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The Appointment of Untenured Department Chairs in Two- and Four-Year Colleges in a Western State: Problems and Potentials

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THE APPOINTMENT OF UNTENURED DEPARTMENT CHAIRS IN
TWO- AND FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES IN A WESTERN STATE:
PROBLEMS AND POTENTIALS

by

Forrest G. Williams

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations
Brigham Young University

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

THE APPOINTMENT OF UNTENURED DEPARTMENT CHAIRS IN TWO- AND FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES IN A WESTERN STATE: PROBLEMS AND POTENTIALS

Forrest G. Williams

Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations

Doctor of Education

This research study explored the appointment of untenured faculty as department chairs in three two- and four-year colleges in one Western state's system of higher education. Eleven untenured faculty serving as untenured department chairs were interviewed using the qualitative methodology of grounded theory to analyze the data collected in the form of interview transcripts. At the two- and four-year colleges studied, an untenured faculty member's potential of achieving tenure does not appear to be negatively affected by serving as department chair before receiving tenure.

A central finding in this research study is the presentation of an explanatory model that provides a framework for understanding characteristics and risk levels for untenured department chairs. The model integrates the factors of tenure standards and department chair duties to predict the risk to an untenured faculty member of failing to

achieve tenure while successfully performing the roles of department chair. Four quadrants represent low to high risk. For the colleges studied, the risk of not achieving tenure for an untenured faculty member serving as chair varies according to (a) the institution's rigor of tenure requirements and standards and (b) the extent to which the chair duties as service to the institution, when taken as a whole, are weighted towards meeting tenure requirements.

Additional findings present the untenured chairs' motivation for accepting the position, the benefits and costs that they encountered as a result of that appointment, and how being an untenured chair affected their ability to perform their various roles as department chairs.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Appointing Untenured Department Chairs

In a national higher education climate of dwindling financial support, increased international competition, and greater demand for accountability, more responsibility is being placed on critical department chairs to align institution rhetoric with practice in the most fundamental of academic units: the department. Increasing pressure from legislatures, students, and policy makers to achieve better results with fewer resources has been felt for decades at the senior administration levels of colleges and universities, but that same pressure and demand for competence is now focusing on the faculty members who are called from their teaching and scholarship to serve their academic divisions as administrators (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004; Gmelch & Miskin, 1995; Gmelch & Schuh, 2004; Hecht, Higgerson, Gmelch, & Tucker, 1999; Leaming, 2003; Lucas, 1994; Tucker, 1981).

Academic divisions at colleges and universities are guided by an academic leader known by differing titles: department head, division head, chairman, chairwoman, chairperson, or simply, and mostly commonly, as the chair. In most cases, this person has had little or no formal training or academic preparation related to this new position, and probably did not decide on a career in higher education with the idea of becoming a chair (Gmelch & Schuh, 2004). Hecht et al (1999) identify four characteristics of department chairs: “(a) they are drawn from faculty ranks; (b) they lack preparation for what is a major change in professional roles; (c) they enjoy, at best, limited financial rewards; and (d) they serve for a relatively short period of time” (pp. 7-8). These characteristics cause

the researcher to ask why someone would agree to become a department chair when the risks seem high and, on the surface, the rewards seem low. Clearly, there are faculty who do routinely rise to this challenge despite its perceived difficulty. In the United States, there are approximately 80,000 department chairs serving usually for five to six year terms (Carroll, 1991; Hecht et al., 1999). Each year thousands of new chairs bravely assume their posts and often move to the corner offices in their familiar halls and notice immediately that something has changed: they begin to be treated differently by other faculty, staff, students, and administrators. One of the first differences they encounter is the sheer volume of choices and decisions to be made that range from the trivial to the complex.

Surprisingly to some, but a quickly learned reality to those newly-appointed department chairs serving in the trenches of the academy, several researchers have asserted that up to 80% of the decisions made in colleges and universities are made by department chairs (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004; Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Roach, 1976). Realizing that the locus of control is actually farther from upper administration and closer to the fundamental academic unit has changed the job description and requisite skills to be a successful department chair. Relying on smaller, more autonomous units (departments) that are closer to the core mission of the institution aligns with the concept of educational institutions as loosely-coupled systems (Weick, 1976) and may apply to department chairs in higher education. According to Daft (2005), an organizational structure (college or university) with more decision-making power closer to those being served is more effective when those individuals (chairs) making the crucial decisions

possess the prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities. However, if newly-appointed chairs lack credibility, their time as chair may be fraught with difficulty.

The influence of department chairs may have been underestimated historically, but in departments of the 21st century, their role is becoming more recognized as central and pivotal to the success of institutions of higher education (Carroll, 1991; Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Hecht et al., 1999; Tucker, 1993). As the contemporary college or university has become more complex, more oversight and management duties have been pushed down to the department level. While educational policy is abstractly debated at the policy-making level, it is increasingly department chairs who have to translate abstract policy into reality about teaching and learning choices. Well established academic departments, complete with tenured faculty, academic senates, and free speech, are particularly good at outlasting change efforts and administrators whose turnover has become all too frequent. If significant change is needed in higher education, it is largely the chair and faculty in the department that have to make it happen. The department is where most of the action takes place (Chu, 2006).

With the understanding that the modern department chair's role is critical to reaching institutional goals, it is little wonder that more attention is being given to the role of department chairs. The perceived traditional and most common career path for a department chair follows a natural progression from bachelor's to master's, doctorate, assistant professor, associate professor, full professor, and, finally, department chair (Carroll, 1991). Historically, department chairs in higher education have been drawn from the ranks of tenured professors, most typically with the rank of full professor (Tucker, 1984). These senior faculty were recognized as more likely to have the

experience and credibility needed to lead their division units with the support of the faculty, dean, and vice president. They presided over departments in an almost ceremonial manner, and until fairly recently did not often wrestle with today's staggering load of budget cuts, declining enrollment, outcome assessment requirements, diversity goals, enrollment management, fundraising, distance education, concurrent high school enrollment, and changing technology.

While many institutions still stipulate that department chairs have a record of scholarship and publication, most stop short of specifying a certain rank or tenure status as a minimum qualification. Tucker (1981) in his landmark book on department chairs included no discussion about untenured chairs. In his third edition of the same title, he added an important and relevant caution that "one should not accept the position of department chair unless he or she is a full professor and has tenure" (Tucker, 1993, p. 545). Although not carefully documented, the trend over the last decade appears to be a gradual lessening of full professor rank and tenure as minimum requirements for chair appointment. By some accounts, an estimated 15% (Smith & Stewart, 1998, p. 12) of department chairs nation wide may be untenured, especially at community and state colleges. At one large Western state college, 25% of the department chairs were untenured during the 2004-2005 academic year.

Accurate statistics about the rank and tenure status of department chairs are not systematically collected by institutions or readily available to researchers. Early indications of the practice of appointing untenured department chairs first began appearing in publications such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education* beginning in the late 1990s (Beall, 2003; Diamond, 1996; Gabbidon, 2000; Jacobson, 2002), and nearly every

faculty member in institutions nation wide knows anecdotally of at least one colleague who was pressed into service for the department before being granted tenure. As a means of gaining further insight into the reasons for the practice from the perspective of the affected faculty member, further examination of the motivation of an untenured faculty member to assume the complex role of an untenured department chair is needed.

Role Ambiguity

One distinct characteristic of the chair's role is its paradoxical nature. Department chairs are leaders, yet are seldom given undisputed authority. Deans and vice presidents look to chairs as those primarily responsible for shaping the department's future (Dedmon, 1985; Jeffrey, 1985), yet faculty members regard themselves as the primary agents of change in department policies and procedures. Chairs are the primary voice for the faculty, staff, and students whom they represent; at the same time, they enforce campus policy and represent the administration to the faculty. While department faculty seek a strong advocate, a consensus builder, a budget expert, and a skilled manager, academic deans and provosts seek department chairs who have excellent managerial and communication skills and are able to implement campus policies and directives (Hecht et al., 1999).

Department chairs are "first among equals" (Tucker, 1993); they are both advisors and advisees, soldiers and captains, employer and employee. Gmelch and Burns (1994) adapted the Roman god, Janus, with two faces to describe how department chairs experience dual role ambiguity as faculty members and as administrators because they must answer to a highly bureaucratic management while maintaining productivity within the department, including their own scholarly pursuits. These turbulent waters would be

difficult to navigate in the best of circumstances when a new chair is a full professor and has tenure. How have untenured department chairs with lower rank navigated those same waters?

Role Attractiveness and Stigma

For many classically-trained faculty, assuming a leadership role as chair is not seen as an attractive career move. On the contrary, at some institutions an individual who confesses interest in serving as an administrator may encounter suspicion from department colleagues. Once in an administrative post, a new chair may find himself or herself apologizing for the decision to move into leadership—a decision that is sometimes referred to by faculty as crossing over to the dark side. Gmelch and Miskin (1995) report findings that nearly twice as many chairs serve because they are drafted by a dean or a colleague or because they believe there is no alternative as compared to those who serve for reasons of personal development and challenge. This difficulty is illustrated by the title of an article from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* about the role of department chairs: “Beggar, Psychologist, Mediator, Maid: The Thankless Job of a Chairman [sic]” (Wilson, 2001). The stigma that is associated with becoming a department chair at some institutions explains at least partially the difficulty of recruiting and developing outstanding academic administrators and further explains why some untenured faculty are pressed into administrative service early.

Statement of the Research Problem

There is an expanding body of recent literature about the increasingly important role of department chairs in general (Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders, 2000; Carroll & Wolverton, 2004; Chu, 2006; Gmelch, 2002; Gmelch & Schuh, 2004; Hecht et al., 1999;

Leaming, 2003; Wergin, 2003), but the specific issues surrounding the appointment of untenured department chairs have been virtually unexplored and needed further investigation. Several potential problems become immediately apparent and need to be examined. To be chair without tenure could be committing professional suicide since the new chair would be the supervisor of, and possibly risk alienating, the very people who would vote on that chair's tenure. Time demands on a chair could make it difficult to research and publish as is often required for rank advancement and tenure. Likewise, it may be difficult for tenured faculty in a department to separate their evaluation of the chair's performance as a scholar and teacher from their feelings about him or her as the department's administrator.

In other words, are the skills necessary to be chair unrelated to the status of having tenure? Perhaps some faculty are poorly suited to being chairs regardless of tenure status while others are well suited and naturally possess the necessary skills and abilities regardless of tenure. Do untenured department chairs make preserving their colleague relationships their top priority? Are they reluctant to tackle sensitive issues for fear of upsetting the very people who will decide their own tenure? Their objective may have become not rocking the boat rather than leading the department through any significant change (Hecht et al., 1999). How will the untenured department chair's progress toward reaching scholarly productivity goals be affected by the addition of new administrative duties? The researcher sought to understand and explain the phenomenon of appointing untenured department chairs in higher education institutions by focusing on three initial research questions.

Research Questions

While acknowledging that some refinement and possible shifting of the research focus was likely, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What factors influence individual faculty to accept positions as untenured department chairs?
2. What are the benefits and costs to the faculty member who is appointed as an untenured chair?
3. How does a chair's status as untenured affect his/her ability to fulfill the important roles of faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993)?

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of the research was to explore the contributing factors and resulting effects of appointing untenured faculty as department chairs of academic divisions in higher education. Studying untenured department chairs was considered to be advisable because of its possible policy implications, its professional ethics implications, and its potential to influence the day-to-day operation of the academy. A closer examination of the practice might yield recommendations that would inform future decisions about appointing untenured department chairs and result in policy discussions at the senior administrative level of colleges and universities.

Definition of Terms

Academic unit (department): Compartmentalized structure within a college or university, comprised of students, faculty and staff and led by an individual administrator (the chair),

who seeks to serve various institutional constituents, to increase the academic knowledge base, and provide institutional, professional, and civic service.

Department chair: Administrator or head of an academic unit acting as the conduit for communication exchange between senior level administration and the academic unit, and authoritarian or arbitrator concerning matters of department policy. The position is also typically responsible for administrative duties such as class scheduling, workload assignment, student appeals, and the development of faculty and staff (Seagren, Creswell, & Wheeler, 1993).

Studying untenured department chairs is a worthwhile research topic because of its possible policy implications, its professional ethics implications, and its potential to influence the day-to-day operation of the academy. A close examination of the practice was undertaken in an effort to inform future decisions about appointing untenured department chairs and result in policy discussions at the senior administrative level of colleges and universities.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

A brief history of departments in higher education will first be presented followed by an overview of department chairs in the relatively young and maturing literature base on department chairs. The overview is focused around three themes found in the publications about department chairs: (a) investigating roles and responsibilities of department chairs, (b) advising the current chair about how to overcome challenges and how to cope with the complexities and stresses of the job, (c) describing the skills needed to be a successful department leader.

Although the first universities were founded over 600 years ago, departmentalization and the subsequent creation of the position of department chair in the administrative structure of American colleges and universities is little more than a century old. The first subdivisions and grouping of academic disciplines began during the period from 1870 to 1925 (Vacik, 1997). For all but the last 25 years, the specific leadership role of department chair was largely ignored in the literature of leadership in higher education, and the major focus was on presidents and senior academic administrators (Birnbaum, 1992). More recently, however, the critical leadership role of department chairs has emerged as a partial solution to the many difficult challenges facing institutions of higher education. (Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders, 2000; Carroll & Wolverton, 2004; Chu, 2006; Gmelch, 2002; Gmelch & Miskin, 1995; Gmelch & Schuh, 2004; Hecht et al., 1999; Knight & Trowler, 2001; Leaming, 2003; Lucas, 2000; Wergin, 2003)

Brief History of Departments in Higher Education

More fundamental than the title and position of department chair was the formation of higher education departments. From the founding of Harvard in 1636 until the Civil War, the administrative structure of the department was quite simple. Hecht, et al. (1999) describe American colleges of this period as being administered by presidents who served as scholars, leaders, teachers, chief disciplinarians, librarians, admissions officers, keepers of student records, business managers, secretaries of the faculty, and secretaries of the board of governors. As the number of enrolled students increased, it became necessary for those who taught classes to assume the part-time and specialized job duties of librarians, registrars, and deans. Full-time tutors and professors who *specialized* in teaching just one discipline were hired.

Faculty gradually grouped themselves together by disciplines and formed academic subunits or departments that also grew out of a need for a more specialized form of education (Vacik, 1997). In the middle of the 1880s, faculty members at both Harvard and the University of Virginia began to organize into separate departments of instruction. American colleges and universities were also influenced by German traditions that sought scientific truth and led to disciplinary specialization (Kerr, 1994).

Another contribution to the development of the department chair position came with the enactment of the Morrill Legislation (1862 and 1890), federal statutes that are commonly referred to as the Land Grant Colleges Acts. These statutes provided land and monetary support to each state for the establishment and maintenance of higher education institutions whose mission related specifically to the study of agricultural and mechanic arts. The founding and staffing of so many institutions during such a brief span of time

led to the standardization of academic structure. Each newly-formed institution soon followed established practice and subdivided into academic disciplines called divisions or departments.

During the 1880s and 1890s, the Land Grant colleges began to understand that they needed to offer a more liberal education and to prepare graduates for employment. This understanding, combined with pressure from business, industry and government to provide a more educated work force and to perform research further fueled the drive toward compartmentalization (Vacik, 1997). Once the newly-formed academic units or departments were created, department or division chairs were appointed to oversee them.

Bennett (1983) asserts three major events with respect to the evolution of the department chair. First, the use of the title of dean, signifying an academic division, occurred in 1792 when Samuel Bard was appointed to that post at Columbia University after it was decided that there could not be two presidents. The second event occurred when Thomas Jefferson, rector of the University of Virginia, organized six colleges with a professor at the head of each. The third event was the addition of modern languages to the curriculum at Harvard in the 1828-1830 period by Professor George Tichnor and the addition of schools of natural science at Yale and Harvard in 1848. Both changes strengthened the new academic disciplinary structures. These fledgling divisions gained strength and prominence with each passing decade, and today's modern departments are the evolutionary products of those early steps toward departmentalization.

The origins of the first organized departments in American higher education are now only a footnote in history, but they have given way to mature academic departments sometimes led by capable chairs who may hold the keys to successful reform efforts. The

Pew Charitable Trusts' *Policy Perspectives* (1996) summed up the role of the academic department as "the principal agent for the purposeful recasting of American higher education" (p. 27). If departments are to live up to such high expectations, they will need strong departmental leadership.

Overview of Department Chairs in the Literature

One of the first critical analyses of the department chair position was conducted and published by Tucker (1981). He was one of the first researchers of note to recognize the importance of the department chair position in the higher education institution.

Tucker identified the major tasks of the department chair as the following: influencing institutional policies and procedures; recommending faculty for appointment, promotion, and tenure; controlling budgets and class and teaching schedules; affecting student interactions with the institution; and establishing or maintaining department cultures.

