An Exploration of Academic Department Chairs in British Columbia Public Colleges

by

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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Abstract

The overriding goal of this mixed method study was to contribute to the relatively small documented body of literature on BC public college chairs by providing a descriptive account of the chair position and chair people from the perspective of the people performing the chair role and from an analysis of college documents and faculty collective agreements. The specific purposes were: 1) to gain an understanding of the position of academic department chair; 2) to gain an understanding of the people who perform the role of academic department chair in BC public colleges; 3) to identify and describe the challenges and successes experienced by chairs in BC public colleges; and 4) to explore strategies to improve the position of chair in BC public colleges.

Publicly-available government policy documentation, chair job descriptions, and faculty collective agreements of all 11 BC public colleges were analyzed. In addition, all 11 public colleges were invited to participate in an online survey consisting of 76 fixed-format and open-ended questions. Ten colleges participated with a response rate of 53.4%, representing 125 chairs of the 234 chairs serving at the 10 colleges.

Survey responses were analyzed applying Kahn's et al. (1964) Organizational Role theory and Mintzberg’s (1979) theory of Professional Bureaucracy as a theoretical framework. Four main conclusions, each one corresponding to each of the four main purposes, emerged from the study: 1) the chair position in BC public colleges is a joint faculty and administration temporary position, assigned with multiple tasks and roles that guide the chair person in serving students and faculty; 2) BC public college chair people are leaders with no official authority who are guided more by altruistic motives rather than by self-serving financial motives and/or career ambitions; 3) the inherent nature of the chair’s dual role and the professional bureaucratic nature of post-secondary educational institutions prevent the elimination of all role conflict experienced by BC public college chairs but it is possible to reduce or eliminate four of the six types of role conflict; 4) strategies to improve BC public colleges’ chair position include a reduction in chairs’ work load, a plan to improve communication and educate members in the chair’s role-set about both the dual role of the chair position and the professional bureaucratic nature of public colleges.
Keywords:  BC public college; academic department chair; professional bureaucracy; role conflict; role ambiguity; role overload;
To My Family
Acknowledgements

Had it not been for Dr. Geoff Madoc-Jones, this project would not have been started. His guidance, encouraging support, and constructive feedback to my initial attempts gave me the confidence to tackle a much larger project than the one I initially envisioned. For his guidance, his intellect, his vision and involvement in the creation of the Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership program, and for his refreshing, often self-deprecating sense of humour, I will always remember and be grateful to Dr. Madoc-Jones. My gratitude extends to Dr. Tom Roemer, who despite managing an exceptionally busy schedule, agreed to serve on my thesis committee. Tom’s prompt and encouraging feedback, his challenging suggestions and pivotal comments at key stages throughout the process substantially improved the final product.

Had it not been for Dr. Michelle Pidgeon, this project would not have been completed. Upon the sad, unexpected passing of Dr. Madoc-Jones, Michelle became my senior thesis supervisor, a role in which she excelled. Her patience, kindness, and wise counsel far exceeded any obligation attached to the role. Time and time again I was awed and humbled by the depths of her critiques, her clear directions, her encouraging remarks, her empathy. I cannot thank you enough, Michelle.

A grateful thank you to each of the 125 chairs who gave their precious time to provide thoughtful, intelligent, insightful responses to the many online survey questions. A special thank you is also extended to Deborah Greene, Catherine Mack, Bruce McCulloch, Lorraine Poulsen, Carolyn Standerwick, Clarabell Thalheimer, and Virginia Thalheimer who pilot tested the online survey and whose insights and suggestions improved the questionnaire; to Monique Tatum who shared her word processing skills with patience and humor; to Pat McCulloch who shone a light on statistical software; to my professors and classmates in the Victoria EdD cohort; to the Camosun College Faculty Association for providing financial assistance; and to the EdD office staff for assisting me countless times throughout the process.
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<td>BC</td>
<td>British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DQAB</td>
<td>Degree Quality Assessment Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPSE</td>
<td>Faculty Post-Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSEA</td>
<td>Post-Secondary Employers’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFU</td>
<td>Simon Fraser University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBC</td>
<td>University of British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVIC</td>
<td>University of Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
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# Glossary

<table>
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<th>Definition</th>
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<td>Academic Department Chair</td>
<td>The official administrative head or leader of an academic unit within a school or faculty within a college. A position held by faculty members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Department or Division</td>
<td>A unit that specializes in and is responsible for instruction and research in a subject matter or academic discipline. Typically, the smallest administrative and budgetary academic unit within a college that is headed or led by an academic department chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Discipline</td>
<td>A branch of knowledge that can either be a component of a broader field of study or a field of study in itself. For example, physics and chemistry are academic disciplines within the science field of study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC Public College</td>
<td>A post-secondary educational institution designated under the College and Institute Act [RSBC 1996] and financially funded in whole or in part by the BC Provincial Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing or Regular Faculty</td>
<td>A faculty member who has successfully completed a probationary appointment and has automatically received a continuing appointment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>A person designated by the college as the administrative head of a school that includes two or more academic departments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Term used to describe instructors/teachers in a public college who are members of the college’s faculty association; may also describe certain non-teaching personnel such as librarians and counsellors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-role Conflict</td>
<td>Role senders from the focal person’s multiple role sets send competing messages to the focal person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-sender Conflict</td>
<td>Two or more members in the same role set send opposing or contradictory messages to the focal person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra-sender Conflict</td>
<td>A single member of a role set sends incompatible messages to the focal person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Role Theory</td>
<td>The study of the behaviour of human beings within the social systems of formal organizations, which are pre-planned, task-oriented, and hierarchical in nature (Kahn et al., 1964).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-role Conflict</td>
<td>Requirements of a role violate the focal person’s personal code of ethics or moral values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Bureaucracy</td>
<td>A bureaucracy in which highly trained professionals perform the organization’s core work and by virtue of their expertise are entrusted with a considerable amount of decision-making operational authority (Mintzberg, 1995).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role Ambiguity</td>
<td>The focal person experiences a lack of clarity with regard to the tasks he/she is expected to perform, labeled task ambiguity, and with regard to how others evaluate his/her performance of the tasks, labeled evaluation ambiguity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload</td>
<td>Various role senders communicate expectations to the focal person to perform tasks that are legitimate and mutually compatible but impossible for one person to complete within given time limits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>School or Faculty</td>
<td>The larger organizational unit comprised of all the academic departments that offer courses and programs within a School's specific field of study, e.g. a School of Business’s field of study is Business and some of the specific subjects or academic disciplines that define and classify departments are Accounting, Finance, Information Systems, Management and Marketing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>One’s anticipation of his or her inability to respond adequately to a perceived demand accompanied by the anticipation of negative consequences for an inadequate response. Stress is the result of the respondents’ interpretation of stimuli and other events in their environment (Gmelch &amp; Burns, 1994, p. 83).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Faculty</td>
<td>A faulty member who has a term appointment with a pre-established end date.</td>
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Problem

Within the governance structures of post-secondary educational institutions, the position of academic department chair is one that lies at the borders between “management and labour”. The contradictory term “peer administrator” has been used to express its liminal and at times ambiguous role. Department chairs are often not only members of their faculty associations but also members of their colleges’ middle management teams. They perform both teaching and administrative duties, and though they tend not to have formal authority over department faculty members, they make decisions which affect faculty teaching assignments, influence course and program curriculum decisions, and provide key input into their institution’s policies and procedures. Researchers estimate that almost 80 percent of all administrative decisions at colleges and universities are made at the department level, and that “much of the work of universities and colleges gets done at the academic department level” (Wolverton et al, 1999, 2005, p. 227).

Research regarding academic department chairs at universities in United States is well established, but that has not been the case with respect to Canadian universities. In her recently completed doctoral thesis, An Examination of Academic Department Chairs in Canadian Universities, Lydia Boyko (2009) makes note of a few current studies on the impact of chair leadership as well as chair stress and satisfaction factors in specific departments at specific Canadian universities, but reports that she “could not locate exclusively - Canadian references that describe the position in its totality” (p. 1). Boyko (2009) concludes that although “The discussion of academic department chairs in the literature of non-Canadian origin is prevalent and systematic,.....academic department chairs in Canadian universities have not been studied extensively and the historical foundation for the function is fragmented” (p. 1).
As the literature review in this dissertation will demonstrate, research is even less established regarding academic department chairs in British Columbia (BC) public colleges. Though Boyko’s study provides valuable insight into the world of academic department chairs in Canadian universities, it does not address department chairs in the BC public college system. At the time of this study, there was no documented research study that involved collecting and examining responses from chairs at BC public colleges as to their experiences as chairs and their opinions on how to improve the chair position.

This dissertation seeks to fill that research gap and provide a descriptive, comparative study of academic department chairs within the BC public college system from the perspective of the people holding those chair positions, and from an analysis of college documentation describing the chair position. Boyko’s (2009) dissertation presents a descriptive account of academic department chairs in 43 Canadian universities, and it provides the model for this study of academic department chairs in the 11 BC public colleges.

1.2. Situating the Researcher

The topic is of special interest to me, having spent more than 35 years teaching at a BC public college, of which the last ten years were spent as an academic department chair. Initially persuaded by my Dean and colleagues to accept the position, I agreed to be re-appointed an additional two terms because of the absence of applicants. During the ten years, I experienced satisfactions and frustrations with the chair position, and observed other chairs’ satisfactions, and also their frustrations with the chair position. The comment below, offered by one of my colleagues when resigning from her chair position, illustrates her level of frustration.

As a person who never wanted to be chair, and said so at my original interview, and many moments since, I am absolutely exhausted, mentally and physically. I have developed really high cholesterol levels, have hair falling in clumps from my head (I know – guys will not have sympathy) and my allergies have intensified to an alarming point. My doctor has recommended I take time off immediately, but I am committed to help until the end of the term. (Email communication from Chair to department faculty, September 2009).
The chair’s explanation for resigning her position raises some interesting questions. For example, what prompted this individual to accept the chair position in the first place? Why does she feel committed to continue to help out, even when her doctor advises otherwise? What caused the stress that resulted in the deterioration of her health? Is the cause a systemic weakness of the chair position? Do other chairs experience similar stress levels? Is this chair typical of the other college chairs in BC’s public colleges? How do chairs’ actual experiences compare to the documented requirements of the chair position? Can chairs offer suggestions to improve the chair position?

The intent of this study is to seek answers to questions, such as those posed above, about the academic department chair position in the BC public college system.

1.3. Purpose of Research

This study has four purposes. First, to understand and describe the position of academic department chair in the 11 BC public colleges; second, to understand and describe the people who perform the role of academic department chair in BC public colleges; third, to examine the successes and challenges facing the academic department chair role in BC public colleges; and fourth, to explore strategies to improve the academic department chair position in BC public colleges.

1.4. Research Questions

This research study will be guided by four core questions, presented below, and 10 subsidiary questions, presented in Table 12 in Section 6 of Chapter 3.

1. What are the features and functions of the academic department chair position in BC public colleges?
2. Who are the people who hold the position and perform the role of academic department chair in BC public colleges?
3. What are the challenges and successes experienced by academic department chair people in BC public colleges?
4. What are strategies to improve the position of academic department chair in BC public colleges?

1.5. **Situating the Site of Study: British Columbia Public College System**

The focus of this research is the position of academic department chair in the 11 public colleges currently operating in BC. This section provides a brief history of BC public colleges and the expansion of BC public colleges’ mandate since they were first established in the early 1960s.

1.5.1. **History of BC Public Colleges**

British Columbia’s existing public post-secondary system, which is made up of 11 colleges, 11 universities, and three institutes, is the result of seemingly constant change over the past fifty years. Dennison and Schuetze (2004) tell us that since the end of World War II, “Reform has been continuous in every aspect of the higher education enterprise, in organization, management, curriculum, accessibility, and finance” (p. 14).

The public college system in BC was established between 1960 and 1975 in response to a rapidly growing number of British Columbians seeking access to post-secondary education. Those British Columbians were unable to attend BC universities because of geographic, economic, and academic barriers. The three universities at the time, University of British Columbia (UBC, established 1915), University of Victoria (UVIC, established 1963), and Simon Fraser University (SFU, established 1965), were located in Vancouver and Victoria only, and offered academic degree programs of a minimum four years in length, with relatively high tuition fees and high academic admission standards.

In 1962, John B Macdonald, the then President of UBC, initiated a study that resulted in a report, named the Macdonald Report. In the report, Macdonald recommended that public colleges be established in several smaller communities throughout the province to allow students to live at home while attending school. His approved proposal modeled the BC college system on the California college system.
Public colleges were established in BC, offering a comprehensive list of programs, with low tuition fees relative to university fees, including academic university transfer courses, vocational and trades training, language training, apprenticeship programs, and open access to high school upgrading which prepared adult students for post-secondary programs (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986, p 23-30).

The BC public college system attracted a diverse student population, and proved to be even more successful than anticipated. The academic university transfer courses were particularly popular. However, many college students, having successfully completed one or two years of university transfer degree studies, chose not to complete their degrees because of family responsibilities and the financial costs of relocating to a university. As a result, in 1989, a selected number of colleges were authorized to offer baccalaureate degrees in conjunction with and under the auspices of existing BC universities. College students were then able to start and complete degree programs at their own colleges. In 1994-95, the selected colleges offering bachelor degree programs were authorized to add University College to their names and to offer both conventional and applied baccalaureate degrees in their own names.

1.5.2. Expansion of BC Colleges’ Mandate

In 2003, baccalaureate degree granting authority was extended to the remaining BC colleges and institutes. Dennison (2006) noted that the wisdom of adding baccalaureate degree programs to BC colleges’ mandate was questioned by “general opinion” (p. 110). There was concern that the degree component of a college’s curriculum may grow at the expense of the non-degree components of the curriculum, placing the comprehensive nature of colleges’ mandate in jeopardy (Dennison, 2006). Geoff Plant voiced the same concern in Campus 2020, his report on BC post-secondary education, commissioned by the BC Premier in 2007. One of Plant’s (2007) recommendations was to “restore the primary focus of community colleges by precluding colleges from granting degrees” (p. 100). The BC government did not repeal colleges’ degree granting authority but it does exercise closer control of college degree programs than of university degree programs through its Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB). Today, eight of the 11 BC public colleges offer baccalaureate degree programs.
As a result of the 2007 Plant report, in 2008, the British Columbia government created five new universities by repealing the “university college” designation and granting university charters to the university colleges. The creation of five new universities resulted in the current BC public post-secondary education system that now consists of 11 universities, 11 colleges, and three institutes. The 11 colleges and three institutes are governed by the College and Institute Act [RSBC 1996] and their mandates are set out in Part 3 of that Act, current as of January 27, 2016, and quoted below:

The objects of a college are to provide comprehensive
(a) courses of study at the first and second year levels of a
baccalaureate degree program,
   (a.1) courses of study for an applied
   baccalaureate degree program,
(b) post-secondary education or training,
   (b.1) adult basic education, and
(c) continuing education

Adding the objective of providing a baccalaureate degree program, Clause (a.1), transformed BC Public Colleges from two-year colleges to four-year degree granting colleges. The transformation is potentially significant for BC colleges, both from an operational perspective and a visionary perspective.

1.6. Definitions and Parameters of Study

This research focuses on “public colleges” in British Columbia, which are post-secondary educational institutions receiving operational and capital funding from the provincial government. As indicated in the previous section, colleges and institutes are designated under the College and Institute Act [RSBC 1996] Chapter 52, current to January 27, 2016. The Act defines colleges and institutes in terms of being designated under the Act, and their objectives, functions and duties as stated in the Act.

“College” means a college designated under this Act (p. 3).

“Provincial institute” means a Provincial institute designated under this Act (p. 4).
“Institution” means a college, Provincial institute or BCIT (p. 4).

The Act sets out the functions and duties of an institution as follows (p. 18, 19): “Subject to this Act and the resources available to the board, an institution must do the following:

(a) establish and maintain courses of instruction;
(b) establish fellowships, scholarships, exhibitions, bursaries, prizes, awards and other aids to encourage proficiency in the subjects taught at the institution;
(c) provide a program of continuing education;
(d) generally promote the objects of the institution.”

The Act describes the objects of a Provincial institute: “The objects of a Provincial institute are to provide instruction and perform other functions designated by the minister under section 2(2)” (p. 8). Section 2(2) states: The minister may designate

(a) technical, vocational, artistic and other post secondary education or training for which instruction must be given at a Provincial institute, or
(b) other functions that a Provincial institute must perform (p. 5).

Regarding colleges, the Act states: “The objects of a college are to provide comprehensive

(a) courses of study at the first and second year levels of a baccalaureate degree program,
(a.1) courses of study for an applied baccalaureate degree program,
(b) post secondary education or training,
(b.1) adult basic education, and
(c) continuing education (p. 8).

The Act designates 11 public colleges: Camosun College (Victoria), College of New Caledonia (Prince George), College of the Rockies (Cranbrook), Douglas College (New Westminster), Langara College (Vancouver), North Island College (Courtenay), Northern Lights College (Dawson Creek), Northwest Community College (Terrace), Okanagan College (Kelowna), Selkirk College (Castlegar), and Vancouver Community College (Vancouver).
Private, for-profit educational institutions and public Provincial institutes are outside the scope of this study and thus are not listed. Table 1, located in Chapter 3, includes more detailed information about each of the colleges.

“Academic Department Chair” is the official administrative head or leader of an academic unit within a faculty or school in a college. The titles “Coordinator” and “Head” describe the same position in some colleges. The department chair is responsible for the courses, programs, students, and faculty involved in teaching within the department’s academic discipline. Chairs are also faculty and are members of their college’s faculty association or union. Due to various titles, such as coordinator, head, chair, associated with the persons responsible for the same role, the term ‘chair’ will be used throughout this paper.

An “Academic Department/Division” is a unit that specializes in, and is responsible for instruction and research in a subject matter or academic discipline. It is typically the smallest administrative and budgetary academic unit within the college, and is headed or led by the academic department chair. The terms division and department will be used interchangeably throughout this paper.

A “School” or “Faculty” is the larger unit, comprised of all the academic departments that offer courses and programs within the School’s specific field of study. For example, a School of Business’s field of study is Business, and some of the specific subjects or academic disciplines used to define and classify departments are Marketing, Management, Finance, Information Systems and Accounting. A School of Science’s field of study is science with disciplines such as Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry.

A “Dean” is the person designated by the college as the administrative head of a school that includes two or more academic departments. The dean’s primary responsibility is to provide administrative services in support of education or training offered by the college. Deans are excluded from, not members of faculty associations or unions and administrative support staff unions.

“Faculty” is the term used to describe instructors/teachers in a public college. Some colleges use the term faculty to also describe certain non-teaching personnel,
such as librarians and counsellors. Each faculty at each college is a member of his/her college’s faculty association or union.

A “Continuing” or “Regular” faculty member is one who has successfully completed a probationary appointment and has automatically received a continuing appointment. A “Term” faculty member is one who has a term appointment with a pre-established end date.

An “academic discipline”, for this study, is a branch of knowledge that can either be a component of a broader field of study or a field of study in itself. For example, history and philosophy are academic disciplines within the arts field of study; and marketing and accounting are academic disciplines within the business field of study; and physics and chemistry are academic disciplines within the science field of study.

1.7. Method and Research Design

The four main purposes of this inquiry are: 1) to gain an understanding of the position of the academic department chair; 2) to gain an understanding of the people who perform the role of academic department chair in BC public colleges; 3) to identify and describe the challenges and successes experienced by chairs in BC public college; and 4) to explore strategies to improve the position of chair in BC public colleges.

The study posed four core research questions. 1) What are the features and functions of the academic department chair position in BC public colleges? 2) Who are the people who hold the position and perform the role of academic department chair in BC public colleges? 3) What are the challenges and successes experienced by academic department chairs in BC public colleges? 4) What are strategies to improve the position of academic department chair in BC public colleges?

The study is exploratory in nature as the researcher’s interest and aim was to conduct an enquiry which would generate data to advance the knowledge of academic department chairs in BC public colleges. Although the study was informed by Kahn’s et al. (1964) Organizational Role theory and Mintzberg’s (1979) theory of Professional Bureaucracies, it began with no theory, no hypothesis to test. A mixed methods
research design (Creswell, 2003) was implemented which involved administering an online survey to BC public college chairs and analyzing publicly-available institutional policy documents and BC public college faculty collective agreements. The study includes a mix of quantitative data gathered from the closed-ended, fixed-format survey questions and qualitative data from the open-ended survey questions. Ethics approval was received from Simon Fraser University on December 31, 2010 and data were collected from May 18, 2011 to June 24, 2011.

The entire BC public college system population consisting of 11 colleges was invited to participate in the online survey, and documents and faculty collective agreements of all 11 public colleges were analyzed. Ten of the 11 colleges participated with a response rate of 53.4%, representing 125 chairs of the 234 chairs serving at the 10 colleges.

1.8. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This study was intentionally focused on the BC public college system only and did not include BC public Institutes and Universities, and private Colleges, Institutes and Universities. Therefore, results are not generalizable to the broader college systems across Canada, however insights may be learned from this study to replicate it in other jurisdictions.

The data sources for this research study were limited to faculty collective agreements, chair job descriptions and chairs serving at BC public colleges only. Of the 11 public colleges invited to participate in the online survey, one college did not participate. Of the 234 chairs serving at the remaining 10 colleges invited to participate in the online survey, 109 invitees (46.6%) did not participate.

Due to the researcher’s own professional demands as an academic department chair and some external factors beyond the researcher’s control, there was considerable delay between the collection of the data and the analysis of the data. The chair online survey was distributed and data collected in the summer of 2011 while the analysis of data was conducted intermittently throughout 2014, 2015, and 2016. While there have been some changes in policies since 2011, for example strategic plans, the BC public
college system and policies examined in this dissertation remain essentially the same. As well, any updates since 2011 to the colleges' collective agreements are not included in this study given the participants were responding to their collective agreements in effect as of summer 2011.

1.9. Significance of Study

The researcher's intent was to create a descriptive account of academic department chairs in BC public colleges that at the time of the study did not exist. The findings of this mixed method study will contribute to the body of knowledge about academic department chairs in BC public colleges, which may benefit BC college leaders, administrators and faculty in their ongoing quest to improve the effectiveness of their colleges. By providing a comparative description of all BC public colleges' chair positions; by identifying the challenges of the chair role, and by exploring chairs' suggestions to improve the chair position, this research study could lead to improvements in the chair position in the BC public college system.

The study is significant also because it involves chairs in the potential restructuring of the chair position. First, it invites chairs to share their experiences and opinions in a non-threatening, confidential format, and second, it incorporates chairs' self-defined successes, challenges, stress issues, aspirations, needs, and recommendations into a potential restructuring process. This involvement creates an environment of trust and respect.

1.10. Summary

Chapter One set out the research problem, which is the lack of documented research studies regarding the chair position in BC public colleges; and the purpose of this study, which is to understand and describe the chair position and the people who perform the chair role in BC public colleges including the chairs' challenges, successes and suggestions to improve the chair position. A mixed methods research design was implemented which involved administering an online survey to BC public college chairs
and collecting quantitative data from the fixed-format survey questions and collecting qualitative data from the open-ended survey questions and from an analysis of college collective agreements.

The BC public college system was established between 1960 and 1975 in response to a growing need by British Columbians to access post-secondary education. The college system proved more successful than anticipated and in 2003 its mandate was extended to include the offering of four-year bachelor degree programming.

Chapter Two presents an overview of the BC public college system, including its origin, mandate, governance, and administrative structure. Also presented is an introduction to the theory of professional bureaucracies and organizational role theory which provide a conceptual perspective of the role of academic department chair and a framework with which to describe and analyze the perceptions and experiences of the chair participants. As well, Chapter Two reviews the literature specific to academic department chairs based on research studies conducted predominately in United States.

The research findings of this study are presented in Chapters Four and Five, and Chapter Six presents conclusions and recommendations based on the research findings. Chapter Four describes the features, such as position title, qualifications, selection process, evaluation, compensation, term length, and reporting relations of the chair position, and the functions, the roles and responsibilities of the chair position, as documented in the colleges’ faculty collective agreements and chair job descriptions and as reported by the people occupying the position of chair in BC public colleges. Chapter Four also presents the motivations, aspirations, and management styles of chairs in BC public colleges as reported by chair participants in the study. Chapter Five examines the challenges and successes experienced and reported by BC public college chairs; and it explores the suggestions to improve the chair position offered by survey chair participants.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review begins with an overview of the British Columbia public college sector, including its origin, mandate, governance, and administrative structure. The organizational structure of colleges as professional bureaucracies is also discussed. Following the overview of the BC public college sector, an introduction to organizational role theory is presented. Organizational role theory provides a conceptual perspective of the role of academic department chair and a framework with which to describe and analyze the perceptions and experiences of the chair participants in this study. The chapter then reviews the literature specific to academic department chairs based on research studies conducted in United States and Canada. Chapter Two is organized as follows: (2.1) History of BC Public Colleges: (2.2) Mandate, Governance and Administrative Structure of BC Public Colleges (2.3) Organizational Structure of BC Public Colleges, (2.4) Organizational Role Theory, (2.5) Review of Research Studies of Academic Department Chairs, and (2.6) Summary.

2.1. History of BC Public Colleges

Canada is a federation of 10 provinces and three territories. British Columbia is one of the 10 provinces. British Columbia’s public post-secondary education system currently consists of 25 public educational institutions that include 11 universities, 11 colleges and three institutes. Dennison and Schuetze (2004) report that the current BC college system is the result of seemingly constant change since its establishment in the 1960s and 1970s.

Reform has been continuous in every aspect of the higher education enterprise, in organization, management, curriculum, accessibility, and finance. (2004, p. 14).
The BC public college system was established between 1960 and 1975 in response to a rapidly growing number of British Columbians seeking access to post-secondary education, but unable to gain access to BC universities because of geographic, economic and academic barriers. The three universities at the time, University of British Columbia (UBC) (est. 1915), University of Victoria (UVIC) (est. 1963), and Simon Fraser University (SFU) (est. 1965) were located in Vancouver and Victoria only, and offered academic degree programs of a minimum four years in length, with relatively high tuition fees and high academic admission standards.

The BC college system was modeled on the California college system and was conceived and proposed in the Macdonald Report, a study initiated in 1962 by the then President of UBC, John B Macdonald. Macdonald (1962) recommended that public colleges be established in several smaller communities throughout the province to allow students to live at home while attending post-secondary school. The colleges offered a comprehensive list of programs, with low tuition fees relative to university fees, that included university transfer courses, vocational and trades training, language training, apprenticeship programs, and open access to high school upgrading which prepared adult students for post-secondary programs (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986, pp. 23-30).

In 1982, the Ministry of Education circulated a planning document to BC colleges, labelled *Integrated Five-Year Planning*, which articulated a mission statement that set out what the government expected of its colleges with respect to providing opportunities to adults. The document also made clear the government’s directive relationship with its colleges. As indicated in the quote below taken from the planning document, public colleges were to serve the public as directed by the economic requirements and priorities established by the provincial government.

The Mission of the College and Institute System of the Province of British Columbia is to provide opportunities to assist adults to meet continuing and changing individual, economic, and societal needs. These opportunities will be provided recognizing the aspirations of individuals, the present and future requirements of Provincial and Canadian society for economic development, priorities of government, and the structure of the educational system of the Province as defined through legislation. (BC Ministry of Education, 1982, p. 5)
Dennison (2006) reports that the BC college system proved to be even more successful than anticipated. “In particular, the academic transfer program attracted a diverse student population who, confronted with financial, geographic, and academic barriers, had previously been unable to enrol in the universities” (2006, p. 109). However, many college students, having successfully completed one or two years of university transfer degree studies, chose not to complete their degrees because of family responsibilities and the financial costs of relocating to a university. As a result, in the late 1980s, a selected number of colleges were authorized to offer baccalaureate degrees in conjunction with and under the auspices of existing BC universities. College students were then able to start and complete degree programs at their own colleges. Dennison (2006) notes that the joint college and university degrees were initially offered in Arts, Science, Education, Commerce, and Nursing, but later included:

a number of “applied” degrees in areas such as Business, Computer Systems, Environmental Studies and Aviation Technology – all subjects outside usual university traditions. (p. 111).

In 1989, the mandates of five BC colleges were expanded to include offering baccalaureate degrees in conjunction with existing British Columbia universities; and in 1994, the five colleges were permitted to offer degrees in their own names. The intent of the expanded mandate was to increase opportunities for college students to complete, at their own colleges, the degree programs they had started at their colleges. Allowing colleges to offer degrees in their own names widened access to starting and completing degree programs, and it also increased the number of British Columbia degree graduates, a number well below Canada’s national average of degree graduates, prior to 1989 (Dennison, 2006).

In 2003, the mandates of all BC public colleges were expanded to include baccalaureate degree programs. Dennison (2006) noted that the wisdom of adding baccalaureate degree programs to the BC colleges’ mandate was questioned by “general opinion”. It was suggested that university level programs undermine the essential values of colleges, such as open access, a focus on teaching rather than research, and comprehensive curriculum. There was concern that the degree component of a college’s curriculum may grow at the expense of the non-degree
components of the curriculum, placing the comprehensive nature of colleges’ mandate in jeopardy (Dennison, p. 110).

Geoff Plant voiced the same concern in *Campus 2020*, his report on BC post-secondary education, commissioned by the BC Premier and Minister of Advanced Education in 2007. In his report, Plant (2007) recommends clarifying the mandates of British Columbia’s post-secondary institutions by repealing the statutory designation of “University College” and transforming the university colleges into new universities, thereby expanding opportunities and access to university degree programs (p.100). Providing the government acted on his recommendation and created new universities, Plant’s (2007) related recommendation was to then “restore the primary focus of community colleges by precluding colleges from granting degrees” (p.100).

As recommended by Plant, the BC Government did repeal the “University College” designation and it did transform the five university colleges into new universities in 2008; but it did not act on Plant’s related recommendation. It did not preclude colleges from granting baccalaureate degrees, and consequently, BC public colleges’ mandates still include baccalaureate degree programs.

### 2.2. Mandate and Governance of BC Public Colleges

As noted in the previous section, the primary function or mandate of BC public colleges was to increase access to post-secondary education in British Columbia. An important feature of increasing access was providing open access to adults who had not completed high school and therefore had historically been denied access to higher education. Hence, BC colleges’ mandate was to teach basic literacy, English as a second language and Math upgrading, as well as providing vocational and technical applied job training, and the first two years of university studies. As explained in the previous section, over time, the mandate of BC public colleges broadened from a local community focus to a provincial focus which includes baccalaureate degree programs.

Since 2003 legislation changes, the government chose to exercise closer control of college degree programs than of university degree programs. Unlike universities, colleges are required to submit proposals for each new college degree program to the
Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB), a provincial government agency. The DQAB’s assessment of each degree proposal is based on government criteria, including provincial government plans, goals, objectives and resources. The Minister approves degree programs based upon the recommendation of the DQAB. Thus, Dennison’s assertion in 2006, that a university college’s mandate must be understandable, non-contradictory, and achievable, in order for that university college to be successful, is still applicable to British Columbia colleges today. Once a college’s mandate is clear, Dennison (2006) argues further, the college’s curriculum, governance and administrative structure can be defined.

Acceptance and success of the university college rested largely upon creating a clear and unambiguous mandate which was understood by all – government, board, administration, faculty, students and the wider community. Once the function of the organization is clear, its form, as reflected in curriculum, governance and administrative structure, should follow. (p. 111)

A research study of baccalaureate degree-granting colleges in Alberta and BC conducted by Levin from 1998 to 2001 revealed that those colleges’ functions or purposes changed as a result of introducing baccalaureate degree programs. Based on his study’s findings, Levin (2001b) concludes:

The changes brought about by the introduction of baccalaureate-degree programming in the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta suggest that the purposes of these institutions altered as they implemented baccalaureate degree programming. (Levin, 2001b, cited by Levin, 2004, p. 7)

The change was from a single purpose, that of a community college, to dual purposes, those of a university and a college.

On the one hand, the colleges claimed to uphold community college principles such as a comprehensive curriculum, open access, and responsiveness to the community. (Dennison & Levin, 1988, cited by Levin, 2004, p. 8).

On the other hand, the colleges’ allegiance was to higher-level programming, as can be noted in their resource allocations and curricular focus, which favored baccalaureate programs. While some lower-level programming was eliminated or starved in both Alberta and British

The governance and administrative structure of BC colleges should, according to Dennison’s reasoning, follow the function or purpose of BC colleges. Levin explains that governance includes decision-making, but also includes the internal structures and processes of institutions, and the external bodies which oversee and interact with the institution.

While customarily viewed as a system of formal and informal decision making, and a structure that reflects authority and hierarchy, governance also pertains to relationships both within an institution and between the institution and other entities, such as government, business, and the public. (Marginson & Considine, 2000, cited by Levin, 2008, p. 67)

One of the external bodies involved in the governance of British Columbia post-secondary educational institutions is the provincial government. The Canadian constitution places education under provincial jurisdiction, which means that each province establishes, organizes and manages its own secondary and post-secondary education system. The legislation which confers powers on the universities in British Columbia is the University Act, which also states that “the minister may not interfere in the exercise of powers conferred on a university” (Dennison, 2006, p. 121).

According to Dennison (2006), the governance of Canadian universities, with respect to decision making, is based upon the principle of bicameral management, a political model in which two or more parties are involved in governing and decision-making. Theoretically, university financial decisions are made by an administrative board of governors, and academic decisions are made by an academic senate; although, as Dennison points out, such decisions are rarely independent of each other. Both university boards and senates include administrators, faculty, support staff, and student members, while senates are predominately composed of faculty members (p. 118).

Traditionally, university administrators are seconded from faculty positions or hired from outside with a concurrent faculty appointment to the appropriate department in their discipline area. After serving a term or two, of five or six years each, they return
to their faculty academic role. Thus, the influence of the academic point of view in the
decision making process, both from the board and senate faculty members, and from the
seconded academic administrators, is significant (Dennison, 2006, p. 119).

British Columbia public colleges do not enjoy the same level of autonomy that
universities enjoy. Autonomy is not a formal condition of BC colleges’ legal existence.
The legislative authority for colleges and institutes is the College and Institute Act.
Unlike the University Act, which states that “the minister may not interfere in the exercise
of powers conferred on a university”; the College and Institute Act (RSBC 1996) states
that the minister responsible for post-secondary education has the power to “establish, in
consultation with the boards, policy or directions for post-secondary education and
training in British Columbia” (p. 3). Dennison (2006) acknowledges that these powers
have rarely been exercised, yet the provision still remains (p. 121).

In 1991, the BC government made changes to the membership representation on
college boards, and it created a new body, named Education Council. Both changes
made the governance of BC colleges more comparable to the governance of
universities. College Board representation was made comparable to university boards
with the inclusion of representatives from faculty, staff, and student bodies. The
colleges’ Education Council is comparable to the universities’ Senate, in terms of its
membership and in terms of its mandate. Education Council’s membership is faculty
dominated: 10 of the 20 voting members are faculty, and the remaining 10 members are
representatives of administration, the board, support staff, and the student body. The
council is empowered legislatively to have decision-making authority with respect to
curriculum changes, and as such, it shares authority with the governing Board. The
College Board’s powers and duties include the direction, administration and
management of the college, the appointment of a president for the college, and making
decisions regarding the introduction and cancellation of courses and programs (Levin,
2000, p. 106).

