

UNDERSTANDING THE DEMANDS AND CONSTRAINTS OF DEPARTMENT HEADS IN
HIGHER EDUCATION BASED ON THE PERCEPTIONS
OF DEANS, FACULTY, AND DEPARTMENT HEADS

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By

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UNDERSTANDING THE DEMANDS AND CONSTRAINTS OF DEPARTMENT
HEADS IN HIGHER EDUCATION BASED ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF DEANS,
FACULTY, AND DEPARTMENT HEADS

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A candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education

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Dedication

To Barry, the love of my life, for your support and patience.

To Brittany and Hilary, who bring me so much joy.

To Mom and Dad, for always believing in me.

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ABSTRACT

The researcher conducted a qualitative study to develop a deeper understanding of the demands and constraints placed on department heads in higher education. Rosemary Stewart's (1997) Theory of Demands, Constraints, and Choices was used as a lens through which to improve understanding. Participants were deans, faculty, and department heads from three AACSB-accredited Colleges of Business' from Midwestern universities in two states. Data were collected from participant interviews, observations of department heads, and website study.

All segments of the participants perceived three overarching categories as relevant to department head demands and constraints: Faculty/student demands and constraints, financial/resource demands and constraints, and administrative/leadership demands and constraints.

The findings of this study have implications for department heads and deans. One glaring finding of this study is the absence of formal materials provided to department heads with regard to procedures and training. Absent within all institutions was the evidence of any supporting material that provided training, or direction for policies and procedures.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Study

Background

The role of the academic department head in higher education is judged to be an important aspect of institutional leadership. The chair of an academic department in a college or university plays a key role in the success of that institution. According to Bennett (1983):

It is at the departmental level that the real institutional business gets conducted...it is here that teachers and learners can make contact, that researchers find encouragement and direction, and that many of the ways to contribute to the larger community are identified and explored. (p. 1)

Individuals who lead the academic department have been called the “front-line leaders” in higher education (Gmelch, 2000). How such persons are selected is not uniform nor is selection criteria well-articulated (Leaming, 1998). It is believed that the leadership role of the department head could be improved if more careful attention was given to the perceptions of important leadership practices (Adibe, 1997). Research has established generally accepted leadership practices, however, little empirical data exists on the type of leader that is perceived to be optimum at the departmental level in higher education (Thompson, 1999).

Recent literature has suggested that department heads are facing increasing pressures and demands on their roles as leaders (Brown, 2002; Brown & Moshavi, 2002; Thompson, 1999). Challenges facing higher education today that are impacting the leader of the academic department include declining enrollments, increased expectations of

accountability, and budgetary constraints (Leaming, 1998). Institutional searches for department heads are failing more often than in past years. When positions go unfilled, institutions suffer from a lack of leadership and departments suffer from a lack of representation (Andersen, 2002).

As demands and constraints increase for the academic departmental leader, changes in leadership style may need to occur. The sphere of influence needed to create the conditions critical to developing academic leaders includes a conceptual understanding of the unique demands and constraints encompassed in academic leadership, particularly at the departmental level. Conceptual knowledge or understanding of the demands and constraints placed on department heads as perceived by deans and faculty may allow them to grasp the many dimensions of leadership (Conger & Benjamin, 1999) needed to be effective in this middle management position.

Based on the existing literature on leadership in higher education, it appears that empirical research has not led to an in-depth understanding of the demands and constraints faced by academic department heads. Without this understanding, it seems that it will be even more difficult to identify needed and improved leadership (Conger & Benjamin, 1999). Developing a fuller understanding of the demands and constraints placed on these middle managers could assist deans and department heads before selections are made, or prior to choosing to accept, this position of leadership. This superficial understanding lends itself to the purpose of this study, which was to glean an understanding of the demands and constraints of department heads through a qualitative investigation of deans, department heads, and faculty perceptions in institutions of higher education.

Conceptual Underpinnings for the Study

Few terms in research inspire less agreement on a definition than that of leadership. One author wrote, “there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept” (Robbins, 1998, p. 346). Leadership literature is full of approaches attempting to explain what makes an effective leader. Leadership theories evolved from looking at specific traits that a leader is born with to behavioral theories such as the Ohio State studies in the late 1940s. Theorists studying leadership continued to look beyond behavioral concepts to contingency theories as posed by Graen in his Leader-Member Exchange Theory (Graen, Novak & Sommerkamp, 1982) and Hersey-Blanchard’s Situational Leadership theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977).

In recent years, transformational, visionary, and servant-oriented leadership theories have influenced research on leadership and what it means to organizations. Some theorists have focused their efforts on identifying when leaders are at their best, such as Kouzes and Posner’s (1995) five critical leadership practices, namely: challenging the process, inspiring shared visions, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. In all of this research, the question begins to emerge, “Are there leadership practices or factors that are perceived to be the most important by followers and leaders alike?”

There is also growing evidence that people develop a mental picture, or perception, of what makes a “good leader” or ways in which “good leaders” would behave in a given situation (Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 2000). The closer the behavior of a leader is to the implicit perceptions of his or her followers, the more

favorable the leader's relationships and key outcomes tend to be (Robbins, 1998). Within organizations, do these mental pictures differ across levels of management or between leaders and followers? While substantial research is in existence on leadership in general, academic leadership in higher education may be the least studied and most misunderstood (Gmelch, 2000). Leadership, in the academic world particularly, is an "illusive, abstract concept" that lacks an agreed-upon definition and understanding (Callan, 1998).

One of the least studied populations in higher educational leadership is the academic department head: the "front-line leader" of the organization (Gmelch, 2000). Recent studies have suggested that the academic department forms the nucleus of the university enterprise. The academic department chair plays an important role in the decision-making process at institutions of higher education, however, little research has been conducted on the topic of department heads, and even less has been done in the areas of department head leadership (Brown, 2002; Brown & Moshavi, 2002). An emerging issue in college and university settings is the effectiveness and efficiency of the academic department. This issue can be related to failed practices in certain areas of educational leadership (Eddy, Murphy, Spaulding & Chandras, 1997). However, research has not addressed which leadership practices are considered ideal for the department head to possess based upon the perceptions of deans, faculty, or department heads themselves. This may be in part due to a lack of understanding of the demands and constraints placed upon department heads, and how these demands and constraints impact the choices made by these middle leaders in terms of leadership.

One lens through which to study the changing position of department heads in higher education is Rosemary Stewart's (1967; 1976; 1997) theory of demands, constraints and choices. *Demands* are role expectations from individuals who have sufficient power to expect compliance. These demands consist of a minimum core of required duties, activities, and responsibilities (Yukl, 2006) and include standards, objectives, and deadlines that must be met, as well as organizational procedures that must be completed such as preparing budgets and reports. *Constraints* are those factors, both internal and external to the organization, that limit what the jobholder can actually do (Stewart, 1982). They include organizational rules, policies, and regulations that must be followed and legal expectations such as labor laws (Yukl, 2006). Other constraints include the availability, or lack thereof, of resources such as facilities, equipment, funding, supplies, and personnel, and demand for services.

Stewart (1997) discovered that there were differences in the pattern of demands, constraints, and choices among different types of managerial jobs. She believed that these patterns were influenced by various aspects of the situations faced by the leader, including work relationships, work patterns, and the amount of "exposure" that decisions by middle leaders incurred (Yukl, 2006, p. 33). According to Stewart (1982), the demands made upon a leader in middle management by superiors, subordinates, peers, and individuals outside the organization's walls (work relationships) influence how a leader's time is spent. More time is needed to deal with peers and subordinates when a job requirement is to monitor performance, but is difficult to do so, and automatic compliance with orders and requests is not guaranteed (Yukl, 2006). Middle leaders are often required to give more time to superiors since they are highly dependent upon

immediate superiors for resources or assignments, and can often make unpredictable demands based upon pressures those superiors are facing from managers holding positions higher in the organization. Based upon Stewart's (1997) research, the extent to which subordinates, peers, and superiors make incompatible demands on a manager determines how much role conflict will be experienced and how difficult it is for the individual to manage the various demands. Without a clear understanding of the demands and constraints placed upon department heads, it would seem difficult for these middle leaders to know how to match their leadership behaviors to the perceptions of their followers or leaders.

Statement of the Problem

Leadership at the academic department level has taken on new importance as the expansion of higher education institutions in an increasingly competitive and resource-limited environment has changed colleges and universities from traditional centers of learning into "holding companies" (p. 33) for semi-independent satellite units (Bolton, 2004). Among these semi-independent units are business schools that contain multi-disciplines, and which operate close to the world of practice while maintaining a research and teaching agenda within higher education. The extent to which these schools are successful can have a significant bearing on the financial health of the entire institution (Bolton, 2004).

Administrators of business schools are coming under increased pressure to demonstrate accountability in many ways, from curriculum to faculty development. Department heads in Colleges of Business are being asked to formalize processes and assess outcomes for "continuous improvement" (Settoon & Wyld, 2004). Increases in

competition for scarce resources and a decrease of public trust in higher education practices have resulted in demands for colleges and universities to demonstrate their ability to be productive, effective, and efficient (Rosser, Johnsrud, & Heck, 2003).

Those serving as department heads in today's institutions of higher education must deal with increasing demands for public accountability at a time when resources are becoming scarce (Leaming, 1998); therefore, the individual who serves in the capacity of department head must be an astute manager. Seagren, Creswell, and Wheeler (1993) pointed out the importance of the department head as manager is expected to increase, while facing fewer resources. However, managing is not enough in order for department heads' to be successful in the competitive environment of higher education. According to Leaming (1998), exceptional leadership skills will be needed if department heads are able to meet the challenges that face colleges and universities today.

While there has been substantial research conducted on the middle leader in industry, little to no research has focused on the middle leader, or department head, within institutions of higher education. This lack of empirical research and understanding regarding the demands and constraints placed on department heads, and how those demands and constraints influence decision making and leadership choices is a laguna in understanding. Individual preparation for leadership positions at the departmental level in higher education has been widely considered to be inadequate, as well (Bolton, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

According to Vroom (1984), "there is a paucity of research on leadership in higher education" (p. 129). In particular, there has been little published about academic department heads in higher education (Gmelch, 2003; Kremer-Hayon & Avi-Itzhak,

1986; Leaming, 1998). The purpose of this study was to develop a further understanding of the demands and constraints of department heads in higher education through a qualitative investigation of deans, department heads, and faculty perceptions. The researcher chose to focus on deans, faculty, and department heads from Colleges of Businesses in mid to moderate sized colleges and universities from the Midwest that are accredited by the Association for the Advancement of Collegiant Schools of Business (AACSB).

The research questions developed provided the general direction for the study. While general and broad in nature, they helped provide a basic frame through which to view the demands and constraints placed on department heads in higher education.

Research Questions

Within the framework of this study, the following research questions were proposed:

1. What are deans' perceptions of the demands and constraints placed on department heads?
2. What are faculty perceptions of the demands and constraints placed on department heads?
3. What are departments heads' perceptions of the demands and constraints placed on them?

Limitations, Assumptions, and Design Controls

Limitations

Only AACSB-accredited Colleges of Business from mid to moderate sized colleges and universities in the Midwest were used for the study. While responses from

deans, faculty, and department heads' at these universities may be generalizable to their particular schools, the generalizations cannot be extended to represent other disciplines in higher education due to the limited nature of the sample. Another limitation to the study was the researcher recognized the potential of personal bias towards department head participant responses, due to prior experiences with department heads in higher education both as a junior faculty member, and as a spouse. Direct experiences with the department head while serving as a faculty member were negative, however, the vicarious experiences of living with the spouse were positive.

Limitations due to the nature of the data collection method were also presented. The interview process, which was heavily relied upon for this study, limits the ability for the participants to articulate his or her viewpoints (Creswell, 2002). Nine face-to-face interviews were conducted in the study. The data collected during face-to-face interviews may have been influenced by the participants' reluctance to disclose information due to the lack of a long-term relationship with the researcher.

Assumptions

By choosing Colleges of Business accredited by AACSB, the researcher assumed that there would be a commonality among programs, which would narrow the focus of the study. The researcher also assumed that the situational leadership theory of demands and constraints (Stewart, 1997) was the appropriate one to inform this particular study. Upon analysis of the transcripts, a grounded theory (Creswell, 2002) might emerge as being more appropriately suited to a discussion of understanding the demands and constraints placed upon department heads.

Design Controls

Validating findings in qualitative research means that the researcher must determine the accuracy and credibility of the findings through strategies including member checking or triangulation (Bogden & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2002; Patton, 1990). Corroborating evidence occurs by interviewing different individuals, such as deans, department heads, and faculty. It also includes gathering data from multiple sources, such as observational fieldnotes, official documents, and interview transcripts (Creswell, 2002; Patton, 1990). External auditors, with prior experience in the field of qualitative research, may also be used to review the different stages of the study to validate the process (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Descriptive validity, the factual accuracy of accounts from interviewees or from document analysis, *interpretive validity*, the ability of the researcher to grasp the meaning of events that participants experience, and *theoretical validity*, the theoretical constructs brought to the study by the researcher, are three ways to preserve the trustworthiness of a qualitative design (Creswell, 2002; Maxwell, 1992; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Internal validity is a major strength of qualitative methods (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993), as evidenced by the reliance of qualitative researchers upon informant interviews for data, and constant self-monitoring by the researchers. While external validity can be more problematic in qualitative studies, extensive descriptions of the research sites and participant characteristics can help readers determine the typicality and generalizability of the study to other contexts (LeCompe & Preissle, 1993).

Within the context of qualitative research, the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data made is a concern. Researchers engaged in a qualitative study tend to view

reliability as a fit between what is recorded as data and what actually occurs in the setting, rather than a literal consistency between different observations (Bogden & Biklen, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Qualitative researchers do not attempt to replicate what has gone on prior to the study in question; in fact, given the dynamic nature of social constructs, and the fact that the qualitative researcher is not an instrument in the experimental sense, replication of qualitative studies is almost impossible to achieve (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). External reliability in qualitative research can be obtained through the documentation of all moves through the stages of data production, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2002). A detailed description of each step taken by the researcher in the study, including the interview process, observation field notes, and document analysis is in Chapter Three.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms and concepts relevant to this study are defined and discussed. Some of the terms are relatively straightforward and do not require extensive discussion. Others are more conceptual in nature, and have been developed in more detail.

Academic Department. The term *academic department*, as used in this study, refers to the strategic unit within colleges and universities in which faculty and departmental leaders serve the constituents of the department and where faculty fulfill their teaching and research interests (Coats, 2000; Fincher, 2003; Leaming, 1998).

Department Head. The official designated leader of an academic department in a college or university. According to Leaming (1998), department chairpersons serve as chief administrators for the department, and represent the interests of the department to upper administration, to the dean, and to their faculty and students. For the purposes of

this study, the terms department chair or chairperson were used interchangeably with department head.

Academic Leadership. An extensive literature review has revealed a lack of consensus as to the meaning of academic leadership. While numerous articles and texts have been written in efforts to investigate and discuss the importance of *academic leadership* to the success of higher education institutions (Blackmore & Sachs, 2000; Leaming, 1998; Middlehurst, 2004; Ramsden, 1998), it is apparent that the term, while frequently used, is neither consistently used nor defined. For the purposes of this study, *academic leadership* was defined as the collection of tasks or duties performed by individuals appointed to a formal position of responsibility within a college or university (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Leaming, 1998). Within the framework of this project, academic leadership refers to the position of department head or dean.

Leadership. Numerous definitions exist in the literature for the term *leadership*. In this particular study, the researcher chose Yukl's (2006) definition of leadership as one that most closely fit the study. Within this context, *leadership* is defined as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives" (Yukl, 2006, p. 8).

Demands. Used within this study, demands are the essential requirements of a job that the holder must do. They also refer to the demands made by relationships with other people, and by the work pattern. Demands are explored in the general sense, as well, when compared to constraints and choices as faced by department heads (Stewart, 1967; 1982; Yukl, 2006).

Constraints. Constraints, as defined by Stewart (1967), are the factors, both internal and external to the organization, that limit what a jobholder may or may not do. Department heads face substantial challenges and changes within their leadership roles, which place constraints on their decision making and leadership (Gmelch, 2004).

Choices. According to Stewart (1967), choices exist for jobholders in similar jobs to do work in different ways from other jobholders. Within the context of this study, choices are defined as leadership options for department heads and their behavior to significant others such as deans and faculty.

Conclusion

The information in Chapter One provided the purpose, justification, and important definitions of terms and concepts of the study. In summary, the purpose of this study was to understand the demands and constraints of department heads from AACSB-accredited Colleges of Business in mid to moderate sized colleges and universities from the Midwest based upon perceptions of deans' and faculty. The existing literature on leadership, demands and constraints in leadership, and the arena of higher education as it relates to departmental leadership provided the background for this study. To the knowledge of the researcher, no other studies have attempted to gain an understanding of the demands and constraints placed on department heads as perceived by deans, department heads, and faculty.

Chapter Two consists of a review of the pertinent literature regarding leadership and organizational characteristics of institutions in higher education. A review of the limited research on department heads is provided. Stewart's theoretical concept of demands and constraints that framed the study is also presented.

Research methodology intended to be employed in the study is presented in Chapter Three, along with a discussion of the rationale for choosing AACSB-accredited institutions for examination, a description of potential research participants and interview protocol, and methods of data collection and analysis. The presentation and findings of the emergent data as discovered through the interview and document review processes constitute Chapter Four. A discussion of the major conclusions of the study as well as implications for deans and department heads and recommendations for further research in the area is included in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

Scholars and administrators alike indicate that there is a substantial leadership crisis in higher education. Considerable research has been focused on the roles of presidents, chancellors, and deans, and has revealed the leadership crisis by institutions of higher learning (Coats, 2000). An examination of these leadership problems in higher education has led researchers to realize that the academic leader is the least studied and most misunderstood management position in North America (Gmelch, 2004). The role that the academic department head plays in higher education has been judged to be a vital aspect of institutional leadership (Coats, 2000; Gmelch 2002). Individuals who lead the academic department have been called the “front-line leaders” in higher education (Gmelch, 2000). While numerous studies have been published on the roles and responsibilities of academic department heads (Benoit, Graham, & Heiman, 2002; Seagren, Creswell, & Wheeler; 1993) and many have focused on the job itself from the perspective of the department head, no specific studies have been located which attempted to gain an understanding of the demands and constraints placed on the department head, as perceived by deans and faculty.

This chapter includes a review of the literature and research which are pertinent to the study of leadership and understanding the demands and constraints of academic department heads in higher education. The first section consists of a review of the literature pertaining to the historical development of leadership theory, and current research and perspectives in leadership studies. The second section includes a discussion

of the literature on higher education issues and perspectives, including organizational characteristics of institutions of higher education, and a review of the academic department head, the leadership position addressed in this study. The chapter concludes with a summary section which positions this study within the existing body of literature.

Leadership Theories and Perspectives

The review of leadership literature and research inspires critical thought regarding several issues involving the concept of leadership. What is a leader? How is leadership defined? Before an examination of what makes an effective leader can be conducted, it is important to know what leadership means (Daft, 1999). Leadership has been a topic of interest to historians and philosophers since ancient times, but it was only at the turn of the century that formal research studies began (Daft, 1999; Robbins & Coulter, 2005; Schermerhorn, 1999).

Definitions of Leadership

According to Yukl (2006), theorists cannot even agree as to whether leadership is a concept that refers to a specialized role filled by a limited number of individuals within an organization, or a shared process that is diffused throughout the organization. Callan (1998) wrote that leadership is illusive; an abstract concept that lacks an agreed-upon definition. It is complex, changes according to the culture or goals of the organization, and can be defined as either an individual characteristic or process (Daft, 1999; Yukl, 2006). Most theorists would agree that leadership is a process that involves one or more individuals exerting intentional influence over others for the purpose of achieving organizational goals. Because it provides a broad basis for the discussion of leadership literature, the following definition of leadership will be used for the purpose of this study:

“Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives” (Yukl, 2006, p. 8).

Approaches to Leadership

Just as there is an abundance of definitions for leadership, there are numerous theories describing how the influence process works. Some are based upon the qualities, skills, or behavior of the leader, some on the relationship between leaders and followers, still others on how the situations affect leadership opportunities. In order to more effectively understand these various theories, it is useful to classify them into groups. No typology is perfect, but Yukl (2006) provided a useful starting point for discussion by suggesting that approaches to leadership research and theories could be organized into the following categories: (a) trait, (b) behavioral, (c) power-influence, (d) situational, and (e) integrative.

Trait approaches. One of the first methods used to research leadership was analyzing leaders’ attributes. Such research focused on leaders’ skills, personality, motivation and values. Researchers assumed leaders had certain traits that were not present in others (Bass, 1990; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Daft, 1999; Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Robbins & Coulter, 2005; Yukl, 2006). Physical characteristics, aspects of personality, and aptitudes were studied, and often these traits were deemed essential for the identification of leadership behavior.

Behavioral approaches. Behavioral approaches to leadership are based on the assumption that leadership can be reduced to learnable behaviors (Daft, 1999; Yukl, 2006). Early behavioral studies identified two distinct leadership styles: autocratic and

democratic (Lewin, Lippert, & White, 1939). Further studies indicated that leadership behavior exists on a continuum (Daft, 1999; Robbins & Coulter, 2005; Yukl, 2006). Therefore, one leader might be autocratic, another democratic, and a third a mix of the two styles. Other theories that fall under the behavioral approach included the Ohio State Studies, University of Michigan Studies, and Blake and Mouton's Leadership Grid (Daft, 1999; Robbins & Coulter, 2005; Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 1997; Yukl, 2006).

Power-influence approaches. Power and influence approaches are rooted in the exploration of the influence processes involved in leadership. Many power and influence theorists utilized French and Raven's (1959) seminal work, in which they identified five bases of power: (a) legitimate power, which is derived from the roles and positions one holds in an organization; (b) reward power, which derives from the ability to provide rewards for completed work; (c) coercive power, which derives from the ability to punish a follower for poor performance; (d) expert power, which derives from the leader's perceived expertise, and; (e) referent power, which derives from followers' positive regard for, and ability to identify with, the leader (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989; Daft, 1999; Kanter, 1977; Robbins & Coulter, 2005; Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 1997). Although it can also be classified as a behavioral approach, participative leadership is an interesting power and influence theory, as it is based upon the idea that leaders become more powerful the more power they give away (Daft, 1999; Robbins & Coulter, 2003; Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 1997; Yukl, 2006).

