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The Chairperson : Faculty, Administrator and Academic and Crisis Leader

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The Chairperson of 2023: Faculty, Administrator and Academic and Crisis Leader

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Having been department chair for 31 years (1987-2018) and planning on maintaining an active role in faculty governance and program administration have caused me to stop and reflect about how the responsibilities and duties of chair have evolved and continue to evolve in our academic world of economic uncertainty and (in many cases) declining student populations.

I have seen the role of chair become increasingly managerial and administrative whereby we are now often intimately involved in strategic planning (departmental, college and university-wide), budget, fundraising, managing conflict, student retention, motivating and encouraging faculty to achieve academic excellence while maintaining scholarship and research, and leading change while maintaining our own standards of excellence in the classroom and in research.

The increasing emphasis on program assessment and outcomes necessary for accreditation and evaluation on many levels has taxed our resource of time management. Performance appraisals with increased emphasis on teacher "accountability" have also tremendously impacted our role.

So how do we juggle it all in order to maintain our status as working, thriving full-time faculty while increasing our duties and responsibilities as administrators and/or managers?

My plan for the session is provide "what if" scenarios of commonly occurring problems and suggestions for handling them as well as to suggest ways of successfully handling the roles of faculty member, administrator, and academic leader simultaneously. The workshop will examine literature on the subject and have the participants actively engage in session dialogue and brainstorming.

In addition to this I will construct various scenarios of conflict within the role of chairs (such as faculty vs. administrator, academic excellence vs. student retention, leading change vs. managing conflict) and use the audience to brainstorm possible solutions to these conflicts. There will be a great emphasis on the use of time-management skills, delegating responsibilities to other faculty, and developing partnerships with the outside world for internships and future employment of our graduates.