Education Council is the sole formal advisor on educational matters to the
College Board. This advice includes development of educational policy for a mission
statement, educational goals, strategies and priorities of the institution. It pertains to all
curricula and policies related to admissions and faculty qualifications. The council is
also the pre-eminent authority over student academic performance, including policies for evaluation and student appeals. Joint approval from the Council and Board is required when determining policies for course transfer credit equivalencies (Levin, 2008, p. 71).

Dennison (2006) observes that, unlike university administrators, college administrators usually chose administration as a career choice rather than as a temporary leave from an academic role, and thus college administrators have become a “class” separate and distinct from faculty (p. 119). In his 1998 report, Degree Programs at the university colleges: A British Columbia success story, Petch (1998) reports that at several colleges, concerns were expressed that college career administrators eventually lose touch with the needs of students and faculty, becoming absorbed in administrative tasks at the expense of academic matters (cited by Dennison, 2006, p.119).

In Yanks, Canucks, and Aussies: Governance as Liberation (2008), John Levin offers an international perspective on how institutional contexts shape governance in community colleges in California, United States, British Columbia, Canada, and Victoria, Australia. He contends that BC public colleges are on the path to bicameral governance, the joint governing of a college by its Board and faculty, due to several factors, specifically, the unionization of college faculty province wide, BC colleges’ university transfer function and baccalaureate degree-granting status, the creation of Education Council, and the inclusion of faculty representatives on College Boards. So that now, a considerable role for faculty participation in institutional decision-making is recognized both by legislation and through collective bargaining agreements.

Indeed, if board-only authority is viewed as unicameral governance, then board and faculty authority is viewed as bicameral governance. Thus, public colleges in British Columbia were jointly governed: formally through the education council and the governing board, and informally through other mechanisms such as collective bargaining agreements and provincial government behaviors that accorded faculty at the table for institutional decisions. (Levin, 2008, p. 71)

Levin (2008) further argues that Plant reinforces the bicameral ethos in his 2020 Report by remaining silent on the bicameral nature of governance in the same colleges he recommends rescinding baccalaureate degree-granting status. Levin surmises that
“Silence in this case reflects acceptance of the practice” (p. 72), and he concludes that college faculty do participate in the governance of colleges.

Thus, governance of British Columbia’s colleges is consistent with principles of equity, and faculty have an equal if not a dominant role in the functioning of colleges. (Levin, 2008, p. 72)

Levin’s proposition that faculty’s participation in college governance is recognized and sanctioned by BC provincial legislation and by BC college faculty’s college collective bargaining agreements is supported and strengthened by faculty’s involvement in the colleges’ core work. The following section presents the notion that in addition to legislation and collective bargaining agreements, faculty’s participation in college governance is required due to the complex nature of colleges’ core work and to faculty’s role in performing that complex core work. This notion is derived from Mintzberg’s (1979) theory about professional bureaucracies in which highly trained professionals perform the organization’s core work and by virtue of their expertise are entrusted with a considerable amount of decision-making operational authority. Section 2.3 begins with a description of the organizational structure of BC public colleges, and then provides a summary of Mintzberg’s theory and its application to BC public colleges.

2.3. Organizational Structure of a BC Public College

A typical BC public college’s internal community includes students and three categories of college employees identified as administration, support staff, and faculty. The college has the classic pyramidal hierarchical organizational structure and it follows the classical organizational principles of chain-of-command and of unity-of-command. In organizations set up on the basis of hierarchical relationships the chain-of-command principle is exemplified by a clear and single flow of authority from the top to the bottom of the organization (Mintzberg 1979; Rizzo et al. 1970). In BC public colleges, the title of the top person, the chief executive officer, is President. The President is appointed by and reports directly to the Board of Governors. The second position in the line of authority is the Vice-President (VP), who is appointed by and reports to the President. Some colleges also have Associate VPs. The third position in the line of authority is the Dean, who reports to the VP and is appointed by the President on the advice of the VP.
The number of vice-presidents varies depending on the size of the college. Typically, there are, at minimum, a vice-president of education or academics, who is responsible for the academic courses and programs the college delivers, and a vice-president of administration or administration and finance, who is responsible for the college’s budget and administering the college’s support services such as human resources, physical facilities, and information technology services.

The portfolio of the VP of Education, that of overseeing the delivery and curriculum development of the college’s academic courses and programs, is organized into units typically named schools. Each school specializes in a particular field of study and is responsible for the curriculum development and delivery of courses and programs related to its field of study. Examples of fields of study are arts, science, trades, health, and business; and the corresponding schools may be School of Arts and Science, School of Trades, School of Health and School of Business. The title of the administrative head of a school is Dean. Deans report to the VP Education and are appointed by the President on the advice/recommendation of the VP Education. A copy of a BC public college’s organizational chart which is illustrative of BC public colleges’ organizational structures is presented in Figure 1.

The second principle typically adhered to in a hierarchical structure is unity of command. According to the principle of unity-of-command an employee should receive orders from one superior only in any action or group of activities having the same objectives. Theoretically, the single chain-of-command principle is consistent with the principle of unity-of-command (Rizzo et al., 1970). For instance, as espoused by the chain-of-command principle, faculty members within the School of Trades receive and obey orders from the Dean of Trades; and as espoused by the unity-of-command principle, Trades faculty receive and obey orders from the Dean of Trades only, not from deans of other schools.
Each school within a college is further organized into academic departments, though departments are not usually depicted on college organizational charts. An academic department is comprised of faculty members who have specialized in and who teach within the same or related discipline. Examples of academic departments are the Nursing Department in the School of Health, the History Department in the School of
Arts, the Math Department in the School of Sciences, the Carpentry Department in the School of Trades, and the Marketing Department in the School of Business. The title of the administrative heads of the academic departments within each school is Academic Department Chair. Academic department chairs may be elected by department faculty, or selected by the dean, or selected by a committee comprised of faculty and the dean. Once the choice of a chair has been made, the dean recommends to the VP Education that the proposed chair be appointed. On the advice of the VP Education, the President then appoints the proposed person to the position of chair. Often the President delegates this authority and takes no direct role in appointing the chair.

BC public colleges’ faculty collective agreements categorize the academic department chair position as a faculty position to be held by regular faculty members within the academic departments. The chair position carries no formal authoritative power, which means that chairs have no official formal supervisory authority over their faculty colleagues. Consistent with the chain-of-command principle, all faculty members, including chairs, receive and obey orders from their school’s dean. Faculty members within a department do not receive and obey orders from their chair (BC Public Colleges’ Collective Agreements).

BC colleges’ dean, vice-president and president positions are categorized as administration and are exempt positions, excluded from faculty unions or associations, which supports Dennison’s (2006) point, that unlike university administrators, college administrators are a class separate and distinct from faculty. That said, some colleges’ faculty collective agreements provide an option for faculty obtaining administrator positions within their own college to retain faculty status by paying an annual fee to the faculty union. The option is available for a period of three months after assuming the exempt position. Consequently, administrators who have exercised this option are eligible to move into a faculty position providing one is available, if and when they resign their administrative post (e.g., Camosun College collective agreement 1.09).

Though colleges have a hierarchical structure, the decision-making power within a college is more decentralized than centralized primarily because the college’s work is complex, requiring that it be performed and controlled by formally trained specialists, referred to as professionals (Mintzberg, 1979, p. 349). Mintzberg (1979) describes the
organizational structure of colleges and universities as professional bureaucracies and offers an explanation of professional bureaucracies as compared to machine bureaucracies. He explains that a bureaucracy is a structure that relies on standardization of methods or procedures such as rules, policies, and specifications that breaks tasks into simple steps so as to regulate correct job performance behaviour (p. 315). A machine bureaucracy is found in simple, stable environments where work can be standardized into simple, repetitive tasks that require a minimum of skill and training to perform. The result is in an organization with narrowly defined jobs, workers and supervisors with little discretion, and the need for an elaborate administrative structure with a fully developed middle-line hierarchy and centralized decision-making authority resting at a single point. Manufacturing firms who mass produce products such as paper products, tobacco products, clothes; and service firms such as banks, and government agencies such as post offices, police forces, fire departments, tax collectors are machine bureaucracies because their work is routine and because they are accountable to the public for their actions (Mintzberg, 1995, p. 260).

A professional bureaucracy, Mintzberg (1995) further explains, is an organization whose work is so complex in contrast to the work of a machine bureaucracy, it must rely on the standardization or similarity of the specialists’ skills and knowledge to ensure correct job performance rather than relying on the standardization of methods - the breaking of tasks into simple steps (p. 282). Examples of professional bureaucracies other than colleges and universities are hospitals, professional accounting firms, engineering firms, medical firms and law firms. The characteristic common to all these organizations is that they are populated by formally trained specialists referred to as professionals who perform the primary purpose of their organizations. The professional employees are the operating core and they perform two main tasks: diagnose the situation or contingency, and execute the solution or program that will deal with the contingency. This process of diagnosing and executing is known as pigeonholing, because though the contingencies and solution programs are complex they are known situations with standardized solution programs. In essence, the professional employee places the situation in the appropriate pigeonhole and then selects the standardized skill program to solve the contingency. Mintzberg (1995)
cautions that though the situations and solution skill sets are standardized, they still require expert specialized judgment.

But no matter how standardized the knowledge and skills, their complexity ensures that considerable discretion remains in their application. No two professionals – no two surgeons or engineers or social workers – ever apply them in exactly the same way. Many judgments are required. (p. 283)

Consequently, professional bureaucracies, though hierarchical, have highly decentralized structures, in which the decision-making operational authority resides with the professional worker, specifically the accountant, the medical doctor, the lawyer, the engineer. In a college or university, the faculty member, in addition to being a professional educator/teacher may also be a lawyer, nurse, accountant, psychiatrist, engineer or some other professional. The professional employees’ decision-making authority is derived from their specialized knowledge and formal training, and many of the standards they apply when making decisions originate with their self-governing professional associations who set universal standards and ensure they are applied by all practicing the profession. The machine bureaucracy, on the other hand, generates its own standards that are enforced by its line managers.

So whereas the machine bureaucracy relies on authority of a hierarchical nature – the power of office – the professional bureaucracy emphasizes authority of a professional nature – the power of expertise (Mintzberg, 1995, p. 283).

The operating units of professional workers tend to be large. Since the tasks professionals perform require extensive knowledge and training and are too complex to be standardized into simple steps which can be supervised by managers who do not have equal specialized knowledge and formal training, the professionals effectively work independently and directly with their clients, or patients, or students. For example, faculty instructors prepare their lectures, assignments, tests, plan their classes, coordinate their office hours, and work directly with students, separately and independently of their dean and their chair. Because there is little or no direct supervision of faculty performing their teaching role, a dean’s span of supervision can be quite wide. For example, the Camosun College School of Business functions effectively
with approximately 60 continuing faculty, 30 term faculty for most the year, and 14 support staff reporting to one dean. Typically, the academic hierarchy at most post-secondary institutions is similarly thin (Mintzberg, 1995, p. 284).

The subject of this study is the role of the academic department chair in BC public colleges. It is a role held by the professionals in a professional bureaucracy, a college, who perform both the work of the professional faculty, that of teaching, as well as the work of professional administrators in a college, that of managing an academic unit. However, unlike the Dean and VP administrative positions, the chair position typically carries no official formal authoritative power. To help understand the chair role, the following section introduces organizational role theory that provides a conceptual perspective of the chair role and a framework with which to describe and analyze the perceptions and experiences of the chair participants in this study.

2.4. Organizational Role Theory

Role Theory is the study of the behavior of human beings with defined social identities within given situations (Biddle, 1986). As Biddle (1986) explains, role theory originates with actors in the theatre and their performances of scripted roles.

If performances in the theatre were differentiated and predictable because actors were constrained to perform “parts” for which “scripts” were written, then it seemed reasonable to believe that social behaviors in other contexts were also associated with parts and scripts understood by social actors. (p. 68)

Continuing the theatrical metaphor, Biddle observed that role theory concerns itself with three concepts; identities that are assumed by social participants, termed social position; defined characteristic social behaviors, termed role, and expectations or scripts for behavior that are understood by all participants and adhered to by the performers, termed expectation. Role theory postulates that depending on the situation and participants’ respective social identities; participants’ behaviors will be different but they will be predictable (Biddle, 1986).
Biddle (1986) explains there are several different versions of role theory due to disagreements among role theorists as to the reasons people have expectations, and also due to role theorists’ varying, though overlapping, definitions of the term *role*. Biddle further clarifies that most theorists are similar in philosophic orientation, that of presuming human awareness, and because of this philosophic orientation, theorists tend to adopt research methods requiring research subjects to report their own or others’ expectations (p. 69).

Most versions of role theory presume that expectations are the major generators of roles, that expectations are learned through experience, and that persons are aware of the expectations they hold. This means that role theory presumes a thoughtful, socially aware human actor. (Biddle, 1986, p. 69)

Based on the assumption that roles are the result of expectations held by participants who are aware of their expectations, role theory is an appropriate theory to apply to the study of the role of academic department chair. The chairs in BC public colleges surveyed for this study were thoughtful, socially aware, and able to report their own and others’ expectations. The particular approach to role theory that is the most relevant framework for this researcher’s study is organizational role theory because it focuses on the social systems of formal organizations that are preplanned, task-oriented, and hierarchical in nature (Biddle, 1986). The social systems of BC public colleges fit this definition accurately. As discussed in the previous two sections, the establishment of BC public colleges was preplanned by the BC Government; the colleges are task-oriented, committed to fulfilling their mandate to teach/educate adults; and colleges’ organizational structures are hierarchical in design.


In *Organizational Stress: Studies in Role Conflict and Ambiguity* (Kahn et al., 1964), the authors begin by providing definitions of the terms needed to understand their theory. *Organization* is defined as an open social system with boundaries determined by the relationships and behaviours of individuals within the system. An example of
organization is a BC public college. Role is the potential behaviour or set of activities to be performed by an individual who occupies a defined position or status in the organization. Role set is a group of individuals in the organization whose activities or work directly inter-relates. The role set of one individual, termed focal person, includes the focal person's immediate supervisor, subordinates, and other persons with whom the focal person must work closely. In a BC college, a chair's role set may include the chair's dean, department faculty, students the chair is teaching and advising, other chairs, and the school's support staff. Role expectations are the “prescriptions and proscriptions” (Kahn et al., 1964, p.14) held by the members of a role set. Since all members in a role set depend upon each other’s performance in some way, the members develop beliefs and attitudes, resulting in expectations, about how each member should and should not perform his/her role.

As emphasized by Kahn et al. (1964) a crucial point of their theoretical view “is that the activities (potential behaviors) [sic] which define a role consist of the expectations of members of the role set, and that these expectations are communicated or ‘sent’ to the focal person” (p. 15). These communicated expectations, termed role pressures, are both informational and influential because the role senders are both informing and attempting to influence the behavior of the focal person to conform to their expectations.

Just as expectations are sent by the role sender, so they are received by the focal person. How closely the message received correlates with the message sent depends on many things; for example, the focal person’s perceptions of the message, the sender’s communications skills, the sender’s status or position in the role set, and the substantive content of the message. However closely the sent and received message correspond, it is important to note that it is the received message that has immediate influence on the focal person.

In addition to the role pressures from other members in a focal person’s role set, each person is also a “self-sender”, and sends messages reflecting his/her own expectations to him/herself. Each focal person has a set of values and expectations, a perception of his/her position, and the behaviours appropriate to that position. As explained by Kahn et al. (1964), “we conceive of the person as having an occupational
self-identify and as motivated to behave in ways which affirm and enhance the valued attributes of that identity” (p. 17).

According to Kahn et al. (1964), the focal person experiences *role conflict* if and when members of the role set, including the focal person, impose pressures on the focal person toward different kinds of behavior. Conflicting expectations create psychological conflict for the focal person. Role conflict is defined as:

The simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) sets of pressure such that compliance with one would make more difficult compliance with the other. In the extreme case, compliance with one set of pressures excludes completely the possibility of compliance with another set; the two sets of pressures are mutually contradictory. (Kahn et al. 1964, p. 19)

Kahn et al. identify four types of role conflict; *intra-sender conflict*, *inter-sender conflict*, *inter-role conflict*, and *person-role conflict*.

**Intra-sender conflict** is when a single member of a role set sends incompatible messages to the focal person, for example, a superior/supervisor directs a manager to develop a new product but doesn’t provide additional resources to execute the directive. In a college, examples of *intra-sender conflict* may be a dean directing chairs to accept increased enrolments of international students but providing no increase in English language support for the students; or a dean directing a chair to increase the department’s class size but providing no accompanying increase in instructor support such as student markers to compensate for the instructor’s increased workload.

**Inter-sender conflict** is when two or more members of the role set send opposing contradictory messages to the focal person. In a college, an example might be the dean pressuring the chair to schedule faculty timetables such that faculty in-office time is increased so as to increase faculty presence on campus, while faculty pressure the chair to schedule timetables which decrease faculty in-office time on campus, preferring to do preparation and marking work at home.

**Inter-role conflict** is when the focal person belongs to more than one role set and demands from role-senders in one role set compete with demands from role-senders in other role sets. For example, a woman who holds a chair position in a college may
belong to multiple role sets due to her roles as a manager, a teacher, a mother, a wife, and a daughter of elderly parents. She will experience *inter-role conflict* when parent care-taking, child care-taking, spouse responsibilities, teacher responsibilities and manager responsibilities compete for her time and attention.

*Person-role conflict* occurs when requirements of a role violate the focal person’s personal code of ethics or moral values. For instance, a chair’s code of ethics regarding treatment of faculty colleagues is violated when the chair is placed in the position of participating in the manipulation of term instructor contracts to prevent or minimize the possibility that term instructors attain continuing permanent faculty status, known as regularization, without formally competing for the continuing, permanent position. Or a chair may be pressured into reducing academic admission requirements in an effort to increase enrolment, thereby violating the chair’s sense of fairness to students in that they are potentially being set up for failure due to their lack of preparedness, and violating the chair’s sense of fairness to fellow instructors in that they are being placed in the position of trying to teach unprepared students.

Kahn et al. (1964) explain that other complex forms of conflict may develop from the four basic types of conflict described above. One such form of conflict arising from two of the four basic types of conflict is *role overload*. *Role overload* combines aspects of *inter-sender* and *person-role conflicts* and is manifested when various role senders communicate expectations to the focal person to perform tasks that are legitimate and mutually compatible but impossible for one person to complete within given time limits. The impossibility of completing all the tasks in the time given creates a conflict of priorities for the focal person.

He is likely to experience overload as a conflict of priorities; he must decide which pressures to comply with and which to hold off. If it is impossible to deny any of the pressures, he may be taxed beyond the limit of his abilities. (Kahn et al. 1964, p.20)

In addition to *role conflict* and *role overload*, Kahn et al. (1964) identify another prevalent condition in organizational life termed *role ambiguity*, which is the discrepancy between the amount of information received and the amount needed to perform a role adequately. At its simplest, *role ambiguity* may be defined as the focal person not
knowing what is expected of him/her, due to a lack of information communicated to the focal person with respect to the requirements of the role, and lack of or confusion of information with respect to other employees’ evaluation of the focal person’s performance in the role.

The first type of ambiguity, referred to as task ambiguity, concerns the tasks the focal person is expected to perform. Is a proper description of the job, its goals, and the permissible means to execute the goals, communicated clearly to the focal person? The second type of ambiguity is concerned with how others evaluate the focal person’s performance. Is there clear and consistent feedback from others so that the focal person can anticipate accurately the immediate consequences of his/her actions? The degree to which information is not forthcoming determines the degree to which the focal person experiences role ambiguity. Kahn et al. (1964) explain that though both task ambiguity and evaluation ambiguity result in increased tension and reduced trust in co-workers, each type of ambiguity affects the focal person somewhat differently.

But whereas task ambiguity tends to create dissatisfaction with the job and feelings of futility, ambiguity about one’s evaluations by others appears to undermine both the individual’s relations with them and his self-confidence. (p. 94)

The authors clarify that though the effects of ambiguity resemble those of role conflict the two conditions occur independently of each other. They explain further that though role conflict and ambiguity occur independently, there are at least three ways in which they are related. (1) The combination of different, inconsistent messages from role senders, even though each message may be clear, may add up to confusion rather than clarity for the focal person. (2) If the role is ambiguous to the focal person it is likely equally ambiguous to the role senders and the role senders’ confusion makes them unaware of the inconsistency of their demands. (3) Role conflict and ambiguity share the same conditions, such as organizational size and complexity, that are the sources of both ambiguity and conflict (Kahn et al. 1964, p. 89). The authors also note that “it is largely by chance that a person finds himself in a work environment that is both ambiguous and conflictful” (Kahn et al. 1964, p. 95).
Kahn et al. (1964) provide a theoretical model depicting a complete cycle of role senders communicating their expectations, focal person responding, and the effects of the response on the role sender. Figure 2 presents the authors’ model of the role episode.

**Figure 2** A model of the role episode. Adopted from Kahn et al. (1964 p.26)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role sender</th>
<th>Focal person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role expectations; perception of; focal person's behavior; evaluations</td>
<td>Role pressures; objective role conflict; objective ambiguity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological conflict; experienced ambiguity; perception of role and role senders</td>
<td>Coping efforts; compliance; symptom formation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The role episode is abstracted from a process that is cyclical and ongoing, and begins with the role senders communicating their expectations and evaluations of the focal person’s performance of his/her role or job. The response of the focal person to the role senders’ initial communications affects the role senders’ expectations, altering or reinforcing them for the next role episode, and thus a new episode begins.

Arrow 1 indicates that the role senders’ communications affect the immediate experience of the focal person in a given situation. If pressures from associates in the role set are directed toward change in the focal person’s behavior, and/or the pressures are contradictory to one another, the focal person may experience role conflict and/or role ambiguity (box III), which will affect his/her response back to his/her associates.

Arrow 2 indicates that the focal person’s response to the role senders’ communications is observed by the role senders and their expectations and evaluations of the focal person are correspondingly adjusted to reflect the focal person’s response. Thus each episode involves experience and response for both the role senders and the
focal person. The directed lines in the role episode model represent a causal sequence. The sent role pressures (Box II) lead to experienced role conflict and ambiguity (Box III), which lead to coping responses (Box IV), which are observed and evaluated in relation to expectations (Box I), and the cycle resumes.

Kahn et al. (1964) expand on their role episode model by presenting a model of the factors involved in adjustment to role conflict and ambiguity. Figure 3 depicts this model.

Circles A, B, and C in this model represent the enduring or stable states of the organization, the person, and the interpersonal relations between the role senders and the focal person. The organizational circle (A) represents the features of the organization as a whole which define the organization separate from and independent of the people occupying positions in the organization. Examples of an organization’s defining structural features include the product it produces or service it performs, its size, its division of labour, the number of positions and ranks in its labor force, and its formal reward system.

The authors’ belief is that in large part, the role expectations held by members of a role set are determined by the organization’s broader structural context. Arrow 3 indicates a causal relationship between the organizational factors and the role expectations and pressures role senders impose on the focal person.

Kahn et al. (1964) also contend that a focus person’s response to the role senders is determined by his/her personality factors, circle (B), and interpersonal relations, circle (C), which is the pattern of interaction between a focal person and his/her role senders (p. 33). Both sets of factors will also tend to condition the focal person’s reaction to conflict and ambiguity. As well, both sets of factors will influence the behavior of the role senders toward the focal person.
The research of Kahn et al. (1964) revealed that role conflict, role overload and role ambiguity are widespread causes of stress in organizations. They determined that contradictory role expectations give rise to role conflicts which negatively affect the emotional experience of the focal person, causing intensified internal conflicts, increased job-related tension, reduced job satisfaction, and decreased confidence in superiors and the organization (p. 71). Similar to role conflict, role ambiguity causes increased job-related tension, reduced trust in associates, job dissatisfaction, and feelings of futility. However, dissimilar to role conflict, role ambiguity also results in low self-confidence for the focal person (p. 95).

*Role overload*, the willingness but inability of the focal person to meet legitimate demands due to a lack of time, was initially listed as a sub-category of role conflict that arises from inter-sender conflicts (logically incompatible demands) and person-role conflicts (morally incompatible demands). However, in a review published in 1975 of several of his and other researchers’ research projects regarding job stress, Kahn et al. (1975) expressed surprise that one of the more dominant forms of conflict people
complained of was *role overload*, and not of logically incompatible demands or morally incompatible demands. Kahn reported that consequently, in subsequent studies, the researchers concentrated more explicitly on role overload as a particular source of stress in certain jobs. In summary, the research of Kahn et al. (1964) determined that the various types of role conflict, including role ambiguity and role overload, result in job stress.

As previously noted, organizational role theory is applicable to a study of college academic department chairs because college organizations fit the definition of formal, preplanned, task-oriented, hierarchical social organizations. As well, organizational role theory is particularly applicable to the chair role because of the chair role’s ambiguous, paradoxical and dual nature. The academic chair role combines two roles, faculty and administration, which represent two role sets and which consequently exposes the chair, the focal person, to twice the range of diverse, potentially conflicting expectations. The ambiguous, paradoxical aspect of the chair role arises from faculty members’ and administration’s contradictory expectations of the chair which result in opposing messages to the chair and places the chair in a loyalty dilemma.

The following section reviews selected research studies of academic department chairs conducted over the last 40 years. The review includes a collection of studies, ranging from years 1992 to 2010, which applied the concepts of role conflict and related job stress developed in organizational role theory in examining the academic department chair role’s conflicting dual nature.

### 2.5. Review of Department Chair Research Studies

The literature on academic department chairs is based primarily on studies conducted over the last forty years by researchers in American universities and colleges. An exception and a welcome addition to that body of literature is Lydia Boyko’s doctoral thesis *An Examination of Academic Department Chairs in Canadian Universities* (2009), a study involving over 500 academic department chairs in 43 Canadian public universities across 10 provinces. The following review summarizes the broad themes of several selected frequently cited past research studies and current research studies.
The themes developed in the selected studies include descriptions of the multiple tasks and roles performed by department chairs; the stress and internal conflict related to the position of department chair, the selection process, and motives and aspirations of the people performing the role of chair, and suggestions to improve the chair position. These themes are summarized, grouped and presented in the following order: (2.5.1) Tasks and Roles of Department Chairs, (2.5.2) Department Chair Role Conflict and Stress, (2.5.3) Demographics, Selection, Motivations of Department Chairs, (2.5.4) Proposed Improvements to Chair Position.

2.5.1. Academic Department Chair Tasks and Roles

Over the years, researchers in United States and Canada have identified a myriad of tasks and a wide range of roles performed by department chairs. In the United States, one of the first scholarly examinations of the variety of chair tasks was Tucker’s seminal work “Chairing the Academic Department: Leadership Among Peers”, first published in 1981, then revised and published again in 1984 and 1992. Tucker (1981) organized the extraordinarily long list of tasks and duties performed by chairs in universities in United States into eight categories, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Tucker’s (1981) Department Chair Tasks and Duties (pp. 2-4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Tasks and Duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department governance</td>
<td>Conduct department meetings; Establish department meetings; Use committees effectively; Develop long-range department programs, plans, and goals; Determine what services the department should provide to the university, community, and state; Implement long-range department programs, plans, goals, and policies; Prepare the department for accreditation and evaluation; Serve as an advocate for the department; Monitor library acquisitions; Delegate some department administrative responsibilities to individuals and committees; Encourage faculty members to communicate faculty ideas for improving the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Schedule classes; Supervise off-campus programs; Monitor dissertations, prospectuses, and programs of study for graduate students; Supervise, schedule, monitor, and grade department examinations; Update department curriculum, courses, and programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Affairs</td>
<td>Recruit and select faculty members; Assign faculty responsibilities such as teaching, research, committee work, and so forth; Monitor faculty service contributions; Evaluate faculty performance; Initiate promotion and tenure recommendations; Participate in grievance hearings; Make merit recommendations; Deal with unsatisfactory faculty and staff performance; Initiate termination of a faculty member; Keep faculty members informed of department, college, and institutional plans, activities, and expectations; Maintain morale;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td>Reduce, resolve, and prevent conflict among faculty members; Encourage faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruit and select students; Advise and counsel students; Work with student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External communication</td>
<td>Communicate department needs to the dean and interact with upper-level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>administrators; Improve and maintain the department’s image and reputation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinate activities with outside groups; Process department correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and requests for information; Complete forms and surveys; Institute and maintain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>liaison with external agencies and institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget and Resources</td>
<td>Encourage faculty members to submit proposals for contracts and grants to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>government agencies and private foundations; Prepare and propose department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>budgets; Seek outside funding; Administer the department budget; Set priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for use of travel funds; Prepare annual reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office management</td>
<td>Manage department facilities and equipment, including maintenance and control of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>inventory; Monitor building security and maintenance; Supervise and evaluate the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>clerical and technical staff in the department; Maintain essential department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>records, including student records.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>Foster the development of each faculty member’s special talents and interests;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foster good teaching in the department; Stimulate faculty research and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>publications; Promote affirmative action; Encourage faculty to participate in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>regional and national professional meetings; Represent the department at meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of learned and professional societies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tucker (1981) explains that to accomplish the 54 tasks identified, chairs assume as many as 28 roles, either one role at a time or several roles simultaneously, whatever is necessary and appropriate to accomplish the task at hand. The 28 roles expanded to 41 roles by the 1992 publication of Tucker’s work (Tucker, 1992).

Carrol and Gmelch (1992, 1994) and Gmelch and Miskin (1993) identified 26 chair duties or tasks. Carroll and Gmelch (1992, 1994) surveyed 800 chairs in universities across the United States and asked them to self-report their effectiveness at performing the 26 chair duties so as to reveal department chair roles. Applying principle components analysis to the chairs’ responses, the researchers observed clusters of chair duties and assigned unifying dimensions or factors of effectiveness to each cluster of chair duties. These unifying dimensions or factors of effectiveness were considered to
be, according to Carrol and Gmelch (1992, 1994), analogous to chair roles. From their statistical analysis the researchers identified four comprehensive chair roles deemed critical to department productivity and faculty survival: faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar. One of the 26 chair duties, “teach and advise students” was not included because it was not rated highly by chairs and thus did not load strongly into any of the role factors. Some of the duties and activities associated with each of the four chair roles, faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar, are described below (Carroll & Gmelch, 1992).

The chair as faculty developer plays a major role in the recruitment, development and retention of faculty. Recruitment includes activities such as networking, interviewing, and keeping current with affirmative action policies. Development includes activities such as providing guidance to junior faculty in improving teaching skills, selecting mentors, encouraging senior faculty to be mentors, and assisting and encouraging faculty in the selection of research programs and personal professional development. Retention of faculty includes activities that enhance departmental harmony and esprit de corps, such as treating faculty fairly and recognizing individual and departmental achievements.

The chair as manager develops class schedules and faculty teaching assignments, manages budgets, organizes departmental functions, and deals with the on-going needs and concerns of students and faculty.

The chair as leader is involved in strategic planning, in helping faculty identify strengths in teaching and research, in shaping the department's mission, goals, and objectives, in facilitating change to program and course content and delivery, and in recruitment of students and faculty.

The chair as scholar is a reminder that chairs are still academics and as such, are expected to engage in productive scholarship, such as remaining current in their academic discipline, active in their research endeavors, and supervising graduate students.

Ferst (2002) extended Carroll and Gmelch’s (1992, 1994) research by surveying faculty and deans as well as chairs at a public Research I university in northeastern United States and asked them to rate the importance of Carroll and Gmelch’s 26 chair
duties. Ferst, similar to Carroll and Gmelch, also employed factor analysis to determine chair roles. The results of Ferst’s survey were substantially the same as Carroll and Gmelch’s results. The notable exceptions were that Ferst determined two faculty developer roles resulting in a total of five roles, Faculty Developer I, Faculty Developer II, Manager, Leader, and Scholar, instead of four chair roles determined by Carroll and Gmelch. Ferst’s category of Faculty Developer I included activities relating to established faculty members, namely “Maintain conducive work climate” and “Solicit ideas to improve the department”, while Faculty Developer II included activities related to new faculty members, specifically “Recruit and select faculty” and “Evaluate faculty performance. Also, Ferst placed “teach and advise students” in the Scholar role, whereas Carroll and Gmelch did not load this activity into any factors/roles (Ferst, 2002, p. 44-48).

Unlike the previously discussed studies which involved chairs at American universities, a more current research study by Young (2007) involved chairs at American community colleges, specifically Illinois public community colleges. One of the distinguishing differences between American universities and American community colleges is that community colleges are two-year post-secondary institutions delivering vocational-technical programs, university transfer curriculum for the first two years of university, continuing education, and remedial education. They are referred to as 2-year colleges because they do not offer four-year bachelor degree programs or graduate programs (Young, 2007, p. 33).

Young’s (2007) research had two primary purposes: to determine department chair role factors and to determine whether role conflict exists for the chairs at Illinois public community colleges (p. 77, 139). The results of Young’s research and analysis in measuring chair role conflict will be discussed in section 2.5.2, following a summary of her research regarding chair role factors.

To determine chair roles, Young (2007) used a modified version of Carroll and Gmelch’s (1992) department chair duties questionnaire to survey a population of 340 department chairs in 48 public community colleges in the state of Illinois. The modified version contained 21 chair duties rather than the original 26. Since the fundamental mission of community colleges is to teach students, not to conduct research, the
modified version eliminated the five chair duties wholly associated with research activities, specifically “obtain resources for personal research,” “maintain research program and associated professional activities,” “remain current within academic discipline,” “select and supervise graduate students,” and “encourage faculty research and publication”; as well as deleting references to the words “university” and “research” (pp. 84-87). These modifications were made to be consistent with the fundamental mission of community colleges which is teaching and not research (Young, 2007, pp. 84-87).

Young (2007) found there was “remarkable similarity between the results of her analysis and that of Carroll and Gmelch (1994)” (p. 214). The six duties found most important by both the surveyed community college chairs and research university chairs, listed in order of importance are: recruit and select faculty, represent department to administration, evaluate faculty performance, maintain conducive work climate including reducing conflicts, develop and initiate long-range departmental goals, and provide informal faculty leadership (Young, 2007, p. 216).

Based on the importance attributed by the chair respondents to the 21 chair duties, Young (2007) employed principal components analysis to determine five roles for public community college department chairs: Department Leader, Resource Manager, Faculty Leader, Instructional Manager, and Teacher and Student Advisor. Young notes that these five roles compare favourably with the four roles of Leader, Scholar, Faculty Developer, and Manager determined by Carroll and Gmelch (1992). The discrepancies between the roles of university chairs and community college chairs are due mainly to the differences in the mission and major focus of the two post-secondary educational institutions. Since teaching students, as opposed to research, is the mission and main focus of community colleges, the absence of the Scholar role and the inclusion of the Teacher and Student Advisor role are appropriate and predictable for community college chairs (Young, 2007, p. 223).

In Canada, Watson (1979, 1986) identified five chair roles, intellectual leader, coordinator-administrator, representative, resource mobilizer, and personnel administrator, based on a study of chairs at one Canadian university in Western Canada (cited by Boyko, 2009). Also in Canada, but more than 20 years after Watson’s study,
Boyko (2009) conducted a research study for her doctoral thesis involving 511 academic department chairs in 43 Canadian public universities across the 10 provinces. In an online survey questionnaire, chair survey subjects were asked, along with many other questions, to stipulate the level of importance they placed on each of 45 specified chair tasks on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being not important and 4 being very important. In a separate question, chairs were asked to rate the degree of applicability to the chair position of each of 19 specified roles on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being not applicable and 4 being highly applicable (p. 164). Boyko (2009) concluded that the Canadian university chairs’ evaluation of chair tasks and chair roles “fall within the general framework laid out in the literature and are similar in content but the priorities differ in orientation and emphasis” (p. 259). Specific to Canadian chairs, Boyko reports that over a period of at least 20 years her study’s findings reveal “a somewhat stronger orientation toward academic interests in the chair’s role and a discernible emphasis on administration in the chair’s responsibilities” (p. 341).

