

AMSPDC New Chairs Interim Department Chairs Session

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Statistics

- Average Tenure of Pediatric Department Chair: 5 years
- Average Annual Turnover 17%
- Remained chair for the 11 years of the study: 10%
- Average length of interim chair role (Internal medicine) increased from 1.3 to 2.3 years in the last 4 decades
- Percentage of interim chairs who became permanent chairs increased over that period from 4.5% to 26.25%
- Few Colleges of Medicine/Departments have succession plans

PERSPECTIVES VIEWPOINTS

- Interim chairs are being appointed more frequently, serving for longer periods of time, and increasingly assuming permanent chair positions.
- The most important role as interim chair is to provide stability during a time of transition and establish transparency with open and frequent communication.
- Interim chairs identified issues relating to people, communication, and finances as their most significant challenges.

Words of Wisdom

- Know what you're getting into—establish clear expectations from the dean before you commit to serve.
- Ensure that you are empowered to act—be more than a placeholder.
- Demonstrate your ability to lead—identify and act on “quick win” opportunities.
- Develop a cohesive leadership team.
- Practice service leadership—your success depends on the development of others.

Words of Wisdom

- Learn to delegate and hold others accountable.
- Be prepared for changes in your relationships with colleagues—it can be lonely at the top.
- Practice the Golden rule—live your shared values of integrity, trust, and fairness.
- Communicate openly and often—promptly meet with key stakeholders after your appointment.

Words of Wisdom

- Speak up—your new role requires you to be bold and courageous (even when it is uncomfortable).
- Be available—being there is half the battle.
- Ask for help—you are not expected to have all of the answers.
- Cultivate mentors—fellow chairs and senior administrators are eager to share.
- Carpe diem—seize the incredible learning opportunity you have been given.

Words of Wisdom

- Study the basics of administration, leadership, and finance.
- Take time to think—chairs are architects and strategists.
- Conduct a personal and departmental strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats/obstacles analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- Establish your department's mission, vision, shared values, and strategies—you need to know where you want to go and how you plan to get there.
- Be realistic—recognize your department's role within the organization.

Words of Wisdom

- Be credible—your effectiveness depends on your ability to remain engaged in patient care, education, research, and service.
- Limit and balance—adjust your day-to-day responsibilities to accommodate your new role.
- Make deliberate choices about what you are not going to do—you cannot do everything.

Dilemma of Department Chair

