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Leading From the Middle: Managing Your Dean...and Others

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Leading from the Middle:

How to Manage Your Dean . . . and Colleagues



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Truisms About Chairs as Academic Leaders

- ❑ **Department chairs hold the most important position in the university.**
- ❑ **Eighty percent of university decisions are made at the department level.**
- ❑ **Deans are only as good as their chairs!**
- ❑ **The department chair is the most unique management position in America.**
- ❑ **Only 3% of department chairs receive training.**
- ❑ **The time of amateur administration is over.**

Call to Leadership

- ❖ **Without leadership training**
- ❖ **Without administrative experience**
- ❖ **Without recognition of metamorphic changes**
- ❖ **Without awareness of the cost to scholarship**
- ❖ **Without planning for leadership succession**
- ❖ **Without understanding of ambiguity/conflict**

Who is here?



- An academic faculty member?**
- An administrator?**
- Both faculty and administrator?**



What Is Academic Leadership?

“Academic leadership is the act of building a **community** of scholars to **set direction** and achieve common purposes through the **empowerment** of faculty and staff.”



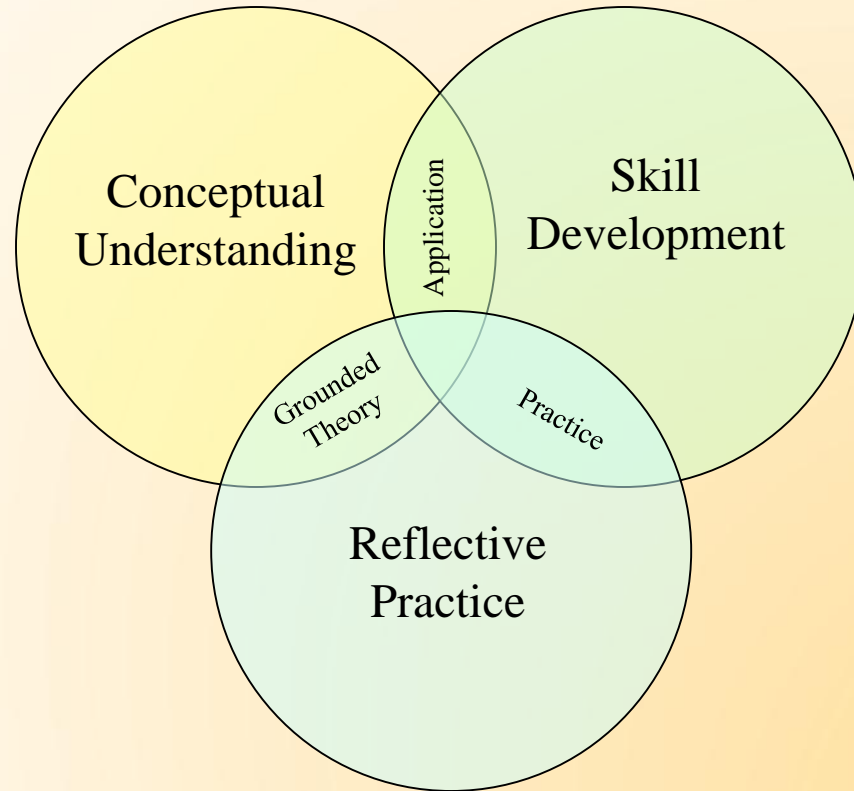
Conditions of Effective Strategic Leadership

- Building a community of colleagues**
- Setting direction**
- Empowering others**

How Long Does It Take To Become An Effective Chair?

- ❑ As a faculty member, it takes on average 6 years to associate-- and 14 years to full professor.
- ❑ As a department chair, how long does it take to become an expert?
 - **10,000-hour rule**
 - **10-year rule**
 - **2 day seminar rule**
- ❑ As an academic leader, how do you lead from the middle?

How Do Academic Leaders Develop?

