Leading Change
A Department Chair’s Guide

Gwynn Mettetal and Dave Vollrath
Change agent
(Lunenburg, 2010)

• As a Dept. Chair, YOU are a change agent

• “A change agent is anyone who has the skill and power to stimulate, facilitate, and coordinate the change effort.” (p. 1)
“Nothing is permanent except change”
(Heraclitus)

• Many changes initiated
  • Prompted by outside changes
    – government, technology, economic conditions
  • Prompted by ideas for improvement
    – quality, efficiency

• Chairs asked to get faculty “on board”

• Your experience:
  • What changes are your faculty/students/staff being asked to make?
  • How are they responding?
  • What are you doing as a Chair to encourage change?
Changing culture is difficult

- Culture is “the way we do things around here”
  Reeves, 2009

- Culture eats data . . . Every time.”
  Mesa Community College on HLC initiative, 2013

- “Evidence . . . Is strikingly powerless against the drivers of human behavior.” Reeves, 2009

- The culture of higher education, with its emphasis on autonomy and independence, is particularly resistant to change. Lane, 2007
Despair.com
Once faculty are tenured, you can’t even threaten them effectively!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pk7yqItMvp8
Aspects of academia that make change DIFFICULT:

• **Autonomy**
  individuals can refuse to change

• **Critical thinking**
  finding flaws in the plan
Aspects of academia that make change EASIER:
(Astin & Astin, 2000)

- **Autonomy**
  individuals can change, undertake initiatives

- **Critical thinking**
  determining what needs to be changed and the best strategies
Leading change: What does NOT work (Shapiro, 2003)

• Just tell them that they must change or face the consequences
  • “…compliance has never spread like wildfire. True commitment never comes from fear, nor can it be forced.” p. 51
Leading change: What DOES work (Shapiro, 2003)

• “Contagious commitment to an organizational change develops when people understand its value to their own jobs, and they feel supported to make the change.” p. 51
Chair is both Leader and Manager

- **Leader**—inspire and motivate people to understand the value of change
- **Manager**—plan, organize, and coordinate tasks to support people as they change
Attitudes towards change (Gladwell, 2000)

- **Advocates (love it)**
  Innovators and early adopters.
  Have experience, expertise, and enthusiasm about the change

- **Incubators (thinking about it)**
  Willing to try if it solves problems, but worried about causing new problems.

- **Apathetics (don’t care)**
  Don’t care or unaware. Waiting for the “fad” to pass.
  The default attitude.

- **Resisters (hate it)**
  Legitimate concerns. Cynicism. Fear.

- **For change to occur, must develop new Advocates and keep old Advocates**
How individuals’ attitudes can change
(Shapiro, 2003)
# Strategies for Apathetics and Incubators

*(many sources)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>How</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understand value</strong></td>
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<td>Define what will NOT change</td>
<td>Identify core values and practices that are not changing.</td>
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<td>Make the case for change compelling</td>
<td>Emphasize student learning, university mission, not just funding or regulations.</td>
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<td>Create a participatory process</td>
<td>Include stakeholders (adjuncts? students?)</td>
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<td>Lead by example</td>
<td>Be an advocate, a role model.</td>
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<td><strong>Provide support</strong></td>
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<td>Provide support and resources</td>
<td>Share information on training, other support. Be willing to help.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listen to concerns</td>
<td>Some concerns are legitimate; others just need to be heard.</td>
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<td>Reward and recognition</td>
<td>Small-wins strategy Rewards/recognition for change</td>
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Strategies for Resistors

(Many sources)

• Seek to understand
  • Listen with an open mind.
  • Validate concerns and viewpoints

• Sources of resistance:
  • Concern with the change or its applicability
    Consider as a source of improvement to your plan!
  • Cynicism from past experiences
    Explain why this change is different (in urgency, level of support?)
  • Fear of loss (job, autonomy, competence, etc)
    Open and honest communication
Each group . . .

- Focus on one change
- Brainstorm
  - at least THREE different strategies to encourage faculty to make that change.
- *Star the one that you think would be most successful with your faculty. Why?
Changing culture can be difficult, but .

- You can make change contagious by . . .
- Both leading people to see the value of change . . .
- And managing your department to support people as they change.
Sources:


