TRANSITIONING INTO LEADERSHIP:
FROM FACULTY MEMBER TO DEPARTMENT CHAIR

by

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PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

August 2016

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Executive Summary

In an increasingly competitive post-secondary landscape, colleges in BC are redefining themselves. College leaders are challenged to meet new demands and department chairs, in particular, face growing pressure (cf. Cook 2012, Culbert and Shaw 2014; Gonzalez 2010; Luna 2012; McNair 2010; Morris 2012; O’Connor 2014). The focus of this project is department chair leadership at Langara College, in Vancouver, British Columbia. Given senior administration’s recognition of the need to support department chair leadership and to expand training and development (Palmer 2015), the aim of this project is to determine department chair preparation, training and leadership development gaps at Langara College and to propose optimal methods to fulfill these gaps. Specific research questions are:

1) What is department chair leadership at Langara College?
2) What department chair preparation, training and leadership development gaps exist?
3) From a preparation, training and development perspective, what can be done to support individuals in this critical role?

A single case study with embedded units (Yin 2014) was selected as the most appropriate methodology, given scope and aim of the project. Qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six department chairs and one academic dean. Participants were selected through stratified, purposeful sampling
(Patton 1990) to ensure a specific range of interviewees. Framework analysis was utilized: interview data was organized thematically for analysis and display.

The literature review focused on trends in leadership theory, leadership development, and leadership issues specific to department chairs. Three key themes emerged from this review: 1) role, responsibilities and competencies; 2) context; 3) and, transition into leadership. The three research questions above were addressed through discussion and analysis of the research results, within the context of these three themes.

**Role Responsibilities and Competencies**

Research revealed that analysis of both responsibilities and competencies provides a balanced understanding of the department chair role: key responsibilities differentiate each chair’s position, while consistency in key competencies unifies the roles.

**Context**

The importance of the context in which leadership takes place (Berdrow 2010; Day and Antonakis 2012) was revealed in the literature review. Shared governance provides a College-wide organizational and cultural context and, within this, each department has its own set of contextual factors.
Transition into Leadership

The transition into leadership process was analyzed in three phases: background, preparation, and training and development. Research results highlighted needs and gaps.

Recommendations

Recommendations arose from the research analysis and results, indicating a need for:

1) a comprehensive job analysis encompassing the unique role, responsibilities and competencies of the job, within the framework of the department and the College as a whole;
2) leadership development programming that includes dealing with ambiguity;
3) distributed leadership initiatives implemented within and across departments;
4) the assistant chair role formalized as a mechanism for preparation, training and leadership development;
5) a formal orientation for new department chairs;
6) further and more indepth research to determine optimal training methods;
7) a more systematic mentorship system structured around group learning; and,
8) a comprehensive development framework that encompasses all recommendations.
# Table of Contents

Executive Summary ................................................................. 1

**Chapter 1 - Introduction** ................................................. 6
  Background ........................................................................ 6
  The Canadian Post-Secondary Context ................................ 7
  Langara College Context .................................................. 10
  Project Objectives .............................................................. 15

**Chapter 2 – Literature Review** ...................................... 18
  Leadership Theory ............................................................ 19
    Leadership Context ......................................................... 19
    Shared Governance ........................................................ 20
    Distributed Leadership .................................................. 22
  Leadership Development .................................................... 23
    The Department Chair .................................................... 26
      Roles and Responsibilities Perspective .......................... 26
      Competencies Perspectives .......................................... 27
      Context ................................................................. 29
    Preparation, Training and Leadership Development .......... 33
      Current Preparation, Training and Development ............ 34
      Framework for Preparation, Training and Development .... 36
      Summary ............................................................... 38

**Chapter 3 – Methodology** ............................................... 39
  Research Methods ............................................................ 40
  Participants ....................................................................... 41
  Data Analysis ..................................................................... 42
  Ethical Considerations ..................................................... 44
  Scope and Limitations ....................................................... 45

**Chapter 4 – Results and Discussion** ............................... 47
  Role and Responsibilities, and Competencies ..................... 48
    Role and Responsibilities .............................................. 48
    Competencies ............................................................. 51
  Context .............................................................................. 55
    Shared Governance ....................................................... 56
  Transition into Leadership ................................................ 60
    Background .................................................................... 61
    Preparation ..................................................................... 64
    Training and Leadership Development ............................. 70

**Chapter 5 – Conclusion** .................................................. 79
  Research Results .............................................................. 80
  Recommendations ............................................................. 82
  Study Limitations .............................................................. 84
  Further Research .............................................................. 86
  Final thoughts .................................................................... 87

Appendix I: Interview Guide .................................................. 88
Appendix II: Information Letter / Consent Form .................... 93
Appendix III A: UNBC Research Ethics Board Approval ........ 96
Appendix III B: Langara College Research Ethics Board Approval ........................................... 97
Appendix IV: Department Chair Job Description ........................................................................ 99
Bibliography .................................................................................................................................. 102

Table of Tables

Table 1 Academic Unit Organizational Structure ................................................................. 11
Table 2 Report Recommendations from Vice President, People Services ...................... 15
Table 3 Interviewees - Langara College Department Chairs .............................................. 42
Table 4 Department Chair Key Responsibilities ................................................................. 48
Table 5 Department Chair Key Competencies ................................................................. 51
Table 6 Department Chair Comments Related to Shared Governance ......................... 56
Table 7 Chairs’ Backgrounds .............................................................................................. 62
Table 8 Chairs’ Preparation ................................................................................................. 65
Table 9 Chairs’ Training and Leadership Development .................................................... 71
Chapter 1 - Introduction

**Background**

Canadian post-secondary education is transforming in the twenty-first century. Demographic shifts, decreased funding and resources, increased accountability, technological advances, and globalization have intensified the competitive landscape for post-secondary institutions in Canada (Finlayson 2014; Steele 2013). Responding to this increased competitiveness and changes in government policy, colleges, universities and technical institutes—both public and private—now offer a myriad of programs and credentials: lines of distinction are becoming blurred between institutions and their offerings. For institutions to remain viable, academic leaders are under pressure to adapt to this evolving environment (cf. Cook 2012, Culbert and Shaw 2014; Gonzalez 2010; Luna 2012; McNair 2010; Morris 2012; O’Connor 2014). Effective academic leadership, in these circumstances, is in high demand.

Operating at the centre of the institution and serving all of its key constituents: students, faculty, senior administration, alumni, administrative and student support staff, community and professional associations, the academic department chair is one of the most crucial and complex academic leadership roles in this time of change (Gmelch and Miskin 2010). Despite its significance, the department chair role is often under supported by the institution, and individuals who assume this
role are often unprepared for its demands. Within institutions, there is a lack of role clarity, administrative and organizational support, adequate preparation, and training and leadership development (Berdrow 2010; Boyko 2009; Carroll and Wolverton 2005; Gonzalez 2010). Incumbents often take on this role with a rudimentary understanding of what it actually entails and with little or no administrative and/or leadership experience. The challenge for academic institutions is to attract and retain high potential individuals and to provide appropriate institutional support and structure to promote developing their leadership capabilities. The challenge for the individuals who take on these roles is to adapt to administrative and leadership responsibilities and, in most cases, to hold dual roles as faculty and faculty leader.

**The Canadian Post-Secondary Context**

Canadian post-secondary education has evolved into a highly competitive arena in the new millennium. Changes in demographics, funding and resources, accountability, technology, and global connectivity have collectively impacted the post-secondary landscape (Finlayson 2014; Steele 2013). Demographic shifts impact both student enrolment and institutional leadership succession planning. Statistics Canada forecasts a decrease in university enrolment in every province between 2013 and 2028 due to the declining youth population. The projected result: 65,000 fewer students nationwide (Statistics Canada 2007 cited in Steele 2013). Institutions are addressing this trend by expanding their non-traditional
student base and competing more aggressively for traditional students.

Institutional leadership is also in jeopardy. Canada’s population is aging and the retirement age is rising, creating fewer openings for new leaders (McClearn 2012; Perreault et al. 2013). An increasing reliance on part-time and contingent faculty, and a reprioritization of work-life balance (Luna 2012) means fewer new candidates are eligible for and interested in leadership positions. Finlayson (2014) cites Henry et al. (2014) in identifying five fundamental forces evident in the Canadian post-secondary context:

1) provincial government funding to post secondary institutions across Canada has been frozen and, in provinces like British Columbia, it has even been reduced, forcing universities and colleges to rely upon other revenue streams;

2) students, parents, and government policy-makers are increasingly concerned with educational return on investment and favour programs providing optimal employment outcomes, causing institutions to revamp program offerings;

3) there is an increasing demand for student outcome transparency making institutions more accountable for graduate success;

4) online delivery is expanding options and decreasing unit costs but also heightening global competition for students with increased accessibility and the advent of offerings such as massive open online courses (MOOCs);

and,
5) universities and colleges are enhancing enrolment numbers and revenues by growing their international student base and are expanding beyond borders with overseas campuses and partnerships.

Adding to the competitive landscape is the increasingly blurred distinction between universities and colleges in Canada (Canadian Council on Learning 2010). Twenty years ago, there were two separate institutional sectors constituting a ‘binary’ system that distinguished between first, public universities offering academic and professional programs at the degree and post-degree level, and second, public colleges offering vocational, technical and university-transfer programs at the diploma and certificate level. The British Columbian (BC) government’s current mandate is to expand access to degree programs (Dennison 2007 cited in Canadian Council on Learning 2010). Since 2003, colleges in British Columbia have been approved, through provincial quality assurance boards, to grant four-year degrees; they can now also offer post-graduate programs. Five of British Columbia’s colleges were granted university status between 2005 and 2008. Technical institutions, and private career colleges and institutes compound the complexity of the Canadian post-secondary context (Finlayson 2014). There are now more types of institutions with overlapping and varied program offerings and credentials. While colleges, universities and technical institutes once differentiated based on their suite of programs and credentials, they now compete with similar offerings. Thus, a student wanting to complete a business degree in British Columbia can do so at a university, college
or technical institute. While students must navigate the myriad of institutional and program choices, institutions must distinguish themselves by adapting to and meeting the current and future demands of the evolving competitive landscape.

For colleges in British Columbia, this means rising to the challenge and competing in more arenas by offering a broader range of credentials, not just by program area but by credential type. It means ensuring that programming provides desirable returns on educational investment in terms of employment opportunities and income, and that modes of delivery are current, flexible and appealing to target groups, including international students. Finally, this requires redefining and rebranding the term ‘college’ both internally and externally: college employees must understand, embrace and drive this transition, while students, prospective employers, communities and other external stakeholders must understand and embrace this new definition of college.

**Langara College Context**

Langara College was founded in 1970 as a campus of Vancouver City College. In 1994, it was established as an independent public college under the Provincial College and Institute Act. Since then, the College has grown to an annual enrolment of 22,606 in the 2015-16 academic year (Langara College Institutional Research 2016). A variety of credentials are offered in university transfer, baccalaureate, career, vocational, post-degree, and continuing studies programs. There are approximately 1,100 employees: 550 faculty, 250 support staff, and 100
administrative and executive staff (Palmer 2015). Employees in each of these
groups belong to either the Langara Faculty Association (LFA), which is
unionized; the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 15; or the
Langara Administrators’ Association, which is non-union. There are thirty-nine
academic departments. The organizational structure of the academic units of the
college is illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Academic Unit Organizational Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Social Sciences &amp; Management</th>
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<tr>
<td>Division</td>
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<td>Creative Arts</td>
<td>Humanities</td>
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<td>Department</td>
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<td>Art History &amp; Religious Studies</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Aboriginal Studies</td>
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<td>Design Formation</td>
<td>Modern Languages</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Studies</td>
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<td>Film Arts</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Computing</td>
<td>Applied Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>Inter-disciplinary Studies</td>
<td>Science &amp; Information Systems</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>Journalism</td>
<td></td>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td>Co-op Education</td>
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<td>Professional Photography</td>
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<td>Kinesiology</td>
<td>Internship</td>
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<td>Publishing</td>
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<td>Nursing</td>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
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<td>Theatre Arts</td>
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<td>Social Service Worker</td>
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Thirty-seven of the departments have chairs as department leaders and two have coordinators as department leaders. Smaller departments are led by coordinators, who have less administrative duty time assigned and lower remuneration. Larger
departments have assistant chairs and coordinators in addition to department chairs, providing distribution of duties. As per the Langara College collective agreement with the faculty association (LFA 2015), the appointment of department chairs is limited to two consecutive three-year terms. Department chairs, assistant chairs and coordinators maintain their faculty association membership while in these leadership roles.

The department chair role attracts individuals with varied backgrounds and experience in leadership, administration and institutional knowledge. In general, administrative duties, management and leadership responsibilities for the department chair are similar across departments while specific roles and responsibilities vary depending upon the size of the department and program area.