Table 2 presents the top ten chair tasks in order of the mean ratings of importance as evaluated by chair survey respondents in research studies conducted by Carroll and Gmelch (1992/1994), Ferst (2002), Young (2007), and Boyko (2009). The tasks are similar in content but differ somewhat in priority. All agree that the chair’s most important tasks are recruiting and selecting faculty, representing the department and championing the unit, developing and implementing departmental plans/goals, reducing conflict and maintaining morale among faculty, and encouraging faculty toward professional development and good teaching practices. It is to be noted that the top ten tasks included in Table 2 represent the top ten tasks from researchers’ lists of chair tasks which include lists of 26 to 45 tasks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>UNITED STATES UNIVERSITIES 1992</th>
<th>UNITED STATES UNIVERSITIES 2002</th>
<th>U.S. COMMUNITY COLLEGES 2007</th>
<th>CANADA UNIVERSITIES 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Recruit and select faculty</td>
<td>Recruit and select faculty</td>
<td>Recruit and select faculty</td>
<td>Participate in department meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Represent department to administration and the field</td>
<td>Maintain conducive work climate, includes reducing conflicts among faculty</td>
<td>Represent department to administration</td>
<td>Recruit faculty and other staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 presents the top five chair roles determined by Carroll and Gmelch (1992/1994), Ferst (2002), Young (2007), and Boyko (2009). It is to be noted that whereas Carroll and Gmelch, Ferst, and Young determined chair roles by employing principal components analysis on chair subjects’ evaluation of chair tasks, Boyko did not. Instead, Boyko provided a list of 19 devised role titles to be evaluated by chair subjects. Boyko’s question did not define the role titles but rather left the titles open to interpretation by respondents. Thus, the top five roles in Boyko’s study, representing the role titles with the highest mean ratings of applicability by respondents, may raise questions of reliability since respondents could have interpreted the role labels differently.

As Table 3 shows, there are more similarities than differences among the lists of top five chair roles. Common to all four lists are leader role and manager/administrator role. The scholar role is included in the two US University top five chair role lists, and the
teacher role, which may include a scholar aspect, is included in the US Community College and Canadian University top five chair roles. The faculty developer role is included in the two US University top five lists, while the champion role, which may include a faculty developer aspect, is included in the Canadian University list. Similarly, the faculty leader role, included in the US Community College list, may include a faculty developer component.

Table 3   Top Five Chair Roles 1992 – 2009 (United States, Canada)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>UNITED STATES UNIVERSITIES 1992</th>
<th>UNITED STATES UNIVERSITIES 2002</th>
<th>U.S. COMMUNITY COLLEGES 2007</th>
<th>CANADA UNIVERSITIES 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Faculty Developer</td>
<td>Scholar</td>
<td>Instructional Manager</td>
<td>Spokesperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Faculty Developer I</td>
<td>Faculty Leader</td>
<td>Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Scholar</td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Department Leader</td>
<td>Champion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Resource Manager</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Faculty Developer II</td>
<td>Teacher and Student Advisor</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Gmelch, 1993, 2004, as cited by Boyko, 2009, p.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to identifying chair tasks and chair roles, Ferst’s study also revealed that deans, chairs and faculty have conflicting expectations of the chair’s role. Ferst (2002) states that he surveyed faculty, deans and chairs to gain “a deeper analytical understanding of the perceptions of deans, chairs, and faculty in order to determine if the three groups held common viewpoints concerning the rankings of the duties of the department chair” (p. 76). He discovered that though overall there was a high level of agreement, there were several notable differences in the ranking of duties/tasks in chairs’ Faculty Developer role, the Scholar role and the Leader role. For instance, Faculty Developer tasks “Evaluate faculty performance” was ranked number two priority by deans and numbers eight and 13 by chairs and faculty respectively, and “Provide informal faculty leadership” was ranked number four priority by deans and numbers 12 and eight by chairs and faculty respectively.

Regarding chairs’ Scholar role, deans and faculty ranked tasks “Teach and advise students”, “Remain current within academic disciplines”, and “Maintain research
programs”, considerably lower than chairs who ranked all three tasks in their top ten list. With respect to the Leader role, faculty rated “Represent faculty to administration” as chair’s number one responsibility while chairs and deans rated it as numbers five and seven respectively. Faculty rated “Solicit ideas to improve the department” as number seven responsibility while chairs and deans rated it as numbers 13 and 14 respectively; faculty rated “Plan and conduct department meetings” as number eight responsibility while chairs and deans rated it as numbers 14 and 18 respectively; and faculty rated “Inform faculty of department, college and community concerns” as number 12, while chairs and deans rated it as numbers 22 and 21 respectively.

The differences in the rankings of chair tasks reveal that deans, chairs and faculty have conflicting expectations of the chair’s role, which, Ferst (2002) suggests, results in chairs being “caught in the middle of these two opposing ideas on the nature of their work” and “looking to please both masters” (p. 76). Further, Ferst speculates that chairs may experience stress from feeling forced into abandoning scholarly activities due to “yielding to the pressure they face from deans and faculty” (p. 77). The following section explores the impact on the chair of the chair’s dual faculty and administrative role and of the conflicting expectations held and communicated to chairs by deans and faculty members.

2.5.2. Department Chair Role Conflict and Stress

As role theory informs us, where a role exists in an organization, a role set exists, and where a role set exists, expectations of role performance exist, and where expectations exist, the probability of conflicting expectations is high, and where conflicting expectations exist, internal conflict is experienced by the focal person. Researchers have theorized that the chair role is inherently more susceptible to conflict than other job positions because of the chair role’s dual nature and its ambiguous, paradoxical nature. The chair role is a dual role in that it combines the faculty role of teaching and research, and the administration role of managing and leading an academic unit. Since the chair role combines two roles, it also combines two role sets, and two role sets result in twice the range of diverse, potentially conflicting expectations with which the chair, the focal person, must contend. The chair’s faculty role set includes, at minimum, students the chair teaches, faculty colleagues, academic
discipline, and the dean. The chair’s administration role set includes, at minimum, students the chair advises, department faculty members, college support staff, other chairs, the dean, professional accrediting agencies, other educational institutions, and community employers of students.

Upon accepting the position, a chair becomes an administrator but also remains a faculty member; and as a wearer of two hats, the chair is expected to be loyal to each constituent group and to advocate for each group simultaneously. When issues place faculty and administration on opposing sides, the chair is caught in a conflicting situation since both faculty and administration expect the chair to support and advocate for their respective sides. In role theory terminology, the chair experiences inter-sender conflict, which according to role theory occurs when two or more members of a role set send opposing messages to the focal person. Examples of issues that may prompt faculty and administration to send opposing messages to the chair are proposals by administration to reduce admission standards in an effort to increase enrolment, or to lower academic standards in an effort to increase student success rate and number of graduates, or to increase class sizes in an effort to increase revenue. Such issues present chairs with the dilemma of advocating for faculty to retain high academic standards and not implement the proposals, or to advocate for administration on the basis that the proposed measures are necessary for the advancement, and even survival, of the institution. Both expectations presented by faculty and administration are legitimate expectations, but they are opposing expectations, and that causes internal conflict for the chair, who is caught in the middle and is expected to take a side.

This “caught in the middle” aspect of the chair role has been observed by many researchers, and leads to discussion of the ambiguous, paradoxical nature of the chair role. Consistent with role theory teachings, Gmelch and Miskin (1993) observe that role conflict occurs when individuals are “confronted with situations which require them to play a role which conflicts with their value systems, or play two or more roles which are in conflict with each other” (p. 4). Gmelch and Burns (1994) compare the chairs’ loyalty dilemma to the Roman god, Janus.

In Roman mythology, the god Janus was depicted as the god who had two faces. Simultaneously, one face turned to the front and the other to the back. Though department chairs are not in danger of deification, they
also have two faces. One face is that of an administrator and the other the face of a faculty member. (Gmelch & Burns, 1994, p. 79)

Sarros et al. (1997) point out that chairs experience negative burn-out effects from attempting to be loyal to two opposing parties and advocating for two opposing positions.

This paradoxical situation of traveling two roads simultaneously causes many academic leaders to burn out from the strain of trying to be an effective administrator and protect the academic autonomy and independence of academic staff and duties. (Sarros et al., 1997, p. 10)

The chair role is ambiguous because it is subject to opposing expectations and therefore cannot be clearly articulated with respect to job requirements, behaviors, and performance expectations. Thus, the chair role is “complex, elusive, intriguing, unique, without common management parallels,” (Gmelch & Burns, 1993, p. 259). And similar to the description of role ambiguity in role theory, Sarros et al. (1997) explain that “Role ambiguity arises when the necessary information to perform a job-related task is missing, and the sources of clarification regarding the job requirements are unknown” (Sarros, Gmelch & Tanewski, 1997, p. 20).

The paradox inherent in the chair role, making it a role that has no parallel in non-academic organizations, is that it carries no official formal authority to perform its management responsibilities. Unlike the managers described by Mintzberg (1995) as people “vested with formal authority over an organizational unit” (p. 37), chairs do not have line authority over their department faculty because they are faculty members themselves. There is a collegial relationship between the chair and department faculty rather than the traditional superior-subordinate relationship that exists between a manager in charge of a unit and the workers in the unit. Hecht et al. (1999) label the paradoxical nature of the chair role disturbing: “One disturbing characteristic of chairs’ role is its paradoxical nature. Department chairs are leaders, yet are seldom given the scepter of undisputed authority” (p. 22). Hubbell (1997) tells us that chairs have little power; they cannot act with impunity. Wells (2002) asserts that chairs have little authoritative influence on tenured faculty. Wolverton (2005) contends that, because of their lack of real power, chairs must learn ways to motivate faculty. Boyko (2009)
reports that the majority of active Canadian university chairs say they have no authority, and are largely “facilitators”. The unionized faculty associations, which include chairs, further restrict chairs’ authority.

According to the common view among chairs and deans, both active and former/retired, the inclusion of chairs in the bargaining unit institutionalizes their level position with faculty colleagues and restricts their discretionary authority. (Boyko, 2009, p. 320)

Boyko (2009) asserts that the chair role ambiguity documented in the literature is evident “in the dominant view of (Canadian) chairs that they cannot be the “boss” of peers if they are all members of the same bargaining unit” (p. 321).

In addition to role ambiguity, brought on in part by the chair’s lack of official formal authority to perform managerial duties, researchers have determined that the chairs also experience role overload. Recall that, according to role theory, role overload is a conflict of priorities for the focal person due to the impossibility of completing all tasks expected of the focal person within given time limits. One reason chairs are susceptible to role overload is that, unlike non-academic manager jobs, managing is only part of a chair’s job. Seedorf and Gmelch (1989) conducted a study comparing the work activities of an academic department chair in a research university and the work activities of traditional non-academic managers as reported in the Nature of Managerial Work by Mintzberg (1973) as cited in Seedorf & Gmelch (1989). The researchers found that the nature of non-academic manager work and the nature of chair manager work are the same; both are “brief, varied, and fragmented” (Seedorf & Gmelch 1989, p. 16). However, the difference between the two manager roles is that managing is a full-time job for non-academic managers while for chairs, managing is only part of the job. A chair job also includes teaching and research responsibilities, and the very limited uninterrupted time at desk work typical of manager work, “is in direct conflict with the long periods of uninterrupted thinking required by academic work” (Seedorf & Gmelch 1989, p. 9). One of the participants in Seedorf and Gmelch’s (1989) study described his chair job as “a half-time job, but it takes time-and-a-half to do it” (p.11). And he summed up the chair role conundrum with the remark:
I would be content being a full-time department chair if there was not the pressure to teach and publish, but then I wouldn’t be a ‘professor’ which is why I’m in higher education. It is all enjoyable but at times I begin to feel overwhelmed. (Seedorf & Gmelch, 1989, p. 16)

New chairs experience the role conflict and ambiguity inherent in the chair role, often quite abruptly, when making adjustments to their work styles and habits in transitioning from professor to chair role. The first year experiences as chair of 13 chairs from 10 colleges and universities across eight states were documented in a qualitative study conducted by the Centre of Academic Leadership at Washington State University (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993). Analysis of the data collected revealed that the 13 new chairs experienced moderate to severe difficulties in making the transition from professor to chair role specifically with the role conflict and ambiguity inherent in the chair role. The role conflict and/or role ambiguity beginning chairs experience are reflected in six roles, listed below, of the nine role changes Gmelch and Miskin (1993) identify as characteristic of the “metamorphosis” of a new department chair.

1. From solitary to social - professors typically work alone, chairs work with others.
2. From focused to fragmented – professors require uninterrupted time to work on scholarly projects; chair’s work is brief, varied and fragmented.
3. From autonomy to accountability - professors enjoy control over much of their time and actions; chairs are accountable to administration and faculty for their actions and time.
4. From manuscripts to memoranda - professors take time producing manuscripts; chairs learn to persuade in memos and emails.
5. From stability to mobility - professors experience movement within the stability of their disciplines; chairs are required to move and operate within the university structure.
6. From client to custodian - professors are clients requesting and expecting resources; chairs are the dispenser of resources.

The three remaining roles changes the 13 new chairs experienced were: from private to public - professors enjoy the privilege of a “closed door”, chairs have an “open-door” policy; from professor to persuading – professors lecture, chairs persuade and compromise; and from austerity to prosperity – chairs are caretakers of departmental resources and thereby create the illusion of prosperity (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993, p 14-15). (cited in Becoming a Department Chair: Negotiating the Transition from Scholar to Administrator, Gmelch & Parkay, 1999).
Research studies have examined role conflict and associated stress experienced by academic department chairs. Prior to discussing the findings of a selection of these studies a summary of the application of organizational role theory to the chair role is appropriate. In Table 4 the types of role conflicts are listed in column one, and in column two each type of role conflict is explained according to Kahn’s et al definitions. Column three includes a description of the applicability of each type of role conflict to the chair in the role of the focal person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Role Conflict</th>
<th>Definition of Type of Role Conflict per Kahn et al</th>
<th>Application of Role Conflict to Chair Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inter-role Conflict</td>
<td>The focal person belongs to more than one role set. Role-senders in the focal person’s multiple role sets send competing demands to the focal person.</td>
<td>Demands from chair’s faculty compete with demands from students, demands from family, demands from administration, and demands from academic discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-sender Conflict</td>
<td>Two or more members in the same role set send opposing/contradictory messages to the focal person.</td>
<td>Faculty and dean sent contradictory messages to the chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra-sender Conflict</td>
<td>A single member in the focal person’s role set sends incompatible messages to the focal person.</td>
<td>Paradoxical aspect of chair role – chair is assigned responsibility to perform certain tasks, i.e., evaluate faculty, with no matching formal authority to perform tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person-role Conflict</td>
<td>Requirements of a role violate the focal person’s personal code of ethics or moral values.</td>
<td>Requirement to increase student enrolment by reducing admission requirements, i.e. English and/or Math requirements, violates Chair’s code to preserve academic standards and to not set students up for failure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Ambiguity</td>
<td>The focal person experiences a lack of clarity with regard to the tasks he/she is expected to perform, labeled task ambiguity, and with regard to how others evaluate his/her performance of the tasks, labeled evaluation ambiguity.</td>
<td>Conflicting demands from dean and faculty and the chair position’s lack of formal authority to perform certain assigned tasks create uncertainty in chairs about what is expected of chairs. The independent nature of faculty’s teaching and research work leads to faculty unawareness of chair position roles and responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload</td>
<td>Various role senders communicate expectations to the focal person to perform tasks that are legitimate and mutually compatible but impossible for one person to complete within given time limits. Combines aspects of inter-role conflict.</td>
<td>Legitimate, compatible expectations of chair’s dean, faculty, students who chair teaches, students who chair advises, and professional associations cannot all be completed within given time limits.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The selection of research studies referenced below shared similar objectives in their examination of the conflicting dual nature, the related ambiguous, paradoxical nature of the chair role, the work overload, and the stress experienced by academic department chairs. The studies’ core objectives are summarized and presented below.

- Identify chair stress factors and determine if there is an association between chair role conflict and role ambiguity and chair stress factors (Burns & Gmelch, 1992).
- Investigate occupational stress associated with the chair’s dual administrative-faculty role, including identifying stressful job situations, comparing faculty and chair sources and levels of stress, and determining if academic discipline and personal attributes influence stress (Gmelch & Burns, 1993, 1994).
- Determine the nature of association between the chair stress factors identified by Burns and Gmelch (1992), and personal, positional and organizational variables (Gmelch & Gates, 1995).
- Determine the extent to which role conflict and role overload exist in the chair job (Young, 2007).
- Explore the essence of internal conflict inherent in the role of chair and identify the tasks that create internal conflict (Johnson, 2010).

The studies examining role conflict and associated stress experienced by academic department chairs used the definition of stress based on Gmelch’s (1987) stress cycle for faculty and administrators in higher education which in turn was based on the four component stress stages suggested by McGrath (1970, cited in Gmelch & Burns, 1994, p. 82).

According to McGrath (1970), Stage I is the individual’s identification of stressors in the environment. Stage II is the individual’s perception of the demands which determine the degree to which stress is experienced. Stage III is the individual’s stress response; the individual’s perception of his or her ability to muster resources to meet the demands. Step IV is concerned with the consequences of the response to stress which
are often associated with long term negative effects. Consistent with the steps of the stress cycle, Gmelch and Burns (1994) provide the following definition of stress:

The following definition of stress is used in this study: one's anticipation of his or her inability to respond (Stage III) adequately to a perceived (Stage II) demand (Stage I), accompanied by the anticipation of negative consequences (Stage IV) for an inadequate response. (p. 83)

The researchers noted that the basic theoretical construct of stress underlying their investigation of chair stress is that the subject’s perception of the stress event is the significant stage “stress is the result of the respondents’ interpretation of stimuli and other events in their environment” (Gmelch & Burns, 1994, p. 83). The main findings of these research studies were that chairs experience stress as a result of performing the chair role, and that there is an association between chair stress factors and the conflicting dual nature and related ambiguous, paradoxical nature and work overload aspect of the chair role.

As noted, Burns and Gmelch’s (1992) research study had a twofold purpose: to identify stress factors experienced by chairs; and to determine if there is an association between chair role conflict and role ambiguity, and chair stress factors (pp. 5, 6). The researchers randomly selected a sample of 100 institutions from a population of 237 research universities in United States. Surveys were mailed to 800 randomly selected department chairs and 523 useable surveys were returned, representing a 66% response rate. Burns and Gmelch’s (1992) study identified five stress factors that reflect the dual faculty and administrative roles assumed by chairs performing functions which cross the boundaries of the two professional positions (p. 16). Factor 1, Faculty Role Stress, the highest stress factor, indicated that working as an active researcher/scholar while also being chair (inter-role conflict) is more disruptive and stressful to chairs than are other chair activities. The second highest stress factor was Administrative Relationship Stress (Factor 2), which includes items that stress chairs such as not knowing how the dean evaluates the chair’s performance, having insufficient authority to perform chair responsibilities, and dealing with conflicting demands (intra-sender conflict). The third highest stress factor mean was Role Ambiguity Stress (Factor 3), which includes items that reflect the uncertainty chairs have about chair tasks, about their dean’s expectations of the chair’s responsibilities, concerns about being adequately
trained, and about the lack of information regarding their role as chair (role ambiguity conflict). Factor 4 was Perceived Expectations Stress which includes items that reflect chair responsibilities beyond normal working hours such as travelling, making professional presentations, performing work-related volunteer activities and social obligations, as well as the chair’s high self-expectations to perform these tasks. The last stress factor was Factor 5, Administrative Task Stress which includes items related to administrative tasks such as writing reports, letters and memos, preparing budgets, gaining financial support for programs, handling student concerns and conflicts, having feelings of too heavy a workload (role-overload conflict), and evaluating faculty and staff performance (Burns & Gmelch, 1992, pp. 9-16).

The second purpose of Burns and Gmelch’s (1992) research study was to determine if there is an association between chair role conflict and role ambiguity, and chair stress factors. The study determined that chairs with high role ambiguity experience high stress regarding their chair position obligations, their academic careers, the administrative tasks they must perform, and the ambiguity related to many of chairs’ administrative tasks (p. 19). The study also determined that chairs with high role conflict are significantly more stressed in every stress factor than are chairs with medium or low role conflict (p. 22). Finally, the researchers noted that the most significant finding of the study is that relief from occupational stress experienced by chairs is highly correlated with reduced conditions of role conflict and role ambiguity (p. 25). As well, some chairs (18.3%) indicated they experience low role conflict and some chairs (36.1%) indicated they experience low role ambiguity, which encouraged the authors to conclude that chair ambiguity and conflict could be eradicated, “though the position is disposed to ambiguity and conflict, these constructs are not indelible components” (Burns & Gmelch, 1992, p. 25).

Gmelch and Burns’ (1993) research study also determined that the most stressful job situations for chairs are related to the chair’s dual faculty and administrative role. The researchers produced two reports, one dated 1993 and one dated 1994, based on the data collected from a 1993 survey of a random sample of 101 universities selected from 213 research and doctorate-granting institutions with eight department chairs selected from each university representing each of Biglan’s eight classifications of disciplines (Biglan, 1973). Of the 808 chairs surveyed for the study, 564 usable surveys were
returned, representing a 70.2% response rate. The specific objectives of the study were to identify job situations perceived by chairs to be stressful; to compare faculty and chair sources and levels of stress; to determine the degree to which chairs exhibit stress from their dual faculty and administrator roles; and to determine if academic discipline and personal attributes influence chair stress.

Chair job situation items were grouped into five stress factors; conflict-mediating stress, task-based stress, role-based stress, reward and recognition stress, and professional identity stress. The job situations chairs perceived to be most stressful were conflict-mediation which included resolving differences among colleagues, obtaining program approval and support and complying with rules and regulations. The next most stressful situations were task-based stress and professional-identity stress job situations which included having too heavy a workload, keeping current in discipline, preparing manuscripts for publication, securing research support, completing paperwork on time, meetings, phone and visitor interruptions. The least stressful factors were role-based stress which included career progress not what it should be, too little authority, and resolving differences with superiors; and reward and recognition stress which included inadequate salary, inadequate rewards/recognition, and incompatible institutional/department goals.

The chairs’ high ratings of conflict-mediation and task-based stress factors prompted the authors to conclude that chairs’ dual roles “underscore the difficulty department chairs have in being caught in the crossroads between faculty and administration” (Gmelch & Burns, 1994, p. 86).

Analysis of variance was used to test for mean differences in stress in each of the five stress factors with respect to chair gender, chair age, academic discipline, and chair role affinity with faculty versus administration. No significant difference in stress existed in any of the factors with respect to chairs’ personal attributes. In regard to academic discipline, significant differences existed in only one of the five factors, professional identity; with chairs in hard-pure-life disciplines (biology) appeared significantly more stressed than chairs in all soft disciplines (Gmelch & Burns, 1994, p. 87).
In the comparison of most serious stressors of department chairs and professors, Gmelch and Burns (1993) found that the “dual pressures on the chair position were reconfirmed” (p. 64). The percent of chairs suffering from stress is higher than professors’ stress in six of the seven most serious stressors, namely, heavy work load, keeping current in discipline, job interfering with personal time, preparing manuscripts, phone and visitor interruptions, and meetings taking too much time. As well, chairs suffer serious stress from managerial stressors not experienced by professors, such as conflict-meditating stressors, which prompted the researchers to conclude:

This paradoxical situation of trying to fill a “swivel” position causes department chairs to feel double pressure to be an effective manager and productive faculty member. (Gmelch & Burns, 1993, p. 264)

Gmelch and Gates (1995) continued Burns and Gmelch’s (1992) study by determining the nature of the association between the five chair stress factors identified by Burns and Gmelch (1992) and personal, positional and organizational variables. The personal variables that were tested as possibly contributing to chair stress were age and experience, gender, and inside versus outside chair appointments. The positional variables tested as possibly contributing to chair stress were role conflict and role ambiguity, role identification, satisfaction with chair role, motivation to serve, perceived role performance, and discipline orientation. The organizational variables tested as possibly contributing to chair stress were institutional and departmental ratings, and size of department. The researchers’ findings are summarized below.

With respect to the personal variables, analysis revealed that gender and experience are not associated with chair stress. Nor is age associated with chair stress except for administrative relations; as age increases, administration relations stress increases. Being appointed as chair from the outside is associated with increased feelings of role ambiguity stress, but with none of the other stress factors (Gmelch & Gates, 1995, p. 17).

The relationship between positional variables and the stress factors was found to be greater than between personal variables and the stress factors. The less role ambiguity and role conflict experienced, and the more satisfaction derived from the chair role, the less chairs experienced stress across all five factors. Also, perception of
effective managerial performance related to a lower level of administrative task stress; perception of effective scholar performance was associated with lower levels of role ambiguity stress and administrative task stress; and perceived effective faculty leadership performance was related to lower levels of faculty role, and administrative task and relationship stress. Chairs who accept the position for intrinsic reasons (see job as an opportunity to advance themselves or department) experienced higher levels of faculty role stress and administrative task stress. A positive relationship was found between chairs in soft disciplines and perceived expectations stress. Finally, role identification with faculty was not associated with higher levels of stress on any of the five factors. (Gmelch & Gates, 1995)

The organizational variables were correlated with stress levels. Chairs who rate their institutions and department faculty highly, experience lower levels of faculty role stress, administrative relationship stress, role ambiguity stress and administrative task stress. The size of the faculty was negatively associated with administrative relationship stress but with none of the other stress factors (Gmelch & Gates, 1995, p.18). In summary, Gmelch and Gates (1995) concluded that chair stress is consistently influenced by the “inherent imperfections in the role itself (role conflict and role ambiguity)” (p. 26) but that personal and organizational variables have relatively little influence on chair stress.

The time-pressure and ambiguity with which chairs travel their road must be modified in order to moderate the exhaustion and dissatisfaction experienced along the way. It is not just the pace (time pressures) of the travel but the ambiguous and conflicting directions which lead to their stress and dissatisfaction. (Gmelch & Gates, 1995, p. 27)

In “The Department Chair’s Balancing Act”, Gmelch (2004) summarizes the findings of three research studies, conducted in 1995 and 1996, involving 2,000 department chairs in United States and Australia (Gmelch, Wolverton, Wolverton & Hermanson, 1996; Gmelch & Miskin, 1995; Gmelch & Sarros, 1996). The studies revealed that the ambiguous, paradoxical, conflicting nature of the chair position, and the volume and diversity of tasks performed by chairs cause an imbalance in chairs’ academic and administrative responsibilities as well as in chairs’ personal and professional lives. Gmelch (2004) summarizes the studies’ findings with the statement:
“time pressures dominate the chair’s position: meetings, heavy workload, deadlines, after-work activities, excessive demands and insufficient time for academics top the list of job stresses” (p. 77).

Chair participants in the three research studies reported spending 88 percent less time on research and writing, 82 percent less time keeping current in their discipline, and 56 percent less time teaching after becoming chair. They also reported spending 65 percent less time with family, 56 percent less time with friends, and 77 percent less time on leisure activities. As well, an overwhelming percentage of chairs expressed dissatisfaction with having to reduce their time in research (87%), in keeping current in their discipline (94%), in personal loss in family time (89%), in loss of time with friends (87%), and in loss of leisure time (79%) (Gmelch, 2004, p. 78). The three research studies also determined that 44 percent of chairs experience excessive stress trying to balance their personal and professional lives, that 70 percent of the stress in a chair’s life is due to the chair job, and that the predictive indicators of excessive stress for chairs are the chair position’s dual role and the excessively high expectations chairs impose on themselves (Gmelch, 2004).

Young’s (2007) research study, which involved 125 chairs and 22 chief academic officers from 22 Illinois public community colleges, determined that mild to moderate role conflict and role overload exists for Illinois public community college department chairs. In addition, Young concluded that a specific expression of role overload may have been determined. Specifically, chairs may suffer from overload because they spend an inordinate amount of time performing chair roles they deem most important, thus leaving insufficient time to complete roles they deem less important (Young, 2007, p. 235).

The purpose of Johnson’s research (2010) was “to explore the essence of the internal conflict inherent in the role of the public community college academic department chair” (p. 89). She defined conflict as being “the most intense of feelings on a continuum from tension through stress to internal conflict” and is “a persistent internal struggle within the person of the department chair among opposing goals, inclinations, aspirations, and purposes – all entities to which the chair has committed him or herself – resulting in what is identified in this study as internal conflict” (Johnston, 2010, p. 2). Johnston conducted a qualitative study, collecting data through a series of four face-to-
face topical-guided interviews with six department chairs from four public community colleges in the State of Illinois. Johnson reported that an analysis of the chairs’ observations revealed the chair tasks that moved chairs through the continuum of tension, to stress, to internal conflict. These chair tasks were: ordinary tasks that must be performed simultaneously and without adequate clerical support; supervisory tasks such as handling complaints against full-time and adjunct faculty because of the time required to resolve complaints and because, by union contract, chairs are not supervisors; assessment related activities such as testing and grade distributions because they are time consuming and may be contrary to chair’s academic quality standards; attending inefficient and unnecessary meetings, dealing with bureaucratic practices and tasks, and participating in the exploitation of adjunct faculty (pp. 174-192).

Johnson’s analysis prompted her to conclude that the essence of the chair role’s stress and resulting internal conflict emerging from the data was the chair’s lack of decision power and authority to control resources.

We can now identify the essence of that internal conflict to be, as stated above, the lack of decision power and authority to control resources that would make it possible for chairs to fulfill their responsibilities according to their own standards. (Johnson, 2010, p. 155)

To summarize, research studies have determined that chairs experience stress as a result of the dual nature and related ambiguous, paradoxical nature and work overload aspects of the chair role. As well, the studies reviewed determined that there is an association between chair stress factors and role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload; and that personal variables, such as chairs’ gender, chair work experience and age have relatively little influence on chair stress. Research studies have also explored the selection processes for the chair position, and the demographics and motivations of the people performing the chair role. The following section presents the findings of such research studies.

2.5.3. **Demographics, Selection, Motivations of Chairs**

Though the gender of chairs varies somewhat with academic discipline, most chairs are male, middle-aged and untrained typically tenured career academics taking
their turn (Boyko, 2009). Chairs are sometimes referred to as “first among equals” because most chairs are faculty members prior to assuming the position of chair, and remain faculty members while serving as chair. In Seagren’s study in 1994, almost ninety-seven percent of chairs surveyed had been faculty prior to accepting the chair position. Boyko’s (2009) findings are consistent with the international literature regarding chairs’ backgrounds in that Canadian university chairs “are scholars first, seeking respect within their discipline and focused on research, teaching and service to the academy. They are not professional managers from outside the academy” (p. 263).

Chairs may be elected by their faculty colleagues; or selected by faculty and dean from a pool of applicants in a competition for a vacant chair position; or be appointed by the dean without input from faculty (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004). Typically, the selection process for the chair job is a collegial process, involving selection or election by peers. “While professional “headhunters” may be involved in the search for appropriate candidates, the department chair is not appointed unilaterally by senior management without prior input of faculty members” (Boyko, 2009, p. 261). The selection or appointment of a department faculty member as chair, rather than a non-faculty administrator, is favored by department faculty members. Even though faculty members tend to view the task of administering as too routine and habitual to be performed by a faculty member, they are also convinced that only faculty should advocate for faculty. Boyko’s (2009) research reaffirms faculty’s unwillingness to accept non-faculty as department chairs, as

Recruitment of professional managers from outside the academy to serve as department chairs is unanimously unwelcomed by subjects in this study, both chairs and deans, and is not evident in any of the policy provisions and personal profiles. (p. 345)

The reasons most commonly cited by faculty members for accepting the chair position are to refocus or reinvigorate the department, to be in control during a change phase, out of a sense of duty, because of a personal request by the dean and/or colleagues, or for personal development. The least significant factor in accepting the chair position is financial gain. (Gmelch & Gates, 1995, p. 8) (Boyko, 2009, p. 208, 275).
Based on their research findings, some researchers have recommended ways to improve the chair position. A summary of their recommendations are presented in the following section.

### 2.5.4. **Proposed Improvements to Chair Position**

Some of the researchers referenced in this literature review have suggested ways, based on their research findings, to both alleviate the excessive stress chairs experience and to improve the effectiveness of the chair. The suggestions posed by four researchers, namely Gmelch (2004), Young (2007), Boyko (2009) and Johnson (2010), address common themes emerging from their research studies, specifically the issues of chair work overload, chair management inexperience, and lack of communication and understanding of the chair role. The researchers’ suggestions aimed to improve each issue are to reduce chair workload and provide chairs with clerical support; to provide chairs with management training; and to educate and connect chairs, administration and faculty. The suggestions, aligned with each challenging issue, are more fully described below.

*Work Overload Issue – Reduce Chair Work and Provide Clerical Support*

The researchers’ suggestions to address chairs’ work overload issue included reducing chair tasks and providing chairs with clerical support. Gmelch (2004) recommended reducing chairs’ work load by assessing and eliminating less important tasks such as requests for rarely read reports. Young (2007) suggested that executive administrators monitor the number, variety and complexity of duties chairs perform and if necessary, redistribute chair duties or reorganize department chair jobs. However, she cautions that if a chair’s work overload is the result of the chair spending an inordinate amount of time on one role she/he deems most important, then the workload can be reduced by the chair’s self-realization and correction of this self-imposed role overload (Young, 2007, p. 245).

Gmelch (2004) also suggested chairs be provided with a support person with authority to collect data, draft reports and take care of office operations (p. 81). Boyko (2009) recommended the same but emphasized the importance of the support person
being an administrative officer with academic credentials so as to be effective and respected as the chair’s assistant by department faculty (pp. 355-357).

**Chair Management Inexperience – Provide Management Training**

Gmelch (2004), Young (2007) and Boyko (2010) all recommend management and/or leadership training for chairs. According to Gmelch (2004), the most effective leadership program is built around a single well-defined model of leadership development that includes cohort groups of chairs and supervisors and entails progressive development and constructive feedback on a continuous basis. Week-end seminars are discouraged since they offer “limited sustained learning, institutional understanding, and support for the chairs’ balancing acts” (Gmelch, 2004, p. 82). Young (2007) suggests offering chairs continuous professional management development opportunities at different levels of experience and length of service as chair (p. 245). Boyko (2009) also recommends that chairs be offered professional development workshops, seminars, conferences, specifically in personnel management, but with the stipulation they be offered on a just-in-time basis, as the need arises. Her stipulation arises from the common sentiment among deans and chairs “that professional development and training are additional commitments to an already onerous work load that simply mean time away from that work” (Boyko, 2009, p. 365).

**Lack of Communication and Understanding – Educate and Connect Chairs, Faculty, Administration**

Gmelch (2004), Young (2007), Boyko (2010), and Johnson (2010) all acknowledge the need to educate and connect chairs, faculty and administration and they suggest three ways to address this need. (1) One way is to establish a chair mentor/buddy program. Gmelch (2004) recommends pairing chairs to promote dialogue and to provide a trusted colleague on the often-lonely leadership journey (p. 82). Boyko (2009) recommends endorsing a mentor or buddy system particularly for new chairs but to support experienced chairs as well (2009, p. 355-357). Johnson (2010) suggests providing regular opportunities for chairs to consort with fellow chairs and share experiences (pp. 236-237). (2) Another way to educate, connect and build trust is to hold regular get-togethers of senior administration and chairs (Boyko, 2009, pp. 355-357). To the same purpose, Johnson (2010) suggests that administrators keep chairs
informed and provide clear explanations for denying chair and faculty requests (p. 236) and Gmelch (2004) suggests deans provide support and leadership to their chairs in a servant leadership capacity (p. 81). (3) The third way to educate and connect chairs, faculty and administration is for faculty to participate in committee work to prepare for the chair position by learning about institutional policies, procedures, meeting conduct rules, and networking (Boyko, 2009, pp. 355-357). In the same vein, Johnson (2010) suggests aspiring chairs should serve on department and college-wide committees to better understand the groups that make up their college community and how things work in their institution (p. 234), and sitting chairs should expand their vision by becoming aware of the mandates and responsibilities of their superiors and other constituencies (p. 231).

