



Good things can be accomplished in the context of an overnight retreat. In addition to teambuilding and information sharing, the retreat format offers the opportunity for sustained yet more relaxed work on the challenging, long term problems and projects of the college.

## **Planning a Leadership Retreat for Academic Department Chairs**

by Peter A. Facione

### **Key Planning Questions**

- ! What results are you trying to achieve?
- ! When and where can these be best achieved?
- ! What venues work best, which should be avoided?
- ! What issues need to be addressed, why?
- ! How much should be content and how much process?
- ! How much information and how much team building?
- ! Should a outside facilitator or presenter be used?
- ! Should campus guests be invited?
- ! Should there be pre-retreat readings or in session homework assignments?
- ! What session formats might work with what intended outcomes and which topics or issues?
- ! How should associate deans be involved?
- ! What role should the dean take during the retreat?
- ! How will you know if your objectives have been achieved?

### **Sample Issues and Topics**

#### **PERENNIAL CAMPUS HOT BUTTONS**

- ! Assessment and Accountability
- ! Enrollment Management
- ! Governance, Policy Formation, Decision-Making
- ! Strategic Thinking in the Institutional Context
- ! Budgets and Faculty Position Allocations
- ! Accreditation and Program Review
- ! Space, Equipment, Support Staff Allocations
- ! Faculty Recruitment and Evaluation Policies / Standards
- ! Discrimination, Biases, Hostile Environment
- ! Academic Freedom and What it Means for Chairs and Deans

#### **FOR NEW CHAIRS**

- ! What is this goofy job about anyway?
- ! Why am I now being treated differently by my colleagues?
- ! Scheduling, part time faculty hiring, nuts and bolts!
- ! Tracking the operating budget, getting the computer fixed!
- ! How do I evaluate an administrative assistant or do a faculty search?
- ! What! A Chair has responsibilities to students, to staff, and to the Dean!
- ! Where are the secret administrative procedures and college policies kept?

#### **FOR VETERAN CHAIRS**

- ! How can I exercise real leadership and make a difference as Chair?
- ! What about the "family" model vs. the "professional" model?
- ! How do I get beyond compliance to motivators and incentives?
- ! Let me share some heartfelt messages from hard won experience.
- ! Forget the easy answers, what do we do about the really tough cases?
- ! How do I staying in touch with my scholarship and teaching?

### Some Example Session Formats

"Messages that Need to Be Sent" -- Early in retreat small group activities.

"Messages that Need to Be Received" -- (From outside and inside the institution.) Later in retreat, candid conversations about challenges and issues.

"Negotiation and Planning vs. Confrontation and Self-Evident Virtue: How Chairs Get the Dean to Yes." -- Open discussion, pre-conference reading.

"The Chair's In-Basket" -- Individual activity, followed by group discussion.

"What to Do about the Dear Department of Psycho-Agriculture?" -- Small group activity followed by large group discussion.

"Models that Don't Work or The Department as Dysfunctional Family, Under-productive Factory, Floundering Football Franchise, and Cub Scout Den" -- Late in retreat open, fireside conversation.

Creating a Shared Operational Sense of Standards: A Working Group Session on Faculty Evaluation Cases -- Retreat long case study activities, small group and large group sessions separately on teaching, scholarship, and service. Each large group session to include debate and consensus formation.

"What To Do and For What Reasons?" -- Role plays of case studies. Seek basic generalizable principles of sound and fair-minded academic administration and leadership.

"Believing Our Own Press Releases: Reflections on the Institution's Mission, Vision, and Goals." Large group discussion with relevant texts at hand.

"Connecting Mission to Market -- How Can We Get There From Here? Large group or small group discussion following well presented enrollment management information, demographics, and current data.

"Bonfires, Burnings, and the Spirits that Bind" -- Optional evening activity.

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