Over the past fifteen years, Langara has proactively responded to the changing post-secondary landscape by expanding the scope of its credential and program offerings and working to meet the needs and demands of target student populations, including international students. In 2001, Langara College offered two-year diplomas and associate degrees, and one-year certificates. By 2016, Langara has expanded its credential offerings to include four baccalaureate degrees and nine post-degree diplomas and certificates (Langara College 2016). Additional degree and post-degree programs are in discussion and development stages, with some being planned in partnership with other institutions. Of
particular significance to this research project, the actual work of creating and managing these new programs falls under the purview of department chairs and, while the job itself has not changed significantly, the workload and pressure have certainly increased.

Langara’s senior leadership team (the president and vice presidents) has been aware of growing department chair issues and identified the need to develop and sustain strong faculty leadership as part of the institution’s overall academic plan (Palmer 2015). Human resources management at Langara recently undertook a study on academic leadership succession planning. The goal of the study was to determine what motivated faculty members to move into leadership roles and what factors deterred them from doing so. The research drew seven conclusions:

1) compensation and incentives to move into leadership roles was lacking;
2) administrative duty release time was not sufficient to carry out administrative and academic duties and the workload was excessive for these roles;
3) a mentorship program would enhance orientation and training for new leaders;
4) additional support from faculty colleagues, senior leadership, and administrative/clerical staff was needed;
5) most faculty believed that leadership skills can be learned;
6) improving communication at all levels within the organization would enhance engagement; and,

7) faculty were interested and engaged in development activities and opportunities (Palmer 2015).

From these conclusions, six recommendations emerged (see Table 2 below). The recommendations were provided by the vice president, people services, to the other members of the College’s senior leadership team (Palmer 2015). Endorsement at this, the highest level of decision-making at the College, bodes well for potential outcomes, yet constraints still exist in terms of resources and externally mandated policies such the collective agreement between the College and the faculty association.
Table 2 Report Recommendations from Vice President, People Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Explore possibility of increasing administrative stipends for department leaders</td>
<td>Improve compensation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review formula for assigning administrative duty time</td>
<td>Improve working conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and implement mentorship program for all faculties</td>
<td>Develop leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore feasibility of increasing support from senior management, peers and administrative/clerical staff to departments and department leaders</td>
<td>Improve working conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand internal development opportunities and explore external development opportunities</td>
<td>Develop leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand leaders’ toolkit website</td>
<td>Assist and develop leaders</td>
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</table>

Collectively, a positive outcome from each of these recommendations might increase faculty motivation to assume leadership roles and also improve leadership success and job satisfaction. Several of the recommendations aim to improve the actual working conditions of the department chair position by increasing compensation and allocated administrative duty time, and by decreasing workload. Other recommendations aim to better prepare and develop individuals to fulfill duties effectively and to lead as department chairs.

**Project Objectives**

There is an undercurrent of frustration among department chairs at Langara College. Increasing competitiveness in the post-secondary environment has fueled growing pressure, which, in turn, exacerbates this frustration. While
department chairs at institutions across Canada face many of the same issues, each institution has unique organizational conditions and characteristics that impact the degree of support and development for their leadership. One department chair at Langara College echoes the assertions of researchers (cf. Aziz et al. 2005; Berdrow 2010; Boyko 2009; Carroll and Wolverton 2005; Gmelch and Miskin 2010; Hecht 2004) that:

“It’s such a pivotal role in the College, but it’s like a volunteer job that nobody wants. We step up out of a sense of obligation or duty, but don’t get the support we need to do the job well. There’s pressure every day and it comes from all directions: from students, parents, from faculty, from administrative and support departments, from division chairs and deans. It’s virtually impossible to do the job well in the time allotted.”

This project focuses on developing insights into department chair preparation, training, and leadership development. The rationale for this specific focus is that actions to improve working conditions are: 1) highly dependant upon external factors and financial resources which could be beyond the College’s control, so, while pursuing these actions is essential, positive outcomes are not guaranteed or could take years to bring to fruition; and, 2) already reasonably defined in that, for example, increasing administrative stipends can either be done or not and, while amounts would need to be assessed, no further analysis is required. Conversely, preparation, training and leadership development have many options to explore.

In summary, the current post-secondary climate in Canada is facing increased competitiveness, which is driving demand for more effective leadership and
exerting greater pressure on post-secondary leaders. While the department chair is a critical and complex leadership role operating at the heart of the institution, it is not well supported by the institution, and individuals who assume the role are not adequately prepared for the challenges they will face. Consequently, an undercurrent of frustration and mounting pressure signal the need for greater understanding and action at Langara College: What is department chair leadership at this College? How do faculty members transition into this role? From a training and development perspective, what can be done to support individuals in this critical role?

The literature review that follows, explores leadership theory and leadership development as they relate to the post-secondary context and, specifically, to the department chair role at Langara College.
Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Much of the literature on post-secondary leadership and leadership development, and the department chair role, generalizes the context simply as post-secondary. In some circumstances, this is appropriate as concepts and descriptions apply to colleges, universities and technical institutes alike. Some researchers, however, focus their studies specifically on the university or college setting as there are notable distinctions in some areas. Throughout this review, the terms used: college, university, and post-secondary, reflect the terms used by each of the sources. Where post-secondary perspective is applicable, this is the term of reference. Where there is a distinction, particularly between university and college, it is noted and explained.

This review first considers trends in leadership theory and leadership development theory that are significant to the post-secondary setting. The well-documented role of the department chair is then examined through literature on responsibilities and competencies as well as context. Finally, literature on the transition into department chair preparation, training and leadership development, provides insights into methods and strategies that may be applicable to Langara College.
Leadership Theory

Leadership theory is diversifying in the new millennium: while established theories such as neo-charismatic types continue to be prevalent, researchers are examining new-genre theories and integrated frameworks to further understand leadership as it evolves in the twenty-first century. In compilations and systematic reviews of the leadership literature by Avolio et al. (2009), Dinh et al. (2013), and Meuser et al. (2016), three trends emerged that are significant to the study of post-secondary institutions: leadership context, shared governance, and distributed leadership.

Leadership Context

The importance of leadership context is a prominent theme emerging in leadership literature. Context is defined as “the situation within which something exists or happens and that can help explain it” (Cambridge 2016). Dinh et al. (2013) note that researchers are now beginning to recognize the significance of the leader’s social context and his or her impact on the team as a whole. Day and Antonakis (2012) add that leadership does not occur in a vacuum and that context and leadership are intertwined. Morris (2009) states that the leadership skills required to lead in post-secondary education are no different than those required in a business setting. While lessons can be learned from business and vice versa, Morris (2009) oversimplifies leadership and does not take into account the importance of context for leadership effectiveness. As discussed above, the post-
secondary setting involves a unique set of contextual factors, and the department
department chair’s setting, even more so. The tradition of shared governance is one aspect of
the post-secondary context that distinguishes it from traditional business settings,
and, according to Barden (2009), prevents us from applying corporate models to
universities and colleges. According to Gmelch and Miskin (2010), the department
chair is the most crucial position in an institution and it is the “most unique
management role in America.” Not only is the context of the department chair
position unique, but the role also varies from setting to setting, further
complicating our ability to understand the role and its leadership and development
needs.

**Shared Governance**

In shared governance, everyone has a role; yet decisions are not simply the result
of group votes, but rather stakeholders—faculty, staff, and administrators—
participating in clearly defined processes (Olson 2009). Shared governance
involves two complementary processes: 1) different groups of individuals
participating in key decision-making processes, often through elected
representation, and, 2) certain groups holding primary responsibility for specific
decision-making areas (Olson 2009).

As a college within BC, shared governance is mandated at Langara through the
College and Institute Act (Langara College 2016), originally passed by the
Provincial Government in 1977 (British Columbia Council on Admissions and
Transfer 2016). The Act legislates composition of the Board of Governors and Education Council\(^1\) to ensure representation of stakeholders, including faculty, support staff, and students (College and Institute Act 1996). Each of these stakeholder groups is responsible for electing their representatives. The Act has established a foundation of shared governance that is embedded in the overall organizational structure and culture at Langara College. In addition to the Board of Governors and Education Council, executive search committees are comprised of elected members from administration, faculty, staff and student groups (Langara College 2016). Informal committees and groups such as the United Way campaign committee, are formed without mandated, elected representation, yet still encompass representation from across the constituent groups. How does this shared governance structure and culture manifest in academic department leadership, and how does this shape the department chair role?

Burke (2010) explains that while shared governance is participatory, it does not ensure collective action or formal collaboration. Rather, it devises a division of labour that aims to balance power within the organization. Other systems and processes within the organization may be contradictory, leading to power struggles instead of balance. Decision-making can become fragmented as a result, impacting collegial relationships. Thus, a system of shared governance

\(^1\) Education Council is responsible for policies regarding student academic issues, program and curriculum content (Langara College 2016).
does not necessarily lead to distributed leadership in all areas and at all levels of an organization.

**Distributed Leadership**

Distributed leadership is one of the most discussed and analyzed of the new genre theories (Avolio et al 2009; Dinh et al. 2013; Meuser et al. 2016). Avolio et al. (2009) and Kocolowski (2010) note that distributed leadership, shared leadership and collective leadership are used interchangeably in literature and therefore can be considered as equivalent. Uhl-Bien (2006 cited in Bolden 2011) describes distributed leadership as a “collective social process” that evolves through the cooperation of individuals within a group. Similarly, shared leadership is defined as a “dynamic, collaborative process” among individuals whose objective is to achieve group or organizational goals or both; the process may involve peer or lateral influence, as well as upward or downward hierarchical influence (Kocolowski 2010). Though distributed leadership has existed in practice for centuries, researchers have only recently begun to study this model. Kocolowski (2010) and Pearce (2004 cited in Avolio 2009) indicate that the interest in this approach and research into its applications stem from the changing business environment: globalization and growing complexity and competition make it increasingly more difficult for any one individual to possess the required competencies to lead an organization effectively. While researchers consider this as a prospective model for business, certain industries, such as education, can
adapt more readily owing to existing organizational structures and systems (Kocolowski 2010). The theory of distributed leadership naturally correlates with concept of shared governance in the management and organization of post-secondary institutions (Burke 2010).

**Leadership Development**

While there is a multitude of established and emerging theories on leadership, there is a significantly smaller, but growing, amount of literature on leadership development. Just as the Canadian post-secondary landscape is rapidly evolving, business in Canada and abroad is also in a state of unprecedented, accelerated change due to factors such as demographic shifts, technological advances, and globalization (Stockton et al. 2016). In a survey of Canadian business leaders, ninety percent rated leadership development as high priority, yet only forty percent believed their organizations were capable of effectively developing leaders (Stockton et al. 2016). Stockton et al. (2016) attribute the lack of leadership development success to attempts at transitory, quick-fix approaches that do not address leaders’ needs in the context of their leadership; they recommend developing a custom model of leadership development which acknowledges that, just as each organization is unique, so are its leaders and leadership development needs. Leadership development requires time to assess leadership needs in the context of the organization, to develop appropriate development strategies and, most importantly, to allow actual leadership development to take place.
Environments, both business and post-secondary, have become more complex and, therefore, the skills required to lead in these environments have also become more complex; yet, leadership development methods have not kept pace (Petrie 2011). Petrie (2011) asserts that, while current development strategies—job experience, training, coaching and mentoring—are still important, these methods do not adequately address key competencies for leaders. He identifies four dimensions needed to inform future leadership development:

1) emphasize “vertical” development which refers to “developmental stages”, versus “horizontal” development which focuses simply on competencies; the difference being that vertical development is “earned” while horizontal development can be “transmitted”;

2) assign greater ownership of development to the individual because development is faster and more thorough when individuals feel responsible for their development, as opposed feeling it is the institution or human resource’s responsibility;

3) place more emphasis on shared versus individual leadership because rather than being one person’s role, effective leadership is a shared process spread throughout individuals in a group; in this way, leadership can be “democratized”; and,
4) develop innovative strategies for leadership development because current methods can neither sufficiently address new and vital leadership competencies nor can they support the above three transitions.

The four dimensions are interrelated as vertical development depends upon individual ownership of development in order to earn it and progress through stages. The third dimension’s emphasis on shared leadership reinforces the notion that distribution of leadership results in more effective leadership as it moves beyond one individual’s capacity and takes into account the capacity of all individuals within the group, building both collective strength and a broader base of individuals’ strengths (Spillane et al. 2001 cited in Burke 2010). Petrie’s (2011) dimensions provide an important foundation for understanding the development of leadership skills and capabilities for department chairs. The necessity of allowing due time to develop and the value of self-ownership of development are evident but not well supported in the department chair context.

Wolverton et al. (2005) propose a three-dimension process that involves conceptual understanding, skill development, and reflective practice. Contextual understanding involves leaders knowing their role and responsibilities within the context of their departments and the institution as a whole; skill development refers to building of requisite competencies to effectively fulfill the role and responsibilities; and reflective practice means learning from experiences and developing as a leader through that learning process (Wolverton et al. 2005).
This process supports Petrie’s (2011) first two dimensions: reflective practice is an ongoing process that focuses on development and requires individuals to take responsibility for their development through self-awareness, and growth based on that self-awareness. This process provides a framework upon which department chair leadership development can be considered.

