

Program Description & Participation

In Fall 2020, we launched a development program for department chairs and program directors (see Appendix A for AY 20-21 description & schedule). The program is designed to support chairs and directors in leading their departments and programs effectively and create a space for chairs and directors to exchange ideas and learn from one another. The role of chairs and directors is complex with multiple responsibilities including but not limited to department governance, personnel, curriculum, and budget, requiring skills that are not typically ones that faculty members develop along the way. Informed by the need for support and professional development specific to the chair's and director's roles, we offered sessions on topics ranging from Role and Responsibilities, to Writing a Chair's Letter for Tenure Files, to Mentoring Colleagues and Managing Conflict.

The development program is open to all chairs, directors, and associate chairs. We scheduled one hour-long session per block, delivered remotely via Zoom. Participation in each session ranged from 15 to 20 chairs and directors. Prior to the first session, we sent out a survey to gather information on chairs' and directors' needs and interest in certain topics. Some topics were included based on survey responses. Each session was accompanied by one to two reading resources that we asked participants to engage with before each session. We structured most sessions to begin with an introduction to the topic, followed by a facilitated conversation about the reading and its relation to chairing and directing at Colorado College. Three sessions (The Chair's Letter, Mentoring Colleagues, Managing Conflict) included guest speakers and facilitators from the CC faculty who shared their knowledge and experience in each area with the group. We met with each guest facilitator prior to their session to plan and prepare. The remaining sessions were facilitated by the Associate Deans.

Summary of Survey Feedback

To better understand faculty experiences with the program, and its effectiveness in promoting a sense of community among chairs and directors, participants were asked to complete a survey at the end of spring semester at the conclusion of the program. Using both Likert-type survey items and open-ended questions, we have collected helpful feedback about what went well with the program and how we can modify it this upcoming academic year to improve faculty experiences. While only 8 participants completed the survey, the information they provided is very useful. Overall, the feedback indicated that the program has the potential to be a useful resource for chairs and directors with some improvements and modifications.

Table 1 provides information for each of the Likert-type items which were developed to assess the degree to which the program was successful in fostering a community among chairs and directors and addressing the needs they indicated before the program began such as writing an effective chair's/director's letter for tenure files, promoting a healthy workplace climate, fostering DEI and antiracism, managing conflict, mentoring colleagues, and handling difficult faculty. Based on the quantitative results of the survey shown in Table 1, the program was most

effective (items with mean scores of 3.5 or above) in supporting chairs and directors who participated in the program in the following: 1) understanding the chair's and director's role; 2) promoting a healthy department/program workplace climate; 3) fostering antiracism; and 4) mentoring colleagues. The mean scores for the other items indicate room for improvement in areas such as fostering community between chairs and directors, effectively writing the chair's/director's tenure letter and managing conflict and difficult faculty.

Responses to the open-ended items on the survey yielded information that corroborated the quantitative data discussed above. In addition, participants provided great ideas for modifying the program and some sessions.

Overall, participants who completed the survey found the program a welcome addition and thought it was a valuable faculty development program. One participant stated that it was a "great idea to bring chairs together to discuss developmental issues and hope[s] it continues". They also stated that the "readings were short and helpful", while another participant described them as "valuable". Another participant appreciated the range of topics covered. One faculty member commented on which sessions were the most valuable to them which included "mentoring colleagues, managing meetings and conflict, using DEI and [an] antiracism lens".

Participants shared three critical ways we can improve the program. First, sessions that promote conversation and dialogue between chairs and directors were most welcome and appreciated which was evidenced by multiple participant statements about the importance of having "well facilitated" sessions. Second, finding ways to foster community such as ice breakers, an opening session that is more relaxed and social, and opportunities for participants to check in with each other and the facilitators mid-way through the program. Third, offering more concrete strategies for chairs and directors to consider and discuss.

Finally, participants offered the following list of topics they would like to see incorporated in the next offering of the program:

- *Salary review/letters*
- *Developing priorities*
- *Understanding the authority of the chair/director*
- *Mentoring within the community of chairs and directors*
- *Create and nurturing a shared vision with colleagues*
- *Faculty-administration conflict*
- *Leadership Styles*

Modifications to the Program

Based on feedback from the end of program survey we will make the following modifications for AY 21-22:

- Add a welcome back and community building session in block 1
- Expand sessions to 90 minutes to provide ample opportunity for dialogue
- Provide a Canvas Page for the program

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- Invite guest facilitators from outside the CC community for some sessions