Situational approaches. Situational, or contingency approaches are based on how the components of leadership style, subordinate characteristics, and situational elements impact one another (Daft, 1999; Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Yukl, 2006). In an early

attempt at situational theory, Fiedler suggested that organizations choose leaders whose styles were most consistent with the situation most favorable for their leadership styles (Daft, 1999; Robbins & Coulter, 2003; Yukl, 2006). Another contingency model, developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1996), described the characteristics of followers as the important element of the situation (Daft, 1999; Robbins, 1998). In this model, leaders respond to the ability and willingness of followers with one of four contingent leadership styles. Hersey and Blanchard (1996) argued that regardless of what the leader does, it is the follower who accepts or rejects the leader. Therefore, leader effectiveness depends on the actions of the followers. This is an important dimension in situational theories that often goes underemphasized in most leadership theories (Daft, 1999; Robbins & Coulter, 2005). A third contingency approach, path-goal theory, was developed by House and rests on the concept that the leader's responsibility is to increase subordinate motivation to reach personal and organizational goals by "increasing personal payoffs to subordinates for work-goal attainment and making the path to these payoffs easier to travel by clarifying it, reducing roadblocks and pitfalls, and increasing the opportunities for personal satisfaction en route" (Yukl, 2006, p. 212).

Integrative approaches. According to Yukl (2006), the integrative approach to leadership studies combines one or more of the other approaches into a single theory. While it has become more common for researchers in leadership to include two or more types of leadership variables, it is still rare to find a theory that includes traits, behaviors, situational, and power-influence factors. One theory that is truly integrative is socialized charismatic leadership (Daft, 1999; Robbins & Coulter, 2005; Yukl, 2006). Charismatic leaders exhibit both traits (e.g., enthusiasm, personal character, and communication

ability) and behaviors (e.g., acting in unconventional ways and putting themselves at risk to achieve their goals) that help attract and inspire followers (Daft, 1999; Yukl, 2006). In addition, charismatic leadership has been understood to be situational in nature. Finally, charismatic leadership may be exhibited by individuals who are not in formal leadership positions, because their influence is based on personal qualities and power, rather than positional authority within the organization.

Leadership and Change

Yukl's (2006) categories for leadership approaches, while useful, do not encompass all theories of leadership. Leaders must recognize that internal changes within organizations must keep pace with their turbulent, external environments (Daft, 1999; Robbins & Coulter, 2003). One approach that has had a substantial impact on leading organizations and followers through change is transformational leadership..

Transformational leadership may best be understood if it is compared to transactional leadership (Daft, 1999; Robbins & Coulter, 2003; Yukl, 2006).

Transactional Leadership. Transactional leadership is a relationship between leaders and followers where valued things (e.g., economic, political, or psychological) are exchanged (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989; Burns, 1978; Daft, 1999; Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Everyone involved brings their own motives to the exchange process, but individuals are not bound to each other for any “continuing, mutual pursuit of higher purpose” (Leithwood & Duke, 1999, p. 49). “Goals may be quite different between leaders and followers but are interrelated so that the tradeoff or exchange is made which will allow both to reach their ends” (Miller, Winston, & Mendenhall, 1983, p. 96).

Transformational Leadership. Bass (1990) described transformational leadership as a process of influencing commitment to shared objectives and empowering followers to accomplish them. The transformational leader “engages followers in such a way as to raise them to new levels of morality and motivation” (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989, p. 10). The transformational leader is capable of: (a) articulating a vision that is attractive and clear; (b) explaining the way the vision will be attained; (c) acting optimistic and with confidence; (d) expressing confidence in followers; (e) using symbolism to emphasize critical values; (f) setting the example for others to follow, and; (g) empowering the people to achieve the vision. (Bass, 1990). Transformational leaders are defined by their ability to bring about fundamental change, not just in organizational behavior, but in the underlying vision, values, and culture (Daft, 1999; Kotter, 1994; Robbins & Coulter, 2005; Yukl, 2006).

Facets of Leadership

Ethics and leadership. Due to changing cultural, social, and political values, ethical standards are more important than ever (Beck & Murphy, 1994; Bolman & Deal, 1997). Two essential ethical questions facing leaders today are: (a) whose values are being used?, and; (b) how are value conflicts resolved? Ethical leadership combines a concern for the rational measures of performance with the “importance of treating people right every day.”

For the purpose of this study, three theories that emphasize the ethical dimension of leadership have been selected to review. According to Burns (1978), *transforming leadership* consists of “leaders and followers raising one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (p. 403). In Greenleaf’s *servant leadership*, the primary

responsibility of leaders is to provide for the needs of followers, help them grow and develop as individuals, and empower them to act on their own (Daft, 1999; Yukl, 2006). Finally, in *path-goal theory*, leaders identify the most appropriate behaviors and styles needed to assist followers in their attainment of organizational goals and objectives, while developing the individual (Daft, 1999; Robbins, 1998).

Decision making and leadership. Decision making is an inherent part of leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Daft, 1999; Robbins & Coulter, 2005; Simon, 1993; Yukl, 2006). To effectively solve problems and make decisions, leaders must have a conceptual understanding of the decision making process. Three models that inform leaders include: (a) Vroom and Yetton's (1973) Normative Decision Model, (b) Simon's (1977) concept of bounded rationality, and (c) Cohen, March, and Olsen's (1972) Garbage Can Model. Vroom and Yetton's model includes four decision making procedures used by managers. The four procedures are: (a) autocratic, the manager makes the decision without asking for participation; (b) consultation, the manager asks for other's ideas and opinions, then makes the decision alone; (c) joint decision, the manager and others have equal influence over the decision; and (d) delegation, the manager gives parameters for decision making, but delegates authority and responsibility for making the decision to an individual or group.

These decision making procedures may be viewed as a continuum from little or no follower participation to high follower participation. The choice of decision making procedures depends on the decision quality desired, the degree of acceptance needed by followers implementing the decision, and the factors inherent in the situation (Robbins & Coulter, 2005; Vroom & Yetton, 1973; Yukl, 2006).

Simon (1977) described decision making in terms of rational, irrational, and non-rational processes. Since organizations do not strive to make irrational decisions, they will not be considered further here. According to Simon, rational decision making results in behavior that is closely aligned with goals and presupposes unlimited time, energy, resources, and attention – an unrealistic presupposition. Simon’s concept of nonrational decision making processes, also known as bounded rationality, is an important one for educational leaders. Leaders must make decisions in the context of limited time, resources, attention and energy (Simon, 1977). This is known as satisficing.

Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972) further developed the idea of bounded rationality with their *Garbage Can Model* for organizational decision making. According to Cohen, March, and Olsen, complex organizations, such as educational institutions, have unclear goals, confusing technology, and fluid participation of key players. As a result, problems, solutions, and participants all move around the organization in constant flux. In this research, leaders often avoided decisions (oversight) or passed them along to others (flight); therefore, underlying issues were rarely addressed. Regardless of how decisions are made, the “quality of leadership is one of the most important determinants...[for] success in making decisions” (Yukl, 2006, p. 328). Kanter (1993) maintained that collaborative modes of management stimulate the search for solutions. The team approach “enhances the capacity of organizations to master new knowledge and to...solve problems” (Bensimon & Neumann, 1994, p. ix). Collaborative decision making reinforces successful team processes, thereby highlighting the importance of membership over leadership.

Culture. According to Schein (1992), culture can be defined as the “pattern of shared, basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problem of external adaptation and internal integration [and teaches] to new members the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (p. 12). Three levels of organizational culture include: (a) artifacts, which represent the visible organizational structures and processes; (b) espoused values, which include strategies, goals, and philosophies, and; (c) basic underlying assumptions, which are unconscious beliefs, perceptions, and feelings. An individual’s relationship to culture is important because “leaders create and change culture, while managers and administrators live within them” (Schein, 1992, p. 5).

The ability to understand culture within an organization is an important skill for leaders. One of the ways in which leaders can view culture is through the use of a lens, such as Bolman and Deal’s (1997) symbolic frame, in which organizations are described as cultures comprised of stories, rituals, and heroes. The symbolic frame helps leaders understand how organizations create, determine, and reinforce the meaning of both internal and external events (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Schein, 1992), which is important because “the ability to perceive the limitations of one’s own culture, and to develop the culture adaptively, is the essence and ultimate challenge of leadership” (Schein, 1992, p. 2).

Effective Leadership

Followers usually judge leadership effectiveness by one primary standard: the leader’s success in achieving organizational goals (O’Toole, 1999). From a research perspective, however, effectiveness is contingent on the leadership philosophy of the

researcher. A number of individuals have sought to define the essence of leadership effectiveness. For example, according to Yukl (2006), effective leaders: (a) help followers find meaning in complex events; (b) build consensus and alignment among followers on organizational objectives and strategies; (c) increase enthusiasm and commitment for the task at hand, and instill confidence in followers that their efforts will be successful; (d) recognize the importance of building mutual trust and cooperation, and foster an understanding and acceptance of diversity among followers; (e) help create an identity for their organizations, and resolve membership issues in ways that are congruent with that identity; (f) help followers get organized, and coordinate different and interrelated activities in a way that makes efficient use of resources; (g) recognize the importance of continuous learning and improvement, and encourage innovation and creativity among followers; (h) obtain the necessary resources and support needed for followers to accomplish the tasks at hand; (i) set the example for moral and just behavior, and develop a climate of fairness, compassion, and social responsibility, and; (j) help followers to develop the necessary skills and empower them to become agents of change and leaders themselves. Just as there are multiple definitions of leadership, there are as many different perspectives on what makes an effective leader. Concepts of leader effectiveness reviewed within the context of this study include teamwork, trust, empowerment, and servanthood.

Teamwork. Effective leaders advocate teamwork. The role of a leader within a team context is that of a facilitator, coach, or teacher rather than a manager or director (Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Yukl, 2006). “Teamwork represents a set of values that encourage listening and responding constructively to views expressed by others, giving

others the benefit of the doubt, providing support, and recognizing the interests and achievement of others” (Katzenbach & Smith, 1991, p. 112). In order to deliver expected outcomes, a leader must recognize the importance of deploying teams strategically where they are most effective and develop basic team disciplines that will make them effective (Bensimon & Neumann, 1994; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Goldsmith, Lyons & Freas, 2000; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Teams create a culture or environment that provides an opportunity for individual or group excellence (Katzenbach & Smith, 1991) and provide a foundation for collaborative learning (Bruffee, 1999; Katzenbach and Smith, 1991; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton, & Kleiner, 2000). According to Katzenbach and Smith (1991), teams are most effective when leaders make sure: (a) they create their own purpose in response to a demand, challenge, or opportunity; (b) they translate their common purpose into specific, measurable goals; (c) they are manageable in size; (d) they have the right mix of expertise; (e) they are committed to working together; and (f) their members hold themselves individually accountable.

Trust. The second component of effective leadership is building mutual trust and cooperation among members of the organization (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Kanter, 1977; Katzenbach & Smith, 1991; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Morgan, 1997; Schein, 1992; Yukl, 2006). Trust is encouraged “when people understand each other, appreciate diversity, and are able to confront and resolve differences in a constructive way” (Yukl, 2006, p. 439). On the other hand, trust is discouraged when leaders’ words and actions do not match (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Argyris and Schon (1974) stated that behaviors that are demonstrated, or “theories-in use” must be aligned with descriptions of behavior, or

“espoused theory” (p. 145). Incongruence between the two can lead to defensiveness and lessen trust. Commitment by followers was contingent on their level of trust in the leader, which was heightened when the leader’s espoused statements were consistent with actions (Yukl, 2006).

Empowerment. Empowerment is a process whereby decision making is transferred or shared between leaders and followers. “The leader who clings to power, who is afraid to give it to others, will in fact cease to be a leader” (Goldsmith, Lyons, and Freas, 2000, p. 154). The effective leader educates the follower so each learns how to act as a self leader.

Leaders must create environments that encourage, facilitate, and reward empowerment. Daft (1999) identified five elements that must be in place before employees can truly be empowered: (a) employees must receive information about company performance; (b) employees must have the knowledge and skills to contribute to company goals; (c) employees must be given the power to make substantive decisions; (d) employees must understand the meaning and impact their jobs have on the organization, and; (e) employees must be rewarded based upon company performance. In addition, the leader must be able to assess whether followers are able and willing to be empowered (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001).

Stewardship and Servanthood. The concept of stewardship is a marked change in leadership thinking (Daft, 1999). Employees are empowered to make decisions and are given control over how to do their own jobs. *Stewardship* is the belief that leaders are deeply accountable to others as well as to the organization, without trying to control others, give definition to meaning, or to define purpose for others (Daft, 1999). *Servant*

leaders take stewardship one step further, and transcend self-interests to serve the needs of their followers, helping them find ways to grow and develop, and provide opportunities for others to gain materially and emotionally (Greenleaf, 1977; Daft, 1999). Greenleaf (1977) proposed that leaders should operate from the basic tenets of servanthood, which include (a) putting service before self-interest; (b) listening first to affirm those around them, and; (c) inspiring trust in followers by being trustworthy.

Demands, Constraints, and Leadership

In the late 1960s, Rosemary Stewart conceived a model for analyzing managerial jobs and understanding how managers do those jobs (Yukl, 2006). This underutilized model contains core components of demands, constraints and choices. Stewart described managers as facing an inner core of *demands*, an outer boundary of *constraints*, and an arena of *choices* that are influenced by both demands and constraints (see Table 1). The concept of constraints and demands was also used by Graen (1990) in discussing determinants of job roles, although neither demands nor constraints were defined in his research.

Demands, as defined by Stewart (1997), are role expectations from individuals who have sufficient power to expect compliance. These demands consist of a minimum core of required duties, activities, and responsibilities (Yukl, 2006) and include standards, objectives, and deadlines that must be met, as well as organizational procedures that must be completed such as preparing budgets and reports. Constraints are those factors, both internal and external to the organization, that limit what the jobholder can actually do (Stewart, 1982). They include organizational rules, policies, and regulations that must be

Table 1

Breakdown of Demands, Constraints, and Choices Affecting Content of Work (not exhaustive)

Demands	Constraints	Choices
Determined by:		
Output specifications	Limited resources	Focus of attention between different job responsibilities
Need for personal involvement in the unit's work	Legal and trade constraints	Time spent on supervision
Bureaucratic procedures that cannot be delegated	Technological limitations	Amount and nature of delegation
Relationships with contacts, expectations, need to influence	Attitudes of peers, subordinates, superiors towards leader's actions and proposed actions	Attention given to boundaries and whom the leader seeks to influence

Adapted from Stewart, R. (1982). The relevance of some studies of managerial work and behavior to leadership research. In J.G. Hunt, C. A. Schriesheim, & J. Sekaran (Eds.), *Leadership: Beyond establishment views*. (pp. 30-46). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

followed and legal expectations such as labor laws (Yukl, 2006). Other constraints include the availability, or lack thereof, of resources such as facilities, equipment, funding, supplies, and personnel, and demand for services.

As part of her research, Stewart (1997) discovered that there were differences in the pattern of demands, constraints, and choices among different types of managerial jobs. She believed that these patterns were influenced by various aspects of the situations faced by the leader, including work relationships, work patterns, and the amount of “exposure” that decisions by middle leaders incurred (Yukl, 2006, p. 33). According to Stewart (1982), the demands made upon a leader in middle management by superiors, subordinates, peers, and individuals outside the organization’s walls (work relationships) influence how a leader’s time is spent. More time is needed to deal with peers and subordinates when a job requirement is to monitor performance, but is difficult to do so, and automatic compliance with orders and request is not guaranteed (Yukl, 2006). Middle leaders are often required to give more time to superiors since they are highly dependent upon immediate superiors for resources or assignments, and can often make unpredictable demands based upon pressures those superiors are facing from managers holding positions higher in the organization. Based upon Stewart’s (1997) research, the extent to which subordinates, peers, and superiors make incompatible demands on a manager determines how much role conflict will be experienced and how difficult it is for the individual to manage the various demands.

Work patterns inherent in the job itself were found to impact how managers behaved in terms of decisions. Stewart believed that the work patterns associated with some managerial jobs tend to be habit forming, in other words, an individual who spends

a long time in one position might become accustomed to behaving in a particular way, and could find it difficult to adjust to another managerial position that has a different set of demands and constraints (Yukl, 2006). A third aspect of managerial jobs identified as determining what behavior and skills are required was termed “exposure.” Exposure is the amount of responsibility the leader has for decisions that have the potential for serious outcomes, and the amount of time that might elapse before a mistake or poor decision might surface.

According to Stewart (1982), all managers exercise choice in their leadership activities. It is the type of choices exercised and the relevance to the situation at hand that matters for effective leadership. Within most work situations, Stewart found that most individuals tended to spend their time (choices) in different ways, because certain aspects of the job struck them as most important, or interested them more than others. Her research revealed that those jobs in which the manager spent most of his or her time with a wide variety of contacts including peers, superiors, and subordinates required the widest variety of leadership skills to deal with the substantial range of contacts that had to be influenced. Stewart’s broad perspective on demands and constraints, and their impact on leader behavior, is not reflected in much of the research on situational determinants of leader behavior. Nevertheless, her research provides useful insights into the manner in which leadership choices may be directly impacted by the demands and constraints found within the job itself (Yukl, 2006).

Summary of Leadership Theories and Perspectives

The arena of leadership studies has undergone numerous changes over the last several hundred years. From *trait theories* to *contingency theories*, leadership ideas and

practices have evolved into an integration of recent thoughts with established research findings in leadership. This integration of leadership research has implications for the front-line leader in higher education, the academic department head.

Higher Education Issues and Perspectives

Leaders in higher education are facing greater pressures than ever before (Stewart, 1997). Those in academic leadership face issues including organizational characteristics of institutions, and new challenges facing these institutions. The review of existing literature on higher education creates questions regarding the growing expectations and demands of leaders in higher education. Before an understanding of department heads and their demands and constraints can take place, it is helpful to study issues and perspectives specific to institutions of higher education.

Organizational Characteristics of Institutions of Higher Education

Academic economists have often modeled colleges and universities as organizations seeking to maximize a university-wide objective function (Ehrenberg, 1999). These models have assisted in explaining changing patterns within universities, and resource allocation decisions across departments. Some characterize universities as being professional bureaucracies (Pawar & Eastman, 1997) in which professionals are prominent and hold the power within the organization. Cohen and March (1986) articulated the idea that institutions of higher education are *organized anarchies* with all of the colleges (and departments within colleges), and faculty within colleges, pursuing independent objectives. Colleges and universities are hierarchical organizations, and members within these institutions often view administrators with distrust and skepticism (McArthur, 2002).

Governance studies explored the impact of increasing size of universities and decentralization in decision making. Weick (1979) developed the concept of coupled dependency that showed decentralized decision making structures as slower, less efficient processes, yet loosely interconnected, allowing for innovation and flexibility. He used higher education as an example of an organization that had achieved a careful balance between decentralized and centralized authority and decision making structures. These characteristics gave colleges and universities an advantage over tightly coupled organizations in their ability to respond to changes because the entire organization did not have to respond to the environment; instead individual departments could react. The academic departments could sense the detailed and nuanced changes in the environment easier than the institution as a whole (Kezar & Eckel, 2004).

While there are similarities between institutions of higher education and other types of organizations, there are characteristics that set them apart. Five core values of university culture were identified by Austin (1990). The first core value is related to the general mission of a university, the purpose of which is to “pursue, discover, produce and disseminate knowledge, truth, and understanding” (p. 62). The second core value is a commitment to autonomy and academic freedom. The constant pursuit of intellectual honesty and fairness comprises the third value, while the fourth, collegiality, is considered ideal for successful governance in higher education. Finally, higher education institutions have a responsibility to convey the culture of society as a whole.

Autonomy in higher education is found on both the individual and departmental level. University governance typically provides substantial amounts of discretion to individual faculty members in terms of research agendas, how to teach, and within some

limits, the hours that are worked. The control and autonomy given to faculty is often mirrored by similar control and autonomy given to departments, many of which elect their own leaders (Thompson, 1999). Collegiality coupled with autonomy is the “appropriate organizational context” for the work of faculty (Austin, 1990, p. 65). While collegiality is one of the core values of institutions of higher education, there is a corresponding bureaucratic structure which at times produces conflict in decision making. Colleges and universities have organizational charts which communicate the formal chain of command for decision making. Faculty members are organized into departments with a chair (department head) as the leader. The department head typically reports to a dean who in turn reports to someone higher up the organizational chart. This formal hierarchy of decision making runs contrary to the collegiality ingrained in a university’s culture (Thompson, 1999).

Moses and Roe (1990) described differences between colleges and universities and other organizations. Typically a college or university is structured around academic disciplines (departments) which provide socialization for faculty members. According to Moses and Roe (1990), there is an ambiguity of goals due to the different constituents served by institutions of higher education, including students, faculty, staff, administration, community, government, and employers. The diversity of constituents faced by colleges and universities often leads to disagreements in the significance and prioritization of various goals (Austin, 1990). As a result, goals are often stated in vague terms.

The history of higher education has revealed its highly adaptive nature in some areas. While slow to change internally with regard to decision making, colleges and

universities have adapted to societal changes over the years. These institutions have also impacted the society in which they exist. This ability to change and be changed, requires a form of leadership rooted in higher education's traditions of value and purpose (Burkhardt, 2002).

Challenges Facing Institutions of Higher Education

For centuries, colleges and universities operated in relatively stable environments in which changes occurred slowly at a pace dictated by the organizations themselves as knowledge and advancements to learning were discovered (Davies, Hides, & Casey, 2001). Changes are in the wind. There is increasing attention being paid to the role that colleges and universities should play in U.S. society (Burkhardt, 2002). Rapid and complex change is now a compelling force for institutions in higher education (Lucas, 2000). Over the past four decades, colleges and universities have faced increasing challenges related to governance (Berdahl, 1991; Birnbaum, 1988; Kezar, 2000; Leslie & Fretwell, 1996). According to Brand (1993), the momentum for change is being primarily driven by external forces, while the resistance to change is coming from within the walls of higher education institutions.

