

Learning the ropes: how department chairs can help new faculty develop productive scholarship habits

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Academic department chairs are challenged, at small-medium sized institutions of higher education, to be role models for new faculty developing their scholarly agendas. The author incorporates the use of reflection as a necessary component of the role of the department chair, and offers three strategies for support for junior faculty. These are described: Model 1, “‘Departmentally embedded’—changes to departmental productivity norms’; Model 2, ‘Campus-wide scholarship support group’ (based on the author’s work with a colleague); and Model 3, ‘Connect with productive scholars in a professional organization’. Specific recommendations for department chairpersons are provided.

Introduction

The summer after I received tenure, I signed up for group sailing lessons. I joined eight other novices on a perfect June afternoon for our first lesson. After a quick trip around the inner harbor, the instructor demonstrated how to tie five different types of knots to the assembled group. While the sun played hide-and-seek with oversized clouds, and the breezes gently nudged our sailboat, we all attentively watched our instructor. Then, we eagerly practiced our knots. Within 15 minutes, all were able to accurately reproduce each knot—all except me.

As a department chair, I have often reflected on that balmy afternoon. I boarded the boat filled with joy and optimism, but left frustrated. I quickly decided to turn what was a private humiliation into a relearning activity, and requested a remedial session on knots. A few days later, on another sunny afternoon, I climbed back onto the sailboat. Away from the pressure of the first demonstration, I learned my knots.

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Had it not been for my willingness to reflect on my experience, and reconceptualize my options, the experience would have demoralized me. Dewey's original (1933) model of reflection integrated into practice has become a method for educators to reconsider their behavior. Garman's distinction between mental rehashing and true reflection is valuable:

[Reflection is not] a mental reexamination of past events aimed at justifying or defending the consequences. Neither is reflection a way of determining what should have been done—a way of replaying scenarios with a slightly different script. (Dewey, 1933, p. 45)

Reflection is, instead a series of specific steps that clarify to the individual involved how to learn from their experiences, and to develop a strategy to move ahead in a new direction. As Fernsten and Fernsten (2005) describe the reflective work, candid reflection turns into purposeful new behavior, framed in a metacognitive understanding.

Many of my peer department chairs could have had the same experience in department meetings that I faced on the boat on that sunny day. Doing their best to simultaneously promote rigor and a collegial environment, they often face the same public potential for humiliation, because they must (in front of colleagues) quickly 'get it'. Peers, with high expectations regarding job performance, are watching. The pressure can be much more intense for individuals who are selected from among peers to serve. Former peers observe as the new chair's attempts to find his or her way, assuming that 'you know how to do it' since you have a history at the institution. The department secretary can be the communication specialist who facilitates the smooth running of the department or the passive-aggressive critic whose carefully timed 'mistakes' on public documents or events shatter the new chair's impression of administrative autonomy.

Depending on their attitudes, faculty colleagues may be encouraging, resentful, dismissive, or watchful. Former friends in the department, either held at arm's length during the term of office, or accused by others of being the 'favorites' of the chair, can become potential problem children, awaiting their turn to advance their case (regarding such departmental turf issues as schedule, travel dollars, merit recommendations) or privately critiquing the chair for an unfortunate remark. These situations may be more common for female than male department chairs (Nidiffer & Bradshaw, 2001). Feeling entitled to draw on past history, former friends can be dangerous acquaintances for the new chair. As the isolation of the new position becomes apparent, new chairs look for someone willing to listen—often 'former' friends. A slippery slope, down which many a department chair slides, entails the former friends becoming the *de facto* 'kitchen cabinet'. Others in the department begin to lobby them as a way to get through to the chairperson. This situation can quickly get out of hand.

If, as in my situation with the knots, department chairs are less than 100% confident about their approach, they may need to step away from the group and sort through situations on their own. They can, on their own equivalent of a sunny afternoon, with an impartial resource person, sort through things—untangling the implicit from the explicit, eventually 'getting it'. This is when reflective practice, straddling issues of professionalism and friendship (see Boucher & Smyth, 2004) or the specific

steps of reflection (see Fernsten & Fernsten, 2005) can enable the chair to develop a new sense of self. Only after this stable identity has been formed can chairs begin to work with others, either on the same campus, or elsewhere. This sequence is one followed by many collaborating teachers, in which only after patient self-inquiry has taken place can effective work with others occur (Cramer, 2006).