2.6. Summary

The BC public college system was established between 1960 and 1975 with the primary purpose of increasing access to post-secondary education in British Columbia and currently consists of 11 colleges. In 2003, the mandates of all BC public colleges were expanded to include four-year baccalaureate degree programs. As a result of implementing bachelor degree programming, the purpose of BC public colleges changed from the single purpose of offering comprehensive curriculum, open access, and responsiveness to the community, to the dual purpose of offering higher-level more focused, specialized programming, in addition to offering comprehensive curriculum.

Over the years, the governance of BC public colleges has moved closer to bicameral governance, a political model in which two or more parties, in colleges the two parties are the College Board and faculty, are involved in the governing and decision making of the institution. The move to bicameral governance came about as a result of the inclusion of faculty representatives on College Boards, the creation of the faculty-dominated Education Council, the unionization of college faculty province-wide, and BC colleges’ university transfer function and bachelor degree-granting status. In addition, faculty’s participation in college governance is required, based on Mintzberg’s (1995) theory on professional bureaucracies, due to the complex nature of colleges’ core work and to faculty’s role in performing that complex core work. Mintzberg (1995) theorizes that a professional bureaucracy is one in which highly trained professionals perform the
organization’s core work and by virtue of their expertise are entrusted with a considerable amount of decision-making operational authority.

A typical BC public college has the classic pyramidal hierarchical organizational structure and follows the classical organizational principles of chain-of-command and unit-of-command. The chief executive officer, named President, is appointed by and reports directly to the Board of Governors. Vice-Presidents (VP) are appointed by and report to the President; and deans are appointed by the President and report to their VP. Academic department chairs, the subject of this study, are faculty members who perform administrative roles as heads of the academic departments within each school of the college. All faculty members, including chairs, receive and obey orders from their school’s dean.

Organizational role theory is the study of the behaviour of human beings within the social systems of formal organizations which are pre-planned, task-oriented, and hierarchical in nature (Biddle, 1986). As such, it provides a conceptual perspective of the role of academic department chair and is an appropriate and relevant framework to describe and analyze the perceptions and experiences of BC college chair participants in this study. Specifically, the six types of role conflict, intra-sender conflict, inter-sender conflict, inter-role conflict, person-role conflict, role-overload conflict, and role-ambiguity conflict, can be applied to better understand chair participants’ reported experiences.

With the exception of Boyko’s 2009 thesis, the literature on department chairs is based on research conducted predominately at non-Canadian universities, in particular United States universities. In both countries, Canada and United States, the university academic department chair position is a combined administrative and faculty position held by a faculty member. The chair’s job is to manage department activities and faculty over whom the chair has no line authority; to be loyal to, and advocate for both faculty and administration; to advise students; to mentor faculty and to teach and participate in scholarly activities. On an operational level, chairs serve as the communication bridge between administration and faculty.

In addition to discussing the responsibilities and roles performed by chairs, the research studies reviewed in this literature review identified common challenges
experienced by chairs which lead to excessive stress issues for many chairs. The challenges included the volume and diversity of tasks required of chairs, the ambiguous, paradoxical, conflicting nature of the chair role, and the lack of chairs’ management training and experience. Researchers acknowledged a need to improve the chair position so as to alleviate chairs’ excessive stress and improve the attractiveness and effectiveness of the chair position. Suggestions included reducing the chair’s workload, introducing management training for chairs, and connecting administration, chairs, and faculty and educating all three parties about the chair role and the operational workings of the college.

Since at the time of this study, no published research studies on academic department chairs at British Columbia public colleges could be found, the purpose of this research study was to explore the various forms the chair position takes in BC public colleges; to examine and describe the roles BC college chairs perform; to describe the people who perform those roles; and to report their self-declared challenges and successes in the chair role and their suggestions to improve the chair position. Prior to a report on the research findings, which is the subject of Chapters 4 and 5, a description of the research design and methods applied in conducting this inquiry is presented next, in Chapter 3.
3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

As the literature review demonstrated, research regarding academic department chairs in the United States is well established. What gave rise to this study was the absence of documented research studies involving collecting and examining the insights of BC public college chairs as to their opinions of and experiences with the chair role, and their suggestions as to how to improve the chair position.

3.1. Research Purpose and Questions

This inquiry is a descriptive study in that its primary purpose is to describe the features and functions of the academic department chair position in BC public colleges; the motivations, aspirations, and management styles of BC public college chairs; and the satisfying, challenging and stressful aspects of the chair role as experienced and reported by the people performing the role of chair in BC public colleges. The study is guided by four core questions, presented below; and 10 subsidiary questions, presented in Table 12 in Section 6 of Chapter 3.

1. What are the features and functions of the academic department chair position in BC public colleges?
2. Who are the people who hold the position and perform the role of academic department chair in BC public colleges?
3. What are the successes and challenges experienced by the academic department chair in BC public colleges?
4. What are strategies to improve the position of academic department chair in BC public colleges?
3.2. Research Context

Information regarding each public college’s name, year established, campus locations, funded student spaces and annual operating grants is located on the website of the BC Ministry of Advanced Education and each college is Education Quality Assurance (EQA) designated. Table 5 sets out the names of the eleven BC public colleges, the year each college was established, the campus locations of each college, the number of government funded student spaces and each college’s annual operating grant for 2015/16.

Table 5  BC Public Colleges as of January 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Year Established</th>
<th>Campus Locations</th>
<th>Funded Student Spaces 2015/16</th>
<th>Annual Operating Grant 2015/16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camosun College Victoria, BC</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Lansdowne, Victoria Interurban, Victoria</td>
<td>7,049</td>
<td>$46,900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of New Caledonia</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Prince George, Burns Lake, Fort St. James, Fraser Lake, Mackenzie, Quesnel, Vanderhoof</td>
<td>3,161</td>
<td>$28,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince George, BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of the Rockies</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Cranbrook, Creston, Fernie, Invermere, Golden, Kimberly</td>
<td>1,722</td>
<td>$16,700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranbrook, BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas College New Westminster, BC</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>New Westminster, Coquitlam</td>
<td>8,354</td>
<td>$54,900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langara College Vancouver, BC</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>100 West 49th Ave, Vancouver</td>
<td>7,056</td>
<td>$41,900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Island College Courtenay, BC</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Courtenay, Campbell, Port Hardy, Port Alberni</td>
<td>2,208</td>
<td>$20,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Lights College</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Dawson Creek, Atlin, Chetwynd, Dease, Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Tumbler Ridge</td>
<td>1,481</td>
<td>$16,700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawson Creek, BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Community College</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Terrace, Hazelton, Houston, Kitimat, Masset, Prince George, Queen Charlotte City, Skidegate, Smithers, Nass Valley</td>
<td>1,676</td>
<td>$16,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrace, BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>Founded</td>
<td>Locations</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okanagan College</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Kelowna, Salmon Arm, Vernon, Penticton</td>
<td>4,751</td>
<td>$42,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selkirk College</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Castlegar, Selkirk, Trail, Nelson, Grand Forks</td>
<td>2,322</td>
<td>$23,900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Community College</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Broadway, Vancouver Downtown Vancouver</td>
<td>6,521</td>
<td>$44,600,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each college is organized internally into schools or faculties. The schools or faculties are responsible for the courses and programs offered within broad fields of study, commonly depicted in the name of the school. Each school is further divided into academic departments, defined by more specialized categories of study, that are managed by academic department chairs. For example, a college’s School of Health may offer programs such as Nursing, Nurse’s Aide, Dental Hygienist, Dental Assistant, Child Care; and include departments such as Nursing and Human Services. School of Arts & Science may include departments such as Psychology, English, History, Math, Biology. A School of Business may include departments such as Marketing, Management, Finance, Accounting, and School of Trades & Technology may include departments such as Electrical Engineering, Plumbing, and Carpentry.

The bodies of knowledge engaged in by the colleges, as reflected by the courses and programs offered by their schools were categorized into broad fields of study for the purpose of establishing a foundation for a consistent, manageable comparison of chairs’ responses across the bodies of knowledge. Table 6 lists the fields of study in which BC public colleges are engaged, and also presents examples of specific areas or sub fields of study in each of the nine broad fields of study. It is acknowledged that the specific groupings of disciplines identified in the sub-fields are non-exhaustive lists. As well, some sub-fields could be aligned with different fields of studies, and/or could overlap two or more fields of study. For example, Applied Business Technology is placed in Business, but could be placed in Technologies. Economics is categorized as a Social Science but could be considered a Business field of study. Computer Science is in Physical Sciences but could be placed in Technology. Sport and Exercise Science is in Health, but could be categorized as a Human Services or Business field of study.
### Table 6  Fields and Sub-Fields of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Field of Study</th>
<th>Sub-Fields of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Arts and Humanities</td>
<td>Art design, art history, communication, classical studies, cultures, literature, languages, film, theatre, drama, dance, history, music, philosophy, journalism, religion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Business</td>
<td>Accounting, management, marketing, management information systems, finance, tourism, hospitality, sports management, applied business technology-office, legal, medical administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 College Access and Preparation</td>
<td>English as a second language (ESL), mathematics and English high school upgrading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Health</td>
<td>Exercise science, health science - Baccalaureate nursing, practical nursing, health care assistant, Dental Hygienist, Dental Assistant, medical laboratory, medical radiography.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Human Services</td>
<td>Child, family and community studies, early childhood education, continuing care, social service work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Natural Sciences</td>
<td>Astronomy, biology, chemistry, geography, geology, mathematics, physics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Social Sciences</td>
<td>Anthropology, criminology, economics, religion, physiology, political science, psychology, sociology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Technologies</td>
<td>Computer science, civil engineering, electronics and computer engineering, mechanical engineering, computer technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Trades</td>
<td>Architectural trades, culinary trades, electrical trades, mechanical and metal trades, plumbing and pipe trades.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.3. Research Design

This enquiry is an exploratory, descriptive research study with a mixed methods research design. Although the study did not begin with a theory and had no hypothesis to test, it turned out that Mintzberg’s theory of Professional Bureaucracies (1995) and Organizational Role theory by Kahn et al. (1964) proved to be a fitting theoretical framework to inform this research on the chair position in BC public colleges. Alternative analysis such as feminism or the hierarchy of fields of study would have resulted in a different presentation of data but these analyses were not done due to the exploratory
nature of this study. Such analyses are recommended in future research studies. An explanation of how the study fits a descriptive, mixed methods research design follows.

3.3.1. Descriptive Mixed Methods Research Design

A descriptive research study is described by M.D. Gall, J.P. Gall, W. Borg (2003) in *Educational Research* as being the most basic form of research. “Research in its most basic form involves the description of natural or man-made phenomena – their form, actions, changes over time, and similarities with other phenomena” (p. 289). The authors also tell us that “Descriptive studies are concerned primarily with determining “what is” (2003, p. 290). Just as the primary concern of descriptive studies is to determine “what is”, this researcher’s interest and aim in conducting this enquiry was also to determine “what is” with respect to the chair role. The primary intent was to generate data that would describe the academic department chair position and the people who perform the chair role in BC public colleges.

A mixed methods research design means that both quantitative and qualitative research approaches are applied. To explain how this study employed a mixed methods research design requires a review of the definitions of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

**Qualitative Research Method**

In *Research Design*, Creswell (2003) explains that a qualitative research approach is merited “if a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because little research has been done on it” and that “Qualitative research is exploratory and is useful when the researcher does not know the important variables to examine” (p. 22). What a qualitative research approach actually entails can be found in the definition of qualitative research provided by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Their definition explains that qualitative research includes an “interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world” which they then clarify to mean “that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring them” (p. 3). The entire definition is presented below.
Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversation, photographs, recordings, and memos to self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3)

Creswell (2003) explains that one of the techniques qualitative researchers use to determine the “meanings people bring” to a particular phenomenon is to analyze and interpret research participants’ responses to open-ended questions posed in interview settings or on questionnaire surveys. He explains further that the qualitative research study begins with no theory, no hypothesis to test; but rather, the researcher’s primary intent when collecting open-ended data is to develop patterns, themes, or theories, based on the collected data (Creswell, 2003, p.18). Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) point out that qualitative research is based on the assumption that social reality is constructed as interpreted by the participants in it and that these interpretations are transitory and situational and thus social reality is continuously constructed; that researchers often become personally involved with research participants and bring personal values into the study; that researchers generate verbal and pictorial data to represent the social environment, and that researchers prepare reports that reflect their constructions of the data and an awareness that readers will form their own constructions from what is reported (2003, p. 25).

The current study exhibits several of the features of qualitative research studies and it also employed what is described above as qualitative research techniques to collect and analyze data. The qualitative research features and techniques that define the qualitative side of the current study are listed and described below.

The current study is a study of human (chair people) actions in a natural setting (BC public colleges).

It is an exploratory study. At the time of the study there was no documented research studies that involved collecting and examining responses from BC public college chairs. Also, the study began with no theory, no hypothesis to test.
Concepts and theories were learned about and applied after data had been collected; specifically, Mintzberg’s theory of Professional Bureaucracies (1995) and Organizational Role theory by Kahn et al. (1964). The researcher sought to understand the chair position and people by asking chairs open-ended questions, e.g. to provide opinions and to explain reasons/motives for chair behaviours and actions. The researcher analyzed and interpreted research participants’ responses to discover the meanings behind their behaviours. The written data generated by participant responses and interpreted by the researcher were used to represent the chair position and chair people in BC public colleges in the researcher’s report. An agenda for reform was created by posing open-ended questions asking chairs to identify problems, to provide best advice to successors, and to suggest ways to improve the chair position.

**Quantitative Research Method**

As noted, a mixed methods research design employs both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The quantitative approach is preferred to the qualitative approach if the research study’s purpose is to test an existing theory or hypothesis or to identify factors that influence an outcome or to identify the best predictors of outcomes rather than to explore an unknown or an insufficiently researched phenomenon (Creswell, 2003, p. 22). Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) provide a definition of positivist research, which they explain is virtually synonymous with quantitative research, as follows:

> Positivist research is grounded in the assumption that features of the social environment constitute an independent reality and are relatively constant across time and settings. Positivist researchers develop knowledge by collecting numerical data on observable behaviors of samples and then subject these data to numerical analysis. (2003, p. 23)

Gall et al. (2003) elaborate on their definition of quantitative research by comparing the distinguishing characteristics of quantitative and qualitative researchers. Unlike qualitative researchers who assume a subjective, transitory social reality, quantitative researchers assume an objective social reality that is relatively constant
across time and settings. Also, quantitative researchers take an objective, detached stance toward research participants, generate numerical data to represent the social environment, use statistical methods to analyze data, and prepare impersonal, objective reports of research findings. In contrast, qualitative researchers bring personal values into their studies, generate verbal and pictorial data to represent the social environment, and prepare subjective reports that encourage readers' interpretative analysis of research findings (2003, p. 25). Another difference between qualitative and quantitative research is that in collecting data to test or verify a theory or hypothesis, quantitative researchers conduct experiments, analyze documents and responses to closed-ended survey questions; in contrast to qualitative researchers who collect and analyze data from open-ended survey and interview questions. (Creswell, 2003, p. 22).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) draw a comparison of the two methods in explaining that qualitative researchers “seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning. In contrast, quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationship between variables, not processes” (2005, p. 10). Gal et al. (2003) point out that some researchers believe the underlying difference between the two methods is in their different purposes, specifically that qualitative research’s purpose is to discover while quantitative research’s purpose is to validate. “Some researchers believe that qualitative research is best used to discover themes and relationships at the case level, while quantitative research is best used to validate those themes and relationships in samples and populations. In this view, qualitative research plays a discovery role, while quantitative research plays a confirmatory role” (2003, p. 24).

The current study is considered a mixed method research study because in addition to its qualitative research features, several of the quantitative research procedures described above were also employed in this study. They are listed below.

An online survey was administered to elicit responses from chairs rather than using interviewing techniques so as to diminish the researcher’s personal biases and eliminate the possibility of the researcher’s presence influencing participants’ responses.
Fixed-format closed-ended survey questions were asked to elicit objective responses and collect quantitative data.

Objective data was generated through an analysis of publicly-available government and college documents and faculty association collective agreements of BC’s 11 public colleges.

Some variables investigated were predetermined, e.g. levels of stress experienced by chairs and chairs’ weekly work hours.

Collected data were observed and measured numerically, e.g. the number of participant responses to each question and the number of responses to each selection choice in each question were counted and reported.

Statistical analysis procedures such as measures of central tendency and linking and computing the number of responses to related questions were calculated and reported in tables and figures. Tests of statistical significance were not applied for two reasons. One, this study involved the entire population; a random sample was not selected. All 11 BC public colleges were invited to participate and all 11 BC public colleges’ documents and faculty collective agreements were analyzed. Two, this study was not conducted to test, either to confirm or reject, a hypothesis; rather the study’s purpose was to describe a population.

Benefits of Mixed Method Research Design

The benefit initially recognized of applying both qualitative and quantitative approaches to a single research study is the benefit of triangulation, whereby data from alternative sources are used to assess the validity of findings from alternative sources (Brewerton and Millard, 2004, p. 200). As Creswell (2003) explains “Recognizing that all methods have limitations, researchers felt that biases inherent in any single method could neutralize or cancel the biases of other methods” (p. 15). In Building Theories from Case Study Research, Eisenhardt (1989) acknowledges the same benefit “It (quantitative evidence) also can keep researchers from being carried away by vivid, but false, impressions in qualitative data, and it can bolster findings when it corroborates those findings from qualitative evidence” (p. 538). In Organizational Research Methods, Brewerton and Millard (2004) clarify that using both qualitative (e.g. case-study) and quantitative descriptive research approaches leads to a more comprehensive view of the
situation and strengthens the relevance and reliability of both quantitative and qualitative data in that one set of data acts as a check on the other set of data.

In case-study research, the notion of combining qualitative and quantitative data offers the promise of getting closer to the ‘whole’ of a case in a way that a single method study could not achieve. This idea is based on the principle of triangulation which advocates the use of as many different sources of information on the topic as possible (e.g. questionnaires, observations, interviews) with a view to obtaining convergence on an issue. (Brewerton and Millard, 2004, p. 55)

In addition to the triangulation benefit, Eisenhardt (1989) identifies other benefits emerging from the triangulation benefit, such as the benefit of qualitative research informing quantitative research by providing the rationale underlying the data and the benefit of suggesting new theory. She explains how combining quantitative and qualitative data can be highly synergistic, as “the qualitative data are useful for understanding the rationale or theory underlying relationships revealed in the quantitative data or may suggest directly, theory which can then be strengthened by quantitative support” (1989, p. 538). Likewise, Creswell (2003) notes other researchers’ discoveries of similar additional benefits emerging from the original concept of triangulation. They are expressed in the quote below and include the benefits of one research method informing the other method, or of providing insight into different levels of analysis, or of serving a larger purpose of advocating for marginalized groups.

For example, the results from one method can help develop or inform the other method (Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). Alternatively, one method can be nested within another method to provide insight into different levels or units of analysis (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Or the methods can serve a larger, transformative purpose to change and advocate for marginalized groups, such as women, ethnic/racial minorities, members of gay and lesbian communities, people with disabilities, and those who are poor (Mertens, 2003). (as cited in Research Design, Creswell, 2003, p. 16)

One of the reasons for utilizing a mixed methods research design in this study was to realize the benefit of triangulation, to obtain convergence on the matter of the chair position in BC public colleges by using different sources of information such as open-ended and closed-ended questions in the survey and government and college documents and faculty collective agreements. Another reason a mixed methods
research design was particularly important to this study is because at the time of the study, the researcher was an active chair serving at one of the colleges in the study. It is likely, therefore, that the researcher’s biases, values and self-interests, as well her insight from performing the chair role, would influence and be reflected in the interpretive analysis. The hope was that quantitative data would counter balance and act as a check on the researcher’s biases, values and self-interests. Yet another reason a mixed methods research design was utilized in this study was to provide insight and interest in not only the chair position but also in the entire BC public college system.

3.3.2. Government and College Documentation

The BC Government and the BC public colleges’ faculty collective agreements and chair job descriptions provided one of the two sources of data for this study. Some of the quantitative data such as age and size of colleges measured in terms of number of students and annual budgets, were assembled from the website of the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Innovation and Technology. Data specific to the chair position were garnered from the BC public colleges’ faculty collective agreements and chair job descriptions.

All 11 BC public colleges in the study population have unionized faculty and 10 of the 11 colleges are members of Faculty Post-Secondary Education (FPSE), which bargains collectively on behalf of its faculty members on clauses deemed common to all faculty employees. The employers are represented by the Post-Secondary Employers’ Association (PSEA), the employer bargaining agent for the 11 public colleges, five special-purpose teaching universities, and three institutes in British Columbia. These 19 institutions are governed by the College & Institute Act, the Universities Act, and the BC Institute of Technology Act (PSEA Webpage, 5/3/2010).

One of the collective agreement provisions not negotiated by FPSE and PSEA is the chair position. Clauses dealing with the chair position are negotiated separately between each college’s faculty and administration representatives. The collective agreements for each of the 11 colleges are publicly accessible on the website of the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Innovation and Technology. The clauses pertaining to the chair position in the colleges’ faculty collective agreements provided information
about the chair position with respect to position title, length of term, reporting relations, qualifications, selection process, performance review process, compensation, chair roles, and key responsibilities.

Chair job description postings were requested from the Human Resources Department of each college. Six colleges provided chair job descriptions and five colleges referred the researcher to the clauses referencing the chair position in their faculty collective agreements. College chair job description documents and faculty collective agreements were analyzed to collect information about the chair position to use both in constructing questions for the online chair survey and to supplement and compare to chair participants’ responses to questions in the online survey, the second data source for this study.

3.3.3. **Online Chair Survey**

The second source of data for this study was an online chair survey, including fixed-format and open-ended questions and targeting the academic department chairs serving in BC public colleges.

Qualitative data were collected through the online open-ended survey questions, rather than by telephone or in-person interviews, for a number of reasons. One reason is that online questions provide participants, particularly “people (who) are not equally articulate and perceptive” whatever time they need to deliberate and articulate a response, thus generating “data that are thoughtful” in the “language and words of participants” (Creswell, 2003, p. 187). Creswell also notes that collecting data through interviews can be limiting because the researcher’s presence may bias responses (2003, p. 186). The risk of researcher presence bias was potentially greater in this particular study because the researcher knows and is known by some of the participants. An online open-ended survey should eliminate or at least reduce the bias resulting from the researcher’s presence. As well, web-based online, typed responses saved the researcher the time and cost of arranging phone interviews and transcribing oral responses.
In addition to the quantitative data from government and college documentation, some quantitative data were also collected through the web-based fixed-format survey questions. A limitation of collecting quantitative data through fixed-format questions is that assigning numeric measures to behavior may be excessively time consuming and politically sensitive, which may make participants feel threatened, resentful and non-co-operative. Care was taken in designing the questionnaire so as to minimize participants’ potential negative reactions. The following subsections describe the questions in the survey, the pilot testing of the survey, and the survey data collection process.

**Online Survey Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is divided into nine sections, and consists of a total of 76 questions. The first eight sections, A to H, consist of 62 fixed-format questions, most of which also have an open-ended option. The ninth section, I, consists of 14 open-ended questions.

The headings of the first eight sections are as follows: (A) Chair Person Profile, (B) Department Profile, (C) Chair Position Features, (D) Chair Responsibilities and Roles, (E) Satisfying and Stressful Aspects of Chair Job, (F) Impact of Baccalaureate Degrees on Chairs, (G) Chair Aspirations, (H) Chair Development, (I) Open Ended Survey Questions.

Section (A) Chair Person Profile; includes demographic data such as gender, age, work experience as chair and other work, academic credentials and professional designations. Section (B) Department Profile; identifies the field of study and size of department in terms of number of faculty, students, programs and courses. Section (C) Chair Position Features; concentrates on selection and performance evaluation of chairs, reporting relationships, and compensation. Section (D) Chair Responsibilities and Roles; is subdivided into Faculty Focus, Student Focus, Department Focus, College Focus, External Focus, and Self Focus. Section (E) Satisfying and Stressful Aspects; asks chairs to rate specific chair activities according to varying degrees of satisfaction and levels of stress. Section (F) Impact of Baccalaureate Degrees; asks chairs to measure noticeable changes in chair responsibilities as a result of colleges offering bachelor degrees, Section (G) Chair Aspirations; focuses on chairs’ reasons for taking the chair job, and their perceptions of themselves professionally. Section (H) Chair
Development; asks about existing training programs and a mentor or buddy system for chairs. Section (I) Open-Ended Chair Survey Questions: consisted of a range of questions designed to further explore chairs’ motivations, aspirations, as well as their views on managerial styles, the paradoxical and conflicting nature of the chair roles, and suggestions to improve the chair role.

Conventional survey design rules were applied (Gall, Gall, Borg, 2003, p. 226, Brewerton and Millward, 2004, p. 104-108). Specifically, sections are clearly distinguishable with noticeable, appropriate topics; non-threatening questions are placed at the beginning of the survey; open-ended questions are placed at the end of the survey; clear instructions are provided; questions are divided into logical parts to maintain clarity and to avoid requiring respondents to read the question several times; continuing a question to the next page and leaving portions of pages blank are avoided; a thank you notation and information regarding dissemination of study results are included (Gall, Gall, Borg, 2003, p. 226, Brewerton and Millward, 2004, p. 104-108).

The sources and construction of the questions in the survey were based on the researcher’s review of other chair research studies and conceptual themes described in the literature review, the review of BC public colleges’ faculty collective agreements and chair job descriptions, and the researcher’s own experience as an academic department chair. Specifically, questions in (A) Chair Person Profile reflect traditional demographic questions asked in most chair research studies. Questions in (B) Department Profile were based primarily on the researcher’s experiences engaging with and observing differences and similarities in chairs from other fields of study and sizes of departments. Questions in (C) Chair Position Features and in (D) Chair Responsibilities and Roles were drawn from the lists of chair tasks and roles in other chair research studies and from BC public colleges’ chair job descriptions and faculty collective agreements, as well as from the researcher’s experiences with tasks not commonly identified in the prior mentioned sources such as providing references for students and building relations with professional bodies and employers. Questions in (E) Satisfying and Stressful Aspects were based on the satisfying and stressful aspects of the chair job identified in other research studies and experienced by the researcher. Questions in (F) Impact of Baccalaureate Degrees were based on the researcher’s experience in working with her department faculty and dean in preparing a Bachelor degree proposal and then
implementing the Bachelor Degree program. Questions in (G) Chair Aspirations and (H) Chair Development were drawn from survey questions in other chair research studies and the researcher’s experiences. The questions in (I) Open-Ended Questions referencing the dual, paradoxical nature of the chair role were based on the dual role conceptual theme described in the literature. The idea for the questions regarding the chair’s management style was the public colleges’ chair job descriptions and faculty collective agreements which describe the chair role as being a coordinating role seeking and implementing collegial decisions, and not a supervisory role. The other open-ended questions were based primarily on the researcher’s experiences as an academic department chair. Based on feedback from the pilot testers, the chair survey was expected to take about 30 minutes to complete in one sitting. (The survey questionnaire is located in Appendix C.)

Pilot Testing

The survey instrument was pilot tested online from October 21 through to November 01, 2010, to determine clarity of wording, sequencing of questions, thoroughness and validity of questions, ease of answering and completion time. The email letter to the pilot testers, included a link to the survey, explained the objective of the pilot test and provided directive questions to guide their test. (Appendix B contains the letter to the pilot testers.)

There were seven pilot testers and they collectively had specialized knowledge and experience in administration, research, teaching, editing, forms design, and curriculum design. They included a newspaper editor and reporter, a former college academic department chair, a high school teacher, an elementary teacher, a former senior government manager/director, an author, and a post-secondary curriculum design and development specialist.

Each tester responded to the researcher with answers to each directive question in the email and suggested modifications to specific survey questions. Their recommendations did improve the wording and intent of seven questions, but did not require extensive editorial or technical changes and thus did not delay the release date of the questionnaire. The pilot testers also indicated that the chair survey took about 30 minutes to complete in one sitting.
Survey Data Collection Process

Collecting survey data was a two-stage process. In stage one a letter was sent to the Academic Vice President (VP) of each college introducing the research study and making three requests: (a) permission to send a letter inviting each chair to participate in the survey; (b) permission to mention the VP’s support of the study in the invitation letter to the chairs; (c) the names and email addresses of the chairs serving at each college. The letter sets out the criteria defining the chair position for purposes of this study as a faculty position with a stipulated term of office, and with responsibilities for managing an academic department and acting as liaison between the department faculty and the dean. The chair person reports to a non-faculty administrator, who is usually the dean. (The letter to the Academic VPs is in Appendix D.)

The letter was emailed to the 11 Academic Vice Presidents on January 07, 2011 and by January 18, 2011, five Academic VPs had responded favourably. The letter was re-sent to the remaining six Academic VPs on January 28, and was followed up with reminder emails, phone calls, and ethics approval applications required by four of the eleven colleges, through to June 14, 2011. Four of the 11 Academic VPs requested the researcher apply for and obtain ethics approval from their colleges as a condition to and prior to the VPs granting permission and providing names and email addresses of their chairs. A fifth Academic VP requested copies of the researcher’s thesis purpose and methodology submission to SFU Research Ethics Board, and a copy of that Board’s Certificate of Approval.

By April 18, 2011, 10 of the 11 Academic VPs had granted permission to contact their colleges’ chairs. Communication between the researcher and the eleventh college continued until June 14, 2011. On that date permission had not yet been granted and the researcher was informed that the college would not be reviewing the researcher’s ethics approval application until September 2011. The decision to delay the review of the ethics application removed any chance of obtaining permission to contact the college’s chairs until sometime after September 2011. Thus, the decision effectively excluded the college’s chairs from participating in the study since the online survey was scheduled to close for participation on June 24, 2011.
In stage two of the data collection process, a letter inviting chairs to participate in the survey was emailed to the list of chair names provided by the colleges’ Academic VPs. The invitation letter was initially emailed to college chairs on May 18, 2011. Reminder notices were sent on June 5, 2011 and June 30, 2011 to non-respondents, database subjects who did not respond to the initial invitation. The survey closed for participation Friday, June 24, 2011.

The letter inviting chairs to participate in the survey explains the purpose of the research study, how the invitee’s name was obtained, the process of participating and estimated time to complete the questionnaire, the consent agreement and rights of participants, the measures taken to ensure confidentiality, and the potential benefits of chairs’ input. In addition, the letter invites the invitees to request a summary of the findings and provides the names and email addresses of the thesis supervisors and the Director of Research Ethics for any questions or concerns about the study. The letter also includes the link to the online questionnaire.

To participate, invitees clicked on the link to the online survey which automatically opened up the questionnaire. The introduction to the questionnaire, as well as the letter, explains that the survey need not be completed in one sitting and that the participant may omit questions, and may withdraw from the study at any time. Also stated in the letter is that by completing and submitting the survey, the participant is consenting to the collection and use of the data for the stated study.

The invitation letter specifies the measures taken to ensure confidentiality; that the survey is password protected, and that access is limited to the thesis supervisors, the researcher, and the survey technical specialist whose position includes a confidentiality clause. The letter further explains that the collected survey data will be stored in a secure location and will be destroyed three years after completion of the thesis (the invitation letter to college chairs is located in Appendix E.). The invitation letter to the chairs of the researcher’s home college, Camosun College, included an additional clause specifying that one of the thesis supervisors was a senior administrator employed by Camosun College. The clause was inserted at the request of, and to comply with, the requirements of Camosun’s Board of Ethics. (The invitation letter to Camosun chairs is located in Appendix F.)
3.4. Ethical Review

Ethical review approval for the web-based survey questionnaire, quantitative and qualitative questions, was applied for and granted from the Office of Research Ethics (ORE) at Simon Fraser University on December 16, 2010. (SFU ORE letter, dated December 21, 2010 is in Appendix A.)

Ethical review approval was also required from four of the 11 colleges. Ethics approval applications were submitted to the four colleges and approval was granted by the Ethics Review Boards of three colleges (Appendix A). Due to a series of delays in communications between the fourth college and the researcher, the researcher’s ethics approval application was not reviewed by the fourth college’s Ethics Approval Board, and therefore not included in this study.

3.4.1. Researcher Subjectivity

At the time of this study, the researcher was an active chair serving at one of the colleges in the study. It is possible therefore, that the researcher’s biases, values and self-interests, as well as her insights from performing the chair role, will influence and be reflected in the interpretive analysis of the data. As well, this researcher, primarily in her role as department chair, had direct prior professional contact with some of the participants. However, to the researcher’s knowledge, no immediate or extended family relationships exist or ever existed between her and any of the study subjects.

3.4.2. Research Risk

The research risk was regarded as low to minimal. Data was collected for the purpose of understanding the job of academic department chairs at BC public colleges. Demographic data such as gender, age, educational qualifications, academic and other work experience; and department size in terms of number of programs, courses, students, and faculty, were collected to compare to chairs’ experiences and perceptions in their role as chair. This study did not involve an analysis of chairs based on disabilities, abilities, racial characteristics, or religious beliefs and affiliations.
There were no foreseeable negative consequences of participating in the study, and participants were informed they were free to withdraw from the study at any stage of data collection. The potential positive consequences of the participation of chairs in the study are an understanding of the academic chair position and the people who hold the chair position in BC public colleges; an identification of strategies to improve the chair position; and the opportunity for future chairs to enhance their preparation for the roles and responsibilities of the chair position.

### 3.4.3. Confidentiality

No individual chair participant or college is identified. All identifying references to colleges’ and people’s names found in participants’ responses have been removed. Each chair participant is coded according to category of study, and only aggregated data based on the coded classification is reported. Participants’ real names are not used and participant responses are not linked to, nor reported in connection with their specific colleges. Data were not separated by college.

### 3.5. Survey Participants

All 11 BC public colleges, which included the entire population of persons serving as academic department chairs in BC public colleges, were selected to be issued the web-based survey. Of the 11 BC public colleges invited to participate in the web-based survey, 10 colleges participated and one college did not. The Academic Vice Presidents from 10 of the 11 colleges identified a total of 234 active department chairs serving within their colleges. The overall response rate, upon close of the survey for participation on June 24, 2011, was 53.4 percent. The 125 responses include all respondents who pressed the submission entry button, regardless of the number of questions individual respondents may have omitted. It does not include chairs who terminated the survey without reaching the end, or who did not press the submit button. In the analysis sections, the number of responses to each part of each question is accounted for and used as the base to calculate the percentage response rate for each question and for each part of each question.
Table 7 displays the number of invitation letters sent to each college’s chairs, and the number of responses received from each college’s chairs. The 234 prospective participants represent the final number of chairs contacted after excluding the invitees who requested to be withdrawn from the study and including new invitees whose names and addresses were provided by some of the invitees. The reasons given by invitees requesting to be withdrawn were: their positions did not meet the study’s criteria for the chair position; they were no longer in the chair position; and/or they were on sick leave. The overall mean chair response rate from college chairs was 53.4 percent, representing participation from 125 of the 234 chairs invited to participate. The median college response rate was 60 percent. The response rates of the individual colleges varied between 35.7 percent and 66.7 percent.

