Foreword

Professor Herbert Waltzer, chairman, Department of Political Science, Miami University (Ohio), here contributes the second in a series of Occasional Papers in which higher education administrators who have examined their roles and responsibilities have been asked to share their reports with colleagues. The author speaks from knowledge by acquaintance rather than knowledge by description—an important difference in understanding.

As the author notes, he prepared the work as a report to the executive vice-president for academic affairs of Miami University. In view of the pivotal role that department and division heads play in carrying out an institution's academic mission and in determining the effectiveness of its human and intellectual climate, the Office of Leadership Development asked permission to give the report a wider distribution.

Professor Waltzer has been generous in preparing background material and in editing the report for publication without, however, sacrificing the initial substance and tone. We are grateful to him, as we know his colleagues will be, for his contribution.

It is hoped that despite the diversity in type, size, organization, control, and mission among institutions of higher education, some benefit and suggestions regarding departmental leadership and responsibility may be derived by any colleague. Your comments or responses to the author or to the Office are welcome.

Broadus N. Butler, Director
Office of Leadership Development in Higher Education
Preface

This report and the study on which it is based were undertaken at the request of David G. Brown, executive vice-president for academic affairs and provost of Miami University. As an inquiry into the job of academic department chairman, it seeks to present a practical look at the expectations and realities of the job at Miami, supply some understanding of the job as it is today, provide a frank evaluation of its major facets and problems, and offer recommendations to make the job more manageable and satisfying. The purpose of the report, which has been distributed to all administrators and chairmen at Miami, is to provoke discussion and produce action.

Shortly after the report was distributed in April 1975, the Office of Leadership Development of the American Council on Education asked to publish it in its Occasional Papers so that other institutions could benefit from the Miami experience. Indeed, this report, in its concerns, might well apply to the job of academic department chairman at virtually any large university. In order to bring the original report into context, certain portions, especially at the beginning, have been reorganized and edited, and material describing Miami has been added. However, the editing has neither abridged the original nor tampered with its directness.

The report is a product of substantial reading, asking, listening, and brooding. Its background includes reading in the literature on higher education, especially on academic departments and department chairmen, and delving into documents and reports internal to Miami University. However, the findings and recommendations are derived primarily from structured interviews with all current department chairmen and a large sample of academic and service administrators and former chairmen.

The report has several important limits. The study inquired into the job of academic department chairman at Miami University. Words like role, office, and position are avoided. The literature seeps in only as it contributes to understanding the situation at this university. Many details, examples, and extensions of arguments are omitted in order to focus on points that will assist clarity, clout, and action. Obviously, the report does not exhaust every concern, avenue of inquiry, or bit of evidence. What appears is either documented or sufficiently well known to obviate need for elaboration.

Things are said directly and sometimes bluntly. There is no intention to be unkind or offensive. The report is a composite, and those interviewed expressed a wide variety of views about the job of department chairman. The report cannot reflect fully every view of everyone; those interviewed or otherwise involved should be able to recognize some things they said or wrote. If a comment or two
hurts, if a thought or two got lost in the synthesis, if a phrase or two were borrowed without credit—for
omissions and infringements, I apologize. For inadequacies, I assume responsibility.

The report has had impact, and the prospects for constructive change are good. The Provost is
responding to the report and to the recommendations. The deans are responding in terms of college and
school administration. Much of the day-long seminar for chairmen and administrators, which precedes
the fall quarter 1975, will be devoted to their response and the actions to be taken. Many chairmen have
expressed relief in learning, from this report and the ensuing dialogue, that other chairmen share their
feelings and concerns. It's nice to know that you are not alone! They seem to have gained in their sense
of group identity and interest, which it is to be hoped will persist.

Commissioning a study of this kind and disseminating the resulting report not only to the Miami
community but also to the national higher education community are not conventional activities.
President Phillip R. Shriver and Provost David G. Brown deserve recognition and appreciation for their
open, positive responses to the project. Their responses, and those of my fellow chairmen and Miamians
and the American Council on Education, have turned an unconventional and difficult assignment into a
rewarding experience for me. The report was intended to make some things happen, and it did.

Finally, thanks are owed to those who talked with me, searched out documents and reports, and shared
experiences and thoughts. I come away from the project with my healthy respect for my fellow
chairmen made more robust. Why do we persist? Perhaps we share a professional and institutional faith
and perhaps a touch of madness.
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Setting of the Inquiry

Miami University, established in 1809, is a state-assisted coeducational institution in Ohio. Baccalaureate programs are offered through six colleges and schools: Arts and Science, Applied Science, Business Administration, Education, Fine Arts, and Western College. Master's degree programs, offered in all divisions except Western College, and the 11 doctoral degree programs are administered by the Graduate School. Enrollment at the Oxford Campus in 1974–75 was 14,293, of whom 1,198 were graduate students. The institution includes two regional campuses, at Middletown (enrollment, 1,864) and Hamilton (enrollment, 1,569) and the European Center in Luxembourg. Oxford, the site of the main campus, is a city of approximately 7,000 population (excluding students), located in southwestern Ohio about 35 miles from Cincinnati and 46 miles from Dayton.

The Ohio Board of Regents and Office of the Chancellor coordinate the thirty-eight institutions that comprise Ohio's state-assisted system of higher education. However, Miami University, like its sister institutions, is governed by its own Board of Trustees of nine members appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Ohio Senate. The principal officers of the University are: president; executive vice-president for academic affairs and provost; vice-president for finance and business affairs and treasurer; vice-president for student affairs; and vice-president for development and alumni affairs. Each college and school is headed by a dean.

The University Senate is the legislative body of the University, recommending policies to the Board of Trustees for final approval in matters of educational programs, requirements and standards, faculty welfare, and student conduct. The Senate is composed of full-time faculty members, certain administrators, and student representatives. It meets at least four times a year, with the president presiding. The Senate delegates authority to the University Council and various committees, but it retains the authority of review and approval. The University Council is composed of 36 voting members and such other members of the Senate as the president may appoint as nonvoting members. The voting members include 16 faculty elected by the Senate from its own membership, 12 student members selected in accordance with the procedures of the Student Senate, and eight members appointed by the president annually from among the Senate. The provost (a voting presidential appointee) presides over the Council, which meets at least twice a month and works through various committees.

There are 47 academic departments and 720 full-time faculty members in the University. The College of Arts and Science is the largest division, with 23 departments, 401 faculty members, and 7,459 students. Department chairmen are appointed by the president upon nomination by the appropriate dean and the
provost. Prior to 1969 chairmen served for indeterminate terms. Since 1969, they are appointed for five-year terms. They may be reappointed to subsequent terms by the president upon renomination by the appropriate dean and the provost, or they may decline without prejudice to accept reappointment. University regulations state that nomination by the dean shall follow consultation with the departmental faculty members and the chairmen of related departments, and that appointment normally should be in conformity with the department's judgment. It is required also that chairmen be subject to periodic evaluation by their departments and that such evaluation must precede reappointment. The procedures for chairman selection, evaluation, and reappointment vary among the divisions, but all involve participation and recommendation by department faculty members.

Miami University does not provide a written description or specification of the job of academic department chairman. But the job in its many responsibilities is there to be done, with the chairman serving as chief administrative officer of the department, responsible both to the dean and to the department. University policies make the chairman responsible for his or her department but also call for collegial departmental governance. The major responsibilities of the department chairman include:

- **Departmental affairs**: developing and accomplishing departmental missions and objectives within those of the University; establishing departmental policies; conducting departmental meetings; involving faculty members and students in departmental decision making and activities; establishing internal communication.

- **Academic affairs**: establishing departmental degree programs and curricula; evaluating and improving programs, curricula, and the quality of instruction; enforcing academic standards; preparing term schedules of courses; providing guest speakers.

- **Faculty affairs**: recruiting, hiring, and orienting new faculty members; supporting and encouraging faculty growth and high performance in teaching, research, and other professional activities; enforcing faculty responsibilities and protecting faculty rights; evaluating faculty members and making documented recommendations to the dean for their retention, tenure, promotion, and annual salary increments.

- **Student affairs**: curricular and career advising of students; awarding of departmental prizes and scholarships; responding to student grievances and complaints; recruiting graduate students; making graduate awards and assigning and supervising graduate assistants and teaching fellows; certifying students for graduation.
• **External communication**: conveying University policies and actions to the department, representing the department in the University and with external agencies (professional associations, government agencies, the public); communicating departmental programs and activities to students.

• **Budgetary affairs**: preparing annual departmental budget requests; administering budgetary allocations (preparing requisitions, authorizing expenditures, maintaining budget records); promoting department cost-effectiveness (income generated from tuition, state subsidies, and grants versus expenditures); allocating faculty travel and research funds.

