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Making Sense of Roles and Responsibilities: A Socialization Study of College and University Music Department Chairs

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MAKING SENSE OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: A SOCIALIZATION STUDY OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY MUSIC DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

by

Jason Robert Werkema

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Educational Leadership, Research and Technology
Advisor: Andrea Beach, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
April 2009
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honor and glorify you.

Jason Robert Werkema
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

College and University Department Chairs

Higher education literature has often regarded the department chair as one of the most important positions in an institution’s hierarchy (Dyer & Miller, 1999; Filan, 1999; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999). Early estimates suggest that 80 percent of all administrative decisions are made at the department level (Roach, 1976). This is likely due to the number of department chairs in comparison to other university administrators. As first level administrators, department chairs outnumber all other types of university administrators combined (Tucker, 1984). In addition to being the chief administrator within an academic discipline, the department chair is a key figure in determining the educational outcomes of a university (Al-Karni, 1995). Much of the significance attributed to department chairs stems from the extensive number of relationships they maintain. Department chairs are expected to serve students, staff, faculty, and administration, as well as numerous other internal and external constituents (Gmelch, 2002a, 2004; Gmelch & Gates, 1995; Hecht, Higgerson, Gmelch, & Tucker, 1999; Thomas & Schuh, 2004; Wolverton, Gmelch, Sarros, Wolverton, & Tanewski, 1997).

The importance of the department chair position and the widespread relationships that chairs maintain together have contributed to multiple roles and responsibilities that department chairs perform.

Research, however, indicates that beginning department chairs experience moderate to severe difficulty in accomplishing chair roles and responsibilities (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999). This difficulty is due, in part, to limited training, little or no mentoring,
and a lack of administrative experience (Gmelch, 2002b). Given these shortcomings, Jones and Holdaway (1995) describe department heads as somewhat disadvantaged in comparison to other academic leaders. Moreover, the factors of age, years of experience, and gender were found to have little effect on department chair stress (Gmelch & Gates, 1995). The troubled experience of many new department chairs is the central problem that drove this research. The primary goal of this study, therefore, was to examine how individuals learn to function as department chairs.

Within the extant literature, department chair issues are commonly discussed across multiple academic disciplines without distinguishing issues unique to individual disciplines. Although the current study will review these broad department chair issues, it will narrow its scope to include only department chairs within one academic discipline (i.e., the discipline of music). According to Miller (1993), the unique demands placed on music department chairs may make the music department chair position more challenging than some department chair positions in other disciplines. This study examined how music department chairs have learned or have sought to learn the roles and responsibilities necessary for department chair leadership. Understanding how these department chairs learn to function in their roles and perform their responsibilities involved a closer look at how these chairs were socialized into their positions. The following section briefly introduces and describes the socialization process by which newcomers (i.e., new department chairs) transition into new organizational roles.

Organizational Socialization

The theoretical frame of organizational socialization informed the thinking of this study. Organizational socialization describes the process of learning accepted behaviors
and attitudes, and assimilating new roles (Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995).

According to Merton (1957), there are three stages of organizational socialization: (a) anticipation, (b) encounter, and (c) adaptation.

The anticipation stage occurs prior to organizational entry. Once work begins, the newcomer enters the encounter stage. During this stage, the newcomer’s anticipations and expectations are weighed against the reality of his or her new work experiences (Louis, 1980). When a newcomer enters the third stage of organizational socialization, adaptation, he or she has successfully transitioned into a new role and become a bona fide member of the organization (Smith & Stewart, 1999; Staton-Spicer & Spicer, 1987).

Critical to these socialization stages are the institutional methods of exposing individuals to their expected roles, behaviors, and attitudes (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Moreover, an individual’s response to these socialization methods may result in rejection, acceptance, or even a redefining of the mission or goals of a role.

Six dimensions of socialization are identified by Van Maanen and Schein: (a) collective vs. individual socialization processes, (b) formal vs. informal socialization processes, (c) sequential vs. random steps in the socialization process, (d) fixed vs. variable socialization processes, (e) serial vs. disjunctive socialization processes, and (f) investiture vs. divestiture socialization processes. Table 1 identifies and describes these six socialization dimensions.
Table 1

Van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) Socialization Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Socialization Dimension</th>
<th>Description of Socialization Dimension</th>
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<tr>
<td>Collective</td>
<td>Moving a group of new recruits through similar experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Processing of a single individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Processing newcomers through purposeful and customized experiences apart from regular organizational members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>New recruits learn through trial and error.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequential</td>
<td>Series of purposeful discrete steps toward learning a role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random</td>
<td>Steps are ambiguous, unknown, or continually changing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed</td>
<td>Scheduled and occur over a set period of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Involves no specified timeframe for learning roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial</td>
<td>Process whereby experienced members groom new recruits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disjunctive</td>
<td>Provides no role model to assist the newcomer in learning a role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investiture</td>
<td>Affirms the personal characteristics of a new recruit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divestiture</td>
<td>Seeks to conform an individual by removing personal characteristics.</td>
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In its application to department chairs, organizational socialization identifies the progressive stages that individuals experience when becoming department chairs. Figure 1 illustrates a prospective socialization model for describing the process of learning the roles and responsibilities of this position. This model begins with the anticipatory stage of
organizational socialization during which a faculty member considers the possibility of becoming a department chair. This stage involves the faculty member’s personal motivations for assuming this role as well as the institutional mechanism for hiring a department chair. At the time of hire, the neophyte chairperson enters the encounter stage of organizational socialization. According to Van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) dimensions of organizational socialization, the new department chair may undergo a number of different socialization processes. Based on the interaction of these socialization processes, Van Maanen and Schein propose that individuals may respond with custodianship (i.e., caretaking of accepted roles), content innovation (i.e., bringing new knowledge to accepted roles), or in the extreme case, role innovation (i.e., redefining the mission or goals of a role). Custodianship is likely to occur when socialization processes are sequential, variable, serial, and divestiture. Content innovation is likely to occur when socialization processes are collective, formal, random, fixed, and disjunctive. Role innovation is likely to occur when socialization processes are individual, informal, random, disjunctive, and involve investiture processes.

Given these socialization dimensions and proposed responses, department chairs then function in their roles and perform their responsibilities. Those who fully transition into their new position are considered to be in the adaptation stage of organizational socialization. Prior to collecting data for this study, I anticipated that department chairs may respond to their socialization experiences with some degree of role innovation given the unique interaction of their socialization processes (see Staton-Spicer & Spicer, 1987).
**Anticipatory Stage**  
(Experiences Prior to Becoming a Department Chair)

Faculty member considered for Department chair position
- Motivations
- Hiring Mechanisms

**Encounter Stage**  
(Transition into the Department Chair Position)

Socialization Processes
- Collective vs. Individual
- Fixed vs. Variable
- Formal vs. Informal
- Serial vs. Disjunctive
- Sequential vs. Random
- Investiture vs. Divestiture

Responses to Socialization Processes

- Custodianship
- Content Innovation
- Role Innovation

**Adaptation Stage: Outcomes of Socialization Experiences**

- Department chairs function as caretakers of accepted roles and perform responsibilities
- Department chairs bring new knowledge to accepted roles and perform responsibilities
- Department chairs redefine the mission/goals of roles and perform responsibilities

Other Socialization Factors
- Relationships
- Strategies and Resources
- Years of Experience
- Identity within Discipline

*Figure 1.* Department chair socialization model for learning roles and responsibilities.
Other factors may also influence the socialization of individuals as they transition into department chair roles. Additional socialization factors that this study considered include: relationships with others, problem-solving strategies and beneficial resources, years of department chair experience, and the identity of department chairs within their academic disciplines.

There are a limited number of studies that address the transition process of moving from the role of a faculty member to the role of a department chair (Bragg, 1981; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Seedorf 1991, 1992; Smith & Stewart, 1999; Staton-Spicer & Spicer, 1987). Bragg (1981) investigated how department heads define the headship role, how they were socialized to perform the headship role, and the relationship, if any, that existed between the defined role and the socialization process. Staton-Spicer and Spicer (1987) identified communication dimensions used by department chairpersons during organizational socialization. Seedorf (1991) acknowledged that department chairs are socialized and trained within academic disciplines, yet they are called to serve as administrators. Subsequently, Seedorf (1992) investigated the primary challenges or surprises (see Louis, 1980) that department chairs experience during the adaptation stage of organizational socialization. Gmelch and Parkay (1999) found that beginning department chairs experienced moderate to severe difficulty in making the transition into their new roles. Smith and Stewart (1999) suggest that a deeper understanding of the role-transitioning process from that of faculty member to department chair will improve individual and organizational effectiveness.

Collectively, these previous studies have identified important aspects associated with the process of becoming a department chair. However, none of the studies
investigated how department chairs learn to function in their multiple roles or how they learn to perform their responsibilities. Furthermore, none of these studies investigated music department chairs.

**Background of the Research Problem**

As a background to the current study, the higher education literature has well documented: (a) the characteristics and challenges of the department chair position (Al-Karni, 1995; Burns & Gmelch, 1992; Gmelch, 1995, 1996, 2004; Gmelch & Burns, 1993, 1994; Gmelch & Gates, 1995; Murray & Murray, 1998; Ragan & Rehman, 1996; Seedorf, 1993; Toma & Palm, 1998; Wolverton et al., 1997); (b) the myriad roles and responsibilities that department chairs perform (Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders, 2000; Bowman, 2002; Carroll & Gmelch, 1994; Crothall, Callan, & Hartel, 1997; Daly & Townsend, 1994; Jones, & Holdaway, 1995; McDowell, 2000; Miller, Jackson, & Pope, 2001; Murry & Stauffacher, 2001; Palmer & Miller, 2001; Staniforth & Harland, 2006; Stark, 2002; Stark, Briggs, & Rowland-Poplawski, 2002); and (c) the training needs of department chairs (Aziz et al., 2005; Filan, 1999; Gillet-Karam, 1999; Kinnick, 1993; Peters, 1994; Pettit, 1999; Smith & Stewart, 1999; Wolverton, Ackerman, & Holt, 2005).

What has is not known, however, is how department chairs transition into their department chair roles and how they learn to perform chair responsibilities. Despite numerous studies that have focused on the various facets of the department chair position, little is known about how professors become chairs (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999). This is a critical issue given that there are over 80,000 department chairs within the United States, and approximately one quarter are replaced each year (Gmelch, 2002b).
Music department chairs are an important group among this national population. According to the *Directory of Music Faculties in Colleges and Universities, U. S. and Canada* (2007), music department chairs provide departmental leadership for nearly 39,000 music faculty members within approximately 1800 colleges and universities in North America. Research involving music department chairs, however, is extremely limited. No studies were found that investigated the socialization process of becoming a music department chair. Central to the current study, therefore, is the goal of understanding how these individuals learn to function as department chairs.

**Research Problem**

The department chair literature over the last three decades has extensively investigated department chair roles and responsibilities. In other words, this research has primarily focused on what these individuals do. Although lists of roles and duties may assist department chairs in knowing job expectations, Wolverton et al. (2005) contends that few department chairs ever see the lists or acquire the skills required of the position. Furthermore, studies demonstrate that department chair roles and responsibilities are continuing to expand and increase in complexity (Aziz et al., 2005; Lucas, 2000; Toma & Palm, 1998). In addition, there is evidence that department chairs are faced with heavier workloads and longer time commitments that ever before (Aziz et al., 2005). Unfortunately, many of these individuals view the department chair position as all-consuming, and having an adverse effect on their scholarship, research, and teaching (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004).

Although department chairs come from the faculty ranks, the skills necessary to be an effective department chair differ drastically from those necessary to be an effective
faculty member (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Thomas & Schuh, 2004). These differing skills, along with little to no leadership training, limited administrative preparation, and limited mentoring, often make the transition process into the department chair position difficult (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999).

Much of the difficulty that department chairs experience is due to role conflict and/or role ambiguity inherent with the position (Gmelch, 1995). Role conflict occurs when department chairs are forced to decide between conflicting requests or expectations. Department chairs have long been considered a buffer between faculty and administration (Gillett-Karam, 1999), and consequently they experience role conflict as they mediate competing role expectations. On the other hand, role ambiguity results when insufficient information about job expectations is available for department chairs to perform their responsibilities.

Stress from role conflict and role ambiguity has been well-documented as an occupational hazard of the department chair position (Burns & Gmelch, 1992, 1995; Gillett-Karam, 1999; Gmelch & Wilke, 1991; Wolverton, et al., 1997). Training has been recommended in the literature as a means of mitigating stress and easing the transition process into the department chair position (Aziz et al., 2005; Gillet-Karam, 1999, Wolverton et al., 1999). Despite these recommendations, lack of chair training and preparation are consistently noted as problems (Bensimon et al., 2000; Burns & Gmelch, 1992; Daly & Townsend, 1994; Dyer & Miller, 1999; Stark, 2002). Peters (1994) describes the present dilemma surrounding the learning of department chair roles: "if trial and error, trial by fire, and trial and tribulation are less than satisfactory models, what more formal mechanisms can be instituted to assist the already accomplished professor in
becoming a successful manager" (p. 100)? Figure 2 illustrates the well-documented challenges of the department chair position.

In response to these issues, research is needed that will assist department chairs in understanding how to effectively function within this multifaceted position. Jones and Holdaway (1995) acknowledge that although many of the foundational role studies of department chairs employ quantitative approaches, more qualitative approaches are now desirable for understanding the complexities of the department chair position. Guided by the organizational socialization literature, this research suggests that the manner in which department chairs are socialized into their positions has implications for how chairs function in their multiple roles and how they perform their responsibilities (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Before introducing research questions, it is important to clarify the specific focus of this investigation. Although this research is informed by the extensive body of literature addressing department chairs from multiple academic disciplines, this study examined the experiences of department chairs only within the discipline of music. As a result, this study acknowledges two assumptions. First, music department chairs belong to the collective population of all college and university department chairs. It is within this broad context that much of the literature concerning general department chairs can be applied to music department chairs. Second, when department chairs are studied only within the context of the music discipline, themes that emerge may be unique to music department chairs. Given these two assumptions, this study is both an investigation of department chairs and more precisely a study of music department chairs.
Figure 2. Challenges of the department chair position as documented in the higher education literature.
Using qualitative research methods, this study sought to explore and describe how fifteen college and university music department chairs were socialized into their multiple roles and how they are learning or have learned to perform their many responsibilities. Music department chairs face challenges with regard to the public visibility of their programs, the oversight of highly specialized faculty, extensive facility and equipment needs, and critical issues associated with decreased arts advocacy and funding (Miller, 1993). Studying a homogenous group of department chairs will help to ensure a uniformity of chair roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, socialization studies support the investigation of homogenous groups of individuals (see Morrison, 1993).

Research Questions

The primary research question addressed by this study is: How do college and university music department chairs learn to function in their multiple roles and perform their multiple responsibilities?

The following secondary questions were also explored:

1. How do these individuals describe their experiences prior to assuming the department chair position (i.e., during the anticipatory stage of organizational socialization)?

2. How do these individuals describe the transition process of becoming a department chair (i.e., during the encounter stage of organizational socialization)?

3. What relationships, if any, do these department chairs maintain that provide support for their multiple roles and responsibilities?

4. What strategies and resources, if any, do these department chairs utilize to facilitate their work, and why?
5. How do years of department chair experience help these individuals make meaning of their multiple roles and responsibilities?

6. How does being a musician (i.e., one’s identity within the discipline) help a music department chair make meaning of his or her multiple roles and responsibilities?

Question one provides a description of the background of each department chair prior to assuming the chair position. Department chairs, as newcomers to their position, actively participate in the socialization process through their individual differences and unique backgrounds (Tierney, 1997) as well as their personal interpretation of their socialization experiences (Louis, 1980). Question two focuses on the transition process of moving from the role of a faculty member into the role of a department chair. Although socialization often describes the early experiences of newcomers within organizations, socialization is equally applicable to those already within organizations who assume new roles (Staton-Spicer & Spicer, 1987). Moreover, socialization is a continuous process for individuals within organizations (Chao et al., 1994). Question three is based on the assumption that organizational roles are defined through social interactions with others (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). According to Louis (1980), other people help newcomers interpret their experiences and make sense of the events that surround them. Question four explores the effective ways that department chairs accomplish their tasks, as well as provide a rationale for the usage of specific strategies and resources. Question five considers how years of department chair experience assist chairs in understanding their roles and accomplishing their responsibilities. Participants within this study represent diverse levels of experience ranging from beginning to veteran department chairs. Lastly, question six addresses a department chair’s personal identity within the discipline of
music. It explores the potential benefit of being a musician on the role of a music department chair.

This study should be of interest to faculty members who are considering becoming department chairs, those who currently serve as department chairs, and deans who are seeking to assist chairs in learning their roles. It fills gaps in the department chair literature by connecting organizational socialization theory to the learning of department chair roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, this research moves beyond the mere listing of chair roles and responsibilities to a deeper understanding of how faculty members transition into the department chair position and how they learn to function in their new roles.

Overview of the Study

This research is organized into six chapters. Chapter One has provided an introduction to the rest of this study. Chapter Two provides an overview of literature from three primary areas: (1) the department chair literature including a description of current chairs, the pathway to the chair position, a historical review of department chair studies, characteristics of the chair position, and the training needs of department chairs; (2) the music department chair literature; and (3) the organizational socialization literature as the theoretical framework that informed this study. Chapter Three describes the study design and qualitative methods used to collect and analyze data. Chapter Four describes the department chairs who participated in this study and their individual socialization experiences. Chapter Five presents collective department chair socialization experiences organized by themes. Chapter Six reviews this study’s thematic organization,
discusses results within the context of relevant literature, and presents implications for various groups connected to the department chair position.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of literature for this study is organized into three main sections. The first section discusses college and university department chairs and the features associated with the department chair position. The second section of literature focuses specifically on music department chairs. The final section presents organizational socialization as a useful theoretical framework for understanding how department chairs come to learn their roles and responsibilities.

Department Chairs and the Department Chair Position

Before seeking to study how individuals learn to function as department chairs, a thorough review of research pertaining to the department chair position and those who serve as department chairs was undertaken. This section: (a) describes those who serve as department chairs; (b) identifies motivations and institutional mechanisms for becoming a department chair; (c) defines the term “role” and identifies the primary roles and responsibilities performed by department chairs; (d) identifies chair roles in relationship to faculty; (e) describes chair roles as a product of their departmental identity; (f) discusses role ambiguity, role conflict, and stress experienced by department chairs; and (g) identifies the professional training needs of department chairs.

Who Serves as Department Chairs

Early demographic findings suggest that university department chairs are, on average, about forty-six years old with 10 percent being women (Carroll, 1991). Seagren and Miller (1994) surveyed 9000 community college department chairs to determine their
demographic profile. They found department chairs to be between the ages of 45-54, predominantly male, and almost exclusively white. More recently, Wolverton, Gmelch, Wolverton, and Sarros (1999) found department chairs to be, on average, fifty-one years old, with women filling 11 percent of the chair positions. The majority of department chairs are tenured at their respective institutions and many hold the rank of professor (Hecht, 2004; Hecht, Higgerson, Gmelch, & Tucker, 1999). While department chair appointments are often variable in length, terms of service are commonly set at three to five years (Hecht, 2004; Hecht et al., 1999). However, department chairs’ length of appointment seldom extends beyond six years (Creswell, Wheeler, Seagren, Egly, & Beyer, 1990). Following their tenure as department chair, most chairs return to faculty status (Carroll, 1991).

Collectively, there are about 80,000 department chairs who serve in colleges and universities in the United States (Gmelch, 2002b). Nearly one quarter of these department chairs will need to be replaced each year (Gmelch). As first level administrators, department chairs outnumber all other types of college and university administrators combined (Tucker, 1984). The following section describes the process of becoming a department chair including: (a) the motivations for becoming a department chair, (b) the varied mechanisms for selecting new department chairs, and (c) the challenges experienced during the transition period.

Motivations and Hiring Mechanisms for Becoming a Department Chair

Department chair research demonstrates that a normative path to the chair position exists. In a national study, Carroll (1991) found that chairs consistently begin
their careers within disciplines as graduate students, become faculty in those disciplines, progress through faculty ranks, and eventually become department chairs.

Although the path to the department chair position is consistent, faculty members choose to become department chairs for several reasons. Booth (1982) suggests that faculty members accept department chair positions because they desire to initiate change within their academic departments, they are bored in their current position, or other acceptable candidates are not available. Seedorf (1990) grouped motivations for becoming department chairs into intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivations include personal development, financial gain, a chance to relocate, and a desire for more control. Extrinsic motivations include a lack of alternative candidates, being drafted by the dean or by colleagues, and a sense of duty to the institution. Gmelch and Miskin (1993) confirmed these findings and sought to understand how the decision to assume the department chair position affected leadership roles. The decision to become a department chair, however, is often viewed negatively by others. Eble (1986) describes this peculiar perspective:

Those who want the position are often ruled out for their wanting it. Those who don’t want it are often and unwisely forced into it. Those who assume the office must face a disdain for administration from many of their colleagues and even from themselves. (p. 2)

Department chairs who accept the position as an opportunity to help their departments or as a way to advance professionally typically remain in the position longer than those who assume the position as a duty (Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002). Some chairs feel pressured into the department chair position by their colleagues or the dean (Carroll & Wolverton,
2004). Occasionally, faculty may seek the department chair position for financial gain (Carroll & Wolverton), although Ragan and Rehman (1996) demonstrate that serving as a department chair may slow research productivity, which in turn may slow future wage growth.

In addition to the varied motivations for becoming a department chair, there are several institutional processes by which a faculty member may become a department chair. Carroll (1991) investigated how department chairs were hired. He found five general methods: (a) a rotational appointment from within the department, (b) an appointment by the dean, (c) an election by the faculty, (d) an election by the faculty with the approval from the dean, and (e) other hiring mechanisms. Although hiring mechanisms are varied across discipline types and institutions, nearly half of the department chairs surveyed in this study were elected by the faculty with approval from the dean. Furthermore, length of service was correlated to the method by which department chairs were hired. Department chairs who were hired without faculty election served for three-fourths of a year longer than those department chairs who were hired by faculty election (Carroll, 1991).

Regardless of the manner in which department chairs are hired, research demonstrates that department chairs come to their positions unprepared to function in their new roles and unprepared to perform their newly acquired responsibilities (Creswell, 1986; Dyer & Miller, 1999; Gmelch, 2002b; Lucas, 1994).

*Department Chair Roles and Responsibilities*

The following section identifies department chair roles and responsibilities as a necessary first step to understanding how department chairs learn to function in their
positions. Prior to this discussion, however, it is important to provide an appropriate
definition for a role. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) generally define a role as "the set of
often diverse behaviors that are more or less expected of persons who occupy a certain
defined position within a particular social system" (p. 226). The primary focus of the
current research, therefore, is to understand how department chairs learn the diverse
behaviors, or roles, expected of their position.

Early department chair studies generally sought to understand what chairs do. As a result, this research often generated lists of roles and responsibilities that chairs perform. One significant study which surveyed nearly 1,200 department chairs found that chairs function in three major roles: academic, administrative, and leadership (McLaughlin, Montgomery, & Malpass, 1975). The academic role involves teaching, research, and curriculum related activities. The administrative role was reported as time-intensive and involves record keeping and department advocacy. The leadership role involves faculty relationships, including selection, motivation, and development. Smart and Elton (1976) grouped major department chair responsibilities into four roles: faculty, coordinator, research, and instructional. McLaughlin, Montgomery, and Sullins (1977) factor analyzed the time that department chairs spent in 27 specific tasks. These tasks were categorized into six major duties: liaison, students, graduate/research, recordkeeping, personnel, and directing.

In his seminal work entitledChairing the Academic Department, Tucker (1984) arranged department chair tasks and duties into eight broad categories: department governance, instruction, faculty affairs, student affairs, external communication, budget and resource, office management, and professional development. In addition, Tucker
(1984) identified 28 possible roles that department chairs assume throughout their tenure including teacher, mentor, researcher, leader, planner, manager, mediator-negotiator, and various other roles.

In other work, Moses (1985) studied the department chair’s role in encouraging excellent teaching, enhancing scholarly productivity, and utilizing faculty members’ talents and abilities. Seagren, Wheeler, Mitchell, and Creswell (1986) surveyed department chairs and faculty regarding the primary roles associated with faculty development and vitality. Their research identified seven department chair roles: communicator, facilitator, academic leader, motivator, counselor, politician, and manager of “administrivia.” Kremer-Hayon and Avi-Itzhak (1986) factor-analyzed role perceptions of academic chairpersons and found five main factors: curriculum and instruction, initiation, staff development, democratic leadership style, and departmental status. Watson (1986) grouped department chair roles into five primary categories: intellectual leader, coordinator/administrator, representative, resource mobilizer, and personnel administrator. Seedorf and Gmelch (1989) compared the managerial role of academic department chairs to traditional managers outside academe. Their research suggests that department chairs experience difficulty in performing their managerial role due both to heavy demands on their time and limited training. Seagren, Wheeler, Creswell, Miller, and Van Horn-Grassmeyer (1994) reported that the majority of department chairs in community colleges and four-year institutions believe administrative duties, faculty development activities, and strategic activities to be very important. Al-Karni (1995) investigated who should evaluate department chairs and the criteria for department chair evaluation. The sample was comprised of academic deans who
identified 19 roles as important for department chairs. Stark, Briggs, and Rowland-Poplawska (2002) identified seven department chair leadership roles associated with departmental curriculum planning. These curriculum planning roles include: facilitator, sensor, initiator, agenda setter, advocate, coordinator, and standard setter. Stark (2002), however, asserts that department chairs receive little or no preparation for their role as curriculum leader.

In a different approach to chair studies, Creswell et al. (1990) interviewed over 200 “excellent” department chairs as recommended by faculty and deans at over 70 campuses to determine effective departmental leadership strategies. Their top strategy identified the need for department chairs to learn about their roles and responsibilities. Important to the current study, this strategy indicates that department chairs do not come to the chair position with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Collectively, this body of research demonstrates a broad set of department chair activities with little consensus regarding a core group of essential department chair roles or responsibilities. Although these studies have generated lists of roles and responsibilities that may assist department chairs in knowing job expectations, few chairs report that they are adequately prepared or have received training to function in these multiple roles and to perform the extensive responsibilities expected of them (Aziz et al., 2005; Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders, 2000; Burns & Gmelch, 1992; Daly & Townsend, 1994; Dyer & Miller, 1999; Gillet-Karam, 1999; Stark, 2002).

Department Chair Roles in Relationship to Faculty

Department chairs’ multi-faceted relationships with faculty account for many of the challenges that department chairs experience. According to Bensimon et al. (2000),
department chairs have some of the greatest institutional responsibilities in hiring new faculty, managing faculty development, and supporting faculty through the tenure process. Yet, most department chairs are not well prepared to perform these roles involving faculty (Bensimon et al.).

Numerous studies acknowledge the department chair’s role in facilitating faculty recruitment and retention (Bensimon et al., 2000; Creswell et al., 1990; Lucas, 1994; Miller, Jackson, & Pope, 2001; Seagren et al., 1993). Boice (1985) reports that department chairs view themselves as responsible for faculty growth and development. However, Vavrus, Grady, and Creswell (1988) indicate that department chairs are rarely given guidance for performing this faculty development role. Staniforth and Harland (2006) investigated the induction process of new faculty members as a primary responsibility of department heads. The induction or socialization of new faculty often involves managing, supporting, and developing new faculty, and may even include mentoring faculty through the various phases of their academic lives.

Furthermore, Barge and Musambira (1992) discuss that the chair-faculty relationship may influence faculty members’ socialization, identification, and motivation within an academic department. Moses (1989) surveyed department heads and faculty who identified promotion of faculty, annual review of probationary faculty, and review of tenured faculty as key roles for which department heads are responsible. Daly and Townsend (1994) studied the department chair’s role in facilitating faculty tenure as part of the socialization process of junior faculty members. Gmelch (1995) identified 12 comprehensive tasks that department chairs perform. The majority of these tasks focus on the department chair’s relationship with faculty. These tasks include the recruitment,
selection, and evaluation of faculty, in addition to providing departmental leadership, enhancing faculty teaching, morale, and professional development, and providing support and motivation for faculty to be successful in their positions. McDowell (2000) studied the department chair’s role in conducting exit interviews with faculty. Department chairs believe that exit interviews provide valuable information to departments and universities, yet few chairs are trained to conduct exit interviews and few actually conduct exit interviews.

Although department chairs’ multi-faceted roles in relationship to faculty have been well-documented, department chairs receive little, if any, training or administrative preparation to effectively perform these responsibilities. This lack of formal training and preparation in regard to faculty leadership should be of serious concern for institutions given that faculty are considered to be an institution’s greatest asset (Bensimon et al., 2000).

Department Chair Roles in Relationship to Identity

The way in which department chairs view themselves often influences how they function and affects their perceptions of the relative importance of their responsibilities. Carroll and Gmelch (1992) used factor analysis to investigate role types and profiles of department chairs into four primary roles: leader, scholar, faculty developer, and manager. The leader role was attributed to chairs who feel effective in leading their departments both internally as well as externally. The scholar role describes chairs who feel effective in their own scholarly productivity. The faculty developer role was attributed to chairs who feel effective in helping faculty to be successful in their various pursuits. The manager role describes chairs who feel effective as custodians of their
departments, including the maintenance of records and the management of staff and resources. Within these primary roles, department chairs also perform multiple tasks and duties, each with its own set of role expectations (Carroll & Gmelch).

Later, Carroll and Gmelch (1994) investigated these responsibilities through department chairs' perceptions of the importance of 26 administrative duties. Specifically, they sought to understand the relationship between department chair duties and the four department chair role orientations (i.e., leader, scholar, faculty developer, and manager). Department chairs who strongly identified with a role orientation also placed a high level of importance on the duties associated with that role. For example, department chairs who felt they were effective faculty developers also perceived faculty development responsibilities as important. Carroll and Wolverton (2004) agree that department chairs' self-perception has an impact on how they function in their position and what they do after they complete their tenure as department chairs. Wolverton, Gmelch, Wolverton, and Sarros (1999) found that over 40 percent of department chairs identify themselves exclusively as faculty, while more than half of department chairs describe themselves as both faculty and administrator. Furthermore, less than five percent of department chairs describe themselves as exclusively administrators. These findings suggest that although faculty members assume the department chair position, rarely do they identify themselves as having fully transitioned into administrative ranks.

Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, and Stress

Research shows that academic leaders come to their positions without leadership training or experience and without a clear understanding of the role ambiguity and conflict associated with being a department chair (Creswell, 1986; Gmelch, 1995;
Much of the role ambiguity and role conflict literature concentrates on the department chair’s mediating role between the conflicting interests of faculty and administration (Booth, 1982; Creswell, Wheeler, Seagren, Egly, & Beyer, 1990). Bennett and Figuli (1990) acknowledge that since both faculty and administrators look to department chairs to advance their specific objectives, chairs find themselves unable to maintain both loyalties. Kahn et al. (1964) describes the mitigating effects of clear communication on role ambiguity:

[The level of perceived role ambiguity depends on] ...the degree to which required information is available to a given organization position. To the extent that such information is communicated clearly and consistently to a focal person, it will tend to induce in him an experience of certainty with respect to his role requirements and his place in the organization. (p. 25)

Consequently, when information is not clearly and consistently communicated, individuals experience uncertainty in their roles (Booth, 1982). In its application to department chairs, role ambiguity is associated with the uncertainty of prioritizing competing tasks, knowing which tasks need to be done, and knowing how best to perform responsibilities (Seedorf, 1990). Closely linked to role ambiguity is role conflict:

[Role conflict is] the simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) sets of pressures such that compliance with one would make more difficult compliance with the other. In the extreme case, compliance with one set of pressures excludes completely the possibility of compliance with another set; the two sets of pressures are mutually contradictory. (Kahn et al., 1964, p. 19)
Booth (1982) suggests that role ambiguity and role conflict are common for department chairs regardless of their prior experience, the selection process used to become chair, or the number of years spent in the position. Carroll and Gmelch (1992) found that maintaining faculty scholarship status while performing administrative roles was a major source of role ambiguity and conflict for department chairs. Gmelch and Parkay (1999) identified role ambiguity and role conflict as factors common to the transition process from faculty member to department chair. Extensive duties along with a wide range of differing skills may also be a source of role ambiguity resulting in conflict for department chairs (Moses, 1985).

Murray and Murray (1998) investigated job satisfaction and the propensity of division chairs at two-year institutions to leave their institutions. Notable results in this study demonstrate that although the majority of division chairs reported high levels of job satisfaction, they also reported high levels of role ambiguity and medium levels of role conflict. More predictive of the propensity to leave their institutions were dissatisfaction over policies, administration, and supervision. In contrast to these findings, Singleton (1987) discovered that role conflict and role ambiguity correlate with decreased job satisfaction and increased department chair anxiety. Despite the many studies describing role ambiguity and role conflict as inherent in the department chair position, not all chairs report high levels of role ambiguity and/or role conflict (Burns & Gmelch, 1992).

Recommendations have been made to reduce role ambiguity and role conflict. Bragg (1981) proposed that a clear presentation of expectations during department chair selection, orientation, and evaluation may reduce role ambiguity. Burns and Gmelch (1992) found that relief from occupational stress experienced by department chairs is
highly correlated with reduced conditions of role ambiguity and role conflict. Aziz et al. (2005) recommend training in specific responsibilities of the chair’s role to minimize role ambiguity and conflict. A goal of the current study is to examine the socialization process of learning roles and responsibilities toward reducing role ambiguity and role conflict for department chairs.

The transition from faculty member to department chair is often difficult (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999). According to Van Maanen and Schein (1979), individuals undergoing any organizational transition are likely to experience an anxiety producing situation. As a result, they often feel a loss of identity in their new organizational role and are likely to experience stress (Van Maanen & Schein). Moreover, new department chairs frequently find that their faculty skills and experiences have not equipped them for the transition into the chair position (Lucas, 1994).

Gmelch and Miskin (1993) define stress as “one’s anticipation of his or her inability to respond adequately to perceived demands, accompanied by the anticipation of negative consequences due to inadequate response” (p. 136). Because department chairs serve as both faculty member and administrator, they feel a dual pressure to be effective leaders as well as productive faculty members (Gmelch & Burns, 1993). In addition, department chairs experience the stress of role conflict as they mediate between faculty and administration (Lucas, 1994).

Numerous department chair studies have investigated the factors that cause stress, the results of stress, and recommendations for decreasing its effects. Burns and Gmelch (1992) studied stress factors, role conflict, and role ambiguity for academic department chairs. They found five primary stress factors, ranked here in order of importance: (1)
faculty role stress, (2) perceived expectations stress, (3) administrative task stress, (4) role ambiguity stress, and (5) administrative relationship stress. Results show that department chairs who experienced high role ambiguity also experienced high levels of stress in regard to their academic career. Similarly, department chairs who reported high role conflict experienced significant stress in each of the stress factors. Gmelch and Wilke (1991) investigated the stresses of both faculty and administrators and found that the majority of stress experienced by both groups involved inadequate time for accomplishing job tasks and a lack of resources. Carroll and Gmelch (1992) confirmed these findings by identifying specific department chair stressors for suggested role types (i.e., leader, scholar, faculty developer, and manager). All of the department chair role types experienced stress from a lack of time to devote to staying current in their field as well as trying to gain financial support for their department.

Subsequently, Gmelch and Burns (1993, 1994) found that department chairs experience stress from heavy workloads, confrontations with colleagues, and organizational constraints, in addition to the financial and scholarly concerns mentioned above. Furthermore, they suggest that the manner in which department chairs handle conflict may influence whether they serve additional terms of appointment.

In a cross-cultural comparison of Australian and United States department chair stress, Gmelch (1996) found that United States chairs experience greater pressure from administrative task stress whereas Australian chairs experience greater pressure from administrative relationships stress. Overall, findings showed that department chairs in both countries experience stress from multiple sources. Using factor analysis, Wolverton, Gmelch, Sarros, Wolverton, and Tanewski (1997) found five common department chair
stress variables: administration relationship stress, administrative task stress, human relations stress, academic role stress, and external time stress.

If ignored, stress may have an eroding effect on the personal well-being of those who serve as department chairs. On the one hand, Gillet-Karam (1999) contends that burnout and stress are occupational hazards of the department chair position that negatively affect individuals’ personal lives, health, and other commitments. On the other hand, Bowman (2002) identifies some department chair stress as constructive and essential to defining reality and initiating positive organizational change.

Recommendations are made in the literature toward improving the department chair position by reducing stress. Gmelch and Burns (1993) recommend that institutions restructure the department chair position to a half-time assignment, purge unnecessary “administrivia,” reverse the hierarchy (e.g., deans serving their department chairs), and protect the research interests of chairs. In addition, they suggest comprehensive leadership and managerial training for department chairs. This type of training may ease the transition from faculty ranks into the department chair position (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999). Wolverton et al. (1999) proposed that effective training programs for department chairs may, to some extent, reduce the effects of stress. Mentoring has also been suggested as an effective strategy for socializing new department chairs into their chair roles (Bartunek et al., 1997; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999).

Training Needs of Department Chairs

Reformers of the department chair position point to leadership training as critical to the socialization process of learning department chair roles and responsibilities (Walvoord et al., 2000). However, despite this call for leadership training, few chairs
receive the relevant professional training, mentoring, or socialization necessary to prepare them to perform their duties (Gmelch, 1995; Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Jennerich, 1981; Seedorf, 1990). Van Maanen (1972) identifies training programs as one method of socializing newcomers into an organization. He describes training processes as "skill oriented and directed toward imparting the abilities and knowledge necessary for the new member to perform a designated organizational role" (p. 65). He further explains, however, that "training programs are never limited to their nominal objectives" (p. 65). In other words, training programs impart more than simply skills to newcomers in an organization. Training programs also seek to impart values and accepted role behaviors that support an organization's mission (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Since most department chairs come to the position without training (Creswell, 1986), they essentially bypass the learning process necessary to perform their organizational roles and ultimately develop their own perception of accepted role behaviors (Van Maanen & Schein).