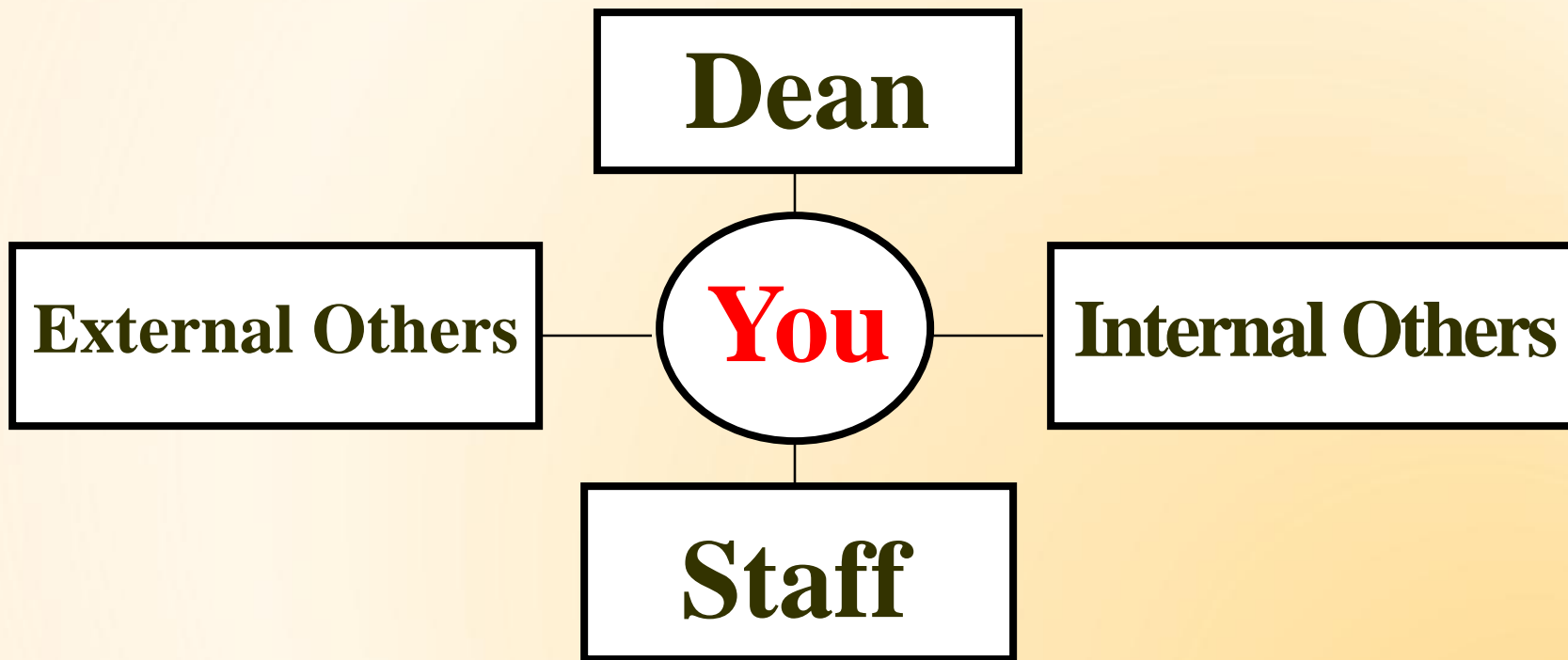


What is your strategy for attending this conference?

Domains of Leadership Development

- ❑ **Conceptual** Understanding of roles, frames, systems, theories, responsibilities...(*habits of mind*)
- ❑ **Skill Development:** teamwork, empowering, communication, visioning, conflict, change...(*habits of practice*)
- ❑ **Reflective Practice:** observations, feedback, mentoring, networking, values, dreaming... (*habits of heart*)