The mentoring model, widely described for executives in other disciplines, could work for department chairs. Nursing (Lazenby & Morton, 2003), early childhood (Fleming & Love, 2003), media studies in schools (Anderson, 2004), and professional communication (Rutkowski, *et al.*, 2002) leaders make use of mentoring, and 'virtual' asynchronous mentoring in the communications field (see Bonk, 2004). Schoenfeld and Magnan (1992) describe training chairs to serve as mentors, which can improve the likelihood that mentoring will be successful. Sometimes, mentoring groups designed to last beyond training provided for chairs (see Peters, 1994).

My knots experience is one that resonates for me not only in terms of the responsibilities of the department chair, but also for new faculty members' first year of full time service at institutions at which teaching is the primary focus and expectation.¹ Generally, during campus-wide orientation programs or individual meetings with department chairs, new faculty members receive many admonitions. New faculty members learn that, to earn continuing appointment, progress must take place in teaching effectiveness, scholarship, and service.² While the definitions of 'progress' are specific both to the discipline of the faculty member and institutional standards, faculty members are expected to develop annual professional plans that can insure expected progress in advancing their scholarly agendas.

My sailing lessons helped me to realize that new faculty can respond to their new set of obligations in radically different ways. Some faculty members quickly grasp the expectations for scholarship. For these individuals, department chairs' roles are simple: provide encouragement, recognition, support, and basically, get out of their way. These new faculty members (the 'quick studies') are able to develop and maintain productive scholarship habits. Professional priorities, including regular publication of articles, successful grant writing and other appropriate scholarly activities, are evident from the outset. Although they may simultaneously, within any given day, be faced with a class preparation to complete, an advisee with questions, a committee meeting to attend, and an article to be revised, they are almost always able to find time for work on the article. I would compare these faculty members with all the knot producers in my sailing class. The main task for the department chair, as mentor, is to provide encouragement as needed. The chair can also write periodic letters to the individual, with copies to the dean, when a new milestone (e.g., new article accepted, new award won, new stature achieved in a discipline-based organization) has been reached. The chair should also be attentive to any ambivalence the individual might evidence, possibly indicating the person is looking to move on, and address that topic in a direct manner.

Ideally, the chair will have to do little in the way of protecting these achievers from dismissive (or worse) comments from their peers. However, depending upon the culture of the department, a sarcastic 'joke' might be made in a faculty meeting, or in

a hall conversation. The chair should be alert, and handle such comments quickly and effectively. If such a comment occurs in a meeting, the meeting should be redirected toward the topic at hand, with casual reference to what was said (it should not be ignored or glossed over, nor over-emphasized). In other cases, the chair may need to take faculty member making the 'joke' aside, and advise them against such behavior in the future.

This article will focus primarily on what the chair can do in relation to the other new faculty members, the ones who resemble me during the sailing class described at the beginning of this article. Despite good intentions, these new faculty members either begin their academic careers with optimism or terror, with many good intentions, or a belief that without too much effort, they could get by. Generally, the outcome for all is the same regardless of dispositions—they do not succeed. By the middle of their first semester, it is evident that they have not incorporated scholarly activities into their weekly routine. Six or eight months into their first year, they have only sketchy outlines of a possible grant, research project, or article. They can justify their lack of scholarship. However, their explanations (papers to grade, advisees to call, committee minutes to transcribe, family obligations) translate into potential problems. Unless they overcome their sense of frustration (and or guilt), they can quickly fall into the abyss of the untenurable.

It is important to clarify that there is a continuum of problems commonly expressed by faculty who have scholarship difficulties. See Table 1 for examples of the kinds of problems which can face faculty members, along with responses by the individual, and the institution.