The lack of department chair training is a critical issue well documented in the higher education literature (Dyer & Miller, 1999). Gordon, Stockard, and Willifor (1991) noted that specialized training opportunities for department chairs are limited when compared to training opportunities for deans, vice presidents, chancellors, and presidents. Gillet-Karam (1999) identified the need for department chair training in community colleges. Bensimon et al. (2000) contend that professional development for department chairs is less common than faculty development. Moreover, most new chairs receive little guidance upon accepting the department chair position and ultimately learn how to function as chairs while on the job (Creswell et al., 1990). In addition, new chairs learn
their roles informally from previous administrative duties, by serving on committees, by reading books and journals, and by observing role models (Smith & Stewart, 1999).

Many books have been written to assist department chairs in understanding their roles and responsibilities (Bennett & Figuli, 1990; Bensimon et al., 2000; Buller, 2006; Chu, 2006; Creswell et al., 1990; Eble, 1978; Gmelch, 1995; Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Hecht et al., 1999; Hickson & Stacks, 1992; Higgerson, 1996; Leaming, 1998; Lees, 2006; Lucas, 1994; Ramsden, 1998; Shtogren, 1978; Tucker, 1984). A lack of formal department chair training leaves chairs unprepared to manage difficult situations that may negatively affect their departments and institutions. According to Peters (1994), department chairs who demonstrate poor or careless leadership weaken departments and may incur costly litigation.

Although Gmelch (2002b) notes a scarcity of sound research on department chair training and development, several studies advocate pre-service and in-service training programs for faculty making the transition to the department chair position (Al-Karni, 1995; Jennerich, 1981; Jones & Holdaway, 1995; Seagren et al., 1986; Smith & Stewart, 1999). A number of institution-based department chair training programs are discussed in the literature (Filan, 1999; Lindholm, 1999; Peters, 1994). When institutions provide formal training for new chairs, it often excludes professional skill development and focuses primarily on campus policies and regulations (Hecht et al., 1999). Pettit (1999) argues that effective chair training must be situated in a problem-solving context that connects chairs to their actual work environments. These training formats may include mentoring, action-learning projects, and reality-based case studies. Training in specific areas may help to minimize role ambiguity and role conflict for department chairs (Aziz
et al., 2005). Furthermore, effective training may improve department chair performance and satisfaction, reduce stress, and reduce turnover (Aziz et al., 2005; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999).

According to Meredith and Wunsch (1991), the role of the department chair is becoming more complex and more time-consuming, and it requires a broad set of skills that differ from the skills required of faculty. Developing department chair training programs around these diverse skills has been the topic of numerous studies. Aziz et al. (2005) developed a model that provides an analysis of specific department chair training needs based on a needs assessment framework. Their research identified budgets and funding, faculty issues, legal issues, and professional development of chairs as the highest priority training needs. Crothall, Callan, and Hartel (1997) discuss the varied training needs of department chairs in regard to the recruitment and selection of faculty. Daly and Townsend (1994) investigated the department chair’s role in facilitating faculty tenure. Their research advocates department chair training in evaluation and interpersonal communication. Similarly, Higgerson (1996) identifies effective communication skills as important for department chairs as they interface daily with faculty, students, and administrators. Jennerich (1981) surveyed department chairs and rank ordered six primary competencies: (1) character/integrity, (2) leadership ability, (3) interpersonal skills, (4) ability to communicate effectively, (5) decision making ability, and (6) organizational ability. Wolverton et al. (2005) surveyed deans, department chairs, and prospective department chairs to identify critical department chair skills. All three groups identified good interpersonal skills, the ability to deal with difficult people, the ability to collaborate, and the willingness to serve as the interface between faculty and
administration as important department chair skills. Research argues that institutions have an obligation to assist in the training of department chairs (Peters, 1994).

Rather than targeting specific training programs for answers, Gmelch (2004) proposes three spheres of influence necessary to create the conditions essential for developing new department leaders: (a) a conceptual understanding of chair roles and responsibilities; (b) interpersonal skills in achieving results through multiple constituents (i.e., faculty, staff, students, and administrators); and (c) the practice of reflection to learn from the past.

Summary of Department Chair Research

Higher education literature has clearly described those who serve in department chair positions and has identified their motivations for serving. The selection process for becoming a department chair varies by institution, though most processes involve faculty appointment with dean approval. Department chairs typically serve for three to six years and then return to their previous positions as faculty members. Department chairs serve in a mediating position between faculty and administration which often leads to role ambiguity, role conflict, and stress.

Although the literature advocates formal department chair training, chairs continue to learn to function informally on the job. The transition process into the department chair position is especially difficult due to limited leadership preparation, a lack of training, and unclear expectations regarding multiple roles and responsibilities. Consequently, department chair research has sought to identify chair roles, responsibilities, and essential skills required of the position. Identifying current roles and
responsibilities may prove to be less helpful to newcomers because department chair roles and responsibilities have been expanding over time (Lucas, 2000).

Carroll and Gmelch (1992) propose that department chair research move away from fragmented lists of duties to more focused descriptions of department chair roles. Focused descriptions of chair roles, however, provide little insight into the process of learning to function as a department chair. Given these shortcomings, few studies have sought to understand how department chairs learn to function in their multiple roles. Understanding how chairs learn their roles involves the investigation of department chair socialization and role orientation (Carroll, 1991; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The current study, therefore, sought to examine how department chairs learn their organizational roles and how they learn to perform the responsibilities associated with their roles.

Music Department Chairs

Although department chairs have received considerable attention in the higher education literature, published research addressing music department chairs is extremely limited and largely out-of-date. However, attention has been given to the topic of music department chairs in the form of unpublished doctoral dissertations. Aside from these studies, only a few articles were found that directly discuss music department chairs or involve the music department chair position. The information within these articles, though, is based primarily on the personal experiences of current or former music department chairs and lacks substantive evidence to support recommendations. No studies were found that employed qualitative methodology to explore the socialization process in its application to music department chairs. This shortage of published research
is somewhat understandable due to the nature of the music discipline to focus on music performance rather than on qualitative research.

Nevertheless, those serving as music department chairs comprise an important group of individuals worthy of study. According to the Directory of Music Faculties in Colleges and Universities, U. S. and Canada (2007), music department chairs provide departmental leadership for nearly 39,000 music faculty within approximately 1800 colleges and universities in North America. The following paragraphs seek to briefly categorize and review the available studies addressing college and university music department chairs.

The literature addressing music department chairs can be broadly grouped by topic into the following categories: roles and responsibilities (Fritschel, 1952; Hannewald, 1974; Jones, 1959; Miller, 1988; Schmidt, 1982), administrative factors and considerations (Lovett, 1964), demographics and backgrounds (Brown, 2001; Chang, 1984; Guess-Welcker, 1983; Key, 1977), leadership styles (Chang, 1984; Sinclair, 1985), administrative preparation (Brown, 2001; Goodman, 1975; Mercavich, 1986; Wiesner, 1967), administrative qualities (Cowden, 1984), organizational structure and goals (Glotzbach, 1972; Penland, 1983), departmental challenges (Ritschel, 1981), creativity and leadership (Shrader, 2004), job turnover (Cornelius, 1986, 1989; Prescott, 1983), advanced music degree curriculum (Harrell, 1970), music education (Shirk, 1989), history of music departments (Hays, 1999), and decision making (Blake, 1991).

Collectively, this research has described those that serve as music department chairs, their administrative preparation, the challenges and characteristics associated with the
department chair position, leadership considerations, and reasons why individuals end their appointments as department chairs.

The only relevant study within the last decade was conducted by Brown (2001) who investigated music department chairs' administrative preparation. She surveyed 408 music department chairs in U. S. colleges and universities to investigate their administrative preparation based on their doctoral coursework. Results showed that most music department chairs held the Doctor of Musical Arts degree (DMA) and reported no administrative coursework as part of their programs. This is not surprising given that the DMA degree is a terminal degree housed within a performance-based discipline. Furthermore, Brown found that most music department chairs come to their positions with low to moderate administrative preparation. Although the majority of chairs reported having participated in at least one administrative development workshop from a professional organization, it is unlikely that such minimal training would have substantial effect on department chairs' administrative functioning. Overall, this study suggests that, taken alone, doctoral coursework does not effectively prepare music department chairs for their positions.

Higher education literature shows a paucity of current, published research concerning music department chairs. The available research indicates that, like department chairs in other disciplines, music department chairs come to their positions with little administrative experience and limited training (Miller, 1993). The current study offers organizational socialization as a theoretical framework for understanding and describing the process of learning organizational roles. To date, limited research has been done on the socialization of department chairs in higher education (Gmelch & Parkay,
1999). Investigating department chairs in the same academic discipline (i.e., music) will allow the study to explore the unique socialization experiences of similar academic leaders.

Theoretical Frame: Organizational Socialization

Organizational socialization has been selected as the theoretical frame for this research. This section seeks to: (a) define organizational socialization; (b) discuss organizational socialization stages and role components; (c) identify organizational socialization dimensions and responses; (d) identify organizational socialization assumptions that inform the current study; and (e) review studies that focus on the socialization of department chairs.

Organizational Socialization Defined

Higher education literature provides multiple definitions of organizational socialization. Van Maanen (1972) describes organizational socialization as “the process by which a person learns the values, norms and required behaviors which permit him to participate as a member of the organization” (p. 2). Similarly, Louis (1980) defines organizational socialization as the “process by which an individual comes to appreciate the values, abilities, expected behaviors, and social knowledge essential for assuming an organizational role and for participating as an organizational member” (p. 229-230). Morrison (1993) shortened this definition: “the process whereby newcomers learn the behaviors and attitudes necessary for assuming roles in an organization” (p. 557). Chao, O’Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, and Gardner (1994) suggest that “organizational socialization is concerned with the learning content and process by which an individual adjusts to a specific role in an organization” (p.730). Lastly, Van Maanen and Schein
define organizational socialization loosely as “the process by which one is taught and learns the ropes of a new organization role” (p. 211).

All of these definitions suggest that organizational socialization is a process of learning specific content. Understandably, the literature has gravitated toward either the process or the content of organizational socialization. Research on the process of organizational socialization seeks to understand the stages that newcomers transition through while research on the content investigates what is learned during the process (Chao et al., 1994). Louis (1980) identifies two basic types of socialization content: role-related learning and a general appreciation of the culture of an organization. The current study is fundamentally concerned with understanding how department chairs learn their roles within an organization rather than how cultural norms and values are learned. Tierney (1997) offers this perspective: “when a professor becomes a department chair or an administrator, further socialization occurs, but at this stage the individual socializes himself or herself to a role rather than to the entire organization” (p. 5). Likewise, Chao et al. (1994) suggest that organizational socialization involves the learning of roles or adjusting to new or changed roles within an organization. However, when a department chair is new to both the position and institution, it is likely that he or she may undergo several transitions.

Socialization Stages and Role Components

Merton (1957) describes organizational socialization as a series of stages that newcomers transition through toward becoming organizational members. He identifies the beginning stage of organizational socialization as the “anticipatory” stage. During this stage, an individual develops expectations about his or her future roles within an
organization. When work begins, the individual enters the “encounter” stage. During this stage, the newcomer’s anticipations and expectations are weighed against the reality of his or her new work experiences (Louis, 1980). When a newcomer’s role expectations are unmet or do not match the reality of organizational life, he or she may experience the dysfunctional effects of reality shock (Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995).

Following the encounter stage, the newcomer enters the “adaptation” stage. It is during this stage that the individual completes the transition from newcomer to insider (Louis, 1980). Throughout the entire socialization process, newcomers seek information about job tasks, role demands, expected behaviors and attitudes, evaluation of job performance, and acceptability of non-task behavior (Morrison, 1993). In order to collect meaningful information about the assimilation of chair roles, the current research investigated both department chairs who have recently accepted the chair position (i.e., the encounter stage) and chairs who have served in the chair position for some time (i.e., the adaptation stage).

During the various stages of organizational socialization, individuals who assume a role also assume a knowledge base, strategy, and mission associated with that role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). A knowledge base provides individuals with a range of solutions to frequent problems that occur within an organization. A strategy outlines specific ground rules for selecting solutions to organizational problems. A mission is essentially the explicit and implicit purpose of the role that is rooted in the larger organizational mission. Thus, a role is comprised of not only expected organizational behaviors but also a knowledge base, strategy, and mission that are linked to those behaviors, thereby providing insight into how organizational roles should be performed.
Organizational Socialization Dimensions and Responses

Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) research identified six tactical dimensions that describe possible role transitioning experiences individuals might encounter during organizational socialization. These tactical dimensions include: (a) collective vs. individual socialization processes, (b) formal vs. informal socialization processes, (c) sequential vs. random steps in the socialization process, (d) fixed vs. variable socialization processes, (e) serial vs. disjunctive socialization processes, and (f) investiture vs. divestiture socialization processes.

The following sentences provide a brief description of these tactical dimensions. **Collective socialization** describes the tactic of moving a group of new recruits through similar experiences (e.g., military training) while individual socialization concentrates on the processing of a single individual (e.g., apprenticeship or internship). **Formal socialization** refers to the tactic of processing newcomers through purposeful and customized experiences apart from regular organizational members (e.g., police academy training). **Informal socialization**, on the other extreme, is a laissez-faire tactic where new recruits learn through trial and error (e.g., on-the-job training). **Sequential socialization** describes a series of discrete steps toward learning a role (e.g., educational steps necessary to become a medical specialist) while random socialization steps are ambiguous, unknown, or continually changing (e.g., becoming a general manager). **Fixed socialization** tactics are scheduled and occur over a set period of time (e.g., attaining tenure within a university) while variable socialization involves no specified timeframe for learning roles (e.g., seeking a promotion in a company). **Serial socialization** tactics refer to the process whereby experienced members groom new recruits (e.g., rookie
policemen trained by veteran officers). Disjunctive socialization, on the other hand, provides no role model to assist the newcomer in learning a role (e.g., a female assuming a managerial position previously held only by males). Lastly, an investiture socialization process affirms the personal characteristics of a new recruit (e.g., a young business school graduate entering a company) while a divestiture socialization process seeks to conform an individual by removing personal characteristics (e.g., head shaving upon arrival at a military boot camp) (Van Maanen & Schein).

Central to the current study is the interaction of socialization dimensions that are likely to result in one of three responses: a custodial response, a content innovation response, or a role innovation response (Schein, 1971b). According to Van Maanen and Schein (1979), a custodial response (i.e., caretaking of accepted roles) is likely to result from a sequential, variable, serial, and divestiture socialization process. In contrast, content innovation (i.e., bringing new knowledge to accepted roles) is likely to occur when a socialization process is collective, formal, random, fixed, and disjunctive. The most extreme response, role innovation (i.e., redefining the mission or goals of the role) is likely to occur when a socialization process is individual, informal, random, disjunctive, and investiture. Based on the interaction of these socialization tactics and the extant literature (see Staton-Spicer & Spicer, 1987), the current research anticipated that department chairs may experience some degree of role innovation.

Organizational Socialization Assumptions

The following socialization assumptions inform the current study: First, newcomers are proactive agents that influence their own socialization (Major et al., 1995; Morrison, 1993). Newcomers actively participate in the socialization process through
their individual differences and unique backgrounds (Tierney, 1997) as well as through a personal interpretation of their own socialization experiences (Louis, 1980).

Second, socialization is a continuous process for individuals within organizations (Chao et al., 1994). Moreover, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) suggest that because learning is life-long, an individual’s entire organizational career can be considered a socialization process (Schein, 1971a).

Third, the manner in which newcomers are socialized affects how they learn attitudes, behaviors, and values appropriate for organizational membership (Van Maanen, 1972). In other words, the strategies used during the socialization process influence how individuals learn their roles.

Fourth, the transition process from previous roles into new or different roles may be particularly stressful for individuals. This anxiety is likely due to a lack of identification with an individual’s new environment (Van Maanen, 1978).

Fifth, organizational stability and productivity are linked to the way in which newcomers learn their new roles and responsibilities (Van Maanen, 1978). As a result, organizations should consider wisely the manner in which they transition newcomers into organizational members.

Sixth, organizational socialization encompasses any and all passages experienced by organizational members (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Although the literature generally describes the socialization of newcomers to organizations, socialization is equally applicable to those already within the organization who assume new roles (Staton-Spicer & Spicer, 1987).
Seventh, organizational roles are defined through social interactions with others (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Furthermore, other people help newcomers to interpret their experiences and make sense of the events that surround them (Louis, 1980).

These socialization assumptions apply to the current study of department chairs in the following ways: (a) department chairs are unique individuals who actively participate in their socialization process, (b) socialization is a continuous process for department chairs, (c) the ways in which department chairs are socialized affect how they learn their roles, (d) the transition into the department chair position may be stressful, (e) the method of department chair socialization is linked to institutional stability and productivity, (f) faculty who become department chairs socialize into new roles, and (g) department chairs make sense of their organizational roles through interactions with others.

Socialization of Department Chairs

Although the topic of socialization has been widely researched, there is a scarcity of research focusing on the socialization of department chairs. Consequently, little is known about how professors become chairs (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999). This section reviews the limited department chair socialization studies available and ends with a summary of considerations for the current study.

According Booth (1982), the earliest application of socialization theory to the experience of department chairs was conducted by A. K. Bragg in 1981. She interviewed 39 university department heads to determine how department heads define the headship role, how they were socialized to perform the headship role, and the relationship, if any, that existed between the defined role and the socialization process. Her research generated the following four headship role orientations: faculty, external, program, and
management-orientations. Regarding the socialization process, department heads indicated that role expectations, feedback, and performance evaluations were ambiguous. Overall, Bragg (1981) suggests that institutions provide department heads with clear role expectations especially during the search, selection, and evaluation processes.

Staton-Spicer and Spicer (1987) investigated academic chairpersons to understand types and functions of various communication dimensions during the encounter and adaptation phases of organizational socialization. Using Van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) tactical dimensions of socialization, they discovered that department chairs experienced socialization processes that were: (1) individual, (2) informal, (3) random, (4) moderately serial, and (5) involved investiture tactics. These tactical dimensions, according to Van Maanen and Schein, are most likely to result in a redefining of the mission or goal of a role (i.e., role innovation). Thus, the findings in this study suggest that department chairs may experience role innovation as a product of their socialization processes. Furthermore, Staton-Spicer and Spicer (as cited in Hickson, 1992) indicate that most department chairs go through a similar socialization process by which they learn and assimilate their roles.

Seedorf (1992) investigated the primary challenges or surprises (see Louis, 1980) that department chairs experience during the adaptation stage (see Merton, 1957) of organizational socialization. Results suggest that department chairs struggle when dealing with people, when coping with university bureaucracy, and when trying to counteract the negative effects that serving as a department chair has on research productivity.

Seedorf (1991) and Gmelch and Parkay (1999) studied the transition process of faculty who have moved from faculty ranks to the department chair position. Seedorf
(1991) investigated changes in the amount of time allotted for personal and professional activities after becoming a department chair. The overwhelming majority of department chairs reported less time for research, writing, keeping current in their academic fields, teaching, personal activities, and leisure. From a socialization perspective, these findings demonstrate that transitioning to a new role (i.e., the department chair) may also involve transitioning from or letting go of a former role (i.e., faculty member) (Seedorf, 1991).

The transition to the chair position is not an easy one. Gmelch and Parkay (1999) found that beginning department chairs experience moderate to severe difficulty transitioning into their new roles. They attribute much of the difficulty that department chairs experience to role conflict and/or role ambiguity. Furthermore, the skills necessary to be an effective department chair differ drastically from those necessary to be an effective faculty member (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Thomas & Schuh, 2004). Because department chairs have different roles than those of faculty members, they require a number of socialization experiences (Thomas & Schuh, 2004). To exacerbate the situation, new chairs receive little training, mentoring, or support for their new roles (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999). Wolverton et al. (2005) suggest that faculty members be identified and trained at least one year prior to becoming department chairs as a way of smoothing the transition into the position. Group mentoring has also been explored as a way of collectively socializing new department chairs into their roles (Bartunek et al., 1997). Smith and Stewart (1999) point to socialization theory as a useful framework for understanding this complex process. They indicate that a deeper understanding of the role-transitioning process from that of faculty member to department chair will improve individual and organizational effectiveness.
Summary of Organizational Socialization Research

Organizational socialization has been suggested as a useful theoretical framework for understanding how individuals learn to function in their roles and perform their responsibilities. This study applies organizational socialization theory to the department chair position. Based on Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) tactical dimensions or methods of socialization, department chairs are likely to respond to their socialization experiences by redefining the goals and mission associated with their roles (see Staton-Spicer & Spicer, 1987). Although Van Maanen and Schein's seminal work in organizational socialization has been widely researched, few studies have linked organizational socialization and the department chair position. Since little is known about how professors become chairs (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999), further research may assist those who are considering or currently making this important transition.

Lastly, a compelling description of department chairs is provided that underscores many of the issues discussed throughout this literature review:

The challenging image that remains is of men and women who take on department chair roles, which do not seem to be accepted as part of normal career paths, and to provide leadership without previous experience and generally without training in institutions where they are not socialized into administrative roles. (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004, p. 8)

In response, the current study utilized qualitative methodology to explore the ways in which college and university department chairs socialize into their roles and how they learn to perform their myriad responsibilities.
CHAPTER III

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction and Overview

Higher education literature demonstrates that the department chair position is a complex, ambiguous, and difficult role to assume. Those who transition from faculty ranks into the department chair position generally receive little training or mentoring and are often ill-prepared to serve in their new roles. Although several studies have sought to identify department chair roles and responsibilities, only limited research has explored how department chairs learn to function in these roles and carry out chair responsibilities. In addition, research concerning music department chairs is extremely scarce. No relevant studies were found that involved music department chairs and the process by which they learn to function in their positions. Informed by the organizational socialization literature, this study used qualitative research methods to understand and describe how college and university music department chairs are socialized into their multiple roles and how they are learning or have learned to perform their many responsibilities.

This chapter details the study design and methodology that was used. The chapter is divided into the following sections: (a) a review of the primary and secondary research questions that were investigated, (b) a description of the study’s participants, (c) a presentation of data collection procedures, (d) a discussion of the researcher’s role, (e) a presentation of data analysis strategies, and (f) a discussion of the study’s limitations and delimitations.
Research Questions

A review of prior studies has shown that department chairs serve a broad constituency, perform myriad tasks, occupy numerous roles, and experience difficulty when transitioning into the department chair position. Research, however, has offered limited insight into this transitional process. Consequently, little is known about how chairs come to understand what is expected of them and how they learn to function in their positions. The following research questions sought to examine how individuals transition into the department chair position and how they learn to function within their multiple roles. These questions are guided by the adult form of socialization known as organizational socialization. As the theoretical framework for this study, organizational socialization describes the content and process of learning attitudes, values, and behaviors necessary for assuming organizational roles (Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994; Morrison, 1993). In its application to department chairs (specifically music department chairs), the primary research question asked: How do college and university music department chairs learn to function in their multiple roles and perform their multiple responsibilities?

Several secondary questions were also explored:

1. How do these individuals describe their experiences prior to assuming the department chair position (i.e., during the anticipatory stage of organizational socialization)?

This question provided a description of the background of each individual before becoming a department chair including former leadership roles, administrative training, prior positions, etc.
2. How do these individuals describe the transition process of becoming a department chair (i.e., during the encounter stage of organizational socialization)?

Question two focused on the transition process of moving from the role of a faculty member into the role of a department chair.

3. What relationships, if any, do these department chairs maintain that provide support for their multiple roles and responsibilities?

Question three is based on the assumption that organizational roles are defined through social interactions and sense-making experiences with others (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; Louis, 1980).

4. What strategies and resources, if any, do these department chairs utilize to facilitate their work, and why?

Question four explored the ways that department chairs accomplish their tasks, as well as provides a rationale for the usage of specific strategies and resources.

5. How do years of department chair experience help these individuals make meaning of their multiple roles and responsibilities?

Question five considered how years of department chair experience assist chairs in understanding their roles and accomplishing their responsibilities. Participants in this study included beginning and veteran music department chairs. As a result, this question provided insight into how chairs learn to function throughout their tenure in the position.

6. How does being a musician (i.e., identity within the discipline) help a music department chair make meaning of his or her multiple roles and responsibilities?
This last question investigated a department chair’s identity as a musician as it relates to the role of a music department chair. It explored the influence that being a musician has on music department chair role sense making and decision making.

Participants

Participants for this study were fifteen music department chairs from fifteen colleges and universities in the Midwest. Purposeful sampling (McMillan, 2004) was utilized where each individual was invited to participate based on his or her experience as a department chair within a higher education institution. As part of this study’s purposeful sampling technique, both newly hired and veteran department chairs were invited to participate. The diversity of experience levels of these department chairs helped to provide a more complete picture of how department chairs learn their roles and responsibilities.

Although this study is informed by the broad department chair literature, only department chairs from the music discipline were studied. Music department chairs were selected based on my knowledge of the music discipline and my personal experience as a college music department chair. In addition, the unique demands placed on music department chairs may make the music department chair position more challenging than some department chair positions in other disciplines (Miller, 1993). Furthermore, music department chairs face challenges with regard to the public visibility of their programs, the oversight of highly specialized faculty, extensive facility and equipment needs, and issues associated with decreased arts advocacy and funding. Studying department chairs from the same discipline may help to ensure the uniformity of chair roles and
responsibilities. Lastly, the organizational socialization literature supports the study of homogenous groups of individuals (see Morrison, 1993).

Data Collection

As the primary means of data collection for this study, I interviewed fifteen music department chairs from colleges and universities. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), it is important that a study's method of inquiry "fit" with the method of inquiry used in establishing its theoretical base. Organizational socialization was selected as the theoretical framework for understanding how department chairs learn to function in their roles and how they learn to perform their responsibilities. Within the organizational socialization literature, qualitative research methods have been extensively used to understand how people assimilate organizational roles (see Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Therefore, this study employed qualitative research methods that matched the methods of inquiry used in establishing the theoretical framework of organizational socialization. This study made use of conventional qualitative interviewing techniques. Qualitative interviewing is based on the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit (Patton, 1990). Moreover, interviewing is often the main source for obtaining qualitative data necessary for understanding the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1998). Although this study does not conform to strict phenomenological methodology, it draws from the philosophy of phenomenology in its emphasis on experience and interpretation.

The current study utilized standard open-ended interviews where questions were carefully worded and ordered so that each participant responded to the same questions in the same sequence (Patton, 1990). Standard open-ended interviews reduce interviewer
bias that may come from asking questions differently to different participants (Patton). Because of their structure, these types of interviews also ensure that participants' time is used carefully (Patton). Probes were used to continue discussions and provided further clarification of ideas that participants identified during the interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Miles and Huberman (1984) suggest that data collection take place in an official or formal setting because this type of data will be more reliable than data collected in informal settings. Therefore, I requested that the interviews take place in the department chair's office, or at a neutral location on the respective campus of each institution. This face-to-face type of interviewing is one of the most common forms of qualitative data collection (Merriam, 1998). Interviews averaged about 90 minutes in duration. Interviews were recorded with a digital voice data recorder and later transcribed verbatim. Verbatim transcriptions provide additional credibility for the research because findings are presented in the exact words of the participants.

A semi-structured interview guide (Merriam, 1998) was utilized during the interviews to ensure the uniformity of questions that were asked of all participants. The interview guide was pilot-tested with one music department chair and one expert interviewer not participating in this study. From their suggestions, modifications were made to the interview guide regarding specific wording, order, and relevancy of questions as well as the duration of time needed to complete each interview.

The interview guide (see appendix A) can be generally divided into six sections: (a) the experiences prior to becoming a department chair (i.e., anticipatory stage of organizational socialization), (b) the transition period into the department chair position (i.e., the encounter stage of organizational socialization), (c) relationships, if any, that
provide support for department chairs, (d) strategies and resources, if any, that help facilitate the work of department chairs, (e) the effect that years of chair experience has on a department chair's ability to make meaning of their work, and (f) the effect that a department chair's personal identity as a musician has on his/her role as a music department chair. These interview sections directly correspond to the research questions addressed in this study. Multiple interview questions were asked within each section to allow for breadth and depth of participant responses. A crosswalk table is provided (see appendix F) that demonstrates how each research question was researched across multiple interview questions.

During data collection, participants were informed that they may stop or decline the recording of their interview at any time. Field notes were also taken during the interviews and provided another source of data. It was anticipated these field notes would serve as a back up to the audio recordings in case of recording failure or if a participant declined the recording of portions or all of his/her interview. However, there were no unexpected recording failures and none of the participants declined the recording of their interview.

Of primary concern to the current study was the protection of participants' identities. To this end, every effort was made to alter the circumstances within this study in order to protect participants' confidentiality and anonymity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, the general term “respondent” was used instead of participants’ names during the process of transcribing interviews. Later, within the final analysis, pseudonyms were used to enhance the overall readability of findings. Regarding data protection, computer audio files and transcriptions were kept in a locked file in a separate location away from
identifying information (i.e., respondent list) that might comprise the confidentiality of participants. As a matter of consent, participants were informed that they may withdraw from the study at any point. However, all department chair participants maintained their involvement throughout the study.

Role of the Researcher

My ten years of experience as a music department chair at a four-year private institution has provided me with insights into the challenges and issues associated with departmental leadership. For me, learning to function in my numerous department chair roles and responsibilities was a demanding process. Much of this difficulty, as supported in the department chair literature, was attributable to no formal training, increased time demands and responsibilities, and a lack of clear expectations. Prior to my appointment to the chair position, I witnessed the transition of other faculty members into department chair positions. Although these experiences have provided me with an insider’s view of becoming and being a department chair, they may potentially influence this study. My obligation, therefore, is to acknowledge these personal and professional predispositions that may have affected data collection, analysis, and interpretations. As a music department chair, I have purposefully sought to bracket my experiences out of this study in order to establish my credibility as a reliable researcher (Patton, 1990).

One of my primary responsibilities as a music department chair involves staff, faculty, and student recruitment for our department. In this recruitment role, I have interviewed several individuals for support staff positions as well as for part-time and full-time faculty positions within our department. Furthermore, I have interviewed numerous prospective students for acceptance into our program. I believe this
interviewing experience, as part of my professional responsibilities, further establishes my credibility as a capable researcher (Patton, 1990).

Data Analysis

The overarching goals of qualitative data analysis are to “reflect the complexity of human interaction by portraying it in the words of the interviewees and through actual events and to make that complexity understandable to others” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 202). The current study sought to reflect the socialization experiences of music department chairs as means for understanding how they learn to function in their multiple roles and perform their multiple responsibilities. An initial step prior to formal analysis involved organizing the raw data from interview transcriptions and field notes to ensure that the data was complete (Patton, 1990). In addition, I organized and saved all recorded interviews and verbatim transcriptions to external hard drives for protection in the event of computer hard drive failure. Patton recommends making several hard copies for use during the coding of interview data. Alternately, I printed only one master copy of all interview transcripts for reference and chose to code interviews electronically, thereby eliminating additional hard copies of raw data.

After organizing the data, I focused my analysis on individual descriptions of each department chair. Content analysis (Patton, 1990) involved coding interview data as part of a continual data reduction process (Miles & Huberman, 1984) for the purpose of identifying and categorizing initial themes. This process involved thoroughly reading through interview data and labeling all relevant data by topic. As part of the labeling process, data was tagged with the corresponding respondent number, transcription page number, and line numbers of each quote (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This detailed analysis
procedure provides the precise location of responses within the collective body of interview data. Furthermore, it demonstrates clear evidence of findings in the event of a data audit. As a result of this procedure, I generated a list of codes by topic for each department chair. From these lists of codes, I further reduced the data into brief summaries for department chairs: namely, their identifying characteristics and socialization experiences. These descriptive summaries precede multi-case interpretations and are presented in Chapter Four of this dissertation along with a larger summary of typical experiences and a demographic profile for each department chair (see Table 2). Patton (1990) suggests that case comparisons and contrasts may occur later in the analysis, but “initially each case must be represented and understood as an idiosyncratic manifestation of the phenomenon of interest” (p. 387).

Following an analysis of individual department chairs, I grouped participant responses together to analyze similar perspectives (Patton, 1990). These repeating ideas were weighed against the study’s research questions and grouped into themes (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). The use of a detailed interview guide helped facilitate this analysis process. However, common ideas were often staggered throughout interview responses.

Extensive data analysis yielded multiple themes that were later narrowed down to eight main themes with several sub-themes. Summary tables of themes are also provided in Chapter Five to further clarify and display results (see Tables 3-9). Throughout this inductive analysis process, common patterns and ideas emerged from the data, rather than being imposed on the data by the researcher (Patton, 1990). Miles and Huberman (1984) propose that data analysis be an iterative process whereby data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification occur continuously throughout the life of the
qualitative project. To this end, data reduction involved the transformation of massive amounts of interview data into smaller, more focused data units (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

As a means of verifying that findings were reliable, transcript summaries of each department chair were sent back to individual participants for review and correction if necessary. This test of trustworthiness has been termed “member checking” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Chapters Four and Five present findings in a written narrative format using extensive quotations from participants along with data display tables that aid in organizing large amounts of data.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore how fifteen college and university music department chairs are learning or have learned to function in their roles and perform their multiple responsibilities. The study specifically investigated the socialization experiences of music department chairs within colleges and universities located in the Midwest. It did not investigate department chairs from multiple disciplines. As a result, this study does not claim generalizeability to other department chairs. Instead, it reflects the individual socialization experiences of department chairs from one academic discipline (i.e., music) in one geographic area during one period of time. The current study does not measure the effects of organizational socialization on job performance, satisfaction, or tenure in the department chair position. While it is possible that institutional leaders may glean beneficial information toward improving the role of the department chair, this research does not advocate for any specific type of socialization process. It is also possible that my experience and perspective as a music department chair may have influenced the interpretations of other department chairs.
Chapter Three Summary

Using qualitative research methods, I have sought to understand and describe how fifteen music department chairs from colleges and universities are learning or have learned to function in their multiple roles and perform their multiple responsibilities. Guided by the theoretical framework of organizational socialization, this study presents the socialization experiences of college and university music department chairs. The current study should benefit new and current music department chairs as well as institutional leaders in understanding the process of becoming a department chair. Furthermore, it should provide insight for those who are considering becoming music department chairs. Finally, this study extends the body of department chair research beyond the typical listing of roles and responsibilities to a deeper understanding of how individuals are socialized into the music department chair position.
CHAPTER IV

DEPARTMENT CHAIRS IN THIS STUDY: CHARACTERISTICS AND INDIVIDUAL SOCIALIZATION EXPERIENCES

Introduction

Chapter Four identifies the characteristics and individual socialization experiences of fifteen college and university music department chairs that participated in the study. It provides a summary of department chair demographics, backgrounds, and motivations for becoming chairs (i.e., during the anticipatory stage of organizational socialization) as well as a detailed description of socialization processes and experiences (i.e., during the encounter stage of organizational socialization). The information within this chapter is drawn directly from verbatim transcripts of semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 90 minutes with each department chair. To protect participants’ identities, the actual names of department chairs have been replaced with pseudonyms throughout this chapter and the remainder of this dissertation.

It is important to note that within this chapter, specific titles reported by participants may include: “Music Department Chair,” “Chair of Fine Arts Division,” “Music Director,” “Director of School of Music,” “Music Area Coordinator,” “Dean of the College of Music,” etc. However, Chapters Five and Six of this dissertation use the general title “Music Department Chair” to describe participants. For purposes of clarification within this study, each of these preceding terms can be viewed as synonymous with the common title “Music Department Chair.” Participant summaries are presented in the following section.
Individual Department Chairs

Susan

Susan is a 42-year-old female who is currently an Associate Professor and Chair of the Fine Arts Division at a Master's College and University (smaller programs) institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). She holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) in Performance and has one and a half years of experience as a department chair. Although she is not tenured at her current institution, she will “go up for tenure next year.” Susan was tenured at her former institution for about six years as a faculty member. Her previous positions included primarily faculty roles and responsibilities. At her former institution, she was not “officially” an administrator although she “did a lot of the duties of the music department chair.” Committee work and accreditation experience were also part of her administrative preparation. She felt that these types of experiences were helpful in preparing her for her current position as Chair of the Fine Arts Division.

Regarding her own motivation, Susan did not originally plan to become a department chair. However, she took an interest in administrative responsibilities along with teaching and found the work “enjoyable.” Susan was hired externally rather than internally which is “atypical” for her institution. She was socialized into the institution as an individual with no set timeframe for learning chair roles and responsibilities and with little support from others within the institution.

Moreover, Susan expected her new institutional environment to be “friendlier” and “welcoming,” but found herself experiencing loneliness upon assuming the chair position. Consequently, she has “struggled” with the lack of support from colleagues on campus. Furthermore, there was no institution-based department chair-specific training or
orientation provided to Susan aside from a general faculty/personnel orientation for all newcomers to the institution. This general orientation occurred over a one year period with approximately 20 sessions offered.

Regarding the process of learning to be a department chair, Susan indicated that it was more random and ambiguous rather than a clear step-by-step progression of learning. Susan did not acknowledge a mentor. However, she did identify a few supportive relationships with individuals on campus outside of her department in addition to a positive relationship with the institution’s provost. Furthermore, she indicated that her relationship with the faculty in the Fine Arts Division is “very supportive.”

Susan reported that her position is “stressful” and that it can be difficult to manage time effectively. She also mentioned that her initial year-and-a-half of department chair experience have helped a “little bit” in understanding her roles and responsibilities. She further added, “...give me a year or two...and then I’ll feel like I’m starting to understand my job. To be quite honest...right now it’s just survival mode.”

Susan indicated that learning department chair roles and responsibilities is an unending process. She responded:

I’m not there yet. I’m still learning a lot and still trying to keep my head above the water. I’m not going to know it all and I don’t ever want to know it all. As soon as I think I know it all, then I should quit because to me, teaching and being in this position, this business, is a constant learning process. And if you’re not content on finding out new stuff and moving forward, then you shouldn’t be doing it.

When asked about the effect that being a chair has had on research, scholarship, and performance, Susan laughed and replied, “...there’s no time to practice...I have a
couple pieces already published, and I have several pieces that are in the works that have been put on hold ever since I got here.”

Susan feels that being a musician is essential to being a music department chair because one must understand the “creative mindset” associated with the music discipline and “connect this creative activity into an academic measurable framework.” Lastly, she feels that her skills as a musician transfer to her department chair roles in regard to the relationships she shares with departmental faculty members. These relationships are analogous to a musical ensemble. She responded:

Every single voice is important, and I need to hear from all of them...Every single one of them is valuable in a different way, and I've got to recognize [that] and they need to recognize that they are all critical to the success of the overall program and that they should be listening to all sides of every single issue, not just looking at it from their perspective.