• **Office management**: administering departmental facilities; hiring, supervising, and evaluating staff personnel (secretaries, clerks, laboratory assistants); establishing file and record systems (faculty, students, courses, academic data, correspondence); maintaining equipment and other department properties; requisitioning supplies; ordering textbooks.

• **Personal professional performance**: providing professional leadership and example in the department; demonstrating professional competence in teaching, research, and other professional activities; participating in professional associations and community service.

**Nature of the Inquiry**

This report looks into the job of academic department chairman at Miami University: its nature, routines, activities, and problems, and the experiences, perceptions, satisfactions, and dissatisfactions of recent and current department chairmen. It originated from a concern for

• the shape and burden the job has come to take;
• perceived measures of chairman disquietude and turnover;
• the need for all segments of the University community to understand the dimensions and limits of the job and the experiences and feelings of the chairmen.

The goal of the study is to promote discussion and action with respect to ways to restructure the job so that it

• fits current circumstances;
• better serves the academic departments and the University;
• permits those who hold it to find greater success and satisfaction.

In the main, the study phase examined the job of chairman as seen by chairmen: How do they define its dimensions, limits, and problems, its rewards and its costs? How do they suggest the job be altered to improve its service to the University and the departments and to enable incumbents to perform satisfactorily and with satisfaction? As a result, the report focuses on the components of the daily working and living which in the aggregate make the job of chairman and the existence of chairmen—tasks and burdens, gratifications and frustrations, successes and failures, pleasures and pains. The report explores how chairmen and others view the chairmanship in order that the key functional components of the job may be revealed and analyzed. In the process, certain recommendations are offered.

This inquiry is based on a set of propositions so often asserted in textbooks and in the rhetoric of university administrators that they have become cliches. But cliches are easily forgotten, and chairmen feel strongly that a grand canyon gapes between rhetoric and reality with respect to their jobs. This report is intended to make these propositions operational by bringing them to the level of consciousness, recognition, and force throughout the University community.

Proposition One: The academic department is where the action is. The academic department is the setting for the primary business of the university. The department is not—as chairmen and their colleagues often feel it is viewed—the bottom administrative rung in the downward delegation of managerial, clerical, and other tasks and responsibilities. If academic and service administrators see and deal with departments and chairmen so, then there indeed lies the central problem.

The academic department is the heart of the academic enterprise: the place where most teaching, service, and research activities go on, where faculty members pursue professional and disciplinary interests while at the same time serving the University, and where students pursue their education. It is at the department level that most of the direct and personal interaction occurs between the University and its faculty members and students. The University's success depends on the success of its academic departments, and the success of the departments depends on their respective capacities to define and achieve productive educational goals, maintain quality staff, establish effective academic programs and internal decision-making procedures, and cope with the constraints and seize the opportunities found in their environments.

Proposition Two: The most common attribute of a successful department is successful leadership. Therefore, the chairmanship is a key position, and chairmen are crucial to the educational success of the
University. Chairmen are the single most important link between the University administration and the faculty members, academic programs, and students. As such, the job, at Miami and elsewhere, is ill-defined, big, complex, and often tension-filled.

**Proposition Three: The job of academic department chairman must not be underestimated by the University administration, the faculty members, or those who hold or seek the job.** Those who interact with chairmen must not see the job only within the narrow dimensions of their own relationship to chairmen. University administrators must not view the job as it was in the "old days" of a small, informally structured University while piling more tasks and responsibilities on the chairmen. Faculty members must not view chairmen as "academics gone wrong," who, to reverse a cliche, "do because they can't teach." And, finally, chairmen cannot live and work like suffering servants. Their effectiveness and the effectiveness of their departments and the University will not be served thereby.

The job of chairmen must be defined, structured, and understood in such a way that it attracts highly qualified persons who can function successfully and find professional and personal satisfaction in the job.

Every study needs its concepts, and those adopted for this report are that the job of academic department chairman must be:

**Attractive:** be professionally and personally challenging and enriching, and be useful in one's career.

**Manageable:** have boundaries of expectations and demands that are congruent with the time and resources allocated to the job, that permit one to be an effective chairman and remain a scholar-teacher and a humane being.

**Performable:** include the tools to be effective—staffing, funding, facilities, discretion, authority. No one is going to take the job if he or she is doomed to grief and failure.

**Understood:** be known in its full dimensions—complexity, limitations, and problems—by those with whom chairmen interact and deal in the University, and also by aspirants to and candidates for the job.

**Appreciated:** be recognized, valued, and rewarded when the job is evaluated to have been done well as measured by established criteria and standards fairly applied.

**Satisfying:** permit achievement of the goals realistically envisioned for the job and feel allow the feeling that by earnest effort one can do it.
This inquiry, in part, asks: To what extent does the job of department chairman at Miami University have these attributes, and what can be done to ensure that the job has these characteristics to the fullest measure possible? If successful leadership is a necessity for successful academic departments, and thereby a successful university, this two-part question is immediate and of great moment.

These queries were particularized in a questionnaire used in structured interviews with all current department chairmen on the Oxford campus, academic and staff administrators with whom chairmen interact, and a sample of former department chairmen who had recently left the job. More than eighty interviews of between one and two hours each were conducted. This report is predominantly reflective of those interviews, especially as they revealed the experience and thoughts of department chairmen. The difficult job of the investigator was to weave the results into a coherent whole. The goal was to raise appropriate questions, elicit findings, and develop recommendations. The report may well raise some questions and report some findings and recommendations that were not originally anticipated.

Two related kinds of findings were sought: data on the condition of the chairmen and data on the disposition of the chairmen. It is important to have a clear understanding both of the job conditions of the chairmen and of their disposition toward the job. What do they think, feel, and believe about the job? What are their motives, goals, and perceptions when they take or leave the job? What do they think is right and what is wrong about the job, and what would they like to see done about it?

Profile of the Academic Department Chairman

What are the basic facts about academic department chairmen at Miami University today? First, more than half of the chairmen are in their first terms in the job, and this figure will increase to around two-thirds in 1975–76 because of resignations and replacements at the end of the 1974–75 academic year. Second, almost two-thirds of the chairmen came to the job with what they considered applicable administrative experience—assistant chairman, program directors, and similar positions. However, none felt that their prior experience was adequate for them to walk into the job and do it. A substantial period of on-the-job learning was required.

Third, more than half of the chairmen were appointed from outside Miami University. What does this outside recruitment indicate about the job of department chairman at Miami University, and how is it viewed? To what extent do we go outside for chairmen to avoid stagnation and acquire new perspectives and skills, and to what extent do we do so because we cannot attract our own able faculty to the job or because internal department problems intervene? Given predicted budgetary constraints, will we be able to go outside for department chairmen and senior rank appointments with alacrity when chairmen step
down to return to fulltime teaching and research? Will we have to stay inside for replacements? In either case—but particularly in the latter one—for recruiting to be effective, the job of chairman must be seen as professionally and personally attractive. Finally, if we continue to appoint chairmen from outside Miami University, and if we continue the policy of no early tenuring of senior appointees, including chairmen, what are the implications for untenured chairmen and for the overall position and authority of chairmen?

There is concern among chairmen about situations in which: (1) chairmen are appointed from the outside to produce change in departments (or, more bluntly, to clean up messes and make unpopular decisions) but are dependent for their tenure recommendations upon those with whom such actions are unpopular; (2) chairmen are appointed from outside without tenure to perform a major administrative job but, to obtain tenure, must publish and teach; and (3) the influx of new chairmen without tenure and at the associate professor level weakens the general position and strength of chairmen in the University.

Fourth, more than half of the present chairmen state unequivocally that they will not consider another term in the job. Adding those who respond, "Yes, I would consider another term if . . ." but attach a host of qualifications, and those who are seeking higher administrative positions, fewer than one-third of the chairmen remain open-minded about considering another term in the job. As things stand now, we must anticipate substantial turnover. If we desire a fairly fast rotation in chairmanships, this may be satisfactory provided we can recruit able replacements and we structure the job so that high turnover will not impair effectiveness. But the reasons that current chairmen will not consider staying in the job may also deter qualified faculty members from taking it.