Table 1. Examples of challenges faced by new faculty unable to meet scholarly expectations for junior faculty

Sample problems which are content-specific	Individual dysfunctional responses to problems (samples)	Institution responses (samples)
Limited completed output (articles or research projects started but none/few accepted for publication) Selection of topics or research focus have content-specific problems Funding problems Collaboration challenges with co-authors related to 'finishing' scholarly articles in a timely way. Selects out-of-date, obscure topic for focus Skill deficiencies in the areas of research design or scholarly writing	Increase in number of excuses provided for lack of scholarly output Failure to take ownership for lack of output New projects are begun, and old ones are abandoned Little or no learning from experience	<i>Renewal with caution:</i> Individual is not given a three year renewal, but rather is limited to contracts of one or two year in length <i>Individual is taken off tenure clock:</i> Individual is given a reprieve to 'get more writing done' <i>Individual fails to achieve tenure:</i> If the institution has been less than candid with the individual, and/or provided no supports to turn the lack of productivity around, this outcome occurs. Often, the individual, chair, and dean are all demoralized by this difficulty decision.

The types of problems described in Table 1, and the accompanying responses from the individual and the institution are familiar to those who have been down this path with a non-productive scholar. All individuals involved become increasingly frantic as the time for the decision about continuing appointment draws near, but little is done to actually turn around the problem behaviors. The ultimate result, non-renewal, comes as a sad, but inevitable, outcome of this pattern of behavior. Table 2 describes a related, though different, set of scholarship problems.

The problems described in Table 2 are substantially different from those in Table 1, although the outcome is the same. The individual is not producing scholarship at the rate expected for permanent appointment. Assistant professors experiencing the problems in the tables above require highly targeted assistance. A candid set of conversations is essential. Conceptualizing and clarifying the type of problems the faculty members have can assist the department chair to be more effective in providing assistance. This paper provides overall guidance for how to provide such help, but analysis of the problem must be a prerequisite to setting up an action plan.

What role should the department chair take to assist these faculty members? Does the chair ask for regular progress reports? Does he or she develop a mentoring system within the department? How can the department chair avoid being seen not as a nag, but rather as a resource to help the new faculty member develop ownership in a realistic scholarship plan? The development of a strategic reflective plan, such as the one outlined by Fernsten & Fernsten (2005) for teachers, could enable the chair to work with the faculty member to create a new way to approach the outstanding problems. In exceptional cases, when personal circumstances are inhibiting the individual, outside resources may need to be involved. However, for the typical inattentive faculty member whose life circumstances overshadow the scholarship, a department-wide attention to scholarship can be effective.

Table 2. Sample of productivity and writing challenges faced by new faculty unable to meet scholarly expectations

Problems managing competing interests	Problems of a unique nature which derail the scholarly agenda	Weak skills lead to problems with scholarship
Inability to manage ongoing personal situations	Illness (self, family, extended family)	Individual cannot translate comprehensive understanding of own field into written work due to general problems with writing
Professional service (or second job) obligations (on or off campus) prioritized ahead of scholarship	Family problems escalate (with spouse or offspring)	Individual's conceptualization is shallow, and written work is below standard in the field
Family obligations consistently overwhelm the person's scholarly efforts	Change in family status (new child in the family, new adult enters or exits family)	Individual is a non-native speaker and does not produce scholarship that has correct grammar; explication of ideas or structure is not in line with discipline standards
Note that for all these situations, scholarship always comes last on a consistent basis	Substance abuse	
	Activity with sharp timeline (e.g., competitive sport, election to office of a professional or community organization)	

Ultimately, by involving the department as a whole, the department chair can help new faculty members develop productive professional habits that will lead to continuing appointment. (Note that, in some cases, given problems with ‘fit’ between the individual and the institution, or insurmountable writing problems described in Table 2, the wise and brave outcome is for the person to leave the institution. Such an outcome should be a planned, well understood decision, and not come as a surprise to the candidate.)

The context of the institution also needs to be considered when developing an action plan.

- If the administration is perceived to only be providing ‘lip service’ to its scholarly agenda (e.g., individuals who all know to be weak scholars are given tenure, or are promoted to full professor), then the mixed messages make the chair’s efforts more difficult.
- If the administration is in the process of ‘clarifying expectations’ for permanent appointment, the ambiguity can be seized upon by the tentative chair, or the unproductive, untenured faculty member.
- If the administration is intentionally reducing resources for scholarship (e.g., a travel fund for untenured faculty is reduced or eliminated; increased use of adjuncts places more pressure on full time faculty for service on college-wide committees), conclusions can be drawn regarding the expectations for scholarship and play into the ambivalence of the non-producing scholar.
- If the administration has frequent changes, such that the expectations are constantly vacillating from one end of the continuum to the other, the ambivalent scholar can legitimately take a ‘wait and see’ attitude.