Tucker's landmark book was comprehensive in nature, and his insights about the unique role of chairs have stood the test of time. So influential was the book that it was revised and printed in three editions (1981, 1984, 1993).

Tucker was aware early on that the leadership function of chairs was unique. He understood that while other designated leaders in colleges and universities had defined responsibilities, department chairs performed all functions from the menial and managerial to the inspirational while maintaining a presence in the classroom. Although the notion of department chairs as fully fledged academic leaders is more accepted today, Tucker was the first scholar to declare that department chairs are leaders in their higher education institutions, and his treatise clearly stands out as the seminal text on department chairs in higher education.

Bennett (1983) followed Tucker's work by developing materials and activities to assist with the professional growth of the department chairs. Bennett used Tucker's categories as the organizational framework for his text of case studies designed to provide new and seasoned chairs experience with practical scenarios drawn from actual experiences. Bennett's early identification of the critical need for the training of department chairs is still with us today. It is remarkable that despite the availability of proven content and materials, many colleges and universities offer no training for their chairs (Gmelch & Miskin, 1995).

As the leadership role of department chairs in higher education increased in national prominence, the decade of the 1990's proved to be a productive one for department chair research with the publication of several books specifically for or about department chairs (Bennett, 1998; Bennett & Figuli, 1993; Birnbaum, 1992; Conway, 1996; John W. Creswell, Wheeler, Seagren, Egly, & Beyer, 1990; Gmelch & Miskin, 1995; Hickson & Stacks, 1992; Leaming, 1998; Lucas, 1994; Moses & Roe, 1990; Seagren, Creswell, & Wheeler, 1993; Tucker, 1993).

Among these books written for the department chair's bookshelf is one authored by Hickson and Stacks (1992). These researchers looked for the core aptitude that any chair must possess to be optimally effective. Their finding was that deft communication was the required skill and that relative ability in communicating distinguished incompetent from competent chairs. According to these authors, some faculty are naturally better communicators than others, and this characteristic may be of equal or greater importance than tenure status for optimum success as a department chair.

Skilled communication was also recognized as a desirable trait by Gmelch and Miskin (1993) who further explored the essence of a department chair's duties. They defined the chair's responsibilities in terms of four major roles: faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar. By calling attention to the chair's responsibility for faculty career development as one of the four roles, they emphasized the need to cultivate the human talent as a valuable resource in the department. The manager role centers on the chair's responsibility to keep order in the administrative life of the department. As a leader, the chair must foster a sense of mission and share that vision with the department. Not to be forgotten, the role of scholar and faculty member is always with the chair. A chair without tenure may have increased difficulty fulfilling the roles of scholar and chair simultaneously because his or her focus and attention would most likely be diverted away from scholarly work in order to perform department chair duties.

Lucas (1994) focused on two of Gmelch and Miskin's (1993) roles, leader and faculty developer, which she identified as those for which department chairs are least prepared. Her team-building approach centers on the human challenges of being a department chair and motivating faculty to enhance productivity, improve teaching, increase scholarship, and augment service. According to Lucas, a major component of the chair's role is to create a favorable atmosphere by creating a supportive communication climate and by managing conflict.

What Gmelch, Miskin, and Lucas share is a concentration on the world of the chair from within the department structure. A marked change was signified when Green and McDade (1992) looked at leadership comprehensively within universities and for the first time included department chairs in that discussion. Following Tucker's (1981) call to

accept department chairs as part of the formal administrative structure, Green and McDade's reference to department chairs is one of the earliest instances of authors writing broadly about higher education and including the department chair as a significant component in the leadership structure of American colleges and universities.

Continuing with the inclusion of chairs in the institution-wide leadership nexus, Higginson and Rehwald (1993) created a case book that involves chairs working with other constituents across campus in a realistic, hands-on approach to problem solving. Higginson's later volume (1996) once again uses cases studies but makes the department chair the focus. She makes the dramatic point that communication is an indispensable asset to any department leader who must work with faculty, staff, and administrators from all over the campus.

The breakdown of critical communication in departments often makes them contentious places where collegiality sometimes disintegrates. Bennett (1998), a noted scholar on department chair issues, examines the current condition of faculty isolation and organizational fragmentation and offers an alternative. He puts forth two models for department academic life. One is the negative example and is characterized by what he describes as *insistent individualism* wherein "privatism, isolation, and fragmentation of effort with resulting diminishment of intellectual community is constructed and explored" (p. ix). The other preferred and more positive model is termed *relationality* or collegial professionalism, which

stresses intellectual community as essential to the mission of higher education as well as to individual satisfaction. It presents selves as relational and communities as mutually enhancing forms of togetherness. The model receives full expression

in the concept of the collegium, which is rooted in academic traditions and remains a source of hope for the present and the future. (p. ix)

While Bennett suggests that all participants in college or university life must make a positive contribution toward “relationality,” clearly most of the work will have to take place at the department level. Fostering this proposed new climate of relationality would almost certainly involve the department chair. One wonders if leading such a laudable shift in department climate would require a chair who has impeccable credibility with the department’s faculty and who has the clout and stature that should accompany full-professor rank.

In addition to Bennett, other researchers have noted the importance of reaching out to faculty and creating a positive work environment. For example, Creswell, Wheeler, Seagren, Egly, & Byer (1990) studied 200 department chairs in 70 colleges and universities. Data were collected by conducting telephone interviews and campus visits. Department chairs identified 15 strategies for developing a department, exercising leadership, and reaching out to faculty. The 15 strategies were grouped into three categories: preparing for the chair position, role as academic leader, and creating a positive work environment. Unlike much of the research on department chairs which uses survey data, the qualitative research methods resulted in sensible and useful advice based upon chairs’ practical experiences.

In one important research project, Gmelch (1991) studied over 800 department chairs at 101 research and doctorate-granting universities. He explored the tradeoffs that faculty have to make to become department heads. This study concluded that there was a dramatic reduction in the amount of time that department chairs spent with family (65%),

personal friends (56%), and leisure activities (77%) due to their administrative duties as chair. Interestingly, the time spent on spiritual and civic activities remained virtually the same. Gmelch also found that 60% of the department chairs classified themselves as faculty while 23% classified themselves as administrators. The author also noted that department chairs (80%) believed that their departmental responsibilities should be reduced so that they could devote more time to research, writing, and other interest in their field. Although untenured chairs were not specifically addressed in the study, one wonders whether the tradeoffs for an untenured department chair would be even greater. More investigation is needed.

To provide context for such an investigation, Allan Tucker would certainly have written a fourth edition of his pioneering text *Chairing the Academic Department: Leadership Among Peers*. Sadly, he died in 1992, and colleagues Hecht, Higgerson, Gmelch, and Tucker (Hecht et al., 1999) published the updated comprehensive volume that should carry today's and tomorrow's chairs well into the next century. Tucker is associated with the text "not only as a tribute to his seminal contribution to the study of department chairs, but also in view of the fact that portions of the text from his third edition appear in *The Department Chair as Academic Leader*" (1999, p. xv). This excellent book serves as a valuable resource manual for new and seasoned chairs alike. It centers on the chairs' roles, the department and its people, the department and its operations, and the department and the university.

Summary of Major Research Focus

Numerous authors studying department chairs in higher education have published on various relevant topics ranging from the anecdotal to the scholarly, but the primary

focus of the research and writing to date can be summarized broadly as (1) investigating the various roles and responsibilities of department chairs, (2) advising the current chair about how to overcome challenges and cope with the complexities and stresses of the job, and (3) describing the needed skills to be a successful department leader. These broad topics will be highlighted from the literature base to provide the research context for this study.

Roles and responsibilities. The first major theme to emerge from the literature is the focus on the various roles and responsibilities of department chairs. Faculty who become chairs frequently face significant role ambiguity. Bennett (1990) calls a chairperson “an odd creature in an odd spot. Rooted in the faculty like no other administrator but tied to the administration like no other faculty member; he or she has both an excess and a deficiency of identity” (p. 11). If chairs are elected by the members of their department, they may feel allegiance to the faculty and feel less like administrators. On the other hand, if they are appointed by the dean, they may be perceived as administrators who do not have faculty interests at heart. One example of this tension between faculty and administration is captured in the title of an article written by a department chair: “Them Versus Us (and which one of them is me?)” (Davidson, 2000). Chairs face an additional dilemma in that they must behave in some ways like for-profit managers who control enrollment and offer a product in the form of classes or degrees, yet they must also maintain a non-profit, developmental attitude about working with students and helping them reach their potential.

A majority of the published research about department chairs focuses on defining roles and responsibilities. In some of the earliest work, McLaughlin, Montgomery, and

Malpass (1975) defined three dominant roles: academic, administrative and leadership. Among the academic duties are teaching, advising, encouraging research, and developing curriculum. Administrative roles include maintaining the budget, keeping records, managing the staff, and representing the department in other aspects to the university. Leadership activities include supporting, motivating, and developing the faculty. Booth (1982) identified four distinctive roles: faculty centered, externally focused, program oriented, and management centered.

Bragg (1980) described four different types of chairs at a research university: (1) faculty chairs who focus on recruitment, support, and development; (2) external chairs, whose primary responsibility is the promotion of departmental image outside the department; (3) program chairs who are primarily concerned with improvements in the curriculum, and (4) management chairs who focus on coordinating the operations of the department. Bragg's categories were expanded upon by Carroll and Gmelch (1992a).

The definitive definition of roles based upon its influence in the literature began with the work of Carroll and Gmelch (1992b) who used factor analysis of department chair duties to define four chair roles: leader chairs, scholar chairs, faculty developer chairs, and manager chairs.

According to Carroll and Gmelch, when chairs act in the leader role, they solicit ideas to improve the department, plan and evaluate curriculum, conduct faculty meetings, keep the faculty informed of university and professional concerns, coordinate departmental activities with constituents, represent the department at professional meetings, and participate on college and university committees. When chairs act in the scholar role, they obtain funds for personal research, maintain a productive research

program, remain current in their own discipline and select and supervise graduate students. When chairs act in the faculty developer role, they obtain funding for faculty research, encourage professional development of faculty, encourage faculty research and publication, provide informal leadership, develop long-range departmental goals, maintain a conducive work environment, recruit and select faculty, and evaluate faculty performance. Finally, when chairs act in the manager role, they prepare and propose budgets, manage department resources, maintain records, manage staff, and assign faculty duties. Carroll and Gmelch's work has been amplified and expanded upon by them and others and is a significant contribution to the understanding of the roles and responsibilities of department chairs (Burns & Gmelch, 1994; Carroll & Gmelch, 1992b; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Seagren, Creswell, & Wheeler, 1993). These four roles were employed to frame one of the research questions for this study.

Publishing at about the same time, but less influential than Carroll and Gmelch, was the work of Creswell and Brown (1992) who found seven distinct roles: two administrative (provider and enabler), one external (advocate), and four interpersonal (mentor, encourager, collaborator, and challenger). Creswell and Brown's categories suggest that different roles are appropriately used by chairs in dealing with faculty in different stages of their career. Picking up the theme of faculty in different stages of their career, Bensimon, Ward, and Sanders (2000), in their recent volume, help department chairs in their role as faculty developer by very specifically setting out ways to meet the socialization needs of junior faculty. The literature on department chairs has matured to the point where specific considerations like junior faculty socialization needs are being addressed.

Other considerations that are more specific have emerged from the writings of department chairs from within various academic disciplines. Several organizations and disciplines have begun to meet the needs of department chairs in their various roles from the vantage point of their own subject matter. For example, the fields of business, foreign language, communication, and English have been active in providing training, conducting research, and advocating for department chairs in their disciplines (Garcia, 1997; Huber, 1994; Pappas, 1989). Organizations and publications dedicated to chairs in specific disciplines help new chairs reconcile the difficult transition from faculty member to academic leader.

Transitioning from the role of faculty member to administrator reveals some acute differences that must be managed if the new chair is to succeed. Gmelch and Miskin (1993) identified nine transitions that are characteristic of the metamorphosis of the beginning chair. According to their taxonomy, chairs must adjust to the following role changes:

1. *From solitary to social.* College professors typically work alone on research, teaching preparation, and projects. [Chairs must] work with and through others. For example, department goals cannot be achieved alone; they must be achieved in concert with . . . faculty.
2. *From focused to fragmented.* While professors must have long uninterrupted periods to work on scholarly pursuits, [the work of department chair] is characterized by brevity, variety, and fragmentation.
3. *From autonomy to accountability.* Professors generally enjoy control over their time and the feeling of autonomy of activity and movement in their working

environment. [Chairs] tend to lose this sense of autonomy and become accountable to upper administration and the faculty for [their] time and accessibility in the office, as well as for [their] actions and activities.

4. *From manuscripts to memoranda.* The scholar and researcher labors over a manuscript for a long period of time. [Department chairs] quickly must learn the art of persuasion and precision through memos.
5. *From private to public.* The professor may block out long periods of time for scholarly work while [chairs] have an obligation to be accessible throughout the day to the many publics [they] serve. In essence, [they] move the privilege of a “closed door” to the obligation of an “open door” policy.
6. *From professing to persuading.* In the academic professions, the professor is disseminating information in a manner that will meet the learning objective of others. [Chairs] profess less and practice more the art of persuasion and compromise.
7. *From stability to mobility.* While always growing and exploring new concepts and ideas, faculty generally experience movement within the stability of their disciplines and circle of professional associations. [Chairs] also attempt to retain [their] professional identity but must become mobile within the university structure. In order to be at the cutting edge of educational reform and implement needed programmatic changes within, [chairs] must be more mobile, visible, and political.
8. *From client to custodian.* In relation to university resources, the professor is a client, requesting and expecting resources to be available to conduct research,

classes, and service activities. [Chairs, however,] represent the custodian and dispenser of resources and are responsible for the maintenance of the physical setting as well as providing material and monetary resources.

9. *From austerity to prosperity.* While in actuality the pay differential between professor and chair may not be significant, the perception of more control over departmental resources creates the illusion of greater prosperity for the chair. (pp. 14-15)

These transitions are further complicated when the faculty member has not been fully acculturated into the department and assumes the role of chair without the credibility of receiving tenure.

Overcoming challenges and coping. A second major theme from the literature is how to survive on the job, often written in first person narrative by current chairs. (Dalbey, 1999; Hackman, 1999; Harper, 1994). While less scholarly, this writing is noteworthy because of the angst described by department chairs on their journey from faculty to administrator and back to faculty again. These articles clearly demonstrate the significant pressures placed upon department chairs and illustrate their immediate need to develop coping strategies to manage their new roles. Perhaps these personal accounts are welcomed by new department chairs as they learn that others share their struggles and challenges.

The scope of writing on overcoming difficulties and dispensing advice on becoming a new department chair ranges from short articles about managing the difficult first year (Garcia, 2001) to cataloging “the reward and sufferings” of department chair life (King, 1997). There are lists of “do’s and don’ts,” counsel about negotiating a

compensation package (Rodgers, 2001), and time management strategies tailored to department chairs (Seedorf, 1993). The commonality among these differing topics seems to be an intent to buoy up, offer solace, and share lessons learned that have come with a price.

Perhaps the best source of practical advice is found in recent books that give department chairs an overview and suggestions in an easy-to-read format on a wide range of topics (Chu, 2006; Gmelch & Schuh, 2004; Leaming, 2003; Wergin, 2003). There certainly is a market and need to address department chair training because approximately 20% of the 80,000 department chairs serving in the United States are new to their positions each year, and one in three faculty serve in the position at some point in their career (Scott, 1997). Publishing companies, including Anker and Jossey-Bass, provide handbooks and primers to fill this need in the absence of more systematic—but sorely needed—training on college and university campuses. Anker publishes *The Department Chair* four times a year with helpful articles targeted specifically at department chairs. For most department chairs, the learning process has been limited to “on-the-job-training” and an occasional conference on department leadership.

In the 21st century, new chairs often turn first to the Internet for information to help solve problems and overcome the day’s challenges. One excellent site for this purpose is a Web resource site organized through a Lumina Foundation grant to the American Council on Education (<http://www.acenet.edu/resources/chairs/>). This site is highlighted to illustrate the maturing national resources available to department chairs that have sprung up outside the formal organizational structure of college and universities.

One challenging issue that arises often and has been studied systematically is stress among department chairs. Results indicate that, overall, stress among department chairs is monolithic (Gmelch & Burns, 1994). Gmelch (1992) provides a broad perspective on stress and introduces a framework for dealing with it called the Chair Stress Cycle. According to his model, Stage I, Identifying Stress Traps, is the key to managing stress. It discloses five sources of stress: administrative tasks, the tensions in serving in an additional faculty role, role ambiguity, hierarchical authority, and perceived high expectations. Stage II, the Perception of Stress, reveals that managing perceptions provides the greatest opportunity for effective stress management: chairs should plan personal time each day, compartmentalize chair and non-chair activities, perform one task at a time, strive to enrich themselves, have a private retreat, and live by the calendar and not the clock. Gmelch further dispels myths about stress and promotes optimal stress levels that allow for personal health while managing unavoidable stress levels in such a way as to optimize job performance. Other later researchers have confirmed and corroborated his findings (Allan, 1999; Burns & Gmelch, 1994; Miller & Seagren, 1997; Sorcinelli, 2000; Wolverton, Gmelch, Wolverton, & Sarros, 1999).