*Audrey*

Audrey is a 52-year-old female Associate Professor and Chair of the Music Department at a *Master's College and University (medium programs)* institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). She holds a Master of Music degree in Performance and has been tenured for seven years. Audrey has served as the Music Department Chair for 13 years at this institution and reported no prior department chair experience. Most notably, she was promoted from the adjunct faculty ranks to the chair position upon the retirement of a senior faculty member. Although this type of promotion is highly unusual, Audrey’s alumni status and expansive knowledge of the department and its history made her a “logical choice” for the chair position. In addition, she brought
many qualities to the department including “professional contacts,” “skills in performance,” “knowledge of pedagogy,” and “organizational skills.” Her prior professional experience includes adjunct faculty roles and responsibilities at a community college and at other institutions of higher learning. Furthermore, she has taught private lessons at high schools and served in leadership roles within her church and within a community music society.

Audrey did not plan to become a department chair although she mentioned, “I was hoping at some point to find a full time position that I would enjoy to hang my hat.” She also felt a sense of duty to rescue the department by assuming the chair position as indicated by the following statement:

It was a sense that I’m going to save this department. My comrades and [I] are going to make this work. This is my Alma Mater. There are great, great students here. We’ve got a mutual legacy to continue and to bring it up.

The current model at this institution for hiring chairs is usually an internal nomination from within departments. This rotating chair model follows a three-year rotation, though the music department does not adhere to this model, as demonstrated by Audrey’s 12 years of continuous department chair service.

Audrey socialized into this institution as an individual rather than with a group of beginning chairs. She reported that there was no institutional orientation or training provided to her as she assumed the department chair role. Supportive relationships for her included the provost, colleagues within and outside of the music department, department chairs from other institutions, and family members.
When asked how chairs learn to function in the position, she replied, “I think in a music department, among departments, there is a lot that just has to happen, and I’ve been pretty well engaged with that.” Later she added, “I learned in more ways than one, not just visibility, but the paperwork, the connectivity, [and] the accountability.”

In response to the effect that the chair position has had on her research, scholarship, and performance, Audrey replied, “I did much more in the ‘90s than I do now, because becoming department chair really cut me off at the legs as far as being a soprano.” Recently, however, she has been more involved with other professional musicians in a vocal trio. Moreover, she acknowledged that performing has helped to “reclaim some of my identity. [This] is very important.”

Regarding stress, Audrey reported that “anytime I teach [in] a classroom setting, I’m more under stress because I haven’t overcome the desire to know each person and their particular needs well.” She feels that her years of department chair experience have helped her to make sense of her chair roles and responsibilities, but “there’s still so much to learn.” Audrey believes that essential advice for music department chairs is to serve as good “role models” for students in both music and non-music areas of life.

Steve

Steve is a 51-year-old male Professor and Director of Music at an Associate's-Public Urban-serving Single Campus institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). He holds a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting and Literature and has completed the coursework and comprehensive exams for the Doctorate of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) in Choral Conducting and Literature. Steve is in his fifth year as Director of Music and has been tenured since completing his third successful year as a faculty
member. His previous experience includes teaching roles as a music faculty member at
this institution as well as at another university and at a community college. He admits that
while there was a “certain amount of organizational responsibilities I coordinated, [I]
really did not have any administrative responsibilities in either one of those previous
positions.” When asked if these experiences adequately prepared him for the Director of
Music role, Steve replied:

No, of course not. I mean there are certain aspects of the job that you need to
understand –what it’s like to be a music educator. You have to have that
experience and I couldn’t relate to the other faculty at all if I’d never had those
experiences, but it certainly wasn’t enough preparation for all the administrative
responsibilities.

Other administrative experiences included committee work and administrative
involvement in two professional music organizations.

Regarding motivation to become the Director of Music, Steve reflected:

I think the biggest motivation was the fact that I care deeply about this department
and wanted it to be successful. Looking at the other members of the faculty, [I]
felt that I was probably the best choice because of my organizational skills, my
interest in the position and willingness to do the work. I felt that I was probably
the best choice and was going to serve the department well.

The selection process for becoming a director at this institution involves a faculty
vote with subsequent dean approval. Steve had an exceptional experience socializing into
the director position as he was mentored by the former director during his first year. They
essentially shared the director roles and responsibilities before the former director retired.
Steve noted that this transition process was "invaluable" and made the transition "much less painful."

He was socialized as an individual rather than with a group of beginning department chairs and reported little support from the administration during that time due to multiple job turnovers at the dean level. Supportive relationships included the former Director of Music and "a number of close faculty members" in addition to the current dean who is "very supportive." Steve noted that during his transition into the Director of Music position, he did not participate in any formal training or orientation although the institution did make available some leadership training opportunities on certain weekends for those in "leadership roles."

In contrast, Steve indicated that he received "invaluable" training from the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). This association is the primary accrediting body for schools of music throughout the United States. They offer "leadership workshops at their annual meeting for new music executives." Steve commented that he learned the roles and responsibilities of a Director of Music by:

...being thrown into it and having to do it. I can’t think of a better way to learn than just by doing these things. You have to experience them. You have to feel them. You have to touch them and that's really the only way I can imagine. Someone explaining the process to me I don’t think would have made a difference.

Having a "clear cut" job description written by the former Director of Music was also an "invaluable" tool in helping him to sort through responsibilities and timelines for departmental reports. When asked about his relationship with the faculty in the music
department, Steve responded, “Overall, the faculty continue to be supportive of the way I handle the leadership role.”

Regarding stress, he replied, “I don’t take myself too seriously, and allow myself to take [students’] education seriously. And then, avoid stressful situations as much as possible. When you are in a situation that is stressful you have to protect yourself.” Steve feels that, although his years of experience as a Director of Music have helped him make sense of his roles and responsibilities, his position is an “ongoing learning process.” Consequently, he does not feel like he’s fully transitioned into the position.

Due to the time requirements of his position, Steve believes that his role has had a significant impact on his personal performance. He acknowledged that his personal performance has “suffered” and “taken a back seat.”

Lastly, he feels that being a musician is “imperative” to being a Director of Music in regard to curriculum development, facilities and equipment management, personnel supervision, etc. He also indicated that it is possible that being a musician may “impede” department progress, because he may view priorities from a musician’s perspective rather than from an overall departmental perspective.

Eric

Eric is a 56-year-old Professor of Music and Chair of the Music Department at an Associate's-Public Rural-serving Medium institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). He holds a Masters of Music degree in Performance and was granted tenure after his third year of service at this institution. He is currently in his 19th year as the Music Department Chair.
His previous role was as choral director in a community where he spent ten years directing a “comprehensive music program” for students from “kindergarten right on up through the 12th grade.” This position involved a broad array of administrative “activities and processes” including “teaching roles, activities roles, evaluation roles, budgetary roles, hiring roles, planning roles—all those things that give continuity to a program.” As a result, Eric felt that these experiences had prepared him for his current role as a collegiate music department chair. He remarked, “The transition was almost seamless.” At his former position, Eric worked under a “very collaborative” department chair who became his “informal” mentor. This mentoring relationship is a long term relationship that has continued to the present.

Eric reported that he did not plan to become a department chair, but is “glad” that he did. His motivation to become chair was primarily a “matter of load” he noted, due to an “increasingly busier academic department that needed someone to oversee departmental activities.” While the process of becoming a department chair at this institution usually involves internal hires and a rotational model, Eric has served 19 consecutive years in his position. In addition to being the Music Department Chair, he is currently the only full-time faculty member in the department. He was socialized as an individual rather than with a group of beginning department chairs.

Supportive relationships for Eric have included his Discipline Chair, his Discipline Manager, an informal mentoring relationship with a department chair from his former K-12 position, and another full-time colleague within the music department that has since retired. Eric indicated that no formal institutional training or orientation was provided specifically to department chairs aside from training related to “budget
processes.” However, he stated that as “academic leaders have changed,” there has been “college-wide” training for all staff and faculty in regard to college procedures.

Eric agreed that learning to be a department chair is a continuous process that is “not very precise.” Furthermore, no timeframe was established by the institution during which his department roles and responsibilities would be learned. Eric views his teaching as his “stress reliever.” He later expanded on this description, “It is my playground. It is my opportunity to interact closely with people in different ways. It is the musical arts. It is an opportunity to take people places where they haven’t gone.” He feels that his years of service as a department chair have helped him to make sense of his roles and responsibilities, although improvements can be made. He stated, “We also have to hope that one doesn’t rest on one’s laurels. Because you happen to do a pretty good job as a department chair doesn’t necessarily mean that you can’t do better.”

Eric confirmed that he had truly transitioned into the department chair position as he mentioned, “some things became easier for me to do. I didn’t have to second guess myself.” He reported that the department chair role had little effect on his personal performance as a musician, but actually increased scholarship in areas where he “was not specifically degreed.” Eric feels that being a musician is essential to being a music department chair because one must understand the “way a musician thinks.” Lastly, he described the most important skills necessary for being a department chair:

You have to be a people person. You have to like people. You have to respect people. You have to be courteous. People do not like to be told what to do. Some people want to be told what to do and you have to know the difference between
them. But for the most part, people want to be asked. They want to be treated fairly. They want to be treated reasonably and they want to be valued.

*Lance*

Lance is a 62-year-old Professor and Chair of the Music Department at a Baccalaureate College-Arts & Sciences institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). He holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Musicology and is an experienced administrator with 31 years of department chair service between three institutions. He is in his third year as the Music Department Chair at his current institution and will soon be reappointed in this position and granted tenure.

He did not plan to be a chair at his current institution, but was approached by the administration for the position prior to his employment. It should be noted that the process for becoming a department chair at this institution usually involves an administrative decision in consultation with department faculty, but without a faculty vote. Lance has also served as the Associate Dean of Literature and Chair of the Fine Arts Division for six years at a former institution. He admitted, “I not only had music experience…I also had more general academic experience.” He reported at the time of his first academic position, “I already had two years in the work business world. I learned some good things there…things about administrative style…before I got to academia.”

Supportive relationships for Lance have included his academic dean, administrative personnel within the department, colleagues from other departments on campus, colleagues from the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), and family members. In addition, he had engaged in a “mentoring-type relationship” with a
chaplain at this institution who served as a “friend” and “spiritual advisor.” He described his relationship with departmental faculty as “quite cordial,” “friendly,” and “collegial.”

Lance identified his primary role with departmental faculty:

My job is to make sure my colleagues do the best work they can in their specific professional domains, whether it is conducting, teaching theory, private lessons, whatever, so at the end of the day, or the end of the year, that is my goal – I want them each to excel to their highest level that they can in their respective competence.

In contrast to the literature concerning higher education department chairs, Lance reports “very little stress” in his position. He also indicated that while a chair-specific calendar of deadlines and reports is available, other planning and curriculum-type issues are “self-driven... nobody says we had to do this...and so you develop your own time frame.” Lance shared his perspective on some of the challenges of being a department chair:

It is very easy I think as a department chair to become myopic because the press of daily work and certainly of administrative work and there is always another report to read or another report you have to file, or another committee meeting you have to go to, and it is very easy for those things to become chronic occupiers of my time.

Furthermore, he reflected on the importance of being a servant within his department, “I am the chief custodian of this department... [being a chair] is what I do, but it is very much a servant role. It is also visionary, it is a leader role, but it is probably 60-70 percent being a servant.” Lance was socialized as an individual rather than with a
group of beginning department chairs. Although his institution holds a “once a semester meeting for all department chairs” as well as a “retreat,” he reported that no department chair training or orientation was provided to him. No time frame for learning chair roles and responsibilities was established by his institution. Lance agreed that learning to be a department chair is an ambiguous process with “no rhyme or reason to it.” When asked about the effect of the department chair role on research, scholarship, and performance, he responded, “It has [had] a decided impact. Administrative deadlines in virtually all cases trump any other deadlines that I might have from publishers or editors or my own projects.”

Lance also believes that being a musician is essential to being a music department chair, but “in a modest way.” He added:

To the extent that I need to understand what happens in music teaching, in music performance and so on, yes, it’s helpful for me to be a musician. I think there is a relationship but within limits. There [are] other things that a chair needs to do that really have nothing to do with the discipline of the department. They’re general skills: people skills, managerial skills, time management [skills], and this business of encouraging. If I had underwater basket weaving people, I’d have to encourage them just as much as I would try to encourage a violin person to make a recording.

Vivian

Vivian is a 54-year-old Professor and Chair of the Music Department at a Baccalaureate College-Arts & Sciences institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). She holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) degree in performance and is in
her third year as a department chair. The position follows a three-year rotating term model of internal candidates by administrative appointment and is typical of other departments at this institution. She acknowledged that she is considering whether or not she would be willing to serve another three-year term. She commented, "I have asked, at this point in time, to have someone else rotated in because I think we need to build the leadership cohort in the department." Vivian has been tenured at the institution for approximately eight years and held a faculty position in the department before becoming department chair.

Her prior experience involved faculty and area coordinator roles at other institutions. Her description of this coordinator role follows:

It was kind of a position that was intermediate between heading up an area and of the director of the school of music. It was a position that had quite a bit of input on promotion and tenure and raises and annual reviews and that type of thing.

In addition, she was involved in an ongoing "national peer review teaching project" with other institutions and has served on multiple committees throughout her academic career. When asked if these experiences prepared her for the department chair position, she responded:

No, because I think any administration position is going to have a lot of aspects to it that are specific to the institution and unless you get some kind of training or learn the ropes somehow, you’re not going to be prepared, you’re going to have to kind of learn on the job, and that’s been how I’ve handled it here.

Vivian came to her music chair position with the department facing a major "reaccreditation evaluation" by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM).
She remarked, “learning how to do the NASM review [and] getting my colleagues to assist me with the self study and getting that done in a very compressed period of time was probably the biggest learning experience I’ve had as chair.” Regarding motivation to accept the position, Vivian stated that she did not plan to become a department chair. She acknowledged that although it “wasn’t part of an action plan for my life...it seemed to me to be something that I could do for the department in lieu of some other sorts of things.” She reported that no institutional orientation or training was provided to her as a new department chair.

Learning to be a chair, for Vivian, was a particularly challenging experience. Her account of the first year follows, “…the first year was really very stressful because there was no roadmap —no idea in the world. I kind of received along with all the other chairs…the deadlines for the year. Okay. That’s fine. What do they mean?” Her socialization was as an individual although she stated that there were probably others in the institution that moved from faculty positions into department chair roles.

Supportive relationships for Vivian have included other department chairs on campus, colleagues from other institutions, and especially family members. When asked whether she was mentored for the department chair position, she responded “not so much.” Her position as Music Department Chair at this institution receives a half load release time from teaching. Vivian feels that this is not enough release time as she remarked that the amount of administrative work required of the position along with half-time teaching “does kind of feel like two full-time jobs.” She also feels that learning to be a department chair is an ambiguous process at this institution. She further explained:
I’m not sure the leadership knows what they want from the chairs. I think they define the chair position with as little actual power and authority as possible and I think that’s been the case for the history of the college.

Vivian noted that to manage her time as a department chair, she makes a “big picture list” of departmental priorities. When a departmental task is completed, though “nobody knows how time consuming that is,” she gives herself a “pat on the back.” Her years of experience have helped her to make sense of her chair roles and responsibilities although she confessed, “…all [of] these pressures and stresses…they have been overwhelming. I really spent a few months being very depressed.” When questioned whether she had fully transitioned into the role of the department chair or not, Vivian responded, “Yeah, I think maybe this year I kind of do.” The department chair role has had a major impact on Vivian’s research, scholarship, and performance. She admitted:

I don’t perform anymore. That’s one reason that I took on this because I don’t think I could have done this and kept performing, I just don’t think it’s possible. I would say any significant progress in my research work is pretty much on hold while I’m doing the chair’s work.

Lastly, Vivian feels that being a musician and being able to “multi-task” are important to being a music department chair.

Gary

Gary is a 50-year-old Professor and Director of the School of Music at a Research University (high research activity) institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). He holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) degree in Composition and is currently in his first year as the Director of the School of Music. He was tenured at his former
institution and was hired into his current role with tenure. Gary has considerable administrative experience in a variety of musical leadership roles. He responded, “I would say, probably my greatest experiences were, in fact, the diversity of experiences that I’ve had.” He has one year of previous department chair experience in addition to several faculty positions. These faculty positions included primarily “classroom instruction and applied music.” Gary further stated that there were many “other administrative things that I’ve done, but probably the largest was being an associate director for a summer music festival.” He has also served as the director for a “couple professional orchestras.” Gary agreed that, collectively, these diverse experiences have helped him to understand the multi-faceted roles and responsibilities associated with directing a school of music.

When asked whether he planned to become a director, he confessed:

I never aspired, no, nor ever planned to be an administrator. In fact, I’ve always had a hard time with authority… I’ve never liked administrators. I’ve spent great numbers of decades making fun of them. I had long discovered how I could be an effective colleague. I was very involved with the curriculum, very involved with performances, very involved with students, very involved with the work of the department and I had found a way in which I could influence people, make decisions, shape the area and I was satisfied.

After becoming a department chair and later a director, Gary reflected:

…suddenly I discovered that I was exactly where I wanted to be. That I was in the situation where I could be a servant to other people, which is what I always wanted to be anyway, and I enjoyed that.
He reported high levels of stress early on in his administrative role and mentioned that there were nights when he struggled to “fall asleep.” Now he has recognized that stress is something you have to be “disciplined about” and something you “have to work at.” As a strategy to manage stress, Gary maintains what he calls a “beginner’s mind.” He further explained:

I was never motivated to be this. I never imagined I would be this. And I have what I call a beginner’s mind. I will always try to keep and preserve that beginner’s mind and, in part, that’s how I sort of managed my stress in the first part and that is that I don’t pretend. I don’t imagine that I’ll ever like be [an] expert at this.

Gary also reported that “this school has had a history of tremendous leadership” and a “tradition and sense of continuity.” However, when probed about his relationship with the former director of the music school, he responded, “…when I walked in here on July second, which was my first day, the dude that was in front of me was long gone, and I spent a total of two hours with him.” These statements indicate that while prior leaders may have been “fabulous,” as he described them, minimal time was invested in building and maintaining a relationship between the outgoing and the incoming music director. Gary praised his support staff in the school of music and described them as “incredible.”

When asked about how he learned to be a director, he acknowledged that the process was “unclear” and more like a series of trials and errors. He explained that the learning process involves “falling down and standing up, and knocking my head on the ceiling” as well as “getting bruised” and “paying attention and listening and watching.” Gary was also positively influenced by a former department chair in his overall growth as
a director. This mentoring relationship evolved from a rather unusual and difficult relationship to a relationship of great respect and friendship. He acknowledged, “I hated his guts and I made his life miserable.” Later, however, he stated:

I learned a great deal from him. He was fabulous. He taught me many things…and became a friend, and became a mentor, and I grew up a little bit…Over the years he and I became great friends. He became a great supporter for me. He gave me every room to run and protected me when there were times I stepped over the line…He was a brilliant administrator and he had incredible patience for me, and I owe him. I owe him because he dragged me into this kicking and screaming and showed me that I would find passion and I would find my bliss in doing this work, and he was right.

Bryan

Bryan is a 56-year-old Dean of the College of Music at a Research University (very high research activity) institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). He holds a Master of Music (M.M.) degree in performance and has completed two years of a doctoral program. He stated, “I did two years toward a doctorate and got a job and away I went–never to return.” Bryan has served in the director/dean position for 17 years and has been tenured for approximately 21 years. His previous roles included primarily faculty positions although he added, “I was fairly involved in governance in a variety of capacities.”

Upon becoming the Associate Director for the College of Music, Bryan’s role expanded to include “issues with marketing…promotion, recruitment, and public
relations." When asked whether these roles adequately prepared him to be a dean, he explained:

I think what those roles did, was help me explore other ways to contribute to this community of scholars and that I enjoyed...It didn’t prepare me for this job, but it confirmed the application of a broader and different set of skills that I found appealing and I found some success in it.

In response to whether or not he planned to become a dean, he answered:

No, I never did, I had a great time as a studio teacher and performer and commissioning a lot of music...I didn’t really prepare for it. I took advantage of the opportunities to participate in governance. I think that there are a lot of dimensions that you can’t really prepare for in this kind of role which have to do with your ability to relate well to people and to be able to listen.

Bryan indicated that learning to be a dean is something that happens by functioning in the role itself, yet credibility with faculty is critical to one’s administrative role. He reflected:

I think a lot of music executives learn on the spot – and there’s no question about that. But I think that in the academic area one of the major things that you need to have is credibility in your profession either as a scholar or a performing musician. I think that is the basis of one’s credibility. I think a lot of the other skills, processes, procedures, are sort of learned along the way with others helping and with a lot of patience.

He described the faculty in the college of music as "a terrific faculty...they are a very hard working, congenial, mutually supportive group of people and I think it's a very
healthy community.” Bryan attributes this healthy faculty community to a “great element of peer review” and a “governance system” that provides faculty with the opportunity to be involved in college-wide planning and various initiatives.

He reported that the dean role has had some effect on his performance, research, and scholarship. He admitted, “There’s less of it. I would say the quantity isn’t what it used to be, but I still do that.” The process of becoming a dean at this institution involves an “appointment by the board of trustees upon a recommendation of the provost and the president.” Retrospectively, he feels that having more financial experience would have been useful for his current roles as a dean. When asked if he feels that he’s fully transitioned into the role of the dean, Bryan responded, “I don’t think it’s ever good to feel comfortable in the job...My perspective has been to be confident, but to never assume that I have all the answers.” He was appointed as a chair three quarters of the way through the academic year. He was socialized into his role as an individual rather than with a group of beginning administrators. Supportive relationships for Bryan include the executive assistant to the dean, the dean, the associate provost for human resources, personnel from the general counsel’s offices, colleagues on campus, and his spouse.

Aside from an “annual retreat,” no formal institutional training or orientation was provided to Bryan. He further added that there is currently a “very comprehensive” professional development program required for new administrators. This program involves two weeks of full day sessions that address administrative “policies and procedures” as well as other administrative functions. Subsequent sessions are also provided “once or twice a month” to chairs, directors, deans, and other administrators. This comprehensive training provides “structure” for learning administrative roles,
though he later stated, “there is no way to avoid learning as you go and learning from each experience.” Bryan mentioned another level of learning for him within the context of an informal group of new deans. He described this group as “mutually supportive” and providing “mentorship for new deans.” Although he feels that his years as a director/dean have helped him to make sense of his roles, he further reflected, “Education is to help you to be a lifelong learner. If you ever think you’ve learned it all as an administrator, then it’s time to let someone else take your spot.”

Bryan’s position does not follow a rotating model, but rather allows for unlimited number of five-year terms that one can serve. His role at this institution is a full administrative appointment with a significant expectation of fundraising. Bryan believes that being a musician is essential to being the dean of a music college because this establishes “credibility with faculty.” Lastly, Bryan believes that being “persistent,” “consistent,” and having a vision that is “congruent with the parent institution and to which faculty subscribe” are essential to being an effective dean of a music college.

Rachel

Rachel is a 47-year-old Professor and Music Department Chair at a Special Focus, Faith-related institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). She holds a Doctorate in Worship Studies (D.W.S.) and has served as the Music Department Chair for 18 years. Rachel acknowledged that since her department is “small,” the institution views department chairs less formally as administrators and more as lead faculty members within disciplines. She stated, “We are small enough that they don’t make a big deal out of department heads.” Rachel also mentioned that she is not tenured because there is no tenure system at this institution.
Rachel has five years of experience as a “youth and music minister” at a former church as well as two years of “part-time music ministry” at another church during her master’s degree. Upon completion of her master’s degree she was appointed to the faculty ranks at this institution. She served for one year as a faculty member prior to becoming the department chair. When asked if these roles and experiences prepared her to be a department chair, she answered:

I’m not sure if anything really prepares you. I think the organizational skills I picked up in other places doing programs [and] doing dual ministries. You have to be really organized to accommodate all that. I love to envision something, to develop a program, or to develop something. I enjoy doing that.

Regarding motivation, Rachel stated that she did not plan to become a department chair. She reflected, “The idea of teaching at a college...that’s why I went back for my master’s; to begin pursuing that possible dream. It wasn’t really to be a department head, but just to teach in a Christian college.” She admitted that learning to be a department chair for her “was by trial and error and by fire.” She became the department chair at this institution at a time when there were two faculty members in the department and the other person was released from contract because of “financial reasons.”

According to Rachel, the dean at this institution makes these types of administrative appointments. She described her department chair role as “being the center of things coming together” rather than being about “power or authority.” She further described her role as “the keeper of the information... [and] the point-person to find things.” Rachel was socialized as an individual rather than with a group of beginning chairs. Supportive relationships for her have included the academic dean, faculty
members within the music department, colleagues from other institutions, and family members. She recalled that being a department chair was difficult during the early years because of the amount of time required of the position. She explained:

I just remember working until seven or eight each evening. [I was] coming back on weekends sometimes, just trying to keep my head above water because it was all new to me. I mean I hadn’t taught before. I was doing new courses and I remember thinking, ‘I can’t keep this up, but I will do it for now.’

However, she later stated that the new administration is “really committed to protecting us” from excessive responsibilities. She reported that no formal institutional training or orientation was provided to her. In addition, there was no established time frame during which her department chair learning would take place. She feels that learning to be a department chair is a “process” that is continually “ongoing and unfolding.” Regarding mentoring, Rachel indicated that no one had mentored her for her position although she frequently recalls her musical training as a “student under excellent professors.”

Despite the challenges of managing time and stress, Rachel acknowledged, “I love what I do. Even when it’s really busy, I still really love what I do.” She reports that her relationship with both the dean and the faculty in her department is supportive and collaborative. Furthermore, she believes that her years of experience as a department chair have helped her to make sense of her roles and responsibilities. Rachel feels that her commitments as a department chair have lessened the amount of time she spends performing. However, she has experienced more time in leading and planning worship.
She stated, “In my area of voice, I think it has been harder with all the other commitments. As far as the worship aspect, that has probably grown.”

Rachel agreed that being a musician is essential to being a music department chair. She explained, “I think for students to respect your leadership they have to respect you as a musician. And if you’re going to demand excellence, you’ve got to display that also.” Finally, Rachel noted that vital department chair characteristics include modeling “excellence” for students as well as possessing “administrative skills, communication, [and] attention to detail.”

_Darrin_

Darrin is a 56-year-old Professor and Chair of the Music Department at a *Baccalaureate College-Arts & Sciences* institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). He holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) in Performance and has been Chair of the Music Department for approximately 16 years. He received tenure after his third year as a faculty member. His previous roles have included assistant and associate faculty positions at a community college. During his second year at his current institution, Darrin was appointed to be the department chair because the previous chair was “taking a sabbatical and they had no one to turn to.” Following this one-year chair appointment, Darrin served as a faculty member for approximately six years. Subsequently, he again assumed the department chair position and has continued in that role until the present. It should be noted that although other campus departments typically utilize a rotating model for the chair position, the music department chair position at this institution is unique in that an individual may serve multiple consecutive terms. In
addition to his department chair role, he also served as the Associate Provost for a year and a half.

Darrin described the department in which he serves as a flat “social family structure.” The department culture is characterized by “shared decision-making” involving “participatory faculty.” Senior faculty members along with the department chair share leadership responsibilities within the department thereby creating a “horizontal structure.” Darrin views his role in this department as follows:

The chair essentially in this type of institution is the first line of communication between the department and the external constituencies of the college...The chair performs a function of sifting communications so that appropriate ones get to appropriate department members and the department chair consults with appropriate department members and can respond to external constituencies.

Darrin views his prior faculty roles as “helpful benchmarks” in development, but “not meaningful” in terms of learning to be a chair. He mentioned that learning to be a department chair is a “continuous process of learning regardless of your title.” The process of becoming a department chair at this institution involves an “administrative appointment” from the provost with prior negotiations happening within the department. He described this process as less of a “top down decision” and “more of a bottom up” decision. When asked about preparation for the chair position, he responded that learning is “pretty much on-the-job training.”

Darrin was socialized as an individual rather than with a group of beginning department chairs. Supportive relationships for Darrin include senior colleagues that have previously served in the chair role, the department’s administrative assistant, current
colleagues, former provosts, and the current provost. Darrin reported that he received no formal institutional training or orientation, but he explained, “I think we all learn by seeing other chairs and by living in the culture.” He further commented, “No kind of formalized training program can substitute for that fundamental living within a culture and understanding people.” Department chairs at this institution do participate in regular meetings, though the focus is not “talking about problems or skill building for new chairs.” These meetings, he explained, are primarily a “function of communication. There are mechanics of the institution to take care of.” Darrin indicated that no specific time frame was established during which his chair learning would occur. He feels that learning to be a department chair is ambiguous and random rather than prescribed. He stated that the “mechanics” of the job are “very simple to learn” while “the important matters” of “dealing with people and dealing with unscripted problems” are more difficult. Darrin reported that he was not mentored for his role as department chair. 

Regarding his role as a musician, he strongly believes that maintaining one’s identity as a “practicing musician” is necessary to departmental life within the discipline. Furthermore, he explained:

Somebody who’s really not continuing as a practicing musician is just a member of the department, just sitting at a chair. [They] don’t bring a real musician’s perspective either to the students in the classroom or to colleagues in deliberations. You have to keep that groundedness in your discipline if you’re going to say or do anything that’s valuable to the group.

As a seasoned department chair, Darrin feels that his years of experience have helped him to make sense of his roles and responsibilities. When asked whether he felt he
had fully transitioned into the role of a department chair, he reiterated the importance of achieving teamwork, analogous to a family structure, between department colleagues. He added:

I’ve always been just a member of a department. I think the goal for us is to get everybody to feel that they’re part of the departmental family and processes and on the same page in terms of these large departmental objectives. And that comfort is the big sort of ‘Yeah, I’m at home.’

Although Darrin commented that his responsibilities associated with the department chair position have had some effect on the amount of time he spends on performance, scholarship, and research, he stated, “It’s a trade-off in the sense of trading one strong conviction for another strong conviction.”

Hanna

Hanna is a 49-year-old Assistant Professor and Music Area Coordinator at a Master's College and University (medium programs) institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). She holds a Doctorate in Educational Administration (Ed.D.) and has completed all of the coursework for a Doctorate of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) in Conducting. She is currently in her second year as the Music Area Coordinator and reported no prior experience as a department chair. Her appointment to this role resulted when the previous Head of Humanities retired. Hanna is the first person to serve in the capacity of Music Area Coordinator within her department. At the time of this interview, she was not tenured at this institution. Her coordinator position follows a two-year rotating model and she is currently in her seventh year as a faculty member within the music department.
Prior roles have included several faculty teaching positions at other higher education institutions. When asked whether these teaching roles prepared her to be a music area coordinator, she acknowledged, “No, I don’t think so.” Hanna reported that she did not plan to become a music area coordinator, but that she was “just asked to do it” by “a previous head.” There was no faculty input in her appointment; however, she explained that “from now on we vote on it.”

Regarding her motivation to become the Music Area Coordinator, she commented:

In all areas there are some people who should do this position, and some who should not. There were not that many people who should do it in our area and I probably was one who should. There weren’t that many choices so I was happy to do it.

Hanna reports that she was socialized into the coordinator position as an individual rather than with a group of beginning area coordinators. Furthermore, she admitted that “no one” provided support for her in learning how to be an area coordinator. She also mentioned that no mentoring or assistance was provided to her by the previous Head of Humanities. She stated, “He left when I started.” Hanna described one major difficulty in her experience as the area coordinator. She explained, “People ignore the fact that I am coordinator or they might ignore that I exist and go to the Head of Humanities.” It is important to note that the Head of Humanities was newly appointed to his position at the time of Hanna’s appointment to the coordinator position, thereby adding to the challenge of her socialization experience. She responded, “I guess what also
made it difficult was [that] I also had a new boss at the exact same time. He didn’t know what was going on either.”

No formal training or institutional orientation was provided to Hanna before or during her service as the area coordinator. She confessed that without these experiences, her learning happened on the job. She remarked, “[I] just did it.” No time frame was established during which her coordinator role learning would occur, though individuals serve two-year terms. Hanna agreed that learning to be an area coordinator is an ambiguous and random process rather than clearly outlined. Despite the challenges associated with the coordinator position, she described her relationship with the department faculty as “ninety-five percent fantastic.” Although the Head of Humanities meets with area coordinators collectively about once a month, these meetings are less support-oriented and involve mostly “information dissemination.”

Having served for nearly two years as a music area coordinator, Hanna feels that her experience has helped her make sense of her roles and responsibilities. She added, “Yes, it will be very easy for me to help the next person do it.” She reported that the coordinator role has had no effect on her professional activities including research, scholarship, and performance. She also feels that being a musician is essential to being a music area coordinator because “decisions are based on an understanding of people’s requests for musical activities.” Lastly, Hanna believes that “organizational skills,” “being fair,” and “the ability to not take things personally,” are necessary to effectively lead a music area.
Christopher

Christopher is a 50-year-old Professor and Chair of the Music Department at a Baccalaureate College-Arts & Sciences institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). He holds a Doctorate of Music Arts (D.M.A.) degree in Performance and has served as the department chair for approximately nine years. Christopher was a faculty member within the department of music prior to becoming the department chair. He has been tenured at this institution for about 14 years. “Very soon after” he received tenure, he was appointed to the department chair position for one three-year term of service. He then “rotated out and then came back in and has been chair since.” This institution does not follow a “consistent model” for rotating individuals into the department chair position or for establishing length of department chair terms.

It should be noted that individuals are not given release time or additional compensation for serving as department chairs at this institution. He described how this issue affects his situation within the music department:

Chairs at [this institution] don’t receive any release time. Neither do they receive any additional stipend. This is considered service. And, as you might imagine, if you’re full time teaching and chairing the music department under those circumstances, there’s not a lot of eagerness on the part for people clambering to do it. It really is a heavy, heavy burden, especially with our department as it has grown. It’s more about who doesn’t want to do it than having to choose.

Department chair appointments are initiated within departments based on “consensus” with provost approval. Aside from committee work, Christopher reported no formal leadership roles prior to assuming the department chair position. He further
admitted that he did not have “a lot of prior experience,” and that he “pretty much learned on the job.” He did not plan to become a department chair though he acknowledged his motivation to serve in this capacity. He explained, “I certainly didn’t resist my first appointment when it came up in the rotation. That was something I just felt obligated to do and serve the department.” When asked whether or not being a department chair affected his music performance, he responded, “It’s just a matter of time. I don’t practice nearly the hours. The hours are just not there.”

Christopher stated that serving in the department chair position along with faculty and advising roles can be very time consuming and stressful. Although his “least stressful periods” are during “private lessons [with] students,” he acknowledged, “I still haven’t learned how to really manage stress well.” One particularly stressful and time consuming period for Christopher was losing two administrative staff members at the time of his hire as the department chair. He described that period as “difficult” and referred to it as “starting from ground zero.”

He reported that he was socialized as an individual rather than with a group of beginning department chairs. Furthermore, no institutional training, mentoring, or orientation was provided to him before or during his service as department chair.

Supportive relationships for Christopher include the provost, administrative assistants, departmental colleagues, and family members. When asked about learning department chair roles and responsibilities, he agreed that the process was “pretty ambiguous.”

Christopher did not identify a mentoring relationship as part of his department chair learning process. However, several full time faculty members within the department have previously served in the chair position. One former chair in particular has been
helpful for Christopher regarding counsel on departmental issues. He feels that his years of experience as a department chair have been beneficial in making sense of chair roles and responsibilities. He explained, “I don’t think that I would know [this institution] as well as I know it and our department—the successes, the disappointments, [and] what it takes. I think you only gain that from being a chair.” Christopher believes that although there is not “a lot more for [him] to necessarily learn,” about the chair role, he can “learn to do it better.”

He feels that being a musician is “important” to being a music department chair in order to “understand the passion that’s there in your faculty” and to understand the multidimensional culture of a music department. Finally, Christopher shared that “communication” and “being a good listener” and to “let your faculty members know that you are there to support them” are the most important attributes required of music department chairs.

Marcel

Marcel is a 56-year-old Professor and Director of the School of Music at a Doctoral Research University institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). He holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in Music Education and has served as the Director of the School of Music for nine years. Previous to this position, he served as a director at a state university for six years and as an assistant to the dean at another university for one year. In addition, he has served in several faculty roles at various institutions. He has been tenured at his current institution for nine years. He explained, “I arrived with tenure.” His former roles involved significant administrative responsibilities including “budget operations,” “faculty evaluations,” “teaching roles,” and he “managed
undergraduate curriculum program and advising.” Marcel indicated that these experiences prepared him to be the Director of the School of Music at his current institution.

Regarding motivation to become a director, he reflected about a difficult series of “cuts” at a previous university. He stated, “I was frustrated that I wasn’t in a position to be a better advocate for music and the arts in that process.” Later he explained:

I’ve always wanted to be in a position where I can help campus communities and [the] public understand why arts and music are important and not just ancillary. I wanted to make sure that music in higher education was supported. That was my primary motivation.

Marcel did not plan to be a director, though he admitted that his perspective changed when “[he] started doing the work.” His experience in becoming a director at this institution involved an appointment “by the dean with input and recommendations from the faculty.”

His socialization experience included a general faculty orientation that lasted two days. Later he added,

We had one meeting, [lasting] a couple of hours, with an assistant provost as new department chairs. Some of them were people on campus who were doing it and some were off campus. But it was only that one meeting and it was mostly; we’re a union campus, so, mostly reviewing the contract.

Specific training for department chairs at this institution has become more involved in recent years to include shared strategies learned by former chairs. Marcel commented:
Since I've been director here, the orientation for department chairs has gotten a lot more comprehensive...they engage people with what it means to be a chair. They bring experienced chairs back to talk about the problems, challenges, pitfalls, and the joys and rewards. I think it’s a pretty good program.

Supportive relationships for Marcel have included two associate deans, administrative staff members, colleagues within the school of music, and family members. He views his director role as a “servant” to the faculty. He further mentioned, “My job is to facilitate their work.” No institutional time frame was established during which he would learn to be a director. He feels that learning to be a director is more random and ambiguous rather than a clear process. No mentoring relationship was identified. Marcel indicated that being a director is a “stressful gig” though he “loves the job.”