The stance of the administration directly affects what the chair can do to assist the beginning faculty member who is having trouble with his/her knots to get the clarity of vision to pursue scholarship with a no-holds-barred approach. The institution that is in the midst of change (Cramer, 2003) might be linking scholarly productivity to strategic agendas, in which case there may be external supports being created to assist new faculty members. However, as described in the next section, even in the ideal situation, new faculty members struggle to place scholarship high on their priority lists.

Dilemmas for new faculty members

New faculty generally begin their service with a heightened sense of self-absorption. They are measuring themselves, often against invisible yardsticks. Many faculty are, as Lucas (1994) points out, resentful because ‘the standards enforced for new faculty could not be met by the evaluators’ (p. 120) and the criteria for tenure seem unclear. A new faculty member may observe his or her colleagues and conclude that only those working toward continuing appointment are productive scholars. This can be discouraging.

Boice’s longitudinal study of 185 new faculty (1992) identified additional needs. ‘Despite orientation days, the first three years of a new faculty member’s life seemed

permeated by feelings of isolation and loneliness, a perception of lack of collegial support, and lack of intellectual stimulation' (cited in Lucas, 1994, p. 120). In helping new faculty adapt, department chairs may find themselves frustrated by the limited support they can provide.

The period of adjustment can be frustrating and emotional, particularly when new faculty members have geographically relocated to begin their academic careers. If they have family members with them, the new faculty members may leave the office, after a day of isolation, only to hear about the difficulties of the relocation (e.g., new school, no friends, trouble finding meaningful work, inadequate shopping or library hours in the new town). If they express even the slightest doubt that this move was the right one, they are likely to be overwhelmed by frustration from their spouses or children ('What did you bring us here for anyway?' 'You mean we are going to have to move again?' 'I'm not going anywhere—I just got unpacked') or extended family members (e.g., 'When are you going to settle down and find the right job?' 'What do you mean, you aren't happy? You've got a job, don't you? Get happy'). If they have relocated by themselves, they are missing a proximal support system, and likely eat, sleep and recreate in isolation.

Faculty members who are new to an academic department need unambiguous signals that will help underscore the high priority of ongoing scholarly activities. How can department chairs compassionately, yet firmly, guide new faculty members into a professional routine that embeds scholarship into their daily and weekly life activities? How can the junior faculty see scholarship constructively, rather than as a Damocles sword hanging over their unproductive heads? In addition to encouraging the faculty member to adopt reflective practices (see Pedro, 2005), other approaches can be used. The models described below are alternative solutions to this challenging problem, and, depending on the circumstances, the department chair might use one, two, or all three to assist junior faculty members.

Alternative models for scholarship support

Model 1: "Departmentally embedded"—changes to departmental scholarship norms'

The department chair, new faculty members, and tenured faculty members all face competition while trying to meet their academic responsibilities. In institutions of higher education which routinely see full time faculty with annual teaching loads of 18–24 credits, advisement loads between 50–80, and an expectation of service on departmental, campus-wide, local and national committees, many struggle to make 'attention to scholarship' more than a token time commitment. Given these circumstances, some believe that, in order to make substantive changes, a department-wide scholarship agenda must develop. In the embedded approach, the chair focuses internally on the department as the scholarly universe.

Outside speakers as role models and stimuli. Discipline-specific nurturing takes place. Guest speakers are invited. Events can feature key speakers on a recurring basis, or

rotate different individuals. The sessions can focus exclusively on the department, or be expanded to include alumni, or current students.

The difference between this series of presentations and others the department might sponsor is that this series is intended to link to the scholarly interests of junior faculty. These individuals might be discussing recent research, or use of a national/international collaborative model for writing, which might be adapted by the junior faculty members (or in which they might become involved). Thus, the chair should not view this as an opportunity to spend department funds to bring in his/her colleagues from other institutions for an evening event. Thought needs to be given to the goal of the session, and linking the junior faculty member up with the speaker afterwards for some one-to-one discussions about scholarly work. The outcome should be to assist the reluctant scholar in charging up his/her writing batteries.

Listen to how other productive scholars accomplish their scholarship goals. Productive scholars from other departments can join the department faculty for regularly scheduled, informal brown bag lunches. These opportunities can be open to all in the department interested in transforming their approach to scholarship. These people, who may include active scholars as well as junior faculty, may band together as a recognizable subculture, working together to make a commitment to scholarship.