Needed skills. A third major theme from the literature is identifying the needed skills to chair an academic department. Some skills are innate while others can be enhanced and improved. Being a department chair is complex, and the most important skill for success is effective communication (Hickson & Stacks, 1992; Higgerson, 1996). Gmelch and Miskin (1993) identify several key leadership skills. They suggest that time management is critical to being an effective department chair, and they introduce the skills of managing conflict through recognizing, responding, and resolving interpersonal

differences. Their final suggested skills are reducing stress and making time for sustained personal and professional development.

Junior faculty most likely were hired based upon their academic credentials, teaching quality, and aptitude for scholarship and not based upon their skills to lead the department as chair. It should not be forgotten that future chairs come from faculty ranks, and perhaps the skills of successful chairs need to be included when screening faculty to fill vacancies. When new faculty are hired, it is likely that at some time in their career they will serve as a department chair. The question remains whether they should serve before or after they have tenure. No studies specifically looking at untenured chairs have been identified.

Conclusion

The literature base on department chairs has grown and become more sophisticated in the decades since Tucker (1981) published his classic book. The primary focus of the research and writing to date can be summarized broadly as (1) investigating the various roles and responsibilities of department chairs, (2) advising the current chair about how to overcome challenges and cope with the complexities and stresses of the job, and (3) describing the needed skills to be a successful department leader.

The training of department chairs is receiving national attention, and institutions are beginning to examine their practices and procedures for selecting department chairs. Most of the literature to date has been survey research that has been foundational to understanding the leadership role of department chairs. However, much of it has centered on department chairs in general and fails to offer the focus on the tenure status of the chair and related issues that this more targeted research explored. Almost no research has

been reported on this topic, perhaps because the appointment of untenured chairs has only recently been highlighted as a phenomenon. The identified research topic of untenured department chairs was studied using qualitative methods because these methods allowed for a wide range of information to be collected, including information that was not known to be relevant at the outset of the study. Qualitative methodology allows for the type of dynamic interaction between researcher and participant that is not possible with survey-based research and that, in this study, ultimately proved critical to gaining insight into the topic because participants often provided unanticipated responses that led the inquiry in unexpected directions. This emic approach is consistent with grounded theory. It was anticipated that the use of qualitative methodology for this study would produce results that would build upon the existing research base to fill a gap in the literature on this subject.

Chapter Three

Methods and Procedures

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to explore the contributing factors and resulting effects of appointing untenured faculty as department chairs of academic divisions in higher education. Numerous studies have used survey instruments to collect and analyze data about department chairs in general (Al-Karni, 1995; Carroll & Gmelch, 1994; Jennerich, 1981; Watson, 1986). While previous survey research guided and framed the proposed research study, no previous studies have been identified that consider the appointment of untenured department chairs specifically. This inquiry used the qualitative research methodology of grounded theory to explore the appointment of untenured department chairs in select institutions of higher education (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) research methodology was appropriate for this research project because only untenured department chairs possess the information and have the lived experience necessary to answer the research questions in depth.

Studying untenured department chairs is a worthwhile research topic because of its possible policy implications, its professional ethics implications, and its potential to influence the day-to-day operation of the academy. A close examination of the practice was undertaken in an effort to inform future decisions about appointing untenured department chairs and policy discussions at the senior administrative level of colleges and universities.

Research Design Overview

The overall research strategy was to explore the appointment of untenured faculty as department chairs using the qualitative methodology of grounded theory (Glaser, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). After carefully selecting a purposive sample of untenured department chairs from several institutions, the qualitative method of semi-structured interviews was used to collect the qualitative data in the form of interview transcripts. The first-round interviews provided the baseline data. The transcripts and other relevant documents were analyzed using NVivo (QSR, 2006) software for qualitative data analysis to uncover the themes, patterns, and theories that explain the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The participants were then interviewed in a second round as necessary to confirm and verify the emergent themes. Subsequently, the findings were synthesized and communicated in written and graphic form. These processes were guided by the initial research questions.

Initial Research Questions

Grounded theory methodology requires that the researcher be somewhat flexible as data are collected and emerging theories surface and form to fit the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). While acknowledging that some refinement and possible shifting of the inquiry would be likely, the following initial research questions were developed to guide the study:

1. What factors influence individual faculty to accept positions as untenured department chairs?

2. What are the benefits and costs to the faculty member who is appointed as an untenured chair?
3. How does a chair's status as untenured affect his/her ability to fulfill the important roles of faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993)?

Procedures

The procedures that were developed for conducting the research are listed below in a logical sequence of planned events. Each section is described in more detail in the following pages:

1. Selection of Institutions and Participants
2. Reducing the Effects of Confounding Variables
3. Phone Call Dialogue and Email to Establish Contact
4. Access and Timeline
5. Data Collection
6. Trustworthiness
7. Data
8. Limitations and Delimitations

Selection of institutions and participants. One of the first tasks in framing the research design was to identify a pool of untenured department chairs to whom access was feasible. In order to keep the institutions similar in mission and type, the first target group identified was a sample of mature universities that offer at least a masters-level degree and that are located in a similar geographical region. This sample included seven universities. Telephone and/or email contact was made with the Office of the Academic

Affairs Vice President or Provost's Office of each institution. After a brief description of the purpose of the inquiry (see Appendix A), information regarding the tenure status of current or former untenured chairs was requested and obtained. Among this group of mature institutions, no untenured chairs were identified.

Typical of the responses from this group is a message received from a vice provost for academic affairs:

The [Institution] bylaws mandate that department chairs be tenured and at the rank of associate professor (Rank III) or full professor (Rank IV). We do not currently have any department chairs who are untenured. The bylaw at issue here says: Section 10.8.2 Qualifications. The department chair or school director shall be a tenured member of the faculty, with a rank of IV or III. Exceptions may be made only by the express written consent of the Dean and the Executive Vice President and Provost. (personal communication, February 8, 2006)

Similar responses from all of the institutions indicated that untenured faculty were not considered for appointments as department chairs and that there were currently no untenured chairs serving at any of the first sample of seven universities that grant at least masters-level degrees.

The researcher then selected a second group of six institutions of various types including two universities, two state colleges, and two community colleges in two Western states. In order to broaden and diversify the types of institutions, the second group was intentionally comprised of institutions from two states and ranging from community colleges to universities. Contact was again made through the Academic Vice President's Office, and 18 untenured chairs were identified among these institutions.

Because this group included varying types of institutions with differing missions, further refinement of the selection was needed to obtain a more homogeneous sample of untenured chairs from similar institutions.

Phone call dialogue and email text to establish contact. Data about untenured department chairs is not readily available, and there is no national source or listing to consult. Therefore, the next research task was to establish the existence or frequency of the appointment of untenured department chairs. The researcher conducted initial inquiries to determine at which institutions the phenomenon was occurring. The researcher was tactful when asking questions and recognized that the question itself might be perceived as sensitive if making known an untenured department chair's status would reflect negatively on the institution.

Appendix A contains the telephone dialogue used to establish contact with institutions and to obtain data about any untenured department chairs. The telephone dialogue was used to guide initial phone conversations with representatives of the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Information about untenured chairs was requested along with guidance about how to obtain the requested list of untenured department chairs. Several options were given for the researcher to follow up and receive the information. This procedure was followed with the seven institutions from the first sample set and the six institutions from the second sample set. Representatives from each of the 13 institutions eventually responded over a period of ten days in February of 2006, although several required multiple phone call and email reminders.

Samples of faculty biographical and credential information listed on the various department web pages for each institution were consulted to verify the accuracy of the

information obtained from the academic vice president's offices. No discrepancies were found, and it appeared that the data obtained from the vice president's offices were reliable.

In addition to the difference in institution type and mission in the second sample, the researcher discovered five department chairs at three of the institutions (three at a community college and two at smaller universities) who were non-tenure track administrators performing typical chair duties. In this model, the non-tenure track chairs are not considered faculty; they run the department and evaluate faculty, but they do not teach classes and earn tenure. Although their non-tenure track status is an interesting phenomenon, this type of role made them unsuitable participants for this research because they would be less likely to experience the interesting tension that was the focus of this study; therefore, the non-tenure track institutions were excluded from the sample.

Similarly, the two universities in the second sample differed significantly from the other institutions because of their mission, institution type, and offering of graduate degrees. Research universities generally require a higher level of scholarly output for tenure, including research and publication, than is generally required for tenure at community and state colleges. Comparing untenured chairs from more mature universities to untenured chairs from state or community colleges might have introduced unnecessary variance into the sample; therefore, the universities were excluded, and the researcher further sought to identify and reduce, when possible, other potential confounding variables in the selected sample of department chairs. For the purposes of this study, the selected institutions are identified as Community College 1, State College 2, and State College 3; they were selected because of their similar characteristics and

because the researcher would have access to a total of 11 untenured chairs who could constitute the final census population of selected participants to interview within the same state.

Reducing the effects of confounding variables. Reducing the impact of confounding variables allowed the researcher to hold constant several key factors and made studying untenured department chairs within these similar contexts viable. All three institutions are changing, maturing, and moving toward department-based tenure programs. Unlike some community college models where tenure is decided by a central campus committee, these schools place the first and most significant tenure recommendations at the department level. Furthermore, these three institutions have additional similarities: (a) they fulfill a community college mission (State College 1 and State College 2 also offer the bachelors degree but fulfill the community college mission as well); (b) they are open enrollment; (c) they do not offer degrees beyond the bachelors level; (d) they are public institutions within the State System of Higher Education; (e) they were founded between 1888-1941; (f) they have similar socio-economic contexts and student/faculty populations; (g) and they have non-unionized faculty.

Table 1 contains a hierarchy of potentially confounding variables in rank order and identifies those for which the three selected institutions offer a measure of control and those which will be addressed using a demographic survey and further analysis.

While the selected institutions have much in common, they are not identical and differ in

Table 1

A Hierarchy of Potentially Confounding Variable in Rank Order of Potential Explanation of Variance

Confounding Variable	Confounding Variable Control
Mission and general type of institution	Participating institutions have a community college history or mission and are undergraduate schools
Selectivity of students	Participating institutions are open enrollment
Socio-economic context of selected institution	Participating intuitions are located in communities that are politically conservative with deep religious convictions generally
Public v. private institutions	Participating institutions are public and all part of same state system of higher education
Union v. non-unionized faculty	Participating institutions are non-unionized
Department-based tenure policy v. central campus committee	Participating institutions have or are moving toward department-based tenure policies

their urban/rural settings and the size of their student populations. Other uncontrolled variables in rank order of potential explanation of variance are included in Table 1. These variables concerning the institution and the individual department chair will be collected through a demographic survey (see Appendix C) and examined to determine whether they are associated with the findings or facilitate richer understanding of the data.

Appendix B contains the text of an email message sent to the 11 untenured department chairs who were identified by the VPAA's offices from the three institutions (Community College 1, State College 2, State College 3) that were targeted to participate in the research study. Positive responses from all 11 potential candidates were received in a two-week period in mid-February of 2006, and they seemed willing to cooperate with the study. The qualifying requirement for participation was department chairs who were untenured at the time of the study or who were untenured at the time of their appointment as chair. A total of 11 untenured department chairs from three institutions were willing to be interviewed and represent a range of demographic and academic characteristics. For example, 6 were male and 5 were female, and the academic disciplines represent a varied group including English, business, dental hygiene, computer science, dance, and elementary education, among others.

Access and timeline. Questions of access to the research population were largely resolved with the willingness to participate of the 11 potential research subjects. All of the selected institutions were within driving distance and posed no access or entry problems.

Interviews with the identified potential research participants were completed during the first weeks of April 2006. The researcher conducted this study full time, and the proposed timeline projected that interviews would be completed, transcribed, and initially coded by May 1 with final analysis and the research findings completed by the early summer of 2006.

Data Collection

Several instruments were used to collect the data that would be analyzed.

Interviews lasted from 1.5 to 2 hours and the participants were informed about how long to plan for the interview. At the beginning of the interview, participants were told the general purposes of the study, and the researcher reviewed and explained the Informed Consent for Interview Research Form (see Appendix E). The purpose of this form was to obtain signed consent from the participant and ensure voluntary participation in the study. The form also discusses important procedures for maintaining confidentiality, granting permission for the recording of the interview, and instructions to follow if concerns were raised.

In order to garner some of the most important points about clinical interviewing that further enhanced critical interviewing skills, the researcher drew from narrative research methodology (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zibler, 1998; Mishler, 1986; Riessman, 1993) and then processed the knowledge with Dr. Clifford T. Mayes, a clinical interviewer and dissertation committee member. The interview protocol was organized along the principles of narrative research with a particular focus on interviewing.

After the participant agreed to the conditions of the study and signed the release form, the researcher recorded the interview and asked the questions as outlined in the Semi-Structured Interview Questions Form (see Appendix D). The form had been piloted for refinement with two former untenured department chairs and the final version reflected the suggested improvements. To facilitate faster interviews that could be more easily analyzed and compared, the same 9 standardized, open-ended questions were

asked of all interviewees. Recordings of the interviews and written notes from the researcher were generally transcribed within 24 hours of the interview to prevent loss or distortion of the data.

Immediately following the interview, the researcher administered the demographic survey (see Appendix C). This survey's purpose was to yield specific items of information pertaining to personal or institutional demographics of the participants. Individual and department variables that were not controlled for in the selection of institutions and participants were collected through the demographic survey. For example, there were questions about ethnicity, age, and academic rank.

Demographic Profile of Untenured Chairs

The eleven chairs who participated in the study constitute the census population of untenured chairs at the three colleges (n=11). In other words, all of the currently seated non-tenured department chairs at the three colleges were interviewed and completed a demographic survey (see Appendix C). A profile summary of the demographic data gives important context about the department chairs. In many of the categories, there was a high degree of homogeneity.

As a requirement for selection, all 11 (100%) participants were untenured faculty serving as department chairs. All 11 (100%) of the untenured chairs were first-time department chairs with 6 (55%) of them being male and 5 (45%) of them being female. When compared to the gender makeup of the faculty at the colleges, female untenured department chairs were disproportionately high. The absence of racial diversity was shown with all 11 (100%) identifying as white. The student, faculty, and surrounding community populations of each of the colleges were also predominately white.

Participants reported their ages as ranging from 30 to 59. Those between the ages of 30 to 39 were 4 (37%) with 5 (46%) between the ages of 40 to 49 and 2 (18%) ranging in age from 50 to 59. No meaningful patterns relating to age were identified.

The academic rank of the participant at the time of their appointment as department chair included 1 (9%) associate professor, 7 (64%) assistant professors, and 3 (27%) instructors. None of the department chairs were full professors. Similarly, a majority of 7 (64%) reported a master's degree as the highest degree earned with 4 (46%) possessing earned doctorate degrees. As a group, the participants were clearly less seasoned academically as evidenced by their lower rank and by their degree held. This academic inexperience of untenured chairs became a theme and will be addressed later in the findings.

The tenure process at the three selected colleges is a seven-year process with some provision for negotiating years toward tenure at the time of hire. Some participants were hired on to be the chair; others had been at the college for several years. The eleven untenured chairs were asked in what year of their pre-tenure status they were appointed as chairs, and the majority were in either their first, (n=4, 37%); second, (n=1, 18%), or third, (n=3, 27%) year; the remaining chairs were in their fourth, (n=1, 9%) or sixth, (n=2, 18%) year. No chairs reported being appointed in their fifth or seventh year. Two different questions in the demographic survey asked participants to identify what year of their pre-tenure status they were in when first appointed as chair and what year of progress they were in during the current academic year. Untenured chairs were asked to give their current year of tenure progress for the 2005-2006 academic year. Faculty were spread evenly across the seven possible responses to this question: second year, 1 (9%);

third year, 1 (9%); fourth year, 2 (18%); fifth year, 2 (18%); sixth year, 2 (18%); and seventh year, 3 (27%). No untenured chairs were currently in their first tenure year. Their varying years of experience either as chairs or in a tenure-track position was a confounding variable that made them more dissimilar. No meaningful pattern related to year of pre-tenure status was found.

The selection process for chair was addressed in a question about their method of appointment. The number of untenured faculty who reported that they were selected by the faculty and approved by the dean was 7 (64%) with 3 (27%) being selected by the dean and approved by the faculty. Only 1 (9%) reported being appointed by the dean without faculty input. No chairs reported being selected exclusively by the faculty without input from the dean. Candidates for department chair were predominantly internal candidates, 9 (82%) with 2 (18%) being external and hired to be the department chair. Deans are clearly very involved with decisions about the selection of department chairs. More study of the involvement of deans in the selection of department chairs is warranted.