Managing Your Chair Molecule: *Leading from Within*





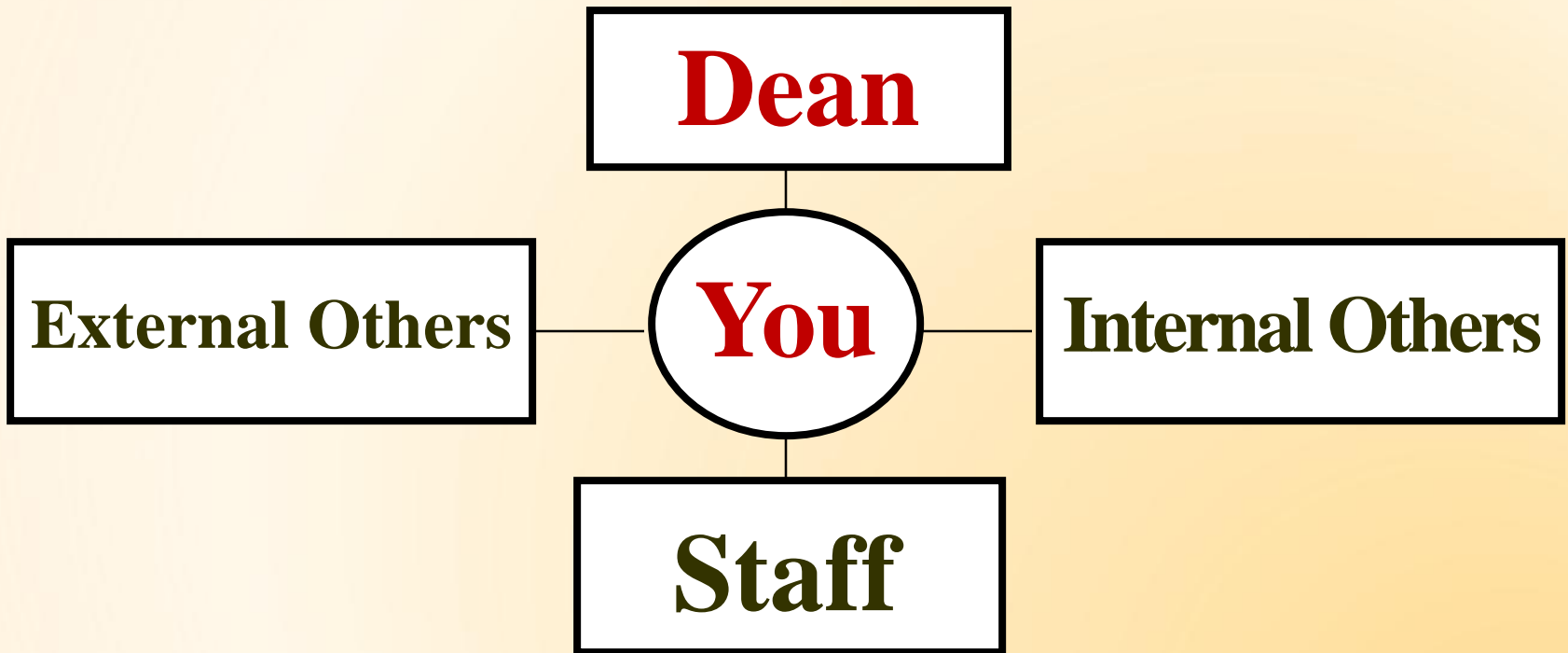
**Why did you choose
to serve as a
department chair?**

The Top Seven Reasons Faculty Become Department Chairs

- 1. For personal development**
- 2. Drafted by the dean or colleagues**
- 3. Out of necessity, lack of alternative choice**
- 4. To be more in control of my environment**
- 5. Out of sense of duty, my turn**
- 6. For financial gain**
- 7. An opportunity to relocate at new institution**

Source: Gmelch, W. H., & Miskin, V. D. (2011). *Department Chair Leadership Skills*. Madison, WI: Atwood.

Managing Your Dean: *Leading from the Middle*



How Do You Manage Your Dean?