When asked about the amount of time required of the director role he responded, “If you’re really passionate about it, it’s going to eat up your life.” He also mentioned that due to myriad interruptions on campus, he regularly works at home to complete projects and reports. Together, these time demands have limited the amount of time Marcel spends as a performing musician. He confessed, “I play so little that I can’t call myself a performer at all anymore.” However, he believes that being a musician is essential to being a director of a school of music. He stated, “If you don’t really love music and really understand it, if the power of music and the arts isn’t something that fires you inside, you can’t possibly develop an institution that provides that on a wide scale.”
Although he continues to research and publish as the Director of the School of Music, he acknowledged that the amount of research has diminished significantly. He stated, “I keep that up to the best of my abilities, but it’s a quarter or less of what I was able to do in a faculty role.” Overall, Marcel indicated that he enjoys being a director despite the difficulties associated with the role. He reflected, “I think this is really rewarding work. I mean, I’m just delighted to do it. I wish it was easier sometimes.”

Nathan

Nathan is a 37-year-old Associate Professor and Chair of the Music Department at a Baccalaureate College-Arts & Sciences institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). He holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) degree in composition and is currently serving in his first year as a department chair. Nathan has been tenured for three years. He has served as a faculty member within the music department for a total of nine years. In addition, he has held teaching positions at various institutions including a community college and other state institutions.

He stated that these previous faculty roles “definitely” prepared him for “the teaching end of things.” However, “none” of these faculty roles prepared him for his chair responsibilities. Furthermore, Nathan indicated that committee work and department evaluation experiences allowed him to “observe what the chair does” to a limited degree. He stated that he “eventually” planned to become a chair of a “smaller department within a larger school” rather than a “full chair a music department.” He later explained, “I hadn’t really anticipated being in an administrative role. At this point in my career I thought that maybe in about 15 years that might be something I might do.” He
reported no formal preparation for the chair position aside from attending a couple
conferences that focused on “leadership themes.”

This institution follows a rotating chair model by which individuals serve for one
term lasting between three to five years before rotating out of the position. Nathan
acknowledged this model is not always consistent. He stated, “Sometimes it’s three years.
Sometimes it’s a five year term. It’s pretty inconsistent except [when] somebody does an
exceptionally good job, they continue on.” He further reflected that his motivation to
become the department chair provided protection for a colleague. He stated:

Everyone else is on tenure. So there’s a bit of a martyr role that I took on because
we have one untenured member who will make an excellent chair if he does get
tenure, but I felt it was unfair to put him in that place before tenure.

Department chair appointments at this institution are primarily made by the “provost”
with “some input” from department faculty. However, there is no “formal vote” by
department faculty.

Supportive relationships for Nathan include colleagues within the department who
have served as chair, the department secretary, and a department chair from another
discipline. Despite these supportive relationships, he admitted that much of his
department chair learning was “just all on my own to a large extent.” He reported that he
socialized into the chair position as an individual rather than with a group of beginning
department chairs. No institutional time frame was established during which his
department chair learning would occur. Nathan agreed that the process of learning to be a
department chair is more random and ambiguous rather than clearly outlined. No
institutional mentoring relationship was identified although he “sought it out.” It should
be noted that department chairs at this institution receive a “one course” reduction for their administrative responsibilities.

The department chair role has affected his performance, scholarship, and research. He explained:

I have had to cut down. I’m a performer who has typically played three to four nights a week even while teaching. With a lot of those weekly type things, I’ve had to let those things go and just do the big ones here and there. I should have probably cut more out, but I haven’t. I can kind of shaft my practicing a little bit and still play, but I would prefer not to.

Though he acknowledged that the department chair position is stressful, he reported that the stress was not significant. He mentioned, “I would say I have stress. But I wouldn’t say it affects me a lot.” Nathan feels that he is still transitioning into the department chair role although he stated that his first year has helped him to more fully understand his chair roles and responsibilities. Lastly, he believes that being a musician is important to being a music department chair, but “not essential for every administrative role in music.” He made reference to his administrative assistant, who competently serves the music department though she is not a musician.

Jackson

Jackson is a 53-year-old Professor and Chair of the Music Department at a Master’s College and University (larger program) institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). He holds a Doctorate of Music Arts (D.M.A.) in Performance and was hired with tenure, although he previously had been tenured for approximately seven years at a previous institution. He is currently in his second year as the Music Department
Chair. Prior to this position, he served as an associate dean for five years and as a music
department chair for two years at another institution. In addition, he has twenty years of
professional music performance and director experience with a nationally known
“touring” ensemble. His roles included significant administrative responsibilities
associated with personnel as he was “in charge of the entire group” and the “operational
budget.” Further academic experience involved graduate “curriculum revision” and
“accreditation processes” as well as advising multiple “theses and dissertations.” Jackson
believes that collectively these experiences have prepared him to be a department chair.

He noted that he planned to become a music department chair because he not only
wanted to be a “music executive,” but to put his “experiences to work” and “craft a
department.” Although Jackson was hired as an external candidate at this institution, he
advocates that the process of becoming a department chair be “internal.” He further
explained:

If you really want to be successful [and] you really want to market yourself, you
need to learn your craft. The only people who will allow you to learn your craft is
your internal system, the university you belong to. If you were an associate
professor, tenured, or full professor, that’s where you take your first steps toward
administration. That’s where you learn.

Later he added:

Academic administration is a unique position and there’s absolutely no way to go
to school to do this. You have to do it by sitting there. It is a non-stop barrage and
you need to do it while there’s somebody looking over your shoulder that can give
you advice; that can take the heat for you if you make a few mistakes; that can
correct the mistakes before they cause irreparable harm. And you do it internally and you get that support and that training. Then you’re ready. Go do it.

Jackson explained that the process of hiring a department chair at his current institution involves a “committee” comprised of several university constituents including administrators and community members with a subsequent vote by department faculty members. His socialization into the chair role was as an individual rather than with a group of beginning department chairs. Supportive relationships for Jackson include the dean, the associate dean, and the provost. However, he acknowledged that these relationships were “two-way.” He explained:

I think that we all help each other. They also have to adjust. When a new department chair, as an executive of a content area, comes to a school, there are adjustments on both sides. So it is not a one-way street. The learning process is two-way.

Jackson reported that no formal training or orientation was provided to him as a department chair. He reflected on the lack of training during his early socialization and mentioned, “They didn’t hire me to be trained. They hired me because I knew what I was doing.” No institutional time frame was established during which his department chair learning would occur. When asked whether he had fully transitioned into the role of the department chair he responded:

This process constantly evolves. And so there is no time where you [finish] learn[ing]. Now there is a time when you can begin to feel confident that through your experience base you can probably manage to eventually arrive at the right answer.
Although his role is primarily administrative, Jackson reported that he teaches “one course a year.” He equated his position as a department chair as the “first rung in a ladder” and again as a “trial judge [where] lots of people have the authority to overturn you, but they’d rather not.”

Jackson indicated that at a previous institution, he was mentored in his administrative roles and responsibilities by a dean. He feels that his years of experience in previous administrative positions have helped him to understand the roles and responsibilities associated with his current role as a department chair. He stated, “I think that all those years I spent as a department chair on a smaller level [and] as [an] associate dean prepared me to be a music executive, the best I can.” The role of the department chair has had an impact on the amount of time he spends performing and practicing, although he admitted, “I don’t stop my playing. It is still an important part of who I am.”

Lastly, Jackson believes that being a musician is “extremely important” to being a music department chair. He explained:

You must practice what you preach. You must represent a level of excellence in the discipline if you’re going to have any respect from the faculty. Everything you do in music is based on your skills as a musician including making decisions in personnel. And so if I wasn’t the [musician] that I am, there is no way I could do what I do.

Summary of Department Chair Characteristics and Socialization Experiences

Although Chapter Five presents a detailed description of themes and collective department chair socialization experiences, it is helpful within the current chapter to summarize some of the individual characteristics and experiences shared by participants.
To aid this summary, Table 2 provides a demographic profile for each of the department chairs that participated in this study.

Of the fifteen participants, five department chairs were female and ten department chairs were male. The average age of these department chairs was 51 years old with the youngest being 37 years old and the oldest being 62 years old. Seven participants held a Doctor of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) degree, four held a Master of Music (M.M.) degree, two held the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree, one held a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree, and one held a Doctor of Worship Studies (D.W.S.) degree. Participants have spent an average of eight years in the department chair position though seven of the fifteen chairs have served for three years or less. It is important to note, however, that these numbers indicate the years of department chair service only at their current institution. For example, Lance, Gary, and Jackson indicated few years in their current positions although they are seasoned administrators with significant previous music department chair experience.
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<th>Years in Position</th>
<th>Tenured</th>
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<td>D.M.A.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Gen. faculty orientation</td>
</tr>
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<td>Audrey</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>M.M.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>M.M.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Eventually</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>M.M.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lance</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>62</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>External</td>
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<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vivian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>D.M.A.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Internal</td>
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<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None reported</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>M.M.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Rachel</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>D.W.S.</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>Internal</td>
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<td>None</td>
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<td>Darrin</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>D.M.A.</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Hanna</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Christopher</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>D.M.A.</td>
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<td>Internal</td>
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<td>Marcel</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Gen. faculty orientation and contract review</td>
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<td>Nathan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>D.M.A.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Eventually</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>Jackson</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>D.M.A.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The participant group included eight veteran chairs who have served for five or more years in the same position at their respective institutions. Four participants were new to any department chair role and acknowledged three years or less of experience. Twelve participants were tenured with their current institutions, two participants were not tenured, and one participant serves at an institution that does not have a tenure system. Ten of the fifteen participants were internally hired as department chairs from within the department and five participants were hired externally. Twelve of the participants did not plan to become department chairs though two mentioned that eventually they would like to become chairs. Only one of the fifteen participants planned to become a department chair. None of the department chairs in this study indicated that their respective institutions provided department-chair-specific training or orientation. Two department chairs acknowledged that their socialization process included a general faculty orientation. Any department-chair-specific training that was identified involved budget processes or contract reviews. As a result of these socialization processes, most department chairs in this study felt unprepared to function in their roles and unprepared to perform their multiple responsibilities.

This chapter has identified the central characteristics and individual socialization experiences of fifteen college and university department chairs that participated in this study. More precisely, it provides a summary of department chair demographics, employment backgrounds, and motivations to become chairs (i.e., during the anticipatory stage of organizational socialization) as well as a detailed description of socialization processes and experiences (i.e., during the encounter stage of organizational socialization).
socialization) for each participant. The following chapter presents collective department chair socialization experiences organized by themes.
CHAPTER V

COLLECTIVE DEPARTMENT CHAIR SOCIALIZATION EXPERIENCES ORGANIZED BY THEMES

Introduction

In contrast to Chapter Four's presentation of individual participant summaries, Chapter Five presents collective department chair socialization experiences organized by themes according to this study's primary and secondary research questions. These themes are substantiated with verbatim quotations by participants. Portraying themes in the exact words of the study's interviewees increases the trustworthiness of findings (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Along with a presentation of themes, I have included multiple data display tables that further describe participants' experiences and assist the reader in summarizing data analysis results. Although numerous themes were identified during the data analysis and reduction process (Miles & Huberman, 1984), they have been narrowed down to eight main themes. Six of these main themes are further divided into sub-themes. The full statement of themes and sub-themes from this study is presented in the subsequent paragraphs.

Theme 1 is as follows: experiences during the anticipatory stage of organizational socialization indicate that participants did not plan or prepare to become music department chairs; (1.1) few individuals planned to become music department chairs, but accepted their positions in support of their departments; (1.2) previous faculty experience did little to prepare individuals for music department chair roles; (1.3) previous music department chair experience prepared individuals for similar roles at other institutions; (1.4) music department chairs acknowledged an inherent challenge in preparing for
unknown roles and responsibilities; and (1.5) tenure was an important criterion for becoming a music department chair at most institutions.

Theme 2 is as follows: experiences during the encounter stage of organizational socialization indicate that the transition into the music department chair position was a difficult process; (2.1) although institutional appointment processes varied among participants, most music department chairs were appointed by administrators with input from department faculty; (2.2) music department chairs received little or no institutional training to assist them in learning how to function in their multiple roles; (2.3) all of the participants acknowledged difficult first-year experiences as music department chairs; and (2.4) some of the participants acknowledged enjoyable first-year experiences as music department chairs.

Theme 3 is as follows: learning how to function as music department chairs involved socialization processes and on-the-job experiences, (3.1) participants experienced similar socialization processes that were likely to result in role innovation, and (3.2) trial-and-error attempts accounted for much of the music department chairs’ on-the-job role learning.

Theme 4 is as follows: relationships were significant sources of support and role sense-making for music department chairs; (4.1) family members provided support to many music department chairs with regard to their personal lives; (4.2) department faculty members provided support to music department chairs with regard to a variety of departmental role functions; (4.3) efficient and empowered support personnel were vital to effective music department functioning; (4.4) although administrators provided support to many music department chairs in the form of advice regarding institutional policies,
processes, and procedures, some administrators were unsupportive; (4.5) non-departmental colleagues provided a network of support for music department chairs; and (4.6) mentors provided support to many music department chairs in the form of friendships, assistance, advice, and guidance with decision making.

Theme 5 is as follows: music department chairs identified numerous strategies that facilitate role functioning; (5.1) although time management was a significant challenge for most music department chairs, they utilized multiple strategies to ensure that their priorities were achieved; (5.2) although the majority of participants recommended strategies for managing stress, experienced music department chairs reported less stress than beginning department chairs; (5.3) clear communication was critical to departmental conflict avoidance and resolution strategies; (5.4) participants identified leadership strategies that were characterized by humility and service to their department colleagues; (5.5) honest and direct communication was fundamental to department chair communication strategies; and (5.6) participants acknowledged multiple attributes, skills and values necessary for effective music department chair functioning.

Theme 6 is as follows: years of department chair experience had a significant effect on role sense-making and scholarly productivity, (6.1) years of music department chair experience helped participants to make sense of their roles and responsibilities, and (6.2) participants reported a decrease in scholarly productivity since becoming department chairs.

Theme 7 is as follows: being musicians helped participants to make meaning of their music department chair roles and responsibilities.
Theme 8 is as follows: challenges and characteristics of college and university music programs may make the music department chair role more difficult than department chair roles in other academic programs.

Results

Theme 1: Experiences during the Anticipatory Stage of Organizational Socialization Indicate that Participants did not Plan or Prepare to Become Music Department Chairs

Experiences before assuming the department chair position are critical to understanding how individuals socialize into their administrative roles. The organizational socialization literature has recognized that an individual’s unique background and experience affect the process of learning new organization roles (Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995). The period before accepting an organizational role has been termed *anticipatory socialization* (Merton, 1957). During this stage of organizational socialization, newcomers develop expectations about their anticipated role (Major, et al., 1995). The following presentation of results focuses exclusively on the anticipatory stage of organization socialization for understanding and describing the experiences that individuals have before they transition into the department chair role.

This section presents findings that address the research question: How do these individuals describe their experiences prior to assuming the department chair position (i.e., during the anticipatory stage of organizational socialization)? Five sub-themes are discussed: (1.1) few individuals planned to become music department chairs, but accepted their positions in support of their departments; (1.2) previous faculty experience did little to prepare individuals for music department chair roles; (1.3) previous music department chair experience prepared individuals for similar roles at other institutions; (1.4) music department chairs acknowledged an inherent challenge in preparing for
unknown roles and responsibilities; and (1.5) tenure was an important criterion for becoming a music department chair at most institutions.

*Sub-theme 1.1: Few individuals planned to become music department chairs, but accepted their positions in support of their departments.* As a first step in understanding how department chairs socialize into their roles, this study sought to understand the plans and motivations of those that assume the department chair position. According to Gmelch (2002b), there are over 80,000 department chairs within higher education institutions in the United States, and approximately one quarter of these individuals are replaced each year. The department chair position has been described as a complex, ambiguous, and stressful role to occupy (Gmelch, 1999). Moreover, stress and burnout have been identified as occupational hazards of the job that negatively affects one’s health and personal life (Gillet-Karam, 1999). Given this negative climate and high turnover rate among department chairs, one might question why individuals become department chairs. To help understand this question, the following section identifies the plans and motivations for becoming department chairs as reported by the participants within this sample.

Only three of the 15 participants planned to become department chairs (see Table 2). Of these three participants, only Jackson actively pursued his position. He stated, “I felt that I could help craft a department and I decided to look for a position where I would be the music executive.” Both Nathan and Steve reported that they thought eventually they might become department chairs. Nathan added, “at this point in my career I thought that maybe in about 15 years this might be something I might do.” Steve had considered the chair position since the time he was hired as a faculty member. He responded, “When
I first came to this school it was somewhere in the back of my mind that when the previous chair retired that I would like to give it a shot.”

The remaining 12 participants reported that they did not plan to become department chairs. Although most individuals simply responded “no” when asked whether or not they had planned to become department chairs, they assumed the position for a variety of reasons. Serving departmental colleagues was a significant reason for assuming the department chair position. Vivian’s experience represents this motivation to serve:

[Becoming a department chair] was not part of an action plan for my life, but it was something I offered to stand for consideration to do. It seemed to me something that I could do for the department in lieu of some other sorts of things. Christopher shared this perspective and felt obligated to serve because his colleagues had previously served as department chair. He acknowledged:

When it was recommended that I do it for the first time, I felt that that was a natural thing. The other members of the department had chaired. We had an individual who was leaving at that time and I certainly didn’t resist my first appointment when it came up in the rotation. That was something I just felt obligated to do to serve the department.

Nathan assumed the department chair position to assist a fellow colleague in his acquisition of tenure. He responded:

Everyone else is on tenure. I guess there is a bit of a martyr role that I took on because we have one untenured member who will make an excellent chair if he does get tenure, but I felt it was unfair to put him in that place before tenure.
Another reason that department chairs assume their positions is out of a sense of deep personal care for their students and their programs. Audrey felt a strong sense of identity with her institution and chose to become the department chair in order to rescue a weakening program. She shared:

It was a sense that I am going to save this department. My comrades and I are going to make this work. This is my alma mater and there are great students here. We have a mutual legacy to continue.

Likewise, Steve accepted his department chair role out of a sense of deep personal care for his department. He responded:

I think the biggest motivation was the fact that I care deeply about this department and wanted it to be successful. Looking at the other members of the faculty, I felt that I probably was the best choice because of my organizational skills, my interest in the position, and my willingness to do the work.

Five participants in this study were hired externally into their current institutions. These individuals pursued external positions for the new opportunities that these department chair positions presented. For example, Susan mentioned, “There are a lot of positions where [the department chair position] is a combination...it is not just administration. You can still have the classroom stuff. I thought maybe I should look into that and [find] something I enjoy doing.” Marcel sought the department chair position as a means for creating increased music advocacy on campus and throughout his community. His response is framed by a negative experience at a previous institution where music faculty members were released from contract during budget reductions. This
experience helped to define his career goals and became a motivating factor in locating a position where music was supported by a broader constituency. He explained:

It is always dicey on a campus. It is a place where people think they can make cuts sort of willy-nilly because all you are doing over there is sitting and playing instruments and that is not central to what is happening. When budgets get tight, music is a place where they look at tightening up, except for here. I've always wanted to be in a position where I can help campus communities and [the] public understand why arts and music are important and not just ancillary [or] entertainment. That was probably my primary motivation. I wanted to make sure that music in higher education was supported and that is with somebody out telling people why it is important and defending programs.

Other individuals responded dutifully to administrative requests to serve in the department chair position. Hanna stated, “I was just asked to do it by a previous head.” She later added,

“There were not that many people who should [serve as the department chair] in our area...I was happy to do it.”

In summary, the majority of participants in this study did not plan to become department chairs. As a result, motivations to serve in the department chair role varied greatly. However, many within this sample reported that service to their colleagues was the primary motivation for accepting the department chair position.

Table 3 identifies several of the anticipatory socialization experiences as described by the participants in this study. It details the roles and experiences of individuals prior to assuming their current department chair positions and indicates
whether or not these roles and experiences prepared them for their current department chair positions. It also identifies motivations for becoming department chairs. Lastly, it reports retrospective changes that participants felt may have best prepared them for their current department chair roles.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Previous Roles</th>
<th>Did Previous Roles Prepare You for Dept. Chair Role?</th>
<th>Motivation to Become Department Chair</th>
<th>Retrospective Changes to Best Prepare for Department Chair Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Faculty, Committee Leadership</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>New opportunities to “administer” and “teach”</td>
<td>“I probably would have tried to get to the NASM conference...that has been invaluable information”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey</td>
<td>Adjunct Faculty, Community Involvement</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>“I’m going to save this department”</td>
<td>“I probably would have done whatever it took to begin a doctorate program”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Faculty, Committee work</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>“I care deeply about this department”</td>
<td>“Nothing. The mentoring process in and of itself was invaluable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>K-12 Music Director</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>“It was a matter of load”</td>
<td>“I don’t think there was anything”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lance</td>
<td>Department Chair, Business position</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>“I actually volunteered for this”</td>
<td>Nothing –“I’ve done all kinds of things earlier on in my life which [gave] me lots of leadership experience</td>
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<td>Vivian</td>
<td>Faculty, Scholarly Associations</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>“[It was] something I could do for the department”</td>
<td>“I don’t know if I could have done any better preparation than what I did”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>Department Chair, Orchestra &amp; Festival Director</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>“I was in a situation where I could be a servant to other people”</td>
<td>Nothing –“diversity of experiences...has helped me here”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Previous Roles</td>
<td>Did Previous Roles Prepare You for Dept. Chair Role?</td>
<td>Motivation to Become Department Chair</td>
<td>Retrospective Changes to Best Prepare for Department Chair Position</td>
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<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan</td>
<td>Faculty, Governance Roles</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>“I was seeking another outlet where I could find some greater satisfaction”</td>
<td>“If I’d had a little bit more financial background that would have been useful”</td>
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<td>Rachel</td>
<td>Faculty, Ministry Roles</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>“[My] giftedness for [this] and the need for it”</td>
<td>“I definitely think I would have talked to other people in similar positions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrin</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>“They had no one to turn to”</td>
<td>“It’s pretty much on the job training”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hanna</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>“I was just asked to do it”</td>
<td>“I can’t think of anything”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>“I just felt obligated to serve the department”</td>
<td>“I’ve had some hard lessons to learn about good communication, especially with adjunct faculty”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcel</td>
<td>Department Chair</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>“I wanted to make sure that music in higher education was supported”</td>
<td>“I think the most important training that I could have had was that sort of interpersonal communication”</td>
</tr>
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<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>“There’s a bit of a martyr role that I took on”</td>
<td>“I definitely would’ve done more conflict management kinds of stuff”</td>
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<td>Jackson</td>
<td>Department Chair</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>“I decided to look for a position where I would be the music executive”</td>
<td>“Try your hand at administration [internally] before you dare to go out into the real world and do this”</td>
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</table>
Sub-theme 1.2: Previous faculty experience did little to prepare individuals for music department chair roles. Of the fifteen participants in this study, ten held faculty positions immediately prior to becoming department chairs, four participants held department chair positions at previous institutions, and one participant formerly held a K-12 teaching position (see Table 3). Of the ten participants that held faculty positions prior to becoming department chairs, eight reported that their faculty roles did not prepare them for being department chairs. Participants generally identified faculty roles as teaching, advising, committee work, involvement in faculty governance, research, and involvement in professional associations. Vivian’s response exemplifies that although some participants had some administrative experience as faculty members, department chair roles are often unique to each institution. She stated:

I taught at two other institutions before this one. I served as the head of the voice program [and] head of the voice area...I also served as a coordinator of a complex of areas. It was a position that was intermediate between heading up an area and the director of the school of music. It was a position that had quite a bit of input on promotion, tenure, raises, and annual reviews.

However, later when asked if these roles prepared her for the department chair position, she replied:

No...because I think any administration position is going to have a lot of aspects to it that are specific to the institution and unless you get some kind of training or learn the ropes somehow, you’re not going to be prepared. You’re going to have to kind of learn on the job. That is how I’ve handled it here.
Similarly, Bryan noted that his previous faculty governance roles did not prepare him to be a department chair, but provided a new way to add to the university. He responded:

I think what those [faculty governance] roles did was help me explore other ways to contribute to this community of scholars, and that I enjoyed...[They] didn’t prepare me for this job, but [they] confirmed the application of a broader, different set of skills I found appealing and I found some success in it.

Darrin’s response suggests that institutional faculty ranking has no relationship with preparing or learning to be a department chair. He asserted that being an assistant or associate faculty member does not indicate a stage of academic expertise that culminates in becoming a department chair. He responded:

I spent very little time as an assistant [professor] and longer as an associate [professor]. They are not helpful benchmarks in development of departmental and institutional expertise...They are irrelevant to the learning process [of becoming a department chair]. In other words, it’s a continuous process of learning regardless of your title.

These shared experiences suggest that being a faculty member has little effect on preparing individuals to become department chairs. Moreover, these responses demonstrate that, within this study, previous faculty roles and responsibilities greatly differ from current department chair roles and responsibilities. The differences between faculty roles and responsibilities and department chair roles and responsibilities have been discussed in the extant department chair literature (see Thomas & Schuh, 2004). As noted earlier, within this sample, eight out of the ten participants who served as faculty members prior to becoming department chairs reported that their previous experience did
not prepare them to be department chairs. These findings should be concerning to institutional leaders given that a normative path from faculty member to department chair exists (Carroll, 1991). Within this context, the current study sought to understand and describe how faculty members transition into the department chair position and learn to function in their new roles.

In contrast to the preceding discussion, two participants did report that their previous faculty experience prepared them for their new department chair roles. However, Susan’s faculty experience prior to becoming a department chair was not atypical of the other participants in this study. Her former faculty role at a previous institution provided her with several committee leadership opportunities. She stated, “I started being more involved with higher education in the university – committee work, chairs of committees, chairs of search committees. I was on the faculty executive committee.” Although these committee roles were not identical to her current department chair roles, she strongly acknowledged that these leadership experiences prepared her to lead a music department.

Audrey also reported that her previous faculty experience prepared her for being a department chair. However, her previous role as an adjunct faculty member was augmented by her extensive community involvement. She reported:

I was snagged to coordinate national music week, so I started doing more with [people in the community]. I was in the symphony chorus and opera chorus and I knew a lot of the performing organizations and the people who ran them.

When asked if these roles prepared her to be a department chair, she replied, “I believe I was what the department needed.”
Sub-theme 1.3: Previous music department chair experience prepared individuals for similar roles at other institutions. Four participants who held prior department chair positions felt that their previous roles prepared them for their new department chair positions at other institutions. Lance spent approximately 31 years in various department chair positions along with two years in a business position. Marcel served in numerous roles as a director and assistant to a dean, as well as in faculty positions. Gary served in numerous administrative roles such as directing orchestras, festivals, and serving as a department chair and faculty member. Lastly, Jackson held multiple administrative appointments including a national touring ensemble, department chair position, and an associate dean position. All four of these seasoned administrators reported that their previous roles prepared them for their current department chair roles. Marcel’s brief response captures their collective experience. He stated, “Yeah. I had most of that [i.e., department chair knowledge, skills, and experience] in place when I got here.”

Sub-theme 1.4: Music department chairs acknowledged an inherent challenge in preparing for unknown roles and responsibilities. To provide participants with the opportunity to voice retrospective changes to their administrative preparation experience, they were asked, “If you could go back in time, what would you have done differently to best prepare for the department chair position?” Six participants felt there was nothing they could have done to better prepare. Thus, over one-third of the participants within this study felt that their administrative preparation was adequate for their new department chair positions. This finding is in contradiction with the department chair literature where numerous petitions have been made for formal administrative training. These results, however, may be in question since three of these six participants also reported that their
previous roles did not prepare them for their department chair roles. Regarding retrospective changes, Vivian responded, “I don’t know if I could have done any better preparation than what I did.” Steve also felt there was nothing he could have done to improve his preparation for the department chair position. His experience, however, was unique in that he was mentored for one year by the previous department chair. He responded, “the mentoring process in and of itself was invaluable.”

Other participants noted areas that would have improved their department chair preparation. Rachel felt that learning from other department chairs would have been beneficial. She stated, “I definitely think I would have talked to other people in similar positions.” Both Christopher and Marcel believed that more interpersonal skills and strategies in communication would have been valuable to their administrative preparation. Susan noted that attending the National Association of Schools of Music conference would have helped her preparation. She stated, “I probably would have tried to get to the NASM conference...that has been invaluable information.” Table 3 summarizes the retrospective changes that participants identified. Overall, the majority of participants acknowledged the inherent challenge of preparing for unknown roles and responsibilities. This inherent challenge provides perspective for understanding why several did not feel they would have significantly changed their preparation experiences.

**Sub-theme 1.5: Tenure was an important criterion for becoming a music department chair at most institutions.** During the design of this study, tenure was treated as a demographic variable along with age, gender, and other demographic information. However, the role of tenure emerged as an important department chair qualification. Twelve participants in this study acknowledged that tenure was a determining factor in
becoming a department chair. At the time of interviewing, all but Susan, Rachel, and Hanna were tenured within their current institutions. Susan indicated that although she was only in her second year as a department chair, she was on the “fast track.” In other words, her tenure portfolio review would take place within the “next year.” She serves within a Master's College and University (smaller programs) institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). Rachel serves within an institution without a tenure system. Her institution has been identified as a Special Focus, Faith-related institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). Hanna reported that she was not tenured and made no mention of timeframe for future tenure plans. Her institution has been identified as a Master's College and University (medium programs) institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008).

In contrast, Gary, Marcel, and Jackson were externally hired into their department chair positions with tenure. Gary serves at a Research University (high research activity) institution, Marcel serves at a Doctoral Research University institution, and Jackson serves at a Master's College and University (larger program) institution (Carnegie Classifications Data File, 2008). Lance’s experience was unique in that he was hired as a faculty member, but immediately appointed department chair due to situational factors within his department. He acknowledged that his administrative appointment sidestepped his institution’s tenure requirement policy. He noted, “according to [the faculty handbook], I would have never become chair because I don’t have tenure.” Overall, these findings demonstrate that in rare cases, tenure was not required for the department chair position. However, tenure is an important criterion for being a department chair at most institutions, especially at large or research intensive institutions.
Theme 2: Experiences During the Encounter Stage of Organizational Socialization

Indicate that the Transition into the Music Department Chair Position was a Difficult Process

Upon beginning a new position, individuals move from anticipatory socialization to the encounter stage of organizational socialization (Merton, 1957). At this time, newcomers weigh their previous conceptions about their anticipated roles with reality (Major, et al., 1995). Often the experiences that newcomers have upon accepting a new position do not match with their previous expectations. Louis (1980) describes this difference between perception and reality regarding organizational roles as “surprise.” The process of sense-making begins when newcomers experience surprise and then attempt to reconcile the differences between role demands and expectations of themselves (Major, 1995).

In its application to the current study, individuals who accept the department chair position weigh their previous conceptions of the department chair position with reality when they begin work. The subsequent findings address the research question: How do these individuals describe the transition process of becoming a department chair (i.e., during the encounter stage of organizational socialization)? The four sub-themes identified in this section are as follows: (2.1) although institutional appointment processes varied among participants, most music department chairs were appointed by administrators with input from department faculty; (2.2) music department chairs received little or no institutional training to assist them in learning how to function in their multiple roles; (2.3) all of the participants acknowledged difficult first-year experiences as music department chairs; and (2.4) some of the participants acknowledged enjoyable first-year experiences as music department chairs.
Sub-theme 2.1: Although institutional appointment processes varied among participants, most music department chairs were appointed by administrators with input from department faculty. Results within this section identify various appointment processes for becoming a music department chair. Ten of the fifteen participants were hired internally and the five were hired externally (see Table 2). Most individuals were appointed to the department chair position by members of the administration, including provosts and deans, with some level of input from the faculty.

Lance’s experience exemplifies the traditional path from a faculty member to the department chair position, “You’re hired because of your academic competence as a professor. [If] you happen to display administrative gifts, you might become chair, but you wouldn’t be hired at [this institution] to be chair.”

Steve explained how faculty become department chairs at his institution. His experience demonstrates an internal appointment process:

Faculty are made aware of the position opening. Faculty members are given the opportunity to throw their hat into the ring, so to speak, and then the faculty vote. After the vote is held, the dean either concurs and says, “Yes, that’s the way to go,” or makes a suggestion that perhaps they ought to reconsider.

Similarly, Bryan’s experience demonstrates a collaborative process that involves administration and faculty. He explained, “It is an appointment of the dean upon the recommendation of the college school of music faculty, and there’s a review every five years that’s conducted by the dean.”

In contrast to procedures involving faculty participation, Vivian shared that her appointment to the department chair position was ambiguous. She admitted, “I couldn’t
tell you honestly how they make the decision.” She speculated, “I suppose it is how the provost defines it…the current provost is someone who holds the control of a lot of decisions quite centrally.”

Darrin’s experience in becoming a department chair demonstrated a “bottom up” process where the decision was made by consensus among departmental faculty members and communicated to administrators. He described:

It is more of a bottom up [decision]. The departments are asked, “Who should be your chair?” It is a consensus just like in a family. Who do you want? Who should we send out to talk to the provost?

Similar to Darrin’s experience, Christopher responded:

The department discusses it at the end of each year. [We] try to arrive at some kind of consensus about whether there’s a feeling for the individual to continue…then at some point that’s communicated to the provost and the provost will sign off on that.

A few individuals acknowledged that their experience was somewhat atypical to traditional processes. For example, Susan was hired externally rather than internally into her department chair position. She stated:

It is not typical of this institution…the department chair at a smaller institution comes from within. This is a person who knows the department in and out [and] who has been there for a while. In some ways I think music is a little unique. Audrey’s experience was also atypical in that she was appointed to the department chair position directly from her role as an adjunct faculty member. She responded:
I think because of the difficulty in the department it was “who can we hire inside that knows us, that can make this work?” because an outsider... if you saw the paperwork that wasn’t happening, no one would touch it with a ten-foot pole.

That was the luck, I suppose, for me to be the right person at the right place.

**Sub-theme 2.2: Music department chairs received little or no institutional training to assist them in learning how to function in their multiple roles.** The literature on higher education has indicated that those who assume the department chair position seldom receive institutional training necessary to function in their roles (Bensimon et al., 2000; Gmelch, 2002b; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Stark, 2002). Not surprisingly, the participants within this sample reported little to no institutional training upon assuming the department chair position. Those who did report minimal degrees of institutional training noted that their training was essentially a general faculty orientation rather than specialized training for department chairs.

The following paragraph summarizes participants’ experiences regarding institutional training. Susan described her training, “It’s just a faculty orientation for anyone who has come in as a faculty member... [it’s] not department chair [specific] at all.” Audrey summed up her institutional training in one sentence, “A meeting with the provost [and] here’s your handbook.” Steve recalled that his institution “made weekends available, but they never seemed to work in my schedule.” He added, “I didn’t get the training here at the college, but the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) provides leadership workshops at their annual meeting for new music executives.” Later he described the importance of this training, “I would say I had guidance through NASM more than anything else.” Eric indicated that his training resulted from changes in
institutional presidents. He noted, “Over the course of time, as presidents come in...as academic leadership changes, there’s always a seeming desire to re-invent the wheel and to make changes.” These changes involved processes related to “budget,” “communication,” and “technology.” Vivian stated, “There was no preliminary training of any kind.” Later she added, “There was never an orientation meeting for all of us who were new chairs, no orientation program of any kind.”

Although participants within this study acknowledged a lack of institutional training during their transition into the department chair position, several individuals added that significant training is now available for new department chairs at their respective institutions. Bryan described his lack of institutional training and then detailed the training that is currently available for administrators at his institution:

No, that’s a situation that has completely changed on this campus now...My experience was mainly seeking people out and by the seat of my pants...There was a real openness that I appreciated, and so I was able to connect with certain individuals, but there was really no formal training.

He later described the training that is now available for new department chairs at his institution:

Any new administrator, whether it’s a chairperson, dean, [or] director is required to attend a two-week session...full days [and] very comprehensive which goes through all kinds of policies and procedures...[This was] a meteoric change...the recognition by the administration that one needed to provide a much more comprehensive set of opportunities to learn and develop and to learn from others.
Marcel shared that his institution now provides a one day orientation for new chairs. He stated, “Since I’ve been here, the orientation for department chairs has gotten a lot more comprehensive...they go over various aspects of the university comprehensively...I think it’s a pretty good orientation as far as a day orientation for chairs.”

Darrin’s response regarding institutional training suggests that authentic learning can only take place within the culture of the department. He noted:

There’s no formalized kind of training program. I think the reason for that is no kind of formalized training program can substitute for that fundamental living within a culture and understanding people. Even if you have a procedure to follow, it’s no good just following it...You have to do it and understand why so that you can explain to everyone else why. And if you disagree with it you have to speak up to everybody about why it needs to be changed. So, chairs learn by doing here.

Lastly, Jackson expressed his confidence in his ability to execute department chair roles without institutional training. He stated, “They didn’t hire me to be trained. They hired me because I knew what I was doing.”

Sub-theme 2.3: All of the participants acknowledged difficult first-year experiences as music department chairs. The entire sample of music department chairs reported difficult first year experiences. Areas of difficulty included: socializing into new cultures, confusion with departmental record keeping, numerous departmental problems, last-minute changes regarding department chair appointments, feeling overwhelmed,
excessive work and time demands that had a negative impact on participants’ lives, and interpersonal dynamics.

Susan expressed difficulty socializing into her institution’s faith-based culture. She stated, “It was very strange how defensive...things can become over the [religion] component...It becomes more difficult, more judgmental when you start adding that component in. I was really quite surprised.”

Vivian reported that her first year as the department chair was especially difficult due to poor record keeping and overall disorganization within the department. She stated, “We had a bunch of loaned pianos which I wasn’t even aware of. The record keeping was so poor that we had no inventories of anything in the department.”

Similarly, Jackson stated, “When I came here I knew I was inheriting a department with a myriad of problems...There were many processes run amuck.”

Lance noted a change of plans regarding his initial appointment as a faculty member. He explained:

I’m the new kid on the block, but I certainly have the experience and the administrators here jumped all over me. By the time I got back from [vacation], I was heading straight for the department chair. That was not in the making when my contract was first prepared.