The size of the academic department was reported as 5 (46%) coming from departments of 5 or fewer full-time faculty, 4 (37%) coming from departments of from 6 to 10 full-time faculty, and 3 (27%) coming from departments of from 11 to 15 full-time faculty. Adjunct faculty made up a significant part of the teaching force of the department with the number of adjunct faculty reported in several different ranges: 5 or fewer adjunct faculty, 2 (18%); 6 to 10 adjunct faculty, 5 (46%); 21 to 30 adjunct faculty, 2 (18%); 31 to 40 adjunct faculty, 2 (18%). The need for untenured department chairs seemed greater in smaller departments.

Identifying Participants

Care was taken to interview the eleven participants in a progressive sequence from smaller two-year community colleges to larger four-year colleges. Interviews were conducted beginning with the two untenured chairs from Community College 1 (1-10, 1-11) followed by two untenured chairs from State College 1 (2-12, 2-13), and ending with the seven untenured chairs from State College 2 (3-14, 3-15, 3-16, 3-17, 3-18, 3-19, and 3-20). Participants were given a two-digit identifier: the first number represents the college and the second number indicates the number of the participant beginning with number 10 and progressing through number 20.

The final source of data was the collection of relevant artifacts from the institutions and departments in the sample. The objective was to include information about the context of the institution that facilitates understanding reasons for appointing untenured faculty as department chairs. The researcher obtained the institution's tenure and rank policy, the institution's catalog description of the department, the published academic credentials of the study participant and his/her department colleagues, and other relevant institution policies and artifacts concerning the role and responsibility of the department chair. The artifacts were coded as attributes and compared against the other themes to discover if they became meaningful in explaining the findings. The analysis of the artifacts did not result in any meaningful findings.

Trustworthiness

One of the goals of this qualitative research project was to take measures to cultivate and maintain the trustworthiness of the research. Credibility refers to the degree of confidence that truth is contained in the research and that it speaks for the populations

from which it is derived and applies back to them (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). The researcher met regularly in peer debriefing sessions with a colleague who is a previous untenured department chair at one of the selected institutions and now has tenure and can offer perspective. She is trained in qualitative research methodology and is a doctoral student with whom emerging themes and trends were discussed.

In addition, the researcher has been a department chair—although never an untenured department chair—for the past four years, and is a current department chair at one of the research sites. Although care needs to be taken to avoid bias from such an insider perspective, this prolonged engagement with the roles and responsibilities of being a department chair certainly lends credibility to the study.

Finally, authors of the recent publication *The Life Cycle of the Department Chair* (Gmelch & Schuh, 2004) have been consulted about findings and emerging themes to tie them back to the literature and to offer expert guidance. Contact was made and cooperation secured with four contributors and with the editors of the book; interviews and messages exchanged were coded and analyzed and added to the data set.

In addition to credibility, transferability refers to the confidence that the reader has that the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Thick description provides enough detail to allow the reader to compare other situations with those in the study and give him or her the information necessary to make transferability and applicability decisions. A thorough and careful research journal and memos in NVivo (QSR, 2006) have been created to record and document the investigative process.

To cultivate trustworthiness and allow for transferability of the results, the sample of institutions was purposive to preserve similar characteristics of the entire data set including the important institution characteristics. The data included transcribed interviews, and data reporting employed codes of interview number and paragraph number (example: Participant 1-10, paragraph 125) to protect the identity of the research participants.

Dependability means the assurance that the study can be replicated by another researcher and that the methods section provides enough detail that another researcher could actually follow the outlined plan (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Marshall & Rossman, 1989). An audit trail in the research journal in NVivo (QSR, 2006) documented the analysis process and allow others to trace the research path (Gibbs, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Memos also outlined major developments and provide other researchers reviewing the work the context to understand the conclusions.

Confirmability is achieved if the theory explains the phenomenon and derives from the data (Erlandson et al., 1993). Because the researcher has significant experience as a department chair, possible bias was acknowledged and managed through full disclosure. Alternate interpretations were encouraged in regular peer debriefing sessions. Specific quotes from untenured chairs can be traced to their sources using the participant number and paragraph number of the original interview transcription.

Data

The first step in the open coding of the documents was to read the entire set of documents without initially coding them and to identify general themes and reflections in the research journal. Using the qualitative software program NVivo, a first set of nodes

was created to reflect the research categories that emerged from the data. The NVivo software allowed for the creation of a hierarchical tree for the categories. Next, each document was carefully read again, line by line, and the identified sections of the text coded to the nodes.

Coding the data was accomplished using the stages of open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). During open coding, broad themes were identified, and categories were expanded as multi-level nodes. During axial coding, relationships between categories and emerging themes were examined. All documents were studied and further coded as subcategories were created and the contexts of the individual untenured department chairs and institutions became more clear. The selective coding process focused on clear emic themes that explained the data and answered the research questions. Themes were identified as a significant pattern when the threshold of 50 percent of the cases confirmed the finding. Matrix searches, assays, and proximity searches in NVivo allowed for further refining of the data. Demographic data were used to see if patterns emerged that were associated with a specific demographic characteristic.

Limitations and Delimitations

One constraint of the study is based upon the census population of three relatively unique institutions; generalizing the findings beyond these three institutions is problematic. Constraints of time and resources contained the study to a manageable project scope. Therefore, the findings of the study cannot be generalized beyond the three schools in the sample, but they may have transferability to theory creation.

Although care was taken to limit the effect of confounding variables, it was not possible to limit their effect entirely. Specifically, the differences in academic discipline

may have contributed to the selection and success of appointing untenured department chairs. A list of potential confounding variables and measures taken to limit their effect is included in Table 1. The selected colleges differ in their urban/rural setting, their size of student population, and the discipline of the identified chairs.

Another constraint was that at one institution, the researcher is a current department chair. This insider status of being a department chair who will study other chairs was a potential source of bias. Care was taken in the research design to check this tendency.

Finally, because the study was conducted by a single researcher, other perspectives that would have been readily available from other researchers were not available. The researcher relied on graduate peers, experts, and committee guidance to gain broad perspective.

The research strategy was to explore the appointment of untenured faculty as department chairs using the qualitative methodology of grounded theory (Glaser, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). After carefully selecting a purposive sample of untenured department chairs from several institutions, the qualitative method of semi-structured interviews was used to collect the qualitative data in the form of interview transcripts. The first-round interviews provided the base line of data. The transcripts and other relevant documents were analyzed using NVivo (QSR, 2002) software for qualitative data analysis to uncover the themes, patterns, and theories that explain the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The participants were then interviewed in a second round as necessary to confirm and verify the emergent themes. Subsequently, the findings were

synthesized and communicated in written and graphic form. These processes were guided by the initial research questions.

Chapter Four

Findings and Discussion

Using the qualitative methodology of grounded theory, the researcher interviewed eleven untenured faculty serving as department chairs at three two- and four-year colleges in a Western state in order to explore the department chairs' perceptions, experiences, and impressions about being appointed as untenured department chairs. The reader should be aware that the perceptions are personal and of historical events. The data in the form of interview transcripts and relevant artifacts were analyzed using NVivo (2006) software for qualitative data analysis to uncover the themes, patterns, and theories that explained the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This chapter presents the synthesized findings of the study while providing some of the relevant context from which they emerged.

Although three initial research questions framed the study, grounded theory methodology requires that the researcher be somewhat flexible as the data are analyzed and emerging theories surface and are formed to fit the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Indeed, two additional research questions were added and are explained below. The following three initial research questions guided the study:

1. What factors influence individual faculty to accept positions as untenured department chairs?
2. What are the benefits and costs to the faculty member who is appointed as an untenured chair?

3. How does a chair's status as untenured affect his/her ability to fulfill the important roles of faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993)?

The investigation of the above research questions led to the emergence of two related and implicit questions that became more explicit as their formulation began to explain the appointment of untenured department chairs:

4. What are the risks of not achieving tenure for an untenured faculty member who is serving as department chair?
5. Why were untenured chairs found at the three research site colleges while none were found at the research universities to whom initial inquiry was made?

Because the answers to the three former questions are predicated upon a clear understanding of the foundational concepts revealed by the answers to the latter questions, the two additional questions will be addressed first. Each of the five questions is discussed in detail in the remaining pages of this chapter.

Risks of Not Achieving Tenure: An Explanatory Model

A central finding in this research study is the conceptualization and presentation of an explanatory model that provides a framework for understanding characteristics of and risk levels for untenured department chairs (see Figure 1). The model integrates the factors of tenure standards and chair duties to predict the risk to an untenured faculty member of failing to achieve tenure while successfully performing the roles of department chair. Four quadrants represent low to high risk. The risk of not achieving tenure for an untenured faculty member serving as chair varies according to (a) the

established level of rigor—the standards—required for achieving tenure and (b) the extent to which the chair duties are weighted towards meeting tenure requirements.

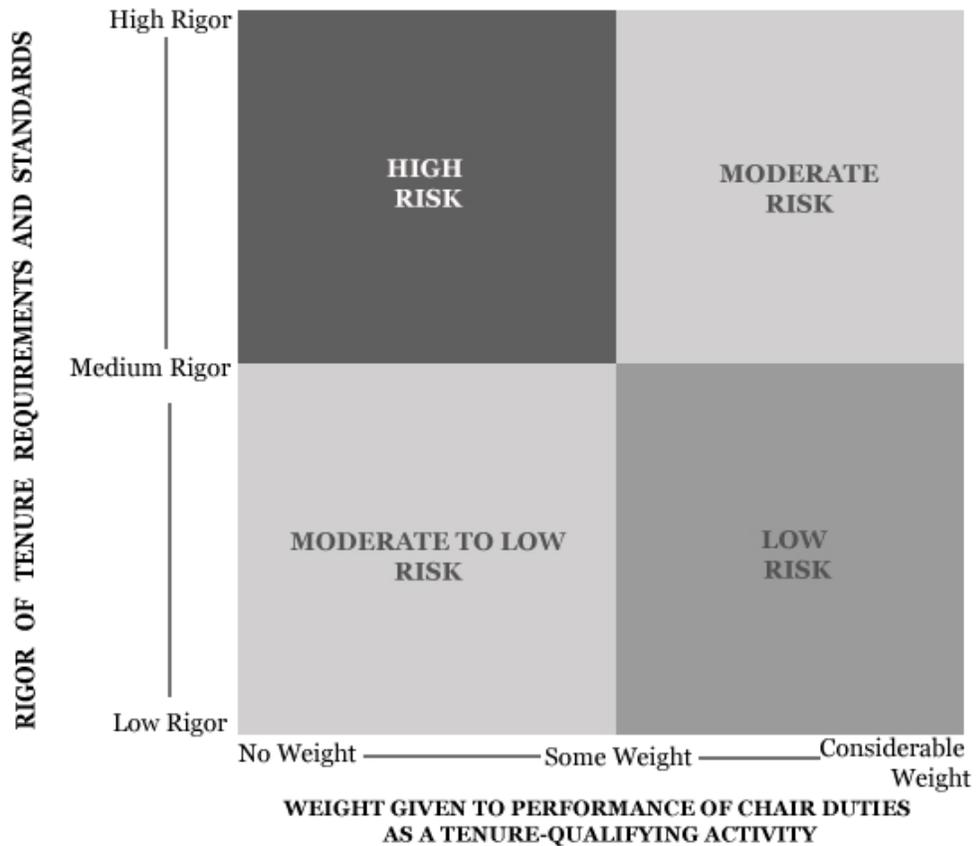


Figure 1. The untenured department chair: Risk levels for achieving tenure while concurrently fulfilling the chair role as a function of the rigor of tenure standards and the extent to which chair duties are tenure-qualifying activities

According to the participants at the two- and four-year colleges studied, an untenured faculty member’s potential of achieving tenure does not appear to be negatively affected by serving as department chair before receiving tenure. One possible explanation for the absence of a negative effect is that the rigor of tenure standards for these colleges is relatively low when compared with the typical standards of most universities. In addition, at the three college research sites, the duties of the chair were counted as tenurable activities whereas department chair duties at most universities do

not excuse a faculty member from meeting typically more rigorous research and publishing standards for tenure. The result for the eleven research participants was that they were all at low risk of not achieving tenure and would fall into the Low Risk quadrant of Figure 1.

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The explanatory model represented by Figure 1 uses the two characteristics of achieving tenure to predict the attendant risk levels for untenured department chairs of achieving tenure while concurrently fulfilling the chair role. The risk levels are displayed as four quadrants: High, Moderate Risk, Moderate to Low Risk, and Low Risk. The first characteristic is the weight given to the performance of chair duties as a tenure-qualifying activity; it is presented as a continuum that represents the weight given--No Weight, Some Weight, Considerable Weight--to the performance of chair duties as a tenure-qualifying activity. The second characteristic is the relative rigor of the tenure requirements and standards arranged along a continuum of Low Rigor, Medium Rigor,

and High Rigor. This model helps explain the scope of the findings in this research study but is not intended to apply necessarily to other contexts or institutions.

If an untenured faculty member is appointed as department chair at an institution where the established standards of excellence are high and the extent to which the standards are rigidly adhered to is rigorous, then the attendant risk of not achieving tenure while successfully completing chair duties is in the High Risk quadrant. Untenured faculty in this situation and academic administrators would do well to avoid putting junior faculty in this vulnerable situation where there is a high probability of failure. Such appointments may require high-risk chairs to choose a focus of either achieving tenure or running the department and giving less attention to the second priority with its logical negative consequences.

Using the characteristics of the model, all eleven untenured department chairs who participated in this study would be in the Low Risk quadrant because the rigor of tenure requirement and standards at these institutions were relatively low and the weight given to performance of chair duties as a tenure-qualifying activity was considerable. The practice of appointing untenured department chairs at these institutions is not as problematic because the risks involved are significantly lower. This conceptual model, then, has explanatory power and succinctly summarizes the findings of the research study.

The model may also be helpful in understanding the literature on department chairs by situating it within the quadrants. For example, most of the literature to date has been written from the paradigm of the High Risk quadrant. In contrast, this research study is situated in the Low Risk quadrant, and the characteristics of the two quadrants differ drastically. The Risk Model prove useful to researchers by providing a conceptual

model for positioning previous, current, and future research about department chairs and thereby helping to define the narrow field of research of department chairs in higher education.

The Presence or Absence of Untenured Chairs

The model represented in Figure 1 may also be useful in understanding why untenured faculty are appointed as department chairs in the selected colleges and not in the universities first identified in the research design. For this research study, seven universities in a three-state, Western region were contacted to identify untenured department chairs for participation in the study. As reported earlier, none of the seven universities had any untenured faculty serving as department chairs. An examination of tenure requirements as found in tenure policies for these primarily research universities revealed that they have relatively high standards and rigor for achieving tenure when compared to the standards and rigor required at the three selected two- and four-year institutions. For example, a research university specified the number of articles from peer-reviewed journals needed to meet tenure requirements. Although the tenurability of chair activities was not mentioned specifically in the university tenure policies and was beyond the specific scope of this research, it seems probable based upon the researcher's inquiries that they would be weighted less heavily in the research universities than in the colleges that participated in the study.

The model suggests that untenured faculty contemplating an appointment to serve as untenured chairs at research universities would fall into the High Risk quadrant of Figure 1, and this theory may partially explain why untenured chairs are less likely to be found at research institutions. The three initial research questions that focus on the

phenomenon of untenured department chairs can be better understood when viewed from within the framework of this proposed model.

Although the tenurability of chair activities was not mentioned specifically in the university tenure policies and was beyond the specific scope of this research, it seems probable that they would be weighted less heavily in the research universities than in the colleges that participated in the study.

Another potentially useful application of the model is to plot where a specific institution or department might fall in the four quadrants. The seven institutions that had no untenured chairs would most likely be clustered toward the top left of the four-quadrant grid in or around the High Risk area while the three institutions from the study would be clustered in or around the bottom right area near the Low Risk quadrant. In order to assess the risk and plot an institution or department, the rigor of tenure requirement and standards would need to be known along with evaluation of the weight given to the performance of chair duties as a tenure-qualifying activity.

Because the expectations for achieving tenure vary greatly by institution type, it seems useful when considering the answer to the three initial research questions to consider also the type of institution where an untenured chair might be appointed. In fact, the very presence of untenured chairs on a campus may be an indication of lower tenure standards and more relative weight given to service at the institution. The investigation of these additional questions was not part of the initial research design. They are presented first because of the general explanatory value and the foundational insight that they provide in answering the three research questions around which the research methodology was designed. This is an area where additional research

specifically about research universities would further illuminate this topic but was outside the specific research design of this study.

