

Role of a Chair, Setting a Vision, Building Community



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Dept. Chair
3, 4, more years?



WARNING



**CHALLENGES
AHEAD**

But--- there are



Do you have a:

- Strong vision for the future?
- Strategic plan?
- Strong, engaged community?
- GREAT web page?
- Regular newsletter?



What do people remember about your dept?



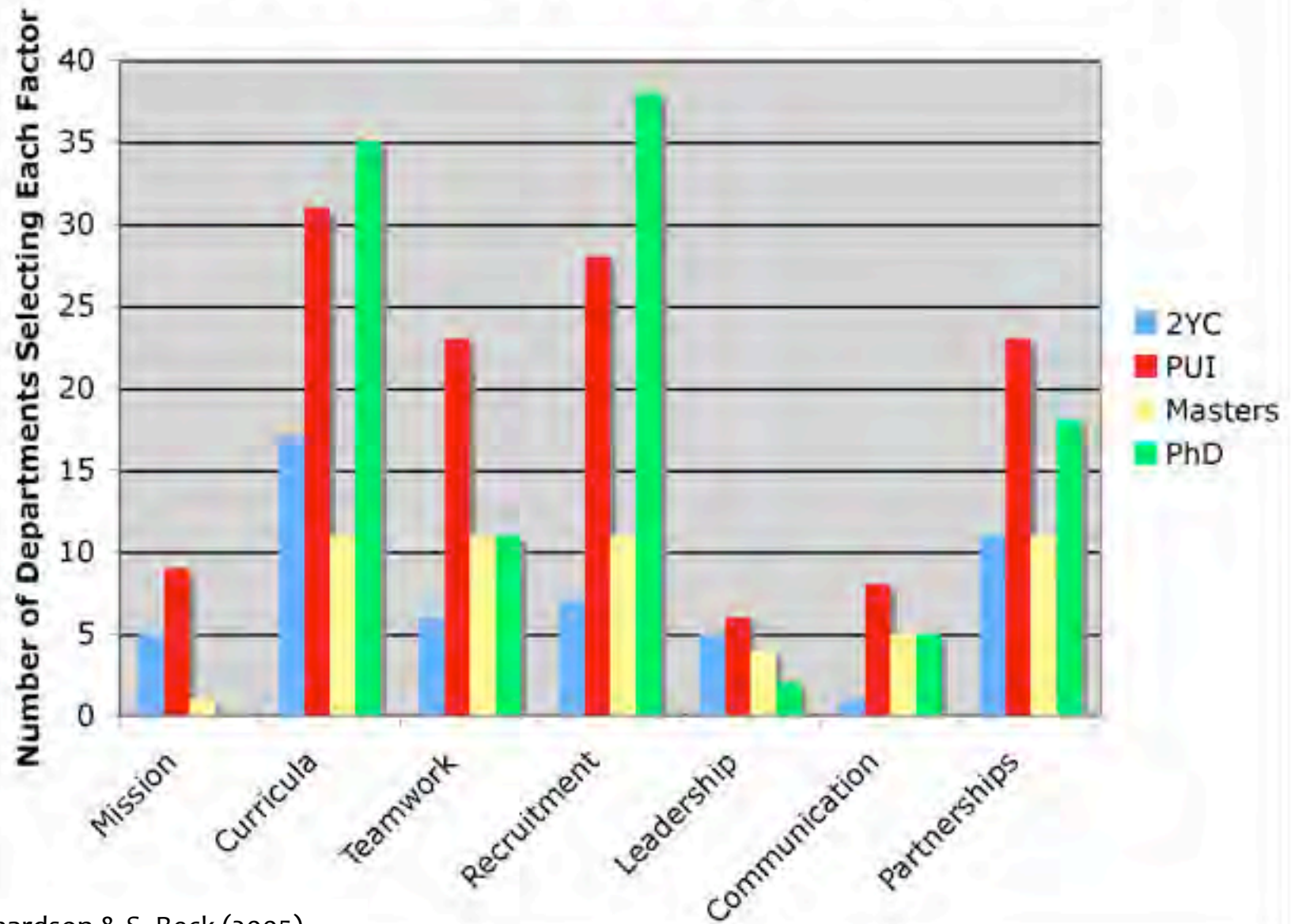
What is a strong, healthy department?