Several participants reported that their excessive workloads placed extreme demands on their time which, in turn, negatively affected other areas of their lives. Gary recalled feeling overwhelmed at the time of his appointment to a former department chair position. He admitted:
It was overwhelming. You sit at the desk and this is day one. It's like, wow, I just want to go home now and curl up under my bed and have a nervous breakdown because...they’ve just been waiting for the new guy to come into the office for the dean to give the marching orders of what [needs] to be done.

Steve acknowledged that his work often extended beyond regular work hours and interfered with family relationships. He confessed:

I worked myself very hard. I think not just that first year, but years afterwards...[I] really pushed myself too many hours...work all day and go home and work all night. [It] was difficult because it got in the way of my relationship with my wife.

Likewise, Rachel shared that she worked continuously during her early years as a department chair. She noted:

It was a lot of time. We had [a] different administration at that time and they didn’t seem as concerned about watching our hours...I just remember working until seven or eight each evening, coming back on weekends sometimes, just trying to keep my head above water.

Other participants reported difficult interpersonal dynamics within their departments. Marcel mentioned:

The [music] unit had been very contentious...It was the hardest part. I remember I used to take my wife to a lot of events I had to go to...it was important for me to know that I had one person in the room that didn’t think I was Satan.

Sub-theme 2.4: Some of the participants acknowledged enjoyable first-year experiences as music department chairs. In addition to difficulties, participants were also
asked about enjoyable first year experiences. Some stated that they enjoyed organizing various departmental initiatives.

Christopher shared his enthusiasm for supporting the plans involving the faculty in his department. He remarked, “I think it’s great to support colleagues when they have exciting plans…that gives a good feeling. It’s always enjoyable to give people the resources to succeed.”

Susan felt that her efforts in affecting positive change were noticed. She shared, “The one thing I thought was enjoyable was just really getting things cleaned up…There was so much substantial change and everybody saw that.”

Rachel expressed, “I’m energized by creating new things or trying to create [them] in a better way.”

Vivian indicated that she enjoyed achieving a lot of “wins” for her department with regard to funding for individual music lessons and equipment upgrades.

Others enjoyed curriculum development and implementation. Nathan responded, “I think generally the visioning process, curriculum…course offerings…those have been the kind of fun things.”

Still others found learning to be a department chair invigorating and rewarding. For example, Steve mentioned, “That first year I enjoyed a break from the classroom. I was doing less teaching that first year than I had been and I was enjoying the newfound responsibilities and excited about learning the job.”

Marcel acknowledged that serving with a successful team of people was enjoyable. He stated, “[The] most enjoyable part was being part of the faculty and the institution that was succeeding at this level.”
Theme 3: Learning How to Function as Music Department Chairs Involved Socialization Processes and On-the-Job Experiences

At the heart of this study is the primary research question: How do college and university music department chairs learn to function in their multiple roles and perform their multiple responsibilities? Using the theoretical framework of organizational socialization, this study sought to understand and describe the learning process of becoming a music department chair. Organizational socialization describes the process of learning accepted behaviors and attitudes and assimilating new roles (Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995). When individuals have fully transitioned into their roles, they are considered to be in the adaptation stage of organizational socialization (Merton, 1957). Eight participants within this study felt that they had fully transitioned into the department chair role. Four participants indicated that they had not fully transitioned into the department chair role. Three participants were unsure whether or not they had fully transitioned in the department chair role (see Table 7). Given this variability, the findings within this section should not be viewed exclusively within the adaptation stage, but rather within both the encounter and adaptation stages of organizational socialization.

The two sub-themes identified in this section are as follows: (3.1) participants experienced similar socialization processes that were likely to result in role innovation and (3.2) trial-and-error attempts accounted for much of the music department chairs’ on-the-job role learning.

Sub-theme 3.1: Participants experienced similar socialization processes that were likely to result in role innovation. Van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) seminal socialization research suggests that individuals experience multiple processes as part of their organizational role learning. These processes were grouped by Van Maanen and Schein
into six socialization dimensions. These socialization dimensions are as follows: (a) collective vs. individual socialization processes, (b) formal vs. informal socialization processes, (c) sequential vs. random steps in the socialization process, (d) fixed vs. variable socialization processes, (e) serial vs. disjunctive socialization processes, and (f) investiture vs. divestiture socialization processes. Chapter One of this dissertation introduced these dimensions and defined each of these socialization processes (see Table 1). Van Maanen and Schein also assert that individuals who experience socialization processes that are individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and involve investiture processes are likely to demonstrate role innovation. This term describes the autonomous manner in which individuals function in their roles to the point of redefining the mission or goals of their organizational roles.

Table 4 presents the socialization experiences of each department chair within this study according to Van Maanen and Schein’s proposed socialization dimensions. Most noteworthy is that all participants, with the exception of Steve, Christopher, and Nathan shared identical kinds of socialization experiences that involved individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and investiture processes. Christopher and Nathan both experienced a moderately serial socialization process since former department chairs were utilized as sense-making resources. Steve was trained and mentored by the previous department chair and therefore experienced a serial socialization process.
### Table 4

**Department Chair Socialization Processes** (using Van Maanen and Schein’s dimensions)

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Sub-theme 3.2: Trial-and-error attempts accounted for much of the music department chairs’ on-the-job role learning. Department chairs within this sample reported remarkable similarities in their socialization experiences. For example, all of the participants indicated that they were socialized into their respective roles as individuals rather than with a group of beginning department chairs. Second, all of the participants reported that learning to be a department chair was more random and ambiguous rather than a step-by-step process. In addition, nearly all of the participants acknowledged that department chair learning happens on the job. These on-the-job learning experiences are presented in the following section.

Susan expressed feelings of loneliness in her process of learning how to be a department chair. She shared:

So here I am by myself and the few people that I could rely on were people I knew back at [my former institution]...I felt like I was just having to rely a lot on my somewhat limited experience at [my former institution]...and just common sense kind of things, what do I think needs to happen, and talking to [the provost] when I didn’t have any idea what to do.

Eric described his solitary socialization experience as he became the department chair. He remarked, “In the early years I was left more to my own devices with the exception of the discipline chair to whom I went.”

Christopher briefly stated, “I pretty much learned on the job.”

Similarly, Rachel described her experience in learning to be a department chair. She pointed out, “It was kind of just by trial and error and by fire.”
Upon her appointment as department chair, Audrey learned that her department was dysfunctional. She stated, “This was a very dysfunctional place and really wasn’t plugged into the college as I learned in more ways than one, not just visibility, but the paperwork, the connectivity, the accountability.”

Lance received little to no institutional assistance as a new department chair. He stated:

I think generally what happens here at [institution’s name], you’re it as chair. Get going. If you have a problem, come and talk to somebody... There’s no rhyme or reason to it. There’s no official orientation process, there is no three-year-kind-of-a plan that says, “Okay, you’ve been appointed as chair. Here’s a first-year mentor.”

Vivian felt lost and consequently stressed in her new role. She shared, “The first year was really very stressful because there was no roadmap. No idea in the world. I kind of received, along with all the other chairs, the deadlines for the year. Okay, that’s fine. What do they mean?” Later she added, “It was really trial and error kind of marching orders from [the] top down.”

Both Darrin and Nathan noted that learning to be a department chair happens through observation and lived experiences. Darrin shared, “I think we all learn by seeing other chairs and by living in the culture.” He further explained that the “mechanicals” (i.e., calendar deadlines, reports, etc.) are “simple” for department chairs to learn. However, “the important matters, which are dealing with people and dealing with unscripted problems,” are more difficult to learn. He added, “There’s no other way to learn it... because you can’t write a handbook for this.” Similarly, Nathan commented,
“...just observing...you’re watching that person [i.e., the previous chair] going, ‘Okay, so that’s what a chair does.’”

Bryan served as an accreditation evaluator for NASM music programs. He indicated that this experience augmented his department chair knowledge. He stated, “You’re never going to come away from a school without learning something. Someone always does something better than you do, and it’s a healthy experience to see different ways of doing things.”

Jackson recommended that department chair growth take place within an internal environment conducive for administrative learning. He mentioned, “I think that learning to become a department chair must be done internally. You can adjust. You can gain experience so you can make corrections.” He further stated, “Once you are it (i.e., once you have become a department chair at a different institution), there are way too many possibilities for mistakes.”

Marcel described his early department chair learning experiences as “stepping on land mines.” He continued, “If your intentions are good and you’re not playing blame, you can make lots of mistakes and people will help you fix them. That’s where you really learn.”

Steve’s experience in learning department chair roles was exceptional. He explained that the former department chair in his program had carefully planned Steve’s transition into the department chair position first by writing a detailed job description. Second, Steve was mentored by this former department chair for a period of one year during which they “shared” the position. He recounted:
There was a fairly clear cut job description that had been written by the previous chair which was invaluable. Pretty much we used that as the basis for dividing the position up that first year...I can’t think of a better way to learn than just by doing these things. You have to experience them. You have to feel them. You have to touch them. That’s really the only way I can imagine. Someone explaining the process to me I don’t think would have made a difference.

*Theme 4: Relationships were Significant Sources of Support and Role Sense-making for Music Department Chairs*

Relationships were a critical component during department chair socialization for the participants within this sample. This finding was expected given that newcomers make sense of their roles through social interactions with others (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Moreover, other people help newcomers to understand and interpret their experiences (Louis, 1980). The results within this section address the research question: What relationships, if any, do department chairs maintain that provide support for their multiple roles and responsibilities? Although most of the relationships that department chairs reported were supportive, this study also identified some relationships that were unsupportive.

Findings are organized into six sub-themes by relationship type. These sub-themes are as follows: (4.1) family members provided support to many music department chairs with regard to their personal lives; (4.2) department faculty members provided support to music department chairs with regard to a variety of departmental role functions; (4.3) efficient and empowered support personnel were vital to effective music department functioning; (4.4) although administrators provided support to many music department chairs in the form of advice regarding institutional policies, processes, and
procedures, some administrators were unsupportive; (4.5) non-departmental colleagues provided a network of support for music department chairs; and (4.6) mentors provided support to many music department chairs in the form of friendships, assistance, advice, and guidance with decision making.

Sub-theme 4.1: Family members provided support to many music department chairs with regard to their personal lives. Department chairs identified family members as providing support in the form of personal encouragement, leadership suggestions, creative ideas, and honesty. For example, Vivian praised her husband for the solid support that he provides for their family. She remarked:

My husband only works part time so he’s been a rock... absolutely wonderful. I could not possibly have done this job with the kind of hours and the pressure if I hadn’t had him at home working part time and taking over things at home.

Rachel pointed to her family as being very supportive especially in generating creative ideas as well as providing encouragement. She stated:

My family is all very musical. I have two sisters and my mom was a public school music educator... I am always picking their brains for ideas. We talk [about] music stuff a lot. They are part of my personal encouragement support.

Bryan shared that his spouse was supportive during his tenure as a department chair, but also provided honest criticism. He responded, “She is my harshest critic. As I move along in years in the administrative role, she said, “You’re thinking like an administrator. What is the matter with you? You’ve got rocks in your head.”

In contrast, Steve remarked that his “ex-wife was never really able to listen and be supportive of the way [he] needed her to be.” However, he reported that his current
relationship with another individual is “very supportive. [She] is not afraid to make suggestions about leadership styles, or how to handle things.” Overall, many participants felt that family members were integral to successful department chair socialization.

Some participants reported that family relationships were affected by the heavy workloads required of the department chair position. For example, Audrey shared that her family relationships were strained during her department chair tenure. She confessed:

I have a lot of regrets about this position and not getting the support in that office. If I was a better manager or [had] a better understanding of the role coming in, I think...my family would have been better. They would have seen me more.

Marcel expressed that his department chair role negatively affected his family members although they continued to support him. He explained:

It's a really stressful gig...I do it [i.e., manage stress] by taking it out on my family and by wrecking my personal life and by doing nothing but this job. It helps that I love the job. And it helps that I have a family that will put up with a lot of crap from me because they know it's important to me. They're nurturing, supporting, loving people.

Sub-theme 4.2: Department faculty members provided support to music department chairs with regard to a variety of departmental role functions. Many of the department chairs within this study expressed that faculty members within their departments were very supportive. The specific type of support functions that these faculty relationships provided to department chairs varied across the sample. For example, Steve acknowledged that his colleagues within his department were very supportive, encouraging, and motivating. He stated, “I’ve had good relationships with a
number of close faculty members who were very supportive and were there to give me the requisite pats on the back...and kicks in the butt.”

Lance was a newcomer to his institution. As part of his organizational socialization experience, the institution provided him with a faculty assistant. He explained:

The first year that I came to [name of institution]...they actually appointed one of the less controversial faculty members to be my assistant...That was a way to sort of get me inside in terms of [name of institution] style [and its] ways of operating. That was helpful.

Department chair relationships with senior faculty members are important because these individuals assist the department chair in socializing junior faculty. For example, Darrin noted the significant role that senior faculty members play in mentoring junior faculty members. He explained, “It’s a matter of advising or mentoring junior faculty once you’re a senior. But that is not the exclusive responsibility of whoever is chair.”

Faculty members who have previously served in the department chair position are a sense-making resource for new department chairs. Christopher described his relationship with a former department chair:

He’s my source when I have a question or when I’m troubled by an issue. I can sometimes speak to him...[He] usually gives good counsel. I did learn quite a bit as far as what was required of the job from him. I remember having to go down to his office all the time and ask him questions about this or that.
Similarly, Nathan expressed the benefit of having two former department chairs serving as faculty members within his department. He stated, “They are very receptive to questions. Certainly I can go ask them.”

In contrast, Vivian described her relationship with the senior faculty members in her department as dysfunctional. She reported difficulty in trying to solve departmental problems due to a lack of collaboration within the department. She shared:

I would like to have an openly supported strategic plan in process involving the faculty. I think that would solve many more problems than what I’m trying to do right now because what I’m trying to do now is sort of manage the cats.

She further conveyed that these faculty members are overly dependent on her role as department chair and consequently view her as part of the administration:

I think in many ways they’re like children when they look at me because of the nature of the environment; they see at the same time, the dean, the provost, and the president. It is all one picture to them because they’ve been trained to be kind of dependent, not independent and not interdependent.

Several participants within this study placed great importance on their relationships with adjunct faculty members. Audrey had previously developed relationships with most of the adjunct faculty members in her department. She shared:

I came in...having worked with most of our adjuncts somewhere or another in the community. We have people who are community professionals and I have a personal relationship with each of them. All but one I think was started before I arrived here.
Other department chairs viewed adjunct faculty members as sources of information about students and departmental needs. Eric noted, “I have adjuncts who are teaching a considerable load...whom I rely on quite significantly for their information about students and advice, and how we do this and this, and how we can make this better.”

Both Eric and Gary stressed the importance of recognizing adjunct faculty members as real people with real lives. Gary advocated, “These are real people with families, with spouses and young children, and car payments, and house payments.”

Sub-theme 4.3: Efficient and empowered support personnel were vital to effective music department functioning. Department chairs within this study had varying expectations regarding the role of support personnel. Most indicated that support personnel provided assistance in the form of meeting deadlines, budgetary processes, record keeping, and departmental communications and operations.

This study suggests that the manner in which department chairs define the role of their support personnel has implications for the types of responsibilities that support personnel perform. For instance, Susan described her support personnel using the general term “staff.” This generic term implies that these individuals serve a secondary or minor role within the department. She further explained, “They’re supportive in the way they can be supportive, they’re staff...We’re not talking about chair and faculty, we’re talking about chair and staff.” The following response demonstrates how Susan’s “staff” member was not meeting her expectations as an “administrative assistant.” Here is her description of this “staff” member:
She’s not [the] support staff that I really need. She is an amazing receptionist. She can answer the phone, she can answer emails, but that was what her job was with [the former department chair]. She’s not an administrative assistant, but I need an administrative assistant. All of a sudden when I first came, I’m giving her a lot of extra stuff that she’s never had to do before, and it’s overwhelming her [and] frustrating me... I don’t feel like she’s efficient at all.

Other department chairs within this study identified their support personnel in much more empowering terms such as “colleagues” and “associates.” For example, Lance identified his support personnel in the following response:

[Although] they have different titles... I just think of them as colleagues... I think [of them] as part of the team, I don’t think of them as slaves [or] servants... I treat them like colleagues the same way I treat my full-time faculty colleagues.

When support personnel were perceived by the department chair as “colleagues” or “associates,” there was evidence of increased responsibilities. When asked how his support personnel provide assistance for his department chair roles, Lance replied, “[By] producing concerts... scheduling practice rooms, scheduling lessons, all the bookkeeping that has to be done... all the prep work of approving invoices... assigning budget numbers.”

Although most participants reported that support personnel were helpful in managing departmental operations, others noted that inefficient support personnel can make for inefficient departments. Most noteworthy, Audrey, Vivian, Hanna, and Susan each reported that their support personnel were unproductive. For example, Audrey described the low functioning skills of one of her previous support personnel. “[She] was
really a glorified receptionist...[She] couldn’t put a sentence together and spell all the words [correctly].” In addition, these four female department chairs reported relational conflict with their support personnel. It should be noted that the support personnel for these department chairs were also females. This finding may suggest that same-gender relationships between department chairs and their support personnel are more likely to result in discord and unproductive departments. Further research is necessary regarding the potential influence of gender on departmental relationships and productivity.

Similarly, participants noted that efficient support staff can make for more efficient departments. Hanna proposed, “A more productive secretary would make us go a step forward.”

Support personnel also provide assistance to department chairs in meeting deadlines with regard to institutional reports and budgetary processes. Bryan noted the important role that support personnel played during his transition into the department chair position. He shared:

I relied in large part on the executive assistant to the dean who was able to assist me with a lot of the time table processes, paperwork, report, budget cycle, information, and of course, I relied on the professional administrative staff, the budget officer, [and] others that were in place.

Darrin described his support person as an “administrative assistant.” Within the department, this individual is viewed as a valuable and contributing member because of her unique perspective and connection with students. He explained:

[She is] an extension of the family team...If she sits in on our department meetings, she voices opinions...there’s nothing that she feels she can’t
say... Those positions are important because they are [the] face of the department and a contact with students that is not polluted by the load of academic power structure... That’s great for us to listen to somebody like that... somebody who is sensitive to working in that environment and who shares and understands the objectives of the department.

Similarly, Marcel described his primary support person as a “partner.” He further described the types of responsibilities that she performs:

She’s not just a secretary, she’s a partner... She keeps track of [my] calendar. She tells me when I’ve got to get ready for something... She’s so good at it and she’s so organized and she’s so meticulous. She’s totally opposite of the way I do things and it’s really helpful.

**Sub-theme 4.4: Although administrators provided support to many music department chairs in the form of advice regarding institutional policies, processes, and procedures, some administrators were unsupportive.** Department chair relationships with administrators served multiple sense-making functions. Many participants reported that these relationships provide support in the form of administrative advice, encouragement, and assistance with institutional protocols during organizational socialization. For example, Lance indicated that his relationship with his dean helped him to understand institutional policies. He stated, “[We discussed] issues of advice, mostly having to do with [institutional] policies... every institution has its own thoughts about how certain things are done. Particularly when I first came to [this institution] there were back and forth questions.”
Rachel’s relationship with her dean was a source of encouragement and empowerment for her. She explained:

I went to the academic dean a lot…I was saying, “I really don’t think I can do this job. I think this is too much.” He would listen and encourage and I would come away thinking I could do it again.

Susan’s relationship with her immediate administrator demonstrates a collaborative partnership. She shared, “[My administrator] has really been responsive. He’s been willing to listen. He’s a person who really wants to work well together…I felt really good about his philosophy of leading.”

Several participants, however, reported that their administrators were unsupportive. These types of relationships created dissension between institutional levels and resulted in overall unproductive working environments. Vivian commented on her particularly challenging work relationship with her administrators. She shared, “During my term as chair, I’ve had a great deal of interference and micromanaging.” She described an example of this micromanaging:

I’ve had the provost numerous times get in touch and say, “I’ve heard from someone that on your agenda for the meeting this week, such and such is going to occur. I would highly advise you, as in, require you, to change that agenda process.”

Vivian later added:

I’m not sure the leadership knows what they want from the chairs. I think they define the chair position with as little actual power and authority as possible, and I think that’s been the case for the history of the college.
Christopher’s response describes a similar lack of department chair authority. He stated:

There’s really very little power invested in the chair so to speak, for major decision making. Our department doesn’t act alone in that regard. In many cases you’re just a connection to the provost’s office essentially. The provost actually writes up the contracts even for adjunct faculty.

Audrey was surprised at her dean’s demeaning attitude toward her music department. She conveyed his comments during their first meeting. He had announced, “The first thing is, well, you’re not going to get that soft shoulder to cry on because I’m not from the arts.”

Steve noted that during his transition into the department chair position, the dean’s position was somewhat of a revolving door. Consequently, he received little support from his immediate administrators. In Steve’s words, “We’ve had so many deans and assistant deans at this school I would say that I was not getting the support from the administration that I would probably have appreciated.” Following this statement he added, “Right now we have excellent leadership in the dean’s position and the assistant dean position. If I was to go through that transition again, I’m sure that they would be there [to support me].”

Darrin indicated that he has a network of administrative individuals on campus that he can access. These relationships include the current and former provost, former department chairs, and senior colleagues who “everybody turns to for a variety of issues.” He further explained, “If an organization is running, you should feel comfortable asking [for help].” This statement is contrasted with Jackson’s response:
You have to understand that inherent with taking a position at this high academic rank, salary and whatever [it] is that you figure out a way to do it. If I’m writing letters to my dean asking for help, it means that I’ve fundamentally failed. These differing responses may be better understood when institution size and administrative accessibility are considered. For example, Darrin noted that at a “small institution,” the “goal...of the president and provost is to make everybody comfortable...They are working to not have distance...and not to be authoritarian.” Jackson, on the other hand, explained, “I have a dean who I answer to who is the dean of the college of liberal arts and sciences, but that’s 17,000 students and faculty...I answer to [him] just like another colleague of mine who may answer to a provost.” Thus, Darrin felt free to seek help given the closeness and accessibility of administrators at his institution. On the other hand, Jackson felt inhibited to ask for help because of the distance and inaccessibility of administrators at his institution.

Sub-theme 4.5: Non-departmental colleagues provided a network of support for music department chairs. The following section identifies department chair relationships with professional colleagues outside the immediate departments of the participants in this sample. These relationships include on-campus colleagues from other departments as well as off-campus colleagues from other institutions.

Nathan identified another department chair at his institution as being especially helpful for providing answers regarding department chair responsibilities. He exclaimed, “The art department chair is just really awesome. She is amazing. I’ve been able to go to her [and] ask her various questions. She doesn’t feel in conflict. She doesn’t feel like I’m in her way.
Similarly, Audrey identified an on-campus department chair who provided helpful models of tenure portfolios. She stated, “My mentor from the education school had wonderful models, even when it came to my tenure case. She had all of this…it was wonderful.”

Susan’s relationships with off-campus colleagues provided her with a safe opportunity to “vent” about personal struggles as a department chair. She confessed:

A lot of times I’m talking to people that don’t even live in the state of Michigan…It’s more of just being able to vent…and know that it’s not going anywhere…You just need to get this off your chest because it’s so frustrating or you’re so discouraged or you’re so overwhelmed, stressed out [or] whatever, and you just need to talk it out with somebody.

Professional associations such as the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), the College Music Society (CMS), the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), and Association of Christian College Music Educators (ACCME) were also reported as supportive to department chairs. Those participants whose programs were accredited by the NASM indicated the value of meeting with colleagues in similar positions from other institutions. For example, Susan shared, “I’ve made a lot of connections with other people who are in the same position.” Steve described the supportive role that NASM played in his becoming a department chair:

NASM provides leadership workshops at their annual meeting for new music executives. Every year they do that. People who are new to the position…people who are a few years out of writing their self-study…they have all those things in
place so that you can benefit. I would say I had guidance through NASM more
than anything else.

Lance explained that, “To sit at a NASM conference with other chairs who have similar
very localized music issues... that’s also been helpful.” Vivian also reported having built
relationships with off-campus colleagues. She stated, “I do have colleagues at other
places around the country and have gotten to know people through NASM
meetings... that’s been useful.”

Rachel noted the importance of the Association of Christian College Music
Educators (ACCME) in her understanding department chair roles and responsibilities.
She shared:

[I was] around other people who were doing what I was doing... I can remember
the relief I felt when I talked to someone else and they said, “Yes, that’s normal to
feel that way... that happens here too.” Both the camaraderie and fellowship and
the developmental part of that was really, really good.

Lastly, participants reported various networks of colleagues that provide support.
For example, Steve mentioned that he communicates with other department chairs
through various email groups and list serves. He mentioned, “We have an email group of
individuals who are in similar positions... faculty who are also chairs... we maintain
correspondence.”

Sub-theme 4.6: Mentors provided support to many music department chairs in the
form of friendships, assistance, advice, and guidance with decision making. Six
participants within this study reported mentoring relationships. Most of these mentoring
relationships developed from casual friendships without formal institutional involvement.
The primary support functions that these relationships provided to department chairs included friendships, assistance in learning chair roles, advice on various departmental processes and procedures, and general guidance about life situations and decisions. It should be noted here, that no formal definition of mentoring was established or presented to participants within this study. During interviews, department chairs were simply asked if they were mentored for their positions and to describe these relationships if any existed.

Steve identified the former department chair as his mentor. He recalled how this mentoring relationship developed:

Previous to that one year transition, we had developed a close friendship. He had let me know probably a year in advance that he was going to retire and that his plan was to stick around and mentor whoever became the new chair. He then said that he would like me to do it. He was recommending me to the position and that was flattering of course to have his confidence. I would say we had a very good close working relationship and friendship

His experience demonstrates that mentoring may serve both a professional function in preparing Steve to become the new department chair as well as a personal function in building a “close friendship.”

Lance identified his mentor as a “spiritual advisor” in addition to being a friend. He shared:

[He was] very much a friend, someone who understood academic scenarios…at a different school… it was just casual, but important, sort of sharing of ideas, listening to another person give you some advice…particularly what I should do
in terms of my own career and so on. That was helpful...It was just more of a
heart-to-heart talk, and really a mentor type relationship.

Eric's mentor was a former K-12 department chair. This relationship was
friendship-based rather than institutionally initiated. It provided an informal means of
encouragement for Eric as he described:

Not only was that person a mentor, [but] also a friend...There was always a
connection in terms of "How's it going?" in casual conversation, but there was
never any formal kind of process that I engaged in with regard to college
business.

Gary's mentor was a department chair from a previous institution. Like other
mentoring relationships identified in this section, this relationship was based on a
friendship, but involved somewhat more formal structures as Gary had been a faculty
member in the previous chair's department. He described the relationship, "[He] taught
me and became a friend and a mentor. I grew up a little bit and I learned a lot...If I have
an issue, I call him up and I [say], "What do I do?" Later, Gary complimented his mentor
by declaring, "He was a master administrator...I'd always say he was the best
administrator on the campus. Even the president of the university couldn't hold a candle
to him and I believe that to this day."

Bryan identified two mentoring experiences that were helpful during and after his
transition into the department chair position. The first mentor was a department chair
from another discipline within the same institution. He recounted the frequency of their
contact, "[We spoke] a couple times a week...sharing information as I was going through
the first of several cycles of reappointment, tenure, [and] promotion. That’s one of the biggies, and so [we were] able to talk about those things.”

The second form of mentoring Bryan described involved a group of colleagues in similar positions at other schools within his institution. These individuals meet together regularly and discuss “different topics” and “policies and procedures.” Bryan further stated, “It also fosters cooperation and partnerships…you get to know people and you share issues…You learn a lot from the experience of others. It’s a mutually supportive group.”

Lastly, Jackson identified a mentoring-type relationship that formed between a dean and him at a previous institution. He noted that this relationship was mutually beneficial. He further explained this reciprocal relationship:

Any good administrator is looking for new ideas. So, [for] mentorship really to be successful, [it] is a two-way street. I presented her with options she had never thought of and she talked through experiences that she had had. Between the two of us we usually came to a good conclusion.

Table 5 displays the supportive relationships that each department chair identified. Relationship categories correspond with sub-themes and include: personal (i.e., family), departmental colleagues, support personnel, administrators, non-departmental colleagues, and mentors.
Table 5

**Supportive Relationships Reported by Department Chairs (Theme 4)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Departmental Colleagues (4.2)</th>
<th>Support Personnel (4.3)</th>
<th>Administrators (4.4)</th>
<th>Non-departmental Colleagues (4.5)</th>
<th>Mentors (4.6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provost</td>
<td>On-campus colleagues, off-campus department chairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provost</td>
<td>On-campus colleagues, off-campus department chairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Current dean</td>
<td></td>
<td>Previous director of music</td>
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<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Discipline manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discipline chair</td>
<td></td>
<td>K-12 department chair</td>
</tr>
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<td>Lance</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Admin. personnel</td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic dean</td>
<td>On-campus colleagues, NASM colleagues</td>
<td>Friend/Spiritual advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivian</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On-campus department chairs, off-campus colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Admin. personnel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dept. chair from previous institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Assistant to dean</td>
<td>Dean, associate provost, etc.</td>
<td>On-campus colleagues</td>
<td>Dept. chair from another department</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 (continued)

**Supportive Relationships Reported by Department Chairs** (Theme 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Departmental Colleagues</th>
<th>Support Personnel</th>
<th>Administrators</th>
<th>Non-departmental Colleagues</th>
<th>Mentors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Sub-themes)</td>
<td>(4.1)</td>
<td>(4.2)</td>
<td>(4.3)</td>
<td>(4.4)</td>
<td>(4.5)</td>
<td>(4.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
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<td>Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic dean</td>
<td>Off-campus colleagues</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Darrin</td>
<td>Faculty, former department chairs</td>
<td>Admin. assistant</td>
<td>Former provosts and current provost</td>
<td>On-campus colleagues</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hanna</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Faculty, former department chairs</td>
<td>Admin. assistant</td>
<td>Provost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcel</td>
<td>Family</td>
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<td>Admin. staff</td>
<td>Deans</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Faculty, former department chairs</td>
<td>Admin. assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td>On-campus department chair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deans, provost</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Dean from previous institution</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Theme 5: Music Department Chairs Identified Numerous Strategies that Facilitate Role Functioning

Higher education literature has described the department chair position as a challenging role to assume. Those who become department chairs report heavy workloads, high levels of stress, and difficulty due to role ambiguity and role conflict. One of the goals of this study was to investigate methods for overcoming many of the challenges associated with the department chair position. To this end, the following sections present strategies reported by department chairs that facilitate role functioning. These findings address the research question: What strategies and resources, if any, do these department chairs utilize to facilitate their work, and why? It is important to note that this presentation of findings does not advocate a particular department chair strategy or evaluate its effectiveness in terms of role functioning.

Findings have been organized into six sub-themes by strategy type that collectively describe how music department chairs function in their complex roles. These sub-themes are as follows: (5.1) although time management was a significant challenge for most music department chairs, they utilized multiple strategies to ensure that their priorities were achieved; (5.2) although the majority of participants recommended strategies for managing stress, experienced music department chairs reported less stress than beginning department chairs; (5.3) clear communication was critical to departmental conflict avoidance and resolution strategies; (5.4) participants identified leadership strategies that were characterized by humility and service to their department colleagues; (5.5) honest and direct communication was fundamental to department chair communication strategies; and (5.6) participants acknowledged multiple attributes, skills and values necessary for effective music department chair functioning. At the end of this
section, I have included several examples of role-facilitating strategies which may be helpful for readers who are considering becoming or currently in department chair positions (see Table 6).

Sub-theme 5.1: Although time management was a significant challenge for most music department chairs, they utilized multiple strategies to ensure that their priorities were achieved. Department chairs in this study were asked the question: How do you manage your time to ensure that your priorities are achieved? Participants responded that time management was perhaps the most significant challenge of being a department chair. This is likely due to the extensive time requirements of the position. For example, Christopher reported, “I put in about 12-hour days...that’s pretty routine.”

Similarly, Marcel detailed his recent work schedule:

I work constantly...I haven’t had a completely free weekend since Christmas and since Christmas I hadn’t had one since Labor Day. I work every night...I try to get home around six or seven and if I have to come back for a concert, I’ve got to be back here at eight. That’s at least two nights a week. But [on other days], I work from probably eleven to somewhere between one and four in the morning.

Long days and continuous work periods are not surprising given that previous research suggests that department chairs’ workloads and time commitments are greater than ever before (Aziz et al., 2005). In response to these increased time commitments, this section provides several strategies to assist department chairs in managing their time. Primary time management strategies reported by department chairs within this study include: open and closed door policies, working at home, following an institutional calendar, operating by deadlines, planning in advance, establishing a support system,
delegating responsibilities, reordering priorities, multi-tasking, non-multi-tasking, and summoning inner motivation.

Several participants reported that they maintain some form of an “open door policy.” Those who maintain this type of policy also acknowledged that interruptions are incessant. Steve schedules regular office hours when his door is open. He explained:

I have set office hours when my door is open. When I close my door, I do get more done, but I also find that even when the door is closed, faculty will ask to come in or students will ask me if I can be seen, so the closed door doesn’t always work.

Lance enforces his open/closed door policy. He replied:

I have an open door policy. If my door is closed, then don’t bother, make an appointment to see me. But if my door is open, people walk in all the time…[this] also means I do very little work in my office here.

Marcel pointed out that closing his door and being away from the office can be “damaging” to his relationships his colleagues. He later explained:

You lose track…all your head faculty get really steamed, and rightly so, when they can’t grab you because they don’t have your schedule. They’ve got to teach, teach, teach, ten minutes here [to meet with you], teach, teach, ten minutes here [to meet with you], teach, teach.

Another common time management strategy reported by several department chairs was to meet the needs of department constituents (i.e., students, faculty, staff, and administration) during the day and work on administrative reports at home during the evening hours. This strategy allowed department chairs to focus on major projects away
from daily interruptions. Steve explained, “It’s [during] the evening when I give priority to chair responsibilities because it’s an uninterrupted amount of time, whereas during the day I’m meeting with students, answering questions, handling some other pressing issues that relate to the classroom.” Susan recalled that working with interruptions was a “big topic of discussion at the NASM [conference]. Lance stated, “My research, administrative report writing... all that kind of stuff I do at home.” Lastly, Marcel replied, “I did the entire NASM accreditation [report] at home because it’s just not possible to work here without the kind of interruptions that make the project three times longer.”

The majority of department chairs within this sample follow an institutional calendar for the completion of various departmental processes, activities, and reports. Lance described the institutional calendar used at his institution:

It’s [on] the website for faculty chairs... [The website] has two versions of the calendar. One is by issues that you have to deal with as department chairs and then there’s a second version of the calendar which puts it in chronological order so in September you can expect to do this, in October this is what needs to be done, etc.

However, some institutions did not provide department chairs with this type of formal calendar. Nathan indicated that he would have “saved... a lot of headache” if he had been given a schedule of routine department chair responsibilities. Vivian writes a “to-do list” as a means of organizing her time. She explained, “This is my big picture list... this is my pad to sketch in faculty meetings and agenda[s].”

Operating by deadlines was another strategy identified by participants. Lance shared, “If I’m asked to do something, [the] first question I always ask is, “By when do
you need this?” If the person doesn’t give me a deadline, I won’t even look at it. I function with deadlines.” Jackson noted, “The deadlines that you use to be the final arbitrators of your time are real. Don’t put extra burdens on yourself. If you have a report due next week, then it can be done next week.” Furthermore, Darrin explained that not all urgent deadlines are significant to departmental effectiveness. He pointed out, “there’s a saying that being organized is a matter of structure…but it’s also the art of knowing what to leave undone…Not everything that looks urgent is really critical.”

Although meeting deadlines can be difficult, Bryan indicated that advance planning, a support system, and delegation are critical to accomplishing departmental priorities. He admitted:

That’s probably my biggest challenge…Too many deadlines, not enough advance planning, and I mean it’s all about making priorities…and getting a support system in place and either delegating appropriately or deciding what you can do and what you can’t do

Other participants shared this perspective. Lance described an example of advanced planning with his support personnel:

I also have to honor other people’s deadlines. [Support personnel] help me with that…We’re basically finishing up teaching assignments and teaching loads for next year. The very next step is scheduling of classes and courses. Again, part of that [support personnel] does, part of it we do together.

Regarding delegation of responsibilities, Nathan provided an example, “Sometimes I delegate…like if it’s a pianist that we’re hiring, I’ll delegate it to our pianist and say, ‘Here, we need to hire somebody in two weeks.’”
Due to continual requests for information from department chairs, several participants pointed out that priorities often need to be reordered daily. Using this strategy, Christopher described how priorities and responsibilities constantly “shift.” He explained:

You sometimes have to shift priorities… You’re looking at that list on a daily basis saying, “This will have to wait…” I wish I could have a very similar or a constant priority scale and approach each day like that, but to be honest, it’s very difficult to do that. You have things that come up that, if you haven’t planned for or they’re unexpected, they immediately take priority.

Jackson advocated, “Prioritize according to critical mass and need.” Marcel manages his priorities according to the significance of the issue. Quasi-jokingly he explained, “Everyday I do the things that I think will get me fired or the school will collapse if I don’t do them today.” Later, Jackson encouraged department chairs to maintain balance in life when re-prioritizing. He recommended:

You keep prioritizing. Every day you re-prioritize, but you never lose sight of the real issue… Plan your time. At the same time, never lose sight of the need to remain healthy, the need to keep the focus in your life on family, friends, [and] the joys in your life.

Department chairs had contrasting views about multi-tasking strategies. For example, Steve’s strategy for accomplishing department priorities avoids the concept of multi-tasking. He stated:

One of the things that helps me the most is having a regular work schedule, and being able to avoid the concept of multi-tasking. Multi-tasking doesn’t work for
me. I can't do two things at the same time, and get them both done adequately. I have to say, okay this is what I'm going to work on right now, and I will either get it completed, or I will work to a point where I feel I have reached a level of completion, and then move on to something else.

Conversely, Marcel noted that although multi-tasking is difficult, it is a necessary part of his role as a department chair. He shared:

What's difficult for me...in this kind of a position is handling 40 things that you do 15 minutes at a time. I've learned how to take a meeting that ends at 20 'til and write a quick note after the meeting, then spend ten or twelve minutes on an assessment project or something. That's not my natural way of working...Working on one project until completion is out of the question. It just doesn't exist here.