Establish a 'writers' circle' within the department, and set up ground rules at the start.

- *Invite everyone to participate.*
- *Decide on frequency of meetings, and how productivity of members will be shared.* Monitoring productivity can be a group discussion. However, some method (meetings, emails, generating a group progress report on a monthly basis) must be established prior to the start of the group's work.
- *Decide how the group will handle 'non-producers' before anyone becomes one.* The group must decide how to handle 'non-producers'. Rather than 'enabling' non-producers, by accepting 'no progress' at the end of a month, the group needs to clarify what its yardstick will be. Will an unproductive individual be allowed to remain for two months? Three? Can an individual choose to 'step out' for a period of up to two months, and then rejoin the group? These healthy discussions, in the abstract, serve to put all on notice regarding expectations and norms.

Incorporate 'mentoring' into the by-laws of the personnel committee as an objective. Ensure that there are annual expectations for the committee that involve substantive outreach to junior and senior faculty regarding scholarship goals. Such an objective is often included for the personnel committees. The chair must make sure that scholarly pursuits are explicitly discussed within the department. Individuals well suited to serve as mentors identified to assist junior faculty members must have conversations that are focused and honest.

Note that any of the activities described above could be used as the annual activity to meet the 'mentoring' objective.

How to make the department embedded model work

If the effort to boost productivity is to succeed, the department chair must tackle the problem with a better understanding of what to address. Starting such an effort up, and watching it fizzle, is a memory no one in the department will let fade gently away. Most agree with Lucas (see below), that the department chair has the ultimate responsibility for establishing a departmental commitment by (1) serving as a role model, and (2) as a shepherd, for productive scholarship activities and outcomes:

The task of increasing scholarly productivity has two dimensions that the chair needs to address. One intervention that can help all faculty is changing the culture of the department so that increased scholarship becomes the norm. The second intervention, which is attuned more to the individual, provides help for faculty who would like to publish because that is part of what they feel a faculty member should do, but who do not know quite how to get started. (Lucas, 1994, p. 157)

If the department chair encourages not only new members of the department but others who are interested in reactivating their scholarly habits, he or she can set an invigorating departmental scholarly agenda. The department chair can only change norms through a collaborative process that shifts the climate in the department to value productive scholarship activities and outcomes. How can these changes take place?

A useful starting point could be completion of the self-reflective activities for department chairs recommended by Welch (1996) and Gmelch and Miskin (1993). Chairs can assess their own values, the values of the department and the institution, and make certain that there are explicit supports for productive scholarship. A realistic appraisal of faculty members' scholarship habits (e.g., as suggested by Balbert, 1991), can avoid superficial stereotypes.

In some cases, this appraisal may lead to a modification of the department's strategic plan (Sheldon, 1994). Ideally, this revision is not an empty exercise, but instead is rooted in a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the department faculty. The department chair, working in concert with the dean and provost/vice-president for academic affairs, must provide the resources and clarity of vision to faculty in the department to facilitate scholarly activities to the greatest extent possible.

Seagren *et al.* encourage the department chair to collaborate with members of the department in outlining the research agenda:

Vision is the means by which a chair can create a focus or agenda for the department's current and future plans. The chair does not invent a vision and then attempt to impose it on disbelieving colleagues; rather, the chair facilitates the debate and discussion through which the department clarifies its options and becomes aware of its possibilities. The chair then oversees the strategies by which those fragments of a future are crystallized into a shared set of goals and a plan by which to reach them. (Seagren *et al.*, 1993, p. 20)

The advantage of a department-wide approach is that it does not single out the new faculty member. Instead, establish a congruent vision that encourages all members of the department to rethink their scholarly activities. Outcomes can include an increased number of individuals ready to apply for promotion, boosted morale, increased candor, and reinvigoration. This approach would take a great deal of courage on the part of new department chairs (especially those who have risen up through the ranks) but has potential for departments that might be ripe for change. However, in some departments, this approach would not work. A different model is needed.