One significant initiative impacting higher education is the growing expectation for accountability. Legislators, parents, students, governments, and industry are demanding that colleges and universities produce a competent graduate (Alexander, 2000; Eddy, Murphy, Spaulding, & Chandras, 1997). Those same external forces are also expecting academic leaders in higher education to exercise ethical leadership (Eddy, 1993). In particular, institutions now face substantially higher competing priorities and demands to:

engage the community, business, and industry; to solve social problems and improve the schools; to generate cutting edge research and innovations to fuel the economy; to develop a more just and equal society by preparing a diverse student body, while having fewer funds, more demands from students, and an increasingly complex legal environment” (Kezar & Eckel, 2004, p. 371).

Education is rapidly expanding beyond the physical boundaries of colleges and universities. Challenges to higher education institutions posed by rapidly changing technology include balancing personal contact between leaders and students and the impersonal contact of technology; limitations of reaching students who are no longer on campus, and the benefits of group learning which is lost when individuals are conducting their primary education over a computer (Eddy & Spaulding, 1996; Leaming, 1998; Lueddeke, 1999; Middleton, 2004).

Other trends that will characterize higher education in the next decade include greater competition for students and funding; more efficient management; and highly specialized institutions. The dilemma for colleges and universities is exacerbated by the constricting financial demands in relation to increasing student and output demands. Davies (1997) noted that this situation seems to be dominant particularly in the United States, the United Kingdom, and most of Western Europe. According to Ramsden (1998), academic leaders of the future will have to possess leadership skills that include an appreciation and understanding of the relationship between education, technology, time, and distance.

Changes in higher education have gone beyond larger class sizes, more diverse groups of students, and different student attitudes. They have altered management

patterns, public perceptions of higher education, professional standards and accountability. The expansion in numbers has been accompanied by an extension of the range of occupations which require a college or university degree. Increasingly, institutions of higher education are expected to earn their funds, based on performance, rather than receive government support (Clark, 1995; Ramsden, 1998). The entire relationship between government and colleges and universities has changed; they no longer function as partners, but as “two parties with different interests and priorities that sometimes converge and sometimes sharply conflict” (Clark, 1996, p. 417).

Academic Departments

Academic departments date back to the nineteenth century. Shortly after the Civil War, a change took place in the reporting relationships in higher education. Up until that time, presidents personally administered colleges and everyone reported to them (McArthur, 2002). As the numbers of students increased, various dean positions were created to help oversee an increasingly complex organization. Expansions of faculty brought the need to improve organization and management of academic areas, thus the academic department was formed (Hecht, Higgerson, Gmelch, & Tucker, 1999). The primary method of organizing an institution of higher education is by departments according to discipline (Thompson, 1999).

Over the years, critics and supporters have argued the merits of academic departments on college campuses. It is the base unit of colleges and universities, the main building block around which all academic endeavors revolve (Lucas, 1994; Seagren, Cresswell, & Wheeler, 1993; Trow, 1977). Anderson (1977) cited several reasons for looking at departments as legitimate units within higher education which included: (a)

departments provide the appropriate milieu for the development, preservation and transmission of knowledge, and; (b) departments are organized in such a way that they provide familiarity, formal simplicity, and have a clearly defined hierarchy of authority to which both students and faculty easily relate.

Academic departments are strategic units within colleges and universities, and are critical with regard to decisions that influence the character of the institution, course content, major requirements, and faculty salaries (Coats, 2000; Leaming, 1998).

Department heads and the faculty of their departments provide for the development and transmission of knowledge, and there is a clearly defined hierarchy of authority within the department. As such, it can be argued that the success of an institution of higher learning is measured largely by the success of its academic departments (Bowman, 2002; Carroll & Gmelch, 1994; Coats, 2000).

The literature on higher education contains information regarding the significance of culture in the study of the academic department (McArthur, 2002). Austin (1994) concluded from his studies that:

like institutions, departments and other units have unique cultures characterized by norms, values and behavior patterns...the departmental missions and goals, the leadership style of the department [head]...the characteristics of the students and faculty, the physical environment, and the relationship of the department ...to other units and to the institution as a whole are all part of the culture of a department (p. 51).

Academic Department Heads in Higher Education

The job of department head came about more than 100 years ago with the establishment of land grant universities (Bennett, 1983). The position of the academic department head in higher education is one that requires leadership, administrative skills, and scholarship (Gabbidon, 2005; Lucas, 2000) and bridges the gap between faculty and administration. Nearly 80 percent of all administrative decisions in higher education are made at the academic department level (Brown & Moshavi, 2002; Knight & Holen, 1985; Wolverton, Gmelch, & Sarros, 1999). One group of researchers noted that, “It is at the departmental level that the real institutional business gets conducted” (Seagren, Creswell, & Wheeler, 1993, p. 2). In 1983, Bennett wrote that:

one can argue that the chairperson is crucial...a college or university can lurch along...with poor administrators at the top. As long as there are good department chairpersons, the integrity of the institution can be maintained. Reverse the situation, however, and watch out! (p. 2)

Tucker (1992) agreed that “a brilliant university of college administration with inept chairpersons cannot survive; an inept administration, with the help of a group of brilliant chairpersons usually can. The position of department chairperson, then, is an important one” (p. 4).

Over twenty years ago, Keller (1983) found that nearly fifty thousand scholars were serving as department heads in the United States, and almost one-quarter were replaced each year. Today there are approximately 80,000 department heads in the United States (Lucas, 1994). Those in leadership at the academic department level continue to serve for only a short period of time even today (Bright & Richards, 2001). What

contributes to the lack of continuity in leadership at the department level in higher education? While numerous studies have been conducted on the specific tasks, activities, roles, and responsibilities of the department head, there continues to be ambiguity in the research regarding the understanding of demands placed on the department head, the various roles they play, and the importance of leadership at this level (Bolton, 2004; Carroll & Gmelch, 1994; Seagren, et al, 1993).

Metaphors have often been used to describe the position that department heads hold in colleges and universities. Seagren, et al, (1993), described the situation that department heads face as a “block of wood held in a vise for shaping” (p. iii). Those holding the title of department head have also been likened to the Roman god, Janus, having two faces: that of administrator and faculty member, simultaneously (Gmelch & Burns, 1991). The head is squeezed between the demands of upper administration and institutional expectations on one side, while facing the expectations and demands of faculty, staff, and students on the other side. The departmental leader is “caught in the middle,” (Seagren, et al, 1993; Thompson, 1999), expected to provide quality leadership and direction while avoiding the inevitable squeeze that occurs from being placed directly between these two layers of demands. Caught between conflicting interests of faculty and deans, trying to look in multiple directions, academic department heads often do not know which way to turn (Gmelch, 2004). Tucker (1984) commented on the very distinctive characteristic of the department head – that of leader, yet rarely given undisputed authority.

The position as head of an academic department in higher education has been characterized as having no parallel in business or industry (Gmelch, 2002). Department

heads often assume their duties at a substantial cost to their professional interests and scholarly productivity (Tucker, 1984). They face both external and political relationships, must maintain college resources, promote internal productivity with faculty, and attend to personnel matters. Academic leaders today are expected to respond to the business pressures of controlling costs and maintaining enrollment numbers, while at the same time manage faculty who often view business interests as secondary to the academic freedom and fidelity of higher education (Raelin, 1995).

Roles and responsibilities of department heads. The role of department head in colleges and universities today is substantially different and more multifaceted than what was expected just a decade ago (Benoit, Graham, & Heiman, 2002). The roles and expectations of department heads often vary from institution to institution, and are not well defined in most cases (Leaming, 1998; Hecht, 2000). The literature on chairing a department tends to emphasize either the importance of leadership and vision for the department, or the role of juggling tasks to keep the department running (Benoit, Graham, & Heiman, 2002; Graham & Benoit, 2004). Most agree, however, that the department heads' role requires individuals to have the ability to fulfill diverse, and at times, divergent responsibilities. These roles and responsibilities require a different skill package from the one of independent scholar, which is often the role that originally attracted the department head to the field of higher education (Graham & Benoit, 2004). Bennett (1983) argued that taking on a departmental leader role demands shifting perspectives from specialist to generalist. Department heads are expected to move from thinking individualistically to thinking together, and are expected to move from the role

of loyalist to their discipline and peers to that of university ambassador (Lueddeke, 1999).

In a recent study conducted by Graham and Benoit (2004), department chairs identified four major roles they play in their position: administrative, leadership, interpersonal, and resource development. Administrative roles were broken down into sub-roles including fiscal management, scheduling coordinator, report generator, and staff supervisor. Further research by Graham and Benoit (2004) revealed that leadership roles department heads' identified as being key included visionary, internal advocate for the department, intermediary, external liaison, curriculum development, and role model.

Four interpersonal roles were stated as critical by department heads, and were based upon developing productive relationships within the workplace. They included the role of counselor, coach, mediator, and fosterer of productive environment (climate). Another role of the department head is that of recruiter, a sub-role of resource development. In smaller departments, it is not unusual for the chairperson of the department to assemble and chair the search committee. According to Perlman and McCann (2003), "department chairs and deans must balance pressures from above and below. Achieving this balance during the recruitment of new faculty is ...accomplished through the use of productive communication" (p. 157). Other sub-roles of resource development communicated by department heads' were that of faculty mentor, faculty evaluator, and resource provider for faculty needs.

Studies of faculty morale have shown that overwhelming numbers of faculty members lacked confidence in their institutions' leadership, and that lack of confidence resulted in low morale (Perlman and McCann, 2003). Johnsrud (1996) reported that the

relationship between the department head and faculty members, and within the department as a whole, was critical to helping faculty morale.

One of the primary roles of the department chair should be to build and nurture a positive collegial climate in the department for all faculty. To accomplish this objective, the selection of chairs should be monitored carefully and ongoing training instituted (Johnsrud, p. 120).

Another key role identified by faculty as critical to a departmental leaders' success was that of facilitator of change. In an academic department, change can only be accomplished with the support of the faculty, and due to the individualistic nature of higher education, obtaining faculty support for anything can be a daunting challenge for the departmental leader (McArthur, 2002). Faculty members can be a force of resistance or a storehouse of creative energy. The direction taken by them is often due in large part to the leadership demonstrated by the department head (Lucas, 2000; McArthur, 2002).

Role ambiguity occurs when there are differing expectations about the activities that the department head should perform (Gmelch, 2002). Moses and Roe (1990) described role ambiguity as something that occurs as a result of the department heads' split focus among multiple constituents (faculty, students, administration) and the limited ability to measure goals in academe. According to Tucker (1984):

the chairperson is a leader, yet is seldom given the scepter of undisputed authority. He or she is first among equals, but any strong coalition of those equals can severely restrict the chairperson's ability to lead. Deans and vice-presidents look to the chairpersons as those primarily responsible for shaping the department's future, yet faculty members regard themselves as the primary agents

of change in department policies and procedures. The chairperson, then, is both a manager and a faculty colleague, an advisor and an advisee, a soldier and a captain, a drudge and a boss. (p. 4)

Role conflict occurs for the department head when he or she is caught between members of the department and the administration (Bennett, 1983). Politically, the head is sandwiched between the faculty and administration, and both groups demand loyalty (Thompson, 1999). When conflict arises between the two groups, and the department head is caught in the middle, he or she may end up alienating one group or the other, or possibly both.

Selection and training of department heads. Departmental leaders often come to their positions without leadership training, without any prior leadership or managerial experience, and without a clear understanding of the ambiguity and complexity of their jobs (Bolton, 2004; Gmelch, 2000a, 2002; Lindholm, 1999). In an earlier study conducted by Tucker (1984), it was found that 68% of department heads had no previous experience in administration. These leaders are often chosen from faculty ranks, and have had little specific preparation for leadership, yet they are expected to lead effectively and efficiently (Creswell, Wheeler, Seagren, Egly, & Beyer, 1990; Hawkins, 1990; Moses & Roe, 1990). They are expected to wear many hats with little to no preparation for juggling those hats with confidence and expertise.

Any training for the role of the department head typically comes from on-the-job experience, a one or two-day seminar provided by the institution, or from observing admired leaders (Nardi, 1996; Tucker, 1984). Whether it is in terms of frames, such as Bolman and Deal's (1995) five frames of leadership, roles, responsibilities, models, or

tasks, department heads are often under-prepared to understand the various dimensions of their positions (Gmelch, 2002). It has been well established in studies that few department heads receive the preparation needed to conceptually understand and professionally balance the expectations of their position. According to Green and McDade (1994), the cost of leadership is too substantial not to invest in the most critical position in the university, the department head.

Leadership and department heads. In recent years, several studies have been conducted on academic leadership in higher education. These studies have confirmed what many department heads know from personal experience: academic leadership is complex and demanding, with substantial stress, high burnout, and high turnover (Brown, 2002; Brown & Moshavi, 2002). Gmelch and Miskin stated, “The position of department chair is one of leadership, charged with challenges of developing a department’s future and of building faculty vitality” (1993, p. 3). Leader effectiveness in higher education has become a major issue, both at institutional and departmental levels (Bolton, 2004). Traditional studies of university governance often place heads of departments within centrally driven structures and processes (Berdahl, 1991; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolton, 2004; Kezar, 2000; Leslie & Fretwell, 1996).

Institutions of higher education differ from many other types of organizations, requiring leadership to be a more shared phenomenon than in most other for-profit organizations (McDaniel, 2003; Seagren, et al, 1993). In addition, Tucker (1992) claimed that departmental leaders are the only academic managers who live with their decisions each day, and this intimate relationship to decision making is not duplicated anywhere else within the college or university. A department head’s authority is often vaguely

defined in college management handbooks and faculty manuals. Often a department head leads his or her faculty only by their consent and with the respect and goodwill earned by fair and faithful leadership (McDaniel, 2003; Tucker, 1992). The concept of faculty ownership is foundational to most academic institutions, therefore, leadership at the departmental level requires greater emphasis on empowering activities than in many other types of organizations (Seagren, et al, 1993). Bowman (2002) suggested that the “real work of academic chairs demands a diverse set of leadership capabilities: well-honed communication skills, problem-solving skills, conflict-resolution skills, cultural-management skills, coaching skills, and transition-management skills” (p. 161).

The position of the department head is ambiguous in nature. Individuals serving in this leadership role find themselves attempting to serve the interests of both the administrative core and the faculty (Carroll & Wolverson, 2004; Gmelch, 2002). Leadership at the departmental level is often handled by individuals who have not necessarily ever served in a previous leadership role; for the most part, department heads have had no managerial experience, and have little intention of continuing in a leadership role beyond a few years as department head (Carroll & Wolverson, 2004; Gmelch, 2001; Gmelch, 2002).

Perhaps the most significant challenge facing educational leaders today is to be able to recognize and understand the demands and constraints facing them within their institutions, and respond accordingly with flexible leader behaviors (Murphy, 2003; Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004). According to Murphy (2003), academic institutions of the twenty-first century are in need of leaders who appreciate the value of bringing order to their schools through a mixture of leadership qualities and organizational and societal

priorities. Yukl and Lepsinger (2004) indicated that flexible leadership is vital in response to continually changing situations, and leaders in higher education today must find an appropriate balance among competing demands and organizational constraints in order to successfully lead the academic department.

Leadership research today often focuses on the “best” way to lead. Administrators in higher education institutions are taught about various leadership styles – transformational, situational leadership, servant leadership, and best practices as espoused by Kouzes and Posner (2000). Although the study of leadership is well researched, there is not a theory of leadership that applies specifically to department heads in higher education (Thompson, 1999). Perhaps a significant challenge facing department heads is to be able to recognize and understand the demands and constraints facing them within their own situations, and respond accordingly with flexible leader behaviors (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004).

Summary of Higher Education Issues and Perspectives

Complexity abounds within the competitive environment of higher education today. Changes have taken place within colleges and universities regarding external and internal demands and challenges. Knowing where institutions of higher education have come from, particularly in light of academic departments and departmental leadership, has contributed to improving understanding of the department head and the importance of effective leadership within this position. It is important, given the volatile environment of higher education today that an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of department heads, coupled with a study of the recent literature on the selection and preparation of departmental leaders occur. Knowledge of issues and perspectives facing

institutions of higher education can assist those contemplating moving into the job of academic department head, the leadership position focused on in this study.

Summary

The preceding literature review was divided into two sections of material which were pertinent to this study of leadership and understanding the demands and constraints of academic department heads in higher education. The first section consisted of a review of the literature pertaining to the historical development of leadership theory, and current research in leadership studies. The second section included a brief discussion of the issues and perspectives in higher education, including organizational characteristics of institutions of higher education and a review of the academic department head, the specific leadership role addressed in this study.

The total enumeration of all possible leadership theories and existing research on department heads in higher education was beyond the scope of this study. Stewart's theory of demands, constraints and choices (1967; 1976; 1997) provided a strong base on which to explore the understanding of demands and constraints faced by department heads as perceived by faculty and deans. The literature reviewed in this chapter has served as both a base and a justification for the purpose of this study: to qualitatively explore the demands and constraints of department heads from AACSB-accredited College of Business' in mid to moderate sized universities. Specific methodology designed to assist in the accomplishment of this purpose is described in Chapter Three. The emerging findings and subsequent discussion of such findings will be presented in

Chapters Four and Five, respectively. Following the concluding chapter, an appendices which contains the informed consent and introduction letters, and the interview protocols, can be found.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

In reviewing recent literature, one of the least studied positions in higher educational leadership is that of academic department head (Gmelch, 2000). Recent studies have suggested that the academic department forms the nucleus of the university enterprise. The department head plays a significant role in the decision-making process at institutions of higher education, however, little research has been conducted on the topic of department heads, and even less has been done in the areas of department head leadership (Thompson, 1999). An emerging issue in college and university settings is the effectiveness and efficiency of the academic department. This issue can be related to failed practices in certain areas of educational leadership (Eddy, Murphy, Spaulding & Chandras, 1997). However, research has not addressed which leadership practices are considered ideal for the department head to possess based upon the perceptions of deans, faculty, or department heads themselves. This may be in part due to a lack of understanding of the demands and constraints placed upon department heads, and how these demands and constraints impact the choices made by these middle leaders in terms of leadership. The purpose of this study was to explore an understanding of the demands and constraints of department heads through a qualitative investigation of deans, department heads, and faculty perceptions in institutions of higher education.

In this chapter, the methodological procedures used in this study are described. Specifically, the research questions to be addressed are delineated and participants are

discussed. The various data collection methods are reviewed and data analysis techniques are described.

Qualitative design is intended to be holistic in nature, with a search for understanding of the whole (Janesick, 1994). This approach demands that the world be viewed with the assumption that nothing is trivial, and that everything has the potential for unlocking understanding about what is being studied (Bogden & Biklen, 1998; Janesick, 1994). This study explored an understanding of the demands and constraints of department heads through a qualitative investigation of deans, department heads, and faculty perceptions in mid to moderate sized institutions of higher education from two Midwestern states. Specifically, business schools accredited by the Association for the Advancement of Collegiant Schools of Business (AACSB) were selected as the target for this investigation.

To the knowledge of the researcher, no specific qualitative studies have been conducted on understanding the demands and constraints faced by department heads in AACSB-accredited Colleges of Business based upon the perceptions of deans, faculty, and department heads. Results from research in this area could be beneficial to deans, department heads and faculty members in higher education by improving understanding of these middle leaders' demands and constraints and how those demands and constraints affect leadership choices. The outcome may impact decisions regarding the areas of selection, retention, recruitment, and the training and development of department heads. It may also provide insights into choices that could be made by department heads in terms of improving their leadership effectiveness.

Rationale for Qualitative Study

The goal of qualitative research is to obtain a clearer understanding of human behavior and experiences (Bogden & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2002). Researchers using the phenomenological approach attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions of people in particular situations (Bogden & Biklen, 1998). To learn about a particular phenomenon, the researcher asks participants broad, general questions and looks for emerging themes from the words and shared experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2002).

All research methods have strengths and limitations. Some believe the weakness of qualitative research is that it relies too heavily on the researcher as the instrument (Bogden & Biklen, 1998), while others emphasize that this is one of its strengths. Other strengths of qualitative research are that it can be used to identify specific areas of investigation that may have not been considered previously, or issues of concern to specific populations (Creswell, 2002; Morse & Richards, 2002; Patton, 2002). The choice of whether to research a problem through a quantitative or qualitative approach depends upon several factors including: (a) the audience; (b) the personal experiences the researcher brings, and; (c) the type of research problem, such as one in which variables need to be explained, or one that requires exploration or understanding (Creswell, 2002). In the case of this particular study, a qualitative exploration was deemed appropriate due to the complexity of the issue at hand, the need for understanding this complexity, and the limited amount of existing research in the field.

Research Questions

The review of the literature pertaining to academic departmental leadership led to several conclusions. These conclusions contributed directly to the formulation of the research questions to be addressed by this study. First, an increased understanding of the demands and constraints placed on department heads as perceived by deans and faculty could assist deans and potential department heads in the area of selection and training (Eddy, Murphy, Spaulding, & Chandras, 1997). Second, little data exists on the leadership practices that are perceived to be the most important or effective at the departmental level in higher education in light of the demands and constraints that are placed upon these middle managers (Thompson, 1999). In order to address these issues, the following research questions were developed:

1. What are deans' perceptions of the demands and constraints placed on department heads?
2. What are faculty perceptions of the demands and constraints placed on department heads?
3. What are department heads' perceptions of the demands and constraints placed on them?

Participants

The procedure of analytic induction is employed when a specific problem, question, or issue becomes the focus of a research study (Bogden & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The method of sampling employed for this study was purposeful, homogenous sampling, in which specific participants were chosen

for interviewing because they were believed to be able to facilitate the understanding of the phenomena (Bogden & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2002; Patton, 1990).

In homogenous sampling, the researcher purposefully chooses individuals or sites based upon membership in a certain subgroup with defining characteristics (Creswell, 2002). Three universities from two Midwestern states, all with business schools accredited by the Association for the Advancement of Collegiant Schools of Business, were contacted about the possibility of participating in the study. These schools were selected because they all met certain minimum benchmarks for accreditation and, therefore, were somewhat homogeneous. From these institutions, deans of the College of Business were interviewed, as well as selected department heads and faculty members from management/marketing and business administration departments within the College of Business.