Lastly, Darrin's thoughtful response identifies the critical role that inner motivation and conviction serve in completing administrative responsibilities. He reflected:

There is the management in making efficient use of time, but I think even before that, there is finding the energy to do the tasks. I think for everyone that means discovering within yourself the kind of conviction to do things. I mean, there's a lot of bureaucratic stuff. There are things that aren't immediately rewarding, but you have to do them out of a belief that this whole enterprise is worth it...this whole educational enterprise, the mission of the institution and the department. You have to summon that conviction, I think, in order to get the energy to do it.
Sub-theme 5.2: Although the majority of participants recommended strategies for managing stress, experienced music department chairs reported less stress than beginning department chairs. Department chair stress has been the focus of numerous studies (Burns & Gmelch, 1992, 1995; Gillett-Karam, 1999; Gmelch & Burns, 1993, 1994; Gmelch & Wilke, 1991; Wolverton, et al., 1997). Collectively, these studies indicate that stress is a significant issue for those who serve in department chair positions. As part of learning to function in stressful roles, department chairs in this study were asked, “How do you manage stress?” Responses varied across participants with many indicating that they don’t manage stress well. For example, Christopher admitted, “I’m still learning. I still drink too much coffee. I still don’t find time to go to gyms and do some more healthy things. I still haven’t learned how to really manage stress well.”

Vivian pointed out a potentially damaging strategy for stress management. She shared:

I usually have a glass of wine at night, [but I] made the decision some time ago that more than one glass of wine at night was not going to be a good policy. I needed to really think about that.

Marcel shared that the intense stress associated with chairing an academic department affects not only himself, but also his family. He confessed, “It’s a really stressful gig. If I’m being honest, I do it by taking it out on my family and by wrecking my personal life and by doing nothing but this job.”

Darrin explained that stressing is “the least effective way to see a creative solution.” He further explained:
All the creative rewiring and new circuitry that you want your brain to work with in order to see a way out of the box is not going to happen if you’re stressed. That’s paralysis…Eventually you learn that that doesn’t get me the solution. That’s definitely not the way to do it…So you find other ways to open up yourself to new solutions.

Despite these department chairs who expressed difficulty in managing stress, several participants identified helpful strategies for managing stress. These strategies include: keeping a sense of humor, avoiding stressful situations, getting sufficient rest, learning how to relax, exercising, leaving work at the office, and learning from experience.

Steve offered two strategies. First, he advocated that department chairs maintain humor in their relationships with students and faculty. He explained:

As soon as you start taking yourself too seriously, then you forget about the humor and then you’re setting yourself up for all kinds of problems with your students and your faculty…I think when people are too serious, students find ways to chip away at that and it can erode a good relationship with those students, so I try not to take myself too seriously, [but] allow myself to take their education seriously.

A second strategy that Steve identified involves stress avoidance. He recommended:

Avoid stressful situations as much as possible, and when you are in a situation that is stressful, you have to protect yourself. You have to be aware of the fact that it is stressful, and you have to have some kind of a barrier that is up there that protects you from being assailed.
Gary noted that managing stress involves discipline and sufficient sleep. He stated, “You have to have a bit of discipline about it. You have to work at it. I try very hard now to get a good night’s rest...I consider that important.” Likewise Eric noted the importance of knowing how to relax. He shared:

What [we] do is exhausting. It’s plain tiring. And you better have the stamina. You better let it fuel you. When you stop, you’ll know. The engine has been running really fast and maybe hot. You better know how to use your relax time because if you can’t, you’ll burn yourself out.

Nathan suggests that long commutes provide time to “leave” work behind. He explained:

I have about a 40-minute commute. Honestly, that helps me. It means for some late nights occasionally here, but when I driving out of here, I’m leaving it away. So that’s a good stress relief. A lot of people here on campus live a block off campus. I notice that they’re always a lot more stressed out because they never leave.

Seasoned department chairs within this sample described the significant effect that their experience had on managing stress. With few exceptions, those with extensive experience in the department chair position reported less stress than beginning department chairs. This finding contradicts previous research indicating that the factors of age and years of experience were found to have little effect on department chair stress (Gmelch & Gates, 1995). For instance, Darrin pointed out that experience builds self-confidence and consequently lessens stress. He shared:
I think part of experience is building up a kind of a self-confidence that there may be short term problems here, but I've done it before. I've seen it before. I've worked through it before. So, it doesn't stress [me] out anymore.

Similarly, Bryan acknowledged his experience along with exercise and time off, help him to manage stress. He stated, “I think that I manage it better because I have much more experience. I [also] think exercise [and] forcing one to take some time off here and there is very important.”

Lance indicated that he experiences “very little stress.” He humorously explained how his 31 years as a department chair have helped him to manage stress. He declared:

[I have] very little stress. Every once in a while...but every job has its bit of bad routines you have to do. There’s probably two days out of a leap year that I would prefer malaria and not have to be a dept chair. But generally, I’m not afraid of challenges, talking to people, even [talking to] difficult people is not particularly stressful to me...That’s where having enough experience helps.

Sub-theme 5.3: Clear communication was critical to departmental conflict avoidance and resolution strategies. According to Stanley and Algert (2007), resolving conflict is a primary responsibility of department chairs. However, there is limited research describing how department chairs resolve conflict (Findlen, 2000; Gmelch, 1995b). To this end, participants were asked, “How do you resolve conflict in your department?” The following section identifies several strategies for avoiding and resolving conflict as reported by the department chairs in this study.

A significant finding among the participants was the importance of clear communication in avoiding and resolving conflict. Audrey noted that resolving conflict
begins with private conversations with all involved parties. Based on her experience, she then recommends bringing involved parties together without trying to over-investigate issues. She shared, “I used to try to figure everything out...I used to try to read between the lines and get to the bottom of it...I’m tired of going to the nth degree.”

Steve maintains a proactive approach to avoiding conflict by bringing people together before issues escalate. He explained:

I always work very hard to be up front. I don’t want to see things develop and grow over a period of time. I can’t sit back and let something like that happen...If I see something occurring between two faculty members...or between myself and a faculty member, I’ll just call him and say we need to talk. Get people together and be open and as much as possible because otherwise those kind of things can spiral out of control and become really impossible to handle.

Gary described the importance of listening to others and yourself when resolving conflict. He stated:

There’s a certain kind of thoughtfulness. It’s beyond trying to understand what people are telling you. It’s also listening carefully and listening to yourself about how you’re thinking about these things. It’s real easy to make decisions and come to conclusions on things through reaction.

Darrin described the department chair’s role during conflict much like a parent’s role in a family. He expressed:

It is the chair’s responsibility to serve as a go-between...In a parental role when two siblings are fighting, that’s what one would expect to do. You talk to [them] and say, “Let’s think together about a solution so that we can stay together as a
family, so that we can work in some synergistic way to energize and support the whole.

Eric recommends that when needed, administrators be invited to the conversation with involved parties. He explained:

If I need to invite someone else into the process...I’ll say, “Alright, let’s have this conversation with the discipline chair. Let’s make sure that we’re all on the same page and everybody understands where you’re coming from so that we can resolve it.”

Lance pointed out that because of his years of experience, he maintains some distance from situations. He remarked:

With years of experience, you know that you’re going to get those situations; they’re always going to happen. You learn to take some distance from the heat of the moment, tirade [or] complaint, even though in some cases, the complaint might even be justified.

Gary casually described the reasons for conflict. He remarked, “Most of the time when people walk in that door, there are two issues: they either want money or they are whining about something.” Later he explained that often times a deeper issue is buried beneath the surface. He stated:

With that immediate issue there’s always the reason for that immediate issue. It’s always behind it. There’s a long-term causation to it. In other words, if it’s come up, likely, it’s not a one-time problem and the cause of it is beyond that three or four levels.
Regarding potentially difficult issues such as tenure and promotion, Bryan suggests a peer review system. He stated:

You can’t beat good faith peer review. It’s why our system is so much stronger now than it was back in the 80s. You can’t say someone has this against me if you have a number of people who are elected into roles of annual review, and there’s a consistency across individuals looking at the comparative data. It’s a very strong system.

Darrin discussed that within “flat” department structures, members work together equally as part of a family for the benefit of the whole group. However, department structures that are not flat often result in the chair role becoming more authoritative. He explained how conflict might result from departmental structures that are not flat:

If it’s not a flat structure, then there’s an assumption that someone, whoever is titled the chair, has some authority and control over someone else’s behavior...When there is conflict, that’s a very difficult kind of authority to maintain because the department depends on smooth day to day operations. In other words, I suppose some chair could say, “Well, as chair I have to make a decision and you’re wrong on this and you’ve got to change.” At a small institution, that is not going to happen because...the very next department meeting I’m going to have to rely on that person to exhibit the kind of empathy and departmental interest that he just feels I’ve robbed him from.

Lastly, Jackson identified a three-step approach to resolving conflict in his department. He shared:
In general, the three steps of conflict resolution are first to allow the person the opportunity to say what they have to say in any context, in any form with any emotional content...The next step is to bring this person around to the fact that...we do have to find a resolution...The third step is to figure out the form of that resolution.

Sub-theme 5.4: Participants identified leadership strategies that were characterized by humility and service to their department colleagues. The department chair position is uniquely situated between faculty and administration. Consequently, department chairs are often viewed as a buffer between these two institutional levels (Gillett-Karam, 1999). Leading from this middle position can be challenging. For example, Susan shared about her difficulty being situated between faculty and administration. She explained, “I am in the middle, and [it’s] tough...I am really having a struggle with that right now.” To help understand and describe how department chairs function in their roles, this section presents several leadership strategies as reported by participants. These strategies include: being a servant, assuming a posture of humility, sharing administrative control, leading from behind, moving institutional objectives forward through departmental goals, helping colleagues to succeed, promoting teamwork, generating new initiatives, and marshaling resources for departmental advancement.

Several participants compared their role to that of a servant. Lance explained his servant leadership role:

[Being a] chair is what I do, but it’s very much a servant role. It’s also Visionary, it’s a leader role, but it’s probably sixty to seventy percent being a servant...There’s a lot of stuff that happens, sort of back room stuff that I think is
important. That’s probably where I work best. That’s where that servant stuff happens.

Similarly, Gary reflected, “I want to help people. I want to be that person that can make a person’s life better and bring more joy and pleasure.” These responses suggest that serving and encouraging others is a useful strategy for leading departments.

Bryan explained the important role that other departmental members play in solving problems. Moreover, department chairs should not assume that they have all the answers based on their title or position within the department. He remarked:

One needs to really bend over backwards to communicate and to listen and learn because you won’t last long in this position if you think you have the answers. Your job might be to go down a certain direction and persuade others and if you can, that’s great. If you can’t, then you need to maybe revise where you’re going. My perspective has been to be confident, but never to assume, and never to assume that I have the answers.

Gary acknowledged the significance of humility in admitting poor decisions. He stated:

Embrace a little bit of humility...there’s time to change a decision. There is a certain point in which you know you’ve done something, whatever it is, a behavior, an action, a decision, and...after awhile, you can’t undo it, no matter what you do...Then it is a question of admitting, yeah, look I was wrong. Sorry. What can I do?
Later he described the reciprocal benefit of trusting and rewarding people. He shared, “When you allow trust and reward people for doing what they do well, they will always give it back to you in another way.”

Jackson compared department chair leadership to being a sheepdog where one leads from behind. He explained:

Being a department chair…is more like being a sheepdog…You have to herd people through a gate. It’s not like, “Follow me. Let’s charge over the hill.” You’ll be all alone at the end. That’s not what it is. You have to be able to get a very diverse group of people to agree on a common goal. And agreement over a common goal does not necessarily mean blanket agreement. It can mean majority agreement and that’s the problem. And so, trying to be a department chair…is more like the sheepdog. You’re herding people through a gate. You lead from behind.

Bryan’s response illustrates the unique manner in which department chair leadership is exercised in faculty-owned areas as well as administratively-owned areas of an institution. He contrasts the areas of curriculum and budget. He pointed out:

The curriculum is owned by the faculty; it is not owned by the administration. It is of the faculty, it’s for the faculty, it’s for the students, but one can try to persuade and one can try to go in certain directions, but one needs to have a governing structure where the faculty are making those decisions…I think that there are certain areas where the administration maybe takes a more direct role; that is not one of them. The budgeting system is clearly one.
Bryan also described the importance of aligning the school of music with institutional objectives and then framing those objectives for faculty. He explained:

The most important role in my view is developing relationships with the upper administration and finding a congruence of mission and articulating [that mission], being very sensitive to what it is they want and being sort of the go-between [for] what the larger institutional objectives are, and framing that for the faculty to try to move the music enterprise forward.

Marcel echoed the importance of moving institutional goals forward through the school of music. He communicated:

When I’m representing the school of music, it’s all about what the school of music is doing to move the university forward...I always try to voice things to the president, the dean, the provost, business folks, and say, “What do they need to be successful? What do they need to drive the school forward?” And I try some way to do that through music.

Similarly, Gary added, “The object is to keep forward motion, to keep things functioning, to keep people communicating with one another, to keep people compassionate, to be able to see the larger picture and understand others in other areas.”

Another leadership strategy reported by participants involves motivating and empowering faculty to excel. Lance framed his leadership role in the success of the faculty members in his department. He explained:

My job is to make sure my colleagues do the best work they can in their specific professional domains, whether it’s conducting, teaching theory, private lessons, [or] whatever. So at the end of the day or [at] the end of the year, that’s my goal. I
want them each to excel to their highest level that they can in their respective competence.

Bryan repeated the importance of empowering faculty, without micromanaging, as part of a unified team. He shared:

One needs to realize it’s a team effort. It’s not an individual effort. I think that the more successful one is as an administrator, the more they empower other people to have responsibility associated with what they do. And you need to listen to them. You shouldn’t micromanage.

Working with faculty members as part of a team involves valuing and respecting others. Darrin stated, “You [have to] respect them professionally.” Likewise, Jackson added:

If you have a fundamental ability to be able to recognize no matter how good you are at something, it’s all right for other people to be good as well, and to constantly acknowledge what they do well, then you’ll be successful.

Bryan remarked, “I think we work very hard to have transparent communication and to share lots of information and to jointly move forward mostly by consensus.” Later he described the importance of teamwork between faculty members:

[They are] terrific faculty and they are a very hard-working, congenial, mutually supportive group of people. It’s a very healthy community and I think that they take great pride in the advancement that they’ve accomplished. I’d say it’s a place where there aren’t a lot of surprises. There’s a lot of joint planning [and] you have a lot of working together.
Generating new ideas and developing initiatives were identified as department chair leadership strategies. Gary described how his department continually searches for improved ways of serving students. He responded:

We're constantly looking to clarify how we can be better, how we can set the bar higher, how we can give our students a better experience, how we create community. That's my big role...There's a never-ending sort of distance to which you can always examine something to see whether we can do it differently or better, or more uniquely, or more innovatively, or more efficiently.

New ideas and initiatives often involve financial support. However, improving departmental functioning can be challenging during times of fiscal constraint. Marcel explained how the current economy has affected the generation of new departmental initiatives. He stated:

I spent my whole career trying to find great initiatives...I think one of the frustrations is when you have years and years where you're looking forward, saying, "How can we make things bigger and better and greater and have a broader impact?" And then you start looking at things saying, "Well, where can we cut? And where can we save money? And what can we keep going?"

Lance acknowledged his leadership role in obtaining institutional resources to advance the success of faculty in his department. He shared:

My job is to sit down and say, "Okay, what can we do to help you? What do you need from us? Do you need some teaching help? Do you need money to do more research?" I strongly believe that's my job; to make my colleagues do their best
and for me to marshal institutional resources as best as I can to help them do their best work.

Sub-theme 5.5: Honest and direct communication was fundamental to department chair communication strategies. Participants within this study identified a number of helpful strategies for communicating with departmental constituents. These strategies include: asking rather than telling people what to do, meeting face to face, practicing honesty, translating communication between institutional levels, using direct communication when issues are critical, and confirming verbal conversations in writing. Overall, honest and direct communication was common to these department chair communication strategies.

Eric pointed out that people want to be asked rather than told what to do. He explained:

People do not like to be told what to do. Some people want to be told what to do and you have to know the difference between them, but for the most part, people want to be asked. They want to be treated fairly. They want to be treated reasonably and they want to be valued.

Lance recommended regular face to face meetings with individuals as a helpful communication strategy. He shared, “I try to meet with my faculty members individually on a fairly regular basis.”

Similarly, Vivian reported that weekly face to face meetings with her dean improved their communication over previous email conversations. She explained:

I have a weekly standing meeting with [the dean] face to face...I think it has made a very positive difference. I do think that there’s an email fatigue that goes
on. I think that he kind of pushes papers across his desk and simply doesn’t remember because it’s not important to him or significant, whereas for me it might be very significant.

Bryan indicated that honesty is perhaps the most significant attribute of effective communication. He stated:

Maybe the single most important attribute is being able to tell the same story and to tell the true story. There are some times where it’s not very helpful to come straight out and say something to someone, but you need to. You just can’t mince [words]. You lose everything if people don’t trust you.

Later he added, “I think the issue of transparent communication is really paramount.”

Lance also recommends that department chairs maintain honest communication in all circumstances. He declared:

This is one of my very fundamental principles. I never say anything about a student, a faculty member, or a staff member in writing that I haven’t said to them face to face...I will not say something in better or for worse judgment about a scenario involving people without talking to those people face to face. If I have a problem with someone’s academic performance, I’m going to sit here with them in my office and tell them face to face, and then I may write the letter, but even that letter then gets copied to the person.

Darrin pointed out that department chairs perform a translating role between institutional constituents. He explained:

[Outside colleagues] are removed from the family life and on the ground, day-to-day operations of the department. So, as a translator, one has to explain that
position. Conversely, there are institution-wide interests and policies which have to be consistently applied across departments. In that case, the chair does just the opposite. The chair has to frame those institution-wide policies to the internal family, to the departmental colleagues so that it makes sense to them.

Christopher acknowledged that when significant issues are discussed within the department, direct communication is critical. He stated, “I think my colleagues know that I speak my mind [and] don’t mince words when it comes to something I think is really important.”

Lastly, Marcel recommends that verbal conversations be confirmed in writing. He shared:

I tell faculty that nothing that we talk about is true unless I’ve written it down to you...It’s their responsibility to say, “Good talking to you this afternoon. I understand we’re going to take $400 and do this.” If it’s not in writing, it doesn’t count...When a meeting is over where I’ve made a commitment, I try to write it down and e-mail it to them. And I keep it. I keep it in the calendar, so I can look back on it.

*Sub-theme 5.6: Participants acknowledged multiple attributes, skills and values necessary for effective music department chair functioning.* Department chairs were asked, “What do you believe are the most important attributes and skills necessary to effectively lead a music department?” Responses included: being fair, supporting colleagues, being honest, communicating clearly through both verbal and written conversations, being organized, understanding budget spreadsheets, relating to colleagues, collaborating with a group of diverse individuals, being an ambassador for the
music department, casting a vision for the department, being a role model, multi-tasking, and maintaining a diligent work ethic. The following section presents these findings as reported by participants within this study.

Jackson communicated that being fair and supporting colleagues are essential to effective music department chair leadership. He explained:

You have to be able to be fair and recognize that your own superior abilities do not mean that others can't have the same. You have to be able to support all of the good deeds and work and vocalize it vociferously to the people who work for you. You have to know, they have to know that you appreciate them and that you support them. If there's any chance or hint that you may be insecure or put off or jealous or something like that, if you're motivated by anything other than the pure desire that they excel in what they do, get out of this job as fast as you can. You're not doing anybody a favor.

Audrey and Hanna also identified fairness as an essential music department chair skill. Audrey stated:

I'm about fairness and equal distribution, so it’s just not the squeaking wheel or the loudest voice, it’s what do we need? And I think I just again work with fabulous faculty that we can all talk about that together and truly if I’ve got the ammunition, I can be very persuasive and I have to guard against that because I really want a balanced or a good fair decision made.

Likewise, Eric noted, "You have to be a people person. You have to like people. You have to respect people. You have to be courteous...They want to be treated fairly. They want to be treated reasonably and they want to be valued."
Steve mentioned that “honesty with your faculty” is important. Similarly, Eric identified honesty and thoughtfulness in relationships within the unique context of the humanities discipline:

I think you have to be very open. You have to be very honest. You also have to be cautious. I teach in a discipline called Humanities. And humanities involve the arts, and the arts involve feelings and intangibles. [These are] the kind of people that you have working for you...You have to know that they are going to be emotional...They’re going to think with a different part of their brain. They’re going to avoid processes if they can. They’re going to be random. You have to be willing to recognize that and work with that or you are not going to be successful as a chair of a music department.

Audrey noted that “people skills” and “communication” skills are essential for functioning effectively as a music department chair. In addition, Steve acknowledged the importance of written communication skills. He stated:

There’s a formalized writing process that really has to be in place. If you don’t have that skill, you need to get it...not just to review the writing of the faculty members, but to do the preparation for annual reports...If you can’t write, you’re going to be in trouble.

Christopher also indicated that good communication and support for faculty are essential for leading a music department. He stated:

Communication has to be there. I think you have to be a good listener. And I think regardless of what you have in the way of the actual physical, monetary support,
meaning regardless of what you can do, I think it’s important to let your faculty
know that you are there to support them.

Rachel remarked that being an effective department chair requires organization.
She stated:

Here it’s more about serving and working, keeping on track, looking ahead, and
just sort of being the one that brings things together...If you aren’t organized, [it]
is going to be a tough thing...It’s going to be hard to keep it going.

Along with organizational skills, Christopher noted that a music department chair
must have knowledge of spreadsheets in order to manage a complex budget. He replied:

If you’re responsible for a large budget with many different kinds of lines,
restricted money, operating money, and trying to learn anything about that budget,
if there’s any changes from year to year in terms of where the pressure is and
what’s increasing whether it’s maintenance, piano tuning, etc., etc., I would really
recommend that you have some basic skill or at least hire someone and have your
clerical staff be able to work with a budget sheet.

Darrin noted that keeping a department “flat” allows a department chair to relate
to colleagues as family members. He shared, “My advice is to keep it flat. I mean you
have to relate to people as your family members. That’s the only way to make it, to keep
the ball rolling, and to keep the machine well-oiled.” In relating to others, Eric responded,
“i think it’s really important to be transparent.”

Bryan indicated that collaboration within a music department is significant. He
replied, “I think the crucial element is being able to work effectively with a very diverse
group of individuals that have many different hopes, aspirations, directions, and trying to bring them together towards some common goals.”

Marcel recommends that a music department chair be an ambassador of the music program to other campus constituents. He shared:

The first responsibility, I think, of anybody that’s in this sort of position that is representing a group of really talented, hard-working faculty is to make other people know what it is they’re doing, know how it aligns with university priorities and why it’s important.

Later he added, “You have to understand your institution and how music fits into it.”

Along with fitting music into the institution, Nathan identified long-term vision casting and conflict resolution as significant music department chair abilities. He responded:

Vision. Long-term vision. Not just thinking how you’re going to get through this year, but where do I want to be in five years, or [where do I want] the department to be. [Other skills include] conflict resolution and finding ways that keep people happy within the budget restraints.

Audrey mentioned that being a role model is essential. She shared, “I think being a role model these days is very, very important as a musician.” Rachel echoed the importance of modeling musical excellence for students. She expressed, “I think that being an excellent musician is part of that. Again, that’s the whole modeling and example of it. So, trying to be as excellent a craftsman and musician as possible.”
Other participants indicated that multi-tasking and strong work ethic are requisite for music department chair functioning. For example, Vivian acknowledged the importance of multi-tasking and providing direction for the department. She stated:

I think you’ve got to be really good at multi-tasking and really good at taking disparate bodies of data and information and putting them together to inform what the department is doing and where it’s going to go. I would say that music I think is probably more complex than any other discipline in that way.

Steve pointed out that being a music department chair requires a diligent work ethic. He shared:

You have to have a really good work ethic. You have to be willing to work harder than you may feel that the other employees are... If you’re going to do this job you can’t expect to do it adequately unless you’re really willing to give up a lot of time.

Table 6 provides examples of many of the strategies reported by participants within this study. These strategies help to explain how department chairs function in their many roles and perform their multiple responsibilities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Scheduling relaxation</td>
<td>“Friday afternoon I’m going to get a massage...just totally relax and after that I’m not going back to the office...try to have a nice dinner at home, just totally down time and then it’s right back at it Saturday.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audrey</td>
<td>Communicating with faculty</td>
<td>“I develop a streamline format in a palatable medium to communicate it and to get what I need back.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Managing time</td>
<td>“It is the evening when I give priority to chair responsibilities because I can. It is an uninterrupted amount of time whereas during the day I’m meeting with students, answering questions, and handling some other pressing issues that relate to the classroom.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Being efficient</td>
<td>“You have to be prepared to put out those bush fires...and you can’t spend a lot of time on that. You have to be really efficient in finding the extinguisher and taking care of the issue because if you don’t something else is going to pass. A deadline will pass. An opportunity for a student will pass. An opportunity for the department will pass.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lance</td>
<td>Maintaining perspective</td>
<td>“The last thing I want is to be locked into only music things, because you lose perspective. For me it is very important that I see an engineering prof, or a nursing prof, or a underwater basket weaving prof, somebody, Lord, just any other mortal.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivian</td>
<td>Communication with dean</td>
<td>“I decided maybe one thing I can do differently is to see if I can have a weekly standing meeting with him (i.e., the dean) face to face and that might work better, and in fact, I think it has made a very positive difference.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>Understanding and resolving conflict</td>
<td>“You have to resolve the immediate issue, but then with that immediate issue there’s always the reason for that immediate issue. It is always behind it. There’s a long-term causation to it.”</td>
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Table 6 (continued)

**Examples of Strategies that Facilitate Role Functioning** (Theme 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bryan</td>
<td><em>Building a support network through non-music related programs</em></td>
<td>“We’ve tripled the number of non music majors we served...Those are the people with whom I engage down the road in terms of who is going to support music, people in engineering, medicine, law, and business that have a great music experience.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td><em>Refining ideas for improvement</em></td>
<td>“It is often like an idea from someone else, or an idea at a conference and I come back and say, ‘I’m not going to do it just that way, but what is that spark that can improve what we do?’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrin</td>
<td><em>Sharing department chair responsibilities</em></td>
<td>“In a small department, those responsibilities, if and when they get too burdensome for one individual, they’re actually unofficially shared among...It’s kind of like a family, you help out when you can.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanna</td>
<td><em>Being fair with department faculty and personnel</em></td>
<td>“Let’s say somebody doesn’t stay in their budget and then they want more money. My opinion is they should have stayed in their budget...I think being fair is very important.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td><em>Meeting regularly as a department</em></td>
<td>“We try to meet twice a month. It sometimes doesn’t work out but we’ll rarely go without meeting at least once a month.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcel</td>
<td><em>Writing down commitments to confirm verbal agreements</em></td>
<td>“I try to immediately when a meeting is over, where I’ve made a commitment, to write it down and e-mail it to them (i.e., the faculty). And I keep it. I keep it in the calendar, so I can look back on it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td><em>Relieving stress</em></td>
<td>“I have about a 40-minute commute. When I’m driving out of here, I’m leaving it away. So that’s a good stress relief. A lot of people here on campus live a block off campus. I notice that they’re always a lot more stressed out because they never leave.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td><em>Leading from behind</em></td>
<td>“Trying to be a department chair or a dean or associate dean is more like the sheepdog. You’re herding people through a gate. You lead from behind.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme 6: Years of Department Chair Experience had a Significant Effect on Role Sense-making and Scholarly Productivity

Participants within this study represent diverse levels of administrative experience ranging from beginning to veteran department chairs. According to Gmelch and Parkay (1999), beginning department chairs experience moderate to severe difficulty in performing their roles and responsibilities. It was anticipated that the longer these individuals serve in their department chair positions, the more they would understand their roles and responsibilities and ultimately be able to perform their department chair functions more effectively. Based on this perspective and other relevant research, the current study addressed the research question: How do years of department chair experience help these individuals make meaning of their multiple roles and responsibilities?

Within this sample, participants reported that their years of department chair experience had a significant effect on both role sense-making and scholarly productivity. Two sub-themes were identified as part of this main theme. These sub-themes are as follows: (6.1) years of music department chair experience helped participants to make sense of their roles and responsibilities and (6.2) participants reported a decrease in scholarly productivity since becoming department chairs.

Sub-theme 6.1: Years of music department chair experience helped participants to make sense of their roles and responsibilities. The findings presented here describe the relationship between years of department chair experience and department chair role sense-making. Fourteen of fifteen participants indicated that their years of department chair experience helped them to make sense of their roles and responsibilities.
Newly appointed chairs in this study acknowledged that although their early years have helped them in making sense of their roles and responsibilities, they still have much to learn. For example, as a recently appointed department chair, Susan indicated that she is still experiencing difficulty in making sense of department chair roles. She confessed:

It's survival mode. No, I'm not there yet. I'm still learning a lot and still trying to keep my head above the water... Teaching and being in this position, this business, is a constant learning process, and if you're not intent on finding out new [information] and moving forward, then you shouldn't be doing it.

In contrast, seasoned department chairs acknowledged that their years of experience have provided them with a complete perspective of the department chair position. For example, Christopher remarked that he understands his institution, his department and its history, and the skills necessary for effective department chair functioning. He further stated that there is little left to learn regarding new department chair roles and responsibilities. He shared:

I don’t think that I would know [this institution] as well as I know it and know how our department functions, the successes and the disappointments it has had over the years without [having been a department chair]. You just see everything. You just know what it takes and I think you’ll only gain that from being a chair... I feel pretty seasoned right now... I don’t feel like there’s a lot more for me to learn. Learn how to do it better? Yes, but as far as brand new... I don’t think at this point I’m going to acquire a whole lot of new skills.

Sub-theme 6.2: Participants reported a decrease in scholarly productivity since becoming department chairs. Research indicates that those serving in department chair
positions report difficulty maintaining their professional activities (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004). Within the current study, nearly all of the participants reported decreased scholarly productivity including scholarship, research, and music performance since becoming department chairs. This decrease in professional productivity is likely due to the heavy time demands required of the department chair position as well as the years that department chairs spend serving their faculty colleagues. Findings within this sub-theme address the interview question: What effect, if any, have your years as a music department chair had on your professional activities (i.e., research, scholarship, performance, etc.)? The following responses describe the difficulty of maintaining scholarly involvement as department chairs.

Susan indicated that her professional activities have “taken a huge nose dive” because of the “time factor” involved with being a department chair. She further remarked that this lack of professional involvement may affect her promotion and tenure. She expressed:

I’d like to get something published at the beginning of the summer because I’m sitting here thinking, as far as promotion and tenure, I can point to this, this, [and] this administratively, but when you start talking about faculty development, I’m not having much to show for it.

Similarly, Audrey stated, “Everything slowed down. Everything.”

Lance admitted that he would have finished a major book had he not become a department chair. He recalled:

It has [had] a decided impact. I think I would have finished my book ten years ago if I hadn’t had to do all the other administrative stuff all the way along. I don’t
think I’m a slouch in what I do outside of the classroom, but I would have done even more, had I not had the administrative assignments that I’ve done...Administrative deadlines, in virtually all cases, trump any other deadlines that I might have from publishers or editors or my own projects.

Likewise, Christopher noted, “It’s just a question of time. I don’t practice nearly the hours; the hours are just not there...I don’t have as much time for research.”

Marcel admitted that his department chair role has significantly impacted his scholarly involvement. He shared, “It really has [diminished]...I keep that up to the best of my abilities, but it’s a quarter or less of what I was able to do in a faculty role.”

Both Bryan and Jackson shared similar experiences. Bryan acknowledged that although “there’s less” research and performance due to his administrative roles, he has “been able to maintain.” However, he later confessed, “I would say the quantity isn’t what it used to be.”

Jackson contrasted the number of hours that he used to spend practicing and performing before and during his department chair tenure. He stated, “[My instrument] was in my mouth for 15 hours a day. Now, it might be in my mouth 1 or 2 [hours].”

Nathan explained that due to his department chair responsibilities, he has had to decline many performance invitations. He shared:

I have had to cut down...I’m a performer who has typically played three or four nights a week even while teaching. With a lot of those weekly type things, I’ve had to let those things go and just kind of do the big ones here and there...I should have probably cut more out, but I haven’t. I just can’t. I mean, I can, but I would prefer not to.
Lastly, Darrin described that while his department chair position decreases the amount of time spent on scholarly activities, it is a tradeoff for an equally important service function to his institution. He explained:

It’s a tradeoff in the sense of trading one strong conviction for another strong conviction... Of course there’s only 24 hours in a day, but, if you see what you’re trading off as one central conviction, I’m trading off not something that I think is a waste of time or something that I don’t believe in, but for another deeply-held conviction, then it’s not very difficult.

Table 7 displays participant responses regarding the effect that years of department chair experience have on role sense-making and scholarly productivity. It lists the number of years in the department chair position for each participant and reports whether or not participants felt they had fully transitioned into their chair role. The table also provides participant responses to the question: Have your years of experience helped you make sense of your roles and responsibilities? Examples demonstrating how years of experience have helped participants make sense of their department chair roles are included. Lastly, the table reports whether or not there were decreases in scholarly productivity given the years that department chairs spend in their positions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Years in Position</th>
<th>Fully Transitioned into the Department Chair Role?</th>
<th>Experience Helped in Sense-making?</th>
<th>Sense-making Example</th>
<th>Decrease in Scholarly Productivity?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No — &quot;I am in survival mode&quot;</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Comprehension role—&quot;give me a year or two and then I'll feel like I'm starting to understand my job&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Yes — &quot;but, still so much to learn&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Staff oversight role—&quot;I know what my role is better as a supervisor&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>No — &quot;ongoing learning process&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Conflict resolution role—&quot;I needed more administrative support, and should not have tried to do it all myself&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Yes — &quot;some things became easier for me to do&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Performance improving role—&quot;because you happen to do a pretty good job as a department chair doesn't necessarily mean that you can't do better&quot;</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes — &quot;lots of leadership experience&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Evaluation role clarified—&quot;you get enough experience looking at what happens in a year in terms of student work and faculty work&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Possibly — &quot;Maybe this year I kind of do&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Communication role clarified—&quot;I've said to the dean and provost, we're not speaking the same language, we're not connecting, what can I do to communicate better with you&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Years in Position</th>
<th>Fully Transitioned into the Department Chair Role?</th>
<th>Experience Helped in Sense-making?</th>
<th>Sense-making Example</th>
<th>Decrease in Scholarly Productivity?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes –“I found my bliss doing this work”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Perspective of leadership role –“to be able to see the larger picture and understand others in other areas of the field of music”</td>
<td>Implied Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Possibly –“I don’t think it’s ever good to feel comfortable in the job”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Decision-making role –“experience brings a sense of equilibrium [so] that you can make those very hard decisions”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Yes –“It got easier in some respects”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Delegating role –“I have slowly learned to be more of a delegator”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrin</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Yes –“I’m at home”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Role of self-confidence –“part of experience is building up a kind of a self confidence that there may be short-term problems here, but I’ve worked through [them] before”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanna</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Possibly –“I don’t know about that”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Role of assisting future chairs –“it will be very easy for me to help the next person do it”</td>
<td>No effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Yes –“I feel pretty seasoned right now”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Perspective of chair role –“you see everything. You just know what it takes and I think you only gain that from being a chair.”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Years in Position</td>
<td>Fully Transitioned into the Department Chair Role?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcel</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Yes — &quot;I've had administrative experience”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Advocacy role — &quot;to make other people know what it is they’re doing, [and] know how it (the music program) aligns with university priorities&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No — &quot;I still feel very new”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Role clarification — &quot;I definitely have a clearer picture of what it means to be a [chair]&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No — &quot;This process constantly evolves”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Problem solving role — &quot;through your experience base you can probably manage to eventually arrive at the right answer&quot;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme 7: Being Musicians Helped Participants to Make Meaning of Their Music Department Chair Roles and Responsibilities

All of the participants within this study indicated that being a musician was important for being a department chair of a music program. However, participant responses suggest that being a musician is important to the music department chair role for different reasons. Participants shared that being a musician is important for: understanding and relating to department colleagues, establishing credibility with faculty, providing a role model for faculty and students, hiring new music faculty, bringing a current perspective to the discipline, and appreciating the passion, dedication, and long hours required of the music discipline. The subsequent responses address the research question: How does being a musician (i.e., identity within the discipline) help a music department chair make meaning of his or her multiple roles and responsibilities?

Susan explained that as a musician in the department chair position, she is able to understand the legitimate concerns that music faculty members face in terms of academic teaching responsibilities and individual practicing. She provided an example of their unique teaching challenges:

The faculty member is [saying], “I have been in my studio teaching all day long. You’d better give me credit for teaching and don’t tell me that because I have limited prep that I’m not working my butt off. Don’t tell me that being able to practice two hours a day is not part of the hours I’m putting in as a faculty member.” You’ve got to respect that if that faculty member is primarily a studio teacher. You need to hear them practicing. You need to make sure they’re performing. You need to give them those kinds of opportunities. [Those activities
are] not just frivolous kinds of things that I think people who are not musicians don’t fully understand.

Susan also explained that being able to hear the voices of each member of her department is similar to performing in a music ensemble. She shared:

Every single voice is important and I need to hear from all of them...Every single one of them has a different perspective that I can use. The newest faculty, in some ways, are the best recourses you have because they have the outsider perspective: “What are you seeing coming in new?” Every single one of them is valuable in a different way and I [need to] recognize and they need to recognize that they are all critical to the success of the overall program.

Steve noted the critical role that being a musician serves in hiring new faculty members in the music department. He stated:

We’re constantly going through hiring processes [and] you have to be a musician to adequately understand the strengths and weaknesses of possible new hires...We have a lot of individuals who sit on those committees who aren’t musicians, and they look to the people with strong [musical] backgrounds to make those decisions. We’re going to be hiring a new faculty member very shortly and without the music background the search committee wouldn’t be able to function.

