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### Roles and Responsibilities of Faculty Academic Chairs: An Academic Senate Perspective

### **Educational Policies Committee 2003–2004**

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### Abstract

This position paper of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges begins by examining the philosophy behind different structures in an academic institution. This discussion leads to a discussion of the roles and responsibilities of "chairs" within that structure and how they might be fulfilled by department chairs, division chairs or deans. The paper concludes that institutional success can only come from widespread discussion and agreement on such philosophy and structure prior to implementation or change. The paper also describes the many advantages to the institution and its successful leadership that result from the use of faculty members in such chair positions. The paper ends with recommendations to local academic senates regarding the impact of such structural discussions on academic and professional matters and on faculty leadership and participation in governance.

## Introduction

his paper examines the roles and responsibilities of faculty academic chairs within the philosophy and structure of an academic institution. It focuses on examples such as department and division chairs in the California Community College System. Academic Senate discussion of this issue was initiated by the three following Plenary Session resolutions.

#### >> ACADEMIC SENATE RESOLUTIONS



Resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community College: Reaffirm its support for faculty division and department chairs and

- prepare a paper on best practices for faculty chairs;
- inform local senates about effective models for administrative structures; and
- provide assistance with leadership recruitment and training for faculty chairs.

[1.02 Fall 2002]



Research and develop a paper on the role and history of department chairs in community colleges, including models for effective department chairs and the relationship of department chairs to local academic senates and collegial governance processes.

[17.02 Fall 2001]

### (D)

Research and provide guidance to local academic senates regarding oversight limits of faculty members serving as division/department chairs in division planning and budgeting. Research and provide guidance to local academic senates regarding their oversight limits regarding faculty members serving as division/department chairs; and research and provide clarification to local academic senates regarding the delineating lines between faculty members serving as division/department chairs' duties and responsibilities as administrators and as members of the bargaining unit. [17.08R Fall 2001] Direction was also received from Executive Committee discussions in 2001–2002 and Plenary Session breakouts in Fall 2002 and Fall 2003.

During these discussions it quickly became apparent that local structure, nomenclature and implementation of the department chair/division chair/dean concept varies enormously from institution to institution. A structure that is anathema at one institution appears to be well liked at a different institution - even within the same district. Local culture and tradition are exceedingly important in the acceptance and effectiveness of any particular structure. Additionally, terms vary: a structure known as a division at one college may be known as a school at another college. And duties assigned to a department chair position at one college may well be assigned to a division chair or dean at another college. The size of a department or division can, by itself, dictate options and limit flexibility in design. Size is one of the most obvious causes for different or changing structures; this size is, in turn, affected by the size of the whole college. Other less obvious factors are the particular duties associated with each position, the college tradition, and faculty background and experiences.

"A structure that is anathema at one institution appears to be well liked at a different institution..."

Some working definitions of structures and positions will be given in the next section. However, no matter the chosen structural model, the leadership role played by faculty academic chairs and their positions in the institutional structure clearly have a profound impact on both academic and governance issues at the college. This potential impact generates a strong interest on the part of the Academic Senate, both from the academic and educational planning perspective and from the more general faculty leadership perspective.

This position paper will examine the definition and development of such faculty academic chair positions and their impact on the academic and professional life of the institution. It will raise appropriate issues to include as part of any local dialog about chair structure and will present several examples that exist within the California Community College System today. Important general principles from the paper will lead to recommendations for local academic senates.

## A Conceptual Framework

B efore we examine faculty academic chairs in practice, it will be useful to consider the underlying theoretical framework that shapes the way chairs are viewed and to agree upon the definitions used in the sections that follow.

### THE ACADEMY: A COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS VERSUS THE CORPORATE MODEL

The topic of faculty academic chairs in this paper is, at first blush, the exploration of where faculty roles appropriately leave off and those of administrators begin. However, important differences in fundamental philosophy, and in approaches to goals and problem solving immediately emerge. It is impossible to present a responsible discussion of what ought to be, or even what is, without bumping into much that defines the very heart of an academic institution in contrast to a private sector corporation. We will first

examine the implications of these two models: the "academy" as a community of scholars and the traditional corporate model.

An immediate example of the effect of definitions is seen in the role played by the faculty in an academic institution. In the American Association of University Professors' (AAUP) 1987 *Statement on Professional Ethics*, a fundamental description of the faculty role emerges:

As members of an academic institution, faculty members seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars...

As colleagues, faculty members have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars...

As teachers, faculty members encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly standards of their discipline...

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges adopted this *Statement* in 1988 and expanded on it in 1994.<sup>1</sup> In analyzing how best to realize the principles contained in the *Statement*, the Academic Senate's expanded statement concludes that "faculty are self-directed and, to a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For details of the Senate's expanded statement see the Spring 1994 Academic Senate paper Faculty Ethics: Expanding the AAUP Ethics Statement, and for a wider view of faculty ethics see the Academic Senate Spring 2002 paper Faculty as Professionals: Responsibilities, Standards and Ethics.

certain extent, determine the nature and quantity of their workload." This perspective is considerably different from the prevailing norm in the corporate world where outsiders determine employees' duties and attach an applicable reward schema. The academic perspective is more akin to that of other educated professionals such as doctors and lawyers.

From this perspective, faculty can be seen as a class of people with attached responsibilities towards students, colleagues, discipline, institution and community. On the other hand, administration can then be viewed as a collection of duties instead of a class of people. These duties can be carried out by a variety of people under a variety of structures and job classifications. The duties, per se, say little about the individual motivation of those performing them.