How do department chairmen see themselves? The chairmen overwhelmingly (83 percent) view themselves as faculty members, not as administrators. They are discipline-oriented scholar-teachers whose interests and loyalties lie with their fields, faculty colleagues, and students. Their career priorities are academic and professional, and they will assume and retain a chairmanship only if they feel they can retain their scholarly-professional identity and status with colleagues while serving as chairman. They see themselves as faculty members with an added, if short-term, dimension. Studies indicate that chairmen at less prestigious institutions see themselves as administrators, whereas chairmen at more prestigious institutions see themselves as faculty members. This chairman self-image means that how the University administration and department faculty structure the job of chairman will influence the kind and quality of people recruited and their willingness to stay in the job. Whether the chairmanship is a job of academic leadership or of paper shuffling, whether the job is developing initiatives or serving as butler to a department, whether people can do the job and retain their professional credentials, are all
central issues. As things stand now, the answers chairmen give to these questions about the character of the job are unfavorable, both in words and deed: they return to faculty status or seek less ambiguous, purely administrative jobs.

The chairmen were asked why they took the job. Their responses fell into four rather untidy categories. The data for each category includes the percentage and number of responses and a listing of the specific reasons mentioned, given in descending order of frequency of mention.

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35 20 Academic-professional activism: took the job because it offered the opportunity to do challenging things in academic leadership and faculty and program development.

32 18 Protectionism-passivism: took the job because it has to be done and it seemed to be my turn, because no one else wanted to or could do it, because I was reluctant to have the job go to the other candidates, because my colleagues asked me to take it.

30 17 Administrative activism: took the job because I like academic administration, because I wanted to try my hand at academic administration for a stint, because I have longer term and higher ambitions in academic administration, because chairmen have more influence in the University than do faculty members.

3 2 Personal factors: took the Job because I needed a change, because of the salary and prestige.

Almost no one took the job of chairman for its salary or prestige. In general, "good" candidates for a chairmanship have "made it" and can "make it" as faculty members. Only a few sought or assumed the job as a rung in the career ladder of academic administration. A fair number took the job because they thought they might like and benefit from a tour of duty in academic administration, but most assumed that they would return to faculty status. Whether people have interest in the job because of its academic leadership opportunity, because they see an administrative tour as personally and professionally developmental and enriching, or because the job is done on a rotating basis, in fact the incentive is tied to the discipline, departmental colleagues, students, and programs, and not to the urge to clerk or push paper or people.
The chairmen were also asked, "What are your measures of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the job? What sends you home happy and what sends you home grumpy?" Their responses (difficult to categorize) are interesting. The categories overlap somewhat, but collapsing them would have resulted in a loss of useful detail.

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<tr>
<th>30</th>
<th>23</th>
<th>Faculty development and achievement: satisfied when I build and maintain able and productive faculty, when I see faculty developing, producing, and obtaining recognition, when I can take pride in the faculty.</th>
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<td>24</td>
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<td>Day-to-day, survival and success: satisfied (relieved) when I go through the day without faculty complaints, when I feel I’m doing the best job can and doing it successfully, when I get through the day without falling further behind, when I stay on top of the job, when I have won a battle or solved a problem.</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>General goal achievement: satisfied when I’m successful in accomplishing goals for the department, when I have a sense that exciting things are going on in the department, when I feel that I’m building a good department.</td>
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<td>Program development and performance: satisfied when I feel I’m developing and improving academic programs in department, when good teaching is being done by the department.</td>
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<td>Student development and performance: satisfied when I feel we are graduating well-educated students who are well placed.</td>
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<td>Facilitating the department's work: satisfied when I obtain for the department the support and resources it needs to do its job, when I create an environment for the faculty to do their jobs.</td>
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<td>Department recognition: satisfied when department is recognized for its accomplishments and contributions by the division, University, and external agencies (professional associations, colleagues at other universities and colleges).</td>
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Similarly, the measures of dissatisfaction among chairmen include:

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| 48   | 45       | Administrative overload: dissatisfied with the explosion of paperwork which contributes excessively to overburdening the job, with the short and badly crowded deadlines imposed, with the toll the job exacts on one's scholarship, teaching, and personal life, with the excessive requirement to justify and rejustify requests, with the long hours the job demands (all day, evenings, and weekends, holidays, summers), with the fact that the aggregate of the tasks is more than can reasonably be done and one is constantly falling behind. |
| 33   | 31       | Poor relations with higher administrative levels: dissatisfied with the lack of support for faculty and programs, with the lack of consultation before decisions are made, with the lack of authority but the abundance of responsibilities in the job (and the resulting consequence of being blamed for things that one has no control over), with the lack of understanding of the job of chairman today by those in the administration, and by the lack of recognition or appreciation of the efforts made. |
| 19   | 17       | Poor relations internal to the department: dissatisfied with the lack of faculty appreciation for the burden of the job or for one's efforts in it, with the inability to satisfy faculty or communicate effectively with them, with taking the "heat" from the faculty for decisions one played no part in making but nevertheless must implement, with student complaints about faculty, with making no headway in the department in achieving goals. |
Before commenting on the preceding data, we should add the responses of the chairmen to the question, "What would lead you to resign—not to step down at the end of a term, but to resign abruptly midterm?" The responses were:

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37 26  

**Administrative relations:** administrative nonsupport of the department and its goals, programs, and people, loss of the confidence of my dean or other administrative superiors, reneging of the administration on a major commitment, loss of an important tenure or promotion recommendation, having to enforce a decision I disagree with, a fundamental disagreement with a superior so that I couldn't serve effectively or comfortably as chairman, reduction in the size of the faculty, further administrative centralization, unfair and inequitable treatment of the department.

26 19  

**Faculty relations:** loss of the confidence of the faculty, the faculty dealing with me less than directly or honestly, a fundamental disagreement with the faculty on policy and program, faculty lack of appreciation of my efforts.

25 18  

**General frustration:** the frustrations of the job pile too high, the paper shuffling becomes devouring, feeling of getting nowhere in what I want to do.

12 9  

**Professional and personal toll:** feeling of losing professional touch, that it's time to go back to teaching and research, that I’m sacrificing myself, that I’m tired of working hard while others don't.

This skimpy profile of the academic department chairmen provides an introduction to the specific issues, findings, and recommendations that follow. It reveals a pattern of substantial turnover in the job that will continue and raises questions about the consequences of this turnover for effective chairman performance and department management, for the position of department chairmen within the University, and for the dimensions and limits of the job as they interact in this turnover. It reveals that chairmen view themselves as teacher-scholars and that their ideal conception of the job is academic leadership. However, they see themselves being turned into clerks so consumed with routines that they cannot adequately engage in academic leadership, and they cannot avoid the sense that they are losing their professional currency and identity.
The profile highlights views of the job as well as sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction that must be addressed. The key to making the job attractive to the recruitment pool is to restore it to an assignment of academic leadership in the departments and University.

**Defining the Job and Its Place in the University**

How is the job of department chairman defined, understood, and positioned in the University? Most chairmen (60 percent) and many of the academic and service administrators interviewed think the answer is badly and inadequately. There is considerable feeling that the administrative perspectives are out of date and bear little relationship to the job as it has changed in the last several years and exists today. This section focuses on the major issues of definition and understanding of the job of department chairman, changes that have reshaped the job, and perspectives on the chairmanship and its position in the University.

**Definition of the Job**

There is no official University definition and specification of the job of academic department chairman. An examination of the *Faculty and Staff Information Manual* reveals scattered references to some but not all of the major tasks chairmen are to perform, but no section in the *Manual* treats the chairmanship as a whole. No one is asking for a detailed or rigid definition and specification. It is recognized that the job is not easily defined and specified and that some ambiguity is necessary and desirable—it requires discretion and nurtures initiative. But at present the job's functional specificity comes largely from the deans as they appoint chairmen in their divisions, from the deans' styles of leadership and administration, and from departmental governance policies and traditions. A majority of those interviewed feel that the chairmanship should be more formally established and defined in the University. Although several divisions provide guidelines to job responsibilities, it is felt that an official Universitywide policy statement is needed. Within such a statement, each division could add those specifics that would implement its distinctive governance arrangements. Therefore, it is recommended that a section be added to the *Faculty and Staff Information Manual* on the academic department chairmanship, generally describing its position in the University, and its major functions, responsibilities, authorities, and accountabilities.

Most chairmen feel that administrators and faculty members do not adequately understand the job in its new and full dimensions and that this lack contributes heavily to the existing problems. An official policy, incorporated in the *Manual*, would contribute to a fuller understanding of the job, and would help to put in proper order the now disarrayed picture of the job's priority tasks (academic leadership) and subsidiary tasks (clerical).
With respect to their authority, chairmen generally agree that the job carries little formal authority, and that, as noted, such authority as does obtain derives from what University and divisional administrators and department faculty allow in specific circumstances, and from the chairmen's personal and professional skills and relations and their abilities to mold consensus, loyalty, and satisfaction. And this is rightly so.