Factors Influencing Untenured Faculty to be Chair

The research participants in the study discussed the various factors that influenced their decision to accept positions as untenured department chairs and several emerged as significant themes. These themes included (a) the lack of other viable candidates and size of the department, (b) the opportunity to be a change agent, (c) the hiring of faculty to start a new program, (d) the desire to give service, (e) the need for leadership in the department, (f) the fact that the dean asked, (g) the hiring of an external candidate to be chair, and (h) the reward of increased pay and status.

Besides the factors specifically identified by the participants, there was wide variance in their ability to identify and conceptualize the role of chair for the department and institution. A majority of the faculty were unfamiliar about what was expected of them as department chairs, and they were overwhelmed by the scope of their responsibilities; in a few cases, not much was expected of the department chair. As a group they were not overly concerned about their ability to meet minimum tenure requirements, and the participants generally expressed a somewhat casual and positive attitude about their prospects for achieving tenure. In a few cases, there was little or no perceived benefit in applying for tenure. Generally, the participants seemed unaware of any potential risks to being an untenured chair.

Among the factors cited by participants (6 or 55%) as influencing their decision to accept the position of department chair as untenured faculty members was the lack of other viable candidates; in fact, five (45%) of the representative departments in the study

were made up of 5 or fewer faculty members. One participant represented an extreme example of the lack of potential chair candidates by stating that “. . . there were two members in our department and the other member is the division chair. So, kind of by default, I was asked to be the department chair and agreed to do that” (Participant 1-10, paragraph 12). Others (6 or 55%) alluded to the practice of taking turns and rotating the department chair position among the faculty. Nearly half of the participants (5 or 46%) mentioned that being from a small department was a factor in their selection. When the number of faculty in a department was small, the need to fill the vacancy came around more often and resulted in untenured faculty being appointed.

In several cases, the untenured department chairs were given the choice of either assuming the role themselves or having someone from another discipline appointed. For example, an untenured chair from a department in a performing arts department “. . . was told that there just really weren’t many options . . . and that another person, who was like a professor of history, would end up in the chair position” (Participant 3-18, paragraph 10). Three of the department chairs (27%) assumed the position themselves at least partially to avoid having someone from outside the discipline lead it. It seemed prudent for these colleges to select untenured chairs when their only other option was to go outside of the department or discipline to find an alternate candidate.

Another common factor that participants cited (6 or 55%) for becoming an untenured chair was the opportunity to be a change agent. Participant 3-17 was typical of this group when he said, “I thought I’d have an opportunity to build something” (paragraph 68). The desire to leave a legacy, build a new program, or improve an existing one was strong in the group. Another department chair expressed a similar

desire this way: “When I was asked to be chair, I thought, I have had this idea [to expand offerings] in mind. This is something that we will be able to do (Participant 3-18, paragraph 143). Nearly half of the participants, (5 or 45%) found the prospect of affecting significant change in the department very attractive.

All three of the institutions in the study have added new programs and the two state colleges particularly are changing, growing, dynamic institutions that have hired new faculty to start or expand new majors and bring on four-year bachelor degrees. Often the result of a new major being approved by the governing bodies was the creation or expansion of a department. According to six (55%) of the untenured faculty serving as chairs, providing leadership specifically for these newly-created or expanded degrees or programs was a factor in their becoming department chairs before they received tenure; they viewed it as their responsibility to move the departments to the next level. One untenured department chair’s experience in this group is illustrative:

Well, it [leading a new department] was even brought up in the interview. And it was one of the reasons why I took the job. I was the first hire in _____, . . . and in the interview they made it clear that what they wanted was someone who could build a program and probably eventually becoming a chair, and that sounded perfect for me. (Participant 3-20, paragraph 13)

At least this faculty member was hired with the specific intent to appoint them as department chairs before they achieved tenure in order to start a new program or degree.

Another factor identified by the participants (7 or 64%) was their strong commitment to serving the department, the students, the faculty, and the institution. The service identified here seemed slightly different from the service component of tenure as

it is generally spoken of as one of the three pillars of achieving tenure: teaching, scholarship, and service. It is interesting that more than half (6 or 55%) agreed to be department chair out of a sense of duty that they seemed to define as service. One comment that typifies this sentiment was captured as “. . . the department needed me. I think that’s probably the most prominent reason [that I agreed to be the chair]” (Participant 3-16, paragraph 9). Another participant stated that he agreed to do it because “I was asked to do it I guess--that was it--by the dean” (Participant 3-19, paragraph 12). Often (7 or 64%) these faculty gave little thought to any potential personal risks and simply agreed to give service even though most of them were fairly young in their academic careers.

One possible interpretation of this unquestioning willingness to serve may be partially related to the deep religious convictions held by the majority in all three communities and clearly present on all three campuses. Such religious convictions may have lead to a general conservative political and cultural orientation. However, there appeared to be some tension about what exactly it means to serve the department, who gets to decide what the service is, and whether getting compensated for it no longer makes it service.

For example, it is worth mentioning that one chair could see a possible discrepancy if he claimed to count his performance of chair duties as service for the tenure requirement even though the time to give that service was compensated by a reduced teaching load for being chair. He said,

Yeah, where I guess if you gave that [the time to give service] in trade of a class, that wouldn’t really be service, where you are trading that. But in my case, it

hasn't been an issue, so it would be additional; it would be service. (Participant 1-10, paragraph 152)

His concern highlights the need for a clear understanding of the weight given the duties performed as chair when making tenure decisions (see Figure 1).

A majority of department chairs (6 or 55%) mentioned the benefit of perks such as increased pay or access to summer contracts associated with serving as department chair as a motivating factor for accepting the position. While these untenured department chairs did enjoy a modest stipend associated with being department chair, they will lose that stipend when they return to regular faculty ranks after serving as chair. Many of the participants (6 or 55%) recognized the increased status and recognition that came with being a department chair. Some viewed it as “a nice thing to be able to put on a CV [curriculum vitae]” (Participant 1-11, paragraph 103) or “as an opportunity actually to get some administrative skills” (Participant 3-18, paragraph 10).

The focus of the first research question was on developing an understanding of what factors motivated untenured faculty to accept positions as department chairs. The next important question to explore with the participants was what, after having accepted the position and performing it for some time, were the benefits and costs associated with being an untenured department chair.

Benefits and Costs to Being an Untenured Chair

The untenured faculty members serving as department chairs were consistent in describing benefits associated with being department chair. All eleven of the participants were first-time department chairs, and it was difficult for them and for the researcher to separate *benefits* that came from being a department chair from those that came from

being an *untenured* department chair or relatively new faculty member. The findings focus on their perceived and reported benefits. Among the important benefits identified consistently by the participants were the following: (a) a reduced teaching load, (b) increased job satisfaction and positive engagement, (c) a reassurance that performing chair duties well would be viewed favorably in tenure decisions, (d) the ability to act as a change agent, (e) financial rewards, (f) heightened status and leadership experience, (g) increased knowledge of campus operations, (h) advocating for the department, and (i) new professional associations and networking opportunities. The participants had slightly more difficulty coming up with benefits when first asked and tended to come back to the issue later in the interviews.

Being an untenured department chair comes with real costs to the faculty member. One of the most substantial was the increased demand on the limited resource of time that resulted from a dramatically changed and increased workload. Chairs experienced much higher levels of stress as they learned to cope with their new department chair roles, and a few discussed feeling vulnerable at times because of their untenured status. They also experienced some frustration at being further removed from the students, and being forced to spend less time on their teaching. A decrease in scholarship productivity or what some study participants defined as professional development resulted from the department chairs' shifting priorities and demands on their time. Finally, most of the untenured department chairs experienced more difficulty in their relationships with other faculty.

The untenured faculty members serving as department chairs were consistent in describing benefits associated with being department chair. All eleven of the participants

were first-time department chairs, and it was difficult for them and for the researcher to separate benefits that came from being a department chair from those that came from being an *untenured* department chair. Another possible confounding variable is a particular faculty member's short experience on campus. Whereas a tenured, full professor who is appointed as chair usually has significant campus or academic experience, an untenured chair is more of a novice about academic and campus life. These findings focus on their perceived and reported benefits.

There was a consistent pattern in the amount of teaching required of faculty before they became department chairs. On these three campuses it was common for these untenured faculty (9 participants or 83%) to report teaching 15 credit hours consisting of five, three-credit classes. There was no variation to this pattern. Being released from teaching hours and having those hours released or reassigned was a benefit for some chairs because it gave them more time to fulfill administrative duties with some flexibility. Released or reassigned time for chairs varied from one credit hour release to a four course (12 credit hour) release. One chair commented that "the fact that I get a workload reassignment to do department chair duties helps" (Participant 2-12, paragraph 18). Several chairs (4 or 36%) viewed their released time as a benefit to allow them to structure their own hours and work from home or other locations to accomplish projects. Not being tied to a teaching schedule was part of the benefit.

It should be noted that a plausible explanation for the lower standards and rigor in the tenure requirements for the colleges in this study may be that it results from the heavy teaching load that faculty are expected to carry. There has to be a balance between expectations for scholarly work and time available to pursue it.

Department chairs reported high levels of job satisfaction and positive engagement with the discipline, the faculty, the students, and the campus. This theme was identified as intrinsic rewards and 9 (or 82%) of the participants discussed it. They enjoyed making a difference and were very committed to reaching the goals of the department. These intrinsic rewards, a form of benefit, sustained them during difficult times:

And I would say that I would speak for the rest of my faculty too and say that it [making a difference] is what we come back to over and over again when we are under staffed, and we don't have the resources, and we are so overloaded. I think that we come back, we all come back to that very same mantra which is--it's that we are making a difference in students' lives. (Participant 3-16, paragraph 109)

Similar satisfaction is evident in another typical comment about job satisfaction:

And it's very satisfying to be building the programs. It's an incredibly rare experience for a young guy--well relatively young guy--like me to build a program. I created the associate's degree, the integrated studies emphasis, [and the] bachelors degree--because usually teaching is so ephemeral--you teach your heart out for an hour and then it's gone, but building the program--it's satisfying. (Participant 3-20, paragraph 154)

The level of dedication exhibited by nearly all of the untenured chairs (10 or 91%) was truly remarkable. Almost without exception the researcher was able to sense from the participants a palpable excitement and dedication to the institution and especially to the students. It is possible that the criteria used to select untenured chairs identifies the rising

faculty stars from the department; such a process might explain why the participants were of such a high caliber.

Another benefit that participants identified was that their work as department chairs would count significantly toward meeting their tenure requirements. One creative suggestion was for department chairs to be granted tenure at the time they are appointed:

This is one thing that I was trying to address in the midterm review. This level of service, [had] better count—and a whopping amount—towards tenure. I have actually had a few faculty members doing some research on this and advocating for taking a new position in the school of [if] you become chair, you are granted tenure. And I would support that even though that's self-serving for me at this point; it would make complete sense to me. In fact, it makes way more sense than the other way, which is--let's pick and choose from our untenured faculty?

(Participant 3-16, paragraph 308)

It is clear that department chair leadership is critically important to the institution and that at least Participant 16 has strong feelings that being untenured and being a department chair is not ideal. In nearly every case (9 or 82%) where an untenured faculty was appointed as chair, there was a less than ideal situation of a new program, or a small department, or lack of other viable candidates that made the appointment necessary.

Being in a position to influence needed change on campus while serving as chair was seen as a benefit. One participant acknowledged that his role as chair allowed him to be “. . . in a position to at least propose changes to our overall function of the campus” (Participant 2-12, paragraph 42). Generally the chairs were anxious to propose creative

and different solutions to problems. Perhaps being untenured and often fairly new to academic life gave them fresh perspective as demonstrated by this response:

By being less experienced and less institutionalized, for example, if I had been here 20 years when I started being a chair. I think by that point, any new ideas would have been flushed out of my system, and I would've given up on them. But since I'm inexperienced, I'm still willing to play Don Quixote and tilt at windmills and take some pretty hard hits that I might be too tired to take in 10 to 15 years from now. (Participant 2-12, paragraph 386)

Perhaps because of the good they were able to accomplish, none of the participants regretted their decision to accept the chair position, and they did not believe that the practice should be forbidden by policy or practice.

An obvious benefit to department chairs was some limited financial reward. This study did not gather comprehensive data about stipends and salary, but comments from one participant confirm that the remuneration is modest: “. . . there was \$1000 a year allocated for chair duties” (Participant 2-12, paragraph 473).

A few participants outlined other perks (8 or 73%) that accompanied the heightened chair status and title: moving into a better office, having access to some discretionary funds, hiring faculty, and using a department assistant.

In the normal course of fulfilling their duties as department chairs, participants reported (6 or 55%) an increased knowledge of campus operations. This knowledge varied from “. . . advisement and changes of curriculum and reviewing of the catalog . . .” (Participant 1-10, paragraph 46) to “know[ing] more of the ins and outs of hiring”

(Participant 1-11, paragraph 107). However, not all of the knowledge was of an uplifting nature:

I think that with any new levels of awareness you get the bad with the good. So in addition to having high awareness of what [the college] is trying to do . . . I also got all of the--some of the political garbage and the insider information about where certain people have been duplicitous and so that piece of awareness has been discouraging. (Participant 3-16, paragraph 97)

Without a doubt, chairs undergo an intense education about the campus they thought they knew as faculty; they attend many meetings and are privy to more of the highs and lows in the academic life of the campus.

Seven (64%) participants described their ability to advocate for department goals as a benefit. For example, they sought to “. . . build . . . resources [by] adding faculty and ask[ing] the deans and the vice presidents . . . and getting space” (Participant 3-18, paragraph 88). Participant 2-12 remarked that “the positive aspects [for advocacy] are that I can make my point of view heard in a campus setting so that at least I feel that our perspective is known” (paragraph 134). Six (55%) untenured chairs were proud of securing additional resources for the department in their public role as department advocates.

One final benefit about which there was wide agreement (9 or 82%) was in the increased opportunities for networking and building professional associations with other colleagues. This sentiment is nicely expressed in this response: “I have gotten to build some relationships with other colleagues that have just been a joy” (Participant 3-16,

paragraph 70). Many of the participants (7 or 64%) sought out other experienced department chairs to act as informal mentors.

The participants when asked about positives or benefits had slightly more difficulty coming up with them than when asked about costs or negatives. After discussing the costs, they tended to come back to identifying the benefits later in the interviews. The costs associated with being an untenured department chair provide important clues about what the job required of these participants.

Being an untenured department chair comes with real costs to the faculty member. One of the most substantial was the increased demand on the limited resource of time that resulted from a dramatically changed and increased workload. Nearly all of the chairs (9 or 82%) struggled with this issue. Their comments concerning time issues are instructive:

One of the negatives that was expected but you never expect it as much as you do is the amount of time that it actually takes to do it [the job of department chair].

(Participant 2-12, paragraph 150)

Oh man, ok. The time—way more than I expected, way more than I expected. (Participant 3-16, paragraph 131)

So what I have learned as a chair, . . . is that I simply don't have time to do everything that is handed me. (Participant 3-19, paragraph 105)

Some chairs gave examples of the typical challenges they face when trying to manage their time effectively:

The accreditors [from Northwest Accreditation], when they were here, they told the chairs that the hardest job on campus is to be the chair, and I believe it. You are in the middle of everything; you have a million things going on; the phone

won't stop ringing, and people are always knocking on your door; it's impossible. And there's more--every week you get an e-mail from the Dean's office; they want this report; they want that report. And then students are complaining and teachers are complaining, you have got to hear lots of complaints--that's hard. And the thing that I have the hardest time with is managing my time

(Participant 3-20, paragraph 126)

And I get so frustrated because I walk in the door and I've got two fires: one is sexual-harassment and one is, you know, something else. And then I was planning on planning my class and teaching, but I can't. (Participant 3-18, paragraph 122)

Most chairs (6 or 55%) reported that after some time in the position they learned to prioritize and let some requests go unfulfilled simply as a way to survive the demands on their time.

The daily grind of the job manifested itself in unhealthy stress for some (7 or 64%) of the participants. Not all were affected equally. Participant 1-10 when asked if the job of chair had been stressful said, "It hasn't been for me" (paragraph 279).

However, more typical of responses was this one:

Because what no one really prepared me for completely--was just the sheer workload, and what this wrings out of you on every level: psychologically, emotionally, professionally, personally, I mean it hits you everywhere—physically. (Participant 3-16, paragraph 306)

Some stress is obviously inherent in the job and needs to be managed. Participant 3-18 illustrates how someone who has dealt the high stress before was affected by becoming department chair:

I think I have always had to have outlets to manage stress, because every situation I have been in has some level of stress. This is just a little higher than I am used to . . . what I find in this job is that I do it less. Like I used to ski all of the time on the weekends, for instance. Now I don't, because I'm just too exhausted.

(Participant 3-18, paragraph 134)

Learning to manage stress appropriately is an important survival skill, especially if untenured department chairs experience more of it than tenured department chairs (Gmelch & Burns, 1994).

