

**LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR  
DEPARTMENT CHAIR AND  
PROGRAM DIRECTORS**

KATHLEEN MOORE  
WISE@OU

# THE PLAN

Why me?

What are they saying?

What is academic leadership?

What does the research say about success?

Who are your stakeholders/constituents?

Where are you taking your department?

When do you take care of yourself?



# LESSONS FROM WISE@OU

The leadership of chairs is the most important component of faculty success.

- Shape departmental culture
- Recruit, retain, and promote departmental faculty
- Develop cutting edge academic programs
- Nurture students via quality faculty engagement
- Anchor/advocate for the department within OU and the wider community
- Provide the ‘big picture’
- Communication and transparency are critical



# WHAT CONTRIBUTES MOST TO SATISFACTION AT OU? (THOUGHTS FROM FACULTY\*)

Support of young faculty by chair, dean is excellent

Chair, junior colleagues, students

Supportive colleagues and department chair

Chair, respect, course load

Chair of the department, fairness and respect

Resources ...from chair and others

Chair good at recognizing my successes

My chairs have been very supportive...

\* From WISE@OU Faculty Survey, 2012



# WHAT FACTORS DETRACT MOST FROM YOUR SATISFACTION AT OU? \*

Lack of transparency and communication from chair

Oppressive chair, lack of leadership opportunities

Atmosphere in my department. No one is ever there including the department chair.

Chair has bullied and manipulated me...

Internal politics... department chair has 'insiders' and 'outsiders'...

\* From WISE@OU Faculty Survey 2012



# WHAT OU CHAIRS WANT/NEED\*

## Top areas of need

- Budgeting, OU processes and structures, role of chair, managing difficult (entitled) faculty, and personnel responsibilities, including evaluations.

## Other significant needs

- Scheduling/workload, complaints/legal processes, recruitment strategies/processes, time management to advance own agenda
- Learning to Lead, including
  - Communication/meeting skills, gaining department cooperation, setting departmental culture, equalizing service

\*Preliminary analysis of June 2015 Survey from Academic Chair Training Taskforce



# WHAT IS ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP?



# WHAT IS ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP?

“The act of building a community of scholars to set direction and achieve common purposes through the empowerment of faculty and staff”

Wolverton, M and Gmelch, WH (2002). *College deans: Leading from within*. Westport, CT: American Council on Education Oryx Press.





# **SELF-ASSESSMENT OF LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS**

# RESEARCH ON ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

Intrinsic motivation is a plus

Need to move from 'specialist' to 'generalist'

Goal setting works for departments and individuals

- The 'vision thing'

Chairs function as: managers, faculty developers, scholars, and  
**LEADERS**

Leaders value diversity in both experience and talent

Leaders encourage faculty and staff to reach full potential

Leaders build a collective (positive) climate



# PRACTICAL ADVICE ON ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP: 7 HABITS OF SUCCESSFUL CHAIRS\*

1. Have, articulate, share and pursue GOALS
2. Get to know colleagues and fellow chairs
3. Advocate for 'progressive' change, rather than defend (mindlessly) *status quo*
4. Stay involved in teaching, research & service
5. Make tough but honest decisions
6. Do not exhibit favoritism
7. Build consensus and communicate well

\* Leaming, DR *Academic Leadership: A Practical Guide to Chairing the Department*



# IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT FACULTY

Students—present and future

Alumni

Employers—present and future

Professional organizations/accreditors

Community organizations

State and/or federal agencies

Other constituents?



# STEERING THE DEPARTMENT

The external environment is constantly changing. Scan that environment for

- Opportunities to thrive and improve
- Threats to departmental success

Internal processes are somewhat controllable. Analyze your current situation so

- Strengths can be leveraged to advantage
- Weaknesses can be rectified or minimized

Move from *analysis* to *vision, outcomes, goals*



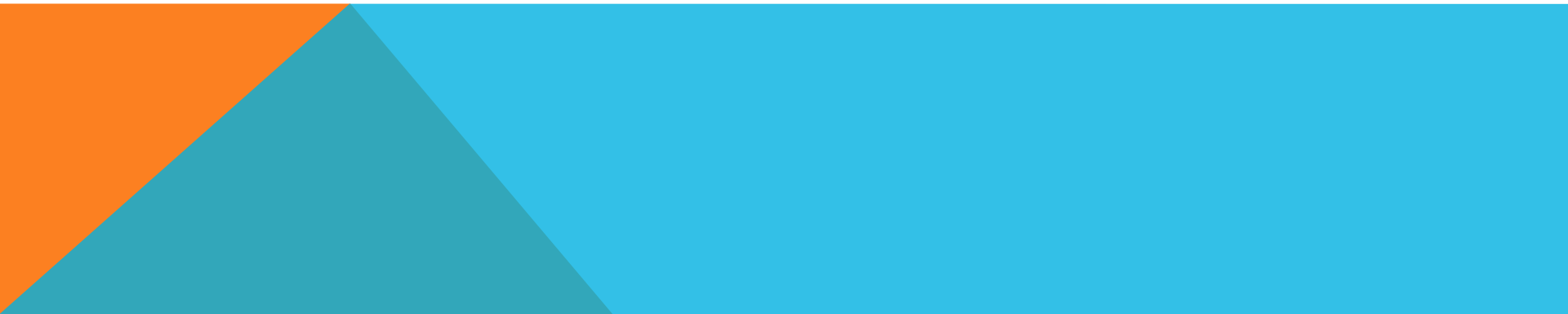
# MINI DEPARTMENTAL ANALYSIS

Quick SWOT assessment of department

Can you see a vision or direction for department?