Photo: Jochen Tack/Alamy

serc.carleton.edu/departments

Most Important Measure of Departmental Success

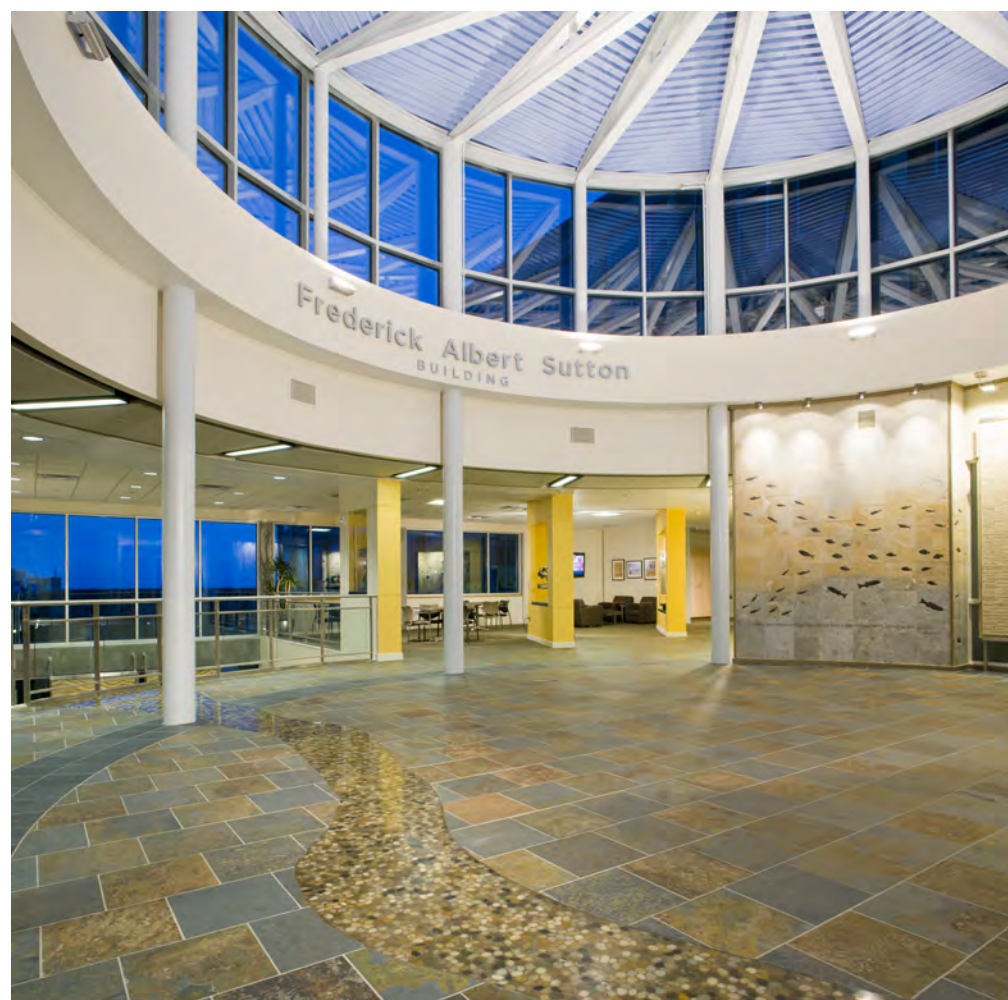


R. Richardson & S. Beck (2005)

R. Richardson & C. Ormand (2008)

Concerns

- * Declining & low enrollments
- * Lack of support by administration
- * Declining resources at all levels
- * Inability to replace faculty as retire
- * Low faculty salaries (compression)
- * Inadequate operation budgets, staff support, space



- 7 years
- Oversaw Dept. programming, construction for 91,000 sq. ft. award-winning, engaging, LEED-certified facility
- Vibrant students & faculty
- Growing (tripled) undergrads
- Positive, promising trajectory!

“I was very impressed by the positive energy and the strong collegial spirit in the department. It is very clear why you and your colleagues are so happy and successful. I was also thoroughly impressed by the beautiful work environment you helped create.”