Another cost that participants described (8 or 73%) was feeling vulnerable in their positions for standing up to and speaking out to administration and in dealing with their faculty who might have a say in their own bid for tenure. For example, one participant articulated his dilemma as follows:

But of course I was also vulnerable, and especially me, because I'm an outspoken person and sometimes I'm a chair, and sometimes I am a professor. And when I speak as a professor the only restraints I recognize is that I should tell the truth as I see it. Chairs need to be more diplomatic, but their roles get convoluted, and I was in some pretty heavy controversies on campus, and I was pretty nervous about how my tenure bid was going to go. (Participant 3-20, paragraph 30)

Another chair characterized his vulnerability on several levels:

We don't know what this administration could do--there were a lot of rumors that the administration didn't respect tenure at all. And if you spoke up and spoke out—which is something that a chair might want to do, at times that you could put yourself into some danger there. I didn't really take it too seriously, because I figured that my challenges were really more within the department than really with the administration. (Participant 2-13, paragraph 58)

Without exception the participants in this study claim that their status as being untenured did not cause them to alter their behavior.

For some participants (8 or 73%) an additional cost of being an untenured chair was being further removed from the students and being forced to spend less time on their teaching. They taught fewer classes generally and had less time to prepare for those classes. As an example, chairs commented that “my courses have suffered this year, more so than I would like” (Participant 2-12, paragraph 260) or that “I don’t get to teach as much and--you know--I love to teach” (Participant 3-14, paragraph 141). Nearly all of the untenured chairs (8 or 73%) said that their teaching had suffered as a result of becoming department chair.

Also a result of shifting priorities was a decrease in scholarship productivity or what most (7 or 64%) defined as professional development. One untenured department chair quickly admitted that “I am sacrificing my own scholarship” (Participant 3-18, paragraph 126). Another chair when asked about scholarship productivity responded that “It’s all gone down, there’s no question; it’s all gone downhill” (Participant 3-19, paragraph 234). A final comment addresses the cost in lost scholarship output:

There's a price, a very high price to pay here in what you can contribute in the scholarship level, whether it's your own research or whether it's a doctoral program. (Participant 3-16, paragraph 184)

It is interesting to consider the effect that lower scholarship productivity would have on an untenured department chair. In a high stakes game where standards for tenure are rigorous, adding the burden of being department chair to an untenured faculty member would be unfair. However, in the lower stakes game where standards for tenure are less rigorous--like those of the three colleges whose untenured chairs participated in this study--achieving tenure seems not only possible but also likely when the rigor of tenured standards is comparatively lower and the performance of chair duties are considered tenurable activities.

Finally, most (7 or 64%) of the untenured department chairs experienced more difficulty in their relationships with other faculty. One example of this cost is in the change in department dynamics and interpersonal relationships as a previous faculty member assumed the leadership role:

People that were my peers--and they are still my peers now--all of a sudden I am a spokesperson for them. And I have noticed a request pattern where they come to me and ask for things, and now I have to say I don't think we can do that this year. We don't have the budget for that . . . we haven't been able to arrange that, um, that's kind of straining the relationship between me and my peers [and] is a major negative that I did not foresee actually. (Participant 2-12, paragraph 154)

Issues with faculty range from trivial items to the most serious issue facing a department chair--that of terminating a faculty member:

We have another faculty member that I'm having to terminate because this person has difficulty dealing with students and is always in scrapes with students. And he is actually chasing students away, and so to dismiss a tenured line, not tenured yet, but a tenured line faculty person is still difficult. It's the right decision, but it isn't easy so that is a negative. (Participant 3-17, paragraph 103)

All of the problems of the individual faculty members seemed to automatically become the problems of the chair. All chairs face the prospect of returning to regular status in the department and need to be aware of how they treat their peers; untenured department chairs must also deal with faculty who might have a vote in their own tenure process. All of the participants in this study (11 or 100%) were not overly concerned with this potential difficult scenario and assumed that it wouldn't affect them.

Untenured Chair Status and Fulfilling the Chair Roles

Another key finding was the unanimous perception (11 or 100%) that being an untenured faculty member serving as a department chair had little effect on the untenured chair's behavior and how they approached their job. Of course, this assertion is based on their own perceptions, and the researcher could make no objective evaluation of their actual behavior. However, it still may be significant that they do not perceive that they would pursue their job functions any differently—with or without tenure. One possible explanation is that admitting to the possibility of behaving differently with tenure may have been uncomfortable and akin to disclosing some deception by the untenured chair or an incongruity between the chair's actual and expected job performance.

When asked to what extent being untenured had any positive or negative affects on how they lead the department or evaluate faculty, the participants were unambiguous:

Because of the history of the institution where tenure hasn't mattered that much; it really hasn't made that much of an effect on how I've been able to do my job.

(Participant 2-12, paragraph 439)

I think it's a non-issue. Maybe for others it wasn't [laughs]. In this head [points to his head] it was not something I thought about very often at all, no.

(Participant 2-13, paragraph 222)

My faculty and dean don't make that [not having tenure] an issue at all . . . that thought [of behaving differently] has never even crossed my mind. I have never worried about that. (Participant 3-14, paragraphs 249 and 257)

Nearly all chairs (8 or 73%) identified that being untenured could potentially be a problem but were quick to say that it hadn't altered the way they went about doing their jobs:

You know, potentially, it is. But I don't think it has ended up being a problem, . . . and so I don't feel that it has really hindered my performance and hurt the department in any way, but I see traps out there. (Participant 3-15, paragraph 30)

You know what? It doesn't change anything for me. I still move forward as if I was tenured. Maybe I'm overly confident or stupid. Um, but I feel like that's the best (Participant 3-18, paragraph 267)

So the answer [to] this question is that it really doesn't have any affects--positive or negative. It simply doesn't enter your mind as you go about the day-to-day operations. (Participant 3-19, paragraph 295)

There was no single point in the study about which there was such high consensus. This issue, however, is complex as illustrated in this final comment from a participant who characterized it this way:

[Groans] This is tough. This is really tough because I feel out of my league here. I may have brought management experience to the table. But I don't bring, being untenured, I don't bring that academic seasoning that some of my colleagues have, and so now I am in a position to evaluate them? I will say this: I will move towards this in the same way that I have anything else and that's fearlessly . . . I wouldn't have any integrity as a leader if I allowed that [being untenured] to affect my evaluations . . . and I have to trust--and sometimes that's a blind trust--but that's how I have to move forward. I don't know how else to do it. (Participant 3-16, paragraph 212)

The participants generally (11 or 100%) refused to acknowledge differences in their conduct based on their tenure status; paradoxically, they did identify some effects in performing their department chair roles as identified by Gmelch and Miskin (1993): faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar.

Chair as faculty developer. In their role as faculty developer, there was some difficulty in the evaluation of faculty due to their lack of experience and their relatively low academic credibility with other faculty. Many of the participants (6 or 55%) felt underprepared to evaluate faculty generally. For two faculty (18%), evaluation was not an issue because the dean, and not the department chair, did the evaluations. A fairly young untenured chair recognized that his credibility was at issue when he began “. . . to sense a little bit of condescension” (Participant 2-13, paragraph 109) coming from senior faculty,

and he speculated it might be because of his age. In some elite academic departments, a person's rank, degree, and status in the field are the sources from which credibility is drawn. At the three colleges in the study, less emphasis seemed to be placed on these traditional academic status symbols and the departments displayed a general cohesiveness. In such a positive department climate, untenured department chairs seemed to fare well; a different outcome might await the untenured chair of an elite academic department.

Many (7 or 64%) did not realize that developing other faculty professionally was a role that is often defined for department chairs. It is true that the participants were involved in hiring and bringing faculty into the department. They expressed great enthusiasm in supporting their colleagues and helping them develop professionally:

It's nice because I am taking part in their success, and I am helping them to realize their final goal or one of their final goals. And they are good people: people who devote themselves to scholarship and teaching, people who devote themselves to scholarship and teaching are generally interested in the world and committed to the world and committed to the idea that ideas and thinking and teaching and relating to other people can make the world a better place. (Participant 3-20, paragraph 108)

According to the participants (7 or 64%), faculty hired into the departments at these three schools were made to feel that this department would be their new long-term home.

There was not a strong sense that untenured faculty were on probation and had to prove themselves to the rest of the department faculty.

Chair as manager. Untenured faculty in the study generally decried the lack of training that was available to them in their role as managers. Their need for training was broad, but a majority of the participants (9 or 82%) mentioned specifically an unfamiliarity with general campus processes, practices, and policies and a need for training:

There is no time line. There is nothing that says [what] I am supposed to do . . . it's just the complexity of coming into this position. (Participant 3-19, paragraph 175).

I didn't get a job description until halfway through this year. I kept asking the question, what is my job as chair? And it took a year and a half to get a job description. (Participant 3-17, paragraph 313)

A few chairs explained that there was some training available at least on one campus but judging from the response, it seems that the training did not have very much of an impact:

Last summer there [were] a couple of things that they offered on the college for department chairs. I don't remember them exactly, but I do remember that I went to something. (Participant 3-14, paragraph 117)

For those new to campus, some of their difficulty in accessing training may have come from their relatively recent arrival on campus.

Some of them (6 or 55%) were either new to higher education or had only been on campus for a short time before being appointed as chair. Two (18%) offered suggestions about how to address the training deficiency: "I'd like to see a more formalized chair manual out there. I think that would help a lot for a new chair" (Participant 3-15,

paragraph 72) and “. . . I would like to create a book for someone that addresses all of my thinking on this” (Participant 3-16, paragraph 274). In the absence of such books or a manual, chairs (8 or 73%) reported that most of the training was informal and based upon the immediacy of meeting a deadline.

Another area of concern in the manager arena for untenured chairs was being first-time supervisors, a role that many (8 or 73%) had not seen themselves fulfilling when they began their careers in academics. This issue is expressed clearly by this untenured chair:

There is no training for chairs. You just have to step in and go, ok, what are the responsibilities and most people in academics haven't been administrators. They have been either researchers or instructors or some combination thereof, but they haven't administered, so it is a huge learning curve. (Participant 2-12, paragraph 98)

The participants (10 or 91%) indicated a critical unmet need for more and better chair training to ensure that both tenured and untenured department chairs are not forced to undertake that learning curve on their own. From the data, it does seem that untenured chairs have an even steeper learning curve.

All untenured faculty in the study decried the lack of training that was available to them in their role as managers. Their need for training was broad, but they mentioned specifically an unfamiliarity with general campus processes, practices, and policies.

Chair as leader. Participants who had the confidence and support of their faculty seemed to feel more confident in their role as leader of the department. For example, a chair clearly in grasp of her potential contribution as a leader stated that she had “a lot of

ideas about strategic directions” (Participant 3-16, paragraph 21) when she took the job and immediately united the department around a vision and future for the department. Some (6 or 55%) struggled in their ability to provide a consistent vision for the future of the department. A different way of fulfilling the role was evident when one participant said that “I am more of a facilitator than a leader” (Participant 3-14, paragraph 36). Many of the participants (5 or 45%) expressed the belief that they had gained the confidence of their faculty and were able to accomplish more because of that support.

Another delicate balancing act for untenured department chairs (6 or 55%) in their role as leader was the ability to advocate forcefully when necessary and “speak truth to power” (Participant 3-20, paragraph 78) while simultaneously negotiating their boundaries and sensing potential vulnerabilities as untenured faculty. Their voices from the trenches of academic life in the department highlight their message:

Well, I have spent my whole entire life devoted to scholarly pursuits, and I didn't do all that, so I could keep my mouth shut, you know what I mean? I'm on this earth to witness what's going on and speak about it. That's why I am here, and I think that's what makes me a good chair because I really relate to the faculty purpose and the academic purpose. I understand what it is. And I have good interpersonal skills and some organizational skills and visionary types of things. And I like to schmooze and talk and get things working right, so you know, freedom of speech is paramount for me. There is no purpose in what I do as chair without that. (Participant 3-20, paragraph 96)

Which is another new thing about being a chair--tenured or non-tenured. You just don't know how far you can go pushing an issue with some people. And

how they're going to respond to it, and you . . . start to understand more [of] what I can say, what I shouldn't say, [and] where I should leave it and not keep going on about it. (Participant 3-15, paragraph 100)

There is a parallel line here with how I am perceived on campus, and the louder my voice is, the riskier it [receiving tenure] becomes. When I speak out, and disagree or . . . call it like I see it—[it] may be very unpopular. I am putting myself at risk, and I have done that quite a bit. That could backfire on me. I mean, I'm not stupid enough to think that just because my department would support my tenure process that at any given time, there are people on this campus with the power to say—no. (Participant 3-16, paragraph 151)

Perhaps because the perceived risk for them was more hypothetical than actual, the participants in this study understood that being untenured could possibly affect them, but they made deliberate choices to act out of their desire to serve a higher good.

Chair as scholar. Untenured chairs were in a unique position with regard to their role as scholar because they had yet to establish themselves as scholars in their field. Indeed, the role of scholar as defined by Gmelch and Miskin (1993) did not fit the group of study participants well and seems more suited to research university faculty.

Furthermore, the role of scholar is quite different from the other roles as defined by Gmelch and Miskin (1993), and the researcher offers a critique and a suggestion to consider eliminating it as a role. The roles of faculty developer, manager, and leader all require the department chair to work with other people to perform the tasks associated with the role. The role of scholar, however, is an individual role and is accomplished when the researcher works alone.

Most of the eleven untenured faculty members serving as chairs (6 or 55%) said that there was, as one participant put it, “zero pressure to publish” (Participant 2-12, paragraph 308). Research or publishing was not required, and they (8 or 73%) used the broad category of professional development as a substitute when asked about scholarly endeavors. Professional development certainly is a large umbrella concept under which a variety of activities are clustered, but it was defined specifically by the participants as “attending conferences . . . subscribing to magazines [and] attending workshops and trainings” (Participant 1-10, paragraph 114).

In defense of a lower standard for scholarly work, it should be noted that faculty at these institutions typically taught 15 credit hours and the time and other resources necessary to publish were generally unavailable. The minority of participants (3 or 27%) who were clearly interested in research were forced to use personal time after hours to accomplish it: “I have continued to do my scholarship. I am traveling to Africa to do research, but it's difficult to take it to the next level like to do the writing and the presenting” (Participant 3-18, paragraph 122). The various scholarly pressures felt by the untenured chairs regarding their non-role as scholars is nicely summarized in this reply:

And we don't have a research component here, and so it hasn't affected that at all-- as far as professional development, I was basically overwhelmed with my teaching load when I was teaching full time. And now I'm overwhelmed between the teaching load, and the chair work, and so I'm still not doing very much professional development—it's just what you can squeeze in here and there. (Participant 2-12, paragraph 216)

The interviews revealed a relatively low standard of rigor required for tenure as evidenced by the fact that nearly all faculty later receive tenure at the three institutions, as one untenured chair mentioned, “. . . we just assume that you are going to get tenure and [that] we are going to support each other” (Participant 3-14, paragraph 261).

Role Ambiguity

Besides the factors specifically identified by the participants, there seemed to be a general inability to identify and conceptualize the role of chair for the department and institution; this ambiguity was especially true for the role of untenured chair. Most of the newly-appointed chairs knew very little about what was expected. As one participant put it, “. . . the role of the chair [needs to be] . . . defined a bit more clearly” (Participant 2-13, paragraph 78). Likewise, another chair realized that there is a critical need for more dialogue before the appointment concerning the scope of the job of chair for an untenured faculty member:

I'm talking about what the job really means. What would it mean to you as an untenured person? How will this affect your ability to lead? I think all those questions are not being asked, and they need to be out of fairness to every player here: to the potential chair, to the Dean, to the department. And those dialogues are not happening. They are just not. (Participant 3-16, paragraph 266).

Similarly, several chairs (6 or 55%) did not realize that they may be vulnerable because they had not yet achieved tenure as evidenced by this comment, “Quite frankly, at that time, I had no comprehension that an untenured chair was vulnerable (Participant 3-17, paragraph 34).

Some (6 or 55%) dismissed any cautions about being untenured as chair because they assumed that doing a good job as chair would put them in favorable standing for achieving tenure:

To tell you the truth when I first came into it, I didn't have, how should I say this, I wasn't really that concerned with tenure . . . I wanted to just plant myself somewhere, so when I came into it, it didn't even occur to me. A couple of people said, well, you're not tenured, and I was like, well, so? That was a little bit of my naïveté towards the position. But I still in a way maintained that--not that I don't care about tenure--but the fact that I'm doing a good job as chair and that should enhance my ability to get tenure and not take away from it. (Participant 3-18, paragraph 40)

Once again the need for a clear understanding of whether or not chair duties are considered tenurable activities for the institution is a key factor in understanding the appointments and averting potential disappointments of faculty appointed as untenured chairs.