*I work well
with my dean
when ...*



Top 3 Strategies for Managing from the Middle

❖ **What Chairs Say**

❖ **What Deans Want**

What Chairs Say

1. Be Prepared and Well-Documented

○Preparation:

- Set up monthly one-on-one meetings
- Send the agenda items ahead of time

○Documentation:

- Don't blindsides the dean
- Bring documents/briefings to support your issues

2. Personalize the Professional Relationship

- ❖ Seek periodic feedback from the dean
- ❖ Find out whether you share common academic and/or personal interests with the dean
- ❖ Ask the dean to lunch
- ❖ Expand:
 - ❖ What the dean knows about you personally
 - ❖ What you know (or don't know) about yourself

3. Master the Art of Balancing Your Swivel Chair

- ❑ Balance faculty-administrative advocacy.
- ❑ Balance your personal and professional lives.
- ❑ Balance between competition and cooperation: “cooptition.”

**Three Strategies Your Dean
Wants
You to Know**

The Chair's Role in Promoting Credibility



What traits or qualities, related to promoting credibility, do deans value most in a department chair?

1. Build Your Credibility Quotient

You can increase your credibility by being:

- **Honest (truthful, ethical, trustworthy)**
- **Competent (capable, productive, effective)**
- **Forward Looking (decisive, direction)**
- **Inspiring (enthusiastic, positive, optimistic)**

***No whining! No pouting! No backstabbing!
No surprises! No end runs! Play well with others 😊***

2. Learn How to Get Your Dean's Attention

- Write and deliver your “elevator speech.”
(GASing the dean)
- Educate your dean about your department and its needs.
- Involve your dean strategically—deans go where the pressure is -- and where they are wanted and invited.

3. Match Your Vision to Your Dean's

Learn to see, as the dean sees:

- Horizontally—across disciplines
- Vertically—up and down the hierarchy
- “Tea Leaves”—What will happen in the future?

Articulate and expand your personal vision

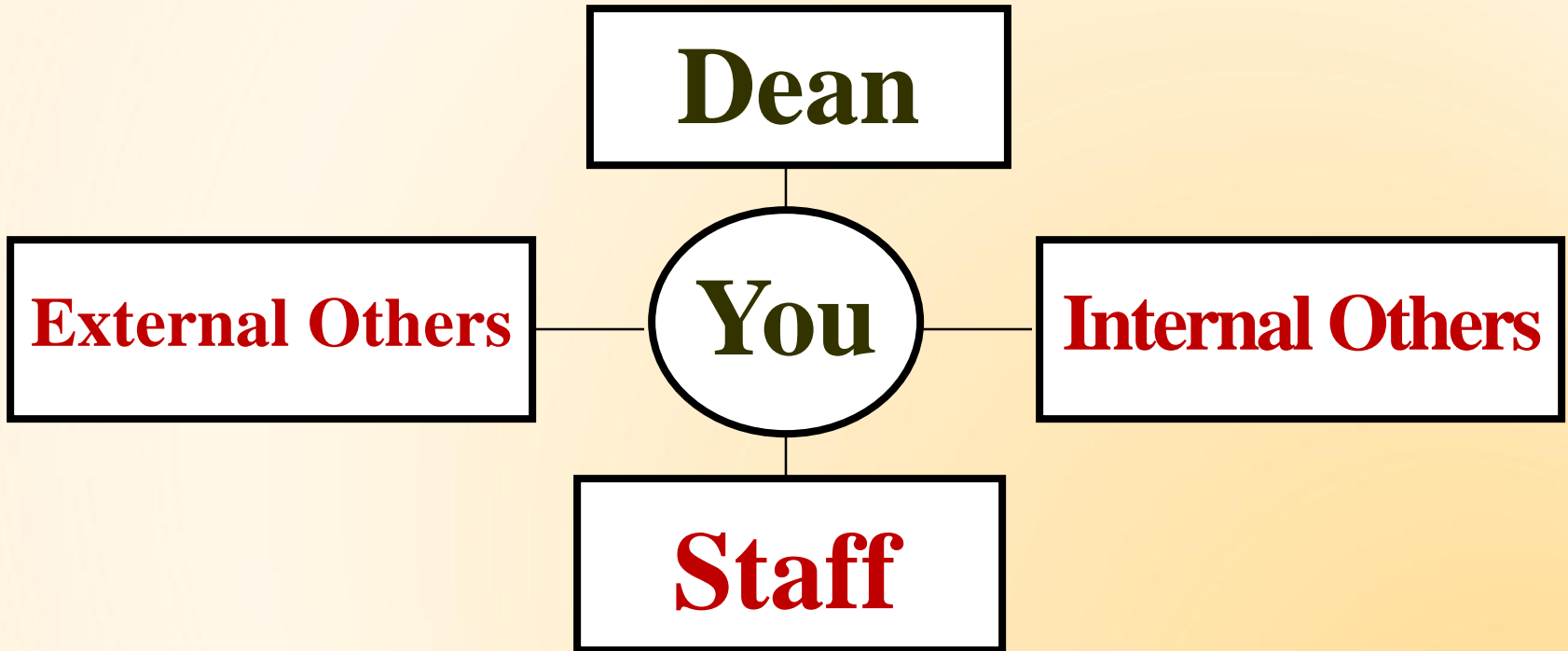
- Reduce blind spots (feedback)
- Increase transparency (disclosure)