The chairmen do not manifest a power drive. They do, nevertheless, observe that the increased bureaucratization and the current style of governance (councils, committees, etc.) spread authority to other places at the expense to them of influence and management prerogatives, if not actual authority. Chairmen are given things to do and deadlines within which to do them. Are these responsibilities matched in some way with the resources to fulfill them? Too often the answer is no. Therefore, it is recommended that a careful review be made of University policies and procedures that relate to departmental tasks and affairs, especially as they bear upon the job and responsibilities of the chairmen, to determine whether the resources required, including authority, are provided. If such are lacking, changes should be made to adjust the assignment of responsibilities and resources.

**Changed Character of the Job**

The full story of how the job of department chairman has changed in the last several years cannot be told in this report; however, several critical differences should be noted. First, the job has expanded dramatically in the number and range of responsibilities, activities, and deadlines, and it has intensified in the pace for meeting these responsibilities. The most obvious change affecting the daily working lives of chairmen is the paper explosion. The chairmen are terribly concerned about, and frustrated by, the endless flow of memos and reports, directives to provide and verify, and requests to read and react, from an expanding array of offices and personnel. The chairmen are drowning in paperwork.

Second, those interviewed had a strong sense of the effects that the changed structure of the University—the “new Miami”—has had on the job of department chairmen. Overlaid on the "old Miami" of informal, loose, personal relations is an enlarged, more bureaucratic, hierarchical organization. To get a proposal considered, to make an inquiry and get a response, to get something done, all require more time, more offices and people, and much more paper. This more elaborate structure has resulted in less communication and contact between chairmen (and faculty members) and University administrators. The weight of opinion among those interviewed is that, despite the rhetoric, decision making is more (not less) centralized in the University, and that chairmen have less (not more) influence in the crucial aspects of the policy-making process. Indeed, a goodly number of respondents
commented that their job has become one of transmitting, interpreting, defending, and implementing policies and procedures instituted without their involvement. Similarly, the increased size and more formal organization in many departments have affected the job of chairman, adding to its management chores and increasing the time and skill demands of the job. And finally, chairmen also must cope with the increased requirement of communication with, and reporting to, professional associations and government agencies.

Third, along with the enlarged administrative responsibilities and the need for better and more efficient departmental management is the competing value and demand for collegial governance. These competing and frequently conflicting values and demands put the chairmen not only on the firing line of responsibility but also in the middle of managing a complex, turbulent, and often contradictory and protracted system of decision making and implementation.

The chairmen were asked if they felt "uncomfortably in the middle" between the policies, directives, and deadlines coming down to them from the University administration for implementation, on the one hand, and the expectations of collegial decision making in the department, on the other hand. An overwhelming majority (83 percent) of the chairmen said yes. Although they see a substantial part of this as being in the nature of the job, desirable, and able to be coped with, they also see both the need for recognition and understanding of it by those with whom they deal and the need for some effort to clarify the situation. It is recommended that administration deadlines for instituting various departmental activities and actions take into account the departmental organization and procedures and not be fixed on the assumption that the chairman simply decides and acts on his or her own, perhaps with a modicum of consultation.

Finally, as the University has become a more complex, formalistic, and bureaucratized organization, the chairmen have had to assume increasing responsibility for translating this organization, with its policies and numeric formulae, into working conditions for the faculty and learning conditions for the students. This process affects each person's successes and failures, satisfactions and dissatisfactions, growth or stagnation. Indeed, the chairmen have the major responsibility for making this complex, contradictory "system" of academic community and management function:

- They have the primary job of converting numeric and other norms (faculty loads, class scheduling through the day, tenure and promotion criteria, X's of salary increment, academic standards) into human particulars.
They must mediate between the faculty's claim to professional competence and academic freedom and the University's claim to final authority.

They must manage administrative directives and collegial decision making.

In departmental governance, they must balance the faculty's professed desire for involvement of its members and the students against a reluctance of members to commit to that process the required time and effort, including the time to listen to students without impatience.

They must retain the friendship and respect of their colleagues while implementing policies that directly affect a skeptical and sometimes hostile faculty.

They must accept responsibility for all departmental affairs but be one among equals in their departments.

They must do all of this with an eye always to the prospect of shortly returning to faculty status.

The chairmen at Miami University are not so much in a chain of command as they are in the middle of a circle where all elements of a diverse constituency have access to them. Managing in such a situation is sometimes fun and oftentimes delicate, exhausting, and consuming. In sum, the job of department chairman is ambiguous, turbulent, and full of tension. It is large, multidimensional, and unwieldy, but the University classifies it as a part-time job.

The Chairmanship: A Part-time Job?

Department chairmen are expected to fulfill this complex job and still have the energy and focus of mind and spirit to teach and do research because the job is classified by the University as part time—at best, half time. Most chairmen, it should be noted, teach more than a half-time course load. In reaction to the classification of this job as part time, the chairmen are "unanimous minus two" in saying, Drivel! Indeed, almost half of the chairmen view the job as now structured—without adequate support of many kinds—as full-time+ in its demands. Chairmen of departments with doctoral programs note that this dimension adds considerably to the job. In many ways, graduate students, and especially doctoral candidates, are more akin to faculty members than to undergraduate students in their demands on the chairman.

The job is consuming simply in its routine aspects. If chairmen wish further, as they do, to engage in planning, developing, evaluating, and leading, then it assumes even larger proportions. They must bootleg time to develop initiatives, yet still prepare for classes. Professional reading and research rarely rise beyond fond hopes. The job is full time except for the hours one steals away from it.
Detailed recommendations are spelled out later. It is important at this point, however, to record the general recommendation that a realistic and manageable conception of the job of chairman be formulated; that such formulation be obtained by: (1) eliminating fringe activities and responsibilities that are not central to the job or that can be done elsewhere; (2) providing better preparation and assistance for chairmen; (3) better defining the job and its components and parameters; and (4) establishing greater flexibility in the loads of chairmen so that they can more adaptively and better balance from term to term the demands of the chairmanship, teaching, scholarship, and health of mind and body. These modifications would permit the chairmen to do what the University community wants them to do and they want to do: stay close to the department and the discipline, teach and engage in scholarly pursuits, and lead.

**The Job: Precept versus Actuality**

The chairmen (as well as others interviewed) were asked how they define the job of chairman as it should be and how, in fact, they spend (or see chairmen spend) their time and energy. With only one exception, the chairmen (and the others) agreed strongly that their time and energy are so consumed with clerical paper pushing and routines that they cannot adequately do the desired job of leading, planning, developing, relating, coordinating, and evaluation. The busywork is shoving out academic and professional leadership. Leadership responsibilities do not carry deadlines set by the University but the paperwork does. The many extraneous jobs being piled on chairmen threaten to make the leadership job extraneous. For the actual definition of priorities, we need to put aside the official rhetoric about the job's priorities, and consider the calendar and the day-to-day, quarter-to-quarter, year-to-year demands made upon chairmen. The key to the "ideal" job for a chair is faculty development and relations, academic programs, and students, but the job is actually something else except as the chairmen put in their own time and family time to get the leadership job done. If, at the end of a day or quarter or year, chairmen ask themselves, "What have I accomplished?" the answer too often is, "I have done other people's paperwork for them." This problem is detailed later, but it is **recommended that a radical surgical reduction be made on the paperwork load on department chairmen to reduce it substantially to what is appropriate to the proper functioning of academic departments in the University.**

**Chairmen and Communication Flows**

Chairmen are often told that they are the major communication links between University administration and departments. The chairmen generally feel that their deans do a good job of keeping them informed on divisional matters, but they also feel that an inadequate job is being done at the University level. Chairmen often are put in difficult positions when they are the "last to know" of important University
policy alternatives being considered or decisions being made, when they learn about them from a faculty member or spouse or read it in print. It is **recommended that the University administration make a sustained effort to ensure that chairmen are informed in timely fashion about University affairs and for which they indeed serve as a major communication link.**

The chairmen are frustrated when University administrators allow proposals, recommendations, and requests to go unanswered or answered belatedly. It is **recommended that University administrators respond to communications, requests, and proposals from departments promptly and courteously. The chairman, in return, will do likewise.**

One interview question asked whether budgetary information was adequate. Again, the chairmen consider it inadequate. Two important examples, the University's general operating budget and faculty salary information, will illustrate. Department chairmen are not provided with copies of the University's current operating budget or annual fiscal reports (both of which contain general figures but reveal no one's salary). Nor are they provided copies of the Board of Regents annual fiscal reports. Why? It is not enough to say, as several administrators did say, that if a department chairman wants this information, he or she can go to the appropriate University administrative office and see these documents. Why should chairmen have to do this? Chairmen should be on the regular distribution lists for such materials. Therefore, it is **recommended that department chairmen be placed on the regular distribution list for the University's current operating budget and fiscal reports, for Board of Regents reports that deal with budgetary and fiscal matters, and for such other materials as will keep them informed about University and state system affairs.**

Second, no chairman asked feels that he or she has adequate information about faculty salaries. They are not provided with information that would permit them to explain to faculty members the "meaning" of their salaries and increments in the college or school or in the University at large. The chairmen and the University have the obligation to do so. Chairmen can tell faculty members the meaning of their salaries and increments in their respective departments; this information is important, but it is not sufficient. Therefore, it is **recommended that each year when salary information is distributed (when faculty letters of appointment are mailed and when chairmen receive their respective department faculty salary budgets), chairmen be provided with aggregate data on salaries and increments for continuing faculty in the University for the coming academic year.** Something like the simple form below might serve.
### SALARY DATA FOR CONTINUING FACULTY FOR 1975–76

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Salary 1974–75</th>
<th>Average Salary 1975–76</th>
<th>Average % Increase</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
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<td>Associate Professor</td>
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<td>Lecturer</td>
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<tr>
<td>All continuing faculty</td>
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To be sure, other information (salary ranges, percentage ranges, and dollar increases) would be highly desirable and useful, but the items on the suggested form are the minimum required.

