4-1-2010

Strengthening the Academic Department Through Empowerment of Faculty and Staff

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Recommended Citation
Cherif, Abour; Ofori-Amoah, Benjamin; and Stefurak, Lin (2010) "Strengthening the Academic Department Through Empowerment of Faculty and Staff," Academic Leadership: The Online Journal: Vol. 8 : Iss. 2 , Article 36.
Available at: https://scholars.fhsu.edu/alj/vol8/iss2/36

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Empowerment of employees has been a primary concern of business for many decades, under the premise that involvement of employees in decision making leads to superior performance and results. Acceptance of the practical value of empowerment by colleges and universities is more recent and more rare, despite the centrality of ideas such as faculty governance and recognition of the faculty’s essential role in the academic enterprise. Empowerment in academe is defined as the process whereby stakeholders are encouraged and supported in utilizing their knowledge, skills, and creativity to embrace ownership and accountability for the well being of their department and institution. The process requires stakeholders to collaborate in order to establish clear goals and expectations focused on the institution’s vision and mission but within agreed-upon boundaries. This alignment of departmental and institutional goals is a key ingredient of empowerment, one that Black (1987) calls "enacting the vision" in organizations.

Empowerment is central to continuous improvement at the personal, professional, and organizational levels. At its core, strategic empowerment motivates faculty and staff to strive for optimal performance in their individual endeavors to enhance the academic enterprise for all, especially in learning and accomplishment. This naturally leads to higher levels of departmental efficiency and effectiveness. As such, empowerment is a crucial component in faculty leadership development, a process that cannot be left to happen by chance. It may require a change in the department chair’s thinking on how to manage faculty, staff, students, and the business of the department. It may also require a change in how faculty and chairs perceive and practice relationships with each other within their department. After all, building an effective academic department will only happen through building good faculty, staff, and academic programs.

The purpose of this paper is to outline a framework for empowering faculty and staff in academic departments. The following section (II) outlines the main types of department chairs and discusses the chair’s two traditional roles—leadership and management. Section III analyzes the main components of the framework for empowering the department and discusses how this framework can be implemented and the empowerment achieved.

II. Department Chairs and Their Roles

Of the main types of department chair positions in American higher education, the first is that of the full-time administrator who has no teaching duties. The second type of chairperson has a reduced teaching load in addition to administrative duties. A third type may be called the co-chair, because he or she may share the position with someone else. The third may also have a reduced teaching load. A fourth type is the acting chair, one who is brought in for a limited period of time. This paper is oriented to the first type of department chair, the full-time administrator. However, most of the issues addressed here are also relevant to the remaining types of department chairpersons.
In all these roles, the department chair is a manager and a leader who need to influence, direct, positively motivate and respond to the people (faculty, students, and staff) and the work environment” in a responsible, professional, and supportive manner that is guided by the vision and the mission of the department (cf., Allan 1993; Bennis and Nanus 1997; Short and Greer 1997).

The Chairperson as Manager

Management, in simple words, deals with process and with getting things done. Within educational settings, management is a collective effort aimed at providing an environment in which “teaching and learning can flourish, resulting in student satisfaction, high performance, retention, and a wide range of career opportunities” (Mayers, Ricordati, and Carter, 1995, p. 181). Effective teaching and desirable student performance cannot take place in a poorly managed environment.

By definition and by the nature of their profession, department members (faculty and staff) are also managers (of the classroom, curriculum, and instruction) who successfully complete designated tasks. Their collective efforts can lead to an environment in which teaching and learning can flourish and student achievement can be enhanced. However, the department chairperson’s role as a manager is unique in one respect: The chairperson is also the human relations officer of the department. She or he brings management and employees together in a dynamic but harmonious way to achieve assigned objectives. In an educational setting, these objectives provide enhanced performance opportunities for faculty and enhanced learning opportunities for students, as well as departmental and organizational efficiency and effectiveness

Based on an understanding such as this, the most important work of the department chair as a manager is to help faculty and staff recognize that their best prospects of realizing their personal goals lie in helping the department, and in turn the organization, achieve its primary goals (McGregor 1960). To this end:

a. The chairperson must have the understanding, belief, and willingness to see the department as expressing a dynamic pattern of communications and other relationships among people who work together for a common goal.
b. The chair must always be concerned about the people, the work, and the achievement of departmental objectives. He or she must operate from a base of “What can I or we do for you” rather than “What can you do for me.”

c. S/he must also be able to effectively harness the collective wisdom and expertise of the department’s personnel.