Communication with the Dean

Make sure you can answer these questions:

- **What is your dean's preferred communication style?**
- **How do you keep the dean informed?**
- **How often do you meet with the dean?**
- **Who schedules the meeting?**
- **Where do you meet?**
- **Who sets the agenda?**

Leading from the Middle



Managing Your Chair Molecule

“The Care and Feeding of Monkeys” (Onchen)

1. Determine if they are on your molecule.
2. Decide where the initiative should be.
3. Make sure the “next move” is where it belongs.

Who Is on Your Molecule?

Managing Down and to Your Sides

- 1. Who is hanging on your molecule? Do they belong there?**
- 2. How do you cultivate productive and cordial relationships with:**
 - Other Chairs?**
 - Faculty?**
 - Staff?**
 - External constituencies?**

Managing your Molecule

- **What is your relationship to the chairs?
Who are your allies?**
- **What is your relationship to the staff?**
- **How do you communicate/manage
external constituencies?**

“We’re all in this alone”

-Lily Tomlin

How to Create and Use Communication Networks

• *Operational Network:*

- Getting work done efficiently.

• *Personal Network:*

- Developing skills through mentorships and coaching.

• *Strategic Network:*

- Visioning future priorities and challenges

Reflective Activity: Developing your Networks



- ✓ **Who is in your operational network?**
- ✓ **How can they help you accomplish your dean duties?**
- ✓ **How often do you communicate?**