The survey was distributed during May and June because that is a time when traditionally, colleges offer fewer courses, and there are fewer students than in the semesters from September to April. It is a time period when many continuing/regular faculty members, including chairs, are not teaching and are able to devote more time to curriculum and professional development activities, such as conducting research, attending conferences, workshops, classes, and developing new and upgrading existing programs and courses. July and August tend to be popular vacation months for many faculty members, including chairs. Consequently, the researcher reasoned that most chairs would be more accessible and available to participate in the survey during May and June than at other times of the year. Though that reasoning held for many chairs, it clearly was not the case for all chairs.

The number of invitees who “clicked” on the link to the questionnaire totalled 134. Nine invitees who clicked on the link chose not to respond and to terminate the survey by not clicking the submit key, while 125 chairs chose to respond to the questionnaire and to submit their responses.
### Table 7  
**BC Public Colleges Represented by Survey Chair Participants**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>BC Public College #</th>
<th>Invited Chairs</th>
<th>Participant Chairs</th>
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<td>n per College</td>
<td>Percent of Total Invited</td>
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<tr>
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<td>40</td>
<td>17.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following subsections, the participants’ response rates are categorized and presented according to participants’ fields of study and the size of chair participants’ academic departments. The reason for grouping chair participants into fields of study and further dividing the fields of study into three department sizes is to gain a better understanding of the scope and range of the position of chair. Specifically, the categorizations reveal whether there are differences in chairs’ views and experiences due to their fields of study and size of departments, which invites an exploration of why there are differences.

### 3.5.1. Survey Response Rates per Field of Study

As explained, the reason for grouping chair participants according to their fields of study is to explore whether a relationship exists between a chair’s field of study and the chair’s views and experiences being a chair and whether there are differences in chairs’ views and experiences due to their fields of study. To accomplish the task of categorizing the participants according to fields of study, participants were asked in the
online survey to select from a list of eight fields, or specify other fields, the category in which their departments reside. A total of 125 responses are recorded, representing 100 percent of the participants.

Ninety-four of the 125 participants self-selected one of the eight listed fields of study. Thirty-one of the 125 respondents specified other fields of study. Fourteen of the 31 respondents identified Human Services as the category of study in which their departments resided, which resulted in the addition of Human Services as the ninth field of study. The other 17 respondents identified several narrower areas of study. Since each of these narrower areas was identified by only one or two respondents, the researcher combined them with the broader related listed fields of study to protect the respondents’ identities and to maintain consistency with the researcher’s initial categorization. For example, Hospitality Management was combined with Business; Language Studies and Performing Arts were combined with Arts and Humanities; Physical Sciences were combined with Natural Sciences; and Criminal Justice was combined with Social Sciences.

Table 8 lists the nine fields of study, the number of chairs invited per field of study, the percentage of chairs invited from each field relative to the total number of chairs invited, the number and percentage of chairs responding per field, and the percentage of chairs responding from each field relative to the total number of respondents.

For example, 35 chairs in the Health field of study were invited to participate in the online survey, and 22 Health chairs, representing 62.9 percent of total Health chairs, completed and submitted the survey. The 35 invited Health chairs represent 15.0 percent of the total number of invited chairs (35÷234), while the 22 Health chair respondents represent 17.6 percent of the total number of responding chairs (22÷125). Thus, Health chairs are slightly over-represented in survey responses relative to the percentage of total chairs Health represents. Similarly, Human Services, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Technologies chairs are slightly over-represented in survey responses.
The chairs representing Arts & Humanities, Business, College Access & Preparation, and Trades fields of study are slightly under-represented in survey responses relative to the percentage of total chair respondents. Human Services chairs had the highest response rate (63.6%) and Business chairs had the lowest response rate (39.3%). The mean survey response rate of chairs in all fields of study was 53.4%.

Table 8  Fields of Study Represented by Survey Chair Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fields of Study</th>
<th>Invited Chairs</th>
<th>Participant Chairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n per Field of Study</td>
<td>Percent of Total Invited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n per Field of Study</td>
<td>Percent per Field of Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Business</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 College Access &amp; Preparation</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Health</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Human Services</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Natural Sciences</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Social Sciences</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Technologies</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Trades</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the next section, the demographics of the survey participants, specifically the gender, age, chair and industry work experience, and professional accreditations of participants are presented. Also presented are the sizes of participants’ departments categorized as small, medium or large, and the number of departments within each field of study.

3.5.2. Chairs’ Demographics and Department Sizes

The survey participants’ gender, age, chair work experience and department size, as revealed in their responses to specific questions in the online survey, are presented in Table 9. The chairs’ prior industry work experience and professional
accreditations are presented in Tables 10 and 11, respectively. Table 9 is presented below, with discussion of the data immediately following the table.

Table 9  Chair Demographics and Department Sizes Per Field of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of Study</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age 30-45</th>
<th>Age 46-55</th>
<th>Age ≥ 56</th>
<th>Department Size</th>
<th>Chair Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>Small (%)</td>
<td>Med (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Humanities</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Access</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Science</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technologies</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Since only six respondents self-selected the (30-35) age category, age categories (30-35) and (36-45) are combined to protect participants' identities.

Chairs' Gender Distributions

Table 9 displays the genders of chair participants from each field of study. Overall, the proportion of female chair participants was higher than male participants. All 125 chairs answered the survey question on gender, and 59.2 percent are female. Male chairs dominate the Trades (72.7%), Natural Sciences (71.4%), and Technologies (62.5%). Female chairs dominate Human Services (78.6%), Health (77.3%), College Access/Preparation (75.0%), and Social Sciences (72.7%). There is a slightly higher proportion of female chairs in Arts & Humanities (55.6%) and Business (54.5%) but the balance between men and women is closer to equal in those fields than in the other fields of study.
Chairs’ Age Distributions

Table 9 presents the age distribution of chair respondents from each field of study. Almost half the chair participants (46.0%) are between 46 and 55 years of age and almost a third (30.4%) are between 56 and 65 years of age. Less than a quarter of the participants (23.2%) are between 30 and 45 years of age, and of these, only 6 chairs are under 35. The largest proportion of 36 to 45 year olds (50.0%) is in Technologies, and the largest proportion of 46 to 55 year olds (64.3%) is in Human Services.

Sizes of Chairs’ Departments

As previously explained, the reasons for categorizing academic departments according to size are to gain a better understanding of the scope and range of the position of chair, and to explore the relationship between the size of a chair’s department and the chair’s views and experiences of being a chair. In this study, each respondent’s department is categorized as small, medium or large based on the number of regular/continuing faculty within the department. Departments consisting of one to nine faculty members are considered small; departments with 10 to 18 faculty members are medium sized; and departments with 19 or more faculty members are considered large.

The size of a department is generally considered to be a function of the number of faculty, the number of students, and the number of courses and programs for which the department is responsible. Measuring department size using a single factor, number of faculty, is based on the assumption that there is a direct causal relationship between the number of students, courses and programs and the number of faculty in a department; so that as the number of students, courses and programs increases, so does the number of faculty. Thus, the number of faculty reflects the number of students, courses and programs for which a department is responsible and is thereby a representative measure of department size.

One survey question asked respondents to identify the number of regular/continuing faculty members within their departments. All 125 participants answered the question. More than half the respondents, 52.8 percent reported their departments consist of one to nine continuing faculty; 30.4 percent reported 10 to 18 continuing faculty in their departments; and 16.8 percent of respondents reported their
departments consist of 19 or more continuing faculty members. The five largest departments, as reported by respondents, consist of 32, 46, 60, 75, and 85 continuing faculty.

Table 9 provides the number and percent of small, medium, and large departments in each field of study, based on number of continuing or regular faculty. Arts & Humanities have the highest proportion of small departments (72.2%), while Natural Sciences have the lowest proportion of small departments (35.7%) and Health has the highest proportion of large departments (27.3%). Overall, more than half the departments (52.8%) are small. Less than a quarter of the departments (16.8%) are large, and 30.4 percent are medium size departments.

Chairs’ Chair Work Experience

More than half the chair participants (60.8%) are currently in their second or third term of chair. Chairs currently in their first term of chair represent 39.2 percent of the 125 participants. Table 9 displays the chair work experience of chair participants in each field of study. Business and Human Services fields of study have the highest proportions of experienced chairs, 81.8 percent and 7.6 percent respectively, serving in second or third terms; and Social Science has the highest proportion of new chairs (63.3%) serving in their first term.

Chairs’ Prior Industry Work Experience

Prior industry work experience denotes employment experience chairs gained prior to college teaching and includes work in professional practice, government, business, non-for-profit organizations, and other industries. One survey question asked chairs to indicate their prior employment experience and the number of years employed prior to college teaching. Table 10 shows the participants’ number of years of prior work experience in one of the employment areas listed in the preceding sentence, though many respondents indicated they have prior work experience in two or more of the areas. Participants from Trades, Business, and Health fields of study reported the highest proportion of chairs with 10 or more years work experience in their professions, at 80.0 percent, 80.0 percent, and 77.3 percent respectively.
Table 10  Chairs’ Prior Industry Work Experience per Field of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of Study</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>1 to 4 Years %</th>
<th>5 to 9 Years %</th>
<th>≥ 10 Years %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Access &amp; Preparation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>77.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technologies</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Responses</strong></td>
<td>114</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chairs’ Professional Accreditations

The online survey question asking chairs to name their last earned academic degree and/or professional accreditation was answered by 95 percent of participants. As indicated in Table 11 more than one half of the participants (55.8%) hold a master’s degree; 19.2 percent hold a doctoral degree; and 25.0 percent hold a bachelor degree or diploma credential. Social Sciences chairs hold the highest proportion of doctoral degrees (63.6%) followed by 38.5 percent of Natural Sciences chairs with doctoral degrees and 29.4 percent of Arts & Humanities chairs with doctoral degrees.

Only five percent of respondents who are included in the Master’s Degree category report holding a professional designation. This number may be understated due to the wording of the survey question which asked for the last earned degree or professional designation rather than the highest earned credential. Some respondents may have pursued an academic degree after already having attained a professional designation, and thus acknowledged only their academic credentials and not their professional accreditations.
Table 11  Chairs’ Academic and Professional Accreditations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of Study</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>PhD %</th>
<th>Master’s Degree or Professional Designation %</th>
<th>Bachelor Degree or Diploma %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Access &amp; Preparation</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technologies</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6. Data Analysis Process

The analysis included the publicly available documents of all 11 BC public colleges, including the college that did not participate in the online survey. Thus the data derived from the document analysis are based on 11 colleges while the data derived from the online survey are based on responses from chairs at 10 colleges. The data collected from college documents were compared to data generated from the online chair survey. Specifically, the features of the chair position, as documented in the colleges’ faculty collective agreements and chair job descriptions, were compared to the chair participants’ perceptions of and experiences with the chair positions as revealed in their responses to questions in the online survey.

The online survey instrument utilized was VOVICI which includes a data analysis software program. Responses to questions are reported primarily as graphs or as frequency tables, which include counts for responses. Cross tabulations of responses
are conducted which compare chairs’ responses to their field of study, department size, age, gender, and chair work experience. For example, chairs’ responses to their level of stress are related to their fields of study (i.e. social sciences, business, technologies); their department sizes (small, medium, large); their genders (female, male), their ages (30-45, 36-55, ≥56), and their chair work experience (1st Term chairs, 2nd or 3rd Term chairs). It is also to be noted that some of the questions in the survey are answered by all participants, but not all 125 participants answered all 76 questions, or all parts of each question. In the analysis of responses in this chapter and throughout the following chapters, the number of responses for each question is stated, and is used as the base to calculate the percentage response for each question.

Data cleanup consisted of correcting spelling errors and removing identifying names to protect confidentiality.

Table 12 sets out the research purpose, research questions, and the sources of answers to the research questions. The sources of answers were college documents and the chairs’ responses to the questions in the chair survey. The table identifies the specific chair survey questions which are related to specific research subsidiary questions, which in turn are related to a specific research purpose. For example, responses to online survey questions #52, #53 and #64 provide answers to the research subsidiary question: What motivates chairs to accept the chair role and continue in the chair role? And this same research subsidiary question provides insight into research purpose two, which is to understand the people who hold academic department chair positions in BC public colleges.
Table 12  Research Purpose, Research Questions, Source of Answers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH PURPOSE</th>
<th>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</th>
<th>SOURCES OF ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To understand and describe the position of academic department chair in British Columbia public colleges.</td>
<td>1.1 How do college faculty collective agreement provisions and college chair job descriptions address the chair function in terms of position title, qualifications, selection and evaluation processes, roles, responsibilities, reporting relationships, length of term, and compensation?</td>
<td>College Documents Chair job descriptions and Faculty Collective Agreements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 What are chair selections and evaluation processes, reporting relationships and compensation, as perceived and experienced by chairs in BC public colleges? Do chairs’ perceptions and experiences vary with chairs’ fields of study?</td>
<td>Chair Survey Questions 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 29, 11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 What are the roles and responsibilities of academic department chairs in BC public colleges, as perceived and experienced by chairs?</td>
<td>27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 66, 67, 68.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To understand the people who hold academic department chair positions in British Columbia public colleges.</td>
<td>2.1 What are chairs’ gender, age, work experiences, and academic and/or professional accreditations?</td>
<td>Chair Survey Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 What motivates chairs to accept the chair position; and what are chairs’ career aspirations? What accomplishments do chairs want remembered and how do they wish to be remembered professionally?</td>
<td>22, 23, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 64, 69.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3 What are chairs’ management styles? How do they run their departments?</td>
<td>71, 72, 73.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.4 Do chairs’ career aspirations and management styles vary with field of study, department size, and chair age, gender, and work experience?</td>
<td>1, 2, 7, 11, 12, 25, 26.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To explore the successes and challenges experienced by academic department chairs in British Columbia public colleges.</td>
<td>3.1 What are chairs’ satisfying experiences and which aspects of the chair role do chairs find challenging? Are there challenges constraining chairs from performing the chair job better? What challenges have chairs experienced due to the change in BC colleges’ curriculum offerings with the addition of four-year baccalaureate degree programs?</td>
<td>Chair Survey Questions 8, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 65.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2 Do chairs’ successes and challenges vary with field of study, department size, and chair age, gender, and work experience?</td>
<td>1, 2, 7, 11, 12, 25, 26.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. To explore strategies to improve the academic department chair position.

4.1 How can the chair position be improved? What are chairs’ views of and experiences with chair training and chair mentor and buddy programs? How can those experiences be enhanced and stress reduced? What advice do chairs leave their successors?

Chair Survey Questions 40, 46, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 70, 74, 75, 76.

3.7. Limitations and Delimitations of Study

This study was focused on the BC public college system only. BC public Institutes and Universities, and private Colleges, Institutes, and Universities were not included. Since this inquiry was focused on the BC public college system the results are not generalizable to other college systems across Canada, however insights may be gained from the study that could be relevant to other jurisdictions.

The data sources for this research study were limited to faculty collective agreements, chair job descriptions and a web-based survey completed by people serving as chairs in BC public colleges. The online survey was to be completed by the chairs serving at the 11 BC public colleges, however one of the 11 colleges did not participate in the online survey. Contact information for that college’s chairs was not provided and was not publicly available so the invitation letter to participate in the study was not issued to the chairs of that college.

Of the 234 chairs at the 10 public colleges invited to participate, 109 chairs, representing 46.6 percent of the 234 chairs invited, did not respond. Five invitees’ email addresses responded with out of office messages; three invitees replied that they were too busy to participate; one invitee explained that illness prevented her/him from participating. In addition to out of office, illness, and lack of time reasons, other factors that may explain why invitees did not respond are the timing of the survey, email overload, and the length and design of the questionnaire. Many individuals automatically delete survey requests and promotional looking emails in an attempt to manage the numerous numbers of emails they receive on a daily basis. The length of the questionnaire, which consisted of 76 questions and took 30 minutes to complete, may also have discouraged invitees from responding.
The online survey included a question asking participants to select all the styles from a list of six management styles that described how they managed their departments. However, definitions of the management styles were not provided which may raise questions of reliability since participants could have interpreted the styles differently. The responses may have been more meaningful had definitions of the management styles been provided and had the question asked participants to select only one style that best depicted their style.

The other data source for this research study was BC public colleges’ academic calendars, chair job description documents and faculty collective agreements. All the colleges’ faculty collective agreements were publicly available on the Internet, however not all the collective agreements documented all the features of the chair position, and the detail in which some of the features were described varied considerably among colleges. Five colleges’ collective agreements were silent on performance review of chairs and two colleges’ collective agreements were silent on chair responsibilities. Chair job description postings were requested from the Human Resources Department of each college. Six colleges provided chair job descriptions and five colleges referred the researcher to their faculty collective agreements.

Due to the researcher’s own professional demands as an academic department chair and some external factors that were beyond the researcher’s control, there was considerable delay between the collection of the data and the analysis of the data. The chair online survey was distributed and data collected in the summer of 2011 while the analysis of data was conducted intermittently throughout 2014, 2015 and 2016. While there have been some changes in policies since 2011 (e.g. strategic plans), the BC public college system and the policies examined in this dissertation remain essentially the same. As well, any updates since 2011 to the colleges’ collective agreements are not included in this study given the participants were responding to their collective agreements in effect as of summer 2011.
3.8. Summary

The primary purpose of this enquiry is to understand and describe the features and functions of the academic department chair position, and the motivations, aspirations, management styles, challenges and successes of the people performing the role of academic department chair in BC public colleges. As well, strategies to improve the chair position are explored.

A mixed method research design was implemented which involved distributing an online survey to BC public college chairs and collecting qualitative data from responses to the open-ended survey questions, and collecting quantitative data from the responses to the fixed-format survey questions and from an analysis of college job descriptions and collective agreements. The online questionnaire consisted of a total of 76 questions, 62 fixed-format questions most of which also included an open-ended option, and 14 open-ended questions. All 11 BC public colleges were invited to participate in the online survey; 10 colleges accepted the invitation and one college did not. The online survey was emailed to 234 actively serving department chairs identified by the Academic Vice Presidents of the 10 participating colleges. The overall response rate was 53.4 percent.

The demographics of BC public college chairs, as revealed in their responses to questions in the online survey, are as follows. There are more female chairs (59.2%) than male chairs (40.8%). Almost half the chair participants (46.0%) are between 46 and 55 years of age, 30.4 percent are between 56 and 65 years of age and 23.2 percent are between 30 and 45 years of age. All the chairs reported having prior industry work experience, 19.3 percent of chairs have one to four years, 23.7 percent have five to nine years, and 57 percent have 10 or more years’ industry work experience. With regard to participants’ chair work experience, 60.8 percent reported being in their second or third term while 39.2 percent reported being in their first term as chair at the time of the survey. More than half of the participants (55.8%) hold a master’s degree; 25.0 percent hold a bachelor degree or diploma credential, and 19.2 percent hold a doctoral degree.

Chapter Four, the first of the two chapters reporting the research findings, summarizes and compares the features and functions of the chair position as discovered in the colleges’ documentation and as reported by participants in the online survey.
Also reported in Chapter Four are the motivations, aspirations and management styles of BC public college chairs as revealed in participants’ responses to fixed-format and open-ended online survey questions.
4. Chair Position, Chairs’ Motivations, Aspirations, and Management Styles

The four main purposes of this inquiry are: 1) to gain an understanding of the position of the academic department chair; 2) to gain an understanding of the people who perform the role of academic department chair in BC public colleges; 3) to identify and describe the challenges and successes experienced by chairs in BC public college; and 4) to explore strategies to improve the position of chair in BC public colleges.

Chapter 4 addresses the first and second purposes. The first purpose is explored through a summary description and comparison of the features and functions of the chair position as documented in the colleges’ faculty collective agreements and chair job descriptions and as reported by participants in the online survey. The second purpose, to gain an understanding of the people who hold the position of chair, is also addressed in Chapter 4. The motivations, aspirations and management styles of chair participants are presented and examined. Chapter 4 is organized as follows: (4.1) Features of Chair Position; (4.2) Function of Chair Position; (4.3) Chairs’ Motivations; (4.4) Chairs’ Career Aspirations; (4.5) Chairs’ Management Styles; and (4.6) Summary.

The other two purposes of this study, to describe the challenges and successes of BC public college chairs and to explore chairs’ suggestions to improve the chair position, are the subject of Chapter 5. In addition, the survey participants’ challenges with the chair role are examined within the framework of the types of role conflict defined in organizational role theory will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

4.1. Features of Chair Position

The features of the chair position include the position title, reporting relations, term length, qualifications, selection process, performance evaluation procedures, and compensation. The function of the chair position, discussed in section 4.2, is revealed in
the responsibilities and roles of the people holding the position of chair. The chair position’s features and function were determined through the analysis of college documentation such as chair job descriptions and faculty collective agreement clauses related to the chair position (Appendix G) and the analysis of participants’ responses to questions in the online survey.

The analysis of college documentation helps provide insight into research questions 1.1 and 1.2. Research Question 1.1 sought to determine if the chair position is formally recognized in college documentation, and if it is, in what detail it is referenced. Another objective of analyzing college documentation, related to Research Question 1.2, is to develop an understanding of the documented chair position to serve as a base to compare with, and to better understand the data collected from the online survey questions regarding the features and function of the chair position. The intent was not and is not to compare the chair position provisions among colleges.

4.1.1. Position Title

An analysis of the colleges’ faculty collective agreements and chair job descriptions revealed that seven of the 11 colleges (Colleges 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10) use the title Chair, Division Chair, Department Chair, or School Chair. The title Head is used by Colleges 8 and 11; and the title Coordinator is used by Colleges 2 and 3.

4.1.2. Chair Reporting Relations

Reporting relationships, who reports to whom, usually indicate the chain of command or line of authority in an organization. Documentation analysis revealed that all 11 BC public colleges’ documents stipulate that chairs report to the Dean or the Dean’s designate. The colleges’ documentation is less clear with respect to whom, if anyone, reports to the chair. Two colleges make reference to chairs’ supervisory responsibilities, one states that “Chairs may, from time to time, supervise CUPE members” (College 6) and one states that chairs “Supervise faculty and staff appropriately” (College 11). In contrast, another college stipulates that the chair position is “a faculty position and, as such, is not supervisory” (College 2). The other eight colleges are either silent with respect to chairs’ supervisory responsibilities or they
stipulate that a chair’s responsibility is “to coordinate the activities of a designated group of instructors and/or ancillary staff” (College 7) or “to seek collegial decisions” and “to implement collegial decisions” (College 4).

The chairs’ experiences with whom they report to, as indicated in their responses to the reporting relationship question in the online survey, are consistent with the documented relationship of chairs reporting to deans. All respondents stated they report directly to the Dean and/or to the Associate Dean or Director. Specifically, 70.4 percent report directly to the Dean and 29.6 percent report to the Associate Dean and Dean. One respondent reports to a Director within the college.

4.1.3. **Length of Chair Term**

Based on documentation analysis, the length of term for a chair position varies between one and three years, but all are temporary renewable terms. Seven of the 11 colleges specify a three-year term (Colleges 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11); one college specifies a two-year term (College 7); and three colleges specify a one-year term (Colleges 2, 4, 8). The number of consecutive terms an individual may hold the chair position is stipulated by five of the colleges; while the other six colleges stipulate no limit on consecutive terms. The colleges specifying three-year terms indicate limits on serving consecutive terms in language such as: “An appointee shall be limited to 2 consecutive three-year terms, subject to turn over rule” (College 5); or “normally a maximum of two consecutive terms” (College 6); or “may be renewed to a maximum 6 consecutive years” (College 11); or “may be re-appointed for a subsequent term” (College 10). One college specifying a one-year term stipulates that a chair “shall normally not serve more than three consecutive terms” (College 2).

4.1.4. **Chair Qualification Requirements**

Based on documentation analysis, the colleges (all but College 8) which address the required qualifications of a chair in their faculty collective agreements stipulate that a successful chair candidate must be a regular/continuing faculty member. One college specifies that the chair/head “must simultaneously be a full-time faculty member” (College 11). Another college specifies that faculty members working a “minimum of one
half time” may qualify to be chair (College 5); and another college specifies the chair/coordinator “must be full-time or regular part-time faculty employee” (College 2).

More than half of the colleges addressing qualifications specify that the successful candidate must be academically qualified in at least one area of the department’s academic expertise (Colleges 1, 2, 7, 10), or must be a faculty member of the department (Colleges 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11), which implies that the successful candidate will be qualified in the department’s academic expertise.

In the online chair survey, all chair participants except one reported having regular/continuing faculty status. One participant reported being subcontracted through a partner institution. The online survey also asked chairs to name their last earned academic degree and/or professional accreditation. Their responses are detailed in Table 11, Chapter 3, Section 3.5.2. A summary of chairs’ academic accreditations is: 19.2 percent of chair respondents hold a doctoral degree, 55.8 percent hold a master’s degree, and 25.0 percent hold a bachelor degree or diploma credential.

4.1.5. Chair Selection Process

Analysis of the 11 colleges’ documentation revealed that for one college the “Selection of Chair will be the responsibility of the appropriate Dean and will be approved through the Dean’s Committee” (College 7), but the process the Dean will follow is not specified. The faculty collective agreements of the remaining 10 colleges document two main processes schools use to choose a chair. One process is the selection and recommendation committee process in which a committee consisting of representatives from department faculty and administration, or a committee consisting of representatives from department faculty only, selects and makes a recommendation to the President or President’s Designate. The second process is the election of the chair by department faculty members through secret ballot or a show of hands.

The colleges’ documentation states that typically, the search for a chair is advertised internally within each college first and only advertised externally if a suitable internal candidate cannot be found.
The online survey asked respondents to choose the method from a list of five choices: elected by department faculty directly, selected by the dean, appointed on the advice of a selection committee in an internal competition open to internal candidates or in an external competition open to candidates outside the college, or to specify other methods. As portrayed in Table 13, almost two thirds of respondents (65.6%) reported they were elected by department faculty directly; 18.8 percent were appointed on the advice of a selection committee in internal or external competitions; 6.6 percent were selected by their deans; and 9.0 percent reported being “acclaimed by default” due to no one else applying or due to no one else in the department being qualified to perform the chair role.

The highest proportion of respondents elected by department faculty directly (90%) are Social Sciences chairs; and the highest proportion of respondents selected by the dean (50%) are chairs within the Technologies field of study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fields of Study</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Faculty Elected %</th>
<th>Dean Selected %</th>
<th>Committee Selected %</th>
<th>Acclaimed %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Access &amp; Preparation</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technologies</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The evaluation of a chair’s performance, as addressed in the collective agreements of some of the colleges, and chairs’ responses to the survey question
asking participants their experiences with being evaluated as chair are presented in the next section.

4.1.6. Chair Performance Evaluation

Five of the 11 colleges’ faculty collective agreements are silent on performance review of chairs (Colleges 2, 4, 5, 7, 8). The other six collective agreements provide varying degrees of detail as to when and how a chair’s performance will be evaluated and the consequences of the evaluation. All six colleges (Colleges 1, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11) require evaluations be conducted at least once in a chair’s term with two colleges (Colleges 1, 6) stipulating that an additional evaluation will be conducted upon the request of other employees, the chair or the dean, within the department. Documentation states that typically, the evaluation process involves department faculty members, the chair and the appropriate administrator, most commonly the Dean. Three colleges (Colleges 1, 6, 9) indicate that the evaluation may result in an early termination of the chair’s assignment.

The online survey provided participants four choices to describe how or if their performance as chair is formally evaluated. As Table 14 shows, 53.7 percent of participants indicated their performance is not formally evaluated. Thirty-five percent of participants indicated they were formally evaluated annually either by the person to whom they reported or through formal input from parties within the college such as faculty, students, support staff and deans. Within the fields of study, the highest proportions of chairs who are not formally evaluated are from Business (72.7%), Social Sciences (72.7%), Human Services (64.3%), and Technologies (62.5%). The highest proportion of chairs who are formally evaluated are College Access chairs (56.3%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of Study</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Not Formally Evaluated %</th>
<th>Formally Evaluated %</th>
<th>Other %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Access &amp; Preparation</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fourteen of the 123 respondents (11.4%) selected “other”. Their responses were one of three; they were not aware of a formal evaluation process; they had either not yet been evaluated, or had been evaluated only once in several years. The evaluation of a chair’s performance raises the question, addressed in the next section, as to how chairs are compensated for taking on this dual faculty/administrative chair role in the college.

4.1.7. **Chair Stipend and Teaching Release Compensation**

All 11 colleges’ faculty association agreements include clauses addressing compensation for the chair position. A compensation common to all colleges is the reduction in the chairs’ teaching assignments to provide the chair time to perform chair duties. The documented reductions in chairs’ teaching duties vary from 20% to 80% across the colleges, and across schools within colleges. Three colleges (College 4, 9, 10) specify that the percentage of teaching release time varies with the number of faculty and/or the number of academic disciplines in the department, and one college (College 8), indicates that the percentage of teaching release time varies with additional administrative and related duties performed by the chair.

In addition to the reduction in chairs’ teaching assignments/duties, eight of the 11 colleges stipulate that chairs are also compensated with annual administrative stipends. The stipend amount is specified, ranging from about $1,000 to $5,300 per annum, or stipulated to be calculated as a percentage, ranging from 1.4% to 1.8%, of a step on the faculty salary scale (Colleges 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11).
The online survey asked participants to identify the amount of annual stipend compensating them for their responsibilities as department chair. Table 15 summarizes the chairs’ responses. Slightly more than one quarter of the participants (25.6%) stated that no annual stipend is paid to them; more than half of the participants (54.4%) reported receiving a stipend of $1,000-$3,000; 12.8% reported receiving $3,001-$5,000, and 2.4 percent reported receiving a $5,001-$7,000 stipend. Of the six ‘Other’ respondents, one reported receiving less than $1,000; two respondents indicated they received teaching releases but did not specify the amount of stipend they received, and three reported being unsure of the amount of stipend they receive.

**Table 15**  
Chair Annual Stipend Compensation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Options</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No annual stipend is paid</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000 - $3,000</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,001 - $5,000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,001 - $7,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4 shows the proportion of chairs in each category, field of study, gender, age, department size, and chair work experience, who reported receiving a stipend and the proportion of chairs in each category who reported not receiving a stipend.
Almost three-quarters of the 125 participants (74.4%) reported receiving an annual stipend. Within the fields of study category, considerably higher proportions of chairs from College Access (100%), Trades (90.9%), and Technologies (87.5%) than chairs from Natural Sciences (64.3%), Health (59.1%), and Human Services (50.0%) reported receiving an annual stipend.

Similarly, considerably higher proportions of male chairs (82.4%), chairs aged 30-45 years (82.8%) and aged 56 or more years (81.6%), chairs of medium departments
(81.6%) and of large departments (81.0%) compared to female chairs (68.9%), chairs aged 46-55 years (65.5%) and chairs of small departments (68.2%) reported receiving an annual stipend.

With respect to chairs’ teaching release compensation, there is an inconsistency in the chairs’ reported experience with the teaching release compensation and the documented teaching release compensation. As referenced previously, the colleges’ faculty collective agreements indicate that reductions in teaching duties vary from 20% to 80%, and they do not allow for 100% release (except as a temporary condition to conduct a special project for a specified period), whereas 17.6 percent of chair participants in the online survey reported receiving 100% release from teaching duties.

One of the survey questions asked participants to identify the number of classes they taught per 12-month academic year while performing chair duties. Their responses are summarized in Table 16. As shown, 22 chairs (17.6%) percent of chairs reported having no teaching duties while 82.4 percent of chairs reported teaching from one to eight classes in addition to performing chair duties. Fifteen of the 16 participants in the “Other” category explained they taught a specific number of hours and/or days per week rather than a number of classes, or they expressed their teaching duties as percentages, such as 25%, 50%, or 75% of a full-time teaching schedule. One of the 16 participants in the “Other” category stated: “Currently I am not teaching but working on a provincially funded project at 25%.” In Figure 5, that participant is included in the group of chairs with teaching duties and is not included in the group of 22 non-teaching chairs who reported teaching zero classes during the 12-month academic year. In addition to selecting the Zero Classes option, many of the 22 non-teaching chairs reiterated that their chair positions provided a continuous 100% release from teaching duties.

Table 16 Chars’ Teaching Duties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Options</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero classes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 class</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 classes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 classes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 classes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 8 classes</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5 shows the proportion of chairs in each category, field of study, gender, age, department size, and chair work experience, who reported receiving a 100% teaching release thus performing chair duties only and the proportion of chairs in each category who reported performing teaching duties in addition to chair duties.

**Figure 5 Chair Release from Teaching Duties Compensation  n = 125**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of Study</th>
<th>Chair + No Teaching Duties</th>
<th>Chair + Teaching Duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Average</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades 11</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Access 16</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technologies 8</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health 22</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services 14</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities 18</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business 11</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences 14</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Chair + No Teaching Duties</th>
<th>Chair + Teaching Duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male 51</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 74</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>83.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Chair + No Teaching Duties</th>
<th>Chair + Teaching Duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ 56 Years 38</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-45 Years 29</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>82.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55 Years 58</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Size</th>
<th>Chair + No Teaching Duties</th>
<th>Chair + Teaching Duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large 21</td>
<td></td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium 38</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small 66</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair Experience</th>
<th>Chair + No Teaching Duties</th>
<th>Chair + Teaching Duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Term 49</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd or 3rd Term 76</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the colleges’ collective agreements not allowing for a continuous 100% teaching release, 22 participants (17.6%) indicated they are granted 100% release from teaching. Within the fields of study category, more than a third (36.4%) of Trades chairs
and almost a third (31.2%) of College Access chairs are granted 100% release while no Social Science chairs (0%), only one Business chair (9.1%) and only one Natural Science chair (7.1%) reported being granted 100% release from teaching. A higher percentage of male chairs (19.6%) compared to female chairs (16.2%) are granted 100% teaching release. The largest proportion of chairs granted 100% teaching release are chairs of large departments (47.6%) compared to chairs of medium departments (18.4%) and small departments (7.6%) and compared to all other categories of chairs.

The next section discusses the function of the chair position. The discussion is based on information from the documentation of all 11 BC public colleges and from the experiences of chairs as described by survey participants serving in 10 BC public colleges.

4.2. Function of Chair Position

The function of the chair position is defined in terms of the roles and the tasks performed by the person holding the position of chair. Presented first is a discussion of chair roles, followed by a discussion of the tasks performed by chairs.

4.2.1. Chair Roles

In all 11 BC public colleges’ documentation, the chair position is identified as a faculty position; and at least one college explicitly states that, as a faculty position, a chair’s role is not a supervisory role (College 2). Rather, the chair’s role is described as a coordinating role. In the same vein, other colleges’ documents reinforce the notion that the chair’s primary role is to coordinate the activities of a designated group of instructors, to seek collegial decisions, to act on emergency issues pending collegial resolution of the issue, and to implement collegial decisions.

What are the roles of academic department chairs in BC public colleges, as perceived and experienced by chairs? The online survey listed 13 roles typically associated with the chair position and asked participants to indicate the degree to which each role applies to them in their position as department chair. Definitions for the role titles were not provided; the titles were open to interpretation by participants.
Consequently, the participants’ ratings of applicability of chair roles may raise questions of reliability since participants could have interpreted the role labels differently.

