

# Musings and reflections from first-year department chairs; an extension of the NCA

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**Description of the session:** This session grew from the 3 presenters' experience at the New Chair Alliance of the 2016 Academic Chairpersons Conference in Charleston, SC. Attend this session to hear them reflect on completing their first year of being a chair and address the good, bad, and ugly.

The presenters will highlight various issues (personnel, academic, leadership, etc.) using a case study approach and make direct connections to their experience in the previous NCA. In particular, examples of the *good* include the leading of an external program review based on the relatively novel utilization of faculty writing groups. Another example is the opportunity to not only start out as a new chair, but also starting a new department. An example of the *bad* related to the unforeseen amount of administrative hassle that warrants timely resolution (student petitions / appeals, graduation audits, campus requested reports, course scheduling, etc.) which often opposed the necessary time associated with being a productive faculty member. An example of the *ugly* centers on the new dynamic as it relates to faculty / colleague relationships and how that weaves into mentorship, evaluation, and merit-based pay.

More specifically, one case will focus on the delicate and often conflicting balance between the primary role of being a faculty member and the expected teaching, research, and service activities expected of you with ever increasing administrative functions and requests that are also expected of you. With the end goal for each role (faculty and administrator) being the same (serve students) it could be very easy for a new chair to fail at both. For one of the presenters, the solution to this conflict was to propose a re-casting of the administrative support structure of their home academic unit to better serve students and ensure academic success. One chair has also been faced with accreditation issues that offered unique challenges as well. Overall, they will share what they knew going into the role of chair, what they wished they knew, and, what they learned. Macro and micro issues will be addressed.

Each presenter comes from a unique (both campus and academic unit) environment that enables various perspectives to be shared and will allow them to offer differing views of the role of chair and how they move through this space of academic leadership.

Learning, from peers, how to address some early challenges in the chair's role will benefit other new chairs showing them ways to succeed in a variety of environments. There will be opportunity for questions, partner think-pair-share, and table talk.