Table 1: Scores and Percentages for Responses to Likert-type Survey Items

Survey Item	Mean	Min	Max	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
<i>I feel that a community of support between chairs/directors was created in this program.</i>	3.4	2	4	0	50	37.5	12.5	0
<i>This program helped me in my role as a department chair/program director.</i>	3.75	2	5	25	37.5	25	12.5	0
<i>I feel more informed about how to write an effective chair's/director's letter after participating in this program.</i>	3	3	3	0	0	100	0	0
<i>I am better prepared to promote a healthy department/program work climate after participating in this program.</i>	3.75	2	5	12.5	62.5	12.5	12.5	0
<i>I more readily promote an antiracist department/program after participating in this program.</i>	3.57	3	5	14.29	28.57	57.14	0	0
<i>This program improved my understanding of how to effectively manage conflict in my department/program.</i>	2.75	1	4	0	25	37.5	25	12.5
<i>I can better mentor faculty in my department/program after participating in this program.</i>	3.5	2	5	12.5	37.5	37.5	12.5	0
<i>I feel more prepared to handle situations involving difficult faculty in my department/program after participating in this program.</i>	3	1	4	0	37.5	37.5	12.5	12.5

Appendix A: Program Description and Schedule for AY 20-21

The CC Chairs and Directors Development Program is designed to create a community of support to promote the initial growth and ongoing development of chairs and directors. The roles and responsibilities of a department chair and program director are complex and multifaceted. Responsibilities include; mentoring colleagues, managing budgets, overseeing personnel matters, managing curriculum, interpreting policy, advocating for the department or program, and representing the department or program to external stakeholders. The skills needed to manage the role include excellent communication skills, conflict management skills, creativity, organization, and vision. Given the huge undertaking that is being chair or director, and the fact that most faculty have not engaged in formal training for the role, it is imperative that CC chairs and directors have ongoing support for their work.

This program is offered to all chairs and directors each academic year. It is designed to meet the needs of chairs participating in the program in any given year based on their responses to a survey about the strengths and challenges of their department or program and topics they would like covered in the program. A program is then developed based on the survey results, a discussion of the survey results, and additional needs expressed during the first session. One session per block is scheduled; each session is 1 hour and co-facilitated by Associate Deans of Faculty. When the Associate Deans of Faculty put together the annual program schedule, they include reading resources for each topic.

For each session, chairs and directors are encouraged to engage in a discussion about the topic of focus, to ask each other questions about approaches and strategies, and to support one another in leadership development. For some sessions, the group of chairs and directors attending are put into smaller groups based on development needs. Other sessions include guest facilitators who have knowledge and expertise about a particular topic. Topics will vary from year to year depending on developmental needs, but can include the following:

Roles & Responsibilities

Department/Program Climate

Mentoring Colleagues

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion and Antiracism

Managing Conflict

Effective Meetings

Managing difficult faculty

Chairs/Directors letters

Establishing a vision and goals

Dates/Times	Topics	Resources
<i>Block 2</i> , 3 rd Tues., Oct. 6, 4-5	Roles & Responsibilities Survey Results Topics of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gmelch, W. H. (2015). <i>Call to Leadership: Why Chairs Serve, What They Do, & How Long They Serve</i>. AKA. • Hecht, I.W., Higgerson, M. L., Gmelch, W. H., & Tucker, A. (1999). <i>Roles and Responsibilities of Department Chairs</i>. ACE. • Jenkins, R. (July 10, 2016). <i>Your to do list as chair</i>. Chronicle of Higher Education.
<i>Block 3</i> , 4 th Tues., Nov. 10, 4-5	The Chair's/Director's Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utz, R. (October 13, 2020). <i>Anatomy of an academic genre</i>. Inside HigherEd.
<i>Block 4</i> , 2 nd Tues., Dec. 1, 4-5	Antiracism/DEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mickey, E. L., Kanalee, E. S., & Misra, J. (June 5, 2020). 10 Small Steps for Department Chairs to Foster Inclusion. InsideHigherEd • Fine, E., & Sheridan, J. (2015). <i>Enhancing departmental climate: A guide for department chairs</i>. WISELI, Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute: University of Wisconsin-Madison.
<i>Block 5</i> , 1 st Wed., Feb. 3, 4-5	Mentoring Colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Faculty Mentoring Guidebook from Columbia University
<i>Block 6</i> , 1 st Wed., March 3 rd , 4-5	Managing Conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MindTools. <i>Managing Conflicts in Meetings</i> • Higgerson, M. L. (1996). <i>Managing Conflict</i>. In <i>Communication Skills for Department Chairs</i>.
<i>Block 7</i> , 2 nd Wed. April 7, 3:30- 4:30	Managing Difficult Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas, J. R. & Thomas, K. T. (2015). <i>Working with difficult faculty: challenges for the chair</i>. AKA
<i>Block 8</i> : 2 nd Wed., May 5, 3:30-4:30	Vision/goals for next academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelly, R. (Sept. 17, 2013). <i>Advice for Department Chairs: Six steps to building a healthy department</i>. Faculty Focus.