All 125 participants responded and Figure 6 presents the chair roles in order of respondents’ ratings of applicable or highly applicable beginning with the role of problem solver (96.4% of respondents), and ending with the role of fund raiser, rated as highly applicable by the lowest proportion (15.2%) of respondents.

The top chair roles selected by BC public college chairs compare favorably with the top roles selected by US University and College chairs and Canadian University chairs participating in research studies referenced in Table 3 in the Literature Review chapter of this study. The roles of leader, manager/administrator, and faculty developer/champion/advocator were rated in the top four roles by US and Canadian University chairs and in the top five roles by BC public college chairs.
The role of leader was rated applicable or highly applicable by 91.9 percent of participants. Participants were also asked three open-ended questions related to leadership and the chair role. Specifically, participants were asked if they, as chairs, perceive chairs as performing leadership roles; if participants think their faculty colleagues perceive chairs as performing leadership roles; and if participants think administrators perceive chairs as performing leadership roles.

As depicted in Table 17, the vast majority of chair participants (87.0%) perceive chairs as performing leadership roles, and 83.2 percent think that their faculty colleagues
perceive chairs as performing leadership roles. Roughly two thirds of participants (65.2%) think that administrators perceive chairs as performing leadership roles.

**Table 17 Perceptions of Chairs as Leaders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Leadership Questions</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Yes Responses %</th>
<th>No Responses %</th>
<th>Unsure %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you perceive chairs as performing leadership roles?</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think your faculty colleagues perceive chairs as performing leadership roles?</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think administrators perceive chairs as performing leadership roles?</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In each of the leadership questions stated above, participants were also asked to explain why they perceive chairs as performing or not performing leadership roles; why they think other faculty members perceive or do not perceive chairs as performing leadership roles; and why they think administrators perceive or do not perceive chairs as performing leadership roles. The reasons 87.9% of chair participants perceive chairs as performing leadership roles revolve around the chair’s role in designing and developing curriculum, upholding academic standards, and being the public face of the department, as depicted in the following representative quotes by participants.

Absolutely. We should be providing encouragement and direction regarding best teaching and curriculum development practice, and holding the department to standards of excellence. (Participant 172)

Yes. We are the face of the program to the community, to the students, to the college, and to our academic partners. We create the collaborative environment that engages faculty in decision making and visioning. I think when it comes to such activities as new course or credential development we lead by example, as you know these are huge tasks we do off the side of our desks. (Participant 145)

Absolutely. In our department it is the chair who guides the faculty team in determining what direction the department is heading – oversees standards set in the department related to instruction, graduation requirements, curriculum design, etc. (Participant 129)

Yes, leader in terms of implementing change in the curriculum; having a say in college policy decisions and strategic directions; hopefully inspiring quality performance in self, other faculty and finally the students. (Participant 143)
Chairs’ reasons for thinking their faculty colleagues perceive chairs as performing leadership roles are different than their own reasons for perceiving chairs as performing leadership roles. Chair participants reported that they think their faculty colleagues perceive chairs as performing leadership roles because those colleagues ask their chairs for advice and direction, and because they refer to the chair as their leader.

Yes because they always seek me out for input on issues in their respective programs. (Participant 84)

Yes as they ask for help, guidance, support with student issues, help with curriculum development and implementation, feedback on their teaching. (Participant 238)

Yes. They come to me for impartial input in contentious issues. They look to me as a conduit between the department and other stakeholders in the college. (Participant 166)

Yes – faculty do look to Chairs for direction, decision-making, praise, mediation, and organization. (Participant 182)

Yes, because faculty members have called me their leader on several occasions. (Participant 228)

Sixty-five percent (65.2%) of chair participants reported that they think administrators perceive chairs as performing leadership roles because i) chairs are asked to provide feedback and direction in day-to-day operational decisions, ii) chairs are the representatives of and link to faculty, iii) administrators assign leadership responsibilities to chairs, and iv) chairs are invited to leadership training.

Yes, if leadership is problem solving, I think we are acknowledged by our senior administration as assisting them in the day-to-day running of the College. (Participant 108)

Sure – we are always asked to provide feedback and direction and have a strong role in planning. (Participant 127)

Yes. The Chair is the link to the faculty. They lead the Faculty by interpreting the goals and objectives set by Administration. (Participant 111)

Yes, as a peer leader. I am the filter through which issues from faculty percolate up to the dean. (Participant 167)

Yes – we are their voices and representation within the schools and departments. They put a lot of trust in us. (Participant 161)
Yes. My Dean supports my initiatives towards excellence and makes it clear that this is expected within our School. Our Chairs and Deans meet frequently to provide support and leadership for our School. (Participant 172)

Yes … they keep adding ‘leadership’ responsibilities to our already full plate. (Participant 72)

Yes, I think that the Dean of our Faculty perceives our Chairs as performing leadership roles. Our Dean interacts with us primarily in relation to our responsibilities that would be considered to be leadership related and has the expectation that we will be transformative leaders within our Department. (Participant 236)

Yes, it is why we are invited into the same training as our Dean, VPs and President for leadership training. (Participant 90)

A small minority of survey participants (7.8%) explained that they think chairs and faculty perceive chairs as not performing leadership roles due to the chair position’s lack of official formal authority, and due to chairs being “only faculty” not administrators.

Not really, we’re just another faculty member really. Chairs don’t have any power to speak of. (Participant 237)

Someone has to lead, but that said we as Chairs are only faculty members, and not part of decision making administration and so we can’t really lead, just maintain. (Participant 190)

Not really, as many have done the task themselves and understand there is no authority associated with the role. (Participant 150)

No, chairs mostly perform administrative/secretarial tasks. (Participant 202)

As revealed in the responses of chairs participating in the online survey, the roles of the academic department chair are heavily influenced by the tasks assigned to the chair position as stipulated in the colleges’ job description postings and faculty collective agreements. The next section addresses the tasks or responsibilities of the chair position as specified in college documentation and as experienced and reported by chair participants in the online survey.
4.2.2. Chair Responsibilities

Documented responsibilities of the chair position were found in chair job description postings and/or in faculty collective agreements for all but one, College 8, of the 11 BC public colleges. In broad terms, the documented responsibilities include working with students to facilitate student access to and success in courses and programs; working with department faculty in managing the effective operation of the department; leading the department in designing curriculum and establishing and maintaining quality curriculum standards; and working with other departments within the college and with external organizations to ensure that curriculum design and delivery are relevant to the needs of students, the college community, and the outside community.

The online survey categorized the tasks typically associated with the chair position according to the chair activities related to each group or entity in the chair’s role set. The people and entities that make up a chair’s role set are the department faculty members, the students, the dean, the college community, the external community the college serves, and the chairperson her/himself. Survey participants were asked to rate the activities in each category as very important, important, somewhat important, not important, or not applicable.

All 125 chairs responded to the chair responsibility questions in the online survey. Figures 7 to 12 portray the participants’ important or very important ratings of each activity in each category of responsibilities related to each group in the chair’s role set. The chair responsibilities in each figure are ranked in the order beginning with the activity rated as important or very important by the highest proportion of respondents, and ending with the activity rated as important or very important by the lowest proportion of respondents.

Figure 7 presents the chair participants’ assessment of faculty-focused chair responsibilities. The top four faculty-focused activities rated as important or very important by the highest proportion of respondents are: i) maintaining and building faculty moral, ii) mentoring faculty, iii) recruiting faculty, and iv) scheduling courses and assigning teaching timetables. The faculty-focused activities rated least important are: i) advising faculty about contractual rights, obligations and opportunities, and ii) planning for a successor to the chair position.
Figure 8 presents the chair participants' assessment of student-focused chair responsibilities. The top three student-focused activities rated as important or very important by the highest proportion of respondents are: i) resolve student issues; ii) inform and advise students; and iii) teach students. The student-focused activity rated least important is to provide job and school references for students.
Figure 9 presents the chair participants’ assessment of dean and department-focused chair responsibilities. The top five dean and department-focused activities rated as important or very important by the highest proportion of respondents are: i) initiate and participate in department meetings; ii) coordinate review of existing programs and courses; iii) implement department plans; iv) develop department plans; and v) coordinate development of new courses and programs. The department-focused activities rated as least important are: i) develop revenue generating initiatives for the department; and ii) administer and monitor student awards and scholarships.
Figure 10 presents the chair participants’ assessment of college-focused chair responsibilities. The top two college-focused activities rated as important or very important by the highest proportion of respondents are: i) *champion the department within the college*; and ii) *maintain relations with college support departments*. The college-focused activity rated as least important by respondents was to *engage in promotional activities to recruit students*. 
Figure 11 presents the chair participants’ assessment of external-focused chair responsibilities. The top two external-focused activities rated as important or very important by the highest proportion of respondents were: i) maintaining and building relations with professional bodies, employers, advisory committees; and ii) championing the department outside the college. The external-focused activity rated as least important by respondents was fundraising – build relations with alumni, foundations, other donors.
Figure 12 presents the chair participants' assessment of self-focused chair responsibilities. The top two self-focused activities rated as important or very important by the highest proportion of respondents are: i) *keep current in academic discipline*; and ii) *professional development activities*. The self-focused activity rated as least important by respondents is to engage in *professional association activities*.

**Figure 11  External Community Focused Chair Responsibilities  n = 125**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair Responsibilities</th>
<th>Percent of Chair Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintain/build relations with professional bodies, employers, advisory committees</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champion the department outside the college</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain/build relations with universities and other colleges</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraise – build relations with alumni, foundations, other donors</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 12  Self Focused Chair Responsibilities  n = 125**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair Responsibilities</th>
<th>Percent of Chair Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep current in academic discipline</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development activities (research, conferences, publications)</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional association activities (consulting, coaching, mentoring)</td>
<td>73.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 13 presents the top 10 of the total 41 chair activities rated as important or very important by 88.0 percent to 98.4 percent of the chair participants. The BC public college chairs’ ratings of chair responsibilities coincide with their ratings of chair roles. BC public college chairs’ two top ranked chair roles were problem solver and listener which correspond to the two top-ranked chair responsibilities, resolving student issues and informing and advising students. The leader and manager roles were ranked third and fourth, and relate closely to the remaining responsibilities with the possible exception of keeping current in academic discipline, which relates more closely to the scholar role. Interestingly, the scholar role was voted as applicable or highly applicable by 61.6 percent of participants while the responsibility, keeping current in academic discipline, was rated as important or very important by 94.4 percent. A possible explanation for these seemingly inconsistent responses is that some participants may have regarded the activity, keeping current in academic discipline, as an activity closely related to the chair’s teacher role rather than the scholar role; however, teacher role was not included in the list of chair roles to be rated by participants. Had teacher role been listed it may have been rated as highly as keeping current in academic discipline was rated.

The top 10 ranked tasks performed by BC public college chairs compare favorably with the top 10 ranked chair tasks performed by US University and College chairs and Canadian University chairs, as reported in the research studies displayed in Table 2 in the literature review of this study. BC public college chairs and US university and college chairs and Canadian university chairs all agree that chairs’ most important tasks are recruiting and selecting faculty, representing the department and championing the unit, developing and implementing departmental plans, reducing conflict and maintaining morale among faculty, and encouraging faculty toward professional development and high teaching standards. The difference between BC public college chairs’ and other colleges and university chairs’ top 10 ranked chair activities is that the list of activities rated by BC public college chairs included two student focused activities, to resolve student issues and to inform and advise students. Whereas the top 10 chair tasks for US Universities 2002 included the task, to teach and advise students, while the top 10 chair tasks for US Universities 1992, US Community Colleges 2007, and Canada Universities 2009, did not include any student-focused activities.
This section examined the features and functions of the position of academic department chair in an attempt to gain an understanding of the position, one of the four purposes of this inquiry. In the following section, the attempt to understand the people who hold the position of department chair, the second purpose of this study, begins with an examination of BC public college chairs’ motivations for accepting the chair job, after which chairs’ career aspirations and management styles are explored.
4.3. Chairs’ Motivations for Accepting Chair Role

In the preceding section, the features and functions of the position of academic department chair were examined in an attempt to gain an understanding of the chair position, one of the purposes of this inquiry. Another purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the people who hold the position of academic department chair. Understanding chair people begins with their demographics, specifically the age, gender, work experience and accreditations of the people serving as chairs in BC public colleges, all of which were presented in Chapter 3. In this section, the attempt to understand chair people is continued with an examination of chairs’ motivations for accepting the chair job as revealed in the chair participants’ answers to specific online survey questions. The analysis in this section addresses research question 2.2: What motivates chairs to accept the chair position?

One of the survey questions presented a list of eight reasons chairs typically may have for taking on the job of chair and asked respondents to indicate the degree of relevance each reason played in their decision. For each reason, respondents were asked to rank the reason according to not relevant, somewhat relevant, relevant, and very relevant. Figure 14 presents the eight reasons in the order beginning with the reason rated as very relevant or relevant by the largest proportion of respondents, and ending with the reason rated as very relevant or relevant by the smallest proportion of respondents.

The number one reason for accepting the chair job, ranked as relevant or very relevant by 79.2 percent of participants is, to make a difference, to improve the department. The lowest ranked reason is financial gain; ranked as relevant or very relevant by 5.8 percent of participants. BC public college chairs’ reasons for taking the chair job compare closely with the reasons cited by chairs in Canadian and US universities (Gmelch, 1995, p. 8, Boyko, 2009, p. 208). The top reasons cited by BC public college chairs, as well as Canadian and US University chairs were: to improve/refocus/re-invigorate the department, personal development, a sense of duty, and recruited by dean and/or faculty colleagues.
Participants were also asked if they had reasons for taking the chair job other than the ones listed. There were 24 responses, half of which were repeats of one or more of the eight listed reasons with minor variations. Two respondents remarked on two of the listed reasons: “I’m still chuckling about the possibility someone would do this for the financial gain.” (Participant 78). The other commented: “Financial gain—so funny!!! Advance career – equally humorous!” (Participant 94). The remaining 10 respondents stated five additional reasons; to avoid being laid off, to get a break from teaching, to avoid working under the only other eligible person, to accommodate a lifestyle change—a geographic move, and, because he/she was capable and competent and the best fit for the job.

The attempt to understand the people performing the chair role is continued in section 4.4 with an examination of chairs’ career aspirations, both their short-term and long-term career goals, and an examination of chairs’ perceptions of themselves and the
chair position. Chairs’ short-term career goals are partly revealed in their motivations for taking on the chair job, presented in Section 4.3, and partly revealed in the accomplishments for which they wish to be remembered, presented in Section 4.4. Chairs’ long-term goals involve chairs’ career intentions after completing their chair terms, and their preference for how they preferred to be remembered professionally – as teachers, administrators, or other professionals. Also presented in Section 4.4 are chair participant responses to survey questions regarding their perceptions of themselves as administrators or faculty in the chair role, and participants’ perceptions of the chair position as a stepping stone to an administration career.

4.4. Chairs’ Career Aspirations

What are the short-term and long-term career aspirations of BC public college chairs? The online survey asked chairs to indicate their short-term career goals by asking chairs their motives for taking on the chair job, presented in the preceding section, and by asking chairs to identify the accomplishments they achieved while serving as chair and for which they wish to be remembered. The survey also asked chairs about their long-term career goals. One of the long-term career survey questions asked chairs to declare their next step upon completing their chair appointment; another question asked chairs if they intended to pursue senior administration positions; and a third question asked chairs to specify how they prefer to be remembered professionally, as teachers, as administrators, or as other professionals.

Additional survey questions asked chair participants to clarify their perception of themselves as administrator or faculty in their role as department chair, and to indicate if they perceive the chair position to be a stepping stone to administration positions. Chair survey participants’ responses to the career aspiration questions referenced above are presented in the following order: (4.1.1) Chairs’ Short-term Career Aspirations, (4.1.2) Chairs’ Long-term Career Aspirations, and (4.1.3) Chairs’ Perceptions of the Chair Position.
4.4.1. Chairs’ Short-Term Career Aspirations

The online survey asked chairs to indicate their short-term career goals by asking chairs their motives for taking on the chair job and by asking chairs to identify the accomplishments they achieved while serving as chair and for which they wish to be remembered. The goals chairs want to achieve while serving as chairs are consistent with their motives for taking on the chair role. As reported in Section 4.3, chairs’ primary motive for taking on the chair job was to make a difference, to improve the department. Similarly, in identifying the chair accomplishments for which they wish to be remembered, 90.4 percent of participants reported that they wished to be remembered for the positive changes they made while serving as chair. The three most frequently cited specific positive changes chair participants indicated they wish to be remembered for are (1) to build a strong faculty team (32.7% of participants); to develop new curriculum (29.2% of participants); and to improve student access to academic courses and programs (15.9% of participants). Samples of quotes illustrating each of the three positive changes chair participants wish remembered are presented below.

Faculty Team Building

Almost a third of chair participants indicated they wanted to be remembered for building a strong faculty team, by “bringing cohesion” to a diverse group of faculty, by “creating a vibrant, knowledgeable and professional faculty”, by “engaging and energizing colleagues”, by “building a sense of professional pride and innovation”, as illustrated in their comments below.

Bringing cohesion through understanding and collaboration to a very diverse group of faculty. (Participant 77)

Creating a vibrant, knowledgeable and professional faculty that are well known throughout the province. (Participant 87)

Engaging and energizing colleagues to begin the process of reinventing ourselves in a rapidly changing environment; maintaining collegiality in a department that values flat hierarchy and faculty autonomy. (Participant 109)

That the instructors felt empowered to lead and engage the students in a meaningful way. (Participant 214)
Building a sense of professional pride and innovation in our department. (Participant 113)

Curriculum Development

A second frequently cited positive change participants wished to be remembered for was curriculum development which included curriculum that would "better meet student interests", "prepare students for work in the digital world", support "concept based learning", and "the establishment of a bachelor degree" program.

I would like to be remembered as having led the department to the establishment of a bachelor degree. (Participant 129)

Keeping pace with change in industry, adjusting curriculum to prepare students for work in the digital world. (Participant 141)

Development of the program in terms of new courses, particularly upper-level courses. (Participant 154)

Revising, reviewing the curriculum to a concept based learning curriculum. (Participant 155)

Successful completion of a major curriculum review development project. (Participant 164)

New courses developed and the development of a new degree. (Participant 200)

Accessibility

The third positive change chair participants cited as wanting to achieve while serving as chair and to be remembered for was to improve student access to educational programs. As articulated by one chair: "I want people to say that I made a difference for students to access the institution and to complete their educational goal". (Participant 138) Another chair reported wishing to be remembered because: "I made the department more accessible to the community". (Participant 76)

In summary, BC public college chairs’ primary motivations for accepting the chair position, to make a difference and improve the department, are consistent with the positive changes, faculty team building, curriculum development, and accessibility, for which chairs want to be remembered. The next section examines chairs’ long-term career aspirations, including whether they intend to pursue senior administrative
positions upon completing their chair appointment and how they prefer to be remembered professionally, as teachers, as administrators, or as other professionals.

4.4.2. Chairs’ Long-term Career Aspirations

The online survey included three questions regarding the chairs’ long-term career aspirations. One of the long-term career survey questions asked chairs to declare their next step upon completing their chair appointment; another question asked chairs if they intended to pursue senior administration positions, and a third question asked chairs to indicate how they prefer to be remembered professionally, as teachers, as administrators, or as other professionals.

What is Chairs’ Next Step?

BC public college chairs’ long-term goals are revealed in their responses, presented in Figure 15, to the online survey question that asked participants their plans upon completing their current chair appointment or re-appointment. The majority of chairs (63.6%) reported they are returning to full-time teaching and almost a fifth (19.9%) reported they are retiring. The Other category includes 20 participating chairs, of which 12 participants (9.9% of all participants) indicated they are returning to part-time teaching, taking scheduled development or banked vacation leave, all of which are faculty positions. Six participants (5.0% of all participants) are pursuing other opportunities; and only two participants (1.7% of all participants) reported they will be taking an administrative position upon completing their chair appointments.
Within the fields of study category, a substantially higher proportion of Natural Sciences (30.8%), Trades (30.0%), Business (27.3%), and College Access (25.0%) chairs than the overall average (19.8%) reported they plan to retire upon completing their chair term. Understandably, the highest proportion of chairs (41.7%) reported to be retiring are those aged 56 or more years. Higher proportions of chairs in their first terms
(76.0%), chairs aged 30-45 years (72.4%), and chairs of small departments (71.9%) than the overall average (63.6%) reported they are returning to full-time teaching. However, it should be noted that 113 of the 121 participating chairs reported to be either retiring or returning to faculty positions, albeit not to full-time teaching. Since only eight chairs are not returning to a faculty position, to assure confidentiality, their fields of study, gender, age, department size and chair experience are not revealed.

**Do Chairs Intend to Pursue Administration Positions?**

The online survey included a question that asked chair participants if they intend to pursue an administrator position. The 120 participants’ responses are displayed in Figure 16. Figure 16 shows the percentage of chairs who do not intend to pursue an administrator position according to chairs’ field of study, gender, age, size of department, and chair experience. Overall, 75 percent of chairs reported they do not intend to pursue administration positions, while only 11.7 percent reported they do intend to pursue administration positions and 13.3 percent are uncertain. Chair participants from Natural Sciences, College Access, and Human Services expressed the strongest disinclination (92.9%, 87.5% and 85.7% respectively) to pursue administrative positions. Chair participants from Business and Technologies expressed the strongest inclination (27.3% and 25% respectively) to pursue administrative positions.

Within the gender category, a slightly higher percentage of male chairs (77.1%) than female chairs (73.6%) reported they intend to return to teaching and not pursue administrative positions. With respect to age, chairs aged 56 years and older expressed the strongest disinclination (91.4%) while chairs aged 30-45 years expressed the strongest inclination (25.0%) to pursue administrative positions. Within the department size category, chairs of small departments expressed the strongest disinclination (80.1%) and chairs of large departments expressed the strongest inclination (23.8%) to pursue administrative positions. A slightly higher percentage of 2nd or 3rd term chairs (76.4%) compared to 1st term chairs (72.9%) reported they do not intend to pursue administrative positions.
The survey also asked chairs to explain why they are or why they are not pursuing administrative positions. The single most often cited reason for not pursuing administrative positions cited by more than half (54.4%) of the 90 participants not interested in pursuing administrative positions is their love and preference for teaching and/or research compared to administrative work, as illustrated in the following quotes.
Probably not – I love teaching and have an active research agenda. Have little interest in spending time at meetings, rather than engaging with students, colleagues and research. (Participant 109)

Never … I am first and foremost an educator and that is my passion. (Participant 72)

No. Too removed from the students and teaching. It becomes about budgets and metrics of performance. This has no interest for me. (Participant 91)

Absolutely not. I would not find that work satisfying. Love to teach. (Participant 78)

No, too old and I simply love teaching too much. My 50% chair role already takes me away from the students more than I’d like. (Participant 108)

No – I love teaching too much. (Participant 168)

Additional reasons, coupled with their love of teaching and research, cited by participants for not pursuing administrative positions were: retirement plans; desire for work life balance, “family is my priority” and/or not interested in “onerous” administrative reporting tasks; and the “limited opportunities in administrative positions”. A sample of responses illustrating these additional reasons is presented below.

No. Increase in money not worth stress or longer hours. Not enough interest in work Dean does. Love teaching. (Participant 207)

No I’m not pursuing Dean positions. I’m nearing retirement. I would miss the teaching and student involvement and be horribly frustrated by the lack of decisiveness in Administration. (Participant 190)

No – I am nearing retirement and don’t want to be that far away from students and teaching. (Participant 183)

Not at this time. My personal family situation is my priority and I see that if move into a Dean’s role at our institution there would be far too many expectations for my time (i.e. travel). Our Deans have a very stretched work life balance. (Participant 111)

No. There are very limited opportunities for administrative positions within the college. It is unfortunate because faculty who excel at administration have nowhere to go. (Participant 93)

Not in the near future. The academic opportunities are expanding in colleges and there is a tension between managing as a Dean and being
engaged with scholarly pursuits. At this stage of my career, I’m more interested in academic leadership. (Participant 123)

No, the reporting to the Ministry is ridiculously onerous (it’s bad enough as a chair) and there is little opportunity for true educational leadership. (Participant 98)

As noted, the additional reasons provided by participants in the quotes above are coupled with their teaching passion, evident in comments such as “love teaching”, “would miss teaching and student involvement”, and “too far away from students and teaching”.

What are participants’ reasons for pursuing senior administrative positions? The reasons cited by the 14 respondents (11.7%) interested in pursuing administrative positions are to advance their own learning and to advance the education system, as articulated by three participants: “I would consider it if the opportunity came up because I like to continue to push myself to learn new things” (Participant 140); and “I would be interested in pursuing other administrative positions. I like to be involved in big picture thinking and moving faculty and various initiatives forward” (Participant 152); and “I would like to attempt to help make the education system and programs relevant and desired” (Participant 86).

How do Chairs Prefer to be Remembered Professionally?

The third survey question reflecting on chairs’ long-term career aspirations asked chairs to indicate how they prefer to be remembered professionally, as teachers, as administrators, or as other professionals. The majority of participants (67.2%) reported they prefer to be remembered professionally as teachers; 24.6 percent of participants reported a preference to be remembered as other professionals such as musicians, engineers, writers, performers, innovators, researchers; and a minority of chairs (8.2%), stated a preference to be remembered as administrators.

Figure 17 summarizes chairs’ preferences to be remembered as teachers, administrators or other professionals, according to chairs’ field of study, gender, age, size of department, and chair work experience.
Relative to the overall proportion of chairs (67.2%) who prefer to be remembered as teachers, a higher proportion of Trades chairs (81.8%) and Social Sciences chairs (80.0%) prefer to be remembered as teachers. Compared to the overall proportion of chairs (8.2%) that prefer to be remembered as administrators, a higher proportion of Business chairs (30.0%) prefer to be remembered as administrators.

The ages of chairs and size of departments appear to be factors in how chairs prefer to be remembered professionally. A higher proportion of chairs aged 56 years or older (75%), compared to all chairs (67.2%) prefer to be remembered as teachers. As well, relative to the overall proportion of chairs (8.2%) who prefer to be remembered as administrators, no chairs aged 56 years or older (0.0%) prefer to be remembered as administrators, and a higher proportion of chairs aged 30-45 years (17.8%) prefer to be remembered as administrators.

Compared to the overall proportion of chairs (67.2%) who prefer to be remembered as teachers, a higher proportion of chairs of small departments (76.6%), and a lower proportion of chairs of large departments (47.6%), prefer to be remembered as teachers. Compared to the overall proportion of chairs (24.6%) that prefer to be remembered as other specialists, a higher proportion of chairs of large departments (38.1%) prefer to be remembered as other specialists.

A higher proportion of female chairs (68.5%), compared to male chairs (62.7%), prefer to be remembered as teachers. A slightly higher proportion of 2nd and 3rd term chairs (68.0%) compared to 1st term chairs (66.0%) prefer to be remembered as teachers.
To summarize, BC public college chairs provided consistent responses to each of the survey questions regarding chairs’ long-term career goals. The majority of chairs (73.5%) reported they are returning to a faculty position, either full-time teaching (63.6%) or other faculty work (9.9%) upon completing their chair appointments. Similarly, the majority of chairs (75.0%) also reported they do not intend to pursue an administrative
position. As well, the majority of chairs (91.8%) reported they prefer to be remembered professionally as teachers or as professionals other than administrators.

The following section examines BC public college chairs’ perceptions of themselves in their role as chair, and their perceptions of the chair position as a career move. Specifically, the two survey questions posed were: do chairs perceive themselves as administrators or faculty in the chair role, and do chairs perceive the chair position to be a stepping stone toward senior administration positions?

4.4.3. Chairs’ Perceptions of Chair Role

One survey question asked chairs to clarify their perceptions of themselves as administrator or faculty in their role as department chair by selecting one of three options: primarily faculty, primarily administration, or 50-50 faculty and administration. Another survey question asked chairs to indicate with a yes or no response if they perceived the chair position to be a stepping stone to senior administration positions. The participants’ responses to both questions are reported below.

Do Chairs perceive themselves as Faculty or Administrator?

All 125 chairs responded to the survey question: What is your perception of yourself in the position/role of department chair? Slightly more than half the participants (50.4%) reported they perceive themselves as both faculty and administrators; one third of the participants (33.6%) reported viewing themselves as primarily faculty; and 15.2 percent of participants reported viewing themselves as primarily administrators. Figure 18 presents chairs’ perceptions of themselves according to the chair participants’ field of study, gender, age, department size, and chair work experience, respectively.

Compared to the overall average proportion of chairs (33.6%) who view themselves primarily as faculty, a higher proportion of Social Sciences chairs (54.5%) view themselves primarily as faculty. Compared to the overall average proportion (15.2%) of chairs who view themselves primarily as administrators, none of the Technologies chairs (0.0%) see themselves primarily as administrators. However, compared to the overall average proportion of chairs (51.2%) who view themselves as
both faculty and administrators, a higher proportion of Technologies chairs (75.0%) view themselves as both faculty and administrators.

More male chairs see themselves primarily as administrators (17.6%) than do female chairs (14.9%). However, one-third of both male and female chairs see themselves primarily as faculty.

The ages of chairs appear to influence chairs’ perception of themselves in their role as chairs. A higher proportion of chairs aged 56 years or older (42.1%) see themselves primarily as faculty, compared to the proportion of chairs aged 30 to 45 years (27.6%), and the proportion of chairs aged 46 to 55 years (31.0%), who see themselves primarily as faculty.

Department size and chair work experience are also factors in how chairs perceive themselves in their role as chairs. A much lower proportion of chairs of small departments (4.5%) see themselves primarily as administrators, compared to the proportion of chairs of large departments (33.3%), and the proportion of chairs of medium departments (26.3%), who see themselves primarily as administrators.

A higher proportion (36.8%) of chairs with three or more years’ chair work experience view themselves primarily as faculty, compared to the proportion (28.6%) of chairs with two or less years’ chair experience, who view themselves primarily as faculty.
As indicated by their responses, chairs are divided in their perception of themselves in the chair role; half the chairs (50.4%) perceive themselves as 50-50 faculty and administrator; a third of the chairs (33.6%) view themselves as primarily faculty; and a minority of chairs (16.0%) view themselves as primarily administrators. The chairs' divided perception of themselves in their role as faculty or administrator is a
reflection of and consistent with the dual nature of the chair role. Recall that the chair role has a dual nature in that it combines the faculty role of teaching and research, and the administrative role of managing and leading an academic unit (Chapter 2, Literature Review). Another survey question related to chairs’ perceptions of themselves in the chair role and the chair role’s dual nature asked participants if they perceive the chair position as a stepping-stone leading to senior administrative positions. Chair participants’ perceptions of the chair position as a stepping-stone to an administrative career are presented next.

Is the Chair Position a Stepping Stone to Administrative Positions?

All 125 survey participants responded to the survey question that asked if they perceive the chair position to be a stepping-stone to senior administrative positions in the college. Figure 19 presents the chairs’ perceptions according to chair participants’ field of study, gender, age, department size, and chair work experience, respectively.

Almost half of all 125 participants (48.0%) indicated that they perceive the chair position to be a stepping-stone to administrative positions, though that perception varies considerably across chairs’ fields of study, genders, ages and department sizes. For example, 100.0 percent of Technology chairs and 63.0 percent of Business chairs perceive the chair position to be a stepping-stone while only 28.6 percent of Human Services chairs perceive the chair position to be a stepping-stone. Similarly, 56.9 percent of male chairs compared to 41.9 percent of female chairs perceive the chair position to be a stepping-stone; and 65.5 percent of chairs aged 46 to 55 years compared to 36.8 percent of chairs aged 56 or more years perceive the chair position to be a stepping stone. As well, 60.5 percent of chairs of medium size departments compared to 39.4 percent of chairs of small size departments perceive the chair position to be a stepping-stone to administration.
Interestingly, though overall almost half the chairs (48.0%) indicated that they perceive the chair position a stepping-stone to administration positions, only 11.7 percent of participants stated they intend to pursue administrative positions (Figure 16). These seemingly inconsistent responses may be an indication that these chair participants, including those chairs not interested in pursuing an administrative position,
have observed that the chair position provides relevant and valuable training experience for future administrators.

The chair participants’ widely ranging perceptions of the chair position as a stepping stone to an administrative career and of themselves in the role of chair as faculty and administrator can also be interpreted as a reflection of and consistent with the chair role’s dual nature. This interpretation is consistent with chairs’ divided perception of themselves as faculty or administrator, which reflected the dual nature of the chair role.

The relationship between BC public college chairs’ motivations, career aspirations, their perceptions of themselves and the chair position, and the chair role’s dual nature and role conflict theory is examined in Chapter 6 – Conclusions and Recommendations. In the following section, the attempt to understand the people who hold the position of chair in BC public colleges is continued with an examination of their self-declared styles in managing their departments.

4.5. Chairs’ Management Styles

In the endeavour to understand the people who hold the position of academic department chair in BC public colleges, the online survey included questions asking chair participants about their management styles. The survey questions addressed research question 2.3. What are chairs’ management styles? How do they run their departments? Do chairs think their academic discipline and size of department influence their managerial styles? Chair participants’ responses to the management style questions are presented as follows: (4.5.1) Styles of Management, (4.5.2) Influence of Academic Discipline on Management Style, and (4.5.3) Influence of Department Size on Management Style.

4.5.1. Styles of Management

The chair survey asks participants to describe their management style by selecting from a list of management styles all the styles that apply to their style of managing their departments. The list included the following management styles:
collaborative, collegial, consultative, democratic, laissez-faire, and autocratic. Definitions of the management styles were not provided. The question was answered by 123 chair participants and most respondents selected more than one style. Figure 20 shows that the collaborative style of management was identified by the highest proportion (78.1%) of participants. The collegial style was selected by 61.8 percent; the consultative style was selected by 57.7 percent; and the democratic style was selected by 42.3 percent of chair participants.

**Figure 20 Chairs’ Management Styles  n = 123**

The chair participants’ selection of the collaborative management style may in part be a reflection of the chair position’s lack of official authority. A collaborative approach to managing may become necessary once the manager, the department chair, discovers he/she has no official authority to perform certain management functions such as directing and disciplining their faculty colleagues. However, a collaborative management style may still be influenced by the academic discipline and/or size of the unit being managed. BC public college chairs’ thoughts on factors influencing their management styles are presented in the following two sections.
4.5.2. **Influence of Academic Discipline on Management Style**

In addition to asking chairs to identify their management styles, the survey also asked participants whether their academic disciplines influence their management style as chair. Figure 21 displays the participants’ agreement that their academic discipline influences their management style according to field of study, gender, age, size of department, and chair work experience of the chair participants. More than two thirds of the survey participants (71.2%) reported that their academic disciplines do influence their management styles; while about one fifth of participants (21.1%) reported that their academic disciplines do not influence their management styles, and 7.7 percent of participants reported being uncertain.

The highest proportions of chairs reporting that their academic disciplines influence their management styles were from the Human Services (92.3%), Health (89.5%) and Business (88.9%) fields of study. The lowest proportions of chairs reporting that their academic disciplines influence their management styles were from the Technologies (37.5%), College Access (50.0%) and Natural Sciences (53.8%) fields of study.