All participants within this study were provided anonymity through the use of pseudonyms for the universities, as well as for individuals. The universities selected were located in two different Midwestern states. Total enrollment figures from these institutions ranged were between 6000 and 12,500 full-time and part-time students. According to Creswell (2002), there is not a set guide in qualitative research regarding sample or site size. Typically, research from a qualitative perspective only contains information from a few individuals or a few cases. Sample size depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what will be useful, what will be credible, and what can be accomplished with available time and resources (Patton, 2002). For the purposes of this study, three deans, three department heads, and three faculty members from mid to moderate sized AACSB-accredited Colleges of Business from two

Midwestern states were asked to participate in the research. Deans, department heads, and faculty were selected to interview because they were identified as the major entities for this research, and provided what Patton termed, “information rich” (1990; p. 169) responses. Table 2 is provided as a visual representation of the participants.

The researcher employed the following data collection methods recommended by Patton (1990; 2002) for qualitative study: in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, observations, and written document analysis. In addition, fieldnotes and a reflective journal were kept during the study to provide a method of expression for the researcher's perspective and thoughts. The interviews, observations, and written document analyses were conducted over a three month period in the Spring of 2007.

Prior to conducting interviews, the researcher advised all participants of their rights both verbally (by telephone) and in writing (by e-mail). The *Informed Consent* letter (see Appendix A) was presented and explained prior to all face-to-face interviews by the researcher to the participant. Informed consent is more than just signing a letter; it is a continuous process, and as such, the researcher communicated with the participants throughout the study regarding their rights. Participants of face-to-face interviews were asked to sign the *Informed Consent* letter, and were given an opportunity by the researcher to discuss any questions or concerns about the project before agreeing to participate.

Data Collection

It helps to think of qualitative data as “made” rather than as “collected” (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 87). Qualitative researchers do not collect events, but actually collect

Table 2

Division and Delineation of Research Participants

COBA Administrators	Department Heads	Business Faculty
Dean, University A College of Business	Head of Management Dept., University A	Management Faculty Member
Dean, University B College of Business	Head of Management Dept., University B	Management Faculty Member
Dean, University C College of Business	Head of Management, University C	Management Faculty Member

Note. Pseudonyms used for universities to protect the identity of the participants.

representations, often through the interview process. Making data is an active process that requires significant time and emotional investment on the part of the researcher. “Good” data in qualitative research comes from rich, thick, dense records, which offer enough detail to allow the reader to understand the situation without needing additional information (Creswell, 2002; Morse & Richards, 2002).

In qualitative research, data collection methods consist of collecting data on protocols developed during the study, gathering text through interviews, and collecting information from a small number of individuals or sites (Bogden & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2002; Patton, 1990). In this research, the researcher seeks to learn from the participants of the study, and has developed an interview protocol for helping obtain data from participants. Data for this study was made through participant interviews, observations, and documents review.

According to Seidman (1998), interviewing provides access to the context of people's behavior and provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior. A foundational assumption of in-depth interviewing research is that the meaning people make of their experience affects the way they carry out that experience. Interviewing allows researchers to put behavior into context and provides access to understanding the action of those behaviors. Meaning goes beyond "just the facts," and influences the understandings one has that are specific to the individual (what was said) yet transcendent of the specific (what is the relation between what was said, how it was said, what the listener was attempting to ask or hear, and what the speaker was attempting to convey or say).

Whereas Seidman (1998) concentrated upon the structure of the interview event and research project, Rubin and Rubin (1995) emphasized a set of necessary skills the researcher must possess. They reiterated the interview process epistemological origins: "Qualitative interviewing is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds. Through qualitative interviews you can understand experiences and reconstruct events in which you did not participate" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 1). Both Seidman and the Rubins placed an emphasis upon comprehending and conveying understandings of the researched and the researcher.

Face-to-Face Interviews

An interview is "a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study" (deMarrais, 2004, p. 54). Maccoby and Maccoby (1954) defined the interview as "a face to face verbal interchange in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expressions of

opinions or belief from another person or persons” (p. 499). In qualitative research, open-ended questions are asked so that participants can voice their experiences without any constraints placed on them by the researcher (Creswell, 2002). These types of questions represent the most frequently used form of interviewing in qualitative studies, which allow the participant to create response possibilities.

Conducting interviews in order to make data has both advantages and disadvantages. They provide useful information that cannot be obtained from observations, and allow participants to describe detailed personal information and experiences. One disadvantage is that they may be “filtered” (Creswell, 2002, p. 205) through the perspective the participant wants the researcher to hear. During this study, face-to-face interviews were conducted with three deans, three department heads, and three faculty members from three different institutions. The interviews took place in the participants’ offices or faculty lounge, at a time set by them. Each face-to-face interview took approximately one hour. The researcher used an interview protocol (see Appendix B) which served as a guide for the interview, with the bulk of the questions worded as open-ended in order to elicit the richest amount of responses.

Permission was asked by the researcher from each participant in the face-to-face interview to audiotape the interview. All nine participants agreed to have the interview taped, as well as allowing the researcher to take written notes. Transcriptions of all audiotapes were e-mailed to the participants in order to confirm accuracy. An e-mail of transcription verification was sent with a copy of the transcribed notes (see Appendix B).

Interview Protocol

According to Creswell (2002), it is important during the interview to have a way for structuring the interview and taking copious notes. Bogden and Biklen (1998) discussed the pros and cons of using an interview protocol rather than conducting an unstructured interview. They observed that with semi-structured interviews the researcher could be more confident in getting comparable data between participants, but would lose the opportunity to understand how the individuals themselves would structure the topic at hand (p. 95). It was determined by the researcher that an interview guide would help facilitate discussion, yet allow the research participant to respond based upon his or her understanding of the subject. The interview protocol used in the study was identical for each of the three groups of participants. Deans, department heads, and faculty were asked the same general guide of questions, while allowance was made for other questions to arise as a result of different responses. A copy of the interview protocol is found in Appendix C.

Observations

Observations of three department heads were conducted at Colleges of Business from three Midwest universities. Permission was asked by the researcher to attend any meetings that occurred during the observation process. For the purpose of this study, the researcher observed as a non-participant (Creswell, 2002; Patton, 2002) and recorded notes during the meetings without becoming involved in the activities.

Document Analysis

The researcher intended to collect and analyze any official documents in support of the interview process. Department head manuals were requested, to help the researcher

gain an understanding of what was expected from these middle leaders in terms of roles, responsibilities, and leadership. These documents could have provided clues about the official expectations placed on department heads at those specific institutions, as well as internal rules and regulations.

Fieldnotes

An important process in the collection of qualitative data is to produce fieldnotes, which are written accounts of what the researcher has heard and seen during an interview or observation. As part of these notes, the researcher will record ideas, strategies, reflections, and will begin to note patterns that appear to emerge (Bogden & Biklen, 1998). They also provide a reflection opportunity for the researcher, in which the emphasis is on speculation, feelings, ideas, and hunches. Fieldnotes were written by the researcher upon the completion of each face-to-face interview, which provided impressions, insights, and additional remarks made before and after the interview that were not caught on tape. These notes assisted the researcher in understanding how the project had been affected by the data collected, and helped her remain cognizant of how the interview data could potentially influence her.

Fieldnotes were also recorded during each observation. *Descriptive fieldnotes* (Creswell, 2002) were used to describe the activities and people (what happened) during the observation of the meetings and department heads, while *reflective fieldnotes* (Creswell, 2002) were developed by the researcher that related to gaining insights, hunches, and themes that emerged during the observation process.

Ethical Considerations

The trustworthiness of a qualitative study is judged by whether the researcher conforms to standards for acceptable and competent practices and whether they meet standards for ethical conduct (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Regulations about informed consent and protection of human subjects as traditionally formulated may not fit a qualitative study, however ethical issues are important to address (Bogden & Biklen, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Two issues that dominate traditional guidelines of ethics in research with human subjects include *informed consent* and the protection of subjects from harm (Bogden & Biklin, 1998; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Prior to conducting the study, the researcher submitted a description of the study, a plan for distribution of the findings, and other pertinent information to the University of Missouri-Columbia Institutional Review Board (IRB). Gatekeeper letters of permission from the deans' of the institutions were also submitted to the IRB committee. Upon approval from the IRB, the researcher began to contact individuals for participation in the study.

Individuals selected for participation were sent a letter asking for their help in the research study. The letter described the purpose of the research, the amount of time needed for the interview, and the option of receiving feedback upon completion of the study. A copy of the letter can be found in Appendix A. Potential participants were informed that they would be contacted one week from the date of the letter to see if they would agree to participate in the research. The researcher made it clear to all participants that their identities would be protected at all times through the research process.

Prior to the onset of an interview, opening statements were made by the researcher which included the following, which is a reiteration of the information contained in the initial letter:

1. The purpose of collecting the information.
2. Who the information was for, and how it would be used.
3. What was going to be asked during the interview itself.
4. How responses would be handled, including confidentiality.
5. What potential risks and/or benefits were involved for the person being interviewed.

In accordance with the researcher's values and beliefs, subjects were treated with dignity and respect, and with great appreciation for the time and effort given during the interview and observation processes.

Validity

Validity is an important aspect for effective research, and is a requirement not only for quantitative methods, but for qualitative studies, as well (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000). In quantitative research, the source of validity is known, whereas in qualitative research validity must be conveyed by showing its workings every single time (Holliday, 2002). Validating findings in qualitative research means that the researcher determines the accuracy and credibility of the findings through strategies such as member checking or triangulation (Bogden & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2002; Patton, 1990).

In this study, the researcher corroborated evidence by interviewing different individuals, such as deans, department heads, and faculty. She also used data from different sources, including observational fieldnotes, and interview transcripts. An

outside auditor, experienced in qualitative research, was used to review different aspects of the study, both during and upon completion, of the research.

Maxwell (1992) argued for several kinds of validity in qualitative methods: descriptive validity, which is the factual accuracy of the account from those interviewed or from document analysis; interpretive validity, the ability of the researcher to ascertain the meaning of events that participants have for themselves; theoretical validity, which are the theoretical constructs that the researcher brings to the study (similar to construct validity), and; generalizability, which is the view that theory generated might be useful in understanding other similar situations.

According to Cohen, Manion, and Lawrence (2000), internal validity is important in that it demonstrates the explanation of a particular event or issue which a piece of research provides can actually be sustained by the data. In some ways, this relates to accuracy, which can be applied to both quantitative and qualitative research. Within qualitative studies, findings must accurately describe the phenomena being researched. Internal validity is a major strength in qualitative research (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993), evidenced by reliance upon informant interviews for data, and constant self-monitoring by the researcher. Likewise, interview data is likely to counteract preconceived notions, assuming interviews are relatively open-ended and not unduly influenced by the researcher's constructs (Creswell, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 1984; LeCompte & Preissle, 1998).

Obtaining external validity can be more problematic in qualitative studies (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) but extensive description of the research sites and participant characteristics can help readers determine the typicality and generalizability of

the study to other contexts. In this case, it was determined that the information gleaned from deans, department heads, and faculty in AACSB-accredited Colleges of Business would accurately represent most individuals in similar situations, while recognizing that their experiences might not transfer to other academic disciplines in higher education.

Construct validity entails identifying whether the qualitative researcher is measuring what he or she wants to measure. The major threats to construct validity in qualitative studies are those created by bias either through the process of observing itself or bias introduced by the observation method. One strategy for improving construct validity is to clearly define the mode of observation. As stated previously, this research employed the method of non-participant observation in the scope of this study.

Reliability

In qualitative studies, researchers are concerned with the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data presented. They tend to view reliability as a fit between what is recorded as data and what actually occurs in the setting, rather than a literal consistency between different observations (Bodgen & Biklen, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The purpose of qualitative research is not to replicate what has gone on prior to the study in question; in fact, given the dynamic nature of the social stratosphere, and the fact that the qualitative researcher is not an instrument in the experimental sense, replication of qualitative studies is almost impossible (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Merriam (1998) observed:

Because what is being studied [in qualitative research] is assumed to be in flux, multifaceted, and highly contextual, because information gathered is a function of who gives it and how skilled the researcher is at getting it, and because of the

emergent design of a qualitative study precludes a priori controls, achieving reliability in the traditional sense is not only fanciful, but impossible. (p. 171)

Qualitative research can attain an appropriate level of external reliability by documenting the succession of moves through the stages of data production, analysis and interpretation (Creswell, 2002). Most qualitative researchers are concerned with the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data. Reliability tends to be seen as a “fit between what [is] recorded as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study, rather than the literal consistency across different observations” (Bogden & Biklen, 1998, p. 36). In the case of this study, a journal was kept in order to provide documentation of every step involved in the process, from the selection of the idea, to the collection, analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Data Analysis

Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data is the process of “deep immersion” in the materials collected (Creswell, 2002; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2002). This immersion includes systemically organizing the material into salient themes and patterns and finding meaning so the themes tell a coherent story. In qualitative research, data analysis begins at the framing of the research questions. It is an ongoing process that requires reflection and written thoughts on the part of the researcher (Rossman & Rallis, 2002).

In keeping with Rossman and Rallis (2002, p. 272), the researcher proposed using the following pointers to facilitate analysis of the data:

1. Refer regularly to the conceptual framework, but be open to new insights.

2. Keep research questions in mind. Stay connected to the qualitative genre framing the study.
3. Modify data gathering based upon what is being learned, not by chance. Ask analytical questions throughout the process.
4. Write at all times. Note any hunches, impressions; write descriptive and analytic memos. Keep a journal for reflections.
5. Talk about emerging ideas with colleagues.
6. Continue to read what others have written about the topic. Use the research literature to gain further insight.

Analysis of the data in qualitative research is primarily inductive; going from the particular (detailed transcriptions from interviews and fieldnotes from observations) to the general – developing codes and themes. The process of data analysis includes both simultaneous and iterative (cycling back and forth) phases (Creswell, 2002, p. 257). During this particular study, the researcher collected and analyzed data by studying transcripts from earlier interviews looking for major ideas to emerge, while continuing to conduct other observations and interviews.

A filing system was developed prior to the first interview, in order to provide a way for organizing the vast amount of information collected and analyzed. The researcher audiotaped all face-to-face interviews, and listened to the tapes prior to turning them over to a transcriber, as well as after transcription. A sample transcription from an earlier research project was provided to the transcriber by the researcher in order to facilitate consistency regarding the format of the transcription.

Hand analysis was chosen for this study since the information collected resulted in a small database, therefore making it easy to keep track of transcriptions and fieldnotes. For the researcher, it was deemed important to be “close to the data” (Creswell, 2002, p. 261) and to have a hands-on feel rather than attempting to use a computer program for data analysis. Upon completion of observations and interviews, the researcher took time to get an overall feel of the data, and began to reflect on emerging ideas. After reading all transcripts, and gaining an overall feel for the data, the coding process will began, which entailed segmenting and labeling the text to form initial descriptions and broad themes in the data (Bogden & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2002; Patton, 1990).

Conclusion

Chapter Three began with a listing of the research questions that were proposed to be addressed in this study, followed by a review of the specific qualitative research design methods chosen to facilitate the work. Multiple methods of qualitative research, including face-to-face interviews, observations, and document analysis were employed to gain information in an attempt to understand and answer the three questions posed as the stated objectives to this study. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with nine different individuals who hold the positions of faculty member, department head, and dean in AACSB-accredited Colleges of Business in mid to moderate sized universities from two Midwestern states. Observations of college meetings led by deans, as well as an informal gathering for department heads by the provost from one institution were observed. The interview protocol for the three interview groups was presented, and issues regarding validity and reliability were addressed. Transformation of the data collected and analyzed

is elaborated upon in Chapter Four, and emergent findings discussed. Results of the research study and integrated findings are included in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FOUR

Discussion of Findings

Introduction

Contained in Chapter four are the results of this study, which was conducted in order to glean an understanding of the demands and constraints of department heads through a qualitative investigation of deans, department heads, and faculty perceptions in Colleges of Business at institutions of higher education. Three Midwest universities used in this study had the following characteristics: (a) all three institutions were classified by the Carnegie Classification System as Master's Colleges and Universities I, and; (b) all three Colleges of Business Administration (COBA) were accredited by The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). The researcher believed that, by choosing institutions with similar distinctions and external accreditation, some sources of variation would be eliminated from the study.

Interviews and observations were used to investigate the demands and constraints of management/marketing department heads in Colleges of Business. Participants were questioned about their perceptions regarding the demands and constraints of department heads in higher education, and those perceptions were noted and analyzed. Observations of the department heads by the researcher provided additional material from which to facilitate understanding.

Themes that emerged from the data were interpreted through theoretical concepts of leadership as they relate to institutions of higher education. Specifically, the theoretical lens of Rosemary Stewart's (1967; 1976; 1997) concepts of demands, constraints and choices was used to filter the data as it emerged. These components of her theory assisted

the researcher in developing a deeper understanding of the demands and constraints of department heads in Colleges of Business based on the perceptions of deans, department heads, and faculty.

Chapter four is divided into four sections. It begins with a description of the data collection process, including setting, participants and observations, followed by a statement of the researcher's professional background and potential biases brought to the study. Data analysis is discussed as it relates to the three research questions, followed by the conclusion of the chapter.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected by conducting participant interviews and observations of department heads. Participants were asked for access to official documents specific to department head manuals, however, none were available. The researcher also observed each of the COBA websites for general information.

Setting

Three Midwestern universities were selected for this study. University A (UA) is located in a city nestled in the surrounding hills. In addition to University A (UA), two other institutions of higher education are located within the city. Over 36% of the population of the city holds at least a bachelors' degree, making it the third most educated city in the state in which it is located.

University B (UB) is in a city surrounded by natural parks in the northeastern part of the state in which it is located. Over 27% of the people in the city hold at least a bachelors' degree. The surrounding area is fertile farmland, and the city functions as a major hub of the state's agricultural industry.

University C (UC) is one of the largest employers in the city in which the institution resides. In addition to the university, there are several other major manufacturing companies located in the city. The city functions as an important crossroads and trade area for the east central portion of the Midwestern part of the state in which it is located.

All three universities had total enrollments between 6000 and 12,500 full-time and part-time students. University A had an enrollment in the College of Business consisting of 1270 full-time undergraduate students, and 111 masters' degree students, with 49 full-time faculty members (including the department head) servicing the students of the college. University B had an enrollment of approximately 1000 full-time undergraduate students and 50 students in the masters' degree program in the College of Business. At the time of the study, there were 51 full-time faculty members employed in the College of Business.

There were approximately 650 full-time undergraduate students enrolled in the College of Business at University C, with an additional 61 full-time students enrolled in the masters' programs. University C was divided into two departments, with approximately 60 full-time faculty members servicing all students within the college.

Participants

The primary source of data collection came from face-to-face interviews with nine individuals who were purposefully selected because of their positions as dean (D), department head (DH), and faculty member (FAC) within the Colleges of Business. Specifically, department heads and faculty members from management, marketing and business administration departments were targeted, as well as the deans over the

Colleges. The deans were initially contacted by colleagues of the researcher who serve as department heads and deans in similar universities. These personal relationships opened the door for the researcher to explore the possibilities of conducting interviews at the three deans' institutions. Following the initial contact, the researcher sent each dean an email describing the project, then followed up with phone calls to confirm their support for the project. Gatekeeper letters of permission written by each dean were sent to the IRB committees of each institution involved, declaring support of the research project and the on campus interviewing that would take place as part of the data collection process.

Department head participation was based on having served in the position at least three years. The researcher also obtained permission from the department heads to interview a faculty member from their department that had worked with them for at least three years, as well. Faculty members were recommended to the researcher by the department heads, with preference given to those who had been faculty members for at least five years in the department.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with three deans, three department heads, and three faculty members from three different Colleges of Business. The interviews were conducted in a location selected by the participants. Interviews took place in the individuals' offices, conference rooms, and faculty lounge. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Pseudonyms were developed to protect the identity of participating universities and individuals (see Table 3).

Each of the original nine individuals purposefully selected for this project were available for the face-to-face interviews. There was great diversity among the

participants, which included three women, and an international faculty member (see Table 3). In addition to the demographic diversity of the participants, all three deans had served as department heads prior to moving into their current positions.

Observations and Fieldnotes

Prior to conducting semi-structured interviews with the department heads, the researcher spent 5-7 hours observing each department head in their normal work setting.

Table 3

*Identifying Codes and Demographics of Participants from Three Midwestern Universities
Colleges of Business Administration (COBA)*

ID	Gender	Position Held	Yrs in Position	Served as DH previously?
FAC – UA	Male	Faculty	5	No
D – UA	Female	Dean	5	Yes
DH – UA	Male	Department Head	3	No
FAC – UB	Female	Faculty	10	No
D – UB	Male	Dean	3	Yes
DH – UB	Female	Department Head	3	No
FAC – UC	Male	Faculty	25	Yes
D – UC	Male	Dean	4	Yes
DH – UC	Male	Department Head	3	No

Note. FAC = Faculty Member; D = Dean; DH = Department Head; UA = University A; UB = University B; UC = University C.

Each day began in the office of the department head, which gave the researcher the opportunity to build collegiality with the individual prior to conducting the interview. During the observation of DH – UA, the researcher had the opportunity to attend an informal meeting for all department heads and deans from every college in the university that was hosted by the University’s Provost. Fieldnotes were taken during the entire day of observation, recorded and transcribed.

While conducting interviews at University B, the researcher observed a bi-monthly meeting for all COBA department heads and directors that was led by the Dean of the College. Fieldnotes were taken during the meeting, and transcribed the same evening. Specific notes were also recorded during observation and dialogue exchange with the department head in the office throughout the day prior to conducting the formal interview.

An observation also took place with the department head from University C, however, access to a university-wide committee meeting was denied to the researcher by the chairman of that committee due to personnel privacy issues. Time was spent with the Business Administration Department head in his office, where there was ample opportunity to observe his interactions with students, faculty, and staff prior to conducting the formal interview. Fieldnotes of this final observation were kept and transcribed by the researcher. All observations reported in the data analysis section are referenced and coded as “OB.”