**The Department Chair**

The complexity and importance of the department chair role is well documented in the literature. Aziz et al. (2005) and Berdrow (2010) analyze the department chair from the perspective of both the role and competencies, while McNair (2010) analyzes the position from a competency-based perspective. What is significant about the approach taken to understand leadership in the post-secondary context is in the definition and understanding of the role of department chair. Is it defined as a set of roles and responsibilities that the department chair must fulfill or as a set of competencies that the department chair must possess? Both approaches provide value in understanding the role and relating it to leadership and development concepts.

**Roles and Responsibilities Perspective**

Knowing the roles and responsibilities of a position is crucial to being able to effectively fulfill that position, yet researchers argue that most department chairs assume the role without a clear understanding of what the job actually entails (cf.
Boyko’s (2009, p. 212) research reveals that most department chairs indicate that they have a job description but it is usually “inaccurate, over-simplified and incomplete.” Without a formal, thorough and accurate description, there is no point of reference or guide. To further complicate the department chair’s predicament, researchers (cf. Aziz et al. 2005; Berdrow 2010; Carroll and Wolverton 2005; Gmelch and Miskin 2010) consistently report that the role is also generally not well understood by senior administration and other faculty members. Without clarity amongst stakeholder expectations and a definitive job description, how can new department chairs know what they must do and how to be successful in their role? In addition to ambiguity, the department chair role faces complexity and, owing to demographic, social and economic, shifts, and technological advances, it also faces uncertainty and change (Aziz et al. 2007; Berdrow 2010; Boyko 2009; Gonzalez 2010; Wolverton et al. 2005).

**Competencies Perspectives**

To address the question of what competencies are needed specifically for effective department chair leadership, the literature is varied, just as the roles vary depending upon context (American Association of Community Colleges 2013; Barden 2009; Gonzalez 2010; Luna 2012; Morris 2012; Myatt 2012; Wolverton et.al. 2005). As with the role and responsibilities, researchers have identified generic, required skills and knowledge that are applicable to the unique
conditions, issues and challenges experienced by post-secondary institutions (Berdrow 2010).

The American Association of Community Colleges’ (AACC 2013) revised competency framework for community college leaders, organizes essential competencies into four categories:

1) organizational strategy;
2) institutional finance, research, fundraising, and resource management;
3) communication; and,
4) collaboration.

This framework is designed with progressions delineated under each category, starting with emerging leaders and progressing to experienced CEOs. Each step in each progression details competencies specific to that level of leadership. Department chairs would fall under the emerging leader step and, though the framework’s structure is progressive, the emerging leader category may be an appropriate assessment tool regardless of progression beyond this step. Morrin’s (2013) research at an Ontario college of applied arts and technology found that the AACC’s college leader competencies were applicable to the institution and could be instrumental in the development of leadership succession planning at the college. In comparison, Berdrow’s (2010) requisite competencies include: personal management, communicating, managing people and tasks, leading peers, boundary spanning, and mobilizing innovation and change. While there is
overlap, these two frameworks provide different approaches that would impact leadership development programming.

According to Aziz et al. (2005), competencies encompass multiple responsibilities or duties, meaning that fewer competencies are needed to meet a number of job responsibilities. They explain that focusing on the competencies needed to complete specific tasks, which vary amongst department, allows for generalization in training. Understanding requisite competencies builds clear objectives for leadership development but, as Petrie (2011) points out, focusing on competencies may limit vertical development. Analyzing the department chair from both the responsibilities and competencies perspectives allows us to understand what the role entails and what is needed to fulfill the position; it also helps to clarify context.

**Context**

Berdrow (2010, p. 499) notes that, although progress has been made in understanding the role and expectations of the academic department chair, “few studies have considered them from the perspective of the individual taking on that role within the context of the organization as a system”. Boyko’s (2009) research on Canadian university department chairs reveals that key responsibilities do not differ across institutions and or disciplines, but the load changes. Boyko (2009) determined that the top five university department chair responsibilities, from the chairs’ perspectives, are:
1) participating in department committee meetings;
2) recruiting faculty and other staff;
3) implementing departmental plans;
4) championing the unit within the university; and,
5) maintaining morale.

In contrast, Wash and Bloomdahl (2015) found that department chair roles and responsibilities vary significantly from institution to institution and from department to department within one institution. They found that university department chairs are often expected to maintain research and publishing activity. College faculty and department leaders are typically not required to engage in research and publishing; and department leaders of career or job training programs in colleges may have different strategic goals, priorities and tasks than those leading departments in areas such as social sciences and humanities. While Boyko’s findings are not consistent with the notion of contextual significance, Wash and Bloomdahl’s (2015) conclusion, supporting the importance of context, more accurately reflects the complexities of Canada’s highly differentiated post-secondary system.

Context contributes to defining and distinguishing the department chair’s role, but there are also consistent elements of the department chair position identified throughout the literature:
1) it is an intermediary position between senior administration and faculty, and has dual roles as administrator and academic leader;

2) it serves the interests of multiple constituents: students, faculty, external stakeholders, administration;

3) it is a temporary role; and,

4) it is an egalitarian role in that one is leading and managing one’s peers (Aziz et al. 2005; Berdrow 2010; Boyko 2009; Branson et al. 2015; Gonzalez 2010; Wolverton et al. 2005).

In particular, the temporary nature of the role is based on the maximum term that department chairs can serve, which is typically two terms of three years, so a maximum of six years (Gmelch 2004). This is consistent with Langara College’s collective agreement with the faculty association (LFA 2016). Due to the temporary nature of the role, sixty-five percent of department chairs return to their faculty position after their term has ended, while only thirty-five percent advance to higher level administrative roles either within the institution or outside (Gmelch 2004). Stockton et al. (2016) concur with Gmelch (2004) that leadership development is a long a complicated process. Not only is there insufficient time to develop as a leader in this position, but there are also limited options for advancement beyond the department chair term, creating a disincentive for individuals to take ownership of their leadership development.
The egalitarian nature of the role can be seen as both a detriment and an advantage. As a detriment, leading one’s peers may be seen as a constraint, limiting one’s leadership authority. As an advantage, in the context of shared governance discussed above, leading one’s peers is an opportunity to instill the principles of distributed leadership. Branson (2015) refers to the department chair as a relational leader, focusing on collegiality, collaboration and teamwork, as is found in a distributed leadership model. When the organizational structure and culture support shared governance, it provides the ideal foundation to establish distributed leadership. Understanding the role and responsibilities of department chairs allows us to establish context and build a framework to better understand the department chair position. Although knowing the role, responsibilities and context, is a crucial component to defining the position, Dessler et al. (2015) argue that competency-based job analysis is a more effective means of defining a position for three key reasons:

1) traditional job descriptions (with their lists of specific duties) may actually backfire if a high-performance work system is the goal;

2) describing the job in terms of the skills, knowledge, and competencies the [employee] needs is more strategic; and,

3) measureable skills, knowledge, and competencies support the employer’s performance management system (2015, pp. 57-8).
So, while traditional job descriptions with listed roles and responsibilities provide a foundation for understanding the department chair role and clarifying the expectations, it is the requisite skills, knowledge and competencies that provide the basis for optimization of the role. Ultimately, such optimization serves not only the organization but also the individual as it defines the tools required to perform successfully in the role.

**Preparation, Training and Leadership Development**

Petrie’s (2011) analysis indicates that leadership development is at an impasse. While job experience, training, coaching and mentorship are useful tools, new, innovative strategies are needed to further advance leadership development and to provide methods to realize new directions such as distributed leadership. How can department chairs best be supported through existing methods? Can current preparation\(^2\), training\(^3\) and leadership development\(^4\) methods provide reasonable, though transitory, support? According to Hearn (2006 cited in Gonzalez 2010), since teaching involves leadership and leadership involves teaching, logically, faculty members should be able to transition into roles as academic administrators. Yet, leadership in terms of the department chair role is very

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\(^2\) Preparation is defined as the process of making ready or able to do or deal with something (Oxford 2016).

\(^3\) Training is defined as “the process of teaching a particular skill or behaviour through sustained practice or instruction (Oxford 2016).

\(^4\) Development is defined as “the process…of growth or advancement” (Oxford 2016).
different from leadership as faculty. According to Finlan (1999), chairs are often thrown into roles that require skills very different from those they utilized as faculty members.

**Current Preparation, Training and Development**

Literature that addresses the process of transitioning from a functional, teaching position to a managerial/leadership position focuses on the shortage of potential leaders, and unpreparedness of incoming and new department chairs (cf. Barden 2009; Bornheimer 2010; Cook 2012; Cooper and Pagotto 2003; Gmelch and Miskin 2010). In the Canadian university context, Boyko (2009) states that department chairs lack preparation and training.

Hecht (2004) and Morris (2012) found that for most department chairs, the learning process takes place on the job, with no formal training or leadership development. This training tends to be inconsistent since current and former chairs generally do not have time to train their colleagues; nor do they have formal responsibility to do so. Overwhelmingly, the literature on academic department chairs indicates a deficiency in preparation, training and leadership development.

Research on how to best support new and incoming department chairs, emphasizes the need for ongoing leadership development through strategies such as coaching and mentoring; establishment of a culture that encourages workplace learning; and, training on policies and procedures (cf. Aziz et al. 2005; Barden
2009; Bornheimer 2010; Hernez-Broome and Hughes 2004; Wolverton et al. 2005). Wolverton et al. (2005) asserts that the distinction must be made clear between task-specific workshops and leadership development. Task-specific workshops are one-time training sessions for administrative duties while leadership development should be ongoing. Training and development can be conducted through external sources, through internally developed programs, and through a combination of both. While external leadership institutes, such as the Chair Academy, can broaden leadership perspective, provide opportunities to learn from other organizations’ best practices and remove oneself from institutional biases, Gmelch (2004) identifies the drawbacks of external leadership development programs as being deficient in contextual foundation and continuous, sustained learning. Preparation, training and leadership development initiatives should take into account department chairs’ individual backgrounds and contexts (Reille and Kezar 2010).

As post-secondary institutions have begun to establish leadership development programs for their department chairs, the literature profiles such programs, providing applicable insights and lessons learned. In a study of college in-house leadership programs, Reille and Kezar (2010) found benefits over institute or external programs as being: accessibility, flexibility, effectiveness, and direct application and customization to the context of the college. Considerations when developing an in-house program are to be cognizant of local biases, to customize the development based on a thorough needs assessment, to integrate the
assessment with a standardized leadership competency framework, such as AACC, to utilize best practices in mentoring, job shadowing and team projects, and to formally evaluate the program’s effectiveness (Reille and Kezar 2010).

Aziz et al. (2005) reiterate the length of term issue: while development should be long term and ongoing, delivery must be within a reasonable time span for the chair to benefit before his or her term has ended. Berdrow (2009) discusses the process of socialization as a theoretical framework for understanding the stages that one goes through in transitioning from one position to another within an organization. An outcome of Berdrow’s (2009) analysis and subsequent research led to recommendation of a one-year shadow period for an incoming chair to learn and for a current chair to prepare for his or her next role.

**Framework for Preparation, Training and Development**

Gmelch (2004) reflects upon an institution that designed its program to develop department chairs as leaders rather than managers. He summarizes lessons learned as:

1) leadership development should be conducted with cohort groups of chairs because leadership development must occur within context, not in a vacuum;
2) mentors, coaches and support networks to help provide guidance and reflection are essential to successful leadership development because leadership is an inner journey and, as such, it is often lonely;

3) the leadership development process must involve continuous learning opportunities because distributed learning is retained longer than learning in one-time programs (should be systematic and progressive and include constructive feedback);

4) a supportive culture that values the leadership development process is crucial—this means that senior administration provide time and encouragement; and,

5) there must be a single, well-defined model of leadership development.

Wolverton et al.’s (2005) three-dimension-model introduced earlier: 1) contextual understanding; 2) skill development; 3) reflective practice, can provide a single framework for leadership development that incorporates Gmelch’s (2004) lessons learned and Petrie’s (2011) dimensions for future leadership development.

Though Petrie (2011) asserts that current leadership development methods cannot facilitate new direction in leadership and that innovative strategies must be developed to advance leadership development, current techniques can be coordinated into a process that provides meaningful preparation, training and leadership development for department chairs.
Summary

Trends in leadership theory demonstrate the importance of context in understanding the department chair role. Shared governance is a significant contextual factor in post-secondary—and in particular, Langara College’s—organizational structure and culture. Distributed leadership provides an ideal approach to leading in a shared governance setting.

Petrie’s (2011) four trends to drive leadership development and Gmelch’s (2004) recommendations based on lessons learned, can be incorporated into Wolverton et al.’s (2005) model for leadership development: conceptual understanding, skill building, reflective learning. Conceptual understanding is built from analysis of the department chair’s role, responsibilities, competencies and context—keeping in mind that each chair’s role is unique. Skill building and reflective learning are built from the foundation of conceptual understanding, and incorporate the following: a distinction between managerial task learning and leadership development; ongoing development focusing on the process; individuals taking ownership of development; and distributed leadership and shared development.
Chapter 3 – Methodology

The literature review revealed that context is a key factor in understanding the department chair role, its requisite skills, knowledge and competencies, and how leadership preparation, training and development gaps can most effectively be filled. Consequently, this project explores the department chair as a leadership role at Langara College using a qualitative case study research methodology (Yin 2014) in order to gain insights and understanding into the role of department chair and an individual’s transition into this role at Langara College. The aim of this research is specifically to understand needs and processes from the perspective and experience of department chairs. In such a context, qualitative methods allow for comprehensive data collection and analysis, perhaps even beyond anticipated scope. The rationale for adopting this methodology is to provide analysis in context, “to investigate a contemporary phenomenon…within its real-world context” (Yin 2014 p.16; Hartley 2004 p.344).

