

ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SERIES (ALDS) SESSION 1

NOW THAT YOU ARE CHAIR – A FEW TIPS ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

“Be empathic, compassionate, affable, warm, supportive, and engaging. Don't be a pushover, but don't be drill sergeant either.” – Dr. Gordon E. Harvey, former chair of the Department of History & Foreign Languages, Jacksonville State University

- For most faculty, serving as department chair is not a position they actively sought, but instead accept as an eventual service. Gone are the days when a colleague can just be thrown into the deep end of the pool and expected figure out how to “be a chair”. During this session, you will have the opportunity to engage in discussion with current and past chairs as they share with you some of their experiences. The goals of this session are:
 - To help you better appreciate the central role of a department chair.
 - To highlight key responsibilities.
 - To foster contemplation about how as department chair you can act as an agent of change.
- As leaders, chairs are faced with an environment that grows increasingly complex, multicultural, and ambiguous, the value of developing reflective capacity becomes ever more important. Considering the importance of practicing reflection, as the session proceeds, think about the following questions:
 - What are your leadership goals?
 - How does your identity influence your leadership?
 - How do you understand the Dean's expectations of you as chair?
 - How do you understand your departmental colleagues' expectations of you as chair?
 - As chair, what do you want to accomplish? And why?
- Being a chair is hard work. While the health of a department cannot be the responsibility of a single person, the chair plays a vital role in steering a department, keeping it a healthy place to work and learn, and guiding it in a positive direction. As you go about your work, carve out time on a regular basis to consider the following steps for creating or maintaining a healthy department:
 - Set strategic goals.
 - Encourage faculty contributions.
 - Build on individual faculty members' strengths and minimize their weaknesses.
 - Maintain contact with alumni.
 - Foster student engagement.
 - Look beyond the department.
 - Network with other chairs. Don't lead in isolation.
- Additional Resources – Access a comprehensive reading list provided by the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences (CCAS) on academic leadership and issues related to serving as a department chair [here](#).