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Making the Move: Tips for Externally Hired Department Chairs

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According to Jeffrey Buller in his book *The essential department chair*, about half of department chairs go back to full-time faculty after leaving their chair positions. The others retire, take other administrative jobs, or move on to become chairs at other universities. The latter group of externally hired department chairs will be the focus of this roundtable. Both facilitators were hired as external candidates for chair positions.

Main points include advantages, challenges, and tips for externally hired chairs.

Advantages:

One topic that will be discussed during the session are the advantages of becoming an external chair at a new school. Discussion points will include testing leadership skills by taking on new challenges (e.g., changing the department culture, working on recruitments/retention, fund raising, alumni relations, increasing faculty research production), the potential to increase one's compensation and/or rank at a new school, and the opportunity to diversify a leadership portfolio/CV.

Challenges:

We will also discuss the challenges of being an externally hired department chair, which include building trust in a new department, facilitating changes expected by upper administration, and the obstacle of gaining respect quickly from other department chairs and upper administration.

Tips:

The facilitators will also offer general tips for external department chairs, including utilizing the most recent program review document, meeting with each faculty member individually, establishing trust with a new dean and faculty, creating alliances/networks across campus, and other proven leadership strategies.

Audience Participation:

The audience will be encouraged to participate throughout the session, but there will certainly be time set aside for questions, answers, and comments.