Case study methodology reveals individuals’ experiences, circumstances and perspectives of importance to them and provides the researcher with an opportunity to gain important insights into their experiences as department chairs within the context of the organizational culture and structure within Langara College. In opting for a single case (Langara College) with embedded units\(^5\)

\(^5\) A ‘single case with embedded units’ involves sub-units situated within a larger case, that can be analyzed individually (Baxter and Jack 2008).
(multiple interview subjects), the researcher is provided with the opportunity to conduct within-case analysis, between-case analysis and cross-case analysis. That is, subunits can be analyzed individually, in comparison with or in contrast to another subunit, or across all subunits (Baxter and Jack 2008). It is anticipated, then, that the information gathered will “not [be] limited to preconceived questions and categories and…[could] provide rich and detailed data…” (Boeije 2010 p. 32). Furthermore, it is “expected that findings [will] have relevance for the field and [could] easily be transformed into interventions…[and] adoption of new policy measures (Boeije 2010 p. 33). This is conducive to answering the final research question, which seeks recommendations for change.

While the qualitative case study methodology provides opportunities to collect rich data, the risk of this design is that the research focuses only at the subunit level, neglecting to analyze the single case level (Yin 2014 p. 55). Maintaining focus on the research questions and ensuring that each is answered at the case level will minimize this risk.

**Research Methods**

The primary research method utilized is semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interview design provides consistency and continuity as each interviewee is asked the same questions but, owing to the open-ended format of the questions, there is also flexibility to adapt and allow participants to expand and provide fuller, more extensive data (Newton 2010). An interview guide (see
Appendix I) was prepared that framed questions and grouped them thematically. Stratified purposeful sampling (Patton 1990) was used to identify interview subjects within Langara College. Patton (1990 p. 174) explains that stratified sampling strives to expose variations within the case instead of identifying core commonalities, though such commonalities may be uncovered through analysis. This sampling strategy produces a representative sample of individuals with specific, varied characteristics within the case. While stratified purposeful sampling ensures a range of differing individual perspectives, it is less varied than using a maximum variation sample where the goal is to uncover more broadly central themes. Finally, relevant documentation, including a position description and the Langara College collective agreement with the faculty association, was gathered to aid in triangulating the data collected in the interviews, and personal communication with a human resources consultant was used to verify data.

**Participants**

Six department chairs and one academic dean were interviewed. To preserve anonymity, a profile of each chair is provided in the table below with pseudonyms (Dept. Chair IDs).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dept. Chair ID</th>
<th>Dept. Size</th>
<th>Leadership Roles in the Dept.</th>
<th>Duration as Dept. Chair</th>
<th>Previous Internal Leadership Experience</th>
<th>External Leadership Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DC1</td>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>Chair, Assistant Chair, Coordinators</td>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>Administrator-other department</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC2</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>Administrator-other department</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC3</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Chair, Assistant Chair</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC4</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>Chair, Assistant Chair</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Assistant Chair</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC5</td>
<td>60+</td>
<td>Chair, Assistant Chairs, Coordinators</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Assistant Chair</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC6</td>
<td>60+</td>
<td>Chair, Assistant Chairs, Coordinators</td>
<td>5-6 years</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty, division and department are not provided for each interviewed chair, but two individuals were interviewed from each faculty and six of the seven divisions are represented. Department sizes range from small (6-8 faculty members) to large (sixty or more faculty members), and based on purposeful stratified sampling selection guidelines, interviewees were selected to provide a cross-section in terms of department sizes, program areas, leadership structures and duration served as chair. The Dean is simply referred to by position title.

**Data Analysis**

Framework analysis was chosen for this project because it accommodates within-case and between-case analysis (Srivastava and Thomson 2009), which is central
to this research. It aims to describe and interpret circumstances in a particular setting (Srivastava and Thomson 2009). Framework analysis is an appropriate form of analysis for data gathered through qualitative interviews because it is: 1) dynamic and flexible as it accommodates changes throughout the process; 2) systematic as data is handled methodically; 3) and, it is comprehensive (Srivastava and Thomson 2009).

Data was first organized into a master table with interviewees by coded identity along the vertical axis and interview questions organized thematically on the horizontal axis. The three themes were: background; the department chair role, including responsibilities and competencies; and the transition process, including department chair preparation, training and leadership development. Through the analysis process, coding was both pre-set and emergent (Srivastava and Thomson 2009). Pre-set coding was created in the master table with specific headings linked to interview questions. Interviewees’ responses were entered under appropriate headings. Emergent coding occurred through open-ended questions where unexpected or complex data arose and was organized into a second table. Once themes emerged, this extraneous data was organized thematically. Emergent headings were: shared governance, distributed leadership, context. Data was then divided into smaller, thematic matrices based on the organization of analysis.
Ethical Considerations

Concern for ethical issues guides and impacts research from beginning to end. Throughout the stages of this project, important ethical considerations involved:

1) privacy of potential and actual participants;
2) voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw;
3) consent and possible deception of participants;
4) maintenance of the confidentiality of data provided by individuals or identifiable participants and their anonymity; and,
5) reactions of participants to way [the researcher] seeks to collect data; and effects on participants of the way in which the data is used, analyzed and reported (Saunders et al. 2007 p. 181).

These concerns were addressed in an information letter / consent form (see Appendix II). Prospective participants were contacted via email and invited to participate in the project. The information letter / consent form was attached to the email and recipients were asked to respond if they had questions, concerns or to express interest being interviewed. To protect privacy, all email communication between prospective and actual participants and the researcher was deleted once the interview process was completed. The interviewee contact list, including potential and actual interviewees, was not disclosed to anyone. Several prospective interviewees did not respond to the email. Snowball sampling was not utilized, as originally planned, to protect the anonymity of potential and actual
participants. Instead, through purposeful sampling, additional department chairs who met stratified criteria to provide a range in terms of faculty area, department size, and duration as department chair, were selected.

Proximity of the researcher was also a potential concern. As the researcher and as an employee of the College, my proximity to the study and relationship with participants could have resulted in a conflict of interest or bias. I was not in a position of authority over any subject and, though I had worked with one of the participants and was familiar with a second participant, the nature of these working relationships did not hinder objectivity in data collection or analysis. I did not have any direct interest in, or benefit from, results of this study.

Research approval was received from both the UNBC and Langara Research Ethics Boards (see Appendix III A and B).

**Scope and Limitations**

As a case study conducted at Langara College, the scope of this project was limited to one institution. While conducting research at additional colleges in BC would have provided more comprehensive data, context was a key factor in the research: focusing on the context of and within one institution was ideal. Six of thirty-seven department chairs were interviewed. Stratified, purposeful sampling ensured a range of department chair profiles in terms of program area, type of program, size of department, department leadership structure, and duration in the
position. To provide senior leadership perspectives and to determine the College’s plans regarding department chair leadership development initiatives, an academic Dean was also interviewed. Data from other targeted areas was not included as prospective interviewees were not available to participate or did not respond to requests for interviews. The scope of this project was intentionally narrow to allow for a more indepth and focused study, the intention being to provide recommendations specific to this organization.

The following chapter provides the results of this study; analysis of these results; and recommendations based on results.
Chapter 4 – Results and Discussion

Department chairs occupy a central leadership position at Langara College yet research has revealed that current training and leadership development initiatives do not meet the increasing demands of the role (Palmer 2015). The aim of this research is to determine department chair preparation, training and leadership development requirements and to consider optimal means to fulfill these needs. To build an understanding of what these needs are, this chapter examines research findings through three themes that surfaced in the literature review. First, evaluating the department chair position from the perspective of role and responsibilities and competencies helps to develop understandings into the nature of the position within the institution (cf. Aziz et al. 2005; Berdrow 2010). Second, building on this discussion, the significance of context is examined (cf. Berdrow 2010; Day and Antonakis 20012; Wash and Bloomdahl 2015). Context is considered from both a college-wide perspective in which shared governance plays a key role, and from the individual department perspective. Finally, the transition into leadership process is evaluated, based on timeline, in three phases: background, preparation, and training and development. Assessment of the research findings structured around these three themes establishes a strong understanding of department chair leadership needs and strategies for development.


**Role and Responsibilities, and Competencies**

When asked to define what a department chair is, all of the interviewees described the position in terms of role and responsibilities: they perceive the job in terms of what needs to be done. Competencies determine how and to what degree of effectiveness these responsibilities are carried out (Dessler et al. 2015) and so are equally important to fully understand the role. Consistent with the literature (cf. Aziz et al. 2005), interviewee responses revealed that a single competency can be utilized to meet multiple responsibilities.

**Role and Responsibilities**

When asked to rank their top five responsibilities in order of importance, interviewees provided a range of responses indicating diversity amongst departments (see Table 4 below).

*Table 4 Department Chair Key Responsibilities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Responsibilities in Order of Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DC1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DC2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DC3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DC4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DC5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DC6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dean</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While certain responsibilities appear consistently, prioritization varies, and certain responsibilities are unique to one position. DC3’s highest priority is managing program admissions, yet no other chair indicates this as a key responsibility. DC3’s department is small, with only one limited enrolment program. The success of this program requires the chair to oversee and implement effective marketing and careful selection of candidates. DC3 is also responsible for sourcing and purchasing program materials, a task that was previously handled by the purchasing department—another function not mentioned by other chairs. DC1, 3 and 6 have external relations duties involving engagement with professional associations related to their programs. DC5, whose department has been undergoing a period of substantial growth, noted that the position has evolved considerably over the past five years with responsibilities and priorities shifting. These findings on key responsibilities contradict Boyko (2009) that key responsibilities do not vary across departments, but are consistent with other researchers (cf. Aziz et al. 2005; Gmelch and Miskin 2010; Wash and Bloomdahl 2015) who found that roles vary across departments, and also vary over time because each department’s context is unique and changeable.

How do department chairs determine and prioritize key responsibilities? There is no standardized, formally approved position description for department chairs that

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6 A limited enrolment program has a maximum capacity for enrolment and specific, unique admission requirements (Langara College 2016).
can be applied to all departments across the College (Ly 2016). Consistent with Aziz et al.’s (2005) finding, the dean indicated there can never be a standardized job description for department chairs because the job is not standardized. Ly (2016), a consultant in Langara College’s human resources department, indicated that individual departments may, however, create their own job descriptions. Four chairs reported that they had never seen a position description for their role and did not know if one existed; one chair knew it existed but had never seen it; and one chair indicated that the job description was only used during the nomination process for the position (see Appendix IV). Supporting Boyko’s (2009) findings regarding job descriptions, the job description, which the chair provided, is over-simplified and vague: though it provides an extensive list of sixty duties and responsibilities, examples such as “solves personnel problems” does not explain what personnel problems are or what it means to solve them, and “checks final exam schedule” does not indicate what on the schedule needs to be checked (Langara College 2012). The description “lists the role and responsibilities but it doesn’t provide the minutiae of what to do and how to do it” (DC6). This job description does not include competencies, which, according to Dessler at el. (2015), are a more valuable means of job evaluation.
Competencies

Key competencies are consistent across departments with all interviewees citing communication as a highly valued skill, and all department chairs indicating the importance of conflict management (see Table 5).

Table 5 Department Chair Key Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Competencies</th>
<th>DC1</th>
<th>DC2</th>
<th>DC3</th>
<th>DC4</th>
<th>DC5</th>
<th>DC6</th>
<th>Dean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to see the big picture; ability to say no; conflict management; communication</td>
<td>Communication; diplomacy; ability to be flexible;</td>
<td>Negotiation; communication, ability to motivate others to compromise; being inclusive</td>
<td>Communication; Conflict management; conflict management, and; conflict management</td>
<td>Conflict management; communication</td>
<td>Communication; leadership, conflict resolution</td>
<td>Communication; willingness and ability to deal with ambiguity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While key responsibilities vary amongst chairs, key competencies to fulfill these responsibilities are the same. This is consistent with Aziz et al.’s (2005) observation that competencies encompass multiple responsibilities, which allows for some generalization in job analysis. Scheduling requires analytical and problem-solving skills yet:

“It’s mostly about knowing your people [faculty], their needs and preferences, having good relationships with them and knowing how much they’re willing to compromise” (Dean).

DC3’s unique key responsibility of program admission management also demonstrates the importance of communication skills:
“I have to connect with our target audience and market the program and I have to interview each applicant to make sure they’re a good fit for the program” (DC3).