When examining the roles of people who only administer, the academic perspective might be analogous to zero-based budgeting, as the following two related examples will explain. In budgeting, it is determined what tasks must be performed and then funds are allocated to accomplish these tasks. In college administration, one might ask what administrative duties are necessary to enable faculty to carry out their work and then determine who should perform those duties. In a community of scholars there is responsibility for chores that contribute to the common good but no administration for its own sake.

An everyday example of an administrative duty that might best be accomplished by a faculty member is the determination and scheduling of appropriate class offerings for a department or division. Faculty members are most likely to know the local impact of different options on students while still keeping in mind the college-wide picture. An example of an administrative duty that might well be performed by an administrator is disciplinary action involving a faculty member. Many faculty members simply won't or don't want to perform such duties. This disciplinary action example will be discussed further in the section on Accountability and Authority.

Goals and problem solving provide a second example where the approach at an academic institution contrasts with the approach in a private sector corporation. The corporate approach tends to focus on a top-down method using simple numerical measures. People who see themselves as managers represent the owners/shareholders and hire the workers necessary to produce the product and meet the numerical measures. In contrast, the "academy" approach involves a different philosophy that values research and a more holistic analysis.

A historical example of an essentially corporate response serves to illustrate how these different approaches to problem solving, inherent in the two

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#### Related Academic Senate Publications

Faculty as Professionals: Responsibilities, Standards and Ethics (Spring, 2002)

The Role of Academic Senates in Enrollment Management (Fall, 1999)

Faculty Ethics: Expanding the AAUP Ethics Statement (Spring, 1994) models, might appear in the California Community College setting. In the early 1980s there was a coincidence of a significant drop in Los Angeles Community College District enrollment and a significant concurrent increase in enrollments in surrounding districts. A study suggested that the Los Angeles District had engaged in elimination of course sections using headcount as the criterion. Many of those courses were second year, major requirement courses. However the surrounding districts, most notably Santa Monica, had maintained a commitment to those types of courses, and thus attracted students from the Los Angeles Community College District.

In the same year, the Foothill-De Anza Community College District, struggling with essentially the same set of issues, created a taskforce to come up with recommendations on how to avoid similar loss of student enrollment. The taskforce examined how courses were scheduled. They concluded:

- the District targets an amount of revenue to be generated by instruction;
- the District then divides that target amount between the two colleges of the District based on prior year's actual and following year's projected enrollment;
- the cost of generating the revenue is divided between budgets for full-time and part-time faculty;
- budgets for full- and part-time faculty are divided at the colleges by divisions based on productivity norms and total revenue generation potential; and
- deans assign individual courses to be taught by full- and part-time faculty necessary to reach the targets.

These two related examples illustrate a response to enrollment management that reflects the

"Being a good leader is not antithetical to being a colleague. In a successful academic environment the two probably go hand in hand..."

corporate model. It simply focuses on students as interchangeable numbers and dollars. It fails to incorporate the goals of those students as reflected in the mission and vision of the institution.

Using the "academy" model, on the other hand, would produce a very different response to the same enrollment management problem. Consider the example presented in the 1999 Academic Senate paper The Role of Academic Senates in Enrollment Management. Here the case is made that class scheduling is an essentially academic enterprise where the faculty must play a key role in defining the philosophy, process and criteria by which course offerings will be deleted, retained, or augmented. The first priorities must be student access and success, and qualitative data is just as important as quantitative data in justifying the chosen course of action. Faculty-driven discussion would include not just class sizes and costs but also planning that incorporates the college's vision and goals by maintaining high cost-programs such as vocational or advanced-level courses. This approach recognizes the primary importance of the curriculum and calls for considerable cooperation across the institution—from individual instructors and counselors to department and division chairs and from academic senate leaders to administrators.

The differences apparent in these models and the philosophies that inspire them can clearly

influence the selection of an appropriate division of duties between administrators and faculty. The corporate approach places more actions in the purview of an administrator, while the "academy" model requires thoughtful participation of faculty carrying out a wide range of duties. As we shall see in the following sections, the academy approach strongly suggests the use of faculty academic chairs as problem-solving leaders capable of—and responsible for—keeping a balanced, interested perspective that encompasses financial solvency as one essential component of a larger institutional mission.<sup>2</sup>

#### LEADERSHIP VERSUS MANAGEMENT

Related but not identical to the "corporate" versus "academy" distinction described above is the "leader" versus "manager" distinction. In the faculty view, "manager" is often used to describe someone who takes the narrow, "bean-counting" approach of the corporate model. "Leader" is normally used to describe an individual who has a broader vision and uses that to inspire the whole institution. Faculty who play broader roles in their institution tend to regard themselves as leaders whereas those employed as administrators seem to fall in both leader and manager categories. In his 2003 article, "Should Faculty be Managed?" (Academe, May-June 2003), Joseph Raelin examines the failures of the Total Quality Management (TQM) approach in academic institutions and discusses how faculty might balance professional autonomy and corporate obligation. In particular he comments:

Any administrator who wishes to be an academic leader must recognize the legitimacy of faculty interests and be open to collegial governance. (p. 42)

One litmus test to determine whether any individual identifies with the "leader" or "manager" approach is to ask the question "For whom do you work?" A "manager" most often responds narrowly with a statement that reflects class distinctions, such as "I work for the administrator I report to." A "leader's" answer will be broader in scope and will reflect a genuine commitment to students and the long-term well-being of the whole institution. Thus, defining an administrator as one who administers may be an accurate statement, but it is not one that distinguishes an administrator from other classes of people, such as faculty, or that reveals the philosophical approach to the duties involved.