**Voice and Influence of the Chairmen**

The department chairmen (and others) were asked whether they thought the voices of the chairmen were sought, heard, and heeded in the University. With only two exceptions, the answer was no. Once-a-year brotherhoodlike statements are not enough. To say that the voice and counsel of the chairmen are respected and would be heeded, as did some administrators, is not to say that they are frequently or regularly asked for. They are not. The chairmen generally feel that decisions on policies, procedures, and appointments which directly affect them and their departments are made without their having prior notice, knowledge, or consultation. Often these are decisions that they must implement. Too many chairmen feel that they have too little real voice and influence outside their departments for the situation to be healthy. Access and influence seem foreclosed. It appears, for example, that the president is unfortunately and unnecessarily isolated from academic affairs and from contacts and dialogues with chairmen.
Chairmen as chairmen are outside the structure of policy discussion and decision making. The chairmen as a group are not represented among the many committees and councils of the University. It is recommended that the University's processes of policy consideration and decision making recognize and include the interests, expertise, and contribution of the department chairmen; and that chairmen be included through such mechanisms as functional representation of groups of chairmen (i.e., by academic divisions) at the levels of the dean, provost, president, and other important but selected administrative offices. The chairmen within divisions should meet periodically at their own call (without the dean and with the dean but setting their own agenda), and they also might meet periodically campuswide.

**Major Components of Concern**

This report omits many details about the job of department chairman; rather, it focuses on elements of the job that are of major concern to chairmen and offers some alternatives for change which have received support.

**Preparation for the Job**

Preparation for the job of department chairman includes experience in similar jobs or in specific tasks that are part of the job; orientation to the job or facets of it in training sessions, seminars, and workshops; and the provision of materials to prospective or incoming chairmen to explain the principal components of the job.

The chairmen, in response to the question, "What is done at Miami University to help prepare people for assuming the job of department chairmen?" agree that the answer is, "Very little, if anything." Deans, in chairman appointments and in the early period of incumbency, try to orient new chairmen to the job and ways of doing things in the college or school. They usually make themselves available to answer questions and help with specific problems. New chairmen, especially those appointed from outside the University, find this assistance highly valuable, but they worry whether it represents the best utilization of the deans' time.

A number of chairmen have come with useful administrative experience, but they were quick to indicate that it in no way adequately prepared them for the job in its full dimensions. Various offices of the University provide memos of instruction and explanation on performing various tasks (for example, course scheduling, budget preparation, and completion of travel vouchers). Several prospective and incoming chairmen also took the initiative and visited selected incumbent chairmen to learn about the
job and how things are done in various departments. In a few instances, an informal buddy system developed. But these activities are limited and unsystematic as preparation, and chairmen were generally thrust into the job. Regardless of experience, they found themselves somewhat asea in a sink-or-swim situation. It seems to take about a year for inside chairmen and two years for outside chairmen to learn the job and some of its subtleties at Miami University. And, it should be noted, there is little reason for faculty members to prepare for a chairmanship: the post is not a logical or necessary career rung for most faculty members, and it is short term for most chairmen.

There is, of course, no full preparation for the job, and "hands on" experience is necessary. There are, nevertheless, several steps that might lessen the difficulties.

First, it is recommended that preparation for the job of department chairman include: (1) provision of an Academic Department Chairman's Handbook in loose-leaf form; (2) training sessions or workshops at the beginning of every academic year for incoming and recent chairmen; (3) an overlap in service for outgoing and incoming chairmen, where possible, including bringing new chairmen into the job early (the prior summer term) with pay; and (4) greater recognition of sub-chairman positions in the departments (assistant chairman, director of graduate studies, director of undergraduate studies), with faculty rotating through such posts.

There is strong support among the chairmen (67 percent) and others interviewed for developing an Academic Department Chairman's Handbook. It would provide a ready and current reference on requirements of the job—on typical tasks, routines, and problems, and on policies, regulations, procedures, and forms—as well as provide instruction on "how to do it." (Much of this material is available now in scattered memos in the files, if new or current chairmen can find them.) It should be loose-leaf in format, like the Faculty and Staff Information Manual. It should include the calendars of due dates and activities for chairmen, be kept continually current as policies and procedures change, and be reviewed thoroughly once a year. Such a Handbook might also serve as the place for the University administration (president and provost) to welcome chairmen to the job and to state its definition and specifications of the job.

The Provost's Office should be responsible for preparing, updating, and annually revising the Handbook, assisted by a small committee of chairmen (both experienced and recent). If turnover in the job continues or increases, a Handbook will become all the more needed and important. By accumulating in a single binder major aspects of chairmanship, the Handbook would help other academic and staff administrators understand the function in its broad dimensions and enable them to
improve the coordination of their activities with the workloads of chairmen. As a by-product, it might disclose job elements that are secondary in priority and transferable to other places.

Several caveats about the Handbook must be offered: (1) It must be written in English, not "administrativeness." (2) It must be continually updated, revised, and improved (the first edition or two will surely have gaps and inadequacies). (3) It must not become a straitjacket on the chairmen and the various styles of functioning found among the schools and departments; it must inform and assist chairmen and departments but not force them into a mold without discretion or difference. (4) It must not become a vehicle for adding chores; it should help us determine what can reasonably be eliminated from the job or shifted elsewhere. And (5) it must not be construed as elevating paperwork (on which, to some extent, it will inevitably focus) to central priority; the job is not moving paper, but that of interacting with administration, faculty, and students, developing faculty and program, and exercising leadership.

Second, there is comparable support (67 percent of chairmen, most of the others) for some kind of training session or workshop for incoming and recent chairmen. The details of this recommendation are difficult to pinpoint. Such programs would be held at the start of each academic year. More experienced chairmen would participate at least periodically in planning and conducting the programs or serving as resource participants. Again, the purpose would be to orient new chairmen to basic tasks, responsibilities, routines, and problems, but not to fit them into any mold and thereby lose the newness and perspective they bring to the job. The sessions should involve sharing problems and alternative solutions and the various ways different chairmen approach the same task or issue. To obviate reduction to minutiae and platitudes, the program would have to be well planned and taken seriously by its participants.

The general orientation program might usefully be supplemented with specialized sessions offered during the year by various administrative offices, such as the program conducted by the director of financial affairs for new chairmen and department secretaries on how to set up departmental bookkeeping procedures and records and how to read and understand budget ledgers.

In sum, the general orientation program proposed is primarily for new and recent chairmen (and perhaps new and recent administrators), with seasoned chairmen participating periodically to help plan and conduct the programs or to contribute as resource persons. Finally, all chairmen might organize and meet regularly during the academic year within and across divisions to share experiences and learn from each other.
Third, it is recommended that the University give greater consideration to overlap in service for outgoing and incoming chairmen, when personal relations and internal departmental politics permit such orientation to be constructive. The assumption of the University now is that a new chairman can step into the job on the opening day of an academic year and start learning and doing instantaneously and simultaneously. Well, shouting "Shazam" and turning into Captain Marvel only works on Saturday morning television and in the comic books.

