overall sense that the dean's office is working with and for the chairs
- **Personal** – expectation is that chairs should *not* teach, but many want to keep teaching; distance from students; setting realistic goals

Leadership Development and Support

- **Culture change**
 - Require leadership service for faculty at all levels, especially P1 and P2
 - Education for colleagues regarding leadership challenges, e.g., exploration of pros and cons of shared support services

- **Preparing future chairs**
 - Building planning and development into appointment structure
 - Outlining realistic personal expectations
 - Rotating leadership – before and after chair role
 - Ability to draw on expertise of former chairs (base of support)
 - Delegation of different roles
 - Role of vice/associate chairs (election/appointment)
 - Role of executive committee
 - Succession planning

- **Time management**
 - Email and meeting efficiency
 - Keeping faculty up to date on key issues and decisions

- **Communication/Decision Making/Engagement**
 - Influence vs. dictating
 - Communication management
 - Managing faculty engagement
 - Creating of internal executive/advisory/planning faculty group
 - Pros**
 - Input into recommendations
 - Shared expertise
 - Ability to build consensus on recommendations
 - Open to others on specific topics
 - Advisory to chair
 - Shared decision making
 - Benefit of broad input (quality of decision and buffer between chair and faculty when needed)
 - Decision vs. enforcement

 - Cons**
 - Scheduling of formal meetings
 - Getting people to engage in service or other department priorities

- **Recognition**
 - Increase in salary stays past service – out of cycle merit

- **Budget**
 - Portion of all-funds-budgeting revenues returned to department

- **Compensation**
 - Take academic leadership into account – change Form1A
- **Outcomes**
 - **Benchmarking** with aspirant peers – key leadership challenges and how other universities have dealt with them
 - Nine AAU aspirant universities were contacted and their websites reviewed
 - Recognition that duties as a chair would result in reduced availability for teaching and research. UC system specifically states that this reduction in teaching and research should not work against those who are being considered for promotion or tenure

Recommendations

- Redefine role of chair as a ‘significant academic activity’ and recognize activity by adding a section on Form 1A
- Through ODL or ALP, survey chairs, directors and other academic administrators to better understand challenges and discuss strategies outlined herein
- Discuss issues with AAVP Dick Edwards

Appendix¹

University of California – Berkeley - <http://diversity.berkeley.edu/APM245.pdf>

Academic leadership is, in itself, a significant academic activity. Therefore, distinguished leadership and effective discharge of administrative duties by a department chair shall be considered as appropriate criteria in evaluating the performance of a department chair for a merit increase, accelerated increase, or promotion. It is expected that a department chair will remain active in both teaching and research in order to maintain his or her capabilities in the appropriate field of scholarship. However, a chair who discharges his or her duties as a chair effectively may have reduced time for teaching and research. Reduced activity in these areas that results from active service as a department chair should be recognized as a shift in the type of academic activity pursued by the department chair rather than a shift away from academic pursuits altogether. Therefore, it is entirely appropriate to award a merit increase, or, if performance warrants it, an accelerated increase, primarily for demonstrated excellence in service in the chair appointment when accompanied by evidence of continued productive involvement in scholarly activities.

UCLA- <http://www.apo.ucla.edu/call/append11.htm>

A Department Chair who discharges the administrative duties with thoroughness and distinction and who gives effective academic leadership to the department cannot have much time left for teaching and research. It will be difficult enough to maintain oneself as a scholar and to keep abreast of developments in the field. It may be impossible for him/her to satisfy the normal criteria for advancement in salary or rank in such a way as to permit the advancements to which he/she is entitled. We must acknowledge the fact that he/she has had to give up to administrative duties time he/she would otherwise have been able to devote to teaching and scholarship, and we must take into account the extent and quality of the administrative service in considering him/her for merit increases and for promotions. The principle involved is that academic leadership is, in itself, a significant academic activity. It is entirely appropriate to award merit increases to a department chair primarily on the grounds of excellence of service in the Chairship, and to award accelerated increases for particularly outstanding service. Promotions in rank for Department Chairs, and advancement to the higher steps (above Step V) of the Professorship or to an above-scale salary, should also be considered with this criterion in mind. However, such advancements are of greater significance than merit increases within rank up to Professor, Step V, and should not be justified wholly on the basis of administrative service. Nevertheless, although promotion from Associate Professor to Professor requires evidence of intellectual attainment and growing distinction, substantial evidence of these qualities may well be found in the way in which a really successful chair performs those duties. In the case of promotion from Assistant Professor to tenure rank, it would be undesirable to waive the requirement of "superior intellectual attainment, as evidenced both in teaching and research or creative achievement." But an Assistant Professor who has served effectively as a department chair has evidenced a considerable degree of intellectual maturity if he/she has provided academic leadership for persons of higher rank, and this certainly should count heavily in considering his/her promotion to tenure. Advancement to the highest professorial salary steps or to an above-scale salary would require substantial justification in addition to service in the Chair; but time spent as a department chair should not be allowed to become an obstacle to merit increases of this kind. In assessing the merits of a Department Chair, it will of course be necessary to follow the regular procedures of review, including review by the Council on Academic Personnel. However, a special effort should be made to assure that

¹From *Department Chairs Benchmarking Study: Training, Incentives, and Compensation*, Center for Organizational Development and Leadership, September 22, 2011. Available upon request.

Chairs are not passed over, and the advice of Deans and other administrative officers will be particularly important in such cases. After a Chair leaves the position, all further advancements in salary or rank should be judged by the regular criteria. Advancements in salary or rank should not be delayed in any way by reason of accelerations received on the grounds of distinguished service as a Chair.