

Delegation & Cooperation: Section Heads, Vice Chairs, & Chairs of Other Departments



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I have no relevant conflicts to disclose

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*"You can't know too much, but
you can say too much."*
Calvin Coolidge



<https://www.developgoodhabits.com/knowledge-quotes/> (accessed 9.9.2019)
<https://www.archives.gov/research/census/presidents/coolidge.html> (accessed 9.9.2019)

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Objectives

- To discuss how best to interact with Vice Chairs, Section Directors and fellow Department Chairs
- To discuss effective delegation
 - Positive vignettes
 - Negative vignettes
- To discuss effective cooperation
 - Positive vignettes
 - Negative vignettes

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Delegation & Cooperation: Section Heads, Vice Chairs & Chairs of Other Departments

- How do delegation and cooperation relate to the success of a department chair?
 - You are not that smart
 - Your time is not unlimited
 - You are going to need all the help and support that you can obtain
- No one likes to work with or for a micromanager

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Benefits of Delegation

- Acknowledges the value & skills of your staff
- Allows subordinates to be creative
- Helps subordinates develop talents and new skills
- Provides important tests in anticipation of succession planning
- Improves communication & morale within and outside your department
- Builds teams, teamwork, engagement and leads to a collective sense of success
- Gives the Chair more time for "Chair Stuff"

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Barriers to Delegation

- “If you want it done right do it yourself”
- “It takes less time to do it myself”
- “They may screw it up”
- Lack of understanding of differences between authority and responsibility
 - Authority: 25,000 employees of FaceBook develop, program & market the product
 - Responsibility: Zuckerberg said: “I started this place. I run it...I am responsible for what happens here.”
- Delegation not a path to plausible deniability for your or your organizations failures

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When Should A Task Be Delegated?

- Your delegate can represent you effectively
- Decisions will not require your assent at every turn (finances, personnel, space, etc)
- Important for the subordinate’s development
 - Learning opportunity
 - Leadership opportunity
 - Opportunity to develop new relationships outside the department/school/health system

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What Sorts of Tasks Can Be Delegated?

- Clinical director
 - Day to day OR staffing
 - Day to day running of the OR
- Vice Chair for Research
 - Distribution of departmental funding
 - Assignments for Research Resident
- Section Heads
 - Rules for “specialty call”
 - Interactions with related specialties
- Program Directors (issues too numerous...)

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When Should A Task Not Be Delegated?

- You are the thought leader, expert, or the one with the most experience; your absence will impede the project (use this excuse sparingly)
- You will be dragged into the decision making regardless of your good intentions (use this excuse sparingly)
- Project profile is so high that your absence would lead to unwanted conversations with the dean/CEO

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In What Sorts of Tasks Must the Chair Remain Involved?

- Disputes among direct reports that they cannot or will not resolve among themselves (but do not be a “helicopter parent”)
- Legitimate concerns about fairness or competence of a direct report
- Issues that should be addressed by a direct report but in which they have a “higher ranking” challenger from another department

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In What Sorts of Tasks Must the Chair Remain Involved?

- Clinical director
 - Monthly to yearly staffing decisions
 - Chain of command for running the OR
 - Some disputes involving other Departments
- Vice Chair for Research
 - Total amount of departmental funding
 - Number and funding of Research Residents

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In What Sorts of Tasks Must the Chair Remain Involved?

- Section Heads
 - Rules for "specialty call"
 - Conflicts among sections
 - Head count in sections
- Program Directors
 - Reminding faculty and residents that the residency and fellowships ultimately are not governed by democratic rules
 - Helping PDs fend off external attacks on residency and fellowship programs
 - Budgets for residency program

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Was The Delegation Appropriate?

- What are the results?
 - Did the project turn out well?
 - Did the project take an unexpected turn?
 - Did the project die in a hot mess?