Eric remarked, “If you’re going to be dealing with musicians, I think it is important that you know how [they] think. He also declared that being a musician “permeates” all of his departmental decisions. He stated, “I can’t think of a single thing that I do as department chair, where I make a decision that is based simply on upon business process and not some blended form of having to be [a musician].”
Marcel added, “I don’t think you’d care enough about what it is you’re supposed to achieve...unless you’re intimately involved with music at a musician’s level.”

Bryan pointed out that being a musician establishes “credibility with faculty.” He remarked:

I think it’s essential that people respect you for your musical opinion and you need to be strong. You just can’t have someone with an MBA move in and run a music school. There are just too many other dimensions.

Similarly, Jackson explained:

It is extremely important. You must practice what you preach. You must represent a level of excellence in the discipline if you’re going to have any respect from the faculty. Everything you do in music is based on your skills as a musician including making decisions in personnel. If I wasn’t the [musician] that I am, there’s no way I could do what I do.

Darrin communicated that department chairs have a fundamental responsibility to stay current in their disciplines in order to bring a real perspective to their disciplines and strength to their institutions. He explained:

As musicians and as academics in other departments, we see in each other a kind of fundamental need to do our disciplines. It’s that fundamental need, that fundamental identity of who we are that makes us stronger individuals within the institution. Somebody who’s really not continuing as a practicing musician is just a member of the department, just sitting at a chair. [He or she] doesn’t bring a real musician’s perspective either to the students in the classroom or to colleagues in
these deliberations. So you have to keep that groundedness in your discipline if you’re going to say or do anything that’s valuable to the group.

Christopher acknowledged that in order to understand the passion within his departmental colleagues, the long hours in the practice room, and the dedication to the art form, one must be a musician. He shared:

Without being a musician, you’re not going to fully understand the passion that’s there in your faculty and why it can become so important to them... As a musician, I know the hours. I know what it takes. There are no shortcuts to an excellent performance; those hours in the practice room, and that dedication, having practiced six hours a day and played in competitions all my life. I’ve done a lot of performing when I was younger. I know what that’s about. I get it. So there’s the understanding of the artistic side and that passion for what they do.

He later questioned the role that being a musician plays in routine department chair responsibilities. He reflected:

But does the music side of it necessarily help you with the more business aspects of it? I don’t know. As far as balancing budgets and writing good letters of recommendation and being able to evaluate faculty in terms of their teaching performance? I don’t know, maybe to a lesser extent.

A few participants indicated that while being a musician may be critical to being a music department chair, other responsibilities and decisions may not require a musician’s perspective. For example, Steve noted that being a musician might possibly impede the overall functioning of a music department. He shared:
It could be [that] being a musician also impedes that process because as a musician you’re saying, “This is the first priority: we need to spend budget dollars on instrument replacement...Maybe you would have been better served if we had looked at overall building maintenance.”

Likewise, Lance acknowledged that being a musician is important to being a music department chair, but “in a modest way.” He explained that many of the skills required of music department chairs including “managerial skills, people skills, time management [skills, and] good common sense” are often not characteristic of musicians. Later he added, “I think there is a relationship, but within limits. There are other things that a chair needs to do that really have nothing to do with the discipline of the department.”

Table 8 provides a summary of participants’ responses regarding the importance of being musicians in music department chair positions. It first provides participants’ answers to the interview question: Do you feel that being a musician is essential to the music department chair position? Second, it provides examples that demonstrate how being musicians has helped participants make meaning of their music department chair roles and responsibilities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Is Being a Musician Essential to the Music Depart. Chair Position?</th>
<th>Music Department Chair Sense-making Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Yes –“absolutely”</td>
<td>Listening skills –“Every single voice is important. I need to hear from all of them (faculty)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Role model for students –“If the students don’t see you performing or don’t know you’re engaged in it, they think, ‘Well, what do you know?’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Yes –“definitely”</td>
<td>Decision-making –“I do have to rely on being a musician to make decisions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Understanding musicians’ thought processes –“If you’re going to be dealing with musicians, I think it is important that you know how [they] think”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lance</td>
<td>Yes –“in a modest way”</td>
<td>Part of a larger leadership role –“There is a relationship but within limits. There [are] other things that a chair needs to do that really have nothing to do with the discipline”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivian</td>
<td>Yes –“I think so”</td>
<td>Building a creative environment –“If my goal is not a collaborative, creative environment, ultimately, then that is something I’m going to build toward”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>Yes (implied)</td>
<td>Understanding the numerous sub-disciplines within the music field –“My greatest experiences were in fact the diversity of experiences that I’ve had as a professional musician”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Establishing credibility with department colleagues –“Credibility with faculty”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 (continued)

**The Importance of Being Musicians in Music Department Chair Positions** (Theme 7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Is Being a Musician Essential to the Music Depart. Chair Position?</th>
<th>Music Department Chair Sense-making Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Gaining respect from students –“I think for students to respect your leadership they have to respect you as a musician”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrin</td>
<td>Yes –“of course”</td>
<td>Departmental identity –“It is essential to being part of a music department. It is a collection of musicians”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanna</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Decision-making –“Decisions are based on an understanding of people’s requests for musical activities”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Yes –“it is important”</td>
<td>Understanding passion of departmental members –“[If you are not a musician] you are not going to fully understand the passion that is there in your faculty and why it can become so important to them”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcel</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Love for the discipline –“If you don’t really love music and really understand it, if the power of music and the arts isn’t something that fires you inside, you can’t possibly develop an institution that provides that on a wide scale”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Yes –“I think it is”</td>
<td>Evaluation of the discipline –“If you’re going to evaluate creative performance or teaching for that matter, I think you have to be a musician”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>Yes –“it is extremely important”</td>
<td>Being a musician permeates the chair role –“Everything you do in music is based on your skills as a musician, including making decisions in personnel”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme 8: Challenges and Characteristics of College and University Music Programs

may make the Music Department Chair Role More Difficult than Department Chair Roles in Other Academic Programs

The extant literature involving music departments indicates that music department chairs face unique challenges due to specialized faculty, facility and equipment needs, arts advocacy and funding, and public visibility of their programs (Miller, 1993). This study expands this list of challenges and characteristics to include: additional service expectations, multiple sub-disciplines, artistic personalities, numerous adjunct faculty, formal pre-training for students, atypical credit equivalencies resulting in disputed teaching loads, and assessment challenges. Given these characteristics and challenges, participants reported that music departments are significantly different from other academic programs. Their responses are provided in the following section.

Participants within this sample reported that there are additional expectations of music departments that extend beyond normal classroom teaching activities. Rachel remarked that additional expectations often include public concerts, performances for campus events, and ensemble travel expectations. She stated, “Many times when there is an event on campus, it involves music. It involves a group. We [also] have traveling ensembles that go out.”

Similarly, Lance noted the additional expectations of his music department when compared with other academic departments at his institution. He explained, “People will say, ‘You do all these kinds of things?’ I say, ‘Yeah, it comes with the music department.’ I mean, the English department doesn’t have to produce concerts. It’s a different scenario.”
Music departments are essentially a collection of many diverse sub-disciplines. Bryan pointed out that bringing these diverse sub-disciplines together to work collaboratively can sometimes be challenging. He explained:

In large schools of music you have performers who want to do performing, you have scholars that sometimes don’t value the performance as much, and then you have music educators, and sometimes they’re clobbered on both sides because academics don’t think it’s a discipline, and performers think its baloney. It can be all of those things; performers can be narrow-minded, academics can be just focused on their thing, and music education can range from relevance to irrelevance. There are very different cultures and there are very different expectations. They’re either valued or not valued. [On] the one side, the academics sometimes identify more with the liberal arts and learning as opposed to those that wiggle their fingers. There are built-in tensions in that sort of a situation because it is not the same as a community of scholars in English or history.

Christopher described the challenges of working with artistic people across multiple specialized sub-disciplines. He explained:

You’re dealing with artistic people and we all know what that can be like in terms of levels of ego and levels of insecurities, etc…I think just the very nature of the discipline…we deal with different types of folks. Music is also so specialized…Music faculty can seem as distant to their colleagues as someone in another department sometimes because of that.
Similarly, Vivian pointed out that music is unique from other disciplines because of its language, the multiple sub-disciplines, and facility needs. She stated:

We have our own language, that’s huge. And there’s such a multitude of sub-disciplines in music. You can’t say that the life of a department is made that much greater by having a renaissance scholar in the English department as opposed to a 20th century [scholar], but for us we’re not talking about that. We’re talking about woodwinds versus brass versus piano versus organ versus...So that’s a challenge, and then of course the facilities issues are enormous.

Several participants reported challenges regarding the condition of their music facilities. Eric described some of these challenges:

We have some base concerns about the building we’re in. How do I manage that? We’re operating in a building that was never intended to be utilized the way we utilize it. We have all these acoustic issues; transfer of sound from one area to another. How do I schedule classes so that this doesn’t happen? Is it possible to schedule the classes? When do our students take their classes?

Another major challenge of music departments is the extensive reliance upon adjunct instructors. Susan shared that although her department is comprised of only a handful of full-time music faculty, she supervises, mentors, and orients numerous adjunct professors. She explained:

Twelve of them were new [last year] and I had nine [additional] new ones this year...It is by far the most number of adjuncts...I asked, “Who does the orientation for adjuncts? Oh, that would be the [department] chair”...I have 42 staff and faculty under me.
In addition, Marcel acknowledged the high numbers of adjunct instructors when he remarked, "We were using a million adjuncts for crazy needs." Likewise, Eric stated: None of the other department chairs nor the discipline chair would think about wanting to take on what I do...They are the first to admit that it's an absorptive, complex process that involves at any given time...20, 24, 26 adjunct faculty members.

Few programs of study within colleges and universities expect new students to enter their programs with specialized training before beginning discipline-specific coursework as freshmen. Music programs are unusual in this aspect as curriculum is designed to develop the skills and abilities of students who have had previous musical experience. Given the importance of prior training, music department chairs noted difficulty when students arrive without such training.

Christopher’s comment regarding private lessons helps to explain this assumed previous musical training. He stated, "We’ve had [issues] with guitar. That’s an area where students certainly can audition, but the level of their music reading and exactly how much formal musicianship they’ve actually had is sometimes suspect."

Community-based institutions, however, often accept students without formal musical backgrounds. Consequently, the role of musical remediation falls on music faculty members and department chairs. Eric described the typical prospective student at his institution. He remarked:

In the music area, we have students who come to us who are masters of air guitar. Their desire is to make music and be gainfully employed some way, shape, or form in the music sector...However, you’re not going to get [that position] unless
you can prove that you’ve got the chops—that’s just reality. You’ve got to be able
to show that you can [play] an instrument of some type. This may be the most
important role that I play as a department chair and academic advisor…talking
reality to students.

A major challenge reported by music department chairs within this study involves
funding and the role of arts advocacy. Although many participants acknowledged
significant costs associated with operating music programs, they also felt burdened with
providing a rationale to institutional administrators for these expenses. Nathan declared,
“We’re the most expensive department on campus…I feel I constantly have to defend
why [we’re] worth [it]…It’s been important for me to justify why that is and why we
need the space…and why it’s worth spending that much on it.”

Vivian responded, “I think we’re probably more expensive than even a research-
oriented science department.”

Susan explained that during fiscal constraint, music departments and music
faculty often hear “no” when requests are presented. She stated, “There’s a lot more no’s
potentially for music chairs than for a lot of other chairs.”

Marcel explained that small student numbers and small class sizes translate into
inadequate tuition dollars resulting in underfunded music programs. As a result,
institutions must cover portions of instructional fees such as private music lessons. He
stated:

We’re on sort of a responsibility-centered management model here. You’re really
supposed to do everything that you do with the tuition money you receive. And of
course, you know that [with] music, only 50% or less of the cost of instruction is
covered by that whereas in other fields, they're just cash cows. Here the college just knows we'll never make up the money. If we want to be a great school of music, and they want us to be one, it costs a bunch of money. On the flip side of that you'd better not throw any away.

Unlike graduates from medical, engineering, or law programs, Bryan noted that funding for music programs is unlikely to come from music graduates. He stated, "It's not going to come from our alumni base, by and large."

Music department chairs also reported challenges with regard to institutional credit equivalencies and faculty teaching loads. Marcel described how music programs are different from other disciplines in terms of instructional methods, class sizes, and credit equivalencies. He shared:

[Music programs are different from other programs in] the cost of instruction and the wide range of section sizes...[Music programs] primarily focus on the one-to-one stuff and the practicum stuff where you really have to be small like your training...We're way out of whack with the rest of the university and it's every school of music, not just this one, with how you award credit for what you do. The fact is nobody understands what the hell you do.

He later provided an example of unique music department credit equivalencies:

If you're telling somebody that you offer band five hours a week for one hour credit and you give the professor a course load like it was a four-point or a three-hour class or more, those things are hard to explain. Frankly, they're not explainable unless your administration trusts that you're doing things right. You
[must] always be able to explain and if you have good folks, they understand and support that. If you don’t, you’re just behind the eight ball all the time.

Similarly, Nathan described his administrators’ perspective regarding small music classes and seemingly light full-time faculty teaching loads. He shared:

The only time it becomes a real issue is when it involves full-time people. They see our full-time pianist, for example, teaching one class and 12 students. The administration would love to see him teach a piano class for 50 people...[This would be] totally unrealistic...It’s difficult to defend when you’ve gone economics classes that have 80 people in [them]. They point to those numbers and here you’re the most expensive department on campus and you’ve got a faculty member who’s contacted 24 students a semester total.”

Lastly, participants discussed the challenges that music programs face regarding assessment. For example, Jackson explained that accrediting bodies require objective data when measuring student learning. These objective assessment data are difficult to demonstrate given that music is a uniquely subjective art form. He explained:

That’s the problem...Assessment tools are something that, in a music sense, we will never be able to adequately respond to in something that is objectively defined such as the sciences...At the core of music is performance, and performance is subjective...You can never make something that is subjective objective. You can’t do it. So music has a fundamental problem. But if we picked out that which is objective and we focus on that, we always will be able to answer the assessment needs of any institution, but we must never lose sight of the fact
that those assessment needs are answering an external source and are not necessarily germane to what we do.

Table 9 summarizes many of the challenges that music department chairs report. It first identifies specific challenges reported by each participant followed by verbatim descriptions of those challenges. This table is not exhaustive, but rather complements the current presentation of music department chair challenges. It is also important to note that some of the challenges presented in Table 9 may not be exclusive to music department chairs. Therefore, it is possible that some of these challenges may be experienced by department chairs from other academic disciplines.

Chapter Five Summary

Chapter Five has sought to present the collective socialization experiences of fifteen college and university music department chairs that participated in this study. Findings were organized into eight main themes with six of these themes divided into sub-themes. Overall, this chapter described participants’ experiences before assuming department chair positions (i.e., during the anticipation stage of organizational socialization) and during their tenure as department chairs (i.e., during the encounter and adaptation stages of organizational socialization).

It demonstrated that few individuals planned or actively prepared to become department chairs. Nearly half of the participants felt that their previous role prepared them for their department chair roles and responsibilities. Regarding motivation, many accepted department chair positions as an act of service to their colleagues. Others assumed department chair positions because they cared deeply about students, faculty, and the music discipline.
### Challenges Reported by Music Department Chairs (Theme 8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Small class sizes</td>
<td>“We are so tuition-driven and again they’re looking at numbers. They want class sizes at ten or more. Anything that is less than ten we have to justify or else it’s cut. Well, we only have nine stations in our piano lab.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey</td>
<td>Educating administrators about excessive credit loads</td>
<td>“They don’t get it. I’m teaching for, I don’t know, 20 hours. I’m teaching private lessons and all because a lesson is two-thirds of an hour.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Building collaboration with faculty</td>
<td>“Although many of them would rather I just took the responsibility away from them, I feel it’s very important for them to be part of the decision-making process. It needs to be collaborative, it needs to be something that they participate in.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>The role of remediation</td>
<td>“The role of remediation still falls on us. What wasn’t remediated in the high school years needs to be remediated by us when you are an open door policy institution...In the music area we have students who come to us who are masters of air guitar. And their desire is to make music and be gainfully employed some way, shape, or form in the music sector.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lance</td>
<td>Expectations beyond the classroom</td>
<td>“People will say, ‘You do all these kinds of things?’ I say, ‘Yeah, it comes with the music department.’ I mean, the English department doesn’t have to produce concerts. It’s a different scenario.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivian</td>
<td>Multiple sub-disciplines in music</td>
<td>“We have our own language. I mean that’s huge. And there’s such a multitude of sub-disciplines in music.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>Stress and its effect</td>
<td>“For months I was not sleeping. I mean, there would be sometimes two and three days in a row where I couldn’t fall asleep.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan</td>
<td>Limited funding from alumni</td>
<td>“It’s not going to come from our alumni base by and large.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td><em>Expectations beyond the classroom</em></td>
<td>“Many times when there is an event on campus it involves music. It involves a group. We [also] have traveling ensembles that go out.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrin</td>
<td><em>Maintaining one’s identity as a practicing musician</em></td>
<td>“Somebody who’s really not continuing as a practicing musician is just a member of the department, just sitting at a chair...[He or she] doesn’t bring a real musician’s perspective either to the students in the classroom or to colleagues in these deliberations...So you have to keep that groundedness in your discipline if you’re going to say or do anything that’s valuable to the group.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanna</td>
<td><em>Educating administrators about the music program</em></td>
<td>“He (i.e., the dean) doesn’t know anything about music at all, so lots of times it’s just keeping him abreast of things, or explaining things to him lots of times.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td><em>No release time or stipend for being department chair</em></td>
<td>“I remember presenting that data to our president about the norms as far as release times for chairs or stipends or how it was being done and I remember nothing coming of that even after I took the time to do that research and made the case for at least a one course release time.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcel</td>
<td><em>Dealing with difficult people</em></td>
<td>“You deal with the people who are being difficult. You can’t do it unless you’ve got other faculty supporting you doing it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td><em>Utilizing numerous adjunct professors</em></td>
<td>“Even though we’re the size of a small department like at a larger institution, we have a lot of adjuncts.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td><em>The department chair role is continually changing</em></td>
<td>“The world changes, so we must change. And academic administrators cannot achieve a plateau saying, ‘I’m here. I’ve now learned what to do.’ Because it’s going to be different tomorrow.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institutional processes for appointing department chairs varied among the participants; most appointments were made by the administration with some degree of faculty input. Tenure was seen as an import prerequisite for becoming a department chair.

Beginning department chairs reported more stress upon accepting the department chair position while seasoned administrators indicated less stress due to their years of experience. Learning to be a department chair often happened on the job with limited institutional training.

Department chairs reported multiple relationships that provided support for their roles and responsibilities. However, ineffective support personnel resulted in less productive departments. This finding was only identified in departments where both chairs and support personnel were females.

Numerous strategies were identified that help facilitate department chair role functioning. Years of experience were found to have a significantly positive effect on role sense-making, but an adverse effect on scholarly productivity. All participants reported that being a musician was important to being a music department chair. Lastly, participants identified several characteristics and challenges of music departments there were atypical of other more traditional academic disciplines.

These findings directly relate to the research questions that drove the thinking for this study. Chapter Six of this dissertation discusses these results within the context of relevant literature and presents implications for various groups related to the music department chair position.
CHAPTER VI
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Overview

Chapter Six begins with an overview of how themes were organized as part of this study’s comprehensive data analysis process. Next, this chapter discusses the results of these themes within the context of relevant higher education literature. Lastly, this chapter discusses implications of this study for various groups, including prospective department chairs, new department chairs, experienced department chairs, administrators, and researchers.

Thematic Organization

The extensive data analysis techniques used in this study yielded multiple groups of repeated ideas (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003) that were narrowed down to a set of initial themes. These initial themes were further reduced to eight main themes with several sub-themes (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). To assist the reader in organizing findings, Table 10 displays the main music department chair socialization themes with their accompanying sub-themes.

The first seven themes directly address this study’s primary and secondary research questions. The last theme addresses characteristics and challenges unique to music departments. This theme was not anticipated during the design of this study, but emerged as a significant finding. Moreover, this last theme provides a context for understanding the other seven themes. For example, understanding the challenges and unusual characteristics of music departments may help explain why learning to be a music department chair might be especially difficult.
Table 10

**Music Department Chair Socialization Themes and Sub-themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1</th>
<th>Experiences during the anticipatory stage of organizational socialization indicate that participants did not plan or prepare to become music department chairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 1.1</td>
<td>Few individuals planned to become music department chairs, but accepted their positions in support of their departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 1.2</td>
<td>Previous faculty experience did little to prepare individuals for music department chair roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 1.3</td>
<td>Previous music department chair experience prepared individuals for similar roles at other institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 1.4</td>
<td>Music department chairs acknowledged an inherent challenge in preparing for unknown roles and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 1.5</td>
<td>Tenure was an important criterion for becoming a music department chair at most institutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 2</th>
<th>Experiences during the encounter stage of organizational socialization indicate that the transition into the music department chair position was a difficult process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 2.1</td>
<td>Although institutional appointment processes varied among participants, most music department chairs were appointed by administrators with input from department faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 2.2</td>
<td>Music department chairs received little or no institutional training to assist them in learning how to function in their multiple roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 2.3</td>
<td>All of the participants acknowledged difficult first-year experiences as music department chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 2.4</td>
<td>Some of the participants acknowledged enjoyable first-year experiences as music department chairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 3</th>
<th>Learning how to function as music department chairs involved socialization processes and on-the-job experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 3.1</td>
<td>Participants experienced similar socialization processes that were likely to result in role innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 3.2</td>
<td>Trial-and-error attempts accounted for much of the music department chairs’ on-the-job role learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 (continued)

Music Department Chair Socialization Themes and Sub-themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 4</th>
<th>Relationships were significant sources of support and role sense-making for music department chairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 4.1</td>
<td>Family members provided support to many music department chairs with regard to their personal lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 4.2</td>
<td>Department faculty members provided support to music department chairs with regard to a variety of departmental role functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 4.3</td>
<td>Efficient and empowered support personnel were vital to effective music department functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 4.4</td>
<td>Although administrators provided support to many music department chairs in the form of advice regarding institutional policies, processes, and procedures, some administrators were unsupportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 4.5</td>
<td>Non-departmental colleagues provided a network of support for music department chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 4.6</td>
<td>Mentors provided support to many music department chairs in the form of friendships, assistance, advice, and guidance with decision making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 5</th>
<th>Music department chairs identified numerous strategies that facilitate role functioning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 5.1</td>
<td>Although time management was a significant challenge for most music department chairs, they utilized multiple strategies to ensure that their priorities were achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 5.2</td>
<td>Although the majority of participants recommended strategies for managing stress, experienced music department chairs reported less stress than beginning department chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 5.3</td>
<td>Clear communication was critical to departmental conflict avoidance and resolution strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 5.4</td>
<td>Participants identified leadership strategies that were characterized by humility and service to their department colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 5.5</td>
<td>Honest and direct communication was fundamental to department chair communication strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 5.6</td>
<td>Participants acknowledged multiple attributes, skills and values necessary for effective music department chair functioning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 (continued)

Music Department Chair Socialization Themes and Sub-themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 6</td>
<td>Years of department chair experience had a significant effect on role sense-making and scholarly productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 6.1</td>
<td>Years of music department chair experience helped participants to make sense of their roles and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 6.2</td>
<td>Participants reported a decrease in scholarly productivity since becoming department chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 7</td>
<td>Being musicians helped participants to make meaning of their music department chair roles and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 8</td>
<td>Challenges and characteristics of college and university music programs may make the music department chair role more difficult than department chair roles in other academic programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results

The following section summarizes and discusses the findings reported in Chapters Four and Five of this dissertation. It begins with a demographic profile of department chair participants and is followed by a discussion of this study’s eight main themes.

Demographic Profile of Participants

Although Chapter Four described this study’s participants in detail (see Table 2), it is helpful to summarize these findings and thereby update the profile of music department chairs within the higher education literature. Fifteen music department chairs from colleges and universities comprised the sample for the current study. No attempt was made to limit participation by recruiting only new or veteran department chairs. As a result, this sample represents a wide range of experiences from beginning department chairs to seasoned department chairs. Ten participants were male and five were female. Average age was 51 years old with the youngest department chair being 37 years old and the oldest being 62 years old. Nearly half of this study’s participants held a Doctor of
Musical Arts (D.M.A.) degree. Participants have spent an average of eight years in the department chair position within their respective institutions. Most participants were hired internally rather than externally to their positions. Of the fifteen participants in this sample, only one individual planned to become a department chair. Participants served at a variety of institution types based on the Carnegie Classifications Data File (2008). Institutions ranged from Special Focus, Faith-related institutions to Research University (very high research activity) institutions.

Overall, this department chair demographic profile is nearly identical to Brown’s (2001) quantitative research involving 408 college and university music department chairs. She reported that the average music department chair was male, aged 51, held a D.M.A. degree, had been in his present position between one and five years, and had not planned on becoming an administrator.

Theme 1: Experiences during the Anticipatory Stage of Organizational Socialization Indicate that Participants did not Plan or Prepare to Become Music Department Chairs

This study showed that although few participants planned to become department chairs, they were motivated to assume the department chair role for a variety of reasons. Some previous department chairs pursued new opportunities as department chairs at other institutions. A few faculty members felt obligated by administrators or by faculty peers to take on department chair roles and responsibilities. This obligation to become a department chair has been recently documented (see Carroll & Wolverton, 2004). However, most participants in this study assumed the department chair role out of service to their colleagues and their departments. Many acknowledged a deep level of care for the students and faculty in their respective departments. This confirms previous research
that reports service to one's department as a significant reason for assuming the department chair position (Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002).

Department chair literature also suggests that a traditional pathway to the department chair exists. According to Carroll (1991), graduate students become faculty members who in turn become department chairs. Within this study, ten of the fifteen participants previously held faculty positions before assuming department chair positions, four participants held department chair positions at previous institutions, and one participant formerly held a K-12 teaching position.

More importantly, department chair research asserts that the roles and responsibilities of faculty members greatly differ from those of department chairs (Thomas & Schuh, 2004). Supporting this assertion, eight out of ten participants reported that their previous faculty roles did not prepare them to be department chairs. This finding strongly suggests that being a faculty member does little to prepare individuals for department chair roles and responsibilities. However, six participants felt that retrospectively they would not have changed their preparation for the department chair position if given the opportunity. This finding challenges previous research that is replete with appeals for training for new department chairs. Conversely, those who had previously served as department chairs felt well-prepared for their new department chair roles at other institutions.

This study also indicated that the role of tenure was significant in becoming a department chair. All but three of this study's fifteen participants were tenured with their respective institutions at the time of interviewing. One of these non-tenured participants acknowledged her tenure review process was forthcoming. Another participant served at
an institution with no tenure system. The third non-tenured participant did not comment on her plans regarding tenure. In addition, three participants who previously held tenured department chair positions were hired into their new positions at different institutions with tenure. All of these individuals worked at large state universities.

Collectively, these findings suggest that tenure is important for becoming a department chair across different types of institutions. This finding is in agreement with previous research that indicates that the majority of department chairs are tenured at their respective institutions (Hecht, 2004; Hecht, Higgerson, Gmelch, & Tucker, 1999).

Theme 2: Experiences During the Encounter Stage of Organizational Socialization
Indicate that the Transition into the Music Department Chair Position was a Difficult Process

The appointment process for becoming a music department chair was examined as a first step in understanding how individuals transition into their new department chair roles. Ten of the fifteen department chairs within this study were hired internally. The other five department chairs were hired externally.

Typical internal department chair appointments began with a previous appointment as a faculty member within a department. One participant described this process. He explained that individuals are hired because of their academic competence as professors, but later are selected as department chairs if they demonstrate administrative ability. Several participants shared this experience. For some, the process involved faculty input and even a vote with subsequent administrative approval. For other individuals, administrators selected department chairs based on recommendations from faculty members.
Overall, the selection process for department chairs involved some level of collaboration between department faculty and administrators. These appointment processes do not significantly differ from previous research. Carroll (1991) surveyed over 800 department chairs and found that nearly half of the respondents had been appointed to their positions by faculty election with approval from the dean.

Externally hired department chairs shared a different appointment process. Often these processes were more complex and involved extensive interviews with search committees, department faculty, administrators, and community members. Within this study, those appointed to positions at large state institutions experienced more extensive hiring processes than department chairs appointed at smaller private institutions.

Upon assuming the department chair position, beginning department chairs received little to no institutional training or orientation to assist them in learning their new roles. This finding is in agreement with previous research (Bensimon et al., 2000; Gmelch, 2002b; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Stark, 2002). Although a few participants experienced an orientation for general faculty, none of the participants in this study experienced any formal department chair-specific training. This should be of serious concern to institutional leaders given the significant roles that department chairs perform in relation to faculty. According to Bensimon et al. (2000), faculty are an institution’s greatest asset.

Many department chairs acknowledged the importance of professional associations in making sense of their roles and responsibilities. Guidance received from the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) was identified by several department chairs as “invaluable.” A few veteran department chairs shared that their
institutions have recently initiated department chair-specific training. This training has taken the form of day- and week-long seminars, retreats, monthly meetings with other department chairs, and group sessions where new and experienced department chairs share information and strategies.

Most new department chairs faced significant challenges during their early socialization process. For some participants, socializing into their new institutions was a lonely and isolating experience. Others who became department chairs within their current departments reported a change in relationship with their faculty peers. This change of relationship with departmental colleagues was not surprising given that department chairs evaluate their faculty peers (Daly & Townsend, 1994; Gmelch, 1995).

Some participants experienced difficulty with regard to institutional operations such as organizing department records and budget reports. In a couple of cases, new department chairs inherited situations where substantial policy exceptions were made by previous department chairs. These situations created challenges for new department chairs in decision making and in providing impartial leadership.

The current study demonstrated that most new department chairs felt overwhelmed with their new roles and responsibilities. This was likely due to increased workloads and time demands required of the department chairs in comparison to their previous faculty positions (Seagren et.al., 1994). In addition, many participants reported strain on their health, personal lives, and relationships with family members as a result of their increased department chair roles and responsibilities. These findings have been described as occupational hazards associated with the department chair position (Gillet-Karam, 1999).
One area that was not directly explored in this study involves trade-offs for being a department chair. Trade-offs might include benefits in the form of release time, decreased teaching loads, or stipends to offset the additional duties required of department chairs as compared to traditional faculty members (Gmelch, 1991b). Further study in this area may be necessary for making the department chair position more attractive to prospective department chairs. To this end, recommendations toward restructuring the department chair position are provided later in this chapter.

New department chairs also reported enjoyable early socialization experiences. Many of these opportunities involved organizing departmental initiatives, casting a vision for their departments, developing curriculum, and helping their fellow faculty members to succeed. Some even mentioned that learning to be a department chair, although challenging, was invigorating and rewarding.

Theme 3: Learning How to Function as Music Department Chairs Involved Socialization Processes and On-the-Job Experiences

The majority of participants in this study assumed their department chair positions with little knowledge of the demands of the position, with limited administrative experience, and little or no formal training in how to accomplish their new roles and perform their responsibilities. Nearly all of the participants reported that learning how to function in the department chair position happened on the job. One participant noted that there is no other way to learn how to be a department chair other than by “doing it.”

The primary research question for this study was: How do college and university music department chairs learn to function in their multiple roles and perform their multiple responsibilities? This process by which department chairs learn to function in their roles and perform responsibilities involved a closer look at how these individuals
were socialized. Organizational socialization served as the theoretical framework that
guided the thinking of this study. According to Major et al. (1995), organizational
socialization describes the process of learning accepted behaviors and attitudes and
assimilating new roles. The socialization process is characterized by a number of
dimensions based in part on institutional hiring and orientation processes among other
variables such as an individual’s unique background, relationships, etc.

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) identified six socialization dimensions for
describing the various processes that individuals experience during their transition into
new organizational roles. These six dimensions include: (a) collective vs. individual
socialization processes, (b) formal vs. informal socialization processes, (c) sequential vs.
random steps in the socialization process, (d) fixed vs. variable socialization processes,
(e) serial vs. disjunctive socialization processes, and (f) investiture vs. divestiture
socialization processes. Table 1 lists these socialization dimensions and provides a brief
description for each dimension.

Based on prior research (see Staton-Spicer & Spicer, 1987) and my own
experience as a music department chair, this study anticipated that participants would
report socialization processes that were individual, informal, random, variable,
disjunctive, and involve investiture processes. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) propose
that individuals who experience these specific socialization processes will likely exhibit
role innovation. This term describes the great latitude demonstrated by individuals in
how they function in their roles to the point of redefining the mission or goals of their
organizational roles.
Every participant in the current study experienced individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and investiture processes with the exception of three participants. One individual was trained and mentored by his previous department chair and two other participants acknowledged that previous department chairs were helpful to their role learning. These three individuals therefore experienced serial rather than disjunctive socialization processes. Aside from these small variations, all participants reported identical socialization processes and thus were likely to exhibit role innovation as defined by Van Maanen and Schein (1979).

The likely presence of role innovation was a central finding within the current study. The degree to which participants demonstrated role innovation was not a primary focus of the current study. Measuring such a construct would first require that a normal process of role functioning be established for specific organizational roles (e.g., establishing a normal or standard method for evaluating a faculty member). Based on these normal processes, any deviation from normal functioning might account for innovative role functioning.

To more closely understand how department chairs function in their multiple roles and perform their multiple responsibilities, this study identified strategies that department chairs use in accomplishing their work. It is possible that these strategies indicate the presence of role innovation since individuals either adopted or created personalized ways of performing department chair functions. A thorough discussion of department chair strategies follows the subsequent section which focuses on relationships that department chairs maintained.
Theme 4: Relationships were Significant Sources of Support and Role Sense-making for Music Department Chairs

Department chairs in this study reported a number of relationships that served significant functions in helping them to make sense of their department chair roles and responsibilities. This finding confirms socialization research which has established that other people help newcomers to define their organizational roles and interpret their experiences (Louis, 1980; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Figure 3 illustrates the primary types of relationships that participants acknowledged as important to their sense-making process of becoming a department chair.

Although these types of relationships were supportive and important for participants in their development as department chairs, specific sense-making functions differed across the sample. Moreover, sense-making functions often differed between individuals within the same relationship type. For example, one individual noted that family members were a source of support when work became discouraging and difficult. He noted that he regularly invited his wife to institutional events so that he had at least “one person in the room that didn’t think [he] was Satan.”

In contrast, another individual noted that her husband provided support in the form of handling responsibilities at home including taking care of their children. Both of these participants identified the value of family relationships, but for different reasons. To help understand the importance of relationships to department chairs, the following section briefly discusses the results of these relationship types (see Table 5).
Figure 3. Department chair sense-making relationship types.
Department faculty members served multiple sense-making functions for department chairs. Faculty members provided assistance for new chairs in helping them to socialize into new departmental cultures. For example, one participant reported that a faculty member helped him to learn his institution’s "ways of operating." Faculty members in some cases shared department chair responsibilities (e.g., helping to socialize junior faculty members). Other participants viewed faculty members as "motivating," "encouraging," "supportive," and "collegial."

In contrast, a few participants described their faculty members as "uncooperative" and "dysfunctional." Not surprising, these difficult relationships resulted in frustration for department chairs. For example, one participant expressed the desire to initiate an "openly supported strategic plan" for her department, but found faculty members lackadaisical toward setting departmental goals.

Part-time and adjunct faculty members were seen as critical to departmental functioning. They also served as sources of information regarding students and departmental improvements from an "outside" perspective.

Administrators primarily served an advisory function for department chairs regarding institutional policies and processes in addition to providing assistance during organizational socialization. The majority of department chairs reported collegial relationships with their administrators resulting in collaboration between institutional levels. Within the context of these positive administrative relationships, department chairs were empowered to lead.

Other participants acknowledged administrative interference, micromanagement, and cases where administrators challenged department chair decisions. It is likely that in
such controlling environments, department chair positions were defined with very little power and authority. Department chairs who reported these types of administrative relationships exercised limited leadership within their departments. Moreover, their role as chair diminished to that of being simply a communication liaison from administration to faculty members. This finding is in agreement with research that has documented the challenges of the department chair position with regard to unclear and limited definitions of power and authority (Al-Karni, 1995; Bennett & Figuli, 1990; Tucker, 1984).

Support personnel were an important source of information for new department chairs during the socialization process. For example, one participant praised his support personnel, “Their institutional knowledge combined will be more than anything I will learn… [They’re] an incredible staff.”

One theme not addressed in the department chair literature involved department chairs’ perception of their support personnel. The manner in which department chairs defined the role of their support personnel determined the types of roles the support personnel performed. For example, when support personnel were described as “colleagues,” they often performed functions critical to departmental operations. However, when support personnel were described using the general term “staff,” they often performed minor departmental functions. This finding should cause department chairs to reconsider their view of their support personnel. Empowering “staff” to become “colleagues” may positively affect departmental productivity.

Another significant finding suggests that department chair and support personnel gender may be an important factor in departmental functioning. Of the five female department chairs in this study, one reported no support personnel and the other four
reported that their support personnel were very unproductive. Furthermore, these four
girl department chairs reported increased departmental and personal conflict with their
support personnel. As a result, participants acknowledged that overall departmental
collaboration and progress suffered.

In contrast, every male department chair in this study reported that their support
personnel were very capable individuals who provided support for department chair roles
and responsibilities. Thus, such departments with male department chairs and female
support personnel resulted in productive departmental teamwork. Departments in this
study with female department chairs and female support personnel resulted in greater
conflict and less productive departments. In sum, support personnel play a critical role in
departmental functioning. Moreover, one’s identity within a department (i.e., “colleague”
versus “staff”) and gender may have implications for the roles that support personnel
perform in assisting department chairs.

Department chair relationships with mentors emerged as a significant finding
within this study. Six participants identified mentoring relationships that helped them to
make sense of their department chair roles and responsibilities. It is important to note that
none of these mentoring relationships were formally established by institutions as a
means of training new department chairs. Instead, all of these mentoring relationships
were informally established and provided support for participants in learning their
department chair roles, offering advice on departmental situations, and guiding
department chairs through challenging decisions. This study did not attempt to define
mentoring or try to assess the value of such relationships. Rather, it simply described the
presence of mentors as identified by participants and the support functions that these mentors provided.

Relationships with family members provided personal support and encouragement for seven of the department chairs in this study. Family members were described as "understanding" and "able to put up with a lot of crap" as one participant stated. Unfortunately, many of the participants who identified the importance of family members also confessed that the demands of their department chair roles resulted in strained family relationships. For example, one participant reflected about her family relationships, "I have a lot of regrets about this position."