These applications of communication—scheduling and management of admissions—support other research findings (cf. Aziz et al. 2005; Berdrow 2010; Dessler et al. 2015) that assert the importance of competency-based job analysis. Knowing that the job involves scheduling or program admission management is important, but knowing that scheduling involves building relationships and that program admission management involves connecting with the target audience and interviewing applicants provides a much more thorough understanding of what the job actually entails.

Interviewees across departments identified the prevalence of ambiguity in the department chair role, consistent with the findings of other researchers (cf. Aziz et al. 2005; Boyko 2009; Carroll and Wolverton 2004; Gmelch and Miskin 2010):

“[A challenge in this role] is feeling like I don’t know what I’m doing; I don’t know what’s coming up so I can’t map out my time…” (DC1).

“There’s so much uncertainty…Things come up everyday that I don’t know how to deal with so I have to constantly ask questions…everyone is willing to help but you have to ask; you have to know what you need to ask and you never know that till it’s in crisis mode” (DC4).

“It’s hard to deal with the ambiguity…you kind of get used to it but there are no hard lines defining the job—I think it’s someone else’s job higher up but then I end up dealing with it…and new stuff comes up all the time” (DC3).
For department chairs, then, ambiguity is in defining the role and responsibilities, and in day-to-day uncertainties that arise unexpectedly and often urgently. While the literature (cf. Aziz et al. 2005) suggests that training can alleviate ambiguity, it is an inherent part of the job:

“One thing that faculty stepping into an admin. role find really hard is that all of a sudden they go into a role where they get asked questions that they don’t know the answers to, and that’s very discomforting, because when you’re at the head of the class, you know all the answers...an important skill is that you’re comfortable dealing with that kind of ambiguity and with judgment calls...it’s working in the grey...that’s something that a good department chair just gets comfortable with” (Dean).

The dean recognizes the challenge of this transition from a role (faculty) in which one knows the answers, to a role (department chair) in which one does not; but rather than training to mitigate this ambiguity, the dean asserts that ambiguity is part of the job and the ability to deal with it is an essential department chair skill. Chairs can overcome some of the ambiguity over time as they learn on the job (Berdrow 2010; Hecht 2004; Morris 2012) but, as the dean points out, they need to “get comfortable with it.” Department chair competency frameworks reviewed for this project do not specifically address dealing with ambiguity, but AACC’s (2013) framework introduced in the literature review, prioritizes being “prepared for change” and “willing[ness] to take risks.” This view is also supported in current leadership literature (cf. Hall and Rowland 2016) that addresses non-traditional competencies needed to lead in current, challenging times. Though department
chairs did not articulate ambiguity as a prevalent challenge in the role that cannot be fully addressed through role clarification or specific task training, the ability to deal with ambiguity should then be considered a key competency of the department chair role.

Analysis of both the responsibilities and competencies provides a balanced understanding of the department chair role: key responsibilities serve to distinguish each chair’s position, while consistency in key competencies unifies the roles. In the absence of a formal, comprehensive job description that encompasses both responsibilities and competencies, department chairs come to understand their role and responsibilities through observation prior to commencing the position and through experience once in it. This finding is consistent with previous research (cf. Carroll and Wolverton 2004; Hecht 2004) which found that department chairs often come into the role not knowing what to expect, nor how to cope with the unexpected. Chairs did not identify dealing with ambiguity as a key competency but acknowledged it as a challenge in the job, while the dean acknowledged it as necessary to succeed in the role.

*Recommendations*

Insights generated through interviews, personal communication and documentation (position description) point to the following needs:
1) A comprehensive job analysis should be conducted. The analysis should encompasses the unique role, responsibilities and competencies of the job, within the framework of the department and the college as a whole, in order to provide clarity on what the position entails, what the expectations are, and essential competencies to effectively carry out responsibilities (Dessler et al. 2015).

2) Leadership development programming should include dealing with ambiguity. While some ambiguity may be resolved through job analysis (Dessler et al. 2015) and through training on specific tasks (Aziz et al. 2005), training in managing ambiguity can help department chairs build competency and confidence in dealing with the array of uncertainties that frequently arise in the job (Hall and Rowland 2016).

**Context**

Department chair and dean perspectives align with the literature (cf. Berdrow 2010; Wash and Bloomdahl 2015) indicating that, though consistencies exist across the College, context is a key factor in differentiating the chair’s role across departments. Overarching contextual factors, such as the organizational structure and culture of the College, and its embedded shared governance, serve to unify the department chair role. At the same time, individual departments’ specific contexts and individual leaders’ interpretation of and response to the overriding college context, serve to distinguish each department chair as a unique role.
Shared Governance

In shared governance, everyone has a role; stakeholders contribute to decision-making, not simply through group votes but through a clearly defined process (Olson 2009). As discussed earlier, shared governance is mandated by the College and Institute Act (1996) and embedded in Langara College’s organizational structure and culture. It is a unifying contextual factor, not only through college-wide systems but also the collective agreement (LFA 2015), which constructs the department chair as a temporary, egalitarian position. The implications of shared governance are revealed through department chairs’ observations (see Table 6).

**Table 6 Department Chair Comments Related to Shared Governance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DC1 You’re trying to organize a department and make it run smoothly but you don’t have direct authority over the people that you’re working with…You’re management but not technically a manager, (DC1-11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC2 This job is about herding cats: faculty and upstairs; it’s supposed to be a collegial work environment and the chair is not your boss, but when someone underperforms, it’s my responsibility to deal with it…it’s a huge hassle when you don’t know the process for dealing with this and you don’t have the authority to do deal with it. (DC2-11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC3 You have to remember that you’re just one piece and that the success of the department is a group effort; you are just here for a few years and then someone else will take over so you have to let some things go. (DC3-16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC4 Ideally everyone has the skill set and everyone volunteers to do their turn but that is not the reality. (DC4-23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC5 Quasi-management: managing people and functions while you’re still a member of the union; it’s a very odd place where you’re management but you’re not; you have to administer the collective agreement like you’re management but you can only go so far and then you have to hand it off to the dean. (DC5-11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC6 You have to be careful around managing performance because the department chair has no authority to discipline and yet the responsibility for performance management falls to the department chair…The [faculty association] collective agreement and our collegial structure make it very hard to manage performance…You learn things about your colleagues in this role and then you have to go back to being their colleague so how to you relate to them? (DC6-16/18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following three themes emerged from the interviews related to context: 1) management without authority, 2) taking one’s turn and, 3) distributed leadership.

**Management without Authority**

Four of the interviewed chairs view their role as managers without management authority. According to DC1 and DC5, “you’re management but not technically a manager.” DC2 states that, “the chair is not [the] boss, but when someone underperforms, it’s my responsibility to deal with it.” DC6 points out that the department chair is responsible for performance management but no authority to discipline. This perspective reflects a transactional management approach; it is not conducive to fostering shared leadership as Burke (2010) suggests shared governance can, but rather it reflects the frustration of having responsibility without authority (Boyko 2009; Gonzalez 2010).

**Taking one’s Turn**

When discussing the role, two chairs described a collective perspective on the department chair that involves taking one’s turn. First, DC3 stated that “the success of the department is a group effort” and second, DC4 believes the ideal is that everyone takes their turn. Consistent with Gonzalez (2010), DC4’s perspective, while seeming more conducive to shared leadership, risks encouraging passive leadership in which chairs, cognizant of the temporary nature their role, may be less likely to enact change that could offend colleagues
who are potentially the next department chair). According to DC3, “someone else will take over [in a few years], so you have to let some things go.”

**Distributed Leadership**

Shared governance provides an ideal framework to foster distributed leadership, which is a cooperative social process involving individuals within a group (Burke 2010). DC6 described two initiatives that demonstrate distributed leadership in the context of shared governance. The first initiative arose from a student complaint about bullying, which resulted in a meeting of multiple constituents from the college, including the students. Participants at the meeting discussed and drafted a department anti-bullying policy. According to DC6:

> “It was important to include the students in this process. It was their initiative that drove it and, including them, empowered them.”

In a second example, the same department chair solicited input from faculty on leadership issues:

> “Every year, each member of the department leadership team [chair, assistant chairs, coordinators], creates portfolio priorities. These are the most important initiatives for each leader’s area and we meet each semester to review progress in each set of priorities. The priorities are drawn from the entire department—all faculty are asked to contribute their ideas and input to formulate the priorities” (DC6).

In this department, the chair is promoting a culture of distributed leadership through inclusive actions that enable members at all levels to participate in
leadership decisions, which is consistent with Burke’s (2010) view in context of shared governance. Here, context is not just pre-set conditions and external factors, but the leader’s actions and behaviour that contribute to the context in which s/he leads. The interviews, therefore, indicate that context is a key factor in defining the chair’s role, and every chair establishes the role based on his or her own talents skills, personal goals and motivation within the context of the organizational and department frameworks (Tucker 1992 cited in Aziz 2005).

While shared governance, as an organizational framework and culture, can limit authority and, therefore, the ability to manage in some scenarios, building distributed leadership within this context has advantages. As discussed in the literature review, it aligns more naturally in the framework of shared governance with its democratic processes (Burke 2010). Rather than trying to force traditional (hierarchical, individual leader) management strategies into this environment, as DC1, 2, 5 and 6 reported struggling with, embracing distributed leadership provides a more effective model for leading a department and, at the same time, provides a basis for succession planning by building a larger pool of leaders. As Burke (2010) contends, distributed leadership is not an inevitable consequence of shared governance. It requires, then, individual department chairs, like DC6, to instill it.
**Recommendation**

Department chair perspectives and experiences support research findings on shared governance and distributed leadership (cf. Burke 2010), and lead to the following recommendation:

Distributed leadership aligns with Langara’s organizational structure and culture, and supports important initiatives such as succession planning. Distributed leadership strategies should be implemented. In addition to DC6’s efforts to implement such strategies, the following is an example of how department chairs can instill distributed leadership: the chair of the business management department has established a network of ‘course conveners’, faculty members who are responsible for ensuring curricular consistency across all sections of specific courses within the department (Alves 2016). The convener role is small enough in scope that it does not require much extra work, yet it effectively distributes leadership and utilizes subject area expertise of individual faculty members. While not all departments offer multiple sections of courses, this is just one example; similar types of initiatives can be implemented across the College.

**Transition into Leadership**

Transition into leadership, from faculty member to department chair, starts with background experience and includes preparation, training and leadership
development initiatives. The transition process is unique to each faculty member who becomes a department chair. Interview responses reveal that interviewees have diverse internal and external backgrounds; their competencies differ; their transition process time frames vary; they encounter different succession systems and support leading into the role; and their training and leadership development experiences also vary. Factors are grouped according to three phases in the timeline of the chairs’ progression to leadership:

1) background, including the chair’s internal and external leadership experience;
2) preparation, including the chair’s individual preparation and orientation provided by the College; and,
3) training and leadership development that take place once in the department chair role.

**Background**

Both external and internal experience provide relevant background from which chairs can draw on in their roles. Background can significantly impact the chair’s level of confidence and own perception of competence as s/he takes on the role.

Chairs were asked to rate their level of competence in their role when they first began as department chair and their current level of competence at the time of the interview which ranged from one (not competent) to five (highly competent).
Table 7 Chairs’ Backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>External Leadership</th>
<th>Internal Leadership</th>
<th>Impact of Previous Experience</th>
<th>Time in Dept. Prior to 1st Role</th>
<th>Perceived Level of Competence: Start</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DC1</td>
<td>Manager of professionals similar to faculty</td>
<td>Program manager for 2 years</td>
<td>How to manage people; connections built around college</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC2</td>
<td>Board member for professional organizations</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Made me believe I had something to contribute</td>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC3</td>
<td>Program coordinator at university</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Similar role but much different in large organization-more support</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC4</td>
<td>Camp counsellor, section director</td>
<td>Assistant chair for 5 years</td>
<td>Developed people skills;</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC5</td>
<td>Manager in unionized environment</td>
<td>Assistant chair for 4 years</td>
<td>Union negotiation; understood quasi-management</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC6</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DC1 and DC5, who rated their starting competence the highest among interviewees, at three, had extensive and relevant experience, both internal and external. Both had worked as managers in environments with professionals or unions. DC5, having worked with a professional union, was “much more comfortable with the structure and system for management of faculty at Langara than most new chairs.” Both also have relevant internal experience: DC5 as an assistant chair for four years and DC1 as an administrator in another division. DC5 explains that through assistant chair experience, s/he was active in education council processes and selection and evaluation committees, in preparation for the chair’s role. S/he notes that this took place through a division chair’s mentorship, and that not all assistant chairs gain that experience.
DC1 had only three weeks notice from accepting to starting the position, had only been in the role for one month and had no orientation, or specific preparation for the role. This chair attributes initial perceived competence at level three due to previous experience:

“Most chairs come from teaching, which is a different skill set. I have experience managing in a similar [environment] and in my previous job here, I built important relationships around the college so I know who to talk to when questions or problems come up” (DC1).

As this chair noted, and consistent with the literature (cf. Berdrow 2010; Boyko 2009; Carroll and Wolverton 2004; Wash and Bloomdahl 2015), most chairs started in the department chair position with limited or no relevant leadership experience. Three chairs, DC2, DC3, and DC6, indicated an initial perceived competence level of one (see Table 7). As DC2 noted, “You’re expected to hit the ground running—to be a leader from the start.” How do chairs in this case, which is the norm, build stronger competence from the start? As explained below, a mechanism is in place to establish higher initial competence and confidence.