The Chairperson as a Leader

Unlike management which deals with process, leadership deals with empowering people and releasing the capabilities within them. It is about leading and coaching rather than controlling and protecting. It functions by eliminating the aspect of control over others and giving them the freedom to be creative and effective. Leaders gain power by giving it away to those who work for them; the more power they give away the more power they get back (Welsh, 2001; Maxwell, 2007). From a practitioner approach, department chairs provide leadership by enabling faculty to accomplish the mission of the department and achieve their own professional growth and development (Gialamas, Cherif, and Hilentzaris, 2003).

For the department chair, the fundamental elements of this leadership include:

a. Practicing the principles of leadership as a partnership.

b. A strong desire to serve and provide faculty with high quality opportunities for professional growth and development and encouraging them to realize their own well considered personal aspirations (Moore, 1996; Blanchard 1999).

c. Working hard to make faculty feel safe in the work environment by adapting systems of performance review and evaluation that first bring confidence, and then bring out the best performance of the faculty (Gialamas and Cherif 2003, 2004a; Blanchard 1999).

d. The ability and willingness to create a climate of trust in the workplace: a structure in which everyone is important and all ideas are considered, and an atmosphere in which hard work, integrity, and generosity are the norms in dealing with people (Casey 1997, Adjobolosoo 1993).

e. Conveying to the faculty the perception that they are “either winners (meaning you already know they are good performers) or potential winners (meaning you strongly think they can become good performers), and you mean them no harm” (Blanchard 1999, p. 69).

f. Believing that “people without information cannot act responsibly; people with information are compelled to act responsibly” (Blanchard et al. 1996, 34). Sharing sensitive and performance information that sends a very strong signal of transparency, respect, and trust to everyone.

g. Understanding that the department chair’s role is to “coordinate efforts, acquire resources, develop strategic plans, and work with customers, coach people, and the like. Everything the department chair does is to help his/her faculty and staff be more effective in what they do” (Short and Greer, 1997).

III. A Framework for Empowering Departments
Philosophies of Empowerment

According to McGregor (1960), empowerment is a process that encourages faculty and staff to develop skills and personal traits and exercise the type of autonomy that helps an institution achieve its primary goal of improving learning opportunities for its students and providing professional development opportunities for its employees. In this sense, empowerment is a mission-driven, achievement-based, and professional growth-oriented objective that aims to liberate the leadership within the faculty and staff and to release the power they already have to do their best beyond their accepted accountabilities and responsibilities (cf., Bennis & Nanus, 1997; Blanchard, Carlos, Randolph, 1996). This results in:

1. Increased faculty status, a highly developed knowledge base, and autonomy within boundaries in decision making (cf. Maeroff 1988; Blanchard, Carlos, & Randolph 1996; Short and Greer, 1997).


3. Organizational efficiency and labor-management cooperation.

4. Faculty growth in professional development, intellectual productivity, and personal satisfaction.

In their book, Empowerment Takes More Than a Minute, Blanchard, Carlos, and Randolph (1996) have brilliantly shown that empowerment is more than an empty promise in liberating the leadership within people. For them:

Empowerment is not giving people power…. People already have plenty of power – in the wealth of their knowledge and motivation – to do their jobs magnificently…. [It is] letting this power out…. [In this sense] empowerment has a sense of ownership at its core, and it starts with the belief system of top management. Too many leaders still need to get over the notion that their people head off to work every morning asking themselves how they can get by with doing as little as possible…. It is not that people in organizations are unable to be their best – they're afraid to be their best. Most organizations are set up to catch people doing things wrong rather than to reward them for doing things right (13-14).