The corporate model generally favors individuals who "manage," whereas the academy model prefers individuals who lead no matter whether they are classified as faculty or administrator. Being a good leader is not antithetical to being a colleague. In a successful academic environment the two probably go hand in hand, emphasizing the role of collaborator and contributor.

### SOME WORKING DEFINITIONS

As mentioned above, local structure, nomenclature and implementation of the department chair/ division chair/dean concept varies enormously from institution to institution. This complicates discussion of how the above conceptual framework applies to specific colleges and the roles of faculty academic chairs. For the purposes of the remainder of this paper we will use the following working definitions in our examination of those roles.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Some Silicon Valley-type companies have taken creative, and perhaps instructive, approaches to problem-solving and institutional strategies, combining both academy-style community of scholars and corporate method approaches with apparent success (for example Hewlett Packard).

#### >> DEFINITIONS RELATED TO STRUCTURE

**Discipline** An academic subject matter area determined by the qualifications required of faculty who teach in that area and published in the document *Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges.* Determined by the Board of Governors of California Community Colleges on the recommendation of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges.

### Faculty Service Area (FSA)

Related to, but not identical to discipline (may be broader or narrower). Determined at the local level by collective bargaining. Important in times of reduction in work force.

**Program** May be used to describe a Community College System Office approved program, or more loosely to describe a collection of somewhat related disciplines.

**Department** Relatively small collection of faculty members and disciplines. Determined locally during discussions of institutional structure.

**Division or School** Larger collection of faculty members and disciplines, often consisting of several departments and/or programs. Determined locally during discussions of institutional structure.

**Area** Term loosely used to describe programs, divisions or schools.

#### >> DEFINITIONS RELATED TO INDIVIDUALS

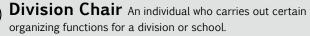
**Faculty/Faculty Member** Employee of a district who is employed in an academic position that is not designated as supervisory or management. Education Code §87003 and Title 5 §53402.

**Faculty Academic Chair** Faculty member in a generally temporary position to carry out organizational duties for a department or division.

- may or may not be elected.
- may or may not remain member of faculty bargaining unit.
- may or may not receive additional compensation.

**Department Chair** An individual who carries out certain organizing functions for a department.

• most commonly a faculty member.



• may be a faculty member or an administrator.



Administrator An individual employed in a

supervisory or management position. Education Code §87002 and Title 5 §53402.

• not part of faculty bargaining unit.

Education Code 87002.

 may be employed in an academic position or a nonacademic position

**Educational Administrator** An administrator who is employed in an academic position. Education Code §87002 and Title 5 §53402.



**Dean** An administrator in a middle management position—may carry out the same duties as a division chair or may supervise several division chairs.



#### **Classified Manager/Administrator** An administrator not employed in an academic position.



**Leader** An individual whose approach is to focus on larger issues and vision and who inspires others to follow the leader's good example.



**Manager** An individual whose focus tends to emphasize local details and measurements rather than the global picture and who functions best in a hierarchical situation.

## Local Structure and Culture

## HOW THE COLLEGE CULTURE MAY DETERMINE STRUCTURE

The choice of conceptual framework-from "academy" to corporate model-tends to be reflected in the structure of a college. Some colleges have "schools," while others have "divisions." Some have faculty division chairs; some colleges have division deans who are academic administrators; and some others have division deans or departmental chairs who are both faculty and administrators, assuming administrative duties for all or a portion of their load. Still others have faculty serving in administrative capacities only as departmental chairs but not at the division level. These choices seem to have been largely based on organizational structure, local history and academic culture and may reflect experiences with some of the following examples.

#### POSTSECONDARY MODELS

Many California community college faculty come from University of California or similar institutions having an administrative model under which faculty move in and out of positions of departmental chair or dean—for a period of a few years, rather than move into a permanent career administrator path. This rotation can prevent the chairs from ...determination of an appropriate structure for any institution requires considerable local discussion ... above all, it must use cooperative, local deliberations—not imposition—to reach agreement..."

becoming isolated from their faculty colleagues and out of touch with the daily reality of students and the classroom. The University of California at Santa Cruz extended the concept of bringing administrators closer to students with their college provost positions where a faculty member becomes the head of a student academic and residential cluster. Faculty in such rotating positions expect to enjoy considerable autonomy in their work and contribute significantly to the direction of the institution. Such faculty will support the concepts from the "academy" model. Such postsecondary models are perhaps particularly prevalent in the more recently established California community colleges.

### CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

Landmark California community college legislation, AB1725, led to specific Education Code language (primarily §§70901 and 70902) and Title 5 Regulations (primarily §§53200 and 53203) regarding governance and the participation of not only faculty, but also students and classified staff. But within these requirements there remained considerable flexibility on how to achieve the required participation and the choice of structure that would best accomplish it.

#### K-14 MODEL

Long-established colleges whose faculty body is largely composed of those hired prior to implementation of AB1725 may have a fundamentally different view from the postsecondary model: the K-12 model under which community colleges operated prior to AB1725 has a top-down hierarchical structure where faculty have little autonomy or say in the direction of the institution. This produces a climate similar to that of the "worker" in a corporate model.

#### EXPERIENCES OF FACULTY IN NON-ACADEMIC PURSUITS

Colleges that have hired many faculty with corporate, military or law-enforcement backgrounds may find their faculty overall have yet different expectations about a managerial structure; often such individuals prefer a hierarchical structure to the bottom-up mechanism afforded by the effective participatory governance structures created by AB1725.

