

# **The role of a department chair as a steward of the discipline**

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# Competing priorities

## Multiple demands on our time and energy

- Institutional priorities
- Priorities of our faculty, staff and students
- **Priorities of the profession**
- External constituencies (alumni, other disciplines, government, industry etc)
- Our personal priorities, etc

# Steward of the Discipline

Need to find time to develop and maintain a “big picture” view of the job.

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of teaching identifies a central purpose of doctoral education to produce “stewards of the discipline”.

# What is a “Steward of the Discipline”?

- What is your view of what a “Steward of the Discipline” is?
- Identify up to five aspects of stewardship of the discipline of mathematics that are relevant to your department’s mission.

# Some aspects of stewardship

- Advance mathematical knowledge through cutting edge research
- Enable research contributions of others
- Maintain the integrity and vitality of the discipline, preserve and disseminate the mathematical literature
- Educate and inspire a new generation
- Outreach to different communities
- Promote interactions with other disciplines
- Communicate mathematical ideas
- Professional service to the discipline

# ASPECTS OF STEWARDSHIP

# Stewardship at your institution

Briefly sketch your ideas of your role as a department chair as a “steward of the discipline” at your institution.

How does having this perspective impact the myriad decisions that you must make in your work as department chair? What role can you play?

# Some roles we can play - I

- Understand and communicate **institutional priorities**: strive to meet these priorities
- Understand and communicate national **disciplinary priorities**
- Understand **departmental** priorities and strengths.
- Create **vision plans** for our departments
- Understand sources of support, seek **resources** and support efforts of others to seek resources
- Fully engage in **personnel decisions** (hiring, reappointments, promotion and tenure, evaluation etc)



# Some roles we can play - II

- Maintain a big picture view of the **curriculum**
- Promote **outstanding teaching** at all levels
- Connect with **other disciplines and campus initiatives**
- Build a **culture that promotes success** of our faculty, staff and students
- Find ways to **utilize talents** of our faculty
- Engage in **educational outreach**
- Promote an active role in **professional service**
- Engage with **alumni and stakeholders**
- Promote **ownership** of our programs among students, faculty and staff

Some roles we can play III

# What tools do we have?

Think about 3-4 tools that we have at our disposal as department chairs to enable us to promote stewardship of the discipline in our faculty

# Some tools that we have

- **Centrality** of our discipline
- Large **educational role** on campus
- Utilize **expertise and interests** of our faculty
- Expand **recognition and reward** system
- Engage **alumni, friends** of the department
- Focus on **excellence** and **blending** institutional, departmental, and disciplinary **priorities**

# Tools at our disposal

# Towards Excellence – AMS 1999

- 1. Develop a plan
- 2. Commit to quality undergraduate education
- 3. Support outreach
- 4. Broaden the preparation of graduate students
- 5. Support diversity
- 6. Build strong relationships on campus
- 7. Invest in strong leadership
- 8. Individualize faculty workloads
- 9. Expand the reward system

# Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate

- Article in AMS Notices, Vol. 50, No. 5. May 2003
- Essay by Hyman Bass, AMS Notices, August 2003
- Essay by Tony Chan, AMS Notices, September 2003
- “The Formation of Scholars: Rethinking Doctoral Education for the Twenty-First Century”, George Walker, Chris M. Golde, Laura Jones, Andrea Conklin Bueschel, Pat Hutchings  
Publisher: San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008.