Compared to the overall average proportion of chairs (71.2%) who reported that their academic disciplines influence their management styles, a lower proportion (60.0%) of chairs aged 30-45 years, a lower proportion (61.9%) of male chairs, a lower proportion (57.6%) of medium-sized department chairs, and a lower proportion (60.0%) of chairs with two or less years of chair work experience, reported that their academic disciplines influence their management styles.
The participants’ explanations for why their academic disciplines influence their management styles are grounded in the underlying philosophies and/or principles of their academic disciplines. For example, chair participants with backgrounds in natural science and technology disciplines reported that the scientific approach to problem solving guides scientists and engineers.
Yes. As a scientist I must assess problems with an open mind. I must be aware of my assumptions/prejudices. (Participant 76)

Yes. Engineers are problem solvers. Gather the information, (listen) make a decision, (process) consult, (test) and then implement. No one person has the answer to all problems. Collectively we will come up with a better result by consulting with others. I often “test” my ideas with a representative group to gauge reaction and to gather more insight. (Participant 91)

Yes, I have a science background so I tend to deal with issues in a straight forward manner much like the scientific method. First gather the facts, decide what the general situation is, formulate a plan, test it and proceed from there. (Participant 135)

Many chairs with backgrounds in arts, business, health and human services disciplines reported that a collaborative, team approach guides their management styles.

Designers tend to be team players and so yes my background and my former experience in Department Chair position helps. (Participant 190)

Performing Arts tend to be collegial and collaborative and the people it attracts are very much that style. (Participant 232)

I am an educator surrounded by industry experts who are not necessarily mindful of educational values. As Chair, socially centered collaborative management attributes must be exercised if I am to connect with these industry experts. (Participant 71)

Yes, I am in sport and teamwork is a huge part of this. (Participant 187)

Yes, as nurses we are used to working with groups of people. Being a team player is valued. Being a leader is valued but autocratic decision making is not. (Participant 118)

Somewhat. Nurses work WITH patients to help them achieve optimal health. We do not ‘heal’ our patients – we help them heal themselves. Both my commitment to serving students, and to being collegial and collaborative with colleagues are embedded in that philosophy. (Participant 172)

While chairs with backgrounds in social science disciplines observed that a democratic collegial approach guides their management styles.

Does Criminal Justice influence my style? Yes, the restorative justice aspect of Criminal Justice brings people together to sort things out, repair harms, and find solutions that work for everyone. (Participant 145)
Yes – I am a sociologist and democracy/collegiality is paramount. (Participant 156)

The 21.1 percent of participants who reported that their academic disciplines do not influence their management styles explained that it is their personality, as noted by one disclaimer: “No. I think my personality, strengths and weaknesses influence my leadership styles” (Participant 75). Or as explained by another chair, it is work experience, rather than academic discipline that influences management style: “No, but my work experience with colleagues in business and academic circles has influenced my style a great deal” (Participant 205).

The survey also asked chairs if the size of their departments influenced their management styles, and to explain why or why not. The chair participants’ responses are presented in the following section.

4.5.3. Influence of Department Size on Management Style

Another possible factor that may influence management styles is the size of the unit being managed. One hundred and twelve chairs responded to the survey question that asked participants if the size of their academic departments influenced their management styles. Figure 22 presents chair participants’ positive responses that department size does influence management styles according to field of study, gender, age, department size, and chair work experience of the chair participants.

Almost two thirds of the respondents (63.4%) reported that size of department does influence their management style; 28.6 percent of chair participants reported that department size does not influence management style, and 8.0 percent of participants reported being uncertain about the influence of department size on their management style.

The highest proportions of chairs reporting that department size influences their management styles are from the Health (80.0%), Natural Sciences (78.6%) and Social Sciences (72.7%) fields of study. At least 50.0 percent of chairs from all fields of study reported that department size influences their management styles.
The lowest proportion of chairs (48.5%) reporting that department size influences their management style is from chairs of medium-sized departments. A much higher proportion of chairs of small-sized departments (71.2%) and of large-sized departments (65.0%) reported that department size influences their management styles. The proportions of female chair participants (65.7%), chairs aged 46 to 55 years (67.3%), are slightly higher than the overall average (63.4%) of chair participants who reported that department size does influence management style.
The chair participants' explanation for why department size influence their management styles is that the larger the department, the larger is the number of faculty members, and the more logistically difficult it is to consult with each faculty member and to bring the group together for discussion and collaboration purposes. Typical comments from chairs of large departments supporting this rational are below.
Yes, in the past I had 140% load as Department Chair and became more autocratic, outside of my style. Now with a more reasonable size group I can be more collaborative. (Participant 111)

Yes, the larger the department grows, the less I tend to have time to consult and discuss with each faculty member. (Participant 146)

Yes. As a very large department it is not possible to consult with every person on every decision. As such it is necessary to set up ways for faculty to have input to decisions while determining which decisions require an autocratic decision, and which require a group decision through consensus or voting. (Participant 172)

We have the largest department in the School, so I think it does. Sometimes I feel I need to be less collaborative and take the lead more. Sometimes it’s hard to herd cats. (Participant 182)

Chairs of small and medium departments voiced the same rationale with observations such as: “Yes, with a small department it is easy to consult with all department members.” (Participant 200); and “Yes, I would say so. The small size of our group does allow for more faculty discussion and involvement.” (Participant 239); and “Yes, my department is not too large which reduces number of conflicts.” (Participant 100).

The 28.6 percent of chair participants who reported that department size does not influence their management style explain that other factors, such as challenges with course offerings and allocating limited resources, rather than department size, influence their management style.

No – any size department will have common challenges and specific problems that relate to specific course offering and personnel. (Participant 87)

No, but it does effect the consistency of the quality of my performance, i.e. it is hard to keep up. (Participant 164)

Not so much the size of the department itself, but the split between the two areas, influences the politics of decision making. I need to balance the distribution of resources between the areas. I must have a good argument/defense for any decision allocating to one area. (Participant 115)

To summarize, the majority of chairs reported that both academic discipline and size of department influence their management styles. Chair participants observed that the underlying philosophies and principles of their academic disciplines such as the
scientific approach, democratic collegial approach, and collaborative team approach guided their management styles. Chairs indicated that department size also influenced their management styles in that the larger the number of faculty within a department, the more logistically difficult it is to consult with each faculty member and to bring the group together for discussion and collaboration purposes. The fewer the number of faculty, the more collaboratively a chair can manage the department. A minority of chairs reported that their personalities, industry experience, and allocating limited resources, rather than academic discipline or department size, influence their management styles.

4.6. Summary

For the most part, the features of the chair position as documented in BC public colleges’ faculty collective agreements are consistent with the features reported by chair survey participants. The majority of BC public college chairs reported they were elected to the chair position by their department faculty colleagues or selected by a committee composed of their faculty colleagues and dean. In keeping with college documentation, chair survey participants indicated they report directly to their dean or dean designate.

According to college documentation, chairs’ teaching duties are to be reduced anywhere between 20% and 80% to provide chairs time to perform their chair duties; and eight of the 11 colleges stipulate that in addition to release time, chairs are to be compensated with annual administrative stipends. Though college collective agreements do not allow for 100% teaching release, 17.6 percent of survey participants reported being granted 100% release from teaching duties. With respect to administrative chair stipends, 68.8 percent of participants reported receiving a stipend ranging from $1,000 to $5,000; while a quarter of the participants (25.6%) reported receiving no stipend to compensate for their chair responsibilities. Only about a third of survey participants reported their peers and deans formally evaluated them annually.

The function of the chair position in BC public colleges is described in terms of the roles and tasks performed by chairs. The primary roles performed by BC public college chairs, as identified by survey participants, are problem solver, listener, leader, manager/administrator, and faculty advocate. The primary tasks performed by chairs
include the following: resolve student issues, inform and advise students, keep current in academic disciplines, champion the department, initiate and participate in department meetings, maintain and build faculty morale, coordinate review of programs, mentor faculty, recruit faculty, and schedule courses and assign timetables.

The attempts to understand the people who hold the position of academic department chair in BC public colleges began with the demographics, including gender, age, industry work experience and academic qualifications of BC public college chairs. To summarize, the proportion of female chairs (59.2%) is higher than male chairs (40.8%) and more than three-quarters (76.8%) of all BC chairs are aged 46 years or older. All the survey participants reported having industry work experience, ranging from four to 30 years, prior to obtaining teaching positions at their colleges. Almost a fifth of BC public college chairs (19.2%) hold doctoral degrees and more than half the chairs (55.8%) hold master’s degrees.

The endeavor to understand BC college chairs also included an examination of their motivations in taking the chair job, their short-term and long-term career goals/aspirations and their management styles. The top reason for taking on the chair job, as indicated by survey participants, was to make a difference, to improve the department, which is consistent with the short-term goals they want to achieve while serving as chair. The accomplishments for which chairs wish to be remembered, as identified by participants, are faculty team building, curriculum development and improving student access to courses and programs.

BC college chairs’ long-term career goals, reported by the vast majority of survey participants, are to return to faculty positions, to not pursue administration positions, and to be remembered as teachers or as professionals other than teachers or administrators. The reasons cited most often by chairs for not pursuing administrative positions is their love for teaching and research and lack of interest in administrative work.

In their role as chair, half (50.4%) the survey participants reported viewing themselves as both faculty and administrators, one-third (33.6%) of the survey participants reported viewing themselves as primarily faculty, and the remaining participants (15.2%) reported viewing themselves as primarily administrators. The chairs’
divided perception of themselves in their role of chair as faculty and administrator may be a reflection of the chair role’s dual nature. As explained in the literature review, the chair role is a dual role in that it combines the faculty role of teaching and research and the administrator role of managing and leading an academic unit. BC public college chairs’ reported experiences with the chair role’s dual nature and role conflict are presented in Chapter 5.

The majority of survey participants (78.1%) selected the collaborative management style as best reflecting their approach in managing their academic departments. Almost three-quarters of survey participants (71.2%) indicated that their management style is influenced by their academic discipline; and almost two-thirds of the participants (63.4%) reported that the size of their departments also influences their management style.

Chapter 5 continues the task set in this study to understand and describe the people who perform the role of department chair in BC public colleges. The survey chair participants’ self-declared challenges and successes with the chair role are presented, and their challenges are described within the framework of the six types of role conflict defined in organizational role theory. The fourth main purpose of this study, to explore strategies to improve the chair position, is also introduced in Chapter 5 with the presentation of the chair participants’ suggestions to improve the chair position.
5. Chairs’ Challenges, Successes, and Suggestions

Chapter 4 described the features and functions of the chair position and the motivations, aspirations and management styles of the people holding the chair position in BC public colleges. Chapter 5 presents the data addressing the two remaining purposes of this study; 3) to identify and describe the challenging aspects and the rewarding aspects, labelled chair successes, of the chair position, and 4) to explore strategies to improve the position of chair in BC public colleges. Thus, Chapter 5 presents chairs’ rewarding and challenging experiences as reported by participants, their recommendations and best advice to their successors; and is organized as follows: (5.1) Chair Challenges, (5.2) Chair Successes, (5.3) Chair Responses Linked and Compared, (5.4) Chair Suggestions and Best Advice, (5.5) Researcher’s Lived Experiences, and (5.6) Summary.

5.1. Chair Challenges

As previously noted in the Research Design and Methodology chapter of this study, the sources and construction of the questions in the online survey were based on other chair research studies and conceptual themes in the literature, BC public college faculty collective agreements and chair job descriptions, and the researcher’s own experience as an academic department chair. One of the conceptual themes developed in the literature is the role conflict and related stress experienced by chairs. The role-conflict related questions in the survey administered to BC public college chairs asked chairs about the chair role’s conflicting nature, paradoxical nature, stress levels, constraining factors, and work load. The chairs’ challenges, as revealed in their responses to the role-conflict questions, indicate that BC public college chairs experience, to varying degrees, all six types of role conflict described by Kahn et al (1964) and presented in the Literature Review chapter of this research study. What
follows is a discussion of the chairs’ reported challenges with specific reference to Kahn’s et al (1964) six types of role conflict. A brief summary review of the six types of role conflict is provided below.

Inter-role conflict: demands from role-senders in one of the focal person’s multiple role sets compete with demands from role-senders in the focal person’s other role sets. Inter-sender conflict: two or more role-senders in the same role set sent contradictory messages to the focal person. Intra-sender conflict: one role-sender in the focal person’s role set sends incompatible messages to the focal person such as assigning responsibility to perform tasks with no matching authority to perform tasks.

Person-role conflict: requirements of a role violate the focal person’s personal code of ethics or moral values. Role-ambiguity conflict: the focal person experiences a lack of clarity due to inadequate direction and/or information and a lack of official formal authority regarding the tasks he/she is expected to perform and regarding the evaluation of his/her performance. Role-overload conflict: multiple role-senders send messages to the focal person to perform tasks that are legitimate and mutually compatible but impossible for one person to complete within given time limits.

5.1.1. **Conflicting Nature of the Chair Role**

One open-ended question in the online survey asked participants to express their views of and experiences with the chair role’s conflicting dual nature. Specifically, chairs were asked their opinions of and experiences with the contradictory messages sent to them by administration and faculty, referred to as inter-sender conflict in organizational role theory (Kahn et al, 1964). The question was prefaced with the following explanation in the survey: *Another common theme in the literature is the conflicting nature of the chair role. It is suggested that conflict arises because, upon accepting the position, a chair becomes an administrator but also remains a faculty member, and as a wearer of two hats, the chair is expected to be loyal to and advocate for faculty and academic discipline while also being loyal to and advocating for administration. When issues arise which place faculty and administrators on opposing sides, the chair is caught in a conflicting situation.*
A total of 111 participants responded, and of those participants, 75 respondents (67.6%) agreed and 23 respondents (20.7%) disagreed that the chair role has a conflicting nature. The remaining 13 respondents (11.7%) said it was too early in their tenure to experience conflict, or gave responses that did not agree or disagree with the conflicting nature of the chair role.

Of the 75 respondents who agreed the chair role has a conflicting nature, 59 respondents provided explanations that can be categorized into three main themes: i) the conflict is stressful and challenging but also rewarding in that it provides chairs the opportunity to understand both sides of an issue and the impetus to help resolve the issue (40.7% respondents); ii) the conflict is stressful and challenging but is manageable providing chairs openly take the position they support and are advocates for faculty (37.3% respondents); and iii) the conflict is stressful, discouraging and lonely (22.0% respondents).

Chairs in category i) the conflict is stressful and challenging but also rewarding, acknowledged that the conflicting nature is challenging but reported that they also regarded the conflicting nature as the chair role’s strength and attraction; as a positive challenge and opportunity for the chair to hone her/his mediation and creative problem solving skills. Participant 205 summarized this notion succinctly: “This conflict is its strength. The role blurs the lines between faculty and administration and enables creative problem-solving.” Other participants explained how the chair’s dual conflicting nature gave them insight and practice in negotiating and creative problem solving.

This is absolutely true as you have stated it. It really is a challenge. It helped me work on my negotiation and creative problem solving skills. I think it has also helped me to learn to look at both sides of issues and help the parties on each side understand the other in getting to resolution. (Participant 182)

I think this is accurate - although I sometimes feel privileged in a way because I have a wealth of insight and knowledge to share with both sides. I think the dual nature is challenging but often very rewarding. I get to be involved with students in some ways as well that is very rewarding. (Participant 226)

Chairs in category ii) the conflict is stressful and challenging but manageable, agreed that the conflict is stressful and challenging but advised that chairs can manage
the conflict by openly aligning themselves with faculty, as Participant 88 expressed it: “Agreed. To survive best is to align with faculty since they are the ones you have to have coffee with. Never have coffee with the Dean.” Similar advice was offered by other respondents who argued that in addition to helping chairs cope with the conflicting nature, to advocate for faculty and students is the chair’s responsibility and chairs not representing faculty could lose their “moral ability to lead”. Further, faculty’s views should be represented because their views are pedagogically relevant since their work is in the classroom and administrators “very often have little or no appreciation of what goes on in the classroom” (Participant 177).

Very true. My philosophy with the role is that I represent the faculty at the management table rather than vice versa. If I took the reverse approach, I would probably lose my moral ability to lead. That said, there are times when I am sure that faculty view me as ‘management friendly’ but that is an inevitable outcome of the duality inherent in the role. (Participant 191)

This situation is very difficult and anxiety provoking. It is difficult to provide support to both groups. From my perspective, my role is to bring forward and advocate for the faculty, the school and the students. I do not see my role to support administration though I may need to support their policies. (Participant 152)

The chair should always side with the Department, because ultimately, the Chair represents his/her colleagues, NOT the dean and higher administrators, who very often have little or no appreciation of what goes on in the classroom. (Participant 177)

Participants who advised chairs to always advocate for faculty’s position also pointed out that “being upfront and frank” and explaining clearly the chairs’ position to faculty and administrators will promote understanding and respect among faculty, chairs and administrators.

This is true. When the college view differs from faculty view, we have to advocate for the faculty position but we also have to advance admin decisions. I find being upfront and frank and saying what the college is asking and why and the feeling of conflict that I am caught in helps the faculty understand my situation. (Participant 128)

I have found this to be true. I have been in many situations where I have had to remind my supervisor that I am in a position with faculty as a colleague not a supervisor and therefore I won’t take certain things on. However, if I am clear it is respected. (Participant 183)
Chairs in category iii) the conflict is stressful, discouraging and lonely, voiced their experiences with the chair role’s conflicting nature with statements such as: “It’s a tough position and very stressful. It is not what I expected or signed up and it's very lonely at times” (Participant 137). “This type of conflict is part of the daily experience as chair. Can be very stressful” (Participant 134). Other participants described in more detail the social isolation, the no-win, discouraging experiences and relationship costs of serving as chair.

One of the costs to becoming chair is social – relationships with colleagues can change significantly. In some cases for the better, but in many cases not. This can lead to a sense of social isolation which, for me, is a source of job dissatisfaction. Developing mentor or co-mentor relationships with other chairs for former chairs can help, but it also compounds the perception of “us” and “them”. A chair is neither. (Participant 113)

Conflicts of this nature occur frequently. I have found myself having to mentor administrators through difficult situations in order to remedy faculty issues. At the same time, I have found myself having to mentor faculty who continually fall prey to administrators who take unfair advantage of new faculty naivety. At the end of the day, I often wish there was someone looking out/guiding me and that mentorship is very limited and most frequently nonexistent. (Participant 71)

I agree with this statement and currently working through an issue between a faculty member, the Union and HR Management. The conflict has directly impacted my relationship with my faculty and union. I don’t care about the union’s issues but I have to work every day with my faculty. (Participant 158)

Absolutely true. The Chair is in a “no win” situation, just a faculty member who has taken on a role for the betterment of the department, but with no actual ability to enact change. We are constantly jumping to the Administrations’ tune, with little or no financial help – very discouraging and at some times, demeaning. The expectation is very high to solve all things in the department with little or no help. (Participant 190)

Of the 23 chair respondents who disagreed that the chair role has a conflicting nature, 17 chairs attributed the lack of conflict they experience to their taking the side of faculty, presumably immediately and in every issue. They explained that they do not feel a conflict because they are “faculty first and foremost” and feel no obligation to advocate for administration. A sample of their responses is below.
I am a faculty first and foremost, I follow the collective agreement and I always act in the best interests of students and faculty. I do not see a conflict here. (Participant 101)

I think it is natural for the Chair to advocate on behalf of the faculty. I actually do not see this as a conflict, but more of a balancing act. (Participant 110)

I don't feel that conflict. I'm a faculty member first and foremost and advocate for department faculty and our disciplines, and attempt to improve working conditions for my colleagues. (Participant 142)

As a coordinator/chair I am faculty and that is where my loyalty lies – do not see a conflict. (Participant 230)

I don't feel a conflict. I work on behalf of my team. I am a buffer between department and administration but I don’t feel I have to represent administration. (Participant 148)

The remaining six of the 23 chairs who reported always advocating for faculty attributed the lack of conflict they experience to their dean's and other administrators’ collaborative leadership qualities.

I have had very little issue or problem with this. I can’t even recall an example where I advocated for administration. We have excellent, collaborative leaders in our school. (Participant 145)

I don't advocate for administrators; I advocate for students and faculty. Luckily, I get along very well with my Dean who is a wonderful advocate for this department. (Participant 209)

Again this is difficult to respond to as I have wonderful working relationships with the Dean and with the faculty in my department. If the individuals that I worked with did not have a collaborative approach to decision making I would answer this question differently. (Participant 211)

To summarize, more than two-thirds of participants (67.6%) indicated that they experience the chair role’s conflicting dual nature. They described the experience as stressful, difficult, anxiety provoking, lonely and challenging, but also as rewarding in that it provides the opportunity for the chair to learn, to understand different perspectives, to communicate faculty’s and administration’s different and at times opposing perspectives to both parties, and to be creative in negotiating and solving problems. Participants who voiced an opinion on taking sides, either immediately or when creative problem solving and negotiating attempts failed, explained that since chairs are faculty, the chair’s loyalty
must ultimately rest with faculty. The 23 participants (20.7%) who disagreed that the chair role has a conflicting nature explained they do not feel a conflict because they always advocate for faculty and students or because of their deans' and other administrators’ collaborative leadership qualities.

Another open-ended survey question regarding role conflict asked chair participants to express their views on the paradoxical nature of the chair role, an aspect of the chair role that is categorized in organizational role theory as intra-sender role conflict which occurs when one role sender in a role set sends incompatible messages to the focal person. The chair participants’ views of and experiences with the chair role’s paradoxical nature, or intra-sender role conflict, is the subject of the following section.

5.1.2. **Paradoxical Nature of the Chair Role**

Participants were asked about their views of and experiences with the chair role’s paradoxical nature in an open-ended online survey question prefaced with the following explanation: *A common theme in the literature is the paradoxical nature of the chair role. The purported paradox inherent in the chair role is that, though the chair position is touted as one of the most influential positions in academe, chairs have little or no formal authority.*

The paradoxical nature of the chair role, due partly to the chair role’s lack of formal official authority, is referred to as intra-sender role conflict in organizational role theory (Kahn et al, 1964). The chair’s lack of formal official authority can lead to intra-sender role conflict if, for example, one role-sender assigns the chair responsibility to perform tasks with no matching authority to perform the tasks and thereby places the chair in a paradoxical situation.

A total of 113 respondents expressed their views of and experiences with the paradoxical nature of the chair role. The vast majority of participants (84.0%) agreed with the statement and acknowledged that the paradox exists primarily because as faculty members, chairs belong to the same union as their faculty peers and thus can have no supervisory or disciplinary authority over their faculty peers. Participants’ other reason for the chair’s lack of official authority over faculty is the need for “academic
freedom” within the academic profession which “prevents chairs from imposing their will on others”.

Ohhhh…I would agree whole heartily with this statement! First, there is no disciplinary role with my particular position (I’m in the same union), and ‘academic freedom’ prevents me from strictly imposing my will on others. The institution in general is quite collaborative though and this is the norm. Frankly, I prefer it that way. (Participant 138)

While appreciating the reasons for the lack of formal authority, participants reported that having responsibility with no corresponding official formal authority makes the chair position frustrating and at times, untenable.

This paradox is what makes the position at times, untenable. It is difficult to have so much responsibility without some authority to influence faculty behavior. (Participant 152)

I found this to be a very frustrating situation in the past. Specifically, in times of dealing with faculty disciplinary situations, three times leading to a dismissal of employees. Being responsible for the actions taken in the process of probation, documentation and enforcing policy but no authority toward the final result. (Participant 111)

It is a quasi-administrative role without any real authority. The role and respect for the role has to be built over time with careful thought as to the perception from faculty and administration. A ‘sandwich’ position. (Participant 83)

Very true … on one hand, we are the change agents and are very influential in how faculty group works together … but with little or no authority and a part of the bargaining unit, it is sometimes difficult. (Participant 184)

The paradoxical nature of the role is challenging in that there are some faculty related issues in the Dept that may affect the quality of education we provide that I cannot intervene effectively in that I do not have the authority to. (Participant 236)

Many chair participants who acknowledged the paradoxical nature of the chair role also observed that the lack of formal official authority provides both the opportunity and necessity for the chair to lead through example, persuasion and collaboration with their faculty colleagues, explaining that “They (chairs) have to have ‘buy-in’ from members by negotiation and agreement” (Participant 195). Further, they explained that leadership without formal authority can turn out to be more influential and effective than
leading with formal authority, “we earn respect which in turn becomes a form of authority” (Participant 204); “I think better to have no authority. That way you can be a colleague with influence” (Participant 148); and “I have lots on informal authority which turns out to be more influential in the long run” (Participant 101). Other comments recognizing a chair’s informal leadership opportunity also reveal the tension and stress accompanying the opportunity and provide rationale for chairs’ consensus based informal leadership.

Huge responsibility, no authority. This places chairs in an at times untenable situation, but also gives the opportunity to lead through persuasion and example. It’s frustrating and leads to the stress, but can also be rewarding when people do support your leadership. (Participant 172)

Formal authority would get me nowhere. My authority arises from my commitment to speak and act with integrity, honesty, and accountability in support of our programs. (Participant 205)

This role is in many cases a filter and conduit role. We filter information gathered from all sorts of meetings, and also provide filtered information ‘out’ of the department. A chair can turn the tide of ‘buy in’ either for or against many initiatives. The chair often has to (or should have to) build consensus to make anything happen. If the faculty is against something, it will have a lot lower success rate, even under the formal threat of ‘discipline’ for failure to comply. (Participant 214)

The authority of the chair flows from the respect earned from your colleagues. Some chairs are very influential and their authority flows from this respect. Other chairs not as well respected may have little authority as a result. In a collegially managed college this is particularly true. (Participant 200)

The chairs’ comments quoted above reveal that they have experienced the paradoxical role-conflict situation and that the lack of formal official authority is challenging, frustrating and stressful. At the same time, participants also expressed understanding and acceptance of the reasons for the lack of formal authority, specifically because the chair belongs to the same union as faculty and because of faculty’s need for professional academic independence. Their comments do not express a desire for formal official authority; rather they express a preference for not having official authority. Nor do their comments reflect feelings of helplessness with the chair position’s paradoxical situation. Indeed, just the opposite. Participants expressed the opinion that
chairs’ lack of official formal authority provides the opportunity for chairs to earn respect and informal authority through collaboration, persuasion and example.

The next section discusses chair participants’ ratings of their overall stress level, and their ratings of situations typically encountered by chairs according to the level of stress experienced with each situation. In analyzing the chair participants’ responses, their ratings of above-normal stress, described in the survey as adversely affecting a person’s physical health, mental health, or personal life, are regarded as the equivalent of experiencing one or more of the six types of role conflict described by Kahn et al (1964) which were described in detail in the Literature Review Chapter and again briefly reviewed at the beginning of this chapter.

5.1.3. Above-Normal Stress and the Chair Role

The survey also included questions regarding stress and the chair role. Chairs were asked i) to rate their overall stress level, ii) to indicate if the stress they experience is continuous or occasional, iii) to rank a list of situations typically encountered by chairs according to the level of stress they experienced with each situation, and iv) to explain why, if they experience above-normal stress, they continue in their chair job. No definition of stress was provided. However, a guide to rate the level of stress experienced by chairs was provided. The guide included three levels of stress described as follows: 1) slight stress rarely or doesn’t bother you; 2) normal stress helps focus you; 3) above-normal stress may adversely affect your physical health, or mental health, or personal life. In analyzing the chair participants’ ratings of their stress levels as slight stress, normal stress or above-normal stress, their ratings of above-normal stress are regarded as the equivalent of experiencing one or more of the six types of role conflict described by Kahn et al (1964). The relationship between chairs’ stress levels and role conflict was established by researchers in research studies reviewed and referenced in the Literature Review of this thesis, Section 2.5.2 Chair Role Conflict and Stress. Interpreting chairs’ ratings of above-normal stress as the experiencing of role conflict by chairs is consistent with the researchers’ note to their definition of stress which clarifies that the most significant stage in the stress cycle is the subject’s own perception of the stress event (Gmelch & Burns, 1994, p. 83). In other words, it is an individual’s own
assessment of his/her stresses, not someone else’s assessment, that determines the individual’s level of inner role conflict.

**Chairs’ Overall Above-Normal Stress Levels**

All 125 chair participants answered the stress questions. Nine participants (7.2%) rated their overall stress level as *slight*, 59 participants (45.6%) rated their overall stress level as *normal*, and 57 participants (45.6%) rated their over-all stress level at *above-normal*, regarded as the equivalent of experiencing one or more six types of role conflict. The chairs’ above-normal rating of their over-all stress level is not specific enough to identify which of the six types of role conflict chairs are experiencing, but it does indicate that chairs experience role conflict. Figure 23 portrays the chair participants’ ratings of above-normal stress according to the participants’ fields of study, gender, age, size of department, and chair work experience.

A higher proportion of Arts & Humanities chairs (55.5%) and of Business chairs (54.5%), compared to the average proportion of chairs (45.6%), reported above-normal overall stress levels. Technologies chairs reported the lowest proportion of chairs (37.5%) experiencing above-normal stress levels.

A higher proportion of female chairs (51.4%) compared to male chairs (37.2%), reported they experience above-normal stress levels. A much higher proportion (76.4%) of large department chairs; compared to medium department chairs (42.1%) and small department chairs (39.4%) reported they experience above-normal stress levels.

A higher proportion of chairs aged 56 years or older (50.0%), and chairs serving in their 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} terms (48.7%) reported experiencing above-normal stress levels compared to younger chairs (41.4%) and new chairs serving in their 1\textsuperscript{st} term (40.8%).
The next section presents participants’ ratings of their above-normal stress as continuous or occasional.
Continuous Versus Occasional Above-Normal Stress Levels

In addition to being asked to rate their stress level, participants were asked to indicate if the stress they experience is continuous or occasional. Figure 24 portrays the 57 chair participants’ ratings of their above-normal stress as continuous or occasional according to the participants’ fields of study, gender, age, size of department, and chair work experience.

Figure 24  Continuous Versus Occasional Above-Normal Stress  n = 57

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuous Versus Occasional Above-Normal Stress</th>
<th>Continuous</th>
<th>Occasional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Average n</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field of Study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Access 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services 6</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health 10</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities 10</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences 5</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades 5</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business 6</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technologies 3</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences 6</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 38</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 19</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55 Years 26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-45 Years 12</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 56 Years 19</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small 26</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium 15</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Term 20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd or 3rd Term 37</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 24 reveals that overall, more than half of the participants (57.9%) reported they experience above-normal stress on a continuous basis. However, there is considerable variation among the participants within the categories who reported experiencing continuous above-normal stress. For instance, within the fields of study category, all College Access chairs (100.0%) and a large majority of Human Services (83.3%) and Health chairs (80.0%) reported experiencing continuous above-normal stress. On the other hand, only 16.7 percent of Natural Science chairs reported experiencing continuous above-normal stress.

Similarly, two-thirds of all female participants (66.7%) reported experiencing continuous above-normal stress, while a considerably smaller percentage of male participants (36.8%) reported experiencing continuous above-normal stress. As well, almost three-quarters of participants aged 46-55 years (73.1%) reported experiencing continuous above-normal stress, while 36.8 percent of participants aged 56 years and older reported continuous above-normal stress. Considerably more chairs of large departments (73.3%), of small departments (65.4%) and first-term chairs (65.0%) reported experiencing continuous above-normal stress than did chairs of medium department (37.5%), and second or third-term chairs (54.1%).

**Above-Normal Stress Ratings of Chair Situations**

Participants were also asked to rank a list of situations typically encountered by chairs according to the level of stress experienced with each situation. The guide to rate the level of stress experienced by chairs included the same three levels of stress as described previously: 1) slight stress rarely or doesn’t bother you; 2) normal stress helps focus you; 3) above normal stress may adversely affect your physical health, or mental health, or personal life. The question was answered by all 125 participants. Figure 25 shows the list of typical chair situations ranked in order beginning with the situation rated as causing above-normal stress by the highest percentage of respondents and continuing to the situation ranked as causing above-normal stress by the lowest percentage of respondents.
Figure 25  Chairs’ Above-Normal Stress Ratings of Chair Situations  n = 125

Chairs’ Above-Normal Stress Ratings of Chair Situations

- Dealing with unprofessional faculty conduct issues: 60.2%
- Having too heavy a workload: 56.8%
- Dealing with conflicting concerns/demands of faculty and administration: 48.4%
- Balancing work and home life: 38.7%
- Having inadequate information: 35.8%
- Having little or no formal authority: 32.8%
- Having excessively high self-expectations: 32.3%
- Dealing with student complaint/conduct issues: 31.2%
- Handling many different tasks simultaneously: 29.8%
- Having inadequate direction: 27.6%
- Having inadequate training for the job: 23.2%
- Performing teaching duties to self-imposed standards: 21.6%
- Responding to emails in a timely fashion: 21.6%
- Dealing with faculty personnel issues: 21.0%
- Completing paperwork and reports on time: 18.5%
- Budgeting and managing financial resources: 16.9%
- Enforcing academic rules, standards, regulations: 13.8%
- Staying current in academic discipline: 12.9%
- Ensuring high teaching standards: 8.1%
- Engaging in promotional activities to recruit students: 4.8%
- Attending meetings: 4.8%

Percent of Chair Respondents
In analyzing the chair participants’ ratings of situations as causing slight stress, normal stress, or above-normal stress, their ratings of above-normal stress are regarded as the equivalent of rating the situations as invoking one or more of the types of role conflict described by Kahn et al (1964). Unlike participants’ ratings of their over-all stress levels, chairs’ ratings of specific situations can be identified with specific types of role conflict. For example, the first situation, dealing with unprofessional faculty conduct issues, which results in above-normal stress for the highest proportion (60.2%) of survey participants, can be categorized as intra-sender role conflict. Specifically, chairs experience above-normal stress or intra-sender conflict when dealing with unprofessional faculty conduct issues because they have no official formal authority to address a situation for which they feel responsible to address. The communicated expectation resulting in the chair’s feeling of responsibility may be coming from the dean, or from a faculty member, or a student, or from the chair herself.

Four other situations which cause above-normal stress and invoke intra-sender role conflict are: having little or no official formal authority (32.8%), dealing with student complaints and conduct issues (31.2%), enforcing academic rules, standards, regulations (13.8%), and ensuring high teaching standards (8.1%). As discussed previously, the chair’s lack of official formal authority, though justifiable, leads to paradoxical situations because of the discrepancy between the chair’s feeling of responsibility and the chair’s formal authority to address a situation. For instance, if student complaints are directed at the chair’s faculty colleagues the chair is placed in the position of feeling responsible to address the complaint while having no corresponding official formal authority to do so. Similarly, if a chair discovers that a faculty colleague is not maintaining high teaching standards or is violating academic standards or rules, the chair has no official formal authority to discipline the faculty member. Three possible options available to the chair are to ignore the conduct, to request the colleague to change his/her conduct, or to report the faculty member’s conduct to the dean. The first option is not constructive, the second option may or may not be constructive, and the third option may be destructive in that reporting a colleague’s conduct is not generally conducive to inspiring confidence and trust among faculty and to building a strong team.

The situation rated as causing above-normal stress for more than half the chair participants (56.8%) is having too heavy a workload, an example of role overload.
conflict. Within that workload, the handling of many different tasks simultaneously was rated as causing above-normal stress or role overload conflict to 29.8 percent of chairs. Responding to emails in a timely fashion was rated as causing above-normal stress or role overload conflict to 21.6 percent of chairs; and the task of completing paperwork and reports on time was rated as causing above-normal stress or role overload conflict to 18.5 percent of chairs.

Almost half (48.4%) the survey participants rated dealing with the conflicting concerns and demands of administration and faculty as causing above-normal stress. This situation reflects an inter-sender role conflict situation in that the opposing/contradictory demands and concerns are sent to the focal person (chair) from two different role-senders (faculty and administration) belonging to the same (chair’s) role-set.