It is part of human nature that most adults are interested in deciding questions that affect their work or work environment and the development of their organizations (Short & Greer 1997; Mohn 2000). In order to succeed, the empowerment must be seen and acted upon as a “philosophy of management” and continued “behavioral action” that promotes a policy of inclusion in the participative decision making process by and through harnessing the collective genius of all types of people in the department (McNulty, 2003; McGregor 1960). Embedded in this philosophy is the task of providing the environment and policies that allow autonomy within boundaries for faculty and allow department chairs to learn “a whole new way to manage—managing projects and cross-functional teams rather than work groups” (Blanchard, Carlos, and Randolph 1996, p 19).

Such an empowerment philosophy stems from the premise that:

Empowered employees benefit the organization and themselves. They have a greater sense of purpose in their jobs and lives, and their involvement translates directly into continuous improvement in the workplace systems and processes. In an empowered organization, employees bring their best
ideas and initiatives to the workplace with a sense of excitement, ownership, and pride. In addition, they act with responsibility and put the best interests of the organization first.

(Blanchard et al., 1996 2)

Creating an Empowered Workplace

In an educational setting, the main task in creating an empowered workplace is to create a faculty-driven departmental environment. Secondly, it is to develop faculty who exhibit dimensions of teacher empowerment such as these: decision making, continuous professional growth, higher status, higher self-efficacy, autonomy within boundaries, high positive impact, and excellence and quality as a daily practice rather than a mere act. To this end, one needs to identify the essential elements of empowerment and to develop and implement an effective framework within which to work toward empowerment.

The Empowerment Agenda

Today's chairs are under pressure to create and maintain a positive departmental culture that meets the needs of faculty, staff, students, and also the goals of the department and the mission of the institution. Learning and student achievement are at the core of the institutional mission and goals. In order to fashion the best ways to effectively achieve the vision and mission, we recommend the following management agenda for creating a culturally empowered department.

1. In-depth analysis of the current department culture and governance.
2. A compelling vision of the empowered organization.
3. Sharing information with department stakeholders through dialogue and feedback.
4. Sharing authority, tasks, and accountabilities.
5. Commitment to ideas, not personalities.
6. Creating autonomy within boundaries.
7. Replacing the old hierarchy with self-directed teams.

These strategies are not intended to be either categorical or comprehensive, but only starting points for developing a productive, empowered department. The goal is to plant the seeds necessary to cultivate a positive, productive department and a culture that is focused on effective classroom learning and raising the achievement of all students at all levels (Allen 2003). It is to create a culture of continuous improvement in student learning through the empowerment of faculty and staff.

1. Deep Analysis of the Current Department Culture and Governance

Academic department must have a homogenous culture that is based on agreed-upon values, mission, and purpose. Multi-culture in a given organization is a sign of a failed institution (Welch, 2001). A departmental culture encompasses a department’s core values and practices, and a system of re-enforcing these core values. Department chairs must willingly listen to and learn from all department
stakeholders, which include faculty, staff, students, alumni, and family members.

Deep analysis of the current department and its governance patterns may be conducted through focus groups, surveys, and open discussions. Such analysis includes identifying individual members’ talents and skills and finding the best ways to capitalize on these. Deep analysis can help the department identify aspects of the department culture that need to be changed, to maintain and reinforce positive traits, and to introduce new traits that have been neglected or never introduced to the system. Such analysis also helps to identify faculty and staff who are collegial and who can work with others in a well-defined collaborative fashion. But most of all, deep analysis will help the department and the chairperson identify the core values which form the foundation for creating a shared vision within the department and among the stakeholders.