#### EXPERIENCES OF NON-FACULTY MEMBERS

The background of administrators and trustees can also influence the selection of an appropriate structure. Trustees with a business background may favor corporate models. Also, one of the most common catalysts for sudden change in structure is the hire of a new senior administrator who believes that a college structure should replicate his or her previous personal experience of administrative structure.

## HOW FACULTY EXPECTATIONS MAY DETERMINE STRUCTURE

There are several reasons why faculty at specific colleges or districts may prefer one administrative structure over another and why duties may then be divided among varying parties: the conceptual framework and personal experience that we have just discussed, in addition to simple interest or lack of interest in specific duties and possible contractual matters. What is an expected duty of a faculty academic chair at one college may be a task for which faculty demand to be specially compensated at another college, or may be left to a full-time administrator at another college. Class scheduling and evaluation of part-time instructors are two common examples.

What is expected of a faculty academic chair may also lead to personal conflicts regarding the position or actions to take on different issues. Chairs must balance often-conflicting desires from different constituency groups.<sup>3</sup> An example that easily leads to conflict is the assignment of classes where any seniority or rehire rights of part-time faculty can reduce ease and flexibility of scheduling. Another example is budget requests where a chair might have to choose between a narrow department priority and wider college benefits.

Each community college's faculty members, then, may be most comfortable with the structure that resembles their prior positive experiences, or they may conclude that a different structure is more appropriate for teaching institutions. Local discussions could focus on the advantages and disadvantages of each structure for certain groups of faculty or disciplines; participants might well discover that there are no inherent advantages or disadvantages in a specific model provided, that it ensures adequate consultation.

However, taking into account this wide variety of possible structures and the perceived advantages and disadvantages from differing viewpoints, we can see that determination of an appropriate structure for any institution requires considerable local discussion. This discussion might include consideration of institutional size, history and academic culture of the institution, and faculty background and desires. Above all, it must use cooperative, local deliberations—not imposition to reach agreement. Otherwise implementation is doomed to failure.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive look at these inherent conflicts, see "One Person, Six Directions" Berger, K.S. (*AAHE Bulletin* April 2002, pp. 6-7).

## Accountability and Authority

### NOTIONS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

ccountability is an intrinsic part of many conversations about faculty academic chair structure. Differences in accountability are, in part, caused by the abovementioned differences in nomenclature such as department and division chair. Other differences arise because administrators ascribe to one definition while faculty ascribe to the other definition. One definition focuses on consequences for the person held accountable-"blame". The other definition focuses on accountability, as in "to account for," as an explanation of what happened or failed to happen and why, as opposed to punishment for that failure. The second may provide information useful for improvement.

If the first definition is held by administration and the second by the faculty, little agreement is likely. For example, explication of process or of factors used in coming to final decisions may not be viewed as terribly important by administrators so long as the person in charge can be removed for poor decisions. The exact opposite may be the case for faculty using the alternative meaning of "accountable". If both parties agreed upon a single definition, perhaps even a collation of the separate meanings, greater trust and collaboration would likely ensue.

Indeed, one reason given for having division-level administration handled by someone who is hired either entirely or primarily as an administrator is the inability of top level administration to directly hold faculty "accountable." To the extent this is true, this perceived lack of accountability may be due to faculty's collective bargaining contract protections for their primary responsibilities that, inadvertently or not, get carried over into administering responsibilities.

For example, most collective bargaining contracts include considerable detail of classroom related responsibilities, much vaguer references to "collegiate" responsibilities such as committee service and little or no detail of administrative type duties such as timely delivery of the department class schedule. If a faculty member fails to teach a class, the consequences for that faculty member are usually clear. However, if the faculty member fails to deliver a department schedule on time, the consequences to the individual may not be clear.

This particular problem might be resolved by replacing the individual who failed to deliver the schedule, if this is contractually practicable. On many campuses there is a shortage of volunteers for administrative type duties: the number of faculty members who prefer to perform purely faculty duties is very much larger than the number who leap to their feet when given the opportunity to take on administrative duties. This problem can be expected to worsen as the workload of chairs increases at many colleges in response to continual demands for increased documentation and reporting.

Another factor professional administrators cite as a source of accountability problems is the notion that a person hired as an administrator is likely to be easily responsive to the needs of the institution as whole and therefore likely to perform tasks not particularly focused on their particular area. In contrast, faculty given administering responsibilities may be likely to come from a perspective of discipline first, reasonably related disciplines second, and the institution third and, therefore, less likely to be easily responsive to the needs of the institution as a whole.

However, many faculty would argue that it is administrators who have this narrow focus. If faculty academic chairs are well integrated with other faculty leaders and with the faculty they serve, this departmental or divisional parochialism is probably less likely to occur than it might under management by a career administrator. In fact, faculty members are often more attuned than career administrators to the perspectives of other disciplines and thus to the collective institution as a community of the whole. Faculty members frequently have loyalties inspired by a lifetime of service to one institution, whereas administrators exhibit increasingly high turn-over rates. The March 2003 newsletter of the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges, RP *Perspectives*, cites the length of service of CEOs at 5.5 years and comments that retirement of

significant numbers of long-term CEOs has begun in earnest.

In addition to a department level awareness, two of the strengths faculty academic chairs bring are discipline expertise and experience in the classroom, strengths that enhance their credibility as academic leaders and increase the likelihood of effective accountability and successful mentorship of new and part-time faculty. For example, faculty department chairs are much more likely to evaluate and recognize good teaching than are generic deans. The dean with a background in child development is at a serious disadvantage when it comes to evaluating faculty in biology or engineering. That dean can recognize generic teaching traits but cannot evaluate the appropriateness or success of content material. Administrators with no classroom experience whatsoever are in an even less equipped to evaluate effective teaching.