Discuss with partner

Share with group



# FIND TIME FOR YOU

Major stressor for chairs is lack of time for personal research agenda\*

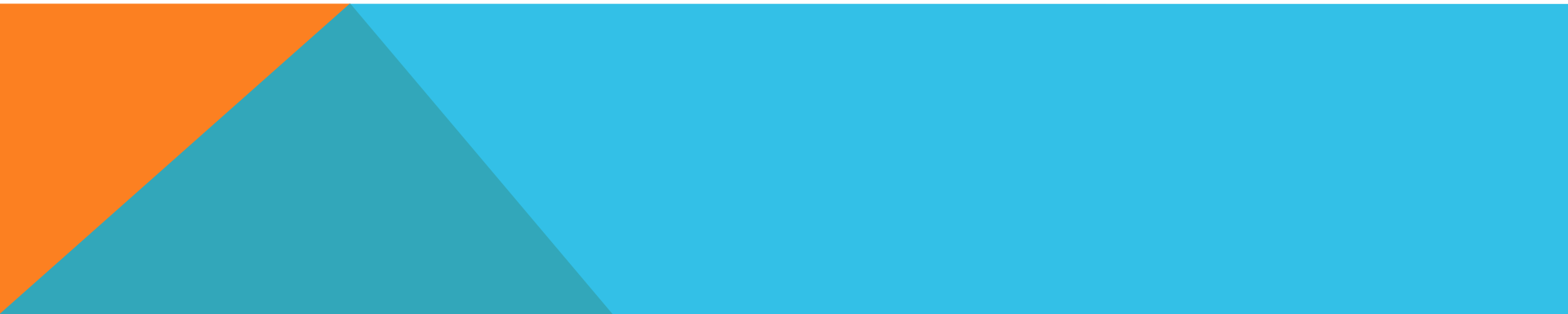
- Delegate some responsibilities
- Set some time blocks aside

Other stressors??

How chairs cope with stress is different for everyone

- Consider: social support, physical activities, intellectual stimulation, entertainment, personal interest, self-management, and supportive attitude

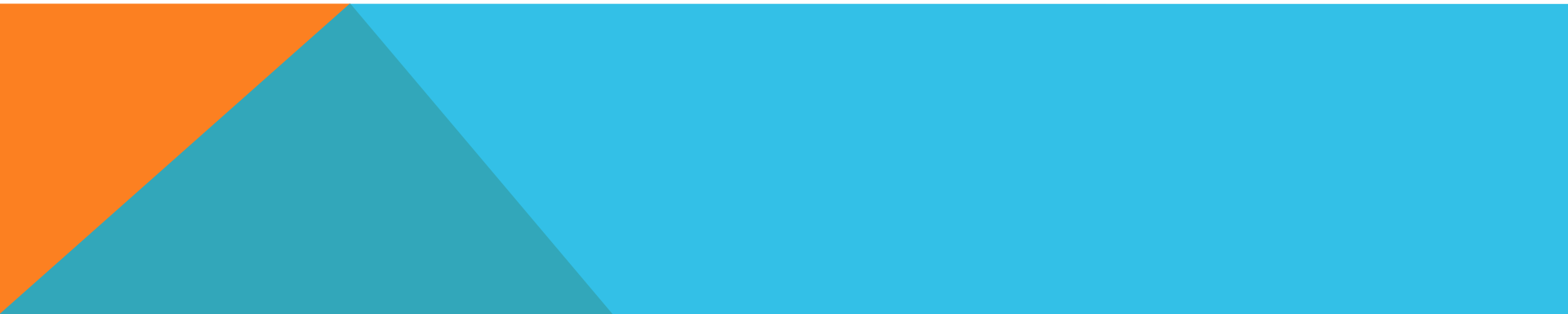
\*Gmelch et al, 1992, Center for Academic Leadership, Washington State University



# Thank you!

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# RESOURCES

WISE@OU: [wwwp.oakland.edu/advance/](http://wwwp.oakland.edu/advance/)

Contact: Kathy Moore, [kmoore@oakland.edu](mailto:kmoore@oakland.edu), (248) 370-2338 or  
Leanne DeVreugd, [ldevreug@oakland.edu](mailto:ldevreug@oakland.edu), (248) 370-4516

CETL Chairs' Corner: [wwwp.oakland.edu/cetl/chairs-corner/](http://wwwp.oakland.edu/cetl/chairs-corner/)

*Leadership Skills for Department Chairs*, Walter M. Gmelch, Val D. Miskin, available  
at Kresge Library: <http://libcat.oakland.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=594288>

*Academic Leadership: A Practical Guide to Chairing the Department*, Deryl R.  
Leaming, available at Kresge Library:  
<http://libcat.oakland.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=892731>