Every successful organization operates from a base of shared core values that govern actions people take and that are the foundation for everything that happens in the organization. Building consensus on the core values is essential to developing a compelling vision for what the organization will work to become. Core values such as accountability, excellence, integrity, professionalism, and individuality help department members establish priorities and guide decisions in the workplace. The consensus of identified core values helps foster decentralized decision making and supports empowerment.

In short, the first step in refocusing a department or organization is to study its existing culture and find ways to make it more efficient at fulfilling its mission, vision, and values. However, having a set of core values without a system for reinforcing them is just having a blueprint for a house without the land to build it on nor the funding and the means to build it.

2. Developing and Articulating a Compelling Vision of the Empowered Organization

Department chairs are also leaders, and leaders are expected to espouse a vision for their departments that can be embraced by most, if not all, stakeholders. In contrast to the mission, an organizational vision is cogent foresight transformed into a mental image produced by a thorough imagination. However, vision without a process for communicating it to the stakeholders and a plan for how to achieve it is merely untenable hope (Maxwell, 2007, 1995; Welch, 2001). In other words, a leader can be “…a genius at synthesizing and articulating visions, but this makes a difference only when the vision has been successfully communicated throughout the organization and effectively institutionalized as a guiding principle” (Bennis and Nanus 1997, p. 99). Furthermore, in order for the vision to be successful and for everyone to buy into it, the chairperson must first consistently act on it and personify it. Second, the vision itself must be more than mere words in the ears of the stakeholders. It must, as Bennis and Nanus (1997) have argued, “feel right,” appeal at the gut level, resonate with the listener’s own emotional needs, and somehow “click” (100). Thus, the leader must influence others by pulling rather than pushing them to make the vision their own.

A re-examination of the department’s fundamental purposes should be conducted with input from faculty, students, staff, and alumni. A committee may be charged with drafting a statement that reflects the new vision. An open dialogue should be organized to help finalize the vision statement.

The involvement of all department members, as well as external stakeholders, will help elicit their commitment to achieving the re-examined vision, mission, and goals, even if they retain reservations about some of the components. Chances for input from everyone lead to active participation in the
crafting of the vision. This in turn leads to more productive collaboration to achieve the vision and its underlying philosophy. This is one of the foundations of a successful department that acts, in key ways, as an ecologically sustainable entity supported by self-renewing resources.

The table below shows how a new vision can be developed by a small group of colleagues, as initially proposed by Bennis and Nanus (1997, p 99). We have added the fifth row in the table based on the idea that a vision without a process for communicating it to stakeholders and a method for achieving it is merely untenable hope (Maxwell, 2007, 1995; Welch, 2001).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Vision Audit</td>
<td>“… which examines the character of the organization, including its current mission, strategy and values.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Vision Scope</td>
<td>“… in which decisions are made regarding the desired characteristics of the new vision.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Vision Context</td>
<td>“… which explores trends and developments that influence the formation of a new vision.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Vision Choice</td>
<td>“… in which alternative visions are identified and evaluated, leading to a final selection of the most desirable option.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Communicating Final Vision</td>
<td>“… a process for communicating it … and a method for achieving it…” must be decided on</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bennis and Nanus have crystallized the process very well:

In the end, the leader may be the one who articulates the vision and gives it legitimacy, who expresses the vision in captivating rhetoric that fires the imagination and emotions of followers, who – through the vision – empowers others to make decisions that get things done. But if the organization is to be successful, the image must grow out of the needs of the entire organization and must be “claimed” or “owned” by all the important actors. In short, it must become part of a new social architecture in the organization (101).

It is because of this type of thinking that Bennis and Nanus (1997) have strongly argued that:

A vision cannot be established in an organization by edict, or by the exercise of power or coercion. It is more an act of persuasion, of creating an enthusiastic and dedicated commitment to a vision because it is right for the time, right for the organization, and right for the people who are working in it (99-100).


Providing access to data and information needed for making sound decisions is an important element
in empowering faculty and staff to perform optimally. (This also holds true for students if we want them to be more active and responsible for their own welfare, education, and professional careers.) The second important element in sharing information and data is trust. A pattern of dialogue and feedback communication, transparency, and other open organizational relationships is a key component of successful organizations.