Finally, there may be tension due to a perception on the part of faculty that administrators are unlikely to be removed from their position for failing to do the very duties that are cited as areas where faculty cannot be held accountable—such as our earlier example of failure to produce the class schedule on time.

## AUTHORITY: COLLEAGUES VERSUS MANAGERS

The following selected dictionary definitions represent very different perspectives on authority: "the power to determine...; the right to control," "an expert on a subject; persuasive force..." and "the right to respect or acceptance of one's word."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Webster's College Dictionary, 1990 edition.

The first definition reflects the corporate conceptual framework while the second accommodates the "academy" model.

One commonly held objection to faculty academic chairs is that faculty should not supervise/ discipline other faculty. As remarked above, many faculty are not willing to perform disciplinary duties, viewing them as the most extreme case of the non-egalitarian situation that arises when one faculty member plays a supervisory role relative to another faculty member. Such duties may also violate collective bargaining agreements. On the other hand, faculty relationships are already nonegalitarian in many ways, as we see, for example, in the different privileges enjoyed by tenured and non-tenured faculty.

This objection to faculty academic chairs on the basis of supervision/discipline grounds is predicated on several assumptions. Chief among these are the notions that being held accountable means being disciplined by someone, and that department or division chairs/deans are the people who are to do the disciplining. Are these assumptions warranted? Are they grounded in some sort of legal empowerment or requirement?

The answer to both questions is no. It is entirely possible to have a structure under which the division chair's responsibilities may ultimately point out a specific need to discipline faculty. Presumably, when a division chair or the division dean learns that a problem exists, they must notify faculty of failure to comply with some agreed standard, and make recommendations to a responsible administrator as to potential actions by administration and possible corrective steps by faculty. An example might be a faculty member who is not teaching sufficient classes to complete a full-time load. "In fact, faculty members are often more attuned than career administrators to the perspectives of other disciplines and thus to the collective institution as a community of the whole..."

Notice that Education Code §87003 (b) specifically states that faculty members do not become administrators simply because they perform certain duties.

Any employees who are employed in faculty positions but who perform supervisory, management, or other duties related to college governance shall not, because of the performance of those incidental duties, be deemed supervisors or managers, as those terms are defined in Section 3540.1 of the Government Code. The incidental "supervisory" or "management" duties referred to in this subdivision include, but are not limited to, serving as a faculty member on hiring, selection, promotion, evaluation, budget development, or affirmative action committees, or making effective recommendations in connection with those activities.

The case for a structure that allows roles in between manager and peer is made by Ann Lucas in several of the recommendations for effective chairs that appear in "Myths that Make Chairs Feel They are Powerless," *AAHE Bulletin*, November 1999. One frequently cited myth is the statement that "I am either a peer or a manager. There is nothing in between." Lucas counters that As chair, an individual is no longer just a peer among equals... Although all chairs have to perform some management functions, they don't have to become managers; they can become leaders...

Granted that role conflict is stressful, a chair must be the conduit between faculty and administration, representing the needs of each to the other. (p.4)

For historical reasons, some other areas of administrative activity still appear difficult to resolve by discussion-for example the "right of assignment." Some colleges report that this "right" is viewed as a sort of divine right of administrators. Long after the passage of AB1725 in 1989 established a new process for faculty qualifications in the California community colleges, some administrators around the state still asserted that administrators had the right to assign a physics course—or whatever else they deemed appropriate-to a baker with only a high school diploma. However, AB 1725 established a clear process to determine if a faculty member meets the minimum qualifications required to teach a course. This process includes use of the publication Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community *Colleges* and also provides for a uniform process involving the local senate in order to assess qualifications and determine equivalency. The determination of minimum qualifications and equivalency is a faculty responsibility, not an administrative one.

Finally, it has been observed that individuals who administer from a "manager" perspective are likely to become removed from colleagues and entrenched in empowerment of their own making. This isolation may be an occupational hazard resulting from a unique combination of responsibilities and circumstances; therefore constant two-way communication with colleagues is vital. Isolation is easily limited by having a traditional rotation approach with whatever term length seems ideal, thus replicating a model used in California's other postsecondary institutions and moving California community colleges away from the career administrator model.

When administrators operate in the "academy" mode, as colleague and leader rather than as corporate manager, the dividing line that separates duties performed by faculty from duties performed by administrators may be less important and less contentious because the individual responsible for administrative duties is accepted as a colleague rather than resented as a manager.

### Governance Issues

aculty academic chairs, whether department or division, interact directly with institutional structures and encounter larger governance issues. Thus, faculty academic chairs are of particular interest to the Academic Senate as well as to local senates.

### DIVISION AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRS AS ISLANDS

Divisions come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. Some may have as few as two departments and two discipline qualifications for faculty, whereas others may have a half a dozen or more departments and more than a dozen discipline qualifications. Size alone may have unanticipated consequences for delineation of duties. For example, in a large diverse division, a faculty academic chair may, in fact, be no closer to most instruction than an administrator, such as a dean, who administers a small division. Similarly, department chairs may serve and represent 40 or more full-time faculty in a single discipline (e.g., English), or they may coordinate the efforts of a few full-time faculty in several related but separate disciplines (e.g., ESL, Foreign Languages, Cultural Studies).