Documents Review

The researcher asked each department head and dean for permission to study any official university documents that DHs would have received at the time of their

appointment to the position, particularly any procedural or training manuals. In all instances, the department heads and deans indicated that there were no materials like this available as far as they were aware. According to the dean from University C, there was “nothing specific for that role. We have a policy manual for faculty in general” (D – UC, 669). Dean UA stated, “I don’t have anything. I think that’s probably because it is impossible to write it all down [laughter]. If we did write it all down, I don’t think we could find anybody to be a department head...” (D – UA, 220).

When asked what types of training, including procedural or training manuals, were provided for department heads, Dean UB replied, “Woefully little...other than just trying to provide a vision, I do a poor job of providing development for department chairs” (D – UB, 607). Dean UB also indicated that he did not receive a manual when he served as department head, and “I haven’t passed any out” (D – UB, 646). Implications for the lack of formal documents with regard to training and procedures for department heads are discussed in Chapter Five.

Researcher Background and Bias

Researcher Background

The researcher holds a Master in Business Administration degree with an emphasis in management and organizational behavior from an AACSB-accredited College of Business. She taught for one semester as an adjunct instructor at a Midwestern state university in their AACSB-accredited College of Business in the department of management prior to accepting a full-time faculty position at a Midwestern parochial university in the College of Business as a junior faculty member.

In this professional capacity, the researcher taught a variety of undergraduate and graduate-level courses, advised students, and assisted with program development for nontraditional students at the university's external program in another city. In addition to her teaching and advisement duties, the researcher attended departmental meetings held by both the department head and dean of the college, as well as served on several university-wide committees.

Researcher Bias

The researcher brought two biases to the process of analysis of the data. First, the researcher was influenced by personal experiences with a department head as a junior faculty member in the management department at a Midwestern private university, as well as her brief experience with the management department head while serving as an adjunct faculty member at a different institution. Second, as the spouse of a management department head from a Midwestern public university with AACSB-accreditation, the researcher has heard and observed some of the demands and constraints placed on this middle leadership level on a personal basis.

The researcher worked to limit the effects of her personal bias due to experiences in two ways. One was to acknowledge these biases going into the study and throughout data collection process. A series of questions, such as, "What is going on here? How are my previous experiences potentially influencing my interviews? What other questions should I be asking?" were asked by the researcher as part of the ongoing self-reflection. In addition to these reflective questions, the researcher intentionally engaged in active listening during the interview and observation process as a method to reduce potential bias (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

In order to minimize bias and strengthen the credibility and rigor of the project, the researcher engaged in participant validation (member checking) by providing interview transcriptions to each participant (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Prior to additional analyses of the data, the researcher also asked an independent reviewer who served in leadership in an institution of higher education to read the transcripts and offer an outside perspective to the data (Creswell, 2002).

Data Analysis

Research Questions

Three initial research questions were proposed at the onset of this project:

1. What are deans' perceptions of the demands and constraints placed on department heads?
2. What are faculty perceptions of the demands and constraints placed on department heads?
3. What are department heads' perceptions of the demands and constraints placed on them?

Immediately following each interview at Universities A, B, and C, the researcher listened to the audiotapes to enhance memory of the interviews as they occurred. Initial impressions were jotted down as similarities seemed to reoccur with each interview. After listening to all three interviews on tape, the researcher submitted the tapes for transcription.

Subsequent to receiving the transcribed notes, the researcher conducted an initial read-through of each transcript in order to obtain a general understanding of the information (Creswell, 2002). After a number of readings of the data, general themes

began to emerge. Large ideas were jotted down in the margins of the transcripts and common threads were highlighted. The researcher numbered each line of the transcripts in order to easily locate highlighted quotes and information.

Time was spent in reflection by the researcher after each pass through the transcripts. Upon continued study, general overarching themes that had initially emerged were collapsed into the following major categories that answered each of the research questions: Faculty/Student Demands and Constraints; Financial/Resource Demands and Constraints, and; Administrative/Leadership Demands and Constraints. Within the analysis of these categories several sub-themes emerged. The remainder of this chapter addresses the three research questions in light of these emergent categories. Data collected from the interviews and observations are used to explain and support the answers to each research question.

Deans' Perceptions of the Demands and Constraints Placed on Department Heads

In order to answer the first research question, each dean was asked to describe their perceptions as to the demands and constraints that impact department heads in Colleges of Business in higher education. Categories of faculty/student demands and constraints, financial/resource demands and constraints, and administrative/leadership demands and constraints emerged from the data.

Faculty/Student Demands and Constraints

One of the overall categories that emerged during analysis of the transcripts was that of faculty and student demands and constraints placed on department heads. Within this category, the following sub-themes emerged: *turf defender and advocate, primetime provider, justice for all, professional adviser, curricularly challenged, and mediator.*

Each of these sub-themes emerged as consistently mentioned perceptions by the deans in terms of department head demands and constraints. The sub-themes within this category are presented from most frequently addressed to least.

Turf defender and advocate. One demand as perceived by deans was faculty expectations that department heads should always act as advocate and turf defender for faculty needs, regardless of university or college constraints. Two deans specifically addressed this demand. According to D – UA:

Faculty have incredible demands. The faculty want the chair to advance their interest in every way – very turf conscious. They spend a lot of time worrying about whether he or she [the DH] is defending them as well as they could; they want them to advance their cause...They want their chair to always take their side; they want them (DHs) to let them (faculty) do anything they please...in the classroom and not interfere, yet enforce all of the peculiar things that are totally absurd or illegal. It's incredible (D – UA, 42-54).

Dean UB reflected on his own time as a department head, and faculty demands he faced, and indicated that one perception he had from faculty was that it was his job “to provide the resources and the tools necessary for the faculty to...do their jobs...then stand in the way and take the arrows that were shot at the faculty so they didn't have to deal with that kind of stuff” (D – UB, 253).

Primetime provider. Two of the three deans perceived that another faculty demand placed on department heads was in the area of teaching loads and schedules. Dean UB commented, “There are some faculty that would demand the perfect teaching schedule...and expect their department chair to go to bat for them, and defend them from

every evil force...” (D – UB, 223). The perception of the dean from University C was that primetime consideration referred to the scheduling of “...their teaching loads, their schedule, what they teach...” (D – UC, 123).

Justice for all. Faculty demands were also perceived in the area of equity and fairness. One dean remarked, “I know existing faculty demand...salary equity and fairness, especially in light of when new employees are hired...which of course, is an impossible demand for a department chair to meet...(D – UB, 230). “They want to be treated fairly...” (D – UC, 124). Part of equity and fairness included the area of faculty evaluations:

“...the chair will be the first one to evaluate them [faculty] each year...And in an AACSB school like us, you...have to have at least one publication each year if you want to get an average raise or more...so the chair needs to be fair and impartial with faculty, I think, to have their support” (D – UC, 125).

In addition to faculty demands of equity and fairness emerged the importance that department heads should exercise objectivity with their faculty.

I want to make sure that they are evaluating the faculty fairly. If I see an evaluation where someone doesn't appear to have done anything...at the top of the chair's merit pay raise list, I would wonder what is going on. Are they playing favorites, or is this a fair evaluation? (D – UC, 171).

Professional adviser. One dean perceived that department heads faced student demands in terms of advising and tutoring. While many larger colleges of business have advisement centers to service the students, Universities A, B, and C were small enough that all faculty and department heads were expected to facilitate advising. “They have to

serve for the students as the adviser of last resort and the tutor of last resort” remarked Dean UA.

Curricularly challenged. One faculty/student constraint was in the area of curriculum ownership. Accreditation constraints as they related to faculty and student needs were mentioned as part of the curriculum challenge. According to one dean, department heads are “certainly limited in curriculum decisions.”

AACSB assessment leaders have said, “Contrary to what people think, faculty don’t control the curriculum.” But I think when you start a sentence with, “contrary to what people think...” it would tell you that a department chair really has *minimal* [emphasis in voice inflection] control over curriculum issues (D – UB, 334).

Mediator. A final faculty/student constraint as perceived by the deans related to department heads functioning as mediator between faculty and student conflicts. “...some of the conflicts that may develop in a given semester, where we...have a faculty member who is getting into conflict with students more than others...can absorb a lot of time...” for the department head, according to the dean from University C (300).

Financial/Resource Demands and Constraints

Deans identified financial and resource demands and constraints that they perceived department heads faced. Within this category, the following sub-themes emerged: *doing more with less, resource acquisition, stewardship and equitable distribution of resources, and salary cap.* The rest of this section contains a discussion of each sub-theme in the order of most frequently mentioned by deans to the least.

Doing more with less. One demand that emerged regarding resources was the inability of department heads to fill all faculty spots due to a decline in financial resources. Two of the three deans addressed this demand specifically. “A department head has very limited ability to get more resources...because they get the budget they got the year before, minus a little...and they aren’t really given the flexibility to go out and try to raise funds on their own...” (D – UB, 315). These demands also translated into resource constraints:

We have constraints with faculty positions, and everybody would like one more, so...the chairs and I need to agree on where the next...hire...might be depending on demand, and those are tough. We have to utilize the faculty lines and resources the best way we can (D – UC, 324).

Financial and resource constraints were primarily discussed in light of continuing budget cuts and challenges. Dean UB responded in both the affirmative, then clarified that response when asked if financial challenges had increased over the past several years. “Well...yes and no. The state budget was cut in 2002, again in 2005, and I was told...here is your new budget, so get rid of that amount. That clearly trickles down. It affected every department...” (D – UB, 520). According to the dean from University A, “Our capital expenditures budget has been, I mean, basically zero. At the end of the year these days, you doubt it’s in your account” (D – UA, 182).

Resource acquisition. Financial demands included working with university personnel and outside business organizations to acquire additional resources for the department. Two of the three deans discussed the need for additional outside monies and relevancy to the business community. “They have to be able to work with the fundraisers

and the development people and have the sensitivity to work with other constituents,” observed Dean UA (32). Demonstrating relevance to the business community at large was also mentioned as an important resource demand perceived by deans.

Probably because of my own bias, and because of *my* [emphasis in voice inflection] need to reengage some of the business leaders who will then write the check for the new building someday...I have really stressed the importance [to DHs] of being integrated and demonstrate our relevance to the business community (D – UB, 448).

Salary cap. In addition to being able to fill all needed faculty spots, one dean perceived that department heads found it difficult to attract and retain qualified faculty members due to financial limitations:

We have some constraints on what we are able to offer salary wise. As it is, we are finding that in order to [obtain] new hires, it will take...paying a brand new assistant professor more than all of our associates are making in a given area, and still at our level, we are not able to offer as much as a D-1 research-oriented school. Even though we are offering more in *our* [emphasis in voice inflection] [university] pay structure, it’s not...you know, we compete against Kline University and Kline State (pseudonyms) for good faculty...and we can only do so much...(D – UC, 345-360).

Stewardship and equitable distribution of resources. Good stewardship was a resource demand perceived by one of the deans. “Here the departments have some separate accounts that they use for travel or professional development, and I would like

good stewardship of those...(D – UC, 189). Equitable distribution of available resources was another stewardship demand.

I shouldn't see one faculty member going to two conferences who doesn't have a paper on the program where someone else who does can't go because they have run out of money...I want to see equity to start with, with the money that the department has...(D – UC, 200).

Administrative/Leadership Demands and Constraints

A third recurring category was the administrative and leadership demands and constraints faced by department heads. Within this category emerged the following sub-themes: *doing the impossible, professional role model, strategist and visionary, disappearing time, visibility, hands are tied, administrivia, faculty evaluator, and role ambiguity*. Each sub-theme is discussed from most frequently to least frequently perceived by the deans.

Doing the impossible. The sub-theme of doing the impossible encompassed several aspects of the position, from handling everything within the department, including conflicts, to keeping issues off the deans' laps. All three deans discussed this demand. "Oftentimes they have to manage the office and maybe the impossible" (D – UA, 58 – 59). "I want them to take responsibility and do their job without my constant monitoring" (D – UC, 113-114). One dean expressed the demand that department heads handle issues at the departmental level, rather than allowing issues to appear at the deans' level:

I like it when they take care of the issues and I don't even hear about them...If I have to hear about something, that means they haven't been able to resolve it and

it has to come to me. I have other things that I'm working on...(D – UC, 71; 73-78).

This same dean also mentioned the expectation that “they [DHs] need to handle faculty-student conflict or conflict between individual faculty members in a department, which sometimes arises...” (D-UC, 265-267).

Doing the impossible also related to the demand that department heads were perceived to experience in terms of being caught in the middle between administration and faculty, and being “all things to all people.” Dean UC observed, “...administration can be tough because you [the DH] are sort of in the middle between faculty and between upper management, so you have to balance those responsibilities...well, I guess that says it all” (D-UC, 137-141).

Dean UB discussed doing the impossible in light of wanting both a manager and leader. “I don't think that good managers automatically translate into good leaders...of the department chairs I have supervised over the years...I would say they are practically all managers. But what I want are leaders. There...uh, huh...makes it tough, doesn't it?” (D – UB, 587-594).

Professional role model. A leadership demand identified by all the deans was that DHs lead by example through teaching and research. In all three of these schools, department heads were required to carry at least a six hour teaching load and continue to research in their field. The time it took for department heads to continue to teach, research, and lead the department was mentioned by all three deans. Time, in this capacity, was perceived as both an administrative demand and a leadership constraint on department heads. Dean UC communicated that DHs needed to “demonstrate that they

still have a research agenda, that they are good in the classroom, and that they expect others to do the same..." (D – UC, 460-462).

"The constraints are enormous for these people who also have to serve as faculty members in the classroom" (D – UA, 173-175). "They are the ones really that are out there in the trenches, you know, teaching the articles, doing the articles" (D – UC, 446-449) "I'm putting additional constraints on them...everybody still has a nine hour teaching load or whatever that load may be, but they are still ...expected to teach, research, *and* [emphasis in voice inflection] do something additional with their time..." (D – UB, 491 – 495).

Department heads as professional role models also included having relevant work experience. "I want them to have work experience because I think at the stage of this particular organization's life...the business community [did not] see us as doing anything for them and vice versa" (D – UB, 427-439). Dean UA mentioned, "...the department head has to maintain a close collegial relationship in terms of their research and knowing their field" (D – UA, 63-65).

Strategist and visionary. Leadership demands included expectations of the head as strategy formulator, vision setter, and communication liaison. All three deans mentioned this demand in their interview. "Department heads are the ones who have to take the discipline forward..."(D – UA, 192). Dean B stated, "I want leadership...I want people who are independent thinkers, certainly want them to be part of a team. I want them to be able to communicate, to interact, and to establish a culture of trust" (172).

Strategic thinking was specifically mentioned as a leadership demand placed on department heads by the deans. Dean UB discussed the fine line that heads had to walk,

“to know how to move forward strategically, and move out of that role as faculty member into strategic direction, strategic setting” (D – UB, 143 – 145). According to Dean UC, “...I want a chair to be a leader within the department in terms of setting a tone, setting a direction, setting objectives and goals for the department that are congruent with those of the school” (455 – 459).

Hands are tied. Limited authority within the position was perceived as an administrative challenge for department heads by all three deans. According to Dean UC, “Things can get a little frustrating because...in academic management, we are all PhDs...here you have to work to try to get people to cooperate, because you really don’t have the military type of authority to order them” (788-794). “There’s not a lot they can control,” according to Dean UA (179-180).

Shared governance was a constraint to the amount of authority department heads had with regard to hiring and firing decisions. Dean UC commented, “It is different...being a manager in academic is different even than a business, where the lines of authority are clear...you are the boss, and you have a subordinate, and you can even fire them. We can’t fire a tenured professor here...it is a different situation” (808-811). According to Dean UB:

Because of the system we have...clearly a department head is *very* [emphasis in voice inflection] limited with regard to personnel issues. I say a department chair can make the final recommendation to the dean with regard to hiring, but most of the time that is done with consultation with committees. So, does the department head have final authority in hiring decisions? No. Does the department head have

final authority in firing decisions? No...they can do nothing more than recommend (280 – 287; 297 – 304).

Personnel issues included certain rules and regulations that tied department heads hands. “They might have the university attorney come in and talk to them about...rules and regulations that we need to follow in terms of our searches,...our hiring, or in terms of what information can be released and what can’t be released...” (D – UC, 491-498).

Department heads hands were also tied with regard to the ability to implement merit. “A department head can help develop a merit system as part of a university or college plan, but has a limited ability to interpret it...it is kind of a check-off list” (D – UB, 308-313).

Disappearing time. Two deans perceived that time disappeared for department heads due to a variety of expectations placed on them beyond the general administration of the department. Lost time included administrative time constraints such as committee work, both at the college and university-levels. “There are some real commitments in terms of setting university committees up, and while they may not have to serve on every one, they are going to need to name a representative...we have chairs’ council meetings...regularly...” (D – UC, 511-514; 535).

Disappearing time also included recurring issues that soaked up department heads time, and took them away from other productive activity. According to one dean, “...when we have recurring issues...sometimes that can absorb a lot of time, and it takes you [the DH] away from putting energies into what I would call productive activity that helps generate scholarly activity or student counseling...” (D-UC, 298-303).

Dean UC also mentioned that certain time commitments were expected of the heads at the university-level in terms of recruitment:

I think there are certain commitments in terms of advising students that will be coming to campus that might be generated from the university recruiting staff...they want, if not the chairs, then they want the chairs to assign somebody to meet with those students and talk about the programs in the school of business (D-UC, 502-509).

University-level expectations were mentioned by Dean UA as putting “a lot more burden on them. I have more things that come down to me that has to be allocated to the chair” (D – UA, 77-79).

Visibility. Two deans mentioned the perceived demand that becoming more visible in the external business community, and being present at a variety of university functions, was a growing expectation of department heads. One dean indicated that department heads needed more visibility in the local and state business community in order to stay relevant with external stakeholders. Dean UB stated:

[I] am trying to increase each of the department chairs’ visibility [in the business community] and they have not been asked to do that before. I want people to associate our department chairs...with what is going on here at the university, and that is not something the faculty or the department chairs have had to do. I...want them to have work experience...because in order for us to accomplish some of the thing we need to do strategically, we have to demonstrate our relevance to the business community. (D – UB, 427-433; 473-488).

DHs were also expected to attend certain university events, “There are certain events [they] have to participate in...they need to be on campus an appropriate amount of time” (D – UC, 259-261).

Administrivia. General administrative demands included the facilitation of tasks such as managing the office, advising, class schedules, overseeing faculty office hours, report writing, and adhering to AACSB standards were mentioned by one dean. “In other words,” observed Dean UC, “they need to keep an eye on things like our faculty posting office hours...doing their assessments...managing the administrative assistants, grad assistants, and those sorts of things” (63 – 65; 466-468).

Reports were part of the administrivia that department heads faced. One dean mentioned that “they have certain reports they need to prepare and to give to me...(D – UC, 91-92). Along with reports, certain constraints were placed on the department heads with regard to class coverage. “They should...consider faculty needs and desires in terms of what they teach, and what courses they teach, and also what they are qualified to teach” reported D – UC with regard to AACSB accreditation constraints, i.e., department heads ensuring that courses were covered by terminally qualified instructors.

Faculty evaluator. Another administrative demand that department heads faced was that of evaluator for merit pay raises. According to Dean UC, “...they need to be good evaluators of the faculty so that I can support their decisions in terms of merit pay raises, promotion, and tenure” (D-UC, 93-95).

Role ambiguity. One dean observed the role ambiguity inherent within the position that places demands on department heads.

Being a department chair is such a difficult job...I think it is probably harder than a dean's, and harder than the president's for sure – because you really don't know if you are a faculty member or an administrator...that's a fine line that a department chair has to walk...(D – UB, 256 – 260).

Dean UB continued, "...today it seems the department head is really an employee of the people that he or she is supervising...you have got to have the power of persuasion..."(351-355).

Summary of Deans' Perceptions of Demands and Constraints on Department Heads

The deans' interviews revealed six sub-themes related to faculty/student demands and constraints. Two deans mentioned the demands in light of turf defense and faculty advocate. The deans from University B and C both observed the demands of the department head as providing optimal (primetime) schedules for faculty and students. Acting fairly towards faculty was perceived by two deans as a demand on the DHs. Each individual dean mentioned professional advising, challenges with curricular decisions, and functioning as a mediator as something they perceived to be demands and constraints, as well (see Figure 1).

Financial/resource demands and constraints were minimally discussed by the deans, with the exception of doing more with less. All three discussed their perceptions that department heads are expected to provide more services and resources, with increasingly declining financial support. Two deans mentioned the demand for external resource acquisition for the department head. Dean UC also discussed the demand for stewardship and equitable distribution of scarce funds, as well as salary cap constraints.

Administrative/leadership demands and constraints were the largest category discussed by the deans. All three referenced the demands of the DHs as professional role models, acting as strategist and visionary for the department, doing the impossible, and recognizing the limits to department head authority in decision making. Two deans also discussed their perceptions that department heads live with disappearing time through meetings and other time constraints, and stressed the importance of visibility, both in the external business community, and internally at university events. General administrative duties, acting as faculty evaluator, and role ambiguity were mentioned by one dean, respectively. See Figure 1 for a graphic summary of overall deans' perceptions.

Faculty Perceptions of Demands and Constraints Placed on Department Heads

In order to address the second research questions, each faculty member was asked to describe their perceptions as to the demands and constraints that impact department heads in colleges of business in higher education. Overarching categories of faculty/student demands and constraints, financial/resource demands, and administrative/leadership demands and constraints emerged from the faculty interviews.

Faculty/Student Demands and Constraints

In the category of faculty and student demands and constraints, a number of sub-themes emerged from faculty interviews. In this section, the sub-themes of *turf defender and advocate*, *primetime provider*, *reverse consumerism*, *mediator*, and *divided loyalties* are discussed. Each sub-theme is presented from most frequently mentioned by faculty to least.