Chairs who began with higher perceived competence, increased their competence to higher levels than those who started at just one. Chairs who started at one, increased their level to four, while DC4 started at two and increased to 4.5, and DC5 started at three and increased to five (see Table 9 on page 68). Though all chairs’ perceived competence increased during their time in the chair role, only
those who started above level one improved to complete or near complete competence\textsuperscript{7}, reinforcing the importance of establishing strong initial competence.

It was anticipated that duration of time as a faculty member in the department prior to taking on a leadership role would have an impact on initial perceived level of competence. This was owing to knowledge of departmental structure and culture, and time to establish relationships and networks within the department. Responses, however, revealed no correlation as DC1, with only four-months experience in the department, had a perceived initial competence level of three, while DC6 with eighteen years in the department indicated level one as his/her initial level of competence. Relevant experience then, both internal and external, are the key background factors in establishing initial competence.

**Preparation**

The preparation phase involves activity prior to commencing and immediately upon starting the role, and includes: individual preparation, if any, and orientation provided by the College (see Table 8).

\textsuperscript{7} DC1 is an exception since s/he had been in the role for less than a month at the time of the interview. Therefore, DC1 reported no change in perceived competence from start to time of interview.
Table 8 Chairs’ Preparation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Perceived Level of Competence: Start</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DC1</td>
<td>No time</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC2</td>
<td>No time</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC3</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC4</td>
<td>As assistant chair</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC5</td>
<td>As assistant chair</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC6</td>
<td>Management certificate program</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consistent with the literature (cf. Gmelch 2004; Hecht 2004; Morris 2012) most chairs commence the role unprepared with interview results showing that only two of the interviewed chairs received preparation through the College prior to commencing the role. Both were assistant chairs. DC6 took independent initiative by signing up for a management certificate program to prepare for the role: “There was nothing offered by the College specifically for department chairs so I just signed up for this on my own.” The remaining three chairs did not experience any preparation for the role.

Succession Planning

The two chairs who received preparation for the role were assistant chairs prior to commencing the chair role and, in both cases, they assumed the assistant chair role with the expectation that they would ladder into the chair position. This supports Berdrow’s (2010) recommended system of socialization and
acknowledges the widespread notion that leadership requires time to develop (Berdrow 2010; Carroll and Wolverton 2004). DC5 had been identified for succession and was mentored throughout the assistant chair years. DC5 participated in activities such as hiring and selection, in preparation for the chair’s role and, upon officially commencing the role, felt well prepared for it. DC5 reported:

“I had been involved in a lot of the processes already so, when I became department chair, there wasn’t a lot of stuff that was unfamiliar. Some things were new but, for the most part, I was well prepared” (DC5).

DC4’s department has a structured system in which the assistant chair gains exposure to the chair’s role but has distinct, separate responsibilities. In this case, the assistant chair does not effectively prepare for the chair’s role. DC4 explained that the assistant chair position is “like a carrot to entice faculty to step up” because most faculty are not interested. DC4’s department does not take full advantage of the socialization process that the assistant chair position can provide. The assistant chair should shadow the department chair and take on some of the tasks as a means of preparation and training (Berdrow 2010). The dean concurred:

“In almost all of my departments there is a secondary position and I don’t know if departments are thinking through that this is likely going to be the chair so I should be making sure they see all the different pieces. I think sometimes, the duties are divided and they operate independently and I think that’s sub-optimal because you move from one role to the next and then all of a sudden it’s all new
again. A lot of departments do try to mentor people into the chair position.” (Dean)

Some smaller departments do not have a secondary leadership role that facilitates socialization and, since there is no regulation of how secondary roles are structured, not all departments that have these roles optimize them to prepare for the chair position.

Succession planning through an assistant chair role is an ideal system because it has the potential to provide preparation, training and leadership development in context (Berdrow 2010). Yet, this process is not administered consistently and across all departments. For D5, preparation and training were effective but the succession plan did not continue; for D4, the assistant chair succession system is embedded and continuous but does not provide actual training for the department chair role. In DC6’s department, assistant chairs have different responsibilities owing to the size of the department. S/he indicated that the next chair is a former assistant chair but, to aid in the preparation process, the position was posted well in advance of the term to allow the incumbent time to shadow the department chair while still an assistant chair. D6 commented:

“My department has already selected a successor. This was advertised well in advance. We meet regularly to orient, prepare, give her ongoing pieces of information as part of ongoing orientation. We have our own succession planning system because within the College, understanding of importance of succession planning--preparing well in advance—is not there. We intentionally advertise positions very early to be able to prepare. We have found that people stay in the positions longer and felt more ready to take
over their responsibilities because they'd had this extensive period of time where they could be oriented" (DC6).

The framework for succession planning exists at the College and, while some departments like DC6’s not only utilize but also enhance this framework; it is generally not fully optimized as the literature proposes it should be (cf. Morrin 2013; Gonzalez 2010).

Orientation

Consistent with literature findings on department chair preparation (cf. Aziz et al. 2005; Berdrow 2010; Boyko 2009; Carroll and Wolverton 2004; Gmelch 2004), Langara College does not provide a formal orientation for department chairs. All interviewees pointed out the lack of any formal orientation. One chair described the first day on the job:

“One day I was faculty, and the next day I was department chair. I came to work and sat in the same office and didn’t really know what was going to happen first. So I waited” (DC1).

Another chair observed:

“Langara is a very nice place to work but not very welcoming. When I first started teaching here, I had to ask a student where the bathroom was.” (DC3)

Literature on orientations is limited. According to HR Council, an orientation is not simply to inform on policies and procedures but to welcome new employees, to make them feel comfortable and to help them understand their role in the context
of the organization’s culture (HR Council 2016). All interviewed chairs stated
interest in some form of orientation. DC1 suggested:

“a big picture explanation of what to expect and a calendar of
important dates and deadlines so I can know what’s coming down
the pike and plan for it.”

DC6 indicated a need for information on “how to operate within the organization—
what are the systems, politics, and what are the expectations?”

Department chairs were asked to rate their preparation experience as provided by
the College on a scale of one (ineffective) to five (highly effective). The average
score of 1.4 indicates a need for more support in this phase: existing frameworks
are not being optimized and orientation is not being provided.

**Recommendations**

Department chair and dean perspectives and experiences indicate a need for
more systematic and comprehensive preparation:

1) The framework for succession planning already exists in the assistant chair
role. The position should be formalized as a means to prepare and train the
assistant chair for the chair’s role. It is an ideal position for socialization into
the role (Berdrow 2010). At least one department has established its own
succession system built around the assistant chair, incorporating proactive
strategies to enhance the assistant chair’s preparation for the chair’s role.
This department’s system can be used as a model to be applied across departments with customization based on size and department structure.

2) Implementation of a department chair orientation, as HR Council (2016) describes, would aid in establishing a supportive and welcoming environment and would provide new chairs with a foundation upon which to understand their role within the context of Langara College. The suggested calendar and information on how to operate within the organization could be incorporated, alleviating some basic ambiguity in the role.

Training and Leadership Development

Though the terms ‘training’ and ‘development’ are sometimes used interchangeably, they are distinguished in this project. Training is defined as “teaching a particular skill or behaviour through sustained practice or instruction” (Oxford 2016). Development is defined as “the process of growth or advancement” (Oxford 2016). Department chair training and leadership development initiatives at Langara College involve training sessions, workshops, and informal mentorship. Offerings and formats have changed over the past several years resulting in current department chairs having varied experiences upon becoming department chairs (see Table 9).
### Table 9 Chairs’ Training and Leadership Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Leadership Development</th>
<th>Perceived Level of Competence: Start</th>
<th>Perceived Level of Competence: Current</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DC1</td>
<td>Workshops: budgeting &amp; other job duties in first month</td>
<td>Workshop: conflict management</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC2</td>
<td>Conflicted with teaching schedule; no time--busy with job</td>
<td>None that I was able to participate in</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC3</td>
<td>1 month: meetings with previous chair explaining duties, reviewing files</td>
<td>Workshops but no follow-up--you can’t learn how to be a leader in a 2-hour workshop; I rely on support and mentorship from my division chair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC4</td>
<td>2011, 2-day workshop series; previous chair and division chair had open-door policy, provided support when needed</td>
<td>2011 workshop got people thinking about leadership but actual training only on hard skills; since then not aware of any leadership development</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC5</td>
<td>No formal training; but as assistant chair, gained exposure so had understanding of the role; mentored by division chair</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC6</td>
<td>No formal training; provided by division chair, as needed</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In keeping with the growing recognition of the importance of leadership training and development (cf. Aziz et al. 2005; Berdrow 2010; Gmelch and Miskin 2010), the trend at Langara has been to enhance such opportunities for department chairs. DC5 and DC6, who have been chairs for five-plus years, report that no training or development opportunities were provided for them while data in Table 8 shows that the other chairs all experienced some form of training and /or leadership development.
Training

Training sessions focus on transactional management duties such as budgeting, scheduling logistics, and on protocols and procedures such as codes of conduct and grading policies. For the past two years, the deans’ office has coordinated a series of ‘lunch and learns’ during May and June, when new chairs begin their term. The dean noted much higher participation in the budgeting workshop this year since the budget deadline was moved from April to the end of May. Timing of training, then, is important: “chairs will not attend workshops on duties that are months away” (dean). Literature (Wolverton et al. 2005) supports this format of conveniently timed, short training sessions for basic, transactional department chair tasks. Timing cannot be planned for all training, though, as department chairs encounter other issues, such as student misconduct, as various times. The dean reported that many training sessions are not well attended. DC1, who attended the budgeting workshop, reported that two other attendees indicated after the session that they still did not understand how to manage their budget, that they did not understand the language and logic. DC3 suggested videos or handouts to supplement the training sessions would be helpful. The dean disagreed:

“Department chairs are too busy—they don’t want workshops and online resources that they have to read and videos that they have to watch. They want someone they can call when they need help, who will provide the answers right away, so they can get on with the next task.”
Consistent with literature focused on how department chairs develop in their roles (cf. Aziz et al. 2005; Boyko 2009; Morris 2012; Gmelch and Miskin 2010), Four of the chairs indicated that they learned through on-the-job training from a division chair or previous department chair. Four chairs also indicated that information is not provided but must be requested:

“Information is not provided; you have to figure out what you need to know and then you have to ask...People are very helpful but you never know what you’re going to need until you’re in crisis mode… I rely heavily on my division chair…it’s not very organized” (DC3).

Department chairs and the dean report the same circumstance—department chairs asking for information as needed—but the dean’s perspective is that this is how department chairs actually want to learn/operate, while department chairs explain that it is because the information is not provided. Thus, it is clear how most of the learning takes place, but it is not clear whether this form of learning stems from the lack of other forms of training or because this is the preferred method of learning. Chairs rated their training experience on a scale of one (ineffective) to five (highly effective), the average score, 2.8, is significantly higher than their rating for preparation (1.4). Four of the chairs attribute the higher score to individual support from a previous department chair or division chair.
The results do not provide clear direction on optimal training methods for task specific department chair duties. The literature suggests factors to consider in deciding what methods to employ:

1) training effectiveness may vary depending on content (Aziz et al. 2005), so what is being taught must be factored into how it is taught;

2) learning styles and preferences vary, so multiple formats may need to be considered (Aziz et al. 2005); and,

3) chairs have different backgrounds and competencies (Rellie and Kezar 2010) that must be taken into account when planning, for example, a budgeting workshop.

Research results from this study reveal mixed and inconsistent perspectives on training. Taking recommended factors into account and conducting more targeted and indepth research on department chair training is required.

**Leadership Development**

Development, as defined above, is a process. Department chair leadership development workshops at Langara are valued but intermittent. As one chair commented, “I would like some follow-up and more continuity. You can’t learn to be a leader in two hours” (DC3). Three of the six interviewed chairs had participated in leadership development workshops but reported limited learning value due to the sporadic and short-term delivery of these workshops. Leadership
development takes time and must be an ongoing process (Berdrow 2010; Gonzalez 2010; Morris 2013).

Mentorship as a leadership development strategy is ongoing and takes individual chair’s context and competencies into account, which the literature (cf. Rellie and Kezar 2010; Stockton et al. 2016) indicates is key to successful development. DC3 expressed concern for the process:

"I rely very heavily on my division chair...[who] is always available to help me and advise me but it takes a lot of time and I don’t know who supports him/her...It shouldn’t be just one person’s job.”

Individualization, if too intense, can create pressure for the mentor. Gmelch (2004) recommends a network of support that should be conducted in cohort groups because leadership development does not occur in a vacuum. DC5 recommends an in-house leadership academy with ongoing leadership development activities and formalized group mentorship. This aligns with Petrie’s (2011) view that the development process should be shared. Four chairs indicated mentorship as a preferred method of leadership development. The role of the assistant chair discussed in the preparation phase, spans across training and leadership development as well. A mentor-mentee structure is devised through the chair-assistant chair relationship, and assistant chairs can begin the leadership development process to build stronger initial competence once in the chair role.
Department chairs rated leadership development experience as 2.1 on a scale of one (not effective) to five (highly effective).