It is not uncommon for department chairs or division chairs to perceive themselves as existing on islands where they advocate solely for their own department or division; they are often elected or appointed on precisely such a basis. Some structures lack opportunities to interact with other chairs as well as with more general faculty leadership. This, in turn, makes it difficult to develop faculty leadership that consistently promotes the wider goals of the whole institution. In addition such isolation can also lead to a personal sense of impotence, identified by Lucas as one of the six most frequent myths in "Myths that Make Chairs Feel They are Powerless,"(*AAHE Bulletin*, November 1999):

I am elected by my colleagues to serve at their pleasure for only three or four years, then I will be a faculty member again. Therefore, there is nothing I can do to deal with the problems. (p.4)

Lucas refutes this by suggesting that

A chair can take an active role in seeking meaningful input and full participation from everyone in the department so that faculty members can plan and organize themselves to function most effectively. (p.4)

In general, a reporting "chain of command" is not typical of faculty groups. This lack of structure may result in faculty academic chairs who are less involved in communication with faculty leadership than administrators are with administrative leadership. Effective faculty academic chairs communicate with local senate and collective bargaining leaders, as well as other faculty, on a regular basis and craft cooperative approaches "For any institution to successfully modify the institutional structure, the planning must take place within the institution's governance structure..."

> to academic issues such as program growth or reduction. Such continuous communication prevents problems caused by triangular communication between administration and different faculty subgroups and guards against divide-and-conquer tactics. Some colleges report that they accomplish this communication with a "Council of Chairs" structure. Others use formal liaisons or personal communication between leaders. If faculty academic chairs behave as islands, there is a negative impact on governance, but effective faculty academic chairs serve as the bridge between faculty members and administration.

## FACULTY ROLES IN GOVERNANCE AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

It is difficult, if not impossible, to make changes in the academic structure of an institution that do not clearly impact academic and professional areas. In practice, structural changes, other than simple changes of an organization chart of senior administrators, almost always impact faculty roles and thus would require collegial consultation. This interpretation is echoed in the 1998 joint Academic Senate/Community College League of California publication, *Participating Effectively in District and College Governance (p.4)*: How the administration is organized may be a matter for wide participation by the affected parties but is outside the scope of the district's responsibility to consult collegially with the senate. However organizational changes which affect academic and professional matters such as curriculum or faculty role in governance would require consultation with the academic senate.

For any institution to successfully modify the institutional structure, the planning must take place within the institution's governance structure that would normally include the local senate, the collective bargaining agent, faculty academic chairs and the administration.5 In addition to the direct effects on faculty described above, there are ripple effects of organizational change, such as impact on the 50% law. Local senates should also require an analysis of the educational impact of any reorganization on the use of scarce resources. A current example of this sort of discussion and analysis is taking place at Diablo Valley College, where the senate has formed a Division/ Department Realignment Task Force to examine their current division structure and determine if it might be improved.6

While Title 5 §53200, addresses the need for collegial consultation, some administrators or trustees have taken the view that such consultation is unnecessary where administrative

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Detailed descriptions of local senate involvement are given in the Spring 2002 Academic Senate publication *Empowering Local Senates: Roles and Responsibilities of and Strategies for an Effective Senate.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> December 2003. DVC Forum, Volume XXXX, Number 4 (p.1).

structure is concerned. However, §53200 clearly lists "district and college governance structures, as related to faculty roles" (emphasis added) as an academic and professional matter requiring collegial consultation. Notice that §53200 does include language<sup>7</sup> that specifies how a governing board may take action following unsuccessful collegial consultation, but this authority applies to all areas of collegial consultation and is not specifically targeted at discussions of administrative structure. Examples of such direct faculty roles include local senate representation, curriculum committee representation and its course-approval process. Any unilateral change in structure could result in unanticipated changes to the curriculum approval process or the way faculty are represented on the local academic senate.

<sup>7</sup> California Code of Regulations, Title 5 §53203 (d)

(d) The governing board of a district shall adopt procedures for responding to recommendations of the academic senate that incorporate the following:

(1) in instances where the governing board elects to rely primarily upon the advice and judgment of the academic senate, the recommendations of the senate will normally be accepted, and only in exceptional circumstances and for compelling reasons will the recommendations not be accepted. If a recommendation is not accepted, the governing board or its designee, upon request of the academic senate, shall promptly communicate its reasons in writing to the academic senate.

(2) in instances where the governing board elects to provide for mutual agreement with the academic senate, and agreement has not been reached, existing policy shall remain in effect unless continuing with such policy exposes the district to legal liability or causes substantial fiscal hardship. In cases where there is no existing policy, or in cases where the exposure to legal liability or substantial fiscal hardship requires existing policy to be changed, the governing board may act, after a good faith effort to reach agreement, only for compelling legal, fiscal, or organizational reasons. In addition, faculty academic chairs often have budget responsibilities that call for interactions between their own department(s) and the college governance structure. Section 53200 also lists "processes for budget development" as an area of collegial consultation. Establishment of a suitable college process is a fruitful area of cooperation between the academic senate and faculty academic chairs since chairs may control day-to-day expenditures in their area.<sup>8</sup> However, the budget process, once established under Title 5 §53200, may or may not routinely involve either the senate or faculty academic chairs in expenditure decisions.

Hiring is another area where faculty academic chairs implement policies that are important to the academic senate. Education Code §87360 (b) requires that

...Hiring criteria, policies and procedures for new faculty members shall be developed and agreed upon jointly by representatives of the governing board, and the academic senate, and approved by the governing board.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Many of the factors to be considered in effective budget and planning processes are described in the Fall 2001 Academic Senate paper *The Faculty Role in Planning and Budget.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> For a recent update on these issues see the Fall 2000 Academic Senate paper A Re-examination of Faculty Hiring Processes and Procedures.