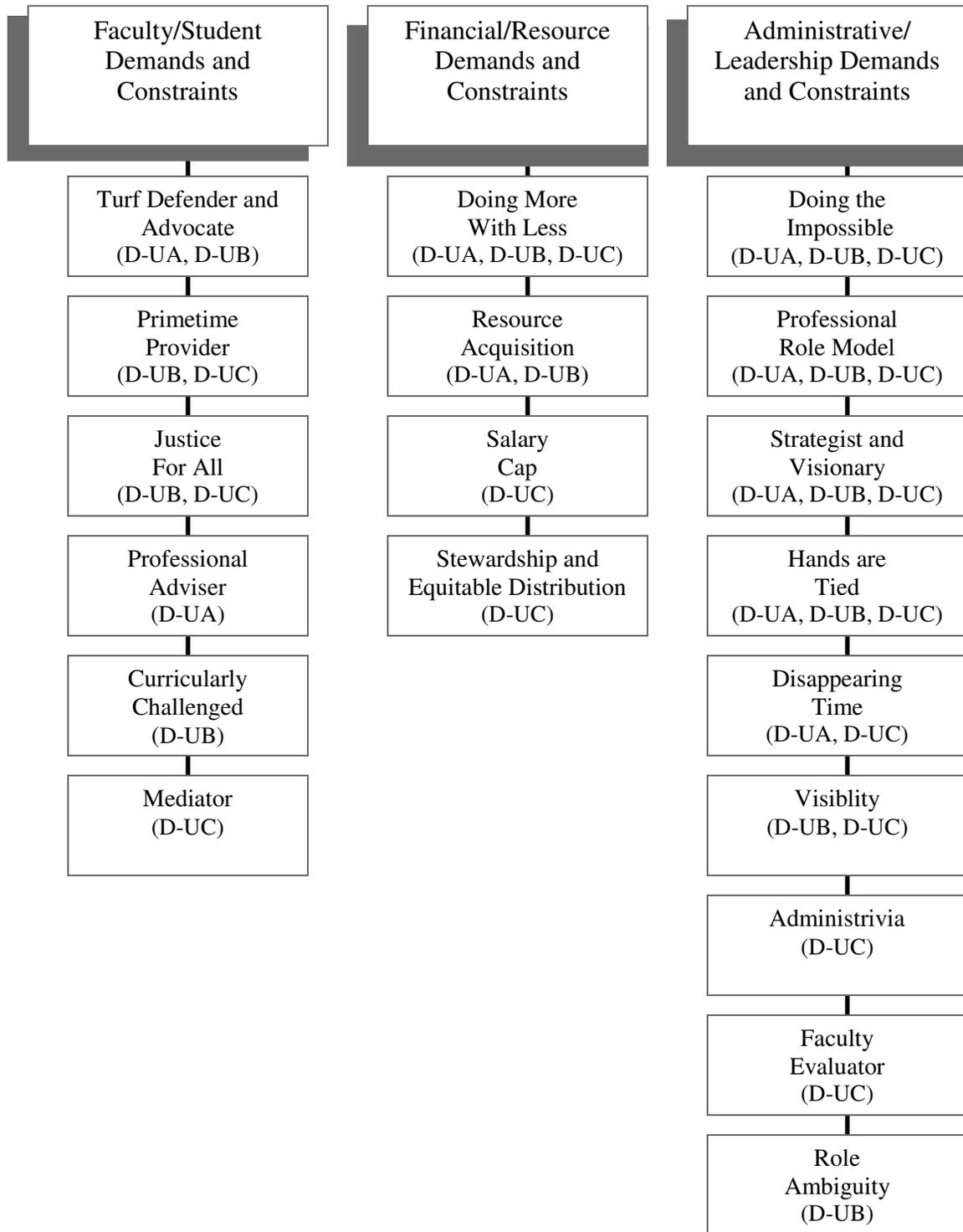


Figure 1. Summary of Deans' Perceptions of Demands and Constraints Placed on Department Heads in Colleges of Business

Turf defender and advocate. Faculty members discussed their perceptions that department heads should be advocates of the faculty. One remarked that department heads should remain apolitical in their current position as part of their advocacy role. “I want a chair that is apolitical in the sense that their aspirations are really no higher than what they are...if the chair doesn’t have those aspirations, they are more willing to do what is right...” (FAC – UB, 144-146; 174-176). Another faculty member observed, “We need a leader who know the faculty and will bring forth those with needs bravely...I want a department chair who offers a supportive role to faculty...who is willing to fight for more resources” (FAC – UA, 312-322).

According to Faculty UB, it was important to have a department head who had “a willingness to carry our concerns higher. I know that sometimes that may be difficult, it may be uncomfortable...but I think...a chair...should be willing to be the banner-holder and do that. And not be unwilling to do so” (445-454). The advocacy role of the DH was also mentioned by Faculty UB in light of “finding ways to support them [the faculty], and help them do it. It is freeing them up when they need to be freed up, or providing funds when they have an idea to do something” (FAC – UB, 537-541).

Turf protector was also mentioned by one faculty member as a demand for department heads. “There is a lot of that protection of turf, protection of position, that comes into play, I think...getting the job done sometimes requires you to do things that will go to the next level, saying, ‘This is not right’...(FAC – UC, 388-395).

Primetime provider. Student demands were also mentioned in terms of course offerings and online degrees. The department head was perceived to be responsible to

provide primetime offerings: courses when students needed them, online degrees for convenience, and programs to improve student skills in the marketplace. One faculty members' observation of student demands was to, "make sure that the courses that should be offered are being offered, that the rotations are there" (FAC – UC, 150-152). Faculty UB discussed this demand in light of online degrees that their department head was expected to offer. "I think...a lot of pressure [is] on her to balance course offerings...you know, a great example is on-line courses..." (319-320).

Reverse consumerism. Student demands placed on department heads included differences in student expectations in today's higher education environment. Faculty UB indicated:

...[the DH] has...to stay close to the expectations of students. Higher education is the only product, goods, service, however you want to refer to it, where you have reverse consumerism. Students don't want what they pay for, they want just the opposite; and I know our head has to battle those expectations or that type of attitude from the stakeholders of students versus the fact that no, we need to give you what you pay for (280-287).

Mediator. Department heads were also expected to act as mediator for student and faculty issues. One faculty member remarked, "...if local problems come up in a particular area with students and a faculty member, then the chair will deal with them and the faculty member...they shouldn't be going to the dean" (FAC – UC, 152 – 158).

Divided loyalties. A constraint perceived by one faculty member was in conjunction with department heads' loyalty to their own discipline. In the case of all three

schools, the faculty were members of combined departments in which more than one discipline was represented. According to Faculty UA:

...the problem with a university environment is that...people are very focused in their field, so if you have a marketing department, then you're a marketing man; you do your research in marketing, you teach marketing. The problem is that you have a chair, let's say for example...DH – UA's leaning is towards management...whether you like it or not, [when] you are familiar with your field, you tend to have a loyalty to someone...(FAC – UA, 222-227).

Financial/Resource Demands and Constraints

All three faculty members interviewed discussed their perceptions as to the types of financial and resource demands and constraints their department heads faced as part of their position. Within this category, three sub-themes emerged. These sub-themes involved *resource acquisition*, *enrollment conflict*, and *doing more with less*. Each of these themes will be discussed in order from most frequently mentioned by the faculty to the least frequently mentioned.

Resource acquisition. Networking with external stakeholders was a demand that faculty perceived DHs had in order to increase resources. “The DH does a lot with external relationships. DH – UA ...has been called upon to do networking with businesses...more interaction with the industry” (FAC – UA, 180-181). Financial constraints also included funding sources from the state, and the perception that department heads were hand-tied because of the needed resources. “It comes all the way from the state legislatures, the funding mechanisms. You can't function and remain a

viable unit without the funding, but..., if you simply become a slave to the income strain, you dilute everything you are trying to do” (FAC – UB, 301-307).

Enrollment conflict. Enrollment issues were mentioned by one faculty member as a financial demand *and* constraint. Many colleges and universities rely on FTEs (full-time equivalency) and FTHs (full-time hours) as a way to measure faculty productivity. According to Faculty UB:

...the funding mechanisms for colleges are based on FTEs and FTHs. So you run this trying to attract a mass population into your college and into your majors, but at the same time knowing that as you let in the masses, then you tend to dilute the quality of the students...the [DH] has to battle that – trying to recruit, trying to retain, versus a natural weeding out process (245-258).

Doing more with less. Faculty perceived that department heads also faced challenges with limited resources. “Obviously, the [DH] has the big issues of resource allocation, you know, that’s an everyday thing for all administrators, and what has to be done to position the college in certain aspects of the university” (FAC – UB, 272-273; 315-317). One challenge specifically mentioned was the need to produce quality graduates with fewer resources. Faculty UB commented:

Yeah, we all know that if the chair had all the resources that they needed, we could have a very effective product...department heads need programs that produce quality graduates. Obviously, they have to be able to deliver that within the constraints of budgetary resource allocation, whatever is set by both the college and the university (FAC – UB, 395; 421-425).

This constraint was perceived to be pushed down to the department head from the dean. “I think D-UB’s mandate [financial constraint] comes from above, but at the same time D-UB passes those things down to DH-UB without being able to give additional resources” (FAC-UB, 331-334).

Administrative/Leadership Demands and Constraints

The faculty perceived that department heads experienced a number of administrative and leadership demands and constraints. Within this larger category emerged several sub-themes: *administrivia, doing the impossible, hands are tied, strategist and visionary, communicator, disappearing time, professional role model, and role ambiguity*. Following is a discussion of each sub-theme from most often mentioned by the faculty to least.

Administrivia. Demands that faculty perceived DHs faced related to the administrative aspect of the position included tasks that one faculty member labeled, “wasting time” (FAC – UA, 137). “Here I see that the head of a department is given a lot of responsibility with respect to handling those things that look like they could be handled by somebody who is not paid as high as the [DH]...” (FAC – UA, 131-136). Those tasks included scheduling, and general managing of the department. “The DH is a manager because he does manage the activities that are necessary, I mean, who’s going to be teaching what courses when, and all those things...” (FAC – UC, 506-508). “I’m not sure I wouldn’t say maybe that 60% of the job is...making out schedules, making sure certain rooms are available...” (FAC – UB, 583-587). “I think that a chair...has a responsibility to keep the departmental organizational structure in place, making sure that

those things that have to done for planning, organizing are in place, tapping faculty as needed...”(FAC – UC, 81-86). Another faculty member remarked:

I would expect a facilitating type of leadership in the sense that the DH should focus more on the leadership-management role, rather than a lot of roles that can be done by other people who require a lower level of skill than that of a department head. But then, having said that, it is difficult when a department head is bogged down with all of these other duties...(FAC – UA, 164-170; 200-202).

Finally, Faculty UB commented, “There are so many tasks...that are routine or non-routine, reports...good chairs take a lot of the load off of us from having to do those types of, I hate to use the term trivial, but in our minds, trivial duties” (577-580).

Doing the impossible. Faculty UB discussed the pressure that DHs faced among stakeholders in general, “...it is pressure, and a lot of time conflicting influences from all the different stakeholder groups, whereas if you satisfy one, you are going to dissatisfy another. And I think chairs...are caught in that issue” (FAC-UB, 291-295).

All three faculty members mentioned that DHs are placed in a difficult position between faculty who believe they are totally autonomous in their professional capacities as teachers/researchers, and the deans and other levels of upper administration.

According to Faculty UA, “...the demand is to mobilize and motivate their subordinates...no, they’re not subordinates, they are called peers. In the school, there is no such thing as a subordinate. Professors hate that” (96-102). “I think part of the characteristic of the business that we are in, in terms of the university environment, is that you are dealing with professionals who can, at any point say, ‘you know I do it this way’...(FAC – UC, 222-225).

Doing the impossible included the department head facing conflict between deans and faculty members as to the heads' responsibility to each competing group. Faculty UC indicated:

If you are a chair for a department, you have to ask yourself, 'Does the chair of the department simply manage the day-to-day or do they sometimes champion the cause of the faculty?' Are they a representative of the faculty or are they simply bringing down orders from the dean's office...does that make sense? (FAC – UC, 667-673).

Hands are tied. An administrative/leadership constraint that emerged was the perception of the limited authority department heads had in their position. "Sometimes, department heads have no control over what role they are supposed to play, because it depends on the policy of the institution itself" (FAC – UA, 172-176). Faculty UB commented:

There are a lot of things the DH cannot unilaterally make decisions about because they involve other programs or other colleges or other parts of the university. I think there is a certain amount of authority that is decentralized down to the department heads, for instance, to decide who teaches a particular section of certain things, but even course offerings...sometimes get outside of their control (FAC-UB, 873-876; 879-894).

According to Faculty UC, an authority constraint was "in terms of financial...of travel, they can sign on, but they can only sign on so much, and that has to go to the next level..." (FAC – UC, 316-319). This perception was corroborated by Faculty UB: I think chairs can take some authority, but...I think there are so many things they do not have the

typical authority to do like you would expect in a traditional business; it has to come from the university” (FAC-UB, 973-978).

Strategist and visionary. Leadership demands were perceived to include communication and facilitation of strategic thinking, vision setting, and forward thinking. Forward thinking was mentioned in context with setting a vision for the department. “The chair should...keep us moving with fresh views of where we should be...the chair has his or her part to play in creating some forward momentum with fresh ideas...” (FAC – UC, 162-168). Faculty UB observed:

Obviously, faculty are different than your typical employees. There is no other job that I know of that gives you the autonomy that you get from these jobs, which means you [the DH] have to be able to kind of set the path, set the vision, set the direction...you have to inspire them to be the best you can be...(FAC-UB, 591-597).

The faculty member from University C also commented that department heads should set the direction for the department, with input from the faculty. They need to “come up with some ideas about direction for a department...that says, ‘Here is the vision...do we share it?’, and ‘Let’s tweak that vision based on what you think as a faculty member” (FAC – UC, 98-100).

Communicator. One faculty member mentioned the demand for communication from the department head. Faculty UB remarked, “...DH-UB has to be an effective communicator to explain rationales for decision making...I think DH-UB’s ability to communicate, to explain...’this is why I chose this route or this is why I didn’t’...is crucial to interaction with faculty” (FAC-UB, 471-475).

Disappearing time. An administrative/leadership constraint perceived by the faculty was that the position itself had evolved into more of a traditional business supervisory role where deadlines were sometimes immediate. Faculty UB responded:

I don't think any chair probably has any idea of the amount of paperwork and...data gathering that they must do...and how everything is 'got to have it yesterday.' I think all of a sudden the chairs have been thrown back into the life of the business world [by entering administration], and everything has got to be now because somebody higher up put it off, and now they absolutely have to have it (717-720).

Professional role model. One faculty member mentioned the importance of department heads being engaged in the business community as part of their professional leadership. According to FAC – UA, "...department heads in a business school cannot divorce themselves from the business community, because it's the business community that we are training" (FAC – UA, 194-198).

Role ambiguity. One faculty member perceived that deans and other upper administrators had different expectations of the role of the department head than what the heads might understand. The perception of Faculty UC was "...we have evolved into a more bureaucratic environment. I think it [the DH position] has become a line position that is more akin to business and industry...and sometimes administrators today...don't understand that this is a different type of industry we're in...you are not just a line foreman..." (FAC-UC, 460-465; 471-472).

Upper administrators were perceived as viewing DHs as their supervisors. "I think that there are too many times when maybe upper level administrators tend to see the chair

as ‘my supervisors’ and that is not what a chair was meant to be...” (FAC – UC, 644-647).

Summary of Faculty Perceptions of the Demands and Constraints of Department Heads

The faculty members interviewed in this study perceived that department heads faced a number of demands and constraints. All three communicated that acting as turf defender and advocate of the faculty was a primary demand on DHs. The second most mentioned faculty/student demand was that course offerings and schedules be at premium and convenient times. At least one faculty member discussed reverse consumerism in terms of student demands. Mediation and divided loyalties were also mentioned by one faculty member, respectively.

Financial/resource demands and constraints were minimally discussed by the faculty. Two individuals from different universities mentioned the importance of external resource acquisition as a demand placed on DHs. The faculty member from University B also spoke of enrollment conflict and doing more with less as financial/resource constraints on the DH.

As with the deans’ perceptions, all three faculty members’ discussed a number of administrative/leadership demands and constraints. All three faculty perceived that administrivia, doing the impossible, and having hands that were tied (limited authority) were major demands and constraints on department heads. Two faculty members mentioned the expectation that DHs act as strategists and visionaries as part of the heads’ demands. Individual faculty members observed that disappearing time, role ambiguity, communicating, and providing professional role modeling were also demands and constraints faced by the department heads (see Figure 2).

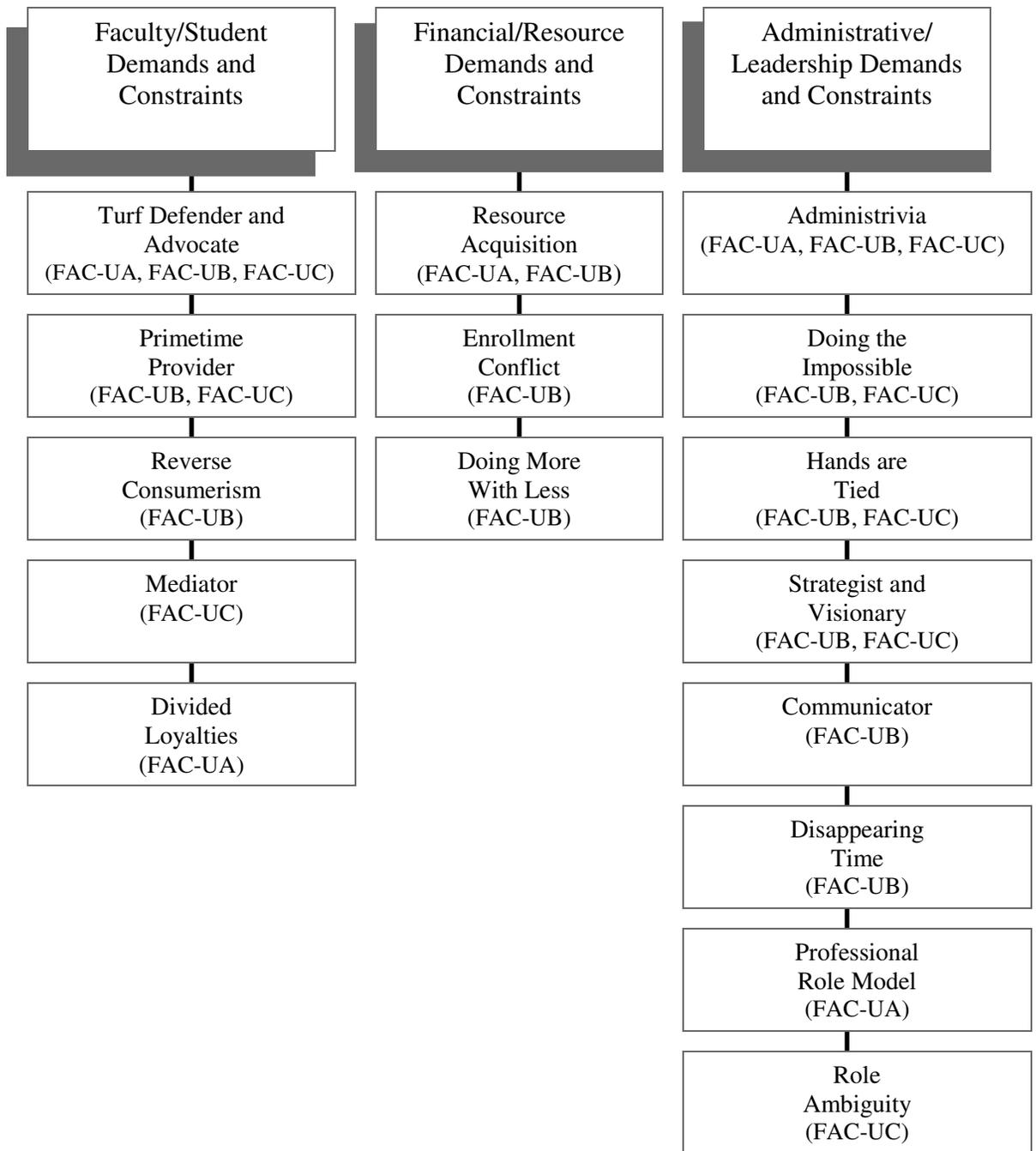


Figure 2. Summary of Faculty Perceptions of Demands and Constraints Placed on Department Heads in Colleges of Business

Department Head Perceptions of the Demands and Constraints Placed on Them

Three department heads were interviewed as to their perceptions of the demands and constraints that were placed on them in this leadership position. Faculty and student demands and constraints were discussed, as were financial/resource demands and constraints, and overall administrative/leadership demands and constraints.

Faculty/Student Demands and Constraints

The department heads perceived several faculty and student demands and constraints. From this category emerged a number of sub-themes including: *mediator*, *endless student needs*, *professional adviser*, *facilitator of resources*, *primetime provider*, and *turf defender and advocate*.

Mediator. All three deans discussed that department heads were expected to act as mediator between students and faculty. “I mediate issues between faculty and students that can’t be resolved...” (DH – UB, 182-183). DH-UC commented, “I was surprised at the end of the year how many students actually had problems that [I] had to work with the faculty members on...I had two or three sets of grade appeals that we had to work through...” (DH-UC, 59-61; 65-66).

DH-UA received an email from a student complaining that he [the student] only had one hour to take his final exam (OB, 22-24). DH-UA’s comment was, “What is he complaining to me for—I’m not his professor!” (OB, 25-26). Department Head UB communicated surprise that this was one of the demands of the job. “I never wanted to involve myself with faculty disputes with students. I find myself in the middle of those things that I don’t enjoy, listening to faculty and students complain...and try to bring those two parties together” (DH-UB, 662-667).

Endless student needs. During the observation of DH-UC, a considerable amount of time of the DH was spent in the morning working with students and their needs over a project (OB, 16-21). In addition to working with the students on their projects, DH-UC also received several emails from students who indicated they would be missing an evening class. DH-UC shared that he worked “on average, 10 hours from home most weekends” and his online class had access to him late nights and on the weekends (OB, 117-124). The demand of “constant student traffic” (DH-UA, 96) was observed by DH-UA, who described it in terms of “our department is service-oriented, since we are marketing and management. The open door policy I have for faculty and students doesn’t really bother me” (96-98; 105-107).