One aspect of the development process that did not surface in the research process is reflective practice, a key element in Wolverton et al.’s (2005) framework for development, which calls upon learning from one’s experiences.

DC6 contemplated:

“Am I good leader? I hope so…but every department chair is on their own. The expectations aren’t clear so how can we know if we’re meeting expectations?”

Chairs’ observations and perspectives on training and development point to some specific gaps. Awareness of these issues provides a foundation upon which to develop a system to prepare incoming chairs for their role, to conduct targeted research in order to determine appropriate and timely training, and to create meaningful leadership development processes.

**Recommendations**

Research results on training and leadership development point to the need for the following:

1) Further and more indepth research should be conducted to determine optimal training methods.

2) A more systematic mentorship system should be implemented. It should be structured around group learning and support to alleviate pressure on
individual mentors, enhance learning from multiple perspectives, and build a culture of distributed leadership.

3) A single, comprehensive framework for leadership development (Gmelch 2004) needs to be established. Wolverton et al.’s (2005) model provides for: conceptual understanding of the role; development of competencies based on this understanding; and reflective practice that ensures ongoing learning and development. This framework encourages individual ownership of development (Petrie 2011) and can be seen as both progressive (from one phase to the next) and cyclical (a continuous process). All previous recommendations can be incorporated into this framework to establish a cohesive preparation, training and leadership development program.

Summary

In this chapter, research results were analyzed through three themes: role, responsibilities and competency; context; and, transition into leadership. Research revealed diversity in responsibilities and consistency in required competencies across department chairs. The significance is that the position must be analyzed from both perspectives to develop a full understanding of the department chair role. Context was discussed from the College-wide perspective of shared governance, and from individual chair approaches to leading within this context. The concept of distributed leadership arose as an ideal leadership approach within the context of shared governance. Finally, the transition into
leadership process was evaluated in three phases: background, preparation, and training and development. While the analysis of background, preparation and leadership development led to specific conclusions and recommendations, the findings on training did not result in concrete conclusions. A final recommendation calls for the development of a comprehensive development framework incorporating all recommendations and providing cohesive structure for creation of a preparation, training and leadership development program.
Chapter 5 – Conclusion

In the context of an increasingly competitive post-secondary landscape, colleges in BC are redefining themselves. College leaders are challenged to meet the demands of this changing environment and department chairs, in particular, face growing pressure. The focus of this project was department chair leadership at Langara College. Given senior administration’s recognition of the need to support department chair leadership and to expand training and development (Palmer 2015), the aim of this project was to determine department chair preparation, training and leadership development gaps at Langara College and to propose optimal methods to fulfill these gaps. Specific research questions were:

1) What is department chair leadership at Langara College?

2) What department chair preparation, training and leadership development gaps exist?

3) From a preparation, training and development perspective, what can be done to support individuals in this critical role?

The literature review focused on trends in leadership theory, leadership development, and leadership issues specific to department chairs. Three key themes emerged from this review: 1) role, responsibilities and competencies; 2) context; and, 3) transition into leadership. The three research questions above were addressed through discussion and analysis of the research results, within the context of these three themes.
Research Results

**Role Responsibilities and Competencies**

Research revealed that analysis of both the responsibilities and competencies provides a balanced understanding of the department chair role: key responsibilities differentiate each chair’s position, while consistency in key competencies unifies the roles. This is supported by literature findings (cf. Aziz et al. 2005; Berdrow 2010) that call for the need to analyze responsibilities and competencies to build a full understanding of what the department chair role entails. Also consistent with the literature (cf. Aziz et al. 2005; Boyko 2009; Carroll and Wolverton 2004; Gmelch and Miskin 2010), the concept of ambiguity arose as a significant challenge for department chairs; but the view of dealing with ambiguity as a key competency was unique. An established college leadership competency framework (AACC 2013) prioritizes related competencies of risk-taking and preparedness for change; and literature focusing on leadership in current, challenging times (Hall and Rowland 2016), calls for innovative leadership competencies, including dealing with ambiguity.

**Context**

The importance of the context in which leadership takes place was revealed in the literature review (cf. Berdrow 2010; Day and Antonakis 2012). Shared governance provides a College-wide organizational and cultural context and, within this, each
department has its own set of contextual factors. These departmental factors combined with the department chair’s interpretation of and response to the overarching context of shared governance, further distinguishes each department as unique. While the majority of chairs interpreted shared governance as ‘management without authority’ or ‘taking one’s turn’, applying a distributed leadership approach is more conducive to this context and supports a key initiative: succession planning.

**Transition into Leadership**

The process of transitioning into leadership process was analyzed in three phases: background, preparation, and training and development. In the background phase, it was discovered that external and internal leadership experience were key factors in department chairs’ initial perceived competence in the role, while duration in the department was not a relevant factor. Building initial competence was deemed significant because chairs with higher initial perceived competence increased their level to complete or near-complete competence. While others, who started with a lower perception of competence, also improved significantly, they did not reach full, perceived competence. In the preparation phase, the assistant chair role was identified as an ideal means for succession planning and leadership development. The framework exists for many departments but, of those interviewed, only one department fully utilizes and even enhances succession planning through the assistant chair role. Chairs expressed
a desire for some form of orientation as none is currently provided. The training phase drew conflicting perspectives and inconclusive results. It was clear that chairs rely primarily on on-the-job training and support from previous department chairs and division chairs, and that chairs are not satisfied with their training experience. Leadership development workshops were seen as potentially valuable but not effective due to short-term and sporadic offering. Mentorship was seen as a favourable development method that could be ongoing, process oriented, and both individualized and group-oriented.

Recommendations

The following recommendations for actions on the part of the College arose from the research analysis and results:

1) Conduct a comprehensive job analysis encompassing the unique role, responsibilities and competencies of the job, within the framework of the department and the College as a whole.

2) Provide leadership development programming to support dealing with ambiguity—this can help department chairs build competency and confidence in dealing with the array of uncertainties that frequently arise in the job.

3) Implement distributed leadership initiatives within and across departments: distributed leadership provides an optimal framework for leadership within the College’s overarching context of shared governance (Burke 2010).
4) Formalize the assistant chair role as a mechanism for preparation, training and leadership development: it is an ideal position for socialization into the role (Berdrow 2010).

5) Provide a formalized orientation for new department chairs: as HR Council (2016) indicates, this would help to establish a supportive and welcoming environment and would provide new chairs with a foundation upon which to understand their role within the context of Langara College.

6) Conduct further and more indepth research to determine optimal training methods.

7) Coordinate a more systematic mentorship system structured around group learning and support to alleviate pressure on individual mentors, to enhance learning from multiple perspectives, and to build a culture of distributed leadership.

8) Establish a single, comprehensive framework for preparation, training and leadership development (Gmelch 2004) that provides for: conceptual understanding of the role; development of competencies based on this understanding; and reflective practice that ensures ongoing learning and development (Wolverton et al. 2005). All other recommendations can be incorporated into this framework.

These eight recommendations were drawn from the research conducted in this study and are supported by the literature findings. The intent of these
recommendations is to provide a means to enhance the process of transition into leadership from faculty member to department chair.

**Study Limitations**

Limitations of this study are: scope of the project including sample size, available literature on key areas of the research, and specific results.

As a single case study of department chair leadership at Langara College, the scope and application of this research are limited to this particular institution. Parallels may be drawn to other similar institutions or departments but, as the study revealed, context is a key factor in understanding the role and those who occupy it. Contextual factors start from the broad environment: the Canadian post-secondary landscape; and, within that, the BC college setting; then, Langara College; and finally, individual departments within the College. While such concentration is small in scope, it allowed for indepth and focused study (Yin 2014). In addition to being a single case, the sample size was intentionally small, again, to allow for indepth and focused research. Interview subjects were selected through purposeful sampling (Patton 1990) to ensure distributed representation across department types, sizes, and program areas, and duration that department chairs have been in their roles. Despite selection based on a specified range of attributes, it cannot be said that the small departments included in this study are representative of all small departments in the College because, in addition to being small, other attributes contribute to each department and department chair’s
uniqueness. Thus, the intention was not to make generalizations about all departments but to gain detailed insight into individual departments and to draw comparisons. Results combined with literature support did provide for some generalizations across departments involved in this study.

Most of the literature on the academic department chair originates in the United States and much of it provides analysis within the general post-secondary or higher education context. There is limited research on the Canadian post-secondary, and in particular the college, setting. Therefore, points of reference, comparisons and consistencies are established with American institutions, which may differ culturally, structurally, and politically.

Literature on leadership theory is expansive. It was not within the scope or intent of this project to conduct indepth research on all possible leadership frameworks that might apply to Langara College. A review of new millennium trends in leadership theory revealed ‘distributed leadership’ as an ideal framework for analysis within Langara’s shared governance context (Burke 2010). That is not to say that other frameworks may not be applicable to this context, but the one selected was deemed most appropriate.

Results regarding training were not conclusive and did not result in definitive recommendations on optimal training methods. While there was consistency in observations on what types of training are being used, the interpretation of
appropriate and desirable methods conflicted. More targeted interview questions and more thorough triangulation may have produced more definitive answers.

Limitations in the scope and results of this project lead to consideration of further research.

**Further Research**

This project provides a small-scale study of department chair leadership at Langara College. A study across colleges could provide more comprehensive data and generalizations on best practices that would be more widely applicable. Though the significance of context and the uniqueness of each department chair leadership role contradict the establishment of generalizations, research on a broader scale may uncover consistencies not detected through small-scale research. Such research would also provide a substantial contribution to literature in the Canadian context.

Further study into leadership theory may reveal other frameworks relevant to the college department chair role in Canada. Research has applied ‘relational leadership’ to a university setting in New Zealand (Branson et al. 2015). Other emerging theories may provide further insight to help conceptualize and guide department chair leadership.

A more focused and applied study on training needs, gaps and methods for department chairs at Langara could result in specific recommendations on optimal
training methods. Training needs will continue to evolve; individual department chair context and demands must be considered when planning the content, timing, and delivery modes for training.

Final Thoughts

The original intent of this project was ‘applied’ in nature; it was to research and provide specific, recommended strategies for department chair preparation, training and leadership development at Langara College. What evolved incorporated a more ‘basic’ approach, particularly in the analysis and writing phase. Applied research is intended to “solve specific, practical questions or problems”; basic (also termed ‘pure’ and ‘fundamental’) research aims to “advance knowledge and to identify/explain relationships between variables” (University of Southampton 2016). Saunders et al. (2007) address the relevance of this distinction in its application to business and management research. They indicate value in both approaches for business and management, and assert that all projects can be placed on a continuum between ‘applied’ and ‘pure.’ As this novice researcher learned, in order to effectively plan, conduct, organize, analyze, and articulate one’s research, it would be prudent to place one’s project on this continuum at the outset. While the practical application of this project is not as originally intended, the learning has been significant.
Appendix I: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Academic Department Chair Preparation, Training, Leadership Development
UNBC MBA research project
Researcher: Gayle Hayashi

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

Explain the following points:

1. BACKGROUND/PURPOSE
   a. Research for UNBC MBA project
   b. The purpose of this research is to understand the department chair role in the context of the institution’s organizational culture and structure and to gain perspective on department chair training, leadership preparation and development.

2. USE OF INFORMATION GATHERED/HOW IT WILL BE HANDLED
   (Interviewee will have received information/consent letter and form prior to the interview)
   a. Do you have any questions regarding the use of this information, confidentiality and anonymity?
   b. Obtain signed consent form if not already received.

3. INTERVIEW AGENDA AND DURATION
   a. I’ll be asking questions under three sections in the following order:
      i. Background
      ii. Department chair role
      iii. Process of becoming department chair and department chair preparation, training, leadership development
   b. This interview should take approximately one hour.

4. INTERVIEWEE QUESTIONS
   Before we begin, do you have any questions?

Transition: I’d like to start with a few questions about your background.

BACKGROUND—about you and your department (5 minutes)

1.1 How long have you been department chair of ________________?
1.2 Did you occupy any administrative/leadership roles at the college prior to this appointment?

1.3 How long did you teach in the department prior to this/your first leadership role?

1.4 How many faculty members are there in your department (full-time, part-time)?

1.5 What are the leadership positions in your department?

1.6 What are the sections of instructional release allocated to each of these positions?

Transition: Now I’d like to move on to the role of department chair.

ROLE: definition, responsibilities, skills and competencies, challenges (25 minutes)

2.1 Imagine you’re talking to someone who does not know what a department chair is—briefly, in 2-3 sentences, how would you describe this role?

2.2 Does the department chair position have a formal job description?

2.2.1 If yes, how closely does it correspond to the actual job? Please give a percentage.

2.3 As department chair, what are your key responsibilities?

2.3.1 How would you rank these responsibilities in terms of priority?

2.3.2 How would you rank these responsibilities in terms of time commitment?

2.3.3 How would you rank these responsibilities in terms of level of challenge?

I’m going to ask about required skills and would like to distinguish between knowledge/hard skills and competencies/soft skills.