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Results Of A Project Can Be Perceived Differently

- What are the results?
 - Did the project turn out well?
 - Did the project take an unexpected turn?
 - Did the project die in a hot mess?



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Was The Delegation Appropriate?

- What are the results?
 - Did the project turn out well?
 - Did the project take an unexpected turn?
 - Did the project die in a hot mess?
- Were you appropriately kept up to date?
 - Was the subordinate in your office every other day gossiping and seeking approval?
 - Were you blindsided with a barrage of questions from the Dean or another Department Chair?

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JB's Delegation Misadventures #1

- Tried to recruit an investigator to fill an endowed professorship on my own
- No proper candidates responded to advertising
- After >year, formed search committee with strong group of "pals"
- Approached, interviewed several candidates
- Finally, search committee happened to be listening to a visiting professor
- Problem solved despite lack of delegation

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JB's Delegation Misadventures #2

- I repeated Misadventure #1, with a worse outcome!

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JB's Delegation Successes

- Selected a group of “coordinators” when the preceding Anesthesia Clinical Director retired from that position
- Gave responsibility for all ERAS activities to a world expert on ERAS (not a tough call)
- Gave responsibility for negotiating a successful contract for ICU coverage in a community site to two senior faculty (Pulm-CCM at VCU previously had failed)

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Benefits of Cooperation

- Acknowledges your mutual respect
- Improves communication & morale
- Builds teams, teamwork, engagement and leads to a collective sense of success
- Makes it easier to achieve goals important to multiple departments

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Barriers to Cooperation

- “If you want it done right do it yourself”
- “It takes less time to do it myself”
- “They may screw it up”
- Lack of trust
 - Competition amongst departments
 - Silo mentality
 - Other chairs have widely differing agendas
- Chair selection criteria in Neurology, Psychiatry, Internal Medicine & Pediatrics is very different from that in Anesthesiology, ED, Radiology or Orthopedic Surgery...

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JB's Cooperation Adventures

- Worked with Chair of Radiology to put MR scanner in new Pediatric Ambulatory facility
- Health system facility “experts” say that there was “no need”
 - Pediatric general surgeons say “we like CT”
 - Experts: “MR will be installed in years to come”
- Facility “completed”
- 4 months after facility opens, hole blasted through exterior wall, rented crane, 20 mph wind, MR installed, exterior wall restored

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JB's Cooperation Adventures

- Opioid management (PM&R, Neurosurgery) – success (but everything changed)
- OR Leadership Structure– spectacular success
 - (OR Medical Director, Consultant)
 - VP for Periop (OR Med Director)
- “Book Club” (Rad Onc, Path, Rad, Ortho, Psych, ED Vice) – ongoing (quiet) success
 - Constituency + interest group
 - Log rolling
 - Intel, “Black Ops”
 - Mental health

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Summary

- Appropriate delegation of tasks and authority is a good thing
 - Faculty development
 - Succession planning
 - Time management
- Cooperation with other chairs
 - Mental health
 - Getting things done
 - Protection

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Useful References

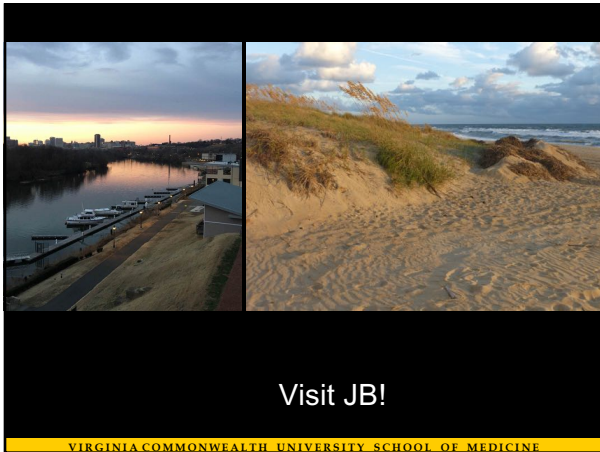
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