Your Professional-- Personal Network



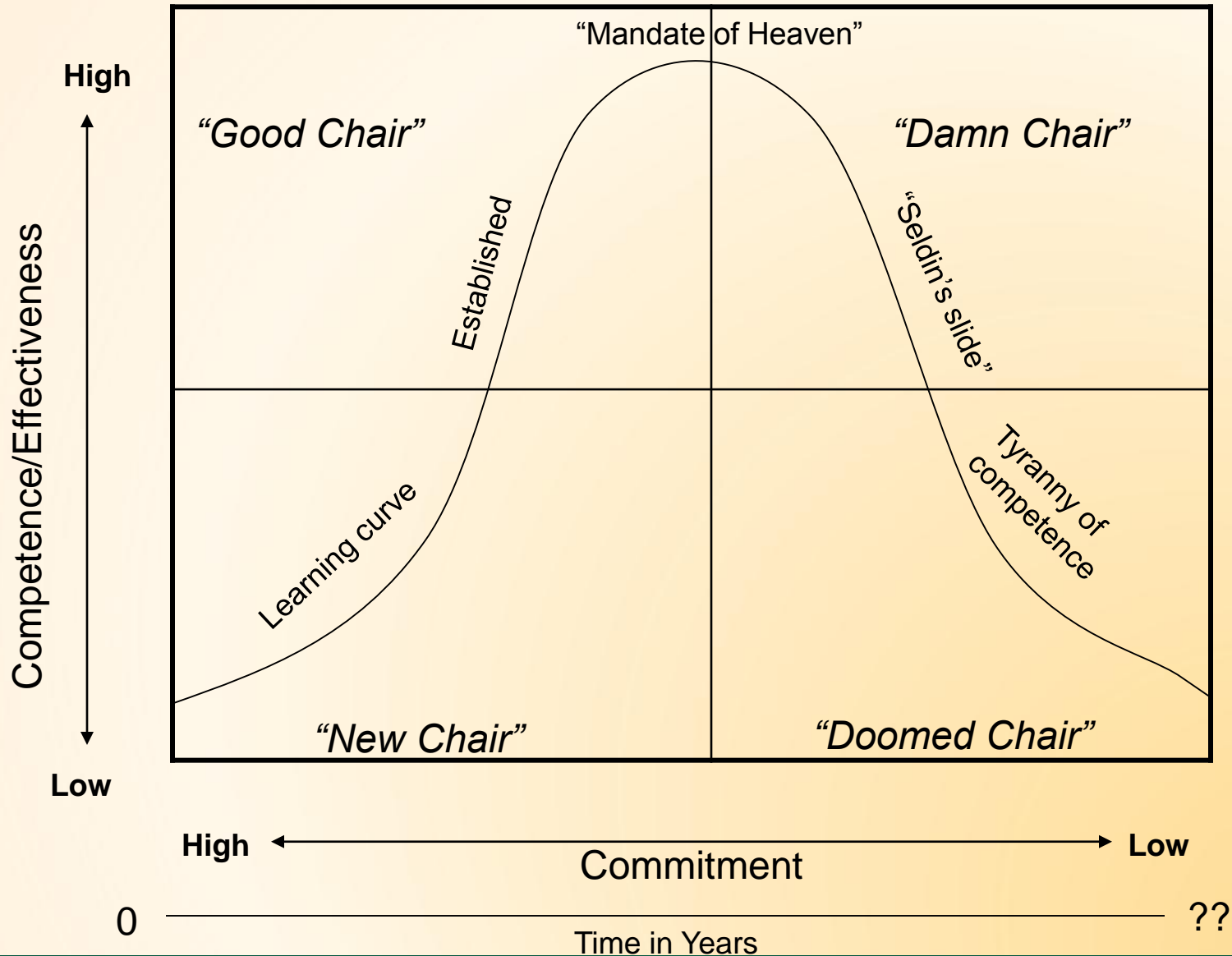
- ✓ **Are you networked with professional colleagues off campus?**
- ✓ **What do you discuss?**
- ✓ **Who will help you with your personal advancement?**
- ✓ **Who will you stay connected with from *Academic Chairpersons Conference*?**

Your Strategic Network



- ✓ **Do you have a strategic network?**
- ✓ **Who is outside your control and can help you become a more strategic leader?**
- ✓ **Who will help you reach your organizational goals?**

The Chair Loop: "Zoom to Doom"



Types of Department Chairs

- ✓ **Department chairs who play instruments are musical chairs.**
- ✓ **Those who overdress are upholstered chairs.**
- ✓ **Those who kick back and do nothing are recliner chairs.**
- ✓ **Those who collapse under pressure are folding chairs.**
- ✓ **Those unsteady on their feet are rocking chairs.**

Types of Department Chairs

- ✓ **Those who lazily go through the motions are lounge chairs.**
- ✓ **Those who have no standards are easy chairs.**
- ✓ **Those who always complain are beach chairs.**
- ✓ **Those who write devastating reports are electric chairs.**
- ✓ **And those who dump on others are just plain stools.**

6 Key Take-Aways

- 1. Book monthly meetings with your dean (send topics prior to meeting).**
- 2. Tell your dean your priorities for the year.**
- 3. Be transparent. Ask for feedback on your leadership and how you can develop.**