It is likely that those who did not report family relationships sought personal support from other relationships. However, this study did not attempt to determine whether or not personal support was received from other relationships for participants who did not report family relationships. Overall, this study demonstrated that family members served a necessary support function at home rather than a professional function in making sense of department chair roles and responsibilities. Family support is a significant theme as there is little mention of family or personal support in the department chair literature.

Lastly, colleagues from outside of music departments provided insight into department chair role functioning. These relationships included individuals from other departments on campus and individuals from other institutions. Participants indicated that colleagues from national associations were especially helpful for answering questions and providing guidance with unfamiliar processes such as conducting tenure reviews and writing accreditation reports. Some participants identified a counseling role performed by
their colleagues as demonstrated through empathetic listening and responding. For example, one participant shared that she was able to “vent” to colleagues from a former institution and know “that it’s not going anywhere.” In sum, these relationships with other colleagues could be considered “professional friendships” as they serve both professional and personal support functions for department chairs.

Theme 5: Music Department Chairs Identified Numerous Strategies that Facilitate Role Functioning

Strategies helped to explain how the fifteen department chairs in this study function in their many roles and how they perform their many responsibilities. Based on extensive interview data analysis, six groups of strategies were identified. It is important to note that this research did not seek to measure the effectiveness of any particular strategy. Instead, this study sought to identify and describe the strategies currently used by department chairs. Careful evaluation of these findings may lead current department chairs to adopt some of these strategies toward accomplishing their many responsibilities. Figure 4 illustrates strategies that facilitate department chair role functioning.

Time management was the most significant challenge reported by department chairs in this study. Numerous studies have documented the increasing time demands of the department chair position (Aziz et al., 2005; Gmelch & Wilke, 1991; Meredith & Wunsch, 1991; Seedorf & Gmelch, 1989). Strategies for managing time included: open and closed door policies, working at home, following an institutional calendar, operating by deadlines, planning in advance, establishing a support system, delegating responsibilities, reordering priorities, multi-tasking, non-multi-tasking, and summoning inner motivation.
Figure 4. Strategies that facilitate department chair role functioning.
Nearly every department chair within the current study noted difficulty in balancing their time to ensure that their priorities were accomplished. Most participants explained that daily work suffered from continuous interruptions from students, faculty, and support personnel along with countless emails and phone messages. As a result, department chairs often worked from home during the evenings and on weekends. Given these many time demands, it is not surprising that Gmelch and Burns (1993) recommend that the department chair role be restructured to a half-time position.

Department chair stress has been well-documented in higher education literature (Burns & Gmelch, 1992, 1995; Gillett-Karam, 1999; Gmelch & Burns, 1993, 1994; Gmelch & Wilke, 1991; Wolverton, et al., 1997). Strategies reported by participants for managing stress included: keeping a sense of humor, avoiding stressful situations, getting sufficient rest, scheduling relaxation, exercising, leaving work at the office, and gaining experience.

In agreement with previous studies, every participant in this study acknowledged that the department chair position is a stressful role to occupy. Gmelch and Gates (1995) assert that age and years of experience have little effect on department chair stress. However, contrary to Gmelch and Gates (1995), this study found that experienced department chairs reported less stress than beginning department chairs. For example, one participant explained that department chair stress was inevitable, but through his experience he learned to “take some distance from the heat of the moment.” Another chair shared that part of experience is building up “self-confidence” in working through challenges, resulting in less stress. Some indicated that stressing about department chair issues was the least effective way to find a creative solution. Although most participants
identified useful stress management strategies, many also confessed they that were still learning to effectively manage the stress inherent in the department chair position.

Department chairs perform an important role in avoiding and resolving conflict (Stanley & Algert, 2007), yet there is little research describing how department chairs resolve conflict (Findlen, 2000; Gmelch, 1995b). This study helped to shed light on the process of avoiding and resolving conflict by providing strategies used by current department chairs. Strategies reported by participants included: exercising open and honest face-to-face communication with involved parties, resolving issues in a private setting, avoiding over-investigation of situations, bringing people together early before conflict escalates, providing opportunities for “venting,” serving as a moderator, not as authoritative judge, listening artfully and responding thoughtfully, avoiding decisions and conclusions based on reactions, identifying deeper issues beneath the surface, involving administrators when necessary, and creating small teams for developing synergetic solutions. Overall, these strategies suggest that department chairs exercise limited authority and power in avoiding and resolving conflict. Rather, these strategies demonstrate how department chairs exercise their important role as mediator. Further research in the area of conflict avoidance and resolution is necessary to determine how department chairs might prioritize or even combine these specific strategies toward improved departmental functioning.

Leadership strategies identified in this study were defined more by humility and service to colleagues and less by authority and vision casting. These leadership strategies included: being a servant, assuming a posture of humility, sharing administrative control, leading from behind, moving institutional objectives forward through departmental goals,
helping colleagues to succeed, promoting teamwork, generating new initiatives, and marshaling resources for departmental advancement.

Participants in this study acknowledged that providing leadership from their buffering position between faculty and administration can be both challenging and rewarding (see Gillett-Karam, 1999). On the one hand, new department chairs struggled to provide effective leadership while balancing their increased administrative duties. Experienced department chairs, on the other hand, seemed to have a better grasp of their roles and consequently reported joy in providing leadership and direction for their younger colleagues. Many pointed to the power of persuasion rather than power of their position in moving departmental initiatives forward (Bennett & Figuli, 1990). In sum, these strategies provide new and prospective department chairs with a clearer concept of leadership based on servanthood in contrast to traditional leadership notions of heroism.

This study also sought to identify strategies that department chairs used in communicating with departmental constituents. Participants within this study identified the following communication strategies: asking rather than telling people what to do, meeting regularly face-to-face, practicing honesty, translating communication between institutional levels, using direct communication when issues are critical, and confirming verbal conversations in writing. It should be noted that these strategies may be applied across many different departmental relationships and are not specifically directed toward relationships between department chairs and faculty members.

Department chairs within this sample agreed that direct and honest communication was vital to being an effective department chair. Overall, these strategies focused on the fundamental value of being truthful in relationships. Not surprising,
participants shared that honest communication promotes trust between department chairs and others. One participant affirmed the importance of transparent communication when he declared that everything is lost when trust is absent. Other participants proposed that verbal and written communication should match. In regard to external relationships, many viewed the department chair position as the first line of communication to and from the rest of the institution.

These findings support the literature addressing effective department chair communication skills (Hickson & Stacks, 1992; Higgerson, 1996). Other research has previously identified communication dimensions that department chairs use during organizational socialization (Staton-Spicer & Spicer, 1987).

This final section identifies essential skills required of department chairs as reported by participants. These essential skills included: being fair, supporting colleagues, being honest, communicating clearly through both verbal and written conversations, being organized, understanding budget spreadsheets, relating to colleagues, collaborating with a group of diverse individuals, being an ambassador for the music department, casting a vision for the department, being a role model, multi-tasking, and maintaining a diligent work ethic. These findings demonstrate that in order to function effectively as a department chair, one must exhibit a vast array of skills, attributes, and values. Prospective department chairs would do well to consider these essential skills and take personal inventory of their presence in their lives. These results describe not only task-oriented skills (i.e., understanding spreadsheets, casting a vision for the department, etc.), but also interpersonal skills (i.e., being fair, supporting colleagues, being an ambassador for the music department, etc.). The findings in this
study augment the many studies in higher education literature addressing requisite skills of the department chair position (Aziz et al., 2005; Crothall, Callan, & Hartel, 1997; Daly & Townsend, 1994; Higgerson, 1996; Wolverton et al., 2005).

**Theme 6: Years of Department Chair Experience had a Significant Effect on Role Sense-making and Scholarly Productivity**

Within this study, years of experience had a significant effect on department chairs’ ability to make sense of their roles. Years of experience describes the amount of time that an individual has spent in the department chair position with the underlying assumption that this time is positively related to one’s learning of department chair roles. In other words, the longer one is a department chair, the greater his or her ability to understand and function in the department chair position. Fourteen of fifteen department chairs indicated that their years of experience helped them to make sense of their roles and responsibilities. It is important to note that this study included both beginning and veteran department chairs.

According to Gmelch and Parkay (1999), beginning department chairs experience moderate to severe difficulty performing their roles and responsibilities. The findings of the current study confirm these results. Many of the beginning department chairs felt unprepared for the challenges of their new positions and struggled to make sense of their roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, they reported greater stress than their more experienced counterparts. However, they did report that their limited time in the department chair position helped them to make sense of their roles and responsibilities. Veteran department chairs also felt prepared for their roles. Their years of experience provided them the time to develop sense-making relationships with others, time to
evaluate potential work-related strategies, and time to acquire the knowledge and perspective necessary for department chair functioning.

This study also confirmed previous literature regarding the negative effect that being a department chair has on scholarly productivity (Gmelch & Burns, 1993; Ragan & Rehman, 1996). Nearly all the participants in this study reported a decrease in scholarly productivity, including researching, publishing, and performing, since becoming department chairs.

Figure 5 demonstrates how years spent in the department chair position positively relates to role sense-making, but negatively relates to scholarly productivity. New department chairs began their administrative tenure with relatively high scholarly productivity, but with a limited perspective of department chair roles and responsibilities. This high level of scholarly productivity was not surprising given that department chairs often come from faculty ranks (Carroll, 1991). As department chairs spent more years in their administrative positions, they reported less scholarly productivity (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004), but increased sense-making of roles and responsibilities. Most participants acknowledged that decreased scholarly productivity was attributable to heavy time demands associated with the department chair position.
Figure 5. Effect of years of experience on department chair sense-making and scholarly productivity.
Theme 7: Being Musicians Helped Participants to Make Meaning of Their Music Department Chair Roles and Responsibilities

Every participant in the current study emphasized that being a musician was essential for being a music department chair. One’s identity as a musician was viewed as necessary for: understanding and relating to department colleagues, establishing credibility with faculty, providing a role model for faculty and students, hiring new music faculty, bringing a current perspective to the discipline, and appreciating the passion, dedication, and long hours required in the music discipline. Participants agreed that music department chairs must practice what they preach in order to represent a level of excellence in the music discipline. Moreover, being a professional musician legitimized the position and authority of the music department chair within the discipline. This is in agreement with Lucas (1989) who asserts that a department chair’s personal skills and technical competence may result in expert power or functional authority. Being musicians also helps music department chairs relate to their constituents by valuing their art form and understanding the numerous challenges inherent in the music discipline (see the discussion about challenges in the next section). In essence, being musicians provided connections to the musical culture shared by artists within the music discipline. This connection to the music culture was a significant finding. One participant declared that everything he does in the music discipline is based on his skills as a musician. However, another participant stated that there were other things music department chairs do that have no relationship with the discipline of the department (e.g., budget planning, report writing, etc.). Overall, being musicians helped music department chairs to make meaning of their roles and responsibilities.
Theme 8: Challenges and Characteristics of College and University Music Programs may make the Music Department Chair Role More Difficult than Department Chair Roles in Other Academic Programs

The final theme discussed in this study centers on the unusual characteristics and challenges of music departments. Although the literature involving music departments is extremely limited, Miller (1993) reported that music departments face unique challenges with regard to specialized faculty, facility and equipment needs, arts advocacy and funding, and public visibility of their programs. The current study added the following characteristics and challenges to this research: additional service expectations, multiple sub-disciplines, artistic personalities, numerous adjunct faculty, formal pre-training for students, atypical credit equivalencies resulting in disputed teaching loads, and assessment challenges.

Nearly all of the participants in this sample acknowledged unusual characteristics and challenges of music departments when compared to traditional academic departments. For example, several individuals commented that English departments do not produce concerts, maintain extensive facilities and equipment, nor do they find a need to defend the educational value of their discipline to institutional administrators. The majority of participants identified additional expectations of their music departments (e.g., performing for campus events, organizing community music camps, and fund raising for departmental needs, etc.). All of these extra-curricular activities require additional time and oversight on the part of music department chairs.

Another significant characteristic of music departments can be seen in the extensive number and variety of sub-disciplines. One participant described that within the music discipline there are performers, scholars, and music educators each with their own
sub-disciplines. These numerous sub-disciplines require specialized faculty, and often an extensive number of adjunct faculty instructors. For example, one chair reported that his relatively small department of seven full-time instructors utilized over 30 adjunct instructors during one semester.

Music is unique in its provision of individual lessons, limited ensemble enrollment, and small class sizes. In addition, significant prior musical training is expected for acceptance into collegiate music programs. Consequently, music departments do not generate high numbers of student credits when compared to other disciplines with large class sizes and liberal enrollments. Many music department chairs struggled to defend their programs to administrators given the high expenses involved in operating music departments and the low return in tuition dollars due to small classes. In summary, music departments are unusual in their many characteristics and challenges resulting in extensive roles and responsibilities for music department chairs. Figure 6 displays the characteristics and challenges of college and university music departments.

Implications of the Study

Overview

This study sought to understand and describe the process by which fifteen music department chairs learned or are learning to function in their multiple roles and responsibilities. Organizational socialization provided a theoretical perspective for investigating how individuals learn and assimilate organizational roles necessary for department chair functioning (Major et al., 1995; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Qualitative interviews with music department chairs yielded eight main themes with numerous sub-themes.
Table 11 is provided to help readers compare many of the findings of this study with previous research involving department chairs. It should be noted that this table is not exhaustive, and therefore does not present every finding within the current study. Rather, it demonstrates how the current study affirms, adds to, or contradicts previous department chair research.
Figure 6. Characteristics and challenges of college and university music departments.
Table 11

*Comparison of Werkema Research with Previous Research Involving Department Chairs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Werkema Research (2009)</th>
<th>Previous Department Chair Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department Chair Demographics</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-male, 51 years old, D.M.A. degree, 8 years in position, no plans to become chairs</td>
<td>Affirms Brown (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-male, 51 years old, D.M.A. degree, 1-5 years in position, no plans to become chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenure</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-tenure important to becoming chairs</td>
<td>Affirms Hecht (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-most chairs are tenured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation for Becoming Dept. Chairs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-did not plan to become chairs</td>
<td>Adds to Seedorf (1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-accepted chair positions in support of their departments</td>
<td>-identified intrinsic and extrinsic motivations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adds to Carroll &amp; Wolverton (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-chairs may feel pressured into chair positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affirms Wolverton &amp; Gmelch (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-service to departments is a major motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous Faculty Experiences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-did little to prepare individuals for roles</td>
<td>Adds to Carroll (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-traditional paths to becoming department chairs involve being faculty members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department Chair Appointment Processes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-chair appointments involved collaboration between administrators and faculty</td>
<td>Adds to Carroll (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-chair appointments made by faculty election with approval from administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transition into the Dept. Chair Position</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-identified multiple socialization processes</td>
<td>Adds to Bragg (1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-transition was a difficult process</td>
<td>-defined headship role and socialization processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adds to Seedorf (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-involves letting go of faculty role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affirms Gmelch &amp; Parkay (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-beginning chairs experienced difficulty</td>
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</table>
Table 11 (continued)

**Comparison of Werkema Research with Previous Research Involving Department Chairs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Werkema Research (2009)</th>
<th>Previous Department Chair Research</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role Innovation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-participants experienced individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and</td>
<td>Affirms Van Maanen &amp; Schein (1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>investiture socialization processes</td>
<td>-multiple socialization processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-participants developed role-facilitating strategies</td>
<td>-individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and investiture processes are likely to result in role innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department Chair Training</strong></td>
<td>Affirms Gmelch (2002b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-received little or no institutional training</td>
<td>-limited training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-training was a general faculty orientation</td>
<td>Adds to Walvoord et al. (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-training critical to learning chair roles and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adds to Hecht et al. (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-training focuses on policies and regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department Chair Relationships</strong></td>
<td>Affirms and adds to Louis (1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-relationships were significant sources of support and role sense-making for music</td>
<td>-other people help newcomers interpret their experiences and make sense of the events that surround them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>department chairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Management Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Affirms and adds to Aziz et al. (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-time management was a significant challenge for department chairs</td>
<td>-department chairs are faced with heavier workloads and longer time commitments that ever before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-participants developed strategies to achieve priorities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stress Management Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Adds to Van Maanen and Schein (1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-participants identified several stress management strategies</td>
<td>-individuals undergoing any organizational transition are likely to experience stress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11 (continued)

**Comparison of Werkema Research with Previous Research Involving Department Chairs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Werkema Research (2009)</th>
<th>Previous Department Chair Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict Resolution and Management Strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- clear communication was a critical component of strategies</td>
<td>Affirms and adds to Stanley &amp; Algert (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- participants developed multiple conflict resolution and management strategies</td>
<td>- resolving conflict is a primary responsibility of department chairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Leadership Strategies** | |
| - leadership strategies characterized by humility and service to their department colleagues | Adds to Creswell et al. (1990) |
| | - primary leadership strategy was the need for department chairs to learn about their roles and responsibilities |

| **Communication Strategies** | |
| - honest and direct communication fundamental to chair communication strategies | Adds to Staton-Spicer & Spicer (1987) |
| | - identified chair communication dimensions as part of organizational socialization |

| **Essential Department Chair Skills** | |
| - participants identified multiple attributes, skills, and values necessary for effective department chair functioning | Adds to Higgerson (1996) |
| | - effective communication skills as important |
| | - department chair skills differ from faculty skills |

| **Years of Department Chair Experience** | |
| - experienced department chairs reported less stress than beginning chairs | Contradicts Gmelch & Gates (1995) |
| - significant effect on role sense-making and scholarly productivity | - years of experience had little effect on department chair stress |
Table 11 (continued)

Comparison of Werkema Research with Previous Research Involving Department Chairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Werkema Research (2009)</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scholarly Productivity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- decrease in scholarly productivity since becoming department chairs</td>
<td>Affirms Seedorf (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- less time for scholarly activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affirms Carroll &amp; Wolverton (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- adverse effect on scholarship, research, and teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being Musicians</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- being musicians helped participants to make meaning of their music department chair roles and responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music Department Chair Challenges</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- expands list of challenges and characteristics of music departments</td>
<td>Adds to Miller (1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- music department chair position may be more challenging than some department chair positions in other disciplines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the findings from this study, recommendations have been identified for prospective department chairs, new department chairs, experienced department chairs, administrators, and researchers. These recommendations are discussed in the following section.

Recommendations for Prospective Department Chairs

This study indicated that those who became department chairs typically had served as faculty members. Given that about one quarter of the 80,000 department chairs in the United States are replaced each year (Gmelch, 2002b), it is likely that tenured faculty members will be asked to serve as department chairs at some point during their educational careers. As a result, this study recommends that these prospective department
chairs carefully consider the challenges, trade-offs, and rewards associated with being department chairs.

Assuming the department chair position involves more than simply a change in title and job description. It presents real challenges with respect to learning department chair roles and responsibilities, managing increased time demands and stress, adjusting to changes in relationships with colleagues, working with multiple constituents, leading faculty peers with limited positional authority, and maintaining scholarly activities. As part of this learning process, prospective department chairs are encouraged to establish relationships with current department chairs. These relationships will provide insight into the expectations of the department chair position and allow time to consider effective strategies to meet these expectations.

This study advocates that prospective department chairs ideally would share the department chair position with current department chairs for one year prior to their initial appointment. This dual chair-ship will allow prospective department chairs time to socialize into the position while allowing current department chairs time to re-socialize back into their faculty positions or elsewhere. Furthermore, it will provide mentoring-like training for prospective department chairs in learning unfamiliar processes and procedures critical to departmental functioning.

Beyond learning to function in department chair roles, prospective chairs should reflect on their motivations for becoming department chairs. The majority of participants within this study viewed the department chair position not as a promotion or significant source of power or authority, but as a way to serve their departments. One participant
described the role of department chair leadership best when he stated, “You lead from behind.”

Recommendations for New Department Chairs

This study shows that many new department chairs did not plan to become department chairs. In the absence of previous planning and institutional training, new department chairs are encouraged to build relationships with other department chairs both on campus and within their professional associations in order to ease their transition from being a faculty member to being a department chair. Not only will these relationships provide support during organizational socialization, but they become a repository of ideas and strategies for improving departmental functioning.

It is also recommended that new department chairs build collaborative partnerships with their deans to move institutional goals forward through departmental initiatives. These relationships may enhance communication between institutional levels resulting in trust and increased departmental support.

New department chairs are encouraged to experiment with the strategies identified in this study toward improved department chair functioning. Regarding role functioning, new chairs should consider delegation as a significant part of their leadership model. Teamwork suggests that department chairs do not work alone but enlist the help of others in accomplishing goals. Similarly, assuming a posture of humility and service to others rather than independence and authority over others demonstrates value to departmental members. This leadership model draws its strength from empowering others toward departmental achievements. New department chairs should also plan for their futures after their department chair tenure. This early planning may clarify priorities and goals
involving research and other professional activities if one plans to return to faculty ranks. Lastly, given the negative effects of department chair stress, new department chairs are encouraged to engage in consistent stress-reducing activities such as exercising and scheduling regular periods of relaxation and renewal.

Recommendations for Experienced Department Chairs

Experienced department chairs are encouraged to share their learning with prospective leaders within their departments. For example, one method of clarifying roles and responsibilities for future department chairs is to assemble a detailed job description with deadlines and suggestions for accomplishing major tasks. Furthermore, experienced department chairs can be a significant source of support for new department chairs during the socialization period.

Several participants within the current study indicated that former chairs still serving within the department provided support as part of their learning of department chair roles and responsibilities. One individual in this study was mentored by the incumbent department chair for one year during which they shared department chair responsibilities. This process was described as “invaluable” by the incoming department chair. A detailed description of this type of partnership is provided (see recommendations for prospective department chairs). Recommendations of both ineffective and effective strategies may help new department chairs streamline their learning toward improved role functioning.

Finally, experienced department chairs can be an advocate for their less experienced colleagues in organizing institutional training. Seasoned department chairs have much to offer new department chairs from their administrative experiences. The
current study indicated that experienced department chairs had a much clearer understanding of the department chair position and how to function in their roles than less experienced department chairs. Researchers calling for department chair training (Aziz et al., 2005; Filan, 1999; Gillet-Karam, 1999; Walvoord et al., 2000; Wolverton, Ackerman, & Holt, 2005) may not need to look farther than to experienced department chairs to provide this training.

**Recommendations for Administrators**

The department chair position has received widespread attention in the higher education literature over the past two decades. Collectively, this body of research portrays the department chair position as demanding, stressful, time-intensive, and as having multiple negative effects on one’s personal life and professional career. Not surprising, there is a paucity of studies acknowledging the benefits associated with department chair service.

Cultivating department leadership in the future may require a restructuring of the department chair position to make it more attractive to prospective department chairs. Administrators are central to this restructuring process. Restructuring the department chair position to a three-quarter or full-time appointment would enable department chairs to complete their work within normal working hours rather than working excessively at home during evenings and weekends. Equitable stipends or other benefits for department chair service would provide incentive and help promote interest in the position. For some department chairs, a reduction in teaching loads would allow for additional time spent accomplishing departmental priorities. Full sabbaticals at the end of one’s department chair tenure would provide preparation time for re-socializing back into their faculty
positions or socializing into other administrative positions. Flexibility with regard to
hours spent on campus would allow for periods of focused work (e.g., writing
accreditation self-studies, etc.) away from constant interruptions experienced on campus.

Several participants in the current study reported that learning department chair
roles and responsibilities was an ambiguous process due to unclear job expectations.
Administrators can help department chairs to make sense of their roles and
responsibilities by developing detailed job descriptions with accompanying expectations
and evaluation criteria. Lastly, administrators should also make available leadership
training for new department chairs that extends beyond general institutional processes to
include human relations skills such as team building, collaboration, and communication
strategies.

Recommendations for Researchers

This study used qualitative methods to investigate the socialization process by
which fifteen college and university music department chairs learned to function in their
roles and perform their responsibilities. Since the sample included both new and veteran
department chairs, participant responses ranged from current descriptions of recent
experiences to reflections of past experiences. Similar studies might include only new
department chairs (i.e., department chairs that have served for only one to two years in
the position) in order to capture recent department chair experiences rather than
retrospective data.

Researchers may also consider interviewing department chairs from two
contrasting disciplines followed by a comparative analysis of findings. This type of study
would illuminate any differences between disciplines that otherwise may not surface.
While expensive and time-consuming, a longitudinal study of department chairs from their initial hire to the end of a three-year term would provide the clearest picture of department chair socialization. Through frequent interviews and extensive document analysis, researchers could extract an accurate understanding of the process by which these individuals were socialized into their department chair roles and how they learned to perform their responsibilities. This type of study, however, would ultimately lack generalizability to other department chairs given the uniqueness of one’s socialization experiences.

Studying department chairs across multiple disciplines at a single college or university would provide helpful data toward improving the socialization process for new department chairs. Furthermore, this study would help administrators and faculty developers to identify department chairs that report significant challenges or difficulties during organizational socialization and extend tailored support to these individuals.

Conclusion

My own experience in becoming a music department chair at a private four-year institution along with numerous studies that portray the struggles of new department chairs served as the impetus for this study. The more I studied the extensive number of roles and responsibilities of department chairs in the extant literature, the clearer it became that the troubled experiences of so many individuals was not just the quantity of roles and responsibilities but also a matter of not knowing how to function in these many roles and responsibilities. Consequently, I refocused my attention to the process by which music department chairs learn to function in their positions.
The primary research question asked: How do college and university music department chairs learn to function in their multiple roles and perform their multiple responsibilities? Driven by a theoretical framework that describes the process of learning organizational roles (i.e., organizational socialization), I sought to understand the socialization experiences of fifteen music department chairs from multiple perspectives. The first of these perspectives addressed experiences before becoming department chairs (i.e., anticipatory socialization). Hence, the first research question asked: How do these individuals describe their experiences prior to assuming the department chair position?

The second socialization perspective I examined involved the transition process of becoming a department chair (i.e., during the encounter stage of organizational socialization). Its corresponding research question asked: How do these individuals describe the transition process of becoming a department chair? During this transition process, the organizational socialization literature points to several sources of information that help individuals to make sense of their new roles and responsibilities.

Relationships with other people were identified as significant sources of support and information for new department chairs. Consequently, the third research question asked: What relationships, if any, do these department chairs maintain that provide support for their multiple roles and responsibilities?

To understand the ways in which these individuals performed their roles and responsibilities, this study identified department chair strategies and resources. Therefore, the fourth research question asked: What strategies and resources, if any, do these department chairs utilize to facilitate their work, and why?
Having researched experiences before becoming department chairs, the transition into the department chair position, sense-making relationships, and role-facilitating strategies, I considered the effect that years in the position may have on role sense-making. As such, the fifth research question asked: How do years of department chair experience help these individuals make meaning of their multiple roles and responsibilities?

Lastly, I investigated the effect that one's identity as a musician has on sense-making of music department chair functions. Thus, the final research question asked: How does being a musician help a music department chair make meaning of his or her multiple roles and responsibilities?

This qualitative study is important in the department chair literature for a number of reasons. First, it is significant in that it is the only study that researched multiple dimensions of organizational socialization for understanding how department chairs learn to function in their roles and perform their responsibilities. Second, this study advances the music department chair literature as no other studies have investigated how music department chairs socialize into their positions or how they learn to function in their roles and perform their responsibilities. Furthermore, this department chair study confirms Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) socialization theory that asserts that individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and investiture socialization processes result in role innovation. Lastly, this is one of the few department chair studies that utilized qualitative methodology in researching the music department chair position.

The findings of this study have painted a clear picture of the challenges associated with learning how to function in the music department chair position. The next step for
department chair researchers and music department advocates is to identify workable solutions to these challenges. In closing, it is my sincere hope that this dissertation research becomes a catalyst for further research aimed at improving the department chair position across all disciplines in colleges and universities within the United States.
REFERENCES


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38(3), 333-350
Appendix A

Interview Guide
Interview Guide

“Let’s begin by collecting some brief background information.”

**Participant Background Information –approx. 3 minutes**

1. What is your age?
2. Gender (Male/Female).
3. Highest degree attained and area of concentration.
4. Title and rank.
5. Number of years as a music department chair.
6. Tenured. (Y/N) If so, how long?

“Reflect with me for a while prior to assuming the department chair position.”

**Preparation for the Department Chair Position –approximately 15 minutes**

1. What types of positions have you held prior to becoming a music department chair?
   a. What were your roles and responsibilities in each of these positions?
   b. Do you feel that these experiences adequately prepared you for the chair position? (Y/N) If so, how? If not, why?
2. Were there other experiences that were valuable in preparing you to be a music department chair? (Y/N) If so, what were they? How were they helpful to you?
3. Did you plan to become a department chair (Y/N)? If so, how did you prepare?
4. What motivated you to consider taking the department chair position?
5. Briefly describe the selection process for becoming a department chair at your institution.
   a. Who makes the decision about hiring chairs?
6. If you could go back in time prior to becoming a music department chair, what would you have done differently to best prepare me for the chair position?
7. What is one piece of essential advice that you would give to someone considering becoming a music department chair?

“You have described your experiences before becoming a department chair. Now let’s spend some time exploring your transition into the department chair position.”

**Transition to the Department Chair Position –approximately 15 minutes**

1. Were you part of a group of beginning department chairs or did you transition in the chair position as an individual?
   a. If part of a group, how did they support you?
   b. If as an individual, who did you rely on for support?
2. What was enjoyable during your first year? What was difficult?
3. Did you participate in any formal training/orientation as part of your transition process? (Y/N) If so, please describe this training/orientation. If not, how did you begin to learn the ropes of the job?

4. Did your institution establish a specific timeframe during which your department chair learning would occur? (Y/N) If so, what was this timeframe?

5. Learning to be a department chair—is this a process of clearly outlined steps or a series of random, ambiguous events? Please explain.

6. Were there individuals that helped you make the transition into the chair position (Y/N)? If so, how did they help you?
   a. Were you mentored for your current position (Y/N)? If yes, please describe this relationship.

7. How did you come to learn what was expected of you as chair?

“Let’s identify and explore some of the relationships, if any, that you currently maintain that help you in your role as chair.”

**Supportive Relationships for Department Chairs—approximately 10 minutes**

1. Who are the primary individuals that provide support for you in completing your work? How do they support you?
2. Who do you contact for assistance when your work becomes especially difficult? How has this person helped you?
3. Briefly describe your relationship with your dean.
4. Briefly describe your relationship with the faculty in your department.

“Now let’s turn our attention to any strategies and resources that you find especially effective in accomplishing your work.”

**Department Chair Strategies and Resources—approximately 10 minutes**

1. How do you manage your time to ensure that your priorities are achieved?
2. How do you manage stress?
3. How do you balance the expectations of your faculty and your administrators?
4. How do you resolve conflict in your department?
5. Are there other strategies and resources that help you accomplish your work? (Y/N) If so, what are they? How are they helpful?

“Reflect with me for a few moments about your years of experience as a department chair.”

**Years of Department Chair Experience—approximately 10 minutes**

1. Do you feel that your years of experience as a music department chair have helped you to make sense of your chair roles and responsibilities? (Y/N) If so, in what ways?
2. Was there a time in your career as a department chair that you felt you had fully transitioned into your role as music department chair? (Y/N) If so, when?
3. Briefly describe a particularly difficult situation difficult during your first year(s). Would you handle this situation differently now? (Y/N) If so, how?

4. What effect, if any, have your years as a music department chair had on your professional activities (i.e., research, scholarship, performance, etc.)?

"The last few questions concern your identity as both a musician and department chair."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Chair as Musician—approximately 10 minutes</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Do you feel that being a musician is essential to the music department chair position (Y/N)? If so, in what ways?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. How does being a musician influence your decision making?</td>
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<td>3. Do you feel that your abilities as a musician (i.e., creativity, collaboration, etc.) transfer to your role as a music department chair? (Y/N) If so, in what ways?</td>
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<td>4. Finally, what do you believe are the most important attributes and skills necessary to effectively lead a music department?</td>
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Is there any further information that you think would be important for me to consider as I explore how music department chairs learn to function in their roles and responsibilities?
Appendix B

Letter of Invitation for Department Chair Participation
Letter of Invitation for Department Chair Participation

Dear Dr. 

I am writing to you in hopes that you will participate in my dissertation study of music department chairs. I am a music department chair at Grace Bible College (Grand Rapids, MI) and I am finishing my Ph.D. in Higher Education Leadership at Western Michigan University. My study is titled “Making Sense of Roles and Responsibilities: A Socialization Study of College and University Music Department Chairs.” My dissertation advisor is Dr. Andrea L. Beach.

The purpose of this study is to explore how college and university music department chairs learn to function in their roles and how they learn to perform their many responsibilities. The following themes will be studied:

- Experiences prior to assuming the department chair position.
- The transition process of becoming a department chair.
- Relationships that provide support for music department chairs.
- Strategies and resources that help facilitate music department chair work.
- The effect of years of department chair experience on role/responsibility sense-making.
- The effect of musician identity on role/responsibility sense-making.

Although the higher education literature regards the department chair as one of the most important positions in an institution’s hierarchy, those who transition into the chair position generally receive little training or mentoring and report high levels of stress, role ambiguity, and role conflict. Given that department chairs maintain relationships with students, staff, faculty, and administration, etc., it is not surprising that chairs report difficulty serving in numerous roles and performing many responsibilities.

This study will employ qualitative research methods to help me understand and describe how individuals learn to function as music department chairs. Your participation would provide you the opportunity to reflect on your experience in becoming a department chair. In addition, your valuable insights would be helpful to others who are considering the department chair position.

If you agree to participate, I would interview you for about 60-90 minutes during one visit. This interview would be scheduled in your office at a time that is convenient for you. All information collected from you will be completely confidential. Only the researcher will know of your participation.

As a fellow music department chair, I would be grateful if you would consider this invitation to participate. I look forward to learning about your experience as a department chair. Within a few days after you have received this letter, I will call you to inquire about your participation. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact me.
Thank you,

Researcher:  
Jason Werkema, M.M.  
Chair, Music Division  
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Grand Rapids, MI 49509  
Email: jwerkema@gbcol.edu  
Phone: 616-261-8532 (office)  
Phone: 616-281-2417 (home)

Advisor:  
Andrea L. Beach, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Western Michigan University  
1903 West Michigan Avenue, MS 5276  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5276  
Email: andrea.beach@wmich.edu  
Phone: 269-387-1725 (office)
Appendix C

Follow-up Phone Script for Participation
Follow-up Phone Script for Participation

Hello, my name is Jason Werkema. I am a music department chair at Grace Bible College in Grand Rapids, MI. I contacted you a few days ago via email hoping that you will participate in my dissertation study of music department chairs. This study is in partial fulfillment of my Ph.D. in Higher Education Leadership at Western Michigan University. The purpose of this study is to explore how college and university music department chairs learn to function in their roles and how they learn to perform their many responsibilities.

As a music department chair, your valuable insights would benefit others who are considering becoming department chairs. You would also have the opportunity to reflect on your own experience in becoming a music department chair.

Although your participation in this study would be voluntary, it would be greatly appreciated. If you decide to participate, I would interview you for about 60-90 minutes during one visit. This interview would be scheduled in your office at a time that is convenient for you. You will also receive the interview questions in advance so that you can prepare to respond to them.

Prior to the interview, I would need your signature on a consent form for you to participate. This consent form can be signed on the day of our visit. Please know that all information collected from you will be completely confidential. As the researcher, I am the only person that will know of your participation.

If you have any questions about the study, I would be glad to answer them at this time. May I schedule a visit to explain the consent form and continue our conversation about your department chair experience?

Thank you and I look forward to meeting you. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me with any questions that you may have about this study. You can contact me by phone at my office at 616-261-8532 or at home at 616-281-2417 or by email: jwerkema@gbcol.edu.

OR

Thank you for speaking with me. I understand that you are unable to participate in this study. I appreciate the time that you spent as you considered participation.
Appendix D

Consent Document
You have been invited to participate in a research study involving college and university music department chairs. This research project is in partial fulfillment of Jason Werkema's Ph.D. in Higher Education Leadership at Western Michigan University. Findings will be published in a doctoral dissertation. The title of the study is "Making Sense of Roles and Responsibilities: A Socialization Study of College and University Music Department Chairs." The purpose of this study is to understand and describe how college and university music department chairs learn to function in their numerous roles and perform their multiple responsibilities.

You will be asked to participate in one 60-90 minute interview to be scheduled in your office at a time that is convenient for you. All information collected from you will be completely confidential. Your identity will be known only to me as the student investigator. To ensure accuracy of your responses, the interview will be recorded using an audio recorder and later downloaded to a computer for transcription, storage, and protection. To further protect your identity, any written reports will use the general term "respondent" when referring to participants. You will receive a summary of your responses following the completion of transcripts. After your summary has been checked for accuracy, the audio recording will be destroyed. Written transcripts will be stored in a locked file on the campus of Western Michigan University for a period of at least three years.

Benefits of this study may include: (a) having the opportunity to reflect on your own experience in becoming a music department chair, (b) providing helpful information to others who are considering becoming a department chair, and (c) providing the opportunity for the student investigator to conduct a qualitative study. There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study.

As a participant, you may withdraw from the study at any point without affecting your relationship with the researcher or with Western Michigan University. You may also stop the audio recording at any time during the interview.
If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the student investigator, Jason Werkema, at (616) 261-8532 (office) or at (616) 281-2417 (home) or by email at iwerkema@gbcoll.edu. My dissertation advisor is Dr. Andrea L. Beach. She can be reached at (269) 387-1725 (office) or by email: andrea.beach@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298 if any questions or problems arise during the course of the study.

This consent form has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and/or had explained to you the purpose and requirements of the study and that you agree to participate.

A signed copy of this written consent document will be provided to you to keep for your own records.

Participant Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Consent obtained by: ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Interviewer/Student Researcher
Appendix E

Approval of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB)
Date: December 18, 2007

To: Andrea Beach, Principal Investigator  
    Jason Werkema, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 07-12-11

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "Making Sense of Roles and Responsibilities: A Socialization Study of College and University Music Department Chairs" has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: December 18, 2008
Appendix F

Crosswalk Table of Interview and Research Questions
### Crosswalk Table of Interview and Research Questions

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3. Transition into the Department Chair Position
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### Crosswalk Table of Interview and Research Questions (continued)

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