2.4 What specific knowledge/hard skills are required to effectively fulfill the department chair role?
2.5 What competencies/soft skills are required to effectively fulfill the department chair role?

2.6 Of the required knowledge and competencies, which are most crucial to effectively fulfilling the department chair role?

2.7 What challenges do you face in this role?

The department chair as a leader is unique in that, most department chairs maintain dual role as faculty member and faculty leader.

2.8 Are there particular challenges and/or benefits that stem from this duality?

Transition: Now I’d like to move our focus to the process of becoming department chair, preparation, training and leadership development

PROCESS, PREPARATION, TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT (25 minutes)

3.1 Can you tell me how you came into this role?

Prompt: Did you anticipate/plan/prepare to take on this role?
Did you volunteer?
Did someone recommend you?

3.1.1 What was the timeline from the point at which you knew or expected to become department chair till you were actually in the role?

3.2 Based on your experience/knowledge, was your process the norm?

Prompt: Is this how department chairs usually come into the role?
Or was your process unique? If yes, what is the usual process?

3.3 How do you feel about this process?

Prompt: Is it transparent? Is it inclusive? Is it effective?

3.3.1 Is there anything that you would change about this process?

Prompt If yes, how would you change?
Why?
3.4 What was the approximate time frame between knowing that you would be taking on this role and formally starting in the role?

I’m now going to ask about preparation, training and leadership development. To distinguish between these three:
Preparation = for example, onboarding, orientation, explanation of transition issues, department chair responsibilities, expectations, time commitment...
Training = teaching of technical skills through workshops, classes, on budgeting, and other processes
Leadership development = coaching, mentoring or other, on leadership skills as communication, motivation

3.5 How did you prepare for this role prior to formally starting?

Prompt: Was any preparation provided—orientation, review of responsibilities, expectations, time commitment?

3.6 Was training provided prior to beginning or since you’ve been in the role?

Prompt: What was training provided on? (budget process, selection & evaluation...)
Was training formal or informal?
Who provided the training?
What resources were provided?
Was training offered/available but you were not able to participate?

3.7 Has any leadership development been provided—prior to or since beginning the role?

Prompt: Have you participated in leadership coaching and/or mentoring?
Have you participated in any leadership workshops or any other forms of leadership development?
Have any opportunities been offered/available that you have not been able to participate in?

3.8 On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being ineffective and 5 being highly effective, how would you rate the following based on your experience:
   i. Department chair preparation
   ii. Department chair training
   iii. Department chair leadership development

3.9 On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being not competent and 5 being highly competent, how would you rate your level of competence:
   i. When you first started in the position
ii. Now

I have two final questions.

3.10 Given your experience, and considering the three categories of preparation, training and leadership development, what should be the priorities to support new/incoming department chairs/leaders?

3.11 Do you have any other feedback or recommendations that have not been covered by my questions or our discussion?

End: Thank you for taking the time to share your perspective and to participate in this study. Feel free to contact me if you think of anything else that you’d like to add. (contact information is on information/consent letter)
Appendix II: Information Letter / Consent Form

Information Letter / Consent Form

Date: May 30, 2016

Project Title: Transition into Leadership: From Faculty Member to Department Chair

Researcher: Gayle Hayashi
UNBC MBA candidate
ghayashi@langara.bc.ca; hayashig@unbc.ca
Phone (work): 604-323-5854

Supervisor: Dr. Rick Colbourne
UNBC MBA program adjunct professor
rick.colbourne@unbc.ca

Purpose of Project

This research is being conducted for a UNBC MBA project. The project is a case analysis of academic department chair preparation, training and leadership development at Langara College. The purpose of the project is to determine the preparation, training and leadership needs; the processes and protocols currently in place; and, finally, what should be provided to further support the transition into the department chair role.

You are being invited to take part in this research study because, as a current/former department chair, your insights and perspectives provide the primary source of information and data to answer the research questions stated above.

What will happen during the project?

If you agree to participate in this study, the researcher will contact you to arrange a one-on-one interview. The interview questions will relate to the purpose of the project as stated above. The interview will be conducted at your institution and is expected to take approximately one hour. It will be audio-recorded.
Risks and/or benefits to participating in the project

There are no known or reasonably foreseeable risks to participating in this study. Some of the questions may make you feel uncomfortable. If this occurs, you may refrain from answering the question(s) and you may end your participation at any time.

The results of the study may provide information to help guide administrative leaders at this institution to implement processes to support preparation, training and leadership development for future department chairs.

Confidentiality, Anonymity and Data Access and Storage

Only the researcher will have access to information that discloses your identity. This information will be kept strictly confidential. Consent forms and any other hard copy documentation that identifies study participants will be kept in a filing cabinet in a locked office. Audio recordings will be downloaded on to a password-protected computer and will be deleted from recording devices once downloaded.

Only the researcher will have access to the data. Research data will be securely disposed of, one year after collection. Hard copies of consent forms and any other identifying documentation will be disposed of through confidential shredding. Audio files will be deleted.

Information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent. Your anonymity will be respected but cannot be guaranteed due to the small size of the study population.

Study Results

The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may be submitted to your institution’s administration.

The results of the study can be provided to participants at their request. If you would like to receive an emailed copy of the study results, you may indicate below.

Questions about the project

If you have questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher and or research supervisor named above.

Contact for Concerns or Complaints Regarding Participation in this Study
If you have concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the UNBC Research Ethics Board at 250-960-6735 or by email at reb@unbc.ca.

**Participant Consent and Withdrawal**

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Should you choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you withdraw from the study, any information that you have provided up to that point will be withdrawn and securely destroyed unless you explicitly consent to this information being retained and analyzed. You may also refrain from answering any questions if you do not want your response included in the study results or if the question makes you feel uncomfortable.

**CONSENT**

I have read or been described the information presented in the information letter about the project:

YES    NO

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this project and to receive additional details I requested.

YES    NO

I understand that if I agree to participate in this project, I may withdraw from the project at any time up until the report completion, with no consequences of any kind. I have been given a copy of this form.

YES    NO

I agree to be audio recorded.

YES    NO

Study results can be sent to me at the email address indicated below.

YES    NO

Signature (or note of verbal consent): ______________________________________________

Name of Participant (printed): ______________________________________________

Date: ______________________________________________

Email address (if applicable): ______________________________________________
Appendix III A: UNBC Research Ethics Board Approval

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

MEMORANDUM

To: Gayle Hayashi
Cc: Rick Colbourne
From: Michael Murphy, Chair
Research Ethics Board
Date: November 5, 2015
Re: E 2015.1014.090.00
Transition into Leadership: From Faculty Member to Department Chair

Thank you for submitting the above-noted proposal to the Research Ethics Board (REB). Your proposal has been approved.

We are pleased to issue approval for the above named study for a period of 12 months from the date of this letter. Continuation beyond that date will require further review and renewal of REB approval. Any changes or amendments to the protocol or consent form must be approved by the REB.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Murphy
Chair, Research Ethics Board
Appendix III B: Langara College Research Ethics Board Approval

January 6, 2016

Gayle Hayashi
Department Services Assistant/Instructor
Langara School of Management
(sent by email to ghayashi@langara.bc.ca)

Notice of Approval for Hayashi - File 20151127-01

Thank you for your careful responses to the provisos in the Notice of Ethical Review. I am pleased to report that your research "Transition into Leadership: From Faculty Member to Department Chair" has been approved by the Langara Research Ethics Board (LREB). The approval is for the period January 11, 2016 to September 30, 2016 (30 days later than the proposed project period).

As a condition of this approval, you are expected to alert the LREB in a timely way of any significant ethical issues that arise during the course of the research. As well, if you amend the study, including by changing the study time period or its goals or methodology beyond what the LREB has approved, or if new risks to participants are identified, or if the consent form is changed, you must submit an amendment to the LREB by writing to its chair to indicate the nature of the amendment and to request ethical approval for the changes. Please include updated versions of study documents with any amendments.

Please provide a brief report of the project after it has been concluded. The report should describe the researcher’s experience of the conduct of the study and any ethical challenges or problems that were encountered and how you dealt with them.
If you have any questions at any time about this approval or the ethical elements or implications of the study, please do not hesitate to contact the chair of the LREB, John Russell, at jrussell@langara.bc.ca.

Good luck with your research!

Sincerely,

John Russell, Ph.D.
Chair, LREB
Appendix IV: Department Chair Job Description

Departmental Duties & Responsibilities: Department Chair
Revised: February 3, 2012

A. Information

Position
Title: Department Chair

Department:

Division:

Reports to: Division Chair

Affiliation: Langara Faculty Association

B. Related Documents:

Langara Faculty Association Collective Agreement.

C. Summary:

The Department Chair is a regular faculty member who meets the requirements as stipulated in the LFA Collective Agreement (LFA-CA) conditions found in Article 10.3.6.1. The qualifications and process for designation of a Department Chair are stipulated in the LFA-CA under section 10.6, Department Chair, Assistant Department Chair, Co-ordinators.

D. Duties & Responsibilities

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<tr>
<th>Categories (ACA)</th>
<th>Duties &amp; Responsibilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DUTIES:</td>
<td>approves departmental publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESPONSIBILITIES:</td>
<td>develops program curriculum – and/or delegates to appropriate subject matter coordinator - researches, redesigns and updates</td>
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<td></td>
<td>chairs departmental policy committee</td>
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<td>updates university transfer credits and/or delegates to appropriate subject matter coordinator</td>
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<td>prepares/reviews program evaluation</td>
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<td>prepares for program accreditation</td>
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<td>prepares new program proposals</td>
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<td>COLLEGE WIDE LIAISON (CWL)</td>
<td>DUTIES:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Liaises with: Deans, Registrar, Division Chairs, other administrators Student Services (for calendar updates), LFA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• substitutes for Division Chair during absence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• participates in campus-wide meetings and committees</td>
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<th>DEPARTMENTAL FUNCTIONS (DEPT)</th>
<th>DUTIES:</th>
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<td></td>
<td>• ensures coordinators &amp; assistant department chairs are informed about budgets and other relevant issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• organizes and liaises with departmental committees</td>
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<td>• disseminates information (by memo, phone, e-mail, meetings)</td>
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<td>• manages correspondence</td>
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<td>• plans (academic and facilities)</td>
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<td>• chairs department meetings (ensures minutes are prepared and circulated)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• maintains department and program policies and procedures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• interprets, implements and communicates College policies and procedures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• is responsible for other duties as may be assigned</td>
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<th>RESPONSIBILITIES:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• arranges visiting lecturers and readers</td>
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<td>• manages departmentally sponsored projects</td>
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<td>• mandatory department projects (e.g. Studio 58, Voice) voluntary department projects (e.g. Design Formation Grad Show, 49th Ave. magazine)</td>
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<td>• chairs program area meetings</td>
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<td>• organizes seminars and department PD days</td>
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<td>• handles internal publicity (eg: posters, course outline booklets)</td>
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<td>• prepares grant &amp; special funding applications</td>
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<td>• liaises with other educational institutions</td>
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<td>• maintains Ministry contacts</td>
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<td>• manages and liaises with advisory committees in accordance with College policy</td>
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<td>• attends articulation meetings</td>
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<td>• communicates with publishers’ representatives</td>
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<td>• implements evaluation process</td>
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<td>• implements hiring process</td>
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<td>• deals with absent faculty and replacements</td>
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<td>• monitors faculty and staff responsibilities</td>
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<td>• participates in Department Chair orientation/training/PD</td>
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<tr>
<td>• orients new faculty to College and department</td>
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<tr>
<td>• organizes PD/Vac scheduling and reporting</td>
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<td>• fosters a positive work environment (eg: recognizes &amp;</td>
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encourages success, awards nominations)  
• supervises other department administrators and staff  
• interprets and implements the Collective Agreement(s) (LFA and CUPE)  
• ensures exams and grades are completed and entered by deadlines  
• encourages career development  
• provides personal reference letters (for faculty)  
• approves and recommends where appropriate to Deans/President short term alternate duty/leave requests  

RESPONSIBILITIES:  
• trains and orients new staff  
• second approver for student aides, work-study students and staff (including time sheets)  
• supervises organization of conferences  
• resolves conflicts  
• solves personnel problems  
• coordinates group Professional Development Projects with/or delegated to Assistant Chair, Faculty Liaison

| FINANCE (FIN) | DUTIES:  
| • plans supplies & capital equipment requests, final approver  
| • prepares and monitors budgets |

SCHEDULING (SCH) DUTIES: Following is done in conjunction with Assistant Chair, Faculty Liaison and/or Administrative Officer.  
• prepares and revises course schedules  
• liaises with other departments re: support course scheduling  
• prepares enrolment projections  
• checks final-exam schedule  
• assigns faculty and staff schedules

| STUDENTS (STD) | DUTIES:  
| • grade appeals (organizes appeal committee and process, communicates with student/Registrar)  
| • student conduct inquiries from faculty  
| • faculty conduct inquiries from students |
Bibliography