Effective and productive dialogues and feedback communication require two related and mutually dependent elements: (1) sharing information and (2) trust and respect. Open dialogue and sincere feedback lead to true understanding of the goals, mission, and the current status of the department. Furthermore, dialogue leads to a strong sense of “feeling connected” to the goals and the mission of the department and the institution, and to feeling integrated in the decision making process. Most important is that dialogue and feedback help all stakeholders, especially faculty and staff, to “move from mere compliance to commitment” (Allen 2003, p. 1), from passive to active and informed involvement, and from being “borrowers” to being “owners” of curriculum and related issues. This also reduces the need to monitor for compliance among the stakeholders.

Good dialogue is essential because it clarifies expectations for all stakeholders, helps to ensure understanding of policies and rules, and makes implementation of rules and policies more effective. Most of all, good dialogue helps shape the departmental culture and empowers faculty and staff to be effective participants in departmental affairs.

Blanchard, Carlos, and Randolph (1996) have argued that “People without information cannot act responsibly, those with information are compelled to act responsibly.” This is so because “People without information cannot monitor themselves or make sound decisions, but those with information can” (34).

Those leaders who are unwilling to share information with their people will never have their people as partners in running the company successfully and will never have an empowered organization. This act of sharing information is absolutely crucial to empowering an organization. That is why it’s the first key [in the empowerment process] (Blanchard et al. 30).

Sharing sensitive and performance information with faculty and staff (if not always with students and external stakeholders) sends a very strong signal of transparency, trust, and respect to department members. Yet, the idea of sharing sensitive data and information could encounter substantial obstacles and resistance.

Some administrators worry that faculty will use shared information for their own ends. For their part, faculty tend to approach strategic planning from individualistic perspectives, often defining shared governance so that it revolves around vetoes and resistance. These pre-existing fears and interaction patterns can corrupt shared governance into a bargain that supports the status quo rather than energizing the learning community. To achieve shared decision making, Lazerson (1997) recommends the use of small groups of faculty, administrators, and trustees, armed with increased data and communication and given budgetary accountability to resolve difficult, yet historically taboo, issues.

(Brodersen and Hansen, 14)

Our view is that departments are strengthened through liberal sharing of information in an atmosphere
of trust, and through the dialogue and feedback such information should elicit. Information that should be shared certainly includes that which relates to faculty goals, to their standing and status, and to their performance. In addition, departments should consider the sharing of strategic information and organizational strategy, which are commonly reserved for those of higher standing in a hierarchy. Sharing strategic information with faculty and staff could also produce benefits in better implementation of plans and projects, more effective performance, stronger departmental morale, and similar benefits deriving from seeing one’s tasks within a bigger picture.

In short, the more information members have about the department, its policies, procedures, goals, and vision, the more active participants they become and the less likely they are to be opponents of change.

4. Sharing Authority and Accountability

Former Vermont Commissioner of Education Ray McNulty (2003) has argued that:

Leadership is not a position, but a way of doing for everyone in a school system. In other words, all members should take on the responsibility for the whole by ensuring that they direct their energies toward organizational priorities. Getting everyone involved in leadership as a way of doing builds an organization’s leadership density, which yields benefits for the whole” (2).

Department chairs must understand that sharing leadership doesn’t take away their power, but rather, adds the richness and adaptability of broader experience and expertise that can lead to better decision making and more desirable outcomes.

In her book Leadership Capacity for Lasting School Improvement, Linda Lambert argues that while sharing leadership is not easy, the failure to cultivate leadership in others maintains a kind of stunted culture in educational institutions. This will lead to dependency on only one or two within the department for consistently addressing problems, making decisions, and providing vision for continuous improvement. Sharing authority, tasks, and accountabilities leads to mutual expectations and reliance by faculty, staff, and the chair for maintaining continuous improvement of the department.