Also, Education Code §§87610 and 87663 require that the collective bargaining agent consult with the academic senate regarding tenure and evaluation procedures.

Thus, faculty academic chairs are responsible for day-to-day implementation of several policies that are originally developed by the academic senate and/or collective bargaining agent, even though they may not have participated in the creation of these policies. Hiring and evaluation of full and part-time faculty are good examples of situations where faculty academic chairs might either accomplish or frustrate the intent of the policies. For example, an occasionally cited barrier to increased diversity in hiring is the lack of support by some department faculty. Faculty academic chairs are ideally situated to observe and affect this influence. Faculty leaders and their department or division colleagues to support the intent of policies and also to protect "vulnerable" part-time and non-tenured faculty in areas such as academic freedom.

## Factors Contributing to Success

hile understanding the effect of conceptual frameworks and local history and culture on the development of an institutional structure, we can also identify factors that might contribute to the successful implementation of different models and resulting structures. These factors may be useful for those considering administrative structure change or academic unit revisions.

#### TRADITION VERSUS CHANGE

In campus faculty conversations pitting status quo against proposed change, the following typical questions emerge.

- Are we changing just for the sake of change?
- Are there good reasons to change?
- Do we do it this way merely because it has become traditional?
- What are the perceived advantages of change?
- What are the likely costs of change?

These questions are unlikely to be answered in a way that

promotes successful change in cases where a structural change is being externally imposed or where the real intent is to punish or change the behavior of an individual.

But a conversation likely to lead to successful change could consider the general concepts above and the possible local existence of success factors discussed in the next section.

### FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO A SUCCESSFUL FACULTY DIVISION CHAIR MODEL

Conversations with faculty leaders at activities such as the Academic Senate's Summer Leadership Institute suggest that the following are important characteristics of an institution where faculty leadership is likely to be successful at the division or school level:

- a tradition of widespread faculty service in leadership positions;
- a selection process that involves election rather than appointment;
- an administration, including most especially the college president, that demonstrates comfort with faculty empowerment;
- avoidance of a "we-they" culture;
- a clearly organized governance structure;
- a well considered means of accountability, communication, and review of all levels of governance; and
- existence of well-considered training for faculty asked to take on this level and amount of responsibility.

### FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO A SUCCESSFUL FACULTY DEPARTMENT CHAIR MODEL

A recent California State University Academic Senate task force report examined the roles and responsibilities of department chairs in the California State University System and included the following recommendations that seem equally applicable to community college departmental chairs. <sup>10</sup>

- Campuses give chairs the resources they require to be effective leaders, including: more authority over financial resources; more training; more access to information.
- Campuses treat chairs equitably regarding their conditions of appointment.
- Compensation for chairs matches the demands of the position.
- Chairs' time is not squandered on routine administrative functions.

Common to both sets of observations is the emphasis on training opportunities for existing and potential faculty academic chairs that are informed by perspectives of administration, experienced faculty academic chairs, collective bargaining representatives and the local senate. Some training opportunities such as out-of-state "chair academies" are often problematic because they ignore the unique governance features of California law and recommend solutions that are inappropriate or even illegal in the California Community Colleges—for example changes in the faculty hiring process that bypass the Education Code requirement for the local senate and governing board to reach joint agreement on that process. Many faculty academic chairs would benefit from broader training similar to the Academic Senate's Leadership Institute that focuses largely on the training of local senate presidents.

# FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SUCCESSFUL USE OF PART-TIME FACULTY

The California Community Colleges rely heavily on the use of part-time faculty. Many of the practical consequences of different models and structures occur in their most extreme forms in the following examples that involve part-time faculty. Since successful integration of part-time faculty is vital to the college, such consequences are particularly important.

Faculty academic chairs are often the reason why this integration of part-time faculty succeeds or fails. Depending on procedures contractually established by the collective bargaining agent, many faculty academic chairs oversee part-time hiring, class assignments and peer evaluations. These procedures, designed in consultation with the local senate, are implemented by the faculty academic chairs.

When faculty supervise other faculty the differing models and attitudes are highlighted. The corporate management model does not work well with faculty who consider themselves and their colleagues as professionals rather than as "hired help." At one end, faculty academic chairs may be uncomfortable with their supervisory role. At the other end, adequate safeguards must be in place to protect such vulnerable faculty such as part-time and non-tenured faculty because of the obvious "power differential" between individuals. Successful faculty academic chairs must provide

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> California State University Academic Senate (Fall 2002). Roles, Responsibilities, Resources, and Rewards for Department Chairs. Retrieved February 2004, from http://www.calstate.edu/AcadSen/E-Senator/Reports/ RolesRespRwrds-DptChairs.pdf

effective communication, support, and protection for part-time faculty in their area—for example by facilitating their participation in department curriculum changes and textbook selection, and by protecting their academic freedom and ability to voice an opinion without negative consequences.

On the status of part-time faculty, the Council of Faculty Organizations (COFO) *Faculty Equity Statement* notes that

Part-time faculty must communicate effectively with each other, share institutional responsibilities and rewards and create an academic community that is based on mutual respect.

To achieve such ends successfully requires the efforts of all faculty and administrators, but especially those faculty in chair roles since they often have the most immediate day-today contact. Similar participation on the part of faculty academic chairs would also be required to implement two of the recommendations in the Spring 2002 Academic Senate position paper *Part-Time Faculty: A Principled Perspective*:

The Academic Senate should work with other faculty and administrative organizations to develop structures that will enhance the professionalism of all faculty and protect their academic freedom.