Practically and ideally, there ought to be a period of overlap and quietude (before the fall quarter rush of doing the job) during which an incoming chairman becomes acclimated, review files and records, gets to know people (faculty members, deans, other administrators), and finds his or her way around campus and through the bureaucratic maze. For chairmen chosen from within the University, this problem is less serious than it is for newcomers who are to "arrive" on the opening day in September and start functioning. To be sure, many chairmen-elect do work with the outgoing chairman prior to assuming the job, and many do arrive on the job during the summer "on their own cuff." It is proposed that this arrangement be recognized and regularized and that compensation be provided for it. It is recommended that the initial appointment of new chairmen begin, where possible and when desired by them, with the second summer term or on July 1 so that he or she may spend part of the summer getting acclimated to the job, the department, and the University prior to the fall rush. Where possible, the arrangement should include overlap in service with the outgoing chairman for orientation, but it should not be allowed to sour or bias an incoming chairman or mold the newcomer in the image of the outgoing chairman.

Fourth, to facilitate development of a recruitment pool of persons experienced and tested in facets of departmental management (and interested in it), greater recognition should be given to intradepartmental responsibilities, such as assistant chairman, director of graduate studies, director of undergraduate studies, and chief departmental adviser. There is strong support for this proposal which provides not only preparation for the job but also assistance to the incumbent chairman. Chairmen perceived resistance in the University administration to formally authorizing and recognizing such jobs. Such recognition would involve: (1) formal appointments to the positions; (2) listing the position titles with the names of those holding them in official University publications (the annual Directory); and (3) University-provided teaching load reductions and/or modest salary stipends that attach to these assignments. Departmental faculty members should rotate through these jobs and receive recognition within departments and from the University for service in them. Chairmen must use them, not simply to
delegate trivia, but to provide directly relevant experience to colleagues while at the same time obtaining assistance.

**Support Systems: Are Resources Adequate?**

Are department chairmen provided with the support resources needed to do the job? The chairmen and others interviewed were asked about three basic support components: central office space and equipment, support personnel, and administrative support.

A majority of chairmen feel that, in terms of the physical space and equipment for departmental central office management, the University must come to recognize that departments have grown, that their responsibilities for record keeping and reporting have increased, and that many departmental central office facilities are inadequate to the management task. The central offices cannot be faculty office cubbyholes, and their equipment must exceed a four-drawer file cabinet. It is recommended that planning for new buildings include realistic recognition of central office requirements of academic departments, that renovation of existing facilities to meet central office needs be considered positively, and that requests for office equipment to improve departmental management be shown increased receptivity.

The overwhelming majority of chairmen feel frustrated by inadequate secretarial support and its consequences. The problem has several dimensions. First is the matter of numbers: departments are in a rising river of paperwork but have shallow secretarial support. Although such a staffing policy may appear to save money, it does not, in the long run, do so in comparison with the cost in chairman frustration and turnover, in chairmen doing routine clerical and administrative tasks because their secretaries are overburdened, and in the inefficiency costs of overworked and tense secretaries.

Second, in the many one-secretary departments, chairmen find themselves "without" during the secretary's illness or vacation. Third, many chairmen do what they shouldn't be doing—routine clerical work—not only because the secretary is overburdened, but also because they sense that faculty members resent the lack of secretarial help when exams or reading lists or manuscripts are to be typed. Fourth, the increase in administrative tasks assigned to departments and the task of departmental management itself have increased the need for office management and the day-to-day supervision of it. Therefore, quality as well as quantity in secretarial support is important. With a few notable and appreciated exceptions, the University provides departments with secretarial staff in the lower classifications. Chairmen and departments need someone with executive assistant and office
management skills who can and will have the incentive (ratings and pay scales) to exercise day-to-day office management under the chairman's supervision.

There is little support for professional administrative assistants to department chairmen, but there is wide backing for executive secretary support. Therefore, it is recommended that: (1) immediate efforts be made to provide additional secretarial support to departments, based on an equitable formula for the allocation; (2) emergency situations (when secretaries are ill or on vacation) be handled by expanding the University secretarial pool so that help can be assigned short term during periods of absence or heavy workload; (3) deans have authority to reassign secretaries temporarily within their divisions to meet short-term problems; and (4) departmental secretarial support be upgraded to higher classifications, based on department size, programs, and activities, to provide executive secretaries to assume office management and thus free the chairmen for increased leadership activity.

Finally, chairmen were asked whether they received adequate backing from their deans and other academic administrators. Chairmen were consistently appreciative of the consideration and support they receive from their deans. As for the central administration, their responses were mixed, according to how they perceived consideration and support to be or not to be forthcoming. Chairmen are asked to make requests and proposals. They are said to be major communication links between the central administration and the faculty and departments. Chairmen find it frustrating, disappointing, and destructive of their credibility and position if their requests and proposals receive no answers, tardy or too-late answers, or unexplained negative answers. Chairmen and department faculty members resent being encouraged to develop proposals only to have them summarily dismissed after the time and effort have been expended. Chairmen often are asked to make hard decisions and perhaps nothing cuts deeper, or more deeply cuts the ground out from under a chairman, than not being supported in the crunch by his or her superiors and colleagues, too. Although a specific proposal on this point is impossible, it is recommended that there be conscious recognition that support is a matter of trust, mutual respect, communication, clear understanding, and backing in the clinches, and that all of these attributes are required between chairmen and their superiors and colleagues.

**Coping with Frustrations: Some Recommendations**

Those interviewed were asked to identify those facets of the chairman's job that they found to be the most difficult and frustrating, and to propose and react to ways of remedying the situation. The matters discussed below received consistent mention.
Job overload. The overwhelming feeling of the chairmen and others interviewed is one of general overload in the job of chairman. The aggregate effects of the proliferation of tasks and of the accelerated pace and uncoordinated scheduling of them have created manageability problems.

The total load, pace, and scheduling of demands on chairmen have increased radically in the past several years. They exceed levels of manageability and tolerance, and they decrease the likelihood of chairman effectiveness and satisfaction. Chairmen are supposed to be exemplar teacher-scholars who creatively lead their departments in faculty and program development and achievement. The chairmanship is not defined as a full-time job. It is not supposed to be a clerkship from which chairmen steal time to do the basic job of leadership or to do a bit of class preparation or professional work. Given the present daily, weekly, and quarterly routines, chairmen are frustrated by the fact that they come to the end of the day, week, and quarter without getting to what they want to do and should be doing. As administrative offices and staffing increase, just that many more offices and people feel they have access to the chairmen and can make demands on them. There is the perception (whether it is exaggerated or not is beside the point) that an increasing array of offices are pushing more and more jobs off on the chairmen, and that the prevailing administrative philosophy is: If I don't know what to do with it, if I don't want to do it, if I feel I don't have the time to do it, if I don't know how to do it, I'll buck it down to the chairmen to do. Does the University want to create the Robert Benchley–like condition in which the chairman "can do any amount of work, provided it isn't what he is supposed to be doing at the moment"?

It is recommended that the overall workload on department chairmen, and the pace and scheduling of that workload, be carefully reviewed and revised to eliminate or shift from the chairmen those things they now do that are inappropriate, unnecessary, or better done elsewhere; to improve the coordination and scheduling of the workload; and to set as central criteria for task assignment to chairmen: Is it necessary? Does it relate to the functioning of academic departments? Could it be done or done better elsewhere? How much of the chairmen's time does it encumber, and how much time does it require immediately in view of the chairmen's other commitments in that week?

Too many memos, reports, and requests. There is strong feeling among the chairmen, and recognition by the others interviewed, that the flow of memos, reports, and requests (read this, distribute this, react to this, provide this, check this, collect this, do this) to chairmen is excessive and uncontrolled. Who at Miami University does not have access to the chairmen? There is little evidence that, in internal communication, any effort is made to separate what is important from what is not.
One proposal suggested that the system be monitored by someone, perhaps in the Provost's Office, with nothing being sent to the chairmen except through and with the approval of that office. That would be an overreaction and potentially might inhibit effective and important communication with department chairmen and faculty. Instead, it is **recommended that all communications with department chairmen (and faculty) be cleared through, approved by, and sent under the signature of the responsible officer of that office (vice-president, dean, director).** This move would deny subordinates direct access to the chairmen (and faculty) and would force them and their superiors to ask: Is this item (report, request, etc.) pertinent, important, and necessary? Will I be criticized for sending it—or for not sending it? 

**Too many justification requirements.** Chairmen and their faculty colleagues sometimes feel that they are not being trusted. Given the justification and rejustification they must provide to proliferating layers of offices and committees, the feeling has foundation. Flexibility, discretion, and timeliness are seriously restricted in budgeting, programming, and personnel affairs. The questions are: How much time does it take to get something or to get something done? Does the particular matter really require that amount of detail, review, and approval, and to what end?