Model 2: 'Campus-wide scholarship support group'

In contrast to the department-specific model, a campus-wide approach (in which a department chair serves as the lead, or co-lead) offers, at the outset, a different definition of the 'universe' of potential participants. Senior scholars, as well as beginning faculty, and professionals on campus pursuing their own scholarly agendas, are all invited to participate. Natural mentoring is often difficult to accomplish within a department where everyone knows a little too much about each other's business, discipline, and private lives.

A campus-wide model has the potential to be more objective. The focus can remain on the productivity, in part because the individuals come together for a specific purpose—scholarship—and are not sidetracked by other topics. I was a co-developer of a campus-wide scholarship support group, and it enabled those involved to gain insights and see results, over a two-year period. A description for such a model, entitled 'Write on!' is provided at www.people.ku.edu/~meodice/writeon/ as well as in Eodice and Cramer (2001).

In contrasting these two models, I believe strongly that the second approach has more potential. The campus-wide model gave opportunities for individuals to get and give feedback about their writing habits from others who knew nothing more about them than their first names, and what they chose to reveal about themselves (which generally was not very much). The feedback on scholarly output was specific, targeted, and realistic. Monthly meetings were enjoyable and predictable: starting and ending on time, they provided opportunities for discussions about writing, with the consistent message that scholarship was important. By early spring, the group was engaged in peer feedback, and those who were ready with articles received gentle, focused feedback.

Years later, I continue to be an informal mentor to the people who were part of the program. Some success stories from that effort:

- One of the members received tenure and promotion, and is ready to work toward promotion to full professor in record time.
- A second (with informal encouragement from me several years after the end of the group) completed an article that she had been considering in our group, published it, and received a prestigious prize in recognition of its rigor and depth.

- A professional staff member of the group who was considering furthering her education is now concluding her dissertation work; she presented a preliminary version of her work at the Research-in-Progress session at a meeting of NERA (the Northeastern Educational Research Association, an American Educational Research Association (AERA) affiliate). Her experiences lead me to my final suggestion.

Model 3: 'Connect with productive scholars in a professional organization'

For many reasons, neither of the first two models may be possible. Department chairs need not feel discouraged or frustrated if this is the case. It is still possible to be a role model as a scholar. If you can't create the culture within your institution, seek out the culture where it is already in place. Beware of recommending listserv participation to struggling scholars, as they may wind up spending time on their e-mail, and getting further from scholarly output. Instead, look for a conference that is part of an organization which requires papers rather than presentations.

An example of a nurturing, scholarship-oriented organization is the Northeastern Educational Research Association. This organization, one of approximately 30 affiliated with the American Educational Research Association, uses a very formal approach to scholarship. At the annual conference, full papers are presented to an audience which includes a discussant (who receives the paper several weeks in advance of the conference). The commitment to conduct research, write it up, present it and receive feedback on it is made by graduate students, junior and senior faculty, and members of research associations (such as the Educational Testing Service and the College Board). As a member of this organization since 1990, and a past officer, I can attest to the sane balance achieved between rigor and support. Members of the organization take their roles as presenters and discussants seriously, and provide evidence to junior faculty that there continues to be vitality, and enthusiasm about research, even after tenure.

In attending NERA, I observed individuals who had incorporated scholarship into their lives as naturally as they did their laundry. Although not always pleasant or easy, research and scholarship wasn't something you talked about, it was something you did. The guidance of a senior faculty member on my campus, 'have a publication every year, not just all in a bunch', has been something that I have achieved. Several of these publications (in peer-reviewed journals) were papers previously presented at NERA. I'm convinced that the role models I saw at NERA helped me to create and achieve my scholarship goals as a department chair. Gmelch and Miskin (1993) report that chairs indicate that their own scholarship suffers when they serve as chairs—placing the scholarship goal on the radar as part of their personal expectation for mentoring junior faculty can be a way of counterbalancing this trend.

The benefit of moving away from discipline-specific organizations (which most junior faculty members would be involved in at the local, state, and national levels) is that faculty members are able to consider alternative ways to think about their scholarship and their work. Not only are various approaches to research design used,

but unusual topics may be part of the program. Cross-disciplinary scholarly endeavors might develop, creating networks that have clear outcomes—a paper must be presented at a conference each year.