The Academic Senate will engage in serious consideration of the implications and advisability of extending the structures and protections of tenure to regularly rehired part-time faculty who have undergone rigorous evaluation processes.

### FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO A NEED FOR ADMINISTRATORS TO PERFORM DEPARTMENT OR DIVISION-LEVEL ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES:

Apart from matters of size, other conditions may prompt institutions to employ academic administrators as department or division chairs:

- a lack of interest or reluctance on the part of faculty to assume division level leadership;
- duties that faculty won't or don't want to perform;
- duties beyond the expertise or time available to faculty;
- duties where an administrator with 100% assignment could improve effectiveness or continuity;
- an institutional culture that values "the power to determine...; the right to control" over "an expert on a subject; persuasive force..." and "the right to respect or acceptance of one's word" as definitions of the word "authority";
- an accepted atmosphere of "manager" and "boss" as opposed to "person responsible for" and "point person";
- compensation and bargaining issues that would result in a faculty academic chair being required to move outside the faculty bargaining unit.

Institution-wide discussion within the governance structure could use these factors to determine a structure that has widespread support and that assigns the range of necessary administrative duties to individuals in appropriate faculty and administrator roles.

# A Range of Structures Present in Some California Community Colleges

t would be inappropriate for the Academic Senate to recommend any specific model or structure. But fundamental principles of faculty involvement emerge from the discussion and recommendations in this paper. Faculty must be involved in institutional discussions of philosophy and structure, and the actual use of faculty in chair positions has many advantages. It may be instructive to briefly describe some of the structures that currently exist within the California Community Colleges.

### HORIZONTAL STRUCTURE WITH CONSIDERABLE FACULTY INVOLVEMENT

- President and Vice President level are career administrators.
- No deans except for specific focus assignments such as workforce development.
- Division Chairs are faculty, elected by the faculty and compensated with reassigned time.
- Department chairs are faculty, elected by the faculty.
- Structure was agreed upon in shared governance process.
- Example—Mission College, Crafton Hills College.
- Some limited examples of Mission College contract language are available at http://www.wvmccd.cc.ca.us/wvmccd/ace/ #Contract

# HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE WITH LITTLE FACULTY INVOLVEMENT

- President and Vice President are career administrators.
- Division Deans are career administrators.
- No or very few faculty department chairs.
- Structure was imposed over objections of faculty.
- Examples—Irvine Valley College, Diablo Valley College.
- Some limited examples of Diablo Valley College contract language are available at http://www.ufccccd.org/contract/article6.html

# COMBINATION STRUCTURE WITH MODERATE FACULTY INVOLVEMENT

- President and Vice President are career administrators.
- Division Deans are career administrators.
- Department chairs are faculty, elected by the faculty.
- Structure was agreed upon in shared governance process.
- Example—Los Angeles Southwest College.
- Some limited examples of LA Southwest College contract language are available at http://www.laccd.edu/collective\_bargaining\_ agreements/AFT/AFT.htm#ARTICLE\_17

# Conclusions

t is clear that there is no single solution to the search for a philosophy and structure that lead to a successful academic institution. The key conclusion of this paper is that such institutional philosophy and structure must be reached through extensive collegial discussion that certainly includes the academic senate and other faculty leaders and is finally agreed to by all constituencies. However, it is also clear that faculty academic chairs have a considerable amount to offer in the participatory governance environment required by California law. Faculty who serve in academic chair positions bring a vital student and classroom perspective to organizational discussions and in turn take a wider knowledge of the institution back to their department level work.

## Recommendations

his paper examines the roles and responsibilities of faculty academic chairs within the philosophy and structure of an academic institution. Local structure and implementation vary enormously and must be decided locally. However, the profound impact of these faculty leadership positions on both academic and governance issues leads to several recommendations addressed to local academic senates.

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges encourages local academic senates to:

 Recognize that faculty academic chairs are an important part of overall faculty leadership, along with academic senate and collective bargaining leaders. The local senate should encourage all three to work together.

- 2. Recognize that there is no single best philosophy and structure for faculty academic chairs. Any effective structure must be developed locally using a process that takes account of local culture and must fully involve the local senate, the collective bargaining agents and other interested parties. The local senate should ensure that effective structures are agreed, not imposed.
- 3. Recognize that local discussions about philosophy and structure must consider the role of the faculty at that institution, addressing which administrative duties are best carried out by faculty members and which by administrators. The local senate should ensure that such discussions most appropriately take place with the institution's governance structure.
- 4. Recognize that an effective chair structure, and its interaction with the administration, significantly affects the implementation of academic and professional matters and, therefore, that there are considerable advantages to the use of faculty academic chairs. Local senates should ensure that such structure is neither instituted nor altered merely as a matter of administrative convenience.
- Ensure that the structure adequately addresses the needs and protects the rights of part-time faculty.

- Work collegially with the local administration to develop well-considered training opportunities for existing and potential faculty academic chairs that foster broader leadership skills and the academic senate perspective.
- Develop a mechanism that promotes broader faculty leadership by encouraging routine effective communication among faculty academic chairs, academic senate leaders and collective bargaining leaders.
- 8. Ensure that the communication mechanism among faculty leaders respects appropriate roles of the academic senate and the collective bargaining agent in the governance of the institution.

"Recognize that faculty academic chairs are an important part of overall faculty leadership, along with academic senate and collective bargaining leaders..."

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