6 Key Take-Aways

4. Increase your credibility:

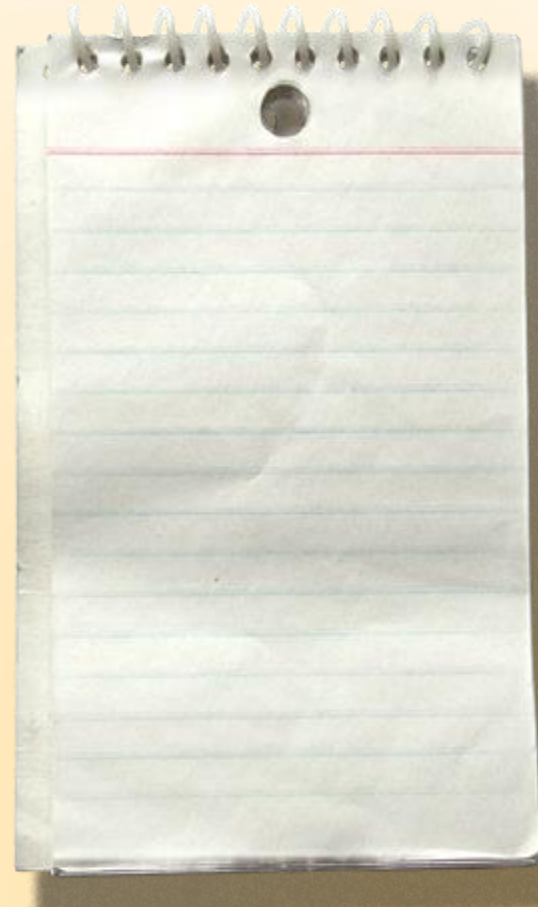
- Be principled
- Be forthright
- Be timely
- Be private (when disagreeing)

5. Identify and network with chair colleagues and others.

6. Articulate the legacy you would like to leave as a department chair.

Legacy Worksheet

*How do you want
to be remembered
as a leader?*



Old Buddhist Saying

To know and
not to use,
is not yet to
know.



Achieving the Learning Outcomes



Strategies for Chair Leadership Development

Leadership Development Component

- 1. Conceptual Understanding**
- 2. Skill Development**
- 3. Reflective Practice**

Levels of Intervention

- 1. Personal Intervention**
- 2. Institutional Intervention**
- 3. Professional Intervention**

1. What Opportunities Are Available to You at the **Personal** Level?

- ❑ ***Reflection:*** Expand your Arena from feedback, confidants, mentors, personal reflection, journaling
- ❑ ***Balance:*** Protect personal HIPOS (family) and professional HIPOS (scholarship)
- ❑ ***Develop yourself as a leader:*** Key skills in building community and empowering others
- ❑ ***Reading:*** CHE, HBR, journals, leadership books

2. What Opportunities Are Available to You at the **Institutional** Level?

- ❑ Manage your Chair Molecule.
- ❑ Work strategically with the dean, staff, faculty.
- ❑ Focus on strategic HIPOS, delegate/eliminate time-consuming LOPOS.
- ❑ Make decisions strategically: Who, when, and how decisions should be made.
- ❑ Take advantage of formal mentoring, internships, and seminars on your campus.

3. What Opportunities Are Available to You at the **Professional** Level?

- ❑ Get networked! Get connected!
- ❑ Take advantage of forums, webinars, and classes.
- ❑ Attend professional conferences, e.g. KSU, AACSB, AACTE, AAC&S.
- ❑ Apply for externships, sabbaticals, and leaves.
- ❑ Explore Harvard MDP, Bryn Mawr, CASE.
- ❑ Read literature on academic leadership.

What Would Executives Change in Their Lives?

The three most common answers:

- Take more time to be reflective.**
- Understand more deeply what really gave them satisfaction.**
- Take more risks.**

Source: Parker Palmer

Department Chair Resources

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