Sharing authority and tasks must be accompanied by accountability—both individual and collective. Faculty members must have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities as individual members of the department, as well as part of a team. There should be a clear sense that individual accountability cannot be devoid of collective accountability for the common good of the department and the institution.

5. Commitment to Ideas, Not Personalities or Positions

As John Maxwell (2007) has suggested, ideas are the most important assets of any organization. They can be generated by creative people who often see beyond what others can envision. Idea generators are always needed by an organization and such members must be supported and maintained. Indeed, even leaders “are only as powerful as the ideas they can communicate” (Bennis and Nanus 1997, p. 99).

Ideas, however, can only move freely in an environment encumbered with minimal bureaucracy, management layers, departmental silos, and other barriers. Ideas need to be heard, examined, and
tested; those that survive must be implemented regardless of who generated them. Success requires an environment for ideas to move freely, both horizontally and vertically (Maxwell 2007; Welch 2001). Ideas need to be everywhere in the organization, and not only in the boss’ mind. It is very important that all the stakeholders commit to continual improvement and pursuit of the goals and vision of the department, rather than to one or a few persons or positions in the department. “A … culture based on a particular leader’s personality, ability to excite, or interpersonal skills [while these are important and necessary], can still fall short because this focus may keep others out of leadership” (Allen, 2003, p.8), and in turn keep the department from realizing its collective potential.

As T. J. Sergiovanni (1991) has pointed out, when principles and roles are publicly agreed upon, stakeholders are energized “because the ideas or commitments are leading the way—not a charming personality or the local state capital.” Using the organization’s vision and goals to guide and lead individual accountabilities “is a right that has an implicit obligation,” something Sergiovanni calls Leadership by Entitlement (cited in Short & Greer 1997, p. 130). By the nature of their assigned responsibilities, department chairs remain essential in shaping the department’s norms, values, beliefs, and accomplishments. Using Peterson’s observations of school principals, department chairs’ roles include being a "symbol" who reinforces core values through daily work; a "potter" who builds culture through hiring, budget, and supervisory decisions; a "poet" whose written and overall messages can reinforce a healthy culture; an "actor" on all the stages of school events; and a "healer" who can help repair the culture after tragedy, conflict, or loss (Allen 2003, p. 8). In their roles, department chairs are also the “prescription glasses” that enable faculty to clearly see the purpose of the vision, the effective ways to achieve goals, and to implement the roles and the policies in a way that will help maximize student learning and faculty professional development.

6. Creating Autonomy Within Boundaries

Productive empowerment requires autonomy within boundaries. Unlike policies and procedures that inhibit individual behavior in a hierarchical organization, the boundaries imposed in an empowered organization are reflected in its core values, shared vision, and collaborative decision making. As Blanchard, Carlos, and Randolph have pointed out:

Boundaries have the capacity to channel energy in a certain direction. It’s like a river—if you were to take away the banks, the river wouldn’t be a river anymore. Its momentum and direction would be gone (41).

Faculty and staff are like the water in a river bed in that their energy must be channeled so they can have direction and a desirable impact. In the empowerment process, Blanchard et al. (1996) have proposed setting boundaries in the following categories to create a desirable kind of autonomy. For each category, the organization through its leadership must ensure that members understand and reflect in their practices a common position that defines the direction and the limits of the category:

a. Purpose: What does the organization or department seek to achieve? Teaching excellence, research breakthroughs, service to the community, or a combination of these?

b. Values: How do departmental values shape operational practices? For example, what should be the response to cheating, what is the view of plagiarism (by students, as well as faculty and administrators)?
c. Image: Does the institution or department seek recognition as selective and achievement-oriented, or does it wish to be seen as responsive to the needs of the underserved and underprepared?

d. Roles: What are the functions and positions fulfilled by the department as a whole, and what is each member’s role in the department?

e. Organizational Structure and Systems: What kinds of support are available for what department members want to do? (42)

Department chairs need to understand that the way they design the boundaries can make the empowerment process succeed or fail. Chairs also need to learn how to be objective and neutral in designing the boundaries. The temptation to hold on to power can mislead the chairperson and obscure the importance of sharing sensitive information, tasks, and accountabilities. On the other hand, faculty and staff have to be coached and given the opportunity to consider their own challenges and reorganize and reframe them differently, whenever needed.