One example, the introduction of a new course, will serve. Assume a department in the College of Arts and Science puts a senior/graduate level course proposal in the mill on October 15 (shortly after the start of the academic year). Will that course get through the layers of review and approval in time to be included in the next year's schedule? It is problematic at best. It is **recommended that the details, duplications, and time delays of justification, as well as the participants for approval, be kept to the minimum necessary, and that departments and chairmen be accorded reasonable and appropriate discretion and autonomy in, and therefore incentive for, action.**

**Too many record-keeping and data-reporting requirements.** There was no dissent among those interviewed that Miami University has an inadequate institutional data system, that too many requests for data or data verification are made upon chairmen, and that the data (reports) chairmen receive too often are inaccurate, unintelligible, and unusable. The operating norm in the University seems to be that the department is the best, only, and easiest locus of record and data keeping in the University. Absurd! Departments don't have the space, facilities, or staff either to accumulate and maintain such records and data or to meet the ever increasing number of requests for data and data verification reports. The situation places enormous, unnecessary, and inappropriate demands on chairmen. Administrative personnel in the University request data or data verification reports from department chairmen when indeed they should be providing them.
The essence of management is analysis—the assembling and ordering of data for those who must report, evaluate, make, and explain decisions. Miami University requires a centrally managed institutional data system lodged in the academic division (Provost's Office) or the President's Office. Strategic planning in this area is needed. As a University, we must decide what basic units of data we need for reporting, planning, evaluating, and decision making; we must centrally gather, verify, and store such data; and we must distribute them in usable form and in timely fashion. Such data must be parsimonious, accurate, understandable, and pertinent to our needs. To be sure, the Ohio Board of Regents prescribes many data parameters and reporting requirements. But surely Miami can meet these requirements and also meet our internal needs.

Such a central institutional data system would relieve the present burden on the chairmen and also give them the data they need to do their jobs. Department chairmen now must create their own data and record systems, without any guidelines or guidance about how to do it or what they will be asked for by the University. Even though data are available elsewhere, it seems the easier course to ask the chairmen for them. It is recommended that: (1) requests to chairmen (and faculty members) to report and verify data be approved by, and transmitted under the signature of, the responsible officer of the requesting office (vice-president, dean, director); (2) requests to chairmen (and faculty members) to report and verify data be limited to what is absolutely necessary; (3) the University provide policies and guidelines on the kinds and units of data required and to be maintained and on systems of data and record keeping; and (4) the University establish a central institutional data system in the office of the provost or the president to gather, verify, store, and disseminate the data required for academic management.

**Lack of planning for demands on chairmen.** The scheduling of demands on chairmen is uncoordinated and poorly integrated. Moreover, timetables have no sanctity among administrators and are violated frequently by them, with the result that the work-time pressure is on the chairmen. Intermediate deadlines are often not met, usually without notice, but in the end the squeeze is put on the chairmen. People cannot ignore their own deadlines and yet require chairmen to meet the timetable.

Deadline scheduling must be reasonable. Perhaps this feat can be accomplished by asking, What is a reasonable amount of time for the chairmen of the largest and most active departments to do a particular task? Furthermore, the deadlines must be better integrated. For example, chairmen should have their summer faculty allocations before they have to develop the summer schedule, and they should have their faculty allocations for the coming academic year before they have to develop the master schedule.
for that year. Finally, there now are several separate calendars of activities and deadlines for chairmen, dean's, provost's, university secretary's, registrar's. They require coordination and integration.

It is recommended that all calendars and deadlines for department chairmen be cleared through and coordinated by the Provost's Office, that these calendars and deadlines be included annually in the chairman's Handbook, and that they be scheduled to pace and spread reasonably the chairmen's work during the academic year. One subsidiary but important problem is the heavy scheduling of chairman duties during vacations (Christmas recess, spring recess) and the summer. It is, therefore, recommended that, to the extent possible, calendars remain open during recesses and vacations. Chairmen, like everyone else, might get a little respite, have some time to get reorganized and think, do things at their own pace and discretion, and even do a little course preparation and professional work. In other words, give 'em a break!

Incentives and Rewards

What are the incentives and rewards of the job of department chairman? Does it pay to take the job, do it well, remain in it for a full term, consider another term? No chairman or former chairman considers the incentives and rewards that attach to the job excellent, and you can count those who consider them adequate on the toes of one foot of a sloth. Without immodesty, chairmen feel the University is getting "one helluva bargain." In reality, the rewards and incentives are to be found in the satisfaction of doing an important job well, of serving one's colleagues, students, and the University, of getting "some things done," and leaving one's mark on the department. But the University, if it is to be successful in recruiting and retaining chairmen, must deal, and deal directly, with the incentives and rewards of the job.

Salaries

This report will not dwell on or try to negotiate the salaries of department chairmen. Most chairmen consider their salaries, not only individually but also generally for the job, inadequate. They feel that they could do equally well as able and productive faculty members and that, in many instances, they could make more money in other ways (extension teaching, writing, consulting). If chairmen see themselves as not adequately rewarded in salary, and if the working circumstances of the job make other forms of satisfaction more difficult or remote, the resulting rising turnover in the job may turn "one helluva bargain" into "one helluva expense." One final point on salary, to be addressed later, should be noted here: It is expensive to be a department chairman. The job includes a heavy obligation for
departmental social events and entertainment, for faculty, job candidates, guests, and graduate students. The costs largely come out of the chairman's pocket.

The Chairman's Stipend
There is widespread acceptance of and support for the principle of the chairman's stipend that accrues to a chairman during his or her term in the post.¹ But there is widespread disquietude among chairmen who do not receive the stipend. Too, there is widespread feeling among chairmen who do receive the stipend—and those who don't—that, in comparison to the demands and costs of the job, the current stipend schedule is at best a token and at worst an insult. No chairman considers the stipend schedule as excellent and only one chairman views it as adequate.

Indeed, the character and terms of the stipend are quite different from those recommended by the committee that proposed it. The committee recommended a substantially higher schedule of stipend amounts, and it made no mention of an obligation for summer service as attaching to the stipend. A number of years have passed since that committee reported; the job of chairman has expanded, and the cost of living has increased. But there has been no change in the stipend schedule. Therefore, it is recommended that the schedule of salary stipends for department chairmen be reviewed and substantially improved, and that it apply only to the regular academic year.

The Summer Obligation
There has been a great increase in the demands placed on chairmen during vacation periods in the regular academic year and in the summer. Moreover, these demands now are spread through the entire summer, especially in departments that have major doctoral programs. The chairmen resent having to mortgage their summers as a condition of the stipend. They work hard during the regular academic year, including vacation periods, and they feel that when the regular academic year rolls to a close in June they already have earned their stipends—and then some.

¹ Prior to 1969 the increments chairmen received for serving in the job were added directly and permanently to their salaries. Chairmen initially appointed before 1969 remain under this arrangement. Chairmen appointed since 1969 receive a stipend that is a separate item in the department's budget and attaches to the job and not to the base salary of the incumbent. Chairmen, of course, share in regular annual performance evaluations and base salary increases. The chairman's stipend is based on a schedule graduated in terms of fulltime faculty equivalents in the department: $500 for chairmen in departments of 1-5 faculty members; $1,000 for departments of 6-10; $1,500 for departments of 11-20; $2,000 for departments in excess of 20; and $2,500 for the very large Department of English. Their annual letters of appointment obligate chairmen for full service during the regular academic year and for chairmanship duties during one term of the summer quarter. Chairmen who teach during the summer quarter receive regular compensation for summer teaching.
There is little support, however, for converting the chairmanship into a twelve-month position; it would alter the incumbent away from faculty status. There is overwhelming support for the recommendation that each department be allocated a summer administrative stipend, separate from its summer teaching allocation, for the purpose of departmental management during the summer. The stipend should be commensurate with the job: tailored after the compensation of 16 2/3 percent of base salary used for a full summer teaching assignment (and perhaps graduated by size and activity of the respective departments). No formal teaching obligation should attach to the summer administrative stipend. The chairman could then handle the department's summer business and have time to do some thinking and planning about the department, prepare for regular year courses, and do some scholarly work. If a chairman planned not to be on duty for the whole summer (minus a normal vacation respite), he or she could divide the summer duty assignment and stipend with the assistant chairman or other designate.

Other Tangible Incentives and Rewards
Several proposals for supplementary tangible incentives and rewards for chairmen received substantial support as appropriate and useful. First, it is recommended that the chairmen be provided with an entertainment fund so that the normal and required social events and entertainment involved in the job do not fully come out of their pockets. While it is understood that appropriated state funds cannot be used for certain refreshments, no such restriction has applied to local funds. Whatever the restrictions, it is apparent that ways have been found to cope with them in other arenas of University-related entertaining, and it is urged that similar concern and ingenuity be applied to the departmental level. Again, such entertainment and social occasions are not frivolous; they are essential to the life and community of a department, and they are costly and getting costlier.