Professional adviser. The department heads also discussed student demands in light of advisement. During an observation, DH-UA commented that students often needed help from the head regarding advisement issues. As the researcher and DH were discussing this demand, a student in the outer office came to the door asking for assistance—he didn’t know who his adviser was. DH-UA gave him the name of the faculty member, then proceeded to question the student regarding what classes he was taking, and gave some general guidelines (OB, 34-39). DH-UA acknowledged that while students needed advisement help, it did take time:

Sometimes, we pay department heads to do advising. Often students need help with what classes to take. The faculty arguably should know these answers, but as a department chair, I spend time defusing contention with some of the faculty in my department over having to advise students...it take away from what you want to do (DH-UA, 166-176).

According to DH-UB, “when faculty [and DHs] advise students...it improves retention and assists with building relationships...” (21-22). “I am the adviser of last resort in the department, so there are lots of days when there are no faculty to be found, so I need to understand the degree plans for all of our majors” (DH-UB, 184-188).

Facilitator of resources. Faculty demands on the DH included acting as facilitator of resources to help faculty do their jobs. DH – UA discussed that faculty wanted “help with intellectual contributions, for funds and college support to travel. They want the best resources in terms of computers and software, and for me to make sure their schedules give them time to research” (DH-UA, 53-58). According to DH-UC, “...mostly what they want is to be given the resources and allowed to do their teaching. It is almost their total focus...” (DH-UC, 226-228).

Primetime provider. Scheduling challenges in terms of meeting faculty preferences were perceived as constraints by the department heads. According to DH – UB, “...when I schedule classes...I’ve got twelve faculty members who all want to teach on Tuesdays and Thursdays...and they *only want* (emphasis in voice inflection) to do it on [those days]. So you know, it becomes an impossible task...” (DH-UB, 239-241; 247-249). The schedule expectations of faculty were also mentioned as a constraint for department heads in light of other campus activities in which they needed the faculty available. DH-UB observed:

There are times when we need faculty on campus, there is an event...something special that requires their physical presence, and the fact that you have committed yourself in other ways, sometimes to me is irrelevant. Because this is still your

job, and so, that is the most frustrating thing to me...just their use of time. (DH-UB, 412-419).

This same department head perceived that faculty expected them to take care of their every need and run the department well, so they could focus on teaching and research. “Basically, I make sure this department runs, I make sure their [faculty] needs are met by the people who work in this office, and I try to make their jobs as painless as possible” (DH-UB, 109-113).

Turf defender and advocate. One department head mentioned that faculty expected department heads to exhibit openness, fairness, and act as protector. DH-UC observed:

They want to know what to expect, they want to both be involved in things that are going to affect them, and they also want to be shielded from the things they don't want to be involved with. The demands I get are generally when something is happening, like on the rare occasion when they are being prohibited or have a problem in making that happen (DH-UC, 114-119; 232-235).

The department head from University A concluded that faculty expected the DH would “fulfill their needs and...run the show well” (DH-UC, 62; 66).

Financial/Resource Demands and Constraints

All three department heads discussed the financial and resource demands and constraints they perceived were placed on them, both from above and below within the college, and then with other stakeholders across campus and externally to the university. This category was further divided into the following sub-themes: *doing more with less*,

facility management, external resource acquisition, and salary cap. Each of these themes will be discussed in order from most frequently mentioned to least.

Doing more with less. DH-UB summed up all three heads perceptions of these demands and constraints, “Well, there is *never* (emphasis in voice inflection) money. So we don’t get to do everything we want to do” (212-213). The department head from University A described his constraints as the inability to find the right hire given limited resources. “We don’t have the resources to add another full-time faculty...I had to make a choice as to what type of faculty member we needed...you always have money constraints...(DH-UA, 229-233; 239).

Another financial/resource constraint was the perception that money was shrinking. “In terms of resources, they just haven’t grown,” remarked DH-UA (472-474). Shrinking resources were discussed during a meeting the researcher observed between D-UA and the various department heads. One issue that emerged during the meeting was that departments would have to incur the costs of background checks for new employees. One DH asked, “Why are the departments having to pay for this when it is an HR issue?” (OB, DH-UB, 157-166). According to DH-UB, “since I don’t have a long history here, people who have been chairs a long time...can tell you what has happened to their supplies and services budget...the steady decline of [resources] while costs are rising...” (DH-UB, 223-228). Resource constraints were summed up by the department head from University B. “We are all fighting for resources, and so it is not like anybody has an overabundance, but for instance, chairs don’t have lines...not even faculty lines. There isn’t a lot of excess, so you know it is...the way it works” (DH-UB, 747-750; 764-766).

Facility management. A resource demand that also created a constraint for department heads was in facility management. One DH talked about the need for a new COBA building. An indication during the observation was that the college was out of office space, which had led to not filling several full-time faculty positions (OB, DH-UA, 130-132). DH-UB also referred to facility constraints. “You know, when I schedule classes, I’ve got five classrooms, the largest of which holds 60 people...I don’t feel constrained all that much besides finances and this physical facility” (DH-UB, 233-235; 237-239).

External resource acquisition. General funding demands and constraints were perceived to fall on department heads. DH-UC talked about the additional demands placed on his time in order to obtain external resources. “The...challenge, at whatever level I can, is to generate external funding from the departmental level, and I have chosen, to this point, to primarily do that through grants” (DH-UC, 184-187). Another financial demand emerged during the observation of DH-UA. He discussed the perceived pressure from above to offer dual enrollment credit through the management department as a way to provide more external funding (OB, DH-UA, 215-217).

Salary cap. One aspect of financial and resource constraints mentioned by department heads was that of faculty salaries and vacancies. According to DH-UB, hiring was a major challenge given the limited resources available. “You know, when it comes to hiring, our ability to compete in the salary market is constrained by the university to support those lines...” (DH-UB, 214-216).

Administrative/Leadership Demands and Constraints

The final category that emerged from the data regarding perceptions of department heads was administrative/leadership demands and constraints. Within this category several sub-themes were identified: *doing the impossible*, *professional role model*, *disappearing time*, *committee crush*, *strategist and visionary*, *administrivia*, *role ambiguity*, *hands are tied*, and *faculty evaluator*. Each of these are discussed in this section in order from most frequently mentioned to least.

Doing the impossible. All three of the department heads mentioned aspects of the job that they felt asked the impossible. DH-UB discussed the perceptions they had about department heads prior to accepting the position:

You know, it was something you always joked about when you left the office, and they [DHs] were talking about some report they had to do or something that took all their time and the comment was always, ‘that’s why you get paid the big bucks.’ The reports and the way a day can disappear when there is no productive work to show for it at the end...it takes way more time than I thought at times (DH-UB, 54-62).

According to DH – UA, “...expectations have increased. It seems this is our philosophy: the chairs will do it...I haven’t time to do research in the things I would like to do” (DH – UA, 112-114). The department head from University C observed, “the fact that I have to be here is probably the hardest part, whereas, as a faculty member you are here when you teach” (DH – UC, 475-478).

Doing the impossible also meant losing flexibility to do activities on their own time schedule. As a faculty member, “if you want to do other things at other times, you

can do it. As an administrator, that really doesn't go over..." (DH – UC, 478-480). DH – UC shared during the observation, "I can't be everywhere and be everything to everybody..." (OB, DH – UC, 151-152).

Professional role model. An administrative demand perceived by the heads was the ability to demonstrate relevancy in the classroom through teaching and research, and how administrative duties placed time constraints on them in terms of their teaching. During the observation period, all three heads mentioned that they had teaching obligations as part of their position (OB, DH-A, B, & C). "I am a teacher, so I have to prepare for my classes. Do I do as good of a job as I probably did before? Probably not, but the demands as an instructor are there..." (DH-UA, 282-288). DH-UA also shared during the observation period that teaching and research were his first loves. The lack of time due to administrative demands had taken its toll on both his research and teaching since taking over the position. "I didn't get into higher education to crunch numbers and attend meetings," (OB, DH-UA, 237-241). The department head from University C described his perception as professional role model in this manner:

I am representing the school of business in a positive way and constantly promoting it, and any chance I get to say something nice about what they are doing, I make sure I do. I keep a website for the department...at least once a semester, everybody gets some recognition (DH – UC, 910-914).

Disappearing time. Department heads perceived their time to always be split-focused due to the expectations placed them. "It [the DH position] seems to take inordinate amounts of time and paperwork (laughter), but then, you run into that with any bureaucracy" (DH-UA, 437-439). The department head from University C described that

the teaching load they carried included online courses, which allowed them to do work at night and on the weekends (OB, DH-UC, 58-60). “When I had classes during the day, it was a problem because students were coming into the office or somebody was sitting there crying...and it always happened right before class started” (DH-UC, 408-412).

Department UB remarked, “...the department things always get done first, and sometimes you think, ‘oh, I only teach two classes – that won’t be a problem.’ And there are days when going to class is the last thing I have time for” (DH-UB, 635-639). The research agenda of DH-UB suffered due to administrative demands. “That has been the thing that has suffered the most because...I never get out of this building, so most of the time it doesn’t get done...there’s not these huge blocks of time...there is always these other demands...” (DH-UB, 652-660).

Disappearing time also meant spending more time on the clock. One issue discussed at the departmental meeting observed by the researcher at University B was the school calendar. The dean of the college shared that department heads would have to cover the office on days the university had decided to add to the annual calendar. The dean stated, “I won’t ask faculty to come back” to which one of the heads replied, “more work, less time off.” (OB, DH – UB, 170-175). Annual reports were also discussed during this meeting. The dean asked each DH to do a summary of professional activities for themselves, for accreditation and evaluation purposes. The comment from D-UB was, “if I need it earlier than Spring Break...I’ll make it urgent. As we do in the university, my poor planning will create an urgency for you [laughter from the heads and dean]...” (OB, DH – UB, 197-209).

Committee crush. Meetings were mentioned by all three department heads, and were part of the observation process of the researcher. “Serving on committees...I might be on these committees because I am a chair of a department,” commented DH-UA (90-92). “I’m on a couple of committees university-wide that are fairly intense in terms of work...the downside...is that you don’t have a lot of time for other professional interests. (DH-UA, 123-127). DH – UC discussed the demands that cross-campus meetings placed on his time:

From time to time, as a chair, I am expected to go [meetings] with the Provost. And while it is nice when it happens, he’s a great guy and we like to have a relationship with him, almost every one of the meeting end up being...the old fashioned gripe session, which is very discouraging because it is purely a waste of time...from my point of view (DH-UC, 278-283; 286-288).

Department Head UA commented, “There are demands on my time for service to the committees...I feel obligated to go to every meeting of each committee that I am part of” (DH-UA, 302-308). Meetings also occurred at the departmental and college level, as well. “Committee meetings are always a constraint, probably number one on everyone’s list. I serve on three or four school committees...”, commented DH-UC (364-366).

According to DH-UB, the committees she served on were characterized as “paralysis by analysis” (OB, DH-UB, 61) “Meetings are supposed to accomplish something – we spend hours to get nothing done” (OB, DH-UB, 71-73).

Strategist and visionary. Leadership demands also centered around communication and setting a vision for the faculty of the department. Department Head UC observed:

I do some things...that provide...leadership to my faculty, [by] providing some mission and vision and direction...I work hard...with each person, asking them what they want to do, then if I have to change something, letting them know that this is going to be changed... (DH-UC, 676-684).

“The faculty are going to go wherever they want, so you have got to get them to want to do what you want them to do, and by proper communication, it works...most of the time,” commented DH-UC (943-947). The demand for vision setting was perceived as a constraint for one department head due to the day to day challenges of the position. “We spend a lot of time putting out fires, and we spend very little time being strategic. Time disappears very quickly” (DH-UB, 67-70). DH-UB continued that the dean would “probably like more strategy, more leadership in terms of the direction of the department. I don’t know if all the chairs feel it...I keep thinking it will get better and I will be that way later...I don’t know” (DH-UB, 118-122; 133-134).

Administrivia. One recurring theme was the amount of time department heads spent on administrative demands, including teaching, research, managing the office and employees, and completing reports. “Now in terms of the job itself, a lot of it is simply procedural...you’ve got to jump through the hoops,” remarked DH – UA (468-471). Administrative demands that involved office management included scheduling, letters of merit, and other reports. According to DH-UC, doing administrative activities such as “each semester’s scheduled classes has to be done at certain times...annual reports have to be gotten in from faculty and... merit letters have to be out in April...” were perceived as administrative demands (431-436).

Another administrative demand department heads perceived was that deans wanted them to handle issues within the department. According to DH-UC, “The dean wants me to deal with individual faculty and individual faculty interests. He is...available to talk with them,...but he really wants me to be the primary one they come to, and not to be a problem for him...” (166-171).

Role ambiguity. Two department heads mentioned feeling some ambiguity in terms of their role as head. “Some things haven’t been totally clarified, which very much can be construed as a constraint...perhaps a clarity in what I can do and what I can’t do...” (DH-UA, 190-195). The issue of role ambiguity was discussed by DH-UC:

Chairs are a very special breed of cat...because you’re really not a full-time faculty or administrator. I mean, I’m half-time as a chair and so the administrative team will treat me as if I am an administrator...it has been interesting to see the...faculty treat me as if I am an administrator, even though I am still faculty. I think of myself as half and half, but...I’m not one of them [faculty] anymore (DH-UC, 485-495).

Hands are tied. One department head mentioned the limited amount of authority the position holds, not only in terms of hiring and resource allocation, but also in terms of communicated role expectations. DH-UA observed that hiring decisions did not fall under the authority of the department head. “To be honest, for hiring the faculty, it really isn’t my decision. It goes to the departmental committee, who then makes the recommendation to the dean” (DH-UA, 84-87).

Faculty evaluator. One administrative demand mentioned was that of faculty evaluator in terms of merit recommendations. According to DH-UB, “We are responsible

for evaluating the faculty every year for merit, and so a faculty member puts together a productivity report...we are responsible for evaluating that...report in light of the merit system..." (DH-UB, 172-176).

Summary of Department Head Perceptions of Demands and Constraints Placed on Them

Department heads interviewed for this study discussed a variety of demands and constraints they perceived were placed on them as part of their leadership position. A graphical summary of department heads' perceptions is found in Figure 3.

Several faculty/student demands and constraints were identified by the DHs. All three department heads revealed that their most challenging demand was acting as mediator between faculty and student conflicts. Two department heads mentioned the endless student needs they faced within their department. DH – UA and DH – UB talked about their demands as professional adviser for students. Two of the department heads were facing constraints within their facilities in terms of space. Providing primetime schedules and acting as turf defender were mentioned by two different department heads as faculty demands they faced.

Financial/resource demands and constraints were distributed into four sub-themes. *Doing more with less* and obtaining *external resources* were mentioned by all three heads. *Facility management* was discussed by the two previously mentioned heads in terms of the shortage of space and need for financing of a new building. Finally, the constraint of *salary caps* was discussed by the department head from University B.

All three department heads perceived that *doing the impossible*, *acting as professional role models*, *disappearing time*, and *committee crush* were the most administrative/leadership demands and constraints they faced. General administration,

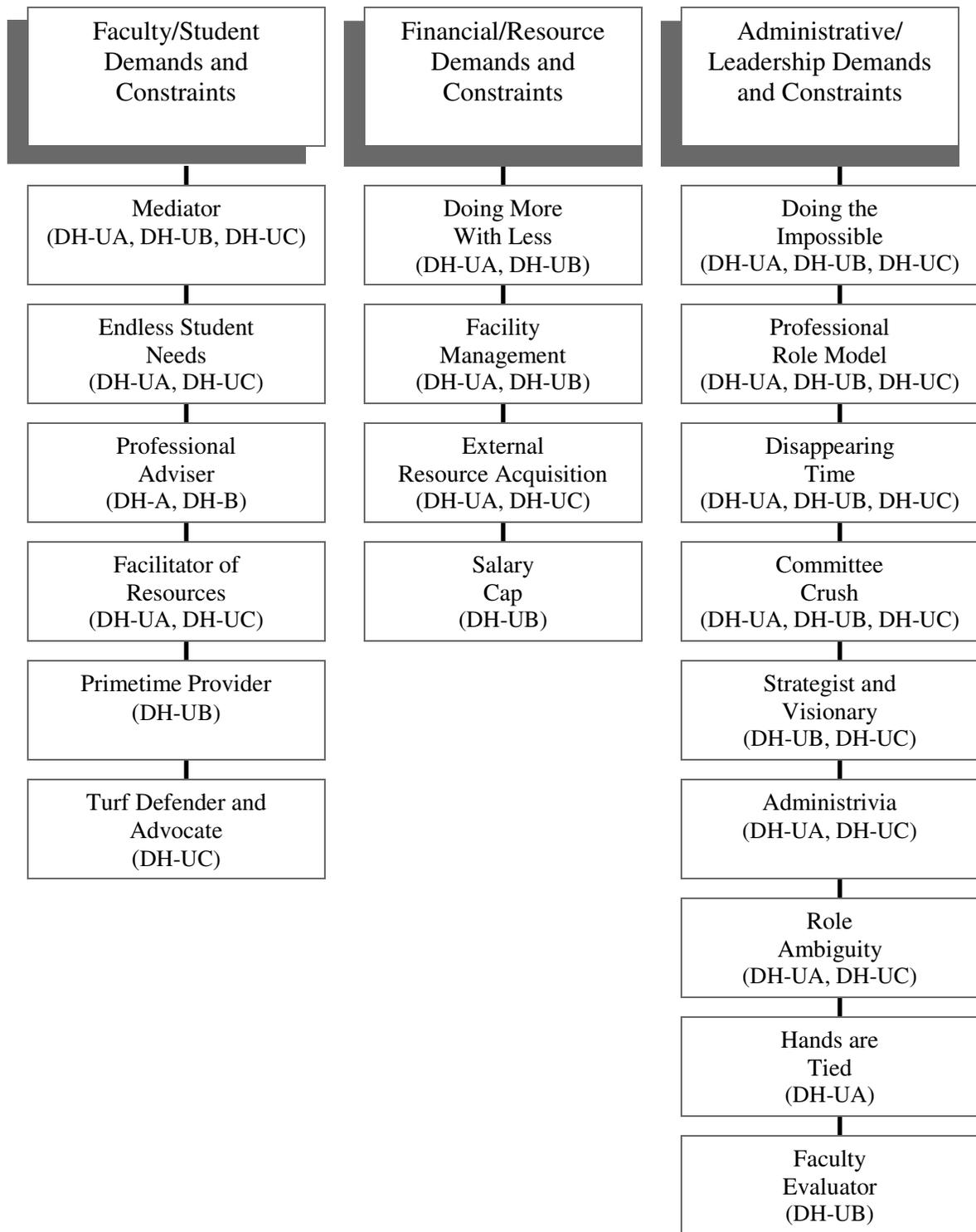


Figure 3. Summary of Department Heads' Perceptions of Demands and Constraints

Placed on Them in Colleges of Business

setting a vision and providing strategic planning, and *role ambiguity* were the second most frequently mentioned demands and constraints. One department head talked about their *hands being tied* (limited authority), while another one discussed the demands they faced as *faculty evaluator*.

Summary

In Chapter four, descriptions of how data were collected in this project and the background and biases the researcher brought to the data collection process were described. Three major theme categories emerged as a result of data analysis: faculty/student demands and constraints, financial/resource demands and constraints, and administrative/leadership demands and constraints. Within each major category emerged a number of sub-themes. The three research questions were addressed through the categories and data collected during the research project.

Contained in Chapter five is a general overview of the study, and integrated findings relevant to the research questions. Limitations of the study are reviewed. Implications for departmental leadership in higher education are suggested and implications for further research are proposed.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary

Introduction

The role of the academic department head in higher education is a complex, integral aspect of institutional leadership. The head of an academic department in a college or university plays a key role in the success of that institution. While there has been substantial research conducted on the middle leader in industry, little to no research has been focused on the academic department head in higher education (Bolton, 2004). This study was undertaken to gain a fuller understanding of the demands and constraints of department heads through a qualitative investigation of deans,' faculty, and department heads' perceptions in institutions of higher education.

Contained in Chapter five is a brief review of the information discussed in the previous four chapters. An integration of findings is presented, along with implications for practice. The final section of the chapter has limitations of the study, as well as implications for further research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to improve understanding of the demands and constraints of department heads in higher education through a qualitative investigation of deans,' faculty, and department heads' perceptions. An extensive review of the literature presented in chapter two indicated that those serving as department heads in today's institutions of higher education are facing increasing demands for public accountability (Leaming, 1998). An analysis of current research in higher education, particularly at the departmental level, revealed the importance of having a greater understanding about the

types of demands and constraints that these middle leaders face. In the case of this particular study, a qualitative exploration was deemed appropriate due to the complexity of the issues at hand, the need for understanding this complexity, and the limited amount of existing research in the field.

Design and Procedures

Three universities from two Midwestern states, all with business schools accredited by the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), were purposefully selected for the study. These schools were chosen because they all met certain benchmarks for accreditation, and therefore, were somewhat homogeneous. All three schools were classified by the Carnegie Classification System as Master's Colleges and Universities I.

Data were collected by conducting participant interviews and observation of department heads. Access to official documents specific to department head manuals was requested, however, none were available. General observation of each university's College of Business Administration (COBA) website was conducted, as well. Interview participants included three deans, three department heads, and three faculty members.

Data were analyzed based upon procedures discussed in Chapter Three. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. All participants in the study received copies of their interview transcripts with the opportunity to make comments and changes prior to the finalization of data analysis. Potential researcher bias was discussed at the beginning of the presentation of findings in Chapter Four, and was noted throughout the entire research process. All data were filtered through the theoretical concept of Stewart's (1967) Theory of Demands, Constraints, and Choices.

Conclusions

Research Questions

Within the framework of this study, three research questions were proposed. Each is addressed with a brief conclusion from the data within this section.

1. *What are deans' perceptions of the demands and constraints placed on department heads?* The responses of the deans as discussed in Chapter four revealed that they appeared to have a good understanding of the types of demands placed on their department heads. All three deans were primarily focused on the administrative demands and constraints of the position, which may have reflected their own filters of experience as the top administrators within the colleges. The deans' perceived that their heads were often caught in no-win situations, whether acting as faculty advocates or facing limited authority in their decision making. Financial and resource constraints faced by department heads were recognized by the deans, but didn't seem to have the same level of importance as did the administrative demands of the job.