7. Replacing the Old Hierarchy with Self-Directed Teams

Empowerment has produced lasting beneficial impacts on companies and industries (McGregor 1960; Lesieur and Puckett 1958), and led to educational reform at the school level (Kaste 1990; Callahan 1962; and Taylor 1916). Yet, in spite of empowerment’s capacity to improve the productivity of work and the satisfaction and position of employees and other stakeholders, the top-down hierarchy is still the most common model in academe.

In an empowered department you have to become “a leader who leads others to lead themselves” (Manz and Sims, 1984, p. 411) by helping faculty and staff learn empowering behaviors. The department chair must “Create and maintain favorable conditions for the group to work and exercise empowering behaviors such as self-reinforcement, self-observation, self-evaluation and diagnosis” (Blanchard, Carlos, and Randolph 1996; Black 1987).

Creating a team approach requires a deliberate effort on the part of the department chair. A team is not just a group of individuals who work together but “a unit of two or more people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose and set of performance goals and to common expectations, for which they hold themselves accountable” (Santora 2007, p. 83-84). “The team concept implies a shared mission and responsibility” (Lussier and Achua 2009, p. 281). Self-directed teams are empowered to operate autonomously and are allowed to make the decisions essential to successfully achieving their goals. Self-directed teams tend to be more flexible and proactive in their behavior as they work toward a common goal. The chair must promote a bottom-up perspective that includes encouraging the faculty and staff to share leadership and accountability for their own activities. This approach will foster the feeling of ownership that characterizes people in an empowered culture.

Conclusion

While empowerment of departments is achievable, it requires redesigning the roles of department chairs, faculty, and staff. In situations reflective of the old hierarchical, top-down governance models, empowerment requires changing department chairs’ approaches to managing faculty, staff, and the business of the department. Furthermore, it requires a change in how faculty and chairs perceive each
other and practice their personal and professional relationships.

The empowered department is an organization of colleagues in which everybody’s potential is explored and everyone’s ideas are considered. Members of such a department are much more effective and efficient; they also feel better about themselves, their chairperson, their department, and their institution. They feel a real sense of ownership and the obligations and responsibilities that go with ownership. For professional persons, such as faculty and staff, there can be no other basis for the work they undertake.

Works Cited


Appendix 1

Healthy Department As Described by Allan Tucker (1993)

In their his book Chairing the Academic Department that has become a significant reference for
In their book *Chairing the Academic Department* that has become a significant reference for department chairs, Allan Tucker has clearly described the healthy department in academic setting as:

A healthy department is one whose faculty and staff are motivated, productive, appreciated, secure in their jobs, work well together as a group, and able to reach consensus on issues concerning the governance and welfare of the department. A healthy department has well-defined operational and visionary goals that are attainable and contribute not only to the mission of the department but to that of the university as a whole. They are understood and accepted by the faculty, and provide direction for both collective and individual decisions. … In summary, a healthy academic department is a businesslike social enterprise with a strong sense of its place in the large college or university enterprise. Its work is optimized by its clear sense of how to put the right people to work on the most important tasks, how to motivate and reward them in fair and equitable ways, and how to bind people to the organization through shared vision and shared values. Although no department meets all the criteria of health outlined, it is important to keep them in focus as targets one might hope to hit in a reasonable amount of time. Healthy departments are most readily recognized as those that achieve results communicate with their role and the resources available to them. But healthy departments also enjoy an internal coherence and a sense of bonding among their members that makes cooperation and coordination of their jobs stimulating and rewarding.

(Tucker, 1993, p. 3 & 11)