The situations balancing work and home life and staying current in academic discipline were rated as causing above-normal stress by 38.7 percent and 12.9 percent of chairs respectively. Both situations reflect inter-role conflict in that the role-senders belonging to two or more of the chair’s role-sets send competing demands to the chair. For example, the chair’s family, the chair’s work place and the chair’s academic discipline may all be competing for the same time available to the chair. The chair feels inter-role conflict or above-normal stress because there in not enough time to satisfy the demands of all three role-sets.

The situations, having inadequate information, having inadequate direction, and having inadequate training, result in above-normal stress for 35.8 percent, 27.6 percent, and 23.2 percent of participants respectively. Having inadequate information and inadequate direction reflect the focal person’s (chair’s) lack of clarity regarding the tasks the chair is expected to perform based on the role-senders’ (dean, faculty, students) communicated expectations to the chair. This lack of clarity leads to role-ambiguity conflict. Having inadequate training reflects the focal person’s unawareness of and inexperience with the chair roles and responsibilities and also results in role-ambiguity conflict, but in this situation the conflict is due to the focal person’s own unpreparedness and is not due to inadequate information and direction from role-senders.
The situations, having excessively high self-expectations and performing teaching duties to self-imposed standards were rated as causing above-normal stress by 32.3 percent and 21.6 percent of chairs respectively. Both situations are examples of person-role conflict which exist when the requirements of a role violate the focal person’s personal code of ethics or moral values. Specifically, the demands and time commitments of chair duties may prohibit the chair from performing chair duties and teaching duties at his/her own standards of performance which result in person-role conflict, reported as above-normal stress by chair participants.

In summary, the chairs’ ratings of above-normal stress of situations typically encountered by chairs illustrate the types of role conflict experienced by BC public college chairs. Specifically, chair situations leading to intra-sender role conflict are dealing with unprofessional faculty conduct issues; having little or no official formal authority; dealing with student complaints and conduct issues; enforcing academic rules, standards and regulations; and ensuring high teaching standards. Chair situations associated with role-overload conflict are having too heavy a workload; handling many different tasks simultaneously; responding to emails in a timely fashion; and completing paperwork and reports on time. The situation, dealing with the conflicting concerns and demands of administration and faculty, results in inter-sender role conflict. The situations, balancing work and home life, and staying current in academic discipline, reflect inter-role conflict. The situations, having inadequate information; having inadequate direction; and having inadequate training result in role-ambiguity conflict. The situations, having excessively high self-expectations and performing teaching duties to self-imposed standards lead to person-role conflict.

Why Do Stressed Chairs Continue in Chair Job?

The final stress-related survey question asked participants who had reported experiencing above-normal stress to explain why they continue in the chair job. Specifically, the question asked: If you experience above-normal stress in any aspect of your chair job, can you please explain why you continue in your chair job? Seventy-seven chairs responded, two of whom reported they were not continuing in their chair jobs. More than half of the remaining 75 respondents (53.3%) explained they continue in their chair job, despite experiencing above-normal stress, out of a sense of duty,
obligation and responsibility to their faculty colleagues and students. They explained that this sense of obligation arises from their “belief in the mission”, or because “no one else wants to do it”, or it is “my turn”, or to honor a “commitment to department and program development” (Participant 71) or “a commitment to implement a new curriculum” (Participant 134), or simply from “a compelling need to finish the job” (Participant 164).

Sense of duty and obligation; no other faculty applied for the position; strongly held beliefs in the mission of the institution; passion for the target student audience and meeting their needs. (Participant 113)

Someone has to do it and term is only three years at a time so there is an escape clause (the last Chair was taken out on a stretcher two years into the role; I’ve finished my first year and so far so good…) (Participant 77)

It is a three-year term and no one else in the department wants to do it. I feel an obligation to the duties. (Participant 155)

Very fair question. Last Chair quit – no one stepped forward, and I was asked to by the department and the Dean, but the work load is killing. (Participant 163)

Stubborn, stupid! I made a commitment to the department; no one else wants the job. Most of the time it is fine; sometimes really good, sometimes incredibly bad. (Participant 94)

The chair position is rotated amongst full-time faculty, and it is now my turn to do my part for the department. (Participant 203)

I feel a duty to my department. It feels that it is “my turn”. Even though I dislike parts of the job because they are very stressful, I know that there are parts that I am very good at. Some days I love the variety of the job. I like change in general – just not the constant changes that I’ve been undergoing in this job. (Participant 209)

The second most often cited reason (29.3%) is that, though stressful, the chair job is enjoyable and personally rewarding in that it is interesting, challenging and provides learning opportunities.

I really enjoy the challenge of engaging so many diverse people and disciplines (students and staff). However, my health is being compromised and I am not sure I can do this for two more years. (Participant 90)
Overall I am enjoying the post – perhaps because I am learning and can see I will be for some time yet; and perhaps because I have a bit more control over my own work life. (Participant 115)

Even though stressful, I do enjoy the work; keep hoping it will get better, i.e. as I have more experience, and also as next year will be the first year of my term without major curriculum changes. No one else wants to do this job in our department. (Participant 229)

I use a cost benefit analysis approach. Every job has its challenges. As I said I love the work, however the job is too big. More and more functions are being downloaded to the chairs and we need more resources – as in people to maintain quality. It is not sustainable to be working 50 plus hours a week. (Participant 204)

I get a great deal of satisfaction working with students as they search out, discover and realize their goals. (Participant 215)

Because I am good at it. Because I take pride in problem solving, challenges or building and I enjoy being a team leader because of the great team I work with. I enjoy work that engages my vision and inspires me or allows me to utilize my skills. (Participant 226)

A small minority of the respondents explained they are continuing in the chair job for job security and financial need - no other job was available, or because the above-normal stress is occasional and not continuous.

The discussion of role conflict is continued in the next section. The chairs’ responses to the online survey question asking them to identify the factors that constrain them from performing their job better are reviewed in relation to role conflict. The leading constraining factors identified by chairs are symptoms/indications of BC public college chairs experiencing role overload conflict and intra-sender conflict.

5.1.4. Factors Constraining Chairs from Performing Job Better

To gain deeper insight into the challenges encountered by chairs, participants were asked, in an open-ended question, to identify the factors that constrain them from performing their job better. The question was answered by 115 chairs, and their responses reflected role conflict, consistent with chairs’ responses to the survey questions regarding the chair role’s conflicting nature and paradoxical nature, and with the chairs’ above-normal stress ratings of chair situations. Eighty-five of the 115
respondents (73.9%) cited lack of time and insufficient clerical support to complete all the tasks in a chair’s overloaded work schedule as the leading factors constraining them from performing their chair jobs better. The chairs’ expressed need for more time to perform chair tasks and for clerical support; their recognition that their chair workload is too heavy; and their feelings of stress, tiredness and being overwhelmed are all indications of role overload conflict. Many chairs responded succinctly with comments such as: “Time, stress, feeling constantly overwhelmed” (Participant 132); “Sheer lack of time to do all the tasks demanded of a Chair really well” (Participant 177); Inadequate time – more responsibilities and workload that can be managed in a workday” (Participant 78); “Too much to do – it can be hard to stay on top of it all” (Participant 140); “My portfolio is ridiculously large; it needs to be half of what it is” (Participant 90). Several chairs responded with just one or two words: “Time” or “Not enough time” or “Too little time” or “Time-work/home balance”. Other respondents provided more detailed explanations.

Time. The 6/8 teaching load and significant administrative responsibilities make it hard to be an effective and responsive instructor, and a scholar with an active research agenda. (Participant 109)

The necessity of balancing the teaching load with the managerial aspects of the chair job. Too little time to do more than deal with the routine chores, rather than really think about larger changes. (Participant 142)

Time – the workload is very heavy. Also short timelines from the institution to get things done – sometimes I feel I am only doing half a job because there hasn’t been the time to complete a task thoroughly. (Participant 183)

Too much work and too little time. Difficulty in taking allotted vacation, professional development time has resulted in my feeling tired a lot of the time, and when I’m tired I’m probably not as efficient as I could be. (Participant 236)

Lack of program assistant and replacement for myself if I’m on holiday or PD or out of office. (Participant 113)

The chair position’s lack of official formal authority, an indication of intra-sender conflict, was cited by only 12.2 percent of respondents as constraining their performance. Chairs expressed their conflict with comments such as “Not being able to do anything about unprofessional faculty conduct issues” (Participant 137), and “Can only ask faculty – if they choose to behave badly, I have little ability to encourage better
behavior.” (Participant 163). The relatively small proportion of chairs (12.2%) citing lack of official authority as constraining their performance is consistent with participants’ responses to the survey question regarding the chair role’s paradoxical nature. In response to the paradoxical nature question, participants explained that though the lack of official formal authority can be frustrating and stressful, it is justifiable; and it also provides the opportunity for chairs to earn informal authority through collaboration, persuasion and example. Given that explanation, it is understandable that the majority of chairs did not cite the lack of official formal authority as a factor constraining them from performing their job better. Constraining factors not reflecting role conflicts, such as the inflexibility of college bureaucracy and lack of financial resources, were cited by the remaining 13.9 percent of participants.

Another survey question regarding role conflict, specifically role-overload conflict, asked chair participants to indicate the change in their chair responsibilities due to the introduction of BC colleges’ four-year bachelor degree programs, an expansion of colleges’ mandate. The chair participants’ responses and a brief background to college bachelor degree programs are the subjects of the following section.

5.1.5. Impact of BC Colleges’ Expanded Mandate

In 2003, the BC Provincial Government began accepting proposals from BC colleges to offer four-year baccalaureate degree programs. Prior to 2003, BC colleges offered programs of a maximum two years in length. Colleges' four-year bachelor degree programs typically include 40 credit courses, representing a minimum 120 academic credits, plus an applied work experience component. Upon approval of a college’s baccalaureate degree program proposal, the college would be granted baccalaureate degree granting status.

The online survey asked participants if they were in favor of BC public colleges offering bachelor degrees. Participants were also asked to indicate the change in chair responsibilities due to the offering of bachelor degree programs by selecting no difference, small difference, difference, or major difference for each of 13 typical chair responsibilities. A healthy majority, 82.1 percent of 112 chair respondents, reported being in favor of colleges offering bachelor degrees. Of the 112 chair respondents, 78
chairs indicated that their colleges offered bachelor degree programs and responded to the question regarding the change in chair responsibilities due to the offering of bachelor degrees. The 78 respondents included 19 chairs whose departments offer bachelor degree programs and 59 chairs whose colleges, but not departments, offer bachelor degree programs. Table 18 shows the increase in chair responsibilities as reported by the 19 chairs and the increase in chair responsibilities as reported by the 59 chairs.

Table 18  
Increase in Chair Responsibilities due to Offering Bachelor Degrees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair Responsibilities</th>
<th>Chairs of Departments Offering Bachelor Degree</th>
<th>Chairs at Colleges Offering Bachelor Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raise and enforce academic standards</td>
<td>19 68.4%</td>
<td>59 18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum development</td>
<td>19 68.4%</td>
<td>59 22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build relationships within the college</td>
<td>19 57.9%</td>
<td>59 25.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly activity (research, graduate studies)</td>
<td>19 52.6%</td>
<td>59 27.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building relationships outside the college</td>
<td>19 52.6%</td>
<td>59 20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty recruitment</td>
<td>19 52.6%</td>
<td>59 13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule and timetable classes</td>
<td>19 47.4%</td>
<td>59 15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty engagement</td>
<td>19 42.1%</td>
<td>59 15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student engagement</td>
<td>19 36.8%</td>
<td>59 6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching (learning new methods, best practices)</td>
<td>19 31.6%</td>
<td>59 15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional Activities</td>
<td>19 31.6%</td>
<td>59 20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget and manage financial resources</td>
<td>19 31.6%</td>
<td>59 20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate revenue, fundraise</td>
<td>19 5.3%</td>
<td>59 11.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both groups of participants reported a difference or major difference in all 13 chair responsibilities listed but the 19 chairs of departments offering bachelor degrees reported higher increases in all the chair responsibilities except fundraising, than the 59 chairs whose colleges, but not departments, offer bachelor degrees.

Of the 19 chairs whose departments offer bachelor degrees, more than two-thirds (68.4%) indicated a difference or major difference in their responsibilities with
respect to curriculum development and raising and enforcing academic standards. More than half of the 19 chairs reported an increase in their responsibilities with respect to building relationships within the college (57.9%), in scholarly activity (52.6%), in building relationships outside the college (52.6%), and in faculty recruitment (52.6%); and almost half of the 19 chairs reported a difference or major difference in scheduling and timetabling classes (47.4%), and faculty engagement activities (42.1%). More than one third of the 19 chairs (36.8%) indicated an increase in student engagement responsibilities, and almost one third of the 19 chairs (31.6%) reported an increase in teaching activities (learning new methods, best practices), promotional activities, and budgeting and managing financial resources responsibilities.

Of the 59 chairs whose colleges, but not departments, offer bachelor degrees, slightly more than a quarter reported an increase in their chair responsibilities with respect to scholarly activity such as research and graduate studies (27.1%), and building relationships within the college (25.4%). About one fifth of the 59 chairs reported an increase in responsibilities involving curriculum development (22.0%), building relationships outside the college (20.3%), promotional activities (20.3%), and budgeting and managing financial resources (20.3%).

Several respondents offered additional chair responsibilities that arose because of the offering of baccalaureate degree programs. They explained that additional responsibilities arose due to the organizational cultural changes brought on by the offering of four-year versus two-year academic programs; the inadequate infrastructure to deal with the expectation of applied research; the preparation and meeting time involved in discussing the possibility of offering a bachelor degree program; the increase in demand for student counseling, advising and registration; and the developing and revising of college policies and publications.

Cultural changes/organization change management, e.g. thinking in terms of a four-year program versus a two-year program. Adequately supporting degree programs when the majority of time/funding is still focused on two-year programs, certificates, etc. (Participant 71)

Expectation of applied research without having the infrastructure to deal with issues such as research space, workloads and resources. (Participant 110)
Even just meeting to discuss this possibility the demands from the chair in terms of time and preparation were enormous over a six-month discussion time. (Participant 190)

More of everything, particularly as we grow. More student counseling, registration issues ... (Participant 163)

Student advising, developing policy and procedures, report writing, revising college publications. (Participant 205)

In summary, the chair participants’ reported increases in existing responsibilities and the addition of new responsibilities such as compensating for the lack of infrastructure and support services due to the offering of four-year bachelor degree programs, indicate that the colleges’ expanded mandate has increased chairs’ role-overload conflict.

Another question in the online survey regarding role conflict, specifically role-overload conflict, asked chairs to specify the time they spend on work-related activities. The underlying objective of the question was to determine if the time chairs spend on work-related activities support chairs’ contention that their workload is too heavy and that they experience role-overload conflict. The time spent on work-related activities, as reported by chairs in the online survey, is presented in the following section.

5.1.6. Time Chairs Spend on Work-Related Activities

The chair participants’ reported number of hours spent on work-related activities supports the contention that chairs experience role-overload conflict. More than three-quarters of the 121 respondents (76.9%) reported spending between 41 and 70 hours per week on work-related activities. Of the 121 respondents, 37.2 percent reported spending 41 to 50 hours per week on work-related activities, and 39.7 percent reported spending in excess of 51 hours per week on work-related activities. Since the contractual weekly hours for a full-time faculty member are 38-40 hours according to BC public college faculty collective agreements, it follows that work hours in excess of 40 hours are overtime hours and reflect role-overload conflict.

Participants were asked to indicate the time spent on work-related activities by selecting one of the following categories: (21-40 hours), (41-50 hours), (51-60 hours) or
(61-70 hours). The category (21-40 hours) included an error; it should have read (38-40 hours) which represents the contractual work hours per week for full-time faculty employees. A total of 28 respondents (23.1%) selected category (21-40 hours); some of whom noted that they were half-time or three-quarter time employees, and the others noted that they worked 38 to 40 hours on average per week.

Figure 26 portrays the percentage of chair participants working in excess of 40 hours per week according to the respondents’ fields of study, gender, age, size of department and chair work experience. Within the fields of study category, the highest proportions of participants who reported spending more than 40 hours per week on work related activities are chairs in Human Services (99.7%), Health (95.5%) and Social Sciences (81.8%). The lowest proportion of participants who reported spending more than 40 hours per week on work related activities are chairs in Arts & Humanities (55.6%).

With respect to gender, a higher proportion of female chairs (81.7%), compared to male chairs (70.0%), reported spending more than 40 hours per week on work related activities. As well, a higher proportion of chairs of large departments (90.5%) compared to chairs of medium departments (84.2%) and to chairs of small departments (67.7%), reported spending more than 40 hours per week on work related activities.

The ages of chairs did not appear to greatly influence the number of overtime hours spent on work related activities. A slightly higher proportion of chairs aged 46 to 55 years (77.7%) reported spending more than 40 hours per week on work related activities compared to the proportion of chairs aged 56 and more years (77.1%) and the proportion of chairs aged 30 to 45 years (73.0%). A higher proportion of second or third term chairs (80.5%), compared to first term chairs (71.5%) reported spending more than 40 hours per week on work related activities.
Figure 26  Chairs Working Overtime  n = 121

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Chairs Working Over Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Average n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technologies 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Access 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46-55 Years 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 56 Years 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-45 Years 28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small 62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd or 3rd Term 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Term 49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To summarize, the time spent on work-related activities reported by chairs is considerably more time than a faculty position contractual hours per week confirming the contention that BC public college chairs experience role-overload conflict. The highest proportion of chairs in each category who reported working overtime are chairs in
Human Services (99.7%), female chairs (81.7%), chairs aged 46-55 years (77.7%), chairs of large departments (90.5%), and chairs serving second and third terms (80.5%).

The discussion in this section focused on the challenges experienced by chair BC public college chairs and the relationship between the challenges of the chair role and the six types of role conflict described in organizational role theory by Kahn et al (1964). The following section focuses on the successes experienced by chairs, as revealed in participants’ responses to two survey questions related to job satisfaction.

5.2. Chair Successes

In addition to being asked to identify the challenging aspects of the chair role, participants were asked to rank chair activities according to their level of satisfaction and to report their level of enjoyment at being at work. Despite the challenges experienced by chairs, the vast majority of chairs reported that they experience high levels of satisfaction performing chair activities and that they enjoy being at work most days or every day.

5.2.1. Satisfying Aspects of the Chair Role

Survey participants were asked to rank a list of activities chairs typically perform according to the level of satisfaction experienced with each activity. In Figure 27, the participants’ responses are presented in order beginning with the activity ranked as satisfying or very satisfying by the largest number of respondents, and ending with the activity ranked satisfying or very satisfying by the smallest number of respondents. All 125 participants rated the activities and the top-rated chair activity, rated as satisfying or very satisfying by the vast majority of respondents (93.5%) was student engagement. The next four activities closely rated as satisfying or very satisfying by the majority of participants were: gaining new work experiences (87.2%); building new work relationships (85.5%); departmental planning and strategizing (84.7%); and faculty engagement (83.9%). The two activities ranked satisfying or very satisfying by the smallest proportions of respondents were: implementing college policies and plans (33.9%), and financial compensation (26.6%).
In addition to asking chairs to rate chair activities according to their level of satisfaction experienced with each activity, participants were asked if they enjoyed being at work. Their responses are presented in the next section.

### 5.2.2. Chairs Enjoy Being at Work

Another survey question related to job satisfaction asked participants if they *enjoy being at work every day, most days, half the time, seldom, or never*. The vast majority of the 122 respondents, 90.2 percent, reported they *enjoy being at work most days or every day*. No respondents selected the “never” response option, and only three respondents reported they seldom enjoyed being at work. Figure 28 presents the percentage of chairs respondents who reported they *enjoy being at work most days* or
every day according to chairs’ field of study, gender, age, size of department and chair work experience.

Figure 28 Chairs Enjoy Being at Work Every Day or Most Days $n = 122$

Chairs’ reported enjoyment at being at work every day or most days is relatively consistent across chair gender, age, and chair work experience. Within the department size category, a smaller proportion of medium size department chairs (81.6%) than average (90.2%) reported they enjoy being at work every day or most days. Within the
fields of study category, a smaller than average (90.2%) proportion of chairs reporting they enjoy being at work every day or most days are from College Access (73.0%), Trades (81.9%) and Human Services (83.3%). Three participants did not select one of the options, and two offered explanations.

My position as chair is 50% so I also teach 50% and that is very hard as they are both really full-time jobs. So this year I decided to work 50% and am just doing chair duties. I have been really enjoying my job. (Participant 97)

I teach and coordinate; I love all the teaching and half of the coordination. (Participant 130)

As well as asking participants about the challenges and successes of the chair role, the survey also asked participants for suggestions and advice as to how to improve the chair position. The chairs’ advice and suggestions are presented in section 5.4. In the next section, section 5.3, participants’ responses to seven selected questions previously reviewed are linked and compared in an attempt to determine if the responses to the seven questions are logically consistent with each other and with reasonable expectations. Also linked and compared are participants’ responses to the range of response options in five of the seven questions to determine if relationships exist among variables that impact the chair role and the people who perform the chair role. Examples of such variables are number of classes taught, number of hours worked, amount of stipend, and chairs’ level of stress and level of enjoyment.

5.3. Chair Responses Linked and Compared

How do participants’ responses to one survey question compare to their responses to other survey questions? Does the linking and comparing of responses provide further insight into the chair role and the people who perform the role of chair? What, if any, relationships exist among variables that effect the chair role? For example, are variables such as the number of classes taught and the number of hours worked directly related, inversely related, or have no discernable relationship? Is chairs’ level of enjoyment being at work related to their level of stress? Is there a relationship between chairs’ amount of stipend compensation and chairs’ teaching release compensation?
In an attempt to determine if patterned relationships exist among variables that influence the chair role, the responses to seven survey questions were linked and compared. The variables identified in the seven survey questions included: the amount of yearly stipend received by chairs, the number of classes taught by chairs per year, the number of weekly hours worked by chairs, chairs’ intent to pursue administrative positions, the offering of bachelor degrees, chairs experience with above-normal stress, and chairs’ level of enjoyment at being at work.

Table 19 and Table 20 display chair participants’ responses to the seven selected survey questions. Table 19 links participants’ responses to each of the seven questions to their responses to the other six questions. Table 20 is a recap of participants’ responses to each of the same seven questions categorized according to chairs’ field of study, gender, age, department size and chair work experience. In both Table 19 and Table 20, the responses are displayed in the following order: the proportion of chairs that reported receiving a stipend, that reported being granted 100% teaching release, that reported their intent to pursue administrative positions, that reported being chairs of departments offering bachelor degrees, that reported experiencing above-normal stress, that reported working overtime each week, and that reported enjoying being at work every day or most days.

Tables 21, 22, 23, and 24 link and display the respondents’ selections of the full range of response choices to five of the seven questions, specifically number of hours worked, number of classes taught, dollar amount of stipends received, level of stress, and level of enjoyment being at work.

**Linking Responses to Seven Survey Questions**

Table 19 links and compares participants’ responses to each of the seven questions to their responses to the other six questions. For example, 93 of 125 participants (74.4%) reported receiving a stipend. Twenty-one point five (21.5%) of those 93 respondents compared to the overall average of 17.6 percent, reported being granted 100% teaching release. Fourteen percent (14.0%) of the 93 stipend-receiving respondents compared to the overall average of 11.7 percent, reported their intent was to pursue an administrative career. Fourteen point nine percent (14.9%) of the 93 stipend-receiving respondents compared to the overall average of 15.2%, reported being
chairs of departments offering bachelor degrees. Forty-three percent (43.0%) of the 93 stipend-receiving respondents compared to the overall average of 45.6 percent, reported experiencing above-normal (A.N.) stress. Seventy-three-point-one percent (73.1%) of the 93 stipend-receiving respondents compared to the overall average of 76.9 percent, reported working in excess of 40 hours per week. Eighty-eight-point-nine percent (88.9%) of 90 stipend-receiving respondents compared to the overall average of 90.2 percent, reported enjoying being at work every day or most days. And so on for each of the remaining six groups of participants who responded positively to the questions.

### Table 19  Linked Chair Responses to Seven Survey Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Receive Stipend</th>
<th>100% Release</th>
<th>Pursue Admin Positions</th>
<th>Bachelor Degree</th>
<th>A.N. Stress</th>
<th>Work Overtime</th>
<th>Enjoy Work Most/Every Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Average n Total Responses</td>
<td>74.4% 125</td>
<td>17.6% 125</td>
<td>11.7% 120</td>
<td>15.2% 125</td>
<td>45.6% 125</td>
<td>76.9% 125</td>
<td>90.2% 122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive Stipend</td>
<td>93 21.5</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive 100% Teaching Release</td>
<td>22 90.9</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursue Admin Positions</td>
<td>14 92.9</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Offers Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>19 68.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience Above-Normal Stress</td>
<td>57 70.2</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Overtime</td>
<td>93 73.1</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy being at Work Most/Every Day</td>
<td>110 75.5</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of the data provided in Table 19 are consistent with reasonable expectations and some data are contrary to reasonable expectations. For example, a reasonable expectation is that chairs who work overtime also experience above-normal stress and would therefore be less likely to enjoy being at work every day or most days. Consistent with this reasoning, the 57 chairs who reported experiencing above-normal stress also had a higher than average proportion of chairs who reported working overtime (87.7%) and the lowest proportion of chairs (78.9%) who reported enjoying being at work every day or most days. Another reasonable expectation is that chairs granted 100% teaching release would be less likely to work overtime since they are free of teaching duties and therefore less likely to experience above-normal stress and more likely to enjoy being at work. However, contrary to this reasoning, the 22 chairs with
100% release time had a high proportion of chairs working overtime (72.7%), the highest proportion of chairs who reported experiencing above-normal stress (54.5%), and a slightly lower than average proportion of chairs (86.4%) enjoying being at work every day or most days.

It is also reasonable to expect that chairs of departments offering bachelor degrees would work overtime and experience above-normal stress since four-year bachelor degree programs involve more courses, more faculty, more contacts, and more academic requirements than shorter term programs. Consistent with this reasoning is that chairs of departments offering bachelor degrees reported the highest proportion of chairs working overtime (94.7%) but inconsistent with this reasoning is that a considerably lower than average proportion of this same group of chairs (31.6%) reported experiencing above-normal stress and a high proportion (89.5%) reported enjoying being at work. Also puzzling is that the 19 chairs who reported being chairs of departments offering bachelor degrees had the lowest proportions of chairs who reported being granted a 100% teaching release (5.3%) and receiving a stipend (68.4%).

Consistent with reasonable expectations is that the 14 chairs who reported intent to pursue administration positions had the highest proportion of chairs who reported enjoying being at work (92.9%) and the lowest proportion of chairs who reported experiencing above-normal stress (21.4%).

**Recap of Responses to Seven Survey Questions**

Table 20 recaps participants’ responses to each of the same seven questions categorized according to chairs’ field of study, gender, age, department size and chair work experience previously depicted separately in Tables 15 and 16 and in Figures 16, 23, 26, 28. An illustration of interpreting the data in Table 20 follows. For example, within the Fields of Study category, 72.2 percent of Arts & Humanities chairs compared to an average of 74.4 percent reported receiving a stipend; 11.1 percent of Arts & Humanities chairs compared to an average of 17.6 percent reported being granted 100% teaching release; 5.9 percent of Arts & Humanities chairs compared to an average of 11.7 percent reported their intent to pursue administrative positions; 5.6 percent of Arts & Humanities chairs compared to an average of 15.2 percent reported being chairs of departments offering bachelor degrees; 55.5 percent of Arts & Humanities chairs compared to an
average of 45.6 percent reported experiencing above-normal stress; 55.6 percent of Arts & Humanities chairs compared to an average of 76.9 percent reported working overtime each week; 94.2 percent of Arts & Humanities chairs compared to an average of 90.2 percent reported enjoying being at work every day or most days. Table 20 shows similar comparisons of participants’ positive responses to the seven questions for each group of chairs in the five categories, fields of study, gender, age, department size, and chair experience.

Table 20  Recap of Chair Responses to Seven Survey Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Receive Stipend</th>
<th>100% Release</th>
<th>Pursue Admin</th>
<th>Bachelor Degree</th>
<th>A.N. Stress</th>
<th>Work Overtime</th>
<th>Enjoy Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Average Responses</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fields of Study</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Humanities</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Access</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Service</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>99.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Science</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technologies</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-45 Years</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>82.8%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55 Years</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 56 Years</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Size</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Certain observations based on the information provided in Table 2 are worth noting. For example, within the *Field of Study* category, the highest proportions of chairs that reported receiving a stipend are from College Access and Trades (respectively 100% and 90.9%) and the two highest proportion of chairs granted a 100% teaching release are also from College Access and Trades (respectively 31.2% and 36.4%). However, despite having the highest proportions of chairs receiving both types of compensation, College Access and Trades have the two lowest proportion of chairs that reported enjoying being at work every day or most days (respectively 73.3% and 81.9%).

Female chairs also exhibit behaviour contrary to reasonable expectations. For instance, almost equal proportions of females (90.1%) and males (90.2%) reported enjoying being at work every day or most days even though considerably smaller proportions of female chairs compared to male chairs reported receiving a stipend (females 68.9%, males 82.4%) and being granted a 100% teaching release (females 16.2%, males 19.6%). As well, considerably larger proportions of female chairs compared to male chairs reported experiencing above-normal stress (females 51.4%, males 37.2%) and reported working overtime (females 81.7%, males 70.0%).

There appears to be a pattern between size of department and proportion of chairs that reported receiving stipends, being granted 100% teaching releases, experiencing above-normal stress, and working overtime. As department size increases from small to medium to large, the proportion of chairs receiving stipends increases from 68.2% to 81.6% to 81.0% (slight decrease); the proportion of chairs with 100% teaching releases increases from 7.6% to 18.4% to 47.6%; the proportion of chairs experiencing above-normal stress increases from 39.4% to 42.1% to 71.4%; and the proportion of chairs working overtime increases from 67.7% to 84.2% to 90.5%.
Across all categories, chairs of large departments had the highest proportion of chairs granted 100% teaching release (47.6%), the highest proportion of chairs that reported experiencing above-normal stress (71.4%), the third highest proportion of chairs that reported working overtime (90.5%), and yet unexpectedly, had a very high proportion of chairs that reported enjoying being at work every day or most days (95.0%).

Linked Ranges of Responses to Five Survey Questions

The four tables in this section link and display the participants’ responses to the full range of response choices in five of the seven questions referenced previously. The five questions include number of hours worked, number of classes taught, amount of stipends received, level of stress, and level of enjoyment being at work. The responses to the questions are linked to determine if variables that impact the chair role and chair people are directly related, inversely related, or have no discernable relationship.

Table 21 links participants’ enjoyment level being at work to the number of hours worked, the number of classes taught, the amount of stipend received, and the stress level experienced. The data indicate no discernable pattern between chairs’ enjoyment being at work and the number of hours per week they work, or the number of classes they teach, or the amount of stipend they receive. However, there is a pattern between chairs’ enjoyment being at work every day or most days and chairs’ levels of stress. There appears to be a trade-off, as chairs’ level of stress increases from slight stress to normal stress to above-normal stress their enjoyment being at work declines from every day to most days. As shown in Table 21, the proportion of chairs that enjoy being at work every day declines as their level of stress increases, (66.7% of chairs with slight stress enjoy every day, 38.0% of chairs with normal stress enjoy every day, 9.1% of chairs with above-normal stress enjoy every day) suggesting an inverse relationship exists between chairs’ enjoyment being at work every day and level of stress. Correspondingly, the proportion of chairs that enjoy being at work most days increases as their level of stress increases, (33.3% of chairs with slight stress enjoy most days, 60.3% of chairs with normal stress enjoy most days, 70.9% of chairs with above-normal stress enjoy most days) suggesting a direct relationship exists between chairs’ enjoyment being at work most days and chairs’ level of stress.
### Table 21  Chairs' Work Hours, Classes, Stipends and Stress Levels Linked to Enjoyment Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Worked per Week</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Enjoy Being at Work Every Day %</th>
<th>Enjoy Being at Work Most Days %</th>
<th>Enjoy Being at Work Half the Days %</th>
<th>Seldom Enjoy Being at Work %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31-40 hours</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 hours</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60 hours</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70 hours</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (1)</strong></td>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes Taught per Year</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoy Being at Work Every Day %</td>
<td>Enjoy Being at Work Most Days %</td>
<td>Enjoy Being at Work Half the Days %</td>
<td>Seldom Enjoy Being at Work %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 (100% Release)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 class</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 classes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 classes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 classes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 8 classes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (1)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stipend Amount</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoy Being at Work Every Day %</td>
<td>Enjoy Being at Work Most Days %</td>
<td>Enjoy Being at Work Half the Days %</td>
<td>Seldom Enjoy Being at Work %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 1 000 – 3 000</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 3 001 – 5 000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 5 001 – 7 000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (1)</strong></td>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Level</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoy Being at Work Every Day %</td>
<td>Enjoy Being at Work Most Days %</td>
<td>Enjoy Being at Work Half the Days %</td>
<td>Seldom Enjoy Being at Work %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slight Stress</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal Stress</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above-Normal Stress</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (1)</strong></td>
<td>122</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) With each comparison, **Total** includes the responses to both of the questions linked together: hours worked and enjoyment level; classes taught and enjoyment level; stipend amount and enjoyment level; stress level and enjoyment level. **Total** does not include **Other** responses nor responses to only one of the two questions linked together.
Table 22 links participants’ reported stress levels to the number of hours worked, the number of classes taught, and the amount of stipend received. For example, 28 chairs reported working 31-40 hours per week and 14.3 percent of these 28 chairs reported experiencing slight stress, 64.3 percent reported experiencing normal stress and 21.4 percent reported experiencing above-normal stress. The data indicate a pattern exists between number of hours worked by chairs and chairs’ above-normal stress levels and normal stress levels. Above-normal stress increases as number of hours worked increases except for a small decrease between 51-60 hours and 61-70 hours, (21.4% of chairs working 31-40 hours experience above-normal stress, 37.8% working 41-50 hours experience above-normal stress, 66.7% working 51-60 hours experience above-normal stress, 58.3% working 61-70 hours experience above-normal stress) suggesting a direct relationship between number of hours worked and above-normal stress. Correspondingly, normal stress decreases as number of hours worked increases except between 51-60 hours and 61-70 hours, (64.3% of chairs working 31-40 hours experience normal stress, 55.6% working 41-50 hours experience normal stress, 33.3% working 51-60 hours experience normal stress, 33.3% working 61-70 hours experience normal stress) suggesting an inverse relationship between number of hours worked and normal stress.

Table 22 data indicate no discernable pattern between the amount of stipend chairs receive and chairs’ stress levels. Nor is there a discernable pattern between the number of classes chairs teach and chairs' slight or normal stress levels. However, excluding zero classes, above-normal stress increases as number of classes taught increases, (25.0% of chairs teaching 1 class experience above-normal stress, 37.5% teaching 2 classes experience above-normal stress, 42.9 teaching 3 classes experience above-normal stress, 42.9% teaching 4 classes experience above-normal stress, 50.0% teaching 5-8 classes experience above-normal stress), suggesting a direct positive relationship between number of classes taught and above-normal stress. That said, the same percentage (50%) of chairs teaching zero classes and chairs teaching 5-8 classes reported experiencing above-normal stress which suggests there are variables other than teaching associated with above-normal stress.
### Table 22  Chairs’ Work Hours, Classes, and Stipends Linked to Stress Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Worked per Week</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Slight Stress %</th>
<th>Normal Stress %</th>
<th>Above-Normal Stress %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31-40 hours</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 hours</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60 hours</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70 