A danger that many junior faculty must avoid is investing time, money, and energy in a series of national presentations which do not require papers. How many PowerPoint files languish in the hard drives of junior faculty members who failed to move from presentation to scholarly product? The annual conference—be it one associated with one's own discipline or a cross-categorical one like a regional affiliate of the American Educational Research Association—can provide a target of accountability. The culture you experience in rigorous, scholarship-oriented conference settings can help you examine your own departmental culture (see Austin, 1994). The multidisciplinary model (Lucas, 1994; Gonzalez *et al.*, 2003) can infuse new energy into your work with your campus colleagues, and some of them may become co-presenters with you at annual conferences of cross-disciplinary organizations.

Conclusion

As I look back at the description with which I began this paper, myself as a beginning sailor, 10 years ago, I realized that things could have turned out very differently. I could have looked around at the knots quickly learned by others, and concluded that sailing was not for me. Instead, I decided to approach my incompetence directly. As a department chair, I decided to ensure that I was not giving only token attention to scholarship norms. I became visibly involved in various scholarly pursuits. This meant placing scholarly priorities high on my personal and departmental agenda. My reflective practices ensure that I regularly assess myself, to review what I have done to actively support scholarship (my own, others in my department, and others on campus). This, I believe, entitles to give advice to others.

In retrospect, I see that my initiation of a short-term campus-wide scholarship program served both my needs and the needs of the campus at the time. It was a vehicle for providing mentoring to others on our campus. And, as a personal outcome, this commitment to 'putting my money where my mouth was' led to my own increased productivity, culminating in promotion to the rank of full professor in record time. Without the spurs of being a role model to our new hires, I doubt that would have happened. I, like most chairs I know, would have complained about how I had no time for writing.

Look at the life of the department chair (which I believe to be arguably the most difficult role on the college campus). There are rewards and costs (Huber, 1994). It is not enough to simply hope that scholarship grows among faculty members during your watch, or that it will continue after your term is over (see Herman, 2004). If research on such activities is to be addressed, a time-motion study of chairs at their desks would need to be undertaken. How do department chairs make choices on an hourly or daily basis that keep scholarship (either personal scholarship, or advancing the scholarly activities of members of their departments) on their

agendas? What do they do to encourage the growth curve in new faculty, such that the ‘quick studies’ receive the periodic boosts they value (but do not really need) to keep going, and those who flunked knots get the counsel suited to their particular situations? This would be an interesting research project to undertake in future years.

In the meantime, if you are a department chair, I encourage you to take an honest look in the mirror. Are you proud of the ways you are mentoring your junior faculty members? If you decide to rethink, or improve, the way you nurture scholarship habits among new and continuing faculty members, you can use your position as department chair to play a key role. Get past the excuses, and (as the Nike advertisement admonishes) ‘just do it’. Consider these three points as you redefine your commitment.

- Department chairs must quickly and accurately assess how well each new faculty member has prioritized scholarship activities. Have they ‘learned the ropes’ as demonstrated by submission of articles to refereed journals, or do they need more assistance? (Use Tables 1 and 2 to assist you in your analysis of their needs.)
- Department chairs must honestly appraise the department’s stated and unstated norms regarding scholarship. This is an essential prerequisite to action. Reflective behavior on the part of the chair and others in the department will facilitate activities that are substantive.
- Department chairs must use consensus-building to develop a department-wide commitment to a scholarship agenda. The department chair and others in the faculty (new as well as seasoned members) can thereby realign weekly and monthly priorities to incorporate research and writing. This method can be achieved through any of the three models described in this paper.

If your experience is similar to mine, I believe you will find that the results of such examinations can be both rewarding and productive—for junior as well as senior members of the department. You may find that the added energy of those from outside your discipline and/or department can help you to look at your work, and your departmental norms in new ways. Your conversations regarding scholarship can incorporate the ‘language of commitment’ rather than the ‘language of complaints’ (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, p. 30), engaging you and others in productivity that increases rather than decreases your enthusiasm for work, leading you to engage with your work and others in invigorating ways.

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Notes

1. While Research 1, and large comprehensive institutions, may have similar issues with non-productive faculty members, it is likely that the norms of the institution and the academic department would be sufficiently strong that many of the issues addressed in this paper would be handled in a more routine manner. This paper was written for those academic departments, and small-mid-sized institutions which have tenured faculty members who wrote only prior to achieving tenure, and who proudly explain that they 'never have to write another article again until they retire'.
2. This article will focus only on scholarship.

Notes on contributor

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