

# 26.2+ Years

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If One Mile of a Marathon Equalled One Year as a Chair ...



## 26.2+ Years, A Few Facts and a Few Inferences

### Facts

- Survived the first few years of Culture Shock
- Did not move to a different administrative job
- Not asked to step down

### Inferences

- Most of the everyday job must be satisfactory
- Alternatives are less attractive

## Partial Explanations

### Facts

- Culture shock manageable, with help
- Role models a powerful influence
- Random influences

## Culture Shock



## Culture Shock?

Consider the typical SOM search committee – fill in the blanks

**Charge:** Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ has done a fine job of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, However, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ has paid less attention to \_\_\_\_\_, Now we need a Chair who will pay attention to \_\_\_\_\_ and take the department to the next level.

**Each committee member:** Yes, an in addition, I/we also need \_\_\_\_\_ from anesthesiology.

## Culture Shock, Four Stages of

1. Honeymoon Stage
2. Frustration Stage
3. Adjustment Stage
4. Acceptance Stage

## Culture Shock, Four Stages of

- |                                 |                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <del>1.</del> Honeymoon Stage   | 1. <b>Anxiety Stage</b> |
| <del>2.</del> Frustration Stage | 2. Honeymoon Stage      |
| <del>3.</del> Adjustment Stage  | 3. Frustration Stage    |
| <del>4.</del> Acceptance Stage  | 4. Adjustment Stage     |
|                                 | 5. Acceptance Stage     |

This process requires patient, insightful friends, coaches and mentors, most of whom are not in the department

## Role Models

People doing the job

Role models ≠ clinical or research mentors

- Subconscious aspirational model
- Watch and infer
- Not see one, do one, teach one

First Chair: Captain Robert Van Houten, MD

First Civilian Chair: Thomas Irving, MD

Second Civilian Chair: Frank James, MD

## Role Models

Key characteristics of anesthesiology role models

- They know how institutional processes work
- They understand key relationships
- They support their colleagues

External perspective may be less developed

- Role model for external perspective: Jerry Reves, MD

## Random Influences – Enhance External Perspective

Associate Chief of Professional Services at Wake Forest

- Unofficial mentor: Ala Jo Koonts

Head of Practice Plan at UTMB, Chief Physician Executive

Lessons from random influences

- External includes administrators, nonphysicians
- External perspective on anesthesiology in a health system
- External perspective invaluable in supporting anesthesiology faculty and residents

Non-random influences: "business" courses

## So How Does a New Culture Evolve?

Team

- Vice-Chairs
- Medical Director(s) of ORs
- Subspecialty Chiefs
- Key Committee Chairs

New faculty usually acclimate to new culture

Disgruntled faculty diminish over time (but can be disruptive)

## Did Not Move to a Different Administrative Job

Hypothesis: I Would Not Enjoy Most Other Administrative Jobs as Much

## Hypothesis Testing

One year sentence as Interim Dean of the UTMB School of Medicine

## Hypothesis Testing

A few things were novel and enjoyable  
Intensive exposure to non-anesthesia environments  
Anesthesiologists are better company  
Within anesthesiology, unanimity difficult, consensus possible  
Within SOM consensus unachievable  
It wasn't much fun

## Response to Change

Change inevitable and constant – embrace it

- Since 1992, four UT Chancellors, three UTMB Presidents, five SOM Deans, four health system CEOs, four health system CMOs, three Chairs of Surgery, multiple Chairs of other surgical specialties

Some components are remarkably stable

Internally and externally, both little and big things change

- Clinical practice changes
- Big concepts change (example):
  - 1992 SICU: surgery tolerated anesthesiology in an open unit
  - 2018: many surgeons would prefer a closed unit managed by Anesthesiology

## Administrative Oasis

Multidisciplinary research

- Within Anesthesiology
- Across clinical and basic science departments
- Necessary range of expertise increasingly broad

Role models/random associations important here too

- Attend basic science research presentations whenever possible
- Participate in PhD Advisory Committees



### What Would I Do Differently?

- More business education, MBA?
- More attention to specific needs of subspecialties
- More specifically communicate departmental goals to new faculty members
- More specifically communicate changes in departmental and institutional goals to all faculty