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**Jennifer Biermann\*** (jvbierma@lakeheadu.ca) and **Adam Van Tuyl**. *Balanced vertex decomposable simplicial complexes and their  $h$ -vectors.*

Given any finite simplicial complex  $\Delta$ , I will discuss how to construct a new simplicial complex  $\Delta_\chi$  that is balanced and vertex decomposable and whose  $h$ -vector is the  $f$ -vector of the original complex. This construction generalizes the “whiskering” construction of Villarreal, and Cook and Nagel. I will also discuss how to reverse this process in the special case of the independence complex of a chordal graph. (Received February 14, 2012)