There appeared to be a fairly clear division among the duties and role of chair among the three institutions. State College 2, at one end of spectrum, clearly asked much more of its chairs than the other two schools. At Community College 1, the opposite end of the spectrum, one chair indicated that “it [the time required to perform chair duties] was minimal, the amount I spent being chair . . . [was] like maybe a half an hour to hour a week—on occasion and not all year long” (Participant 1-11, paragraph 204). At State College 1, department chairs did not have the responsibility to evaluate faculty, and the

complexity of the department chair role would fall somewhere in the middle of the spectrum.

An interesting pattern emerged among the three schools wherein the rigor of tenure requirements seemed to increase according to the individual institution's definition of the department chair's job becoming more involved and time consuming. In other words, the prospect of being chair while earning tenure was hardly an inconvenience for the participants at Community College 1 but seemed to be slightly more difficult at State College 1 and, of the three, most difficult at State College 2 where chairs describe being overwhelmed by the scope of their duties. It should be noted, however, that the three colleges in the study do not require the highest standards of rigor for tenure that are typically required at universities, and they tend to count chair duties as tenurable activities. Such a combination puts the untenured chairs at low failure risk for concurrently performing chair duties successfully and attaining tenure successfully.

As a group, the participants were not overly concerned about their ability to meet minimum tenure requirements, and the participants generally expressed a somewhat casual attitude about their prospects for achieving tenure. All 11 (100%) of the participants expressed at least some confidence that serving as department chair would help their case for tenure, that it would generally have a positive effect, and that it certainly counted. Typical of their comments on this central question are the following:

It [being an untenured department chair] just helps demonstrate service to the college and to the division and to the department. (Participant 1-10, paragraph 106)

There is good chance that my accomplishments as chair and the exposure that came with being involved in those chair responsibilities on different committees--and so forth--made me look somewhat attractive. Because on paper, you know, I don't think I was terribly, terribly attractive--a guy with a master's degree? (Participant 2-13, paragraph 155)

Well, it [being an untenured department chair] certainly goes down as service . . . So, I don't think it [achieving tenure] is going to be a big problem. (Participant 3-14, paragraph 135)

I think it [being an untenured department chair] helped. In the end it helped because I got to say, hey look, I did all this service. (Participant 3-20, paragraph 179)

During the course of the interviews, 6 (55%) of the participants revealed that they had already received preliminary notice that their tenure had been approved and was just waiting final governing-board approval which they described as largely a formality. This information is evidence supporting the central finding of this study that in these three institutions serving as department chair does not appear to affect negatively a faculty member's bid for tenure.

In a few cases there was little or no perceived benefit in applying for tenure. For example, Participant 2-12's response to a question about how common it was for someone to be denied tenure illustrates this point: "On our campus, no, no [tenure] hasn't been very rigorous and there have been no real rights or privileges associated with it" (paragraph 352). He goes on to say that although he was eligible for tenure for some time, he never bothered to apply for it because there were no benefits associated with it:

. . . I will apply for tenure now since it's going to mean something, but I didn't really bother with it for the past couple of years. I was eligible a couple of years ago but there was not reason to do it.—nonprobationary and tenured are basically the same from our policy standpoint until now. (Participant 2-12, paragraph 398)

Generally, the participants seemed unaware of the potential risks of being an untenured chair. One explanation for this lack of awareness is that the risks associated with being an untenured chair at these institutions was indeed low. Many (8 or 73%) of the participants had not considered that evaluating faculty or a potential conflict with the dean could possibly have a negative effect on their tenure. Nearly all of the participants (10 or 91%) were quite certain that their risk of not achieving tenure was low. They cited confidence and trust in their colleagues and in the process. One untenured department chair described a supportive atmosphere in her department when asked how being untenured affected her work:

It [the fact I'm untenured] doesn't even come up. It's not even an issue. Yeah, we all want to be tenured of course. I know that I am doing everything I can, so I am not worried about it, you know. So in that sense, yes, I want tenure, but no, I am not worried about it because I have been made to feel from the very beginning that we are all in this together, and we are going to support each other (Participant 3-14, paragraph 253).

An illuminating discussion relevant to conceptualizing the term “untenured chair” and the respective roles of faculty member and department chair helped the researcher untangle and unpack just what “untenured chair” means. This exchange takes place between the researcher (F) and participant 1-11 (paragraphs 294-306).

F: Are there other insights or important factors that you would like to share about your experience so far of being an untenured department chair that I might have over looked or that might be useful to someone else considering becoming an untenured department chair?

1-11: I guess--it's interesting because when you talk about being an untenured chair, I don't think of those as being together. I think of them as being two separate things: I am department chair and this is what I do as department chair [and] I'm untenured--

F: An untenured faculty member, sort of separate?

1-11: Right, and this is what I am doing to work towards tenure.

F: That's very interesting.

1-11 . . . I don't think I've thought of them as, Oh, I am an untenured chair. I just think I am the department chair and this is what I need to do. And I am untenured and this is what I need to do for that, so.

F: That's actually really, really, insightful. Any other advice you'd give to somebody else either on this campus or another about becoming an untenured depart—let's see--let me say this in your terms because I like them better--that you would give to an *untenured faculty member who assumes the duties and role of department chair* [emphasis added]?

This excerpt illustrates role ambiguity that untenured chairs face and is evidence for the lack of clear roles and difficulty that faculty have as they add being a department chair to the already consuming role of faculty member.

Disparity Between Advice Given and Experience

One additional finding is that the participants advised against the practice of appointing untenured chairs generally (8 or 73%), but they did not foresee drastic negative consequences for themselves (9 or 82%) and most said that they would do it again (8 or 73%). The consistency of the responses might suggest a disparity between their initial perception of how risky the job is and the realization that the risk was not as great as they thought once they began functioning as chairs. Alternatively, it may reflect their perception that they possess a skill set that is not typical of most untenured faculty and that uniquely positions them to succeed both as chair and as faculty member progressing toward tenure.

At the two- and four-year colleges studied, an untenured faculty member's potential of achieving tenure while performing chair duties did not appear to be affected negatively by serving as department chair before receiving tenure. A conceptual model (see Figure 1) provided a framework for understanding risk levels for untenured chairs. A possible explanation for the presence or absence of untenured chairs on campuses was offered. Factors influencing department chairs to accept the position were presented in context, and the benefits and costs to being an untenured chair were explored. Finally, the effect of fulfilling the roles of chair as an untenured faculty member was discussed.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

This research study explored the appointment of untenured faculty as department chairs in three two- and four-year colleges in one Western state's system of higher education. Eleven untenured faculty serving as untenured department chairs were interviewed using the qualitative methodology of grounded theory to analyze the data collected in the form of interview transcripts. At the two- and four-year colleges studied, an untenured faculty member's potential of achieving tenure does not appear to be negatively affected by serving as department chair before receiving tenure.

A central finding in this research study is the presentation of an explanatory model that provides a framework for understanding characteristics and risk levels for untenured department chairs (see Figure 1). The model integrates the factors of tenure standards and department chair duties to predict the risk to an untenured faculty member of failing to achieve tenure while successfully performing the roles of department chair. Four quadrants represent low to high risk. The theoretical proposition set forth is that the risk of not achieving tenure for an untenured faculty member serving as chair varies according to (a) the institution's rigor of tenure requirements and standards and (b) the extent to which the chair duties as service to the institution, when taken as a whole, are weighted towards meeting tenure requirements.

Additional findings present the untenured chairs' motivation for accepting the position, the benefits and costs that they encountered as a result of that appointment, and how being an untenured chair affected their ability to perform their various roles as department chairs.

Research Questions

Although three initial research questions framed the study, grounded theory methodology requires that the researcher be somewhat flexible as the data are analyzed and emerging theories surface and are formed to fit the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Indeed, two additional research questions were added and are explained below. The following three initial research questions guided the study:

1. What factors influence individual faculty to accept positions as untenured department chairs?
2. What are the benefits and costs to the faculty member who is appointed as an untenured chair?
3. How does a chair's status as untenured affect his/her ability to fulfill the important roles of faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993)?

The investigation of the above research questions led to the emergence of two related and implicit questions that became more explicit as their formulation began to explain the appointment of untenured department chairs:

4. What are the risks of not achieving tenure for an untenured faculty member who is serving as department chair?
5. Why were untenured chairs found at the three research site colleges while none were found at the research universities to whom initial inquiry was made?

Summary of Findings

According to the participants at the two- and four-year colleges studied, an untenured faculty member's potential of achieving tenure does not appear to be negatively affected by serving as department chair before receiving tenure. One possible explanation for the absence of a negative effect is that the rigor of tenure standards for these colleges is relatively low when compared with the typical standards of most universities. In addition, at the three college research sites, the duties of the chair were counted as tenurable activities whereas department chair duties at most universities do not excuse a faculty member from meeting typically more rigorous research and publishing standards for tenure.

The model represented in Figure 1 may also be useful in understanding why untenured faculty are appointed as department chairs in the selected colleges and not in the universities first identified in the research design. For this research study, seven universities in a three-state, Western region were contacted to identify untenured department chairs for participation in the study. As reported earlier, none of the seven universities had any untenured faculty serving as department chairs. An examination of tenure requirements as found in tenure policies for these primarily research universities reveals that they have relatively high standards and rigor for achieving tenure when compared to the standards and rigor required at the three selected two- and four-year institutions. For example, a research university specified the number of articles from peer-reviewed journals needed to meet tenure requirements. Although the tenurability of chair activities was not mentioned specifically in the university tenure policies and was

beyond the specific scope of this research, it seems probable that they would be weighted less heavily in the research universities than in the colleges that participated in the study.

The risk model (see Figure 1) needs to be validated and tested. The researcher recognizes that the y axis descriptor of the model may need to be further refined. The current label of “Rigor of Tenure Requirements and Standards” is more than the presence of rigor per se and also includes the different strands or definitions of rigor that may need further clarification. One possible refinement might be the inclusion of publication standards, such as numbers of publications in peer-reviewed journals, as a tenure requirement. At the time of this writing, the researcher has left the current label on the y axis of the model but realizes that further refinement of the label may better communicate its intent to readers.

The research participants in the study discussed the various factors that influenced their decision to accept positions as untenured department chairs and several emerged as significant themes. These themes included (a) the lack of other viable candidates and size of the department, (b) the opportunity to be a change agent, (c) the hiring of faculty to start a new program, (d) the desire to give service, (e) the need for leadership in the department, (f) the fact that the dean asked, (g) the hiring of an external candidate to be chair, and (h) the reward of increased pay and status.

Besides the factors specifically identified by the participants, there was wide variance in their ability to identify and conceptualize the role of chair for the department and institution. Some of the faculty knew very little about what was expected, and they were overwhelmed by the scope of their responsibilities; in a few cases, not much was expected of the department chair. As a group they were not overly concerned about their

ability to meet minimum tenure requirements, and the participants generally expressed a somewhat casual and positive attitude about their prospects for achieving tenure. In a few cases there was little or no perceived benefit in applying for tenure. Generally, the participants seemed unaware of any potential risks to being an untenured chair.

The untenured faculty members serving as department chairs were fairly consistent in describing benefits associated with being department chair. All eleven of the participants were first-time department chairs, and it was difficult for them and for the researcher to separate *benefits* that came from being a department chair from those that came from being an *untenured* department chair or relatively new faculty member. The findings focus on their perceived and reported benefits. Among the important benefits identified consistently by the participants were the following: (a) a reduced teaching load, (b) increased job satisfaction and positive engagement, (c) a reassurance that performing chair duties well would be viewed favorably in tenure decisions, (d) the ability to act as a change agent, (e) financial rewards, (f) heightened status and leadership experience, (g) increased knowledge of campus operations, (h) advocating for the department, and (i) new professional associations and networking opportunities. The participants had slightly more difficulty coming up with benefits when first asked and tended to come back to the issue later in the interviews.

Being an untenured department chair comes with real costs to the faculty member. One of the most substantial was the increased demand on the limited resource of time that resulted from a dramatically changed and increased workload. Chairs experienced much higher levels of stress as they learned to cope with their new department chair roles, and a few discussed feeling vulnerable at times because of their untenured status. They also

experienced some frustration at being further removed from the students, and being forced to spend less time on their teaching. Also a result of shifting priorities was a decrease in scholarship productivity or what some study participants defined as professional development. Finally, most of the untenured department chairs experienced more difficulty in their relationships with other faculty.

Another key finding was the nearly unanimous perception that being an untenured faculty member serving as a department chair had little effect on untenured chairs' behavior and how they approached their job. Of course this assertion is based on their own perceptions, and the researcher could make no objective evaluation of their actual behavior. However, it still may be significant that they do not perceive that they would pursue their job functions any differently—with or without tenure. The participants generally could not perceive differences in their conduct based on their tenure status; paradoxically, they did identify some effects in performing their department chair roles as identified by Gmelch and Miskin (1993): faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar.

In their role as faculty developer there was some difficulty in the evaluation of faculty due to their lack of experience and their credibility with other faculty. For a few faculty, evaluation was not an issue because the dean, and not the department chair, did the evaluations. Many did not realize that developing faculty was a role they should fulfill.

All untenured faculty in the study decried the lack of training that was available to them in their role as managers. Their need for training was broad, but they mentioned specifically an unfamiliarity with general campus processes, practices, and policies. Some of their difficulty may have come from their relatively recent arrival on campus.

Some of them were new to higher education and others had only been on campus for a short time before being appointed as chair. Another area of concern was being first-time supervisors, a role that many had not seen themselves fulfilling when they began their careers in academics.

Participants who had the confidence and support of their faculty seemed to feel more confident in their role as leader of the department. Some struggled in their ability to provide a consistent vision for the future of the department. Another delicate balancing act for untenured department chairs in their role as leader was the ability to advocate forcefully when necessary and speak truth to power while simultaneously negotiating their boundaries and sensing their vulnerabilities as untenured faculty.

Untenured chairs were in a unique position with regard to their role of scholar in that they have yet to establish themselves as scholars in their field. Indeed, the role of scholar as defined by Gmelch and Miskin (1993) did not fit the study participants well. Because they were still progressing toward tenure as untenured faculty, the role of scholar may be replaced simply by the role of untenured faculty member. The interviews revealed a relatively low standard of rigor required for tenure as evidenced by the fact that nearly all faculty receive tenure at the three institutions and many receive it early. Most faculty said that research was not required of them and used professional development as a substitute when asked about scholarly endeavors.

The findings of this research study cannot be generalized beyond the three colleges involved. Findings may be transferable to theory generation, and Figure 1 provides a conceptual model that may be applied in other contexts. Additional research in

other states and with different institution types could test the theories in the model to see if they are applicable beyond this study.

The research conclusion deviated from the expected outcome with a different result: at the two- and four-year colleges studied, an untenured faculty member's potential for achieving tenure while leading the department did not appear to be affected negatively by serving as department chair before receiving tenure. This does not mean, however, that the practice should not be scrutinized more closely.

Given the caution in the literature against the practice of appointing untenured chairs, the researcher anticipated that the study would likely document the harmful effects of the practice and perhaps suggest policies against it. Such was not the case. Tucker's (1993) admonishment that "one should not accept the position of department chair unless he or she is a full professor and has tenure" (p. 545) seems to be directed at research universities with rigorous tenure requirements and did not seem to apply to the two- and four-year colleges in this study. In fact, many of the untenured chairs in the study, although very busy and occasionally overwhelmed, appeared to be thriving as they led their departments successfully.

The findings of this study suggest that untenured chairs possess different characteristics from those described in the literature. More needs to be known about how these differences affect the operation of the department and the institution.

The researcher speculates that exercise of leadership is influenced, at least in part, by the nature and source of the leader's authority. The classic tenured chair referenced in the literature derives authority from several sources: extensive academic experience gained through a reputation for scholarly achievements, teaching excellence and

knowledge of the intricacies of the institution's formal and informal decision-making processes. In contrast, the untenured chairs in this study derive their authority from a different source. In some cases, the foundation for the untenured chair's authority is no more than his or her being the only one available to perform the role. In almost all cases, the chair was new to the institution, new to postsecondary teaching, and not reputed yet to be a true expert within his or her discipline. Instead, untenured chairs possessed a willingness to serve, a significant amount of enthusiasm and idealism, and the willingness to spend the extra time needed to accomplish their faculty duties as well as their duties as chair.

Implications for Practice

Studying untenured department chairs proved to be a worthwhile research topic because of its possible policy implications, its professional ethics implications, and its potential to influence the day-to-day operation of the academy. A close examination of the practice was undertaken in an effort to arrive at recommendations that would inform future decisions about appointing untenured department chairs and result in policy discussions at the senior administrative level of colleges and universities.

Clearly, department chairs play a critical leadership role for the institution; they exert considerable influence in setting the tone and making strategic decisions that affect the department and institutions of which they are a part. They are closest to the implementation of the institution's mission and have to deal with the institution's inefficiencies directly. As they deal with the institution's inefficiencies as untenured chairs, they could benefit from the careful development and implementation of policies.

