

## *Chair as a leader: Developing emerging leadership among faculty*

- *Developing emerging leadership is also a means to develop leadership of our own  
– Passion, Reality, & Transition*

## Some Thoughts About Successful Department Heads

Rod Erickson  
Executive Vice President and Provost  
Penn State University

September 7, 2001

*"I believe too many department heads don't get the proper balance between what I would distinguish as **management** and **leadership**. Too many view their role as "making the trains run on time" rather than addressing the questions of where are the trains going? and how do we build the tracks to get there? ..... A successful department head leads by helping to mold a strategic and collective vision for the unit, something that faculty can embrace. That sense of purpose can be built around major themes that underlie curricular reform, upgrading the quality of the graduate program, key recruitment areas to build future faculty strength, improving the student learning environment, and the like."*

## *Systematically Identifying Leaders*

### Step 1

- ID individuals who have core qualities NEEDED for success
- Ex – problem Solvers, optimistic, passion...

### Step 2

- At the proper time, approach the individual(s) for opportunities
- Ex – post tenure status, career compatibility, ...

### Step 3

- Expose the reality of the position to prospects
- Ex – departmental structure, budgets, administrative roles, ...

### Step 4

- Mentor, listen and transition
- Ex – sustainable passion, independence, trust, ...

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## **Passion** for Academic Leadership:

- How to identify faculty with the passion for the Chair position?
- How to (self-) assess and/or maintain passion for improvement for the current Chairs?

## **Reality (Try-outs):**

- How to groom emerging leaders?
- Is it beneficial to have them work on some administrative tasks before stepping into it? Is it realistic to do this given the size, faculty composition, and culture of different units?
- What have we (current Chairs) uncovered that we did not expect at all? Good and bad? To what degree should we share such to our potential successors?

## **Transition:**

- Sharing of good practices to transition new chairs for the job.
- How long is the honey moon period? Continuous improvement?
- A balancing act (or not) between administrative, research, teaching, and leadership for new and old?

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