

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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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.