2. *What are faculty perceptions of the demands and constraints placed on department heads?* The faculty interviewed in this study perceived that department heads were primarily administrators that faced demands and constraints because of the bureaucratic environment in which they operated. Administrivia and limited authority were perceived to be major constraints that heads experienced in this position. As with the deans, all three faculty members had limited awareness or minimal perceptions of the types of financial and resource constraints and demands faced by the department heads.

3. *What are department heads' perceptions of the demands and constraints placed on them?* Department heads interviewed for this study discussed a variety of

demands and constraints they perceived were placed on them in this leadership position. One of the most challenging demands perceived by all three heads was acting as a mediator between faculty and student conflicts. Administratively, the heads focused on their perceptions that they were expected to do the impossible as a major constraint to their ability to complete the tasks placed before them. Unlike the deans and faculty members, department heads perceived that their shrinking funds, combined with increased expectations for services and other resources by their faculty and other constituents, created major constraints for them as they led the department.

Conclusions Related to Existing Literature

A review of the existing literature did not appear to address the demands and constraints placed on department heads in higher education, particularly as they relate to the perceptions of deans, faculty, and department heads. Most of the literature on academic leadership has focused on the role expectations of department heads, rather than demands and constraints. Trends impacting higher education mentioned in prior literature were discussed by the participants, including changes in technology, the increased pressure for accountability (assessment), and shrinking resources.

Graham and Benoit's (2004) research on department heads identified several areas of roles and responsibilities. Within the context of this project, some of the roles identified by Graham and Benoit (2004) emerged as demands and constraints placed on the department head, rather than roles. Several studies have focused on faculty members' lacking confidence in their department leaders, and that lack of confidence resulted in low morale within departments. Morale was not an issue that emerged in this study; in fact, it became apparent that these three departments were led by highly functioning

department heads. The morale issue could have been absent due to the high level of trust and confidence that faculty had in these specific departmental leaders.

Existing literature on department heads and the challenges they face included a discussion of balancing pressures from above and below within an institutional setting. Consistent with this prior research, the researcher found that the heads are squeezed between the demands of upper administration, including their immediate supervisors (deans) and the demands and expectations of faculty, students, and other constituents on the other side. According to the Dean from University B, "...administration can be tough because you are sort of in the middle between faculty and between upper management, so to speak, so you have to balance...those responsibilities" (D – UC, 137 – 140).

A number of leadership theories were studied prior to the onset of this project. A review of leadership theory indicated that several might inform this study, however, Rosemary Stewart's Theory of Demands, Constraints, and Choices was used as the lens from which the data was collected and analyzed. After applying the posits of this theory to the findings, it was found to not be an effective lens through which to inform the study. The theory was helpful in terms of establishing an interview protocol, and influenced the overall research questions, but upon further study, other leadership theories may be more amenable to explaining the dynamics encountered. A potentially more appropriate lens through which to study this subject is addressed later in this chapter.

Integrated Findings of the Study

The findings of this study were organized around the research questions and three overarching categories. Following is a discussion of the integrated findings across all three participant groups: deans, faculty, and department heads' within the context of three

overarching categories of perceptions: faculty/student demands and constraints, financial/resource demands and constraints, and administrative/leadership demands and constraints. Only themes addressed by the majority of the respondents are discussed in detail.

Faculty/Student Demands and Constraints

Under the category of faculty/student demands and constraints, sub-themes of *turf defender and advocate*, *primetime provider*, *justice for all*, *professional advisor*, and *mediator* emerged. Of these sub-themes, only two of them were discussed by more than half of the participants. The sub-theme of *turf defender and advocate* was discussed by five of the nine participants as a demand placed on department heads. Dean UA and UB, and DH-UC identified this issue of defending and protecting faculty as a perceived demand, however, all three faculty members (FAC-UA, FAC-UB, FAC-UC) discussed their perceptions that acting as defender and advocate of the faculty was a critical demand department heads faced. *Primetime provider*, a sub-theme relating to faculty scheduling and course scheduling, was also discussed by five of the nine participants (D – UB, D - UC; FAC – UB, FAC-UC; DH – UB) however, upon closer analysis, only two of the three institutions were represented. None of the participants from University A mentioned the demand of primetime provider.

Financial/Resource Demand and Constraints

Financial/resource demands and constraints were further sub-divided into themes of *salary cap*, *stewardship and equity*, *facility management*, *resource acquisition*, and *doing more with less*. Only two of these sub-themes emerged as critical to a substantial number of participants: resource acquisition and doing more with less. Six of the nine

participants discussed the constraint placed on heads in terms of “doing more with less,” particularly in the area of shrinking resources. All three deans (D – UA, D-UB, D-UC), two department heads (DH – UA, DH-UB), and one faculty member (FAC – UB) discussed this area of constraint. The need for resource acquisition was addressed as well by six of the nine participants. D-UA, D-UB, FAC-UA, FAC-UB, DH – UA, and DH-UB all mentioned the demands placed on the department heads regarding the importance of obtaining resources for the department, primarily from external sources.

Administrative/Leadership Demands and Constraints

The final category, administrative/leadership demands and constraints, was by far the largest that emerged from the data. Ten sub-themes discussed by the participants within this category included: professional role model, life in the fast lane, strategic and visionary, hands are tied, doing the impossible, role ambiguity, administrivia, faculty evaluator, communicator, and committee crush. Of these sub-themes, the overriding demand perceived by all participants in the study was that of doing the impossible (D – UA, D-UB, D-UC; FAC – UA, FAC-UB, FAC-UC; DH – UA, DH-UB, DH-UC). Department heads are perceived to be all things to all people, giving up their time, flexibility, and facing increasing expectations that “the chairs will do it” (DH – UA, 112). According to the faculty member from University A, “Over here, the department head just gets involved with everything!” (FAC – UA, 152-153).

The demand of professional role model was perceived by all three deans (D – UA, D-UB, D-UC) and all three department heads (DH – UA, DH-UB, DH-UC), however, only one faculty member (FAC-UA) perceived that department heads’ were expected to be professional role models. One surprising finding was in the area of limited authority.

Although all three deans (D – UA, D-UB, D-UC) and all three faculty (FAC – UA, FAC-UB, FAC-UC) perceived that department heads faced limited authority in their decision making abilities, only one department head (DH – UA) mentioned it as a constraint from their perspective.

Seven of the nine participants also discussed the demand that department heads' are expected to serve as the strategist and visionary of the academic department. All three deans (D – UA, D-UB, D-UC), two faculty (FAC – UB, FAC-UC), and two department heads (DH – UB, DH-UC) mentioned that leading the department through strategic planning was something that was desired, yet sometimes lacking, in departmental leadership.

Five of the nine participants discussed administrivia and disappearing time as demands and constraints placed on heads. All three faculty members (FAC – UA, FAC-UB, FAC-UC) perceived that general administrative duties placed substantial demands on their department heads, while only one dean (D – UC), and two of the heads (DH – UA, DH-UC) mentioned administrivia as a demand. Disappearing time was perceived by all three deans (D – UA, D-UB, D-UC) as a leadership constraint faced by department heads, however, the only other participants to mention this perceived constraint were both from University B (FAC – UB, DH – UB). See Figure 4 for a visual summary of the integration of findings.

Implications for Future Practice

The findings of this study have implications for department heads and deans. One glaring finding of this study is the absence of formal materials provided to department

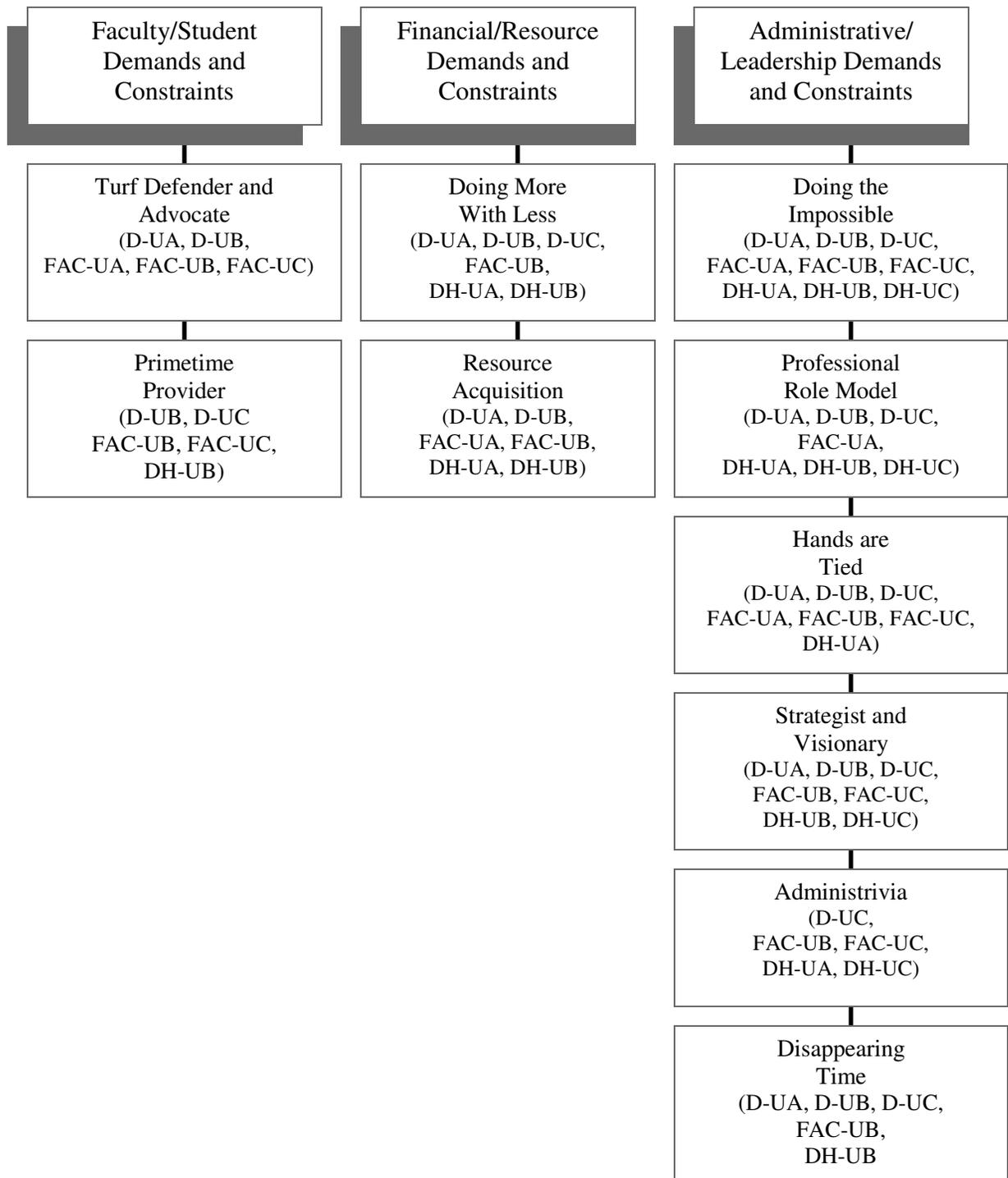


Figure 4. Integration of Findings on the Demands and Constraints Placed on Department Heads in Colleges of Business

heads with regard to procedures and training. Absent within all institutions was the evidence of any supporting material that provided training, or direction for policies and procedures. According to Faculty UB, “I think there is very little training, I think there probably is very little support. I think you pretty much learn by the seat of your pants, thrown into the fire” (FAC – UB, 684-687). None of the department heads could produce any type of training or procedures manual, nor could any of the deans. Other than a few trade books provided to the heads upon hiring, nothing else was provided for them in terms of the detailed requirements of the position. It would facilitate the orientation and early performance of department heads if they were provided with training materials prior to the assumption of the position.

Turf defense and acting as advocate clearly were areas of concern for faculty. In order to address this concern, department heads could maintain effective communication with their faculty members. This might facilitate the heads’ understanding as to what faculty members perceive to be issues and opportunities that would require defending their turf or acting as their advocate. Heads could engage in an ongoing dialogue with faculty members about concerns, and collaborate with them in environmental scanning. The purpose of the scanning would be to identify opportunities and threats that are within the university community, which may have implications for resource allocation, curriculum development, and other issues. Clear communication from the head to the faculty is needed when decisions have to be made that are in the best interest of the entire department, rather than an individual faculty member.

As resources, both internal and external, continue to shrink within higher education, department heads are expected to do more with less, and to obtain external

resources for the department. Implications for meeting these constraints include the need for heads to receive more training in terms of fundraising skills, working with university development offices, and other critical constituents. These skills will become increasingly important for department heads as colleges and universities continue to experience a decline in support.

All of the participants in the study perceived that the job of department head is asking the impossible. Being all things to all people appeared to be a consistent perception among all constituents. Both deans and faculty members commented that they would not want to hold this position either again (based on the deans' prior experiences) or ever (based on faculty perceptions). According to one faculty member, "...it takes you too much out of the classroom, takes you too much out of your research. It is not worth it monetarily, financially, and I wouldn't want the hours" (FAC – UB, 640-643). In the future, deans engaged in the selection process of future department heads could offer a realistic job preview to potential candidates. It might also be helpful if deans had a clear understanding of the demands and constraints faced by heads prior to looking for their optimal candidate. The probability of department heads successfully transitioning into this position would be enhanced if they accepted the position with realistic expectations as to what the job entailed. This might lower the turnover rate of department heads (Bright & Richards, 2001) that plagues this position.

It is important that department heads continue to function as faculty members with a research agenda, albeit in a limited fashion. Teaching a class and having a research agenda bolster the credibility of the department head, and allow them to serve as role models/mentors for young, aspiring faculty. The challenge faced by heads is that the

administrative part of the position often supercedes the time needed to prepare adequately for teaching and research. There are options that might be considered to resolve this conundrum. One option might be to make department heads full-time administrators with no teaching or research responsibilities. This runs a possible risk of disconnecting professionally from the faculty, and being perceived as being “one of them” (the administration).

Another alternative used by some schools in higher education is that of the rotating department chair. A drawback with this approach is that the complexity of the job has evolved to the point that a new chair would find it nearly impossible to master the skill set in a two to three year timeframe. Perhaps a compromise arrangement that could be beneficial to department heads would be to provide release time from classroom and/or administrative duties every two years or in a summer format in order to allow the head time to reestablish currency in their academic field. During these release times, faculty appointees could possibly fill in as the temporary department head.

Strategy within an organization flows from the top, therefore, it is incumbent upon the deans to provide department heads with a clear set of goals and objectives for their colleges. These goals and objectives will then serve as the foundations from which departmental strategic planning can be conducted. Department heads in this study were all trained in strategic management as it is a fundamental part of the business curriculum. Heads serving in other academic disciplines would need additional training in the theories and processes of strategic management.

A number of respondents indicated that department heads often function with an absence of hard, formal authority. Deans and faculty were particularly aware of this

dynamic, more so than the department heads. One dean mentioned, “You’ve really got to almost work for those very people that you are supposed to be supervising. So the leadership, I think, has to be very consultative, and you’ve got to have powers of persuasion...” (D – UB, 351 – 355). Future practice would suggest that development of negotiation skills, consultative leadership behaviors, and persuasion techniques could be highly beneficial for department heads. Training seminars for department heads in the area of mediation might also be helpful.

Given the volume of paperwork and repetitive processes that have to be completed on a regular basis, it could be beneficial to department heads dealing with administrivia, if they would develop a systematic approach for dealing with repetitive responsibilities such as scheduling, budgeting, faculty loads, and recruitment. This could also be a time saver, as it would prevent department heads from having to reinvent the wheel.

Implications for Future Research

This study has identified demands and constraints that are placed on department heads in three AACSB-accredited Colleges of Business as perceived by deans, faculty, and department heads. It was an attempt to shed some light on the challenge of mid-level academic leadership, and to improve understanding of the types of demands and constraints faced by these leaders. One of the limits of this study was that only departments of business management in Midwestern AACSB-accredited Colleges of Business were included. Future research could look for differences and similarities in different regions of the United States, or in foreign institutions of higher education, as well as in different academic disciplines.

Stewart's (1997) theory, while helpful in forming the research questions, was not an effective lens through which to analyze the data based on her definition of demands and constraints. The third component to her theory deals with choices that leaders make based on their demands and constraints of the job. This study did not address that aspect of her theory. As an alternative to Stewart's (1997) theory, the researcher is not aware of any single theory that would ideally operate as a lens through which to continue to improve understanding. One possible theory to consider, given the dynamics of the academic department in higher education and the complexity of the department head position, is Kerr and Jermier's (1978) Leadership Substitutes Theory. Elements of the leadership relationship between department heads and faculty such as advanced training and ability, formalization of roles and procedures, and low position power of the head suggest possible relevance of this model.

It was apparent from the interviews that all three department heads were highly functioning leaders, which may have had an impact not only on their perceptions, but the perceptions of their deans and faculty. While performance was not part of this study, future studies might use measures of performance as a categorization tool and then look for differences on that basis.

Appendix A

Informed Consent

Dear _____:

Thank you for considering participating in my study of department heads in higher education. This study is being conducted as part of my dissertation research for my doctoral program in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis; I am using the study to understand the demands and constraints of department heads as perceived by deans, department heads, and faculty. This information will be useful to deans and department heads before selections are made, or prior to choosing to accept, this position of leadership.

Before you make a final decision about participation, please read the following about how your interview will be used and how your rights as a participant will be protected:

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any point, including withdrawing in the middle of the interview or after it is completed. If you decide at a later time to withdraw from the study, or that you would prefer that I not use parts of your interview in my study, I will respect your decision. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding your participation. I can be reached by phone at (417) 886-1839 or through my email address: ncadoc59@sbcglobal.net.

Participation in this research project will not affect your performance evaluations or opportunities for job advancement.

Time Involvement. The face-to-face interview will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour. It will be tape-recorded to help facilitate accuracy in the transcription of the interview. Department heads will be "shadowed" by the researcher the day prior to conducting their interview.

To the knowledge of the researcher, there are no reasonable or foreseeable risks or discomforts that you should experience as a result of participating in this study.

Your identity will be protected in the reporting of my findings. Your answers will be kept confidential, and I will use a code or pseudonym rather than your real name in my report. All collected data will be kept secure within a filing system, and will be destroyed three years after the completion of my dissertation.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Missouri Campus Institutional Review Board. The committee believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. If you have any questions for the Board, you can contact them at: 483 McReynolds Hall, Columbia, MO 65211; Phone - 573-882-9585; Email - umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu. The project is being supervised by Dr. Cindy MacGregor, Assistant Professor, Educational Administration, Missouri State University (417-836-6046).

If at this point you are still interested in participating and assisting with this important research project, please fill out the consent form on the following page. Keep the first page of this document for future reference. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Vickie L. Wisdom
ncadoc59@sbcglobal.net
417-886-1839

Appendix A

Informed Consent

I, _____, agree to participate in the study of understanding department heads in higher education demands and constraints, based on the perceptions of deans, department heads, and faculty, being conducted by Vickie L. Wisdom, a doctoral student at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

I, _____, agree to be audiotaped during the interview and/or have my emails preserved as data.

I understand that:

My answers will be used in a dissertation study.

My participation is completely voluntary, and I may withdraw at any point in the study without penalty.

My participation will not affect my performance evaluations or opportunities for job advancement.

My identity will be protected in the reporting of the findings.

All collected data will be secured, then destroyed three years after the completion of the dissertation.

Interviews will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour and will be audiotaped. I will be given the opportunity to confirm the transcription contents from the taped interview.

I will be “shadowed” by the researcher for one day prior to the actual interview (applies to department heads only).

I have read the information above and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

Transcription Verification E-Mail

Dear _____:

Thank you so much for the time you spent with me sharing your thoughts and perceptions regarding the demands and constraints placed on department heads. I thoroughly enjoyed the observation period as well as our interview. I have concluded all interviews at this time, and have begun the process of reading the transcriptions.

Please find attached the transcript from our time together. In order to ensure that what is transcribed is what you intended to say, I would appreciate it if you would read through the transcription. If there are any concerns or inaccuracies, please indicate them on the transcript and return it to me.

When I complete the dissertation, I would love to send you an electronic copy of the findings and conclusions. Again, thank you so much for your time and expertise that you have lent to this investigation.

Sincerely,

Vickie Wisdom
Doctoral Candidate in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
University of Missouri-Columbia

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Deans, Faculty

1. What do you want from your department head?
2. What demands do you place on the department head?
3. What demands do you perceive are placed on the department head from external sources?
4. What demands do you perceive are placed on the department head from faculty? Deans?
5. What demands do you perceive are placed on the department head from other internal sources?
6. When you hear the term, “demand,” what comes to mind in light of the department head? How would you define, “demand”?
7. What are the qualities of an effective department head? What are the qualities of an ineffective department head?
8. What constraints do you perceive are placed on the department head?
9. How would you define, “constraints”?
10. What are the limits of the department head’s authority?

Department Heads

1. What do you perceive faculty and deans want from you?
2. How would you define, “demand”? “Constraint”?
3. What demands do you perceive are placed on you from external sources?
4. What demands do you perceive are placed on you from internal sources other than your faculty and dean?
5. What demands do you perceive are placed on you from faculty and deans?
6. What constraints do you perceive are placed on you?
7. What do you believe are the qualities of an effective DH?
8. What do you believe are the qualities of an ineffective DH?

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VITA

Vickie (Vanzant) Wisdom was born November 6, 1959, in Springfield, Missouri. After attending public schools in both Springfield and Akron, OH, she received the following degrees: B.M.E. in Vocal and Instrumental Music from Evangel University (1981); M.B.A. in Management/Organizational Behavior from Missouri State University (1992), and; Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Missouri-Columbia (2007). She is married to Barry L. Wisdom, Ph.D., Professor and Head of the Management Department at Missouri State University, and has two children, Hilary and Brittany. Dr. Wisdom has made educating others her lifetime work, both at the secondary and collegiate levels. She is currently employed at New Covenant Academy in Springfield, Missouri.