There seems to be a need for senior academic administrators to explicitly consider the issues surrounding department chairs and to formulate clearer policies addressing whether the institution will permit the appointment of untenured department chairs, and if so, the conditions under which such appointments will take place.

When untenured department chairs are appointed, the event is preceded by some less-than-ideal conditions. Fulfilling the complex role is demanding and requires that executive administrators and deans provide the intentional and sustained nurturing of the department chairs that they appoint. Upon the appointment of an untenured faculty member to lead a department with a less-than-ideal condition, the dean has the responsibility to tailor a specific plan designed to help ameliorate the deficiency.

The results of this study suggest that institutions that permit the appointment of untenured chairs should consider provisions for the support of the untenured chair, such as clearer delineations of job expectations, opportunities for training, and assistance with certain duties, especially with faculty evaluation. In addition, the results of this study would suggest that matters such as released time for chair duties, stipends and other forms of compensation should be related to job expectations and should be negotiated within a framework of established parameters and standards.

From the perspective of the untenured chair's progress toward tenure, the institution's policies in this area should also provide explicit guidance concerning the extent to which the performance of chair duties will be counted toward tenure. Similarly, guidance should be provided as to how, if at all, performance of chair duties will affect expectations concerning other tenure activities, such as teaching load, teaching quality, and scholarship, however it is defined for tenure purposes.

In making these policy decisions, senior academic administrators should take into consideration certain of the institution's current characteristics as well as its aspirations with respect to those characteristics. For example, an institution which seeks to maintain high standards of rigor would need to consider whether those standards are compatible with the tension that this study suggests exists between such standards and successful performance of both the duties of chair and rigorous tenure requirements. This tension may, likewise, be a consideration where an institution does not presently have, but seeks to establish, high academic standards for tenure. Higher academic standards for tenure would almost certainly require the examination of teaching loads.

The participants carried heavy teaching loads that were reduced somewhat when they became chairs. One unfortunate outcome of this study would be for institutions to increase the rigor of tenure requirements without reducing the teaching load of the faculty who are supposed to reach the more rigorous standards. There are real limitations to the human resources of time and energy. Careful consideration should be given to balancing the needs of the institution and department with the needs of the faculty including possible untenured department chairs.

All of the institutions in this study are changing, dynamic colleges with aspirations to expand offerings and to offer higher-level degrees. Caution should be exercised when formulating policies that require faculty to meet more rigorous standards for tenure and promotion if the time to pursue those endeavors is not made available as well. As the institutions in the study seek to expand their mission toward university status, at what point do tenure requirements begin to blur the line between rigor and less

rigor and what is the tipping point between community-college based systems of tenure and those required at research universities?

This study also suggests that, even at some institutions where it is determined that appointing untenured chairs is consistent with the institution's current mission and its aspirations, the potential benefits of appointing an untenured chair for the good of the department need to be weighed carefully against the potential harm, especially to the untenured faculty member. There are certainly situations of high risk where the appointment of untenured faculty as department chairs should be avoided when taking into consideration the type and level of the institution, the requirements for tenure, and the extent to which the chair duties are tenure-qualifying activities. Nonetheless, this research study suggests that there are cases where the appointment of an untenured faculty member did not harm the individual and seemed to be generally of legitimate benefit to the department and college. Where appropriate, institutional policies on chair appointments should address teaching loads, role clarification, training and mentoring, and conflict management.

All department chairs in general but especially untenured chairs in particular need training to fulfill their new role. Institutions should provide initial and ongoing training because most department chairs have little or no experience in their acquired role of evaluators and supervisors. The appointment of an untenured faculty member as chair seems to be precipitated by conditions in the department that are less than ideal. After the less-than-ideal factors are known, specific training and resources should be made available to the new chair to mitigate the circumstances for which the unusual event of appointing an untenured department chair was made.

Another possible training opportunity is peer mentoring of new chairs. Several chairs identified the need for mentoring by other chairs or deans and a desire to meet with other chairs from across campus to discuss ideas and solve problems. Such gatherings, whether sponsored by the institution or organized by the chairs themselves, would provide a forum for discussing challenges and for strategizing about reaching future goals.

Training in conflict management is another unmet need. A mine field that surfaced in the study was the potential conflicts that could arise as untenured chairs advocate sometimes passionately for their departments but against the wishes of tenure decision makers. It would seem prudent for the untenured chair to understand how any potential conflicts would be resolved before accepting the position and how long they will likely remain in the position.

The learning curve for untenured chairs is very steep and just when they have learned the job well, they are often replaced. Another way to meet the challenge of appointing untenured chairs is to increase the pool of potential candidates by reducing the tasks that make being chair unattractive and increasing those that would attract the best and brightest in the department to consider it. The lessons learned from the costs and benefits to untenured chair question of this research study could be further refined to see if implementing them might attract and retain capable chairs. For example, chairs mentioned that they need the authority to be effective and that they need good information to do their jobs. They also need the time to be effective, and they need to be recognized by the administration and by their peers for their accomplishments.

Future Research

This study sought to understand the perspective and experience of untenured department chairs exclusively. Another relevant voice is that of the deans and academic vice presidents at institutions where untenured faculty are appointed as chairs. Using similar methodology, an additional study could interview deans and academic vice presidents to understand the context, motivation, and rationale for such appointments. The resulting contrasts could be explored and would provide helpful perspectives as policies are drafted.

It is unclear how the experience of *tenured* chairs differs from *untenured* chairs. The results of a study using a sample of tenured chairs from Community College 1, State College 1, and State College 2 or other institutions could be compared with the results from this study to better understand which issues are implicit by virtue of being a chair and which issues are unique to untenured department chairs.

There is a possibility that the department chairs in the Low Risk quadrant of the proposed model actually receive and have access to more resources by virtue of their leadership position as chair. This access to resources may make them more productive, and a further study could examine this assumption.

The parameters of one of the research questions for this study could be expanded. This study focused on the perceived benefits and costs to the faculty member appointed as untenured chair. Future studies might be expanded to include the benefits and costs to the department and to the institution as a whole. While related, these issues were outside the scope of this research project and further research would increase understanding about the topic.

The model may also be helpful in understanding the literature on department chairs by situating it within the quadrants. For example, most of the literature to date has been written from the paradigm of the High Risk quadrant. In contrast, this research study is situated in the Low Risk quadrant, and the characteristics of the two quadrants differ drastically. The Risk Model may prove useful to researchers by providing a conceptual model for positioning previous, current, and future research about department chairs and thereby helping to define the narrow field of research of department chairs in higher education.

This research study gives rise to questions about what happens to teaching and service at institutions of higher education where the emphasis placed on research makes faculty less likely to do service. At these institutions service was highly valued and rewarded as a tenure-qualifying activity. Boyer (1990) in *Scholarship Reconsidered* advocates for a broadening of the conventional definition of scholarship beyond basic research to include the scholarship of teaching. It would be instructional to investigate whether the two- and four-year colleges of the type examined in this study are actually closer to Boyer's ideal than the research universities upon which much of his research was based.

Finally, better information is needed to ascertain whether the practice of appointing department chairs is a growing phenomenon nationally. Additional research could assess the trends related to the faculty being appointed as untenured chairs and analyze policies from campuses at both the college and university level.

Without a doubt, departments in colleges and universities have a critical need for excellent leadership to meet the challenges of educating students. Carefully selected and

prepared department chairs are strategically important to the success of higher education now and into the future. Hopefully, this study has helped to increase understanding about the appointment of untenured chairs and to highlight the problems and potentials associated with the practice.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Phone Call Dialogue

Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs (or Provost)

Record the following information for each institution:

VPAA or Provost: _____ Assistant to VPAA or Provost: _____

Institution: _____ Telephone #: _____

Date: _____

Hello.

My name is Forrest Williams, and I am a graduate student at Brigham Young University in the Department of Educational Leadership. I am investigating untenured department chairs at institutions of higher education in the intermountain West. Could you tell me who in your office might best answer a few questions about the tenure status of department chairs there?

Name: _____

[Repeat introduction if passed to another person.]

1. Does your institution have any untenured department chairs whom I might contact about participating in a research study? It is likely that such a list may not be readily available. If you have a list of tenure-track faculty and a list of current department chairs, comparing these two lists might be an easy way to identify potential untenured chairs.

2. Is there a policy or practice regarding the appointment of untenured chairs on your campus?

3. May I follow up this phone conversation with an email to which you could easily respond with the requested information? Or may I call again at another time to give you time to do some research on this subject? Call back on _____.

Email address: _____.

Thank you very much for your cooperation,
Good bye.

Appendix B

Email Invitation to Participate in Research Study

From: "Forrest Williams" <williafo@____.edu>
To: <____@____.edu>
Date: Thu, 09 Feb 2006 [Example]
Subject: Seeking untenured chairs for a research study

Dear [Department Chair Name]:

Hello. My name is Forrest Williams, a graduate student at Brigham Young University in the Department of Educational Leadership. I am conducting a research project on untenured department chairs and am now identifying possible untenured chairs to determine the viability of my proposed study. A representative from the Office of Vice President of Academic Affairs on your campus helped me find potential candidates and indicated that you might be willing to participate.

Would you be willing to participate in such a study if it proceeds? If so, please respond to this email, and I'll confirm your general interest. If you would rather not participate, your negative response will remove your name from the list of possible candidates.

I appreciate your timely response either by email or phone.

Thanks for your time,

Forrest Williams
(801) XXX-XXXX

Appendix C

Demographic Information

Please mark your answer in the blank for each question.

1. What was your age when you were appointed chair?

- 29 or younger
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or older

2. Which item most accurately describes how you became a department chair?

- Appointed by the Dean, without input from faculty
- Selected by the faculty, without input from Dean
- Selected by the faculty, approved by the Dean
- Selected by the Dean, agreed upon by the faculty
- Other, please indicate _____

3. As a potential chair, I was an

- external candidate
- internal candidate
- Other, please specify _____

4. Please indicate your gender.

- Male
- Female

5. Racial/Ethnic Group

- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black
- Multi-ethnic
- Hispanic/Latino(a)
- Native American
- White
- Other, please specify _____

6. How many full-time faculty are in your department (academic unit)?

- _____ 5 or less
- _____ 6 to 10
- _____ 11 to 15
- _____ 16 to 20
- _____ over 20

7. How many part-time (adjunct) faculty are in your academic unit?

- _____ 5 or less
- _____ 6 to 10
- _____ 11 to 15
- _____ 15 to 20
- _____ 21 to 30
- _____ 31 to 40
- _____ 41 to 50
- _____ over 50

8. What was your highest earned degree when you were appointed as chair?

- _____ Professional/Trade Certificate/Licenser
- _____ Associate
- _____ Bachelor's
- _____ Master's
- _____ Doctorate

9. What was your academic rank when you were appointed as chair?

- _____ Professor
- _____ Associate Professor
- _____ Assistant Professor
- _____ Instructor
- _____ No rank at this institution
- _____ Other

10. In what year of your pre-tenure status were you appointed as chair?

- _____ 1st year
- _____ 2nd year
- _____ 3rd year
- _____ 4th year
- _____ 5th year
- _____ 6th year
- _____ 7th year

11. In what year toward tenure are you in during the 2005-2006 academic year?

- _____ 1st year
- _____ 2nd year
- _____ 3rd year
- _____ 4th year
- _____ 5th year
- _____ 6th year
- _____ 7th year

Material for the items on this survey was drawn from the following sources:

Gmelch, W. H., & Schuh, J. H. (Eds.). (2004). *The life cycle of a department chair*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gmelch, W. H., & Miskin, V. D. (1993). *Leadership skills for department chairs*. Bolton, MA.: Anker Publishing.

Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview Questions Form

Accepting the Role of Chair:

1. Is this the first time that you have been a department chair? [RQ1]

2. What were the factors involved in your decision to accept the job of department chair? [RQ1]
 - 2a. How did the fact that you are untenured figure into your decision to become the chair?

Achieving Tenure:

3. Now that you have been an untenured chair for a period of time, what are some positive aspects and experiences related to that job, both expected and unexpected, that have you experienced? Negative, both expected and unexpected? [RQ2]

4. How will being department chair affect your own ability to achieve tenure? [RQ2]
 - 4a. How has your level of scholarship productivity and your teaching been affected by being department chair?

 - 4b. How will the performance of your duties as chair be counted as accomplishments toward tenure?

Balancing Roles:

5. To what extent has being untenured had any positive and/or negative effects on the way that you supervise and evaluate faculty who might be involved in your tenuring process at a later date? [RQ3]
 - 5a. To what extent does being untenured have any other effects, positive or negative, on how you lead the department?

Summation:

6. Are there other insights or important factors that you would like to share about your experience so far of being an untenured department chair that I might have over looked or that might be useful to someone else considering becoming an untenured department chair?

RQ1 = Research Question 1: What factors influence individual faculty to accept positions as untenured department chairs?

RQ2 = Research Question 2: What are the benefits and costs to the faculty member who is appointed as an untenured chair?

RQ3 = Research Question 3: How does a chair's status as untenured affect his/her ability to fulfill the important roles of faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993)?

Material for the questions was drawn from the following sources:

Gmelch, W. H., & Schuh, J. H. (Eds.). (2004). *The life cycle of a department chair*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gmelch, W. H., & Miskin, V. D. (1993). *Leadership skills for department chairs*. Bolton, MA.: Anker Publishing.

Appendix E

Informed Consent for Interview Research Form

INFORMED CONSENT TO BE A RESEARCH SUBJECT

Research Project: Understanding the Appointment of Untenured Department Chairs

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the proposed research is to explore the contributing factors and resulting effects of appointing untenured faculty as department chairs of academic divisions in higher education. It will focus on the following research questions:

1. What factors influence individual faculty to accept positions as untenured department chairs?
2. What are the benefits and costs to the faculty member who is appointed as an untenured chair?
3. How does a chair's status as untenured affect his/her ability to fulfill the important roles of faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993)?

Forrest Williams, who is a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Foundations Department at Brigham Young University, will conduct this study. You were selected for participation based upon your untenured department chair status at your institution.

PROCEDURES

Your participation in this research will involve one to two meetings with the researchers for approximately 60-90 minutes. During this time you will participate in an interview with the researcher and complete a survey. The research sessions will be completed at your work site, or at another mutually agreeable location, and at times that are convenient for your working schedule. The total estimated time for your involvement in this research study will be 2-4 hours.

Interview

You will be involved in a semi-structured interview with the researcher regarding your role as a department chair. The interviewer will ask questions regarding your roles and responsibilities as an untenured department chair. You will be given the opportunity to extend or expand on any concept or idea related to the research questions. The interviews

will be recorded for transcription purposes to ensure accuracy. (see Confidentiality statement described below).

Risks

Time commitment for interview participants will be approximately 1-2 hours, and this will be a sacrifice of time that will require schedule adaptation from daily routines. Any fears regarding the confidentiality of information will be respected and diligent efforts will be undertaken to maintain confidentiality as explained below. The only foreseeable organizational risk will be the opportunity cost of utilizing employee's time to participate in the study rather than conducting their daily duties, thus possibly delaying organizational tasks. However, the cumulative amount of time requested from employees is minimal, and the overall impact on the organization should be negligible.

Benefits

Participants in the research will be provided with access to an executive summary of the research findings following the completion of the dissertation research. Participants will also receive the satisfaction of being a part of expanding the knowledge base and understanding of untenured chairs in public higher education.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your identity, and those of individuals you identify, will remain confidential and will not be revealed in published or unpublished results of this study. For the purposes of this study, in order to protect your privacy, the data will use code names for both you and your institution. The recorded interview data will be transcribed using these code names. The physical audio file will be labeled with your code name. A separate key will be created which links and identifies you and your institution. This key will be kept in a separate secure location from the actual data. Only the principal investigator will have access to this key and the original tape recording. The researcher will be under non-disclosure obligations. Any illustrations or diagrams will use code names or be reported in aggregate form in order to preserve the confidentiality of your identity and information. Every effort will be made to insure confidentiality for both you and your institution.

WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this research is voluntary. You may, at your discretion, refuse to answer any question during the interview session or on the survey. You may choose not to disclose any particular archival or written records. In addition, you may choose to withdraw from this study at any time without any penalty by verbally stating your intentions to the researcher.

CONCERNS

If you have any concerns or questions at any time during this study, you may reach the principal investigator, Forrest Williams, at 801-785-9143. You may also call Dr. Scott Ferrin at (801) 422-4880 or Dr. Renae Beckstrand, Chair of the Institutional Review Board, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602; phone, (801) 422-3873, to discuss concerns that cannot be directly discussed with the principal investigator or your rights as a participant in research projects.

I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above statement of Informed Consent and desire of my own free will and volition to participate in this study.

Participants Name (Printed)

Participants Signature

Date

Researcher Signature

Date