Mechanisms in place to insure a strong future

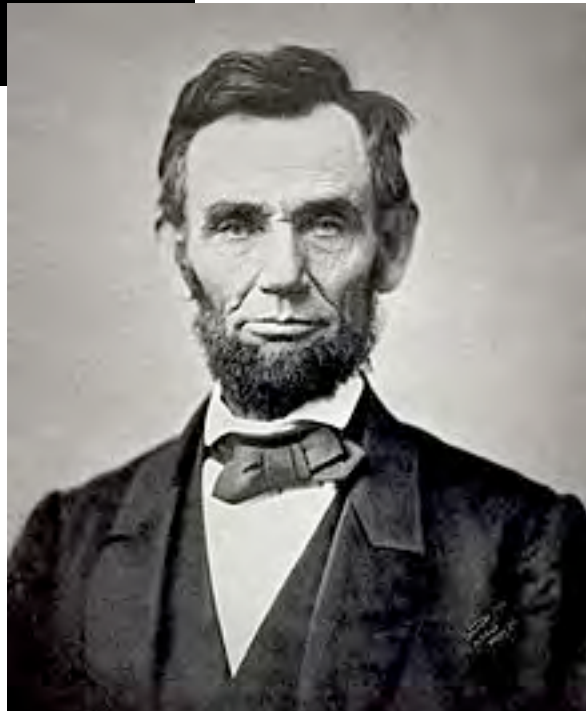
1. Your Role
2. Vision
3. Community
4. Maximize assets
5. Secret weapon



Leaders



Many styles



Many outcomes

1. Your role

- * Strive to be a visionary leader. (Simply a caretaker isn't enough to move a dept. forward) .
- * Prioritize & focus on a few important things to accomplish.



(Not perfect
role model!)



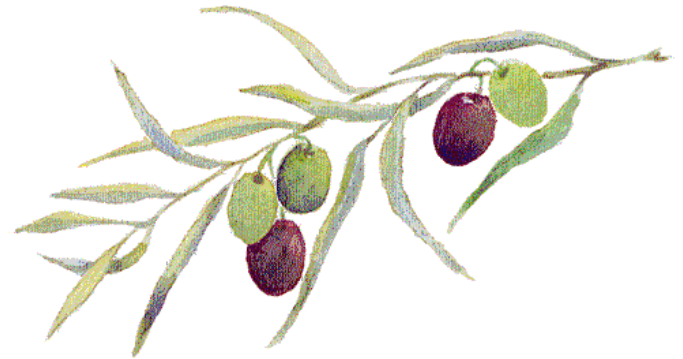
2. Vision, Goals



- * Set goals & objectives shared with faculty
- * Teamwork builds a strong department (good of the whole vs. single empire builders)
- * Kind words go far
- * Create consensus
- * Explain what you are doing
- * If confront do it in a positive way, while acknowledging a problem there is still a good way forward

3. Community

- * Create & build community & partnerships.
- * Good communication skills carry you far.
- * Engage alumni & friends.
- * Everyone wants to be part of a good thing. They will stay away from a problem department.
- * Mistake? (real or perceived - apologize!) Offer olive branch.



Different (sometimes difficult) People



Collegial



THE AMERICAN NATIONAL GAME OF BASE BALL.

SEARS MATCH FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIP. AT THE RUBEN FIELDS, WASHINGTON. N.Y.

- * Approach people on their own level.
- * Not everyone can be stars, still need base hits, folks that play multiple positions.
- * Maximize strengths, minimize weaknesses.
- * Pay close attention to new faculty hires, mentoring. Recruit team players, keepers (won't polarize).

4. Maximize & leverage your assets



- * Web page: Defines who you are
- * Newsletter, annual report: reach alumni & friends
- * Advisory board : ideas, advice, direction, support, endowments, engages alumni
- * Visibility to admin, students, community
- * Outreach: programs, building
- * Positive environment builds more positives

Worst-case scenarios

- * Dysfunctional dept. = won't talk to each other.
- * Poses potential threat to dept's entire existence. Administrators cringe.
- * Reduces opportunities.
- * Paid mediator? At this point, difficult for any chair to be effective.



5. Secret weapon = Engage Student Workforce!

- * Use students to mutual advantage. Ask their help & provide rewards that build their clubs, and/or support field trips, experiences, etc.
- * Engaged student body = lifeblood of dept!



Raise visibility

- * Street fair or other community outreach
- * Science Olympiad, etc.



Build Endowments

- * Alumni & friends
- * Gifts in perpetuity
- * Stability, independence
- * Enlarges choices



Student Photo Contest, T shirts



Silent Auction

* Community



L. Jordan



CELEBRATE Achievements!

- * Builds community
- * Keeps connectivity



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What do WANT people remember about your dept?



Good things are on your horizon!