Second, it is recommended that a separate travel fund be established and administered through the deans' offices so that chairmen may represent the University and its departments at professional association meetings. Such a fund should be independent of departmental faculty travel budgets, and should fund (travel, reasonable lodging and meals, registration fees) chairmen to attend at least one national and one regional professional association meeting. It is important that chairmen participate in these meetings to represent their departments and the University—to "fly the flag," as well as to enjoy the professional activities and to participate in the faculty recruiting and graduate student placement activities of these meetings. However, chairmen often are hesitant to use limited departmental travel funds to help defray the costs of their own participation. The recommended separate budget and funding would help relieve this situation and would promote the representation and visibility of Miami University within major national and regional professional associations.
Third, it is **recommended that chairmen be allowed more flexible teaching loads, including terms in which they do not teach regular classes.** If the University has confidence enough in someone to appoint him or her as chairman, it should have confidence in him or her to do the job on a self-determined schedule. Greater flexibility would permit a chairman to devote time during a term to reviewing the department's organization and procedure and its degree programs and curriculum, or to doing some new course development or scholarly work.

Fourth, it is **recommended that research assignments** be readily available to chairmen, as a professional stimulus, whether mid-term, before starting another term, or before returning to full-time teaching. Fifth, it is **recommended that chairmen be provided subscriptions to significant literature in higher education and higher education administration.** The University should provide subscriptions, addressed simply to "Chairman, Department of . . ." to the *Chronicle of Higher Education, Change,* and such other journals and publications as would inform them in the job of academic department chairman. Perhaps a **selected collection of books on higher education and its administration might be provided to chairmen.**

**Effects of Service in the Job, and Some Conclusions**

Two points for this report remain: summary findings about the effects of the job on the professional and personal lives of the chairmen, and a few concluding paragraphs that synthesize the findings and recommendations.

While we have examined specific aspects of the job, the summary issue is the cost-benefit analysis with respect to the job of academic department chairman at Miami University. The chairmen, and the others interviewed, agree that the costs of the job are high. As one chairman put it, "You pay one helluva price!" The job is consuming to the exclusion of other important activities. It exacts a high career and personal toll that chairmen feel is neither understood nor recognized by the University community. What is that price?

The chairmen were asked, "What are the effects of serving as chairman on your teaching, your scholarly and professional activities, and your personal life?" The question asked included these particulars because chairmen are faculty members recognized by their colleagues and the University as able and accomplished teacher-scholars with personal and professional skills of leadership. Surely at the core of

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2 In the wake of campus disturbances of 1970, the Ohio General Assembly abolished faculty sabbatical leaves with compensation at the state-assisted institutions. "Research assignment" is a substitute arrangement.
concern is the issue of the effects that the chairmen feel the job has on them as teacher-scholars, the role
to which most of them will return and which most thought they were not leaving.

Only two chairmen feel that serving in the job has no negative effect on their teaching performance.
There is an overwhelming feeling among chairmen that their teaching suffers while they are in the job.
Given the current demands, it simply is too difficult to steal the time necessary to prepare properly for
classes, grade exams and papers and return them to the students in good time, and interact with students
out of class. The daily and weekly chairmanship chores leave little time to concentrate on teaching.
Many chairmen commented that they often feel inadequately prepared when they enter the classroom,
that they often are distracted by some administrative task or problem, and that they are not always as
"present" in the classroom as they should be.

The chairmen have devised ways to cope with this problem, but the solutions are unsatisfactory and in
themselves are part of the problem. Many chairmen limit their teaching to courses they have taught for a
long time and “have down pat.” They cut their costs (and benefits) by teaching from experience and
instinct rather than from preparation and currency. They do not have the time to read, rethink, and
reorganize, to develop and try new materials and techniques, or to explore new areas and courses. As
teachers, they often are marking time.

A word of caution. There is no doubt that the chairmen worry about the effects they see the job having
on their teaching performance. As one chairman put it, "I'm taking a super beating and it's killing me!"
But they are their own most severe taskmasters and critics. The chairmen serve students well both in and
outside the classroom. Nevertheless, they see themselves as not at their best, with some days and weeks
more difficult and frustrating than others; and when their teaching slips or they feel it to be slipping,
they feel guilty, and it hurts. As professors, they take pride in their teaching. As chairmen, they take
pride in being exemplar teachers, carrying their share of the department's load, and demonstrating the
good teaching they preach. They consider it important to stay close to their academic programs,
disciplines, and students. Moreover, they do not want to lose the skills they will need when they return
to full-time faculty member status.

And what of the perceived effects of the job on the scholarship and professional activities of the
chairmen? Only one chairman said that incumbency has no negative consequences. Nearly
unanimously, the chairmen responded that the job has its highest costs in this aspect of their lives.
When, we might ask, during the academic year do chairmen have the time unencumbered by the job, the
blocks of several hours, to read in professional journals and books, open a research file, or put a pen to
paper? A chairmanship at Miami University requires "presence" during the working day: the chairmen are expected to be in the office and available for faculty, students, and administrators. The flow of people in and out of the chairman's office, the number of telephone calls, and the level of noise and hubbub in the department's central office are considerable. And if chairmen seek some working quiet and solitude in the library, a second office, or other hideaway, whether to write a report or prepare for classes or read an article, they find that faculty, students, and administrators object to and sometimes resent this "liberty." A number of chairmen commented that in fact they have been criticized on this score.

The chairmen feel that the job as now constituted makes it difficult at best to continue in scholarly and professional activity, remain productive as a scholar, and retain one's professional edge and identity. This high price is especially hurtful if colleagues observe a slippage. As scholars, again, chairmen often are marking time.

The last item pursued, the effect of the job on one's personal life, will not be pursued. A number of the chairmen chose not to comment on this point, but half of them did reply that the job takes its toll on their personal lives. On particularly bad days and in the aggregate, it is difficult not to take the job home with them, to be moody and testy, to holler at the kids. The job may exact its heaviest personal toll on those with young families, with spouses and children bearing the brunt of the costs. Former chairmen, by comparison, seem at peace.

In sum, the professional and personal costs of the job are high. Recognition of this job circumstance is important not only with respect to incumbent chairmen but also as it relates to the image of the job. If those who are potentially in the recruitment pool for future chairmanships see the costs as too high in relation to the satisfactions and rewards, they simply will not consider the job. How can we at Miami cut the costs and increase the benefits of the job of department chairman and make it a more enriching, productive, satisfying, and attractive part of an academic career? A tall order.

This report catalogues a host of findings about the condition of the job of chairman and the disposition of the chairmen at Miami University. It offers wide-ranging recommendations to improve the situation. The answer to the question itself lies in undelayed discussion and action.

At this point, the obvious should be noted and guarded against. Some may be tempted to respond that if the job is not the best dream of higher education textbook models, it also is not the worst nightmare painted herein. Perhaps. Remember, this report is a composite of the experiences, perceptions, and
thoughts of many people. To be sure, the chairmen do the job and do it well. They manage to survive and even occasionally to smile. But it would be a mistake to clutch at the positive, yet react defensively. The report is made in order to lay bare some things and to do it starkly, to make some proposals, and to provoke frank discussion that leads to understanding and action.

It is not expected that anyone will agree with everything in this report. No doubt there are things that will meet criticism and opposition. That's okay! No doubt better improvements will be suggested. Terrific! But it is expected that the issues addressed will be dealt with directly and seriously; otherwise we shall have knocked ourselves out for nothing.

Finally, to recall the concepts noted at the beginning of this report, the recommendations are intended to help make the job of academic department chairman at Miami University more attractive, manageable, performable, understood, appreciated, and satisfying. They seek to get the job under control and better structured through paring away that which does not bear directly on the department as an academic enterprise, producing better understanding of the job by administrators, faculty, and the chairmen themselves, and providing the time and flexibility of self-determined scheduling to permit chairmen to remain exemplar teacher-scholars who lead their departments. The recommendations have the further view of encouraging faculty to contemplate and enter the job with affirmative expectations about its opportunities for academic leadership in the department, a significant voice and influence in the University, professional growth, and appreciation for a job well done. Although the recommendations recognize that academic administrative responsibilities are part of the job, they seek to restore them to reasonable boundaries and direct relationship to the academic enterprise, to restore the department chairmanship to a job with academic priorities, expectations, opportunities, and rewards.

One dean remarked that he never heard a chairman say how much he enjoyed being chairman. Perhaps this overstates the case, but might we not change this, or at least try? Inertia and temptation run to the contrary, but cannot we be contrary, and discuss and act now?
American Council on Education

Roger W. Heyns, President

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