

## **Administrative Philosophy of Mark Borzi**

I recognize that each university has its own system of management which generates unique issues and processes. In addition, each academic department has its own history and way of doing things. The following statement is an effort to outline general management principles. I suspect that specific issues and tasks would vary depending upon the nature of the department. With that said, here is what I believe.

### **What I believe an academic department should be.**

It is my sense that a department should be a scholarly community of students and faculty. In a scholarly community, faculty and students engage in the learning process in ways that promote intellectual development in a supportive and nurturing environment. A scholarly community must be tolerant of divergent and fringe ideas, as it is from the fringe that most new ideas develop. A scholarly community is not simply the research and publication of ideas, it requires the freedom and ability to engage in intellectual discourse which fosters the development and extension of new ideas. It occurs in and out of the classroom. It is essential to a healthy and supportive department. It is the sense of scholarly community that separates us from other forms of education and work.

### **What I believe the role of the chair should be.**

The primary role of the chair is service: service to students, to the faculty, and to the administration. The chair needs to ease the way so that the department can accomplish its primary mission: teaching. This includes allocating resources, facilitating decision-making and planning, representing the department to the administration, mediating faculty disputes, and addressing those tasks required to keep the primary departmental purpose moving forward. Often these activities are not done in isolation. The faculty should be involved in the process.

The chair's secondary role is to assist faculty in their personal and professional growth. The reasons that a faculty member chooses to teach are probably as varied as the number of faculty on campus. In most cases, teaching is only one aspect of a faculty member's goals and aspirations. In order to have a faculty who is satisfied with their work experiences, personal and professional goals must be fulfilled. The chair needs to be cognizant of these goals and assist faculty members in accomplishing them.

### **What I believe departmental decision-making should be.**

Although each institution has a slightly different administrative structure that would define the decision-making parameters, there are fundamentally three areas that a chair must be concerned with in the daily administration of a department: departmental governance, facilitating administrative processes, and supervision. These areas are often interrelated and at times will conflict. A chair must be flexible enough to recognize which type of decision-making is most appropriate for what situation. Let me outline each of these areas in turn.

*Departmental governance* – Departmental governance is often known as faculty governance. The faculty play a key role in shaping the department through decisions associated with department governance.

In departmental governance faculty have a mixture of rights and responsibilities that provide direction and focus for the department. Most fundamental of these responsibilities is a definition

of what the department is to be: what are the focus, goals, objectives for the department? More specific issues the faculty need to address include departmental direction or blue print, the development of policies and procedures, the committee structure, the curriculum, admission criteria, tenure and promotion, and decisions on governance that do not conflict with the legally defined role of the supervisor.

The role of the department chair in relation to departmental governance is to serve as a catalyst and facilitate the decision-making process. These roles involve providing ideas, suggestions feedback, to keep the process moving forward, and to hold people accountable for decisions that are made. The chair, who is also a member of the faculty, should have a voice equal to any other faculty member in this process (but no greater).

*Facilitating administrative processes* – I define the mundane things that need to be done on a daily basis to free the faculty to teach and do research as those in the administrative processes. Activities and processes include fund-raising, internal and external public relations, promoting the use of technology, ensuring equipment works, adequate office supplies, scheduling, coordinating enrollment management and recruiting, room scheduling, monitoring student performance, and implementing agreed upon policies and procedures.

Often the chair is responsible for these activities because the faculty is not interested in these tasks. It is possible, as is frequently the case with a graduate program, that the duties may be assigned to a faculty member. Decision-making in this area is typically done on a case-by-case basis. The department chair should consult with the faculty as necessary to facilitate the smooth operation of the department. If left to my own devices, my decision tree tends to flow as follows:

1. What is best for the department?
2. What is best for the students?
3. What is best for the faculty?
4. What is best for the individual faculty member?
5. Flip a coin (a decision is better than no decision)

*Supervision* – Supervision is the area that is usually the most controversial. The issues in this section are typically those which the department chair as supervisor, must, by university or legal definition, make decisions. These decisions may be informed by departmental input, but it is the chair who is held accountable. Examples of the types of issues that fall into this category include performance evaluations, acting as the departmental fiscal agent, representing the department to the administration, assigning duties, hiring and evaluating faculty, and discipline.

The chair is both responsible and accountable for making decisions in this area. It is important that the chair seek the input (as appropriate) of the faculty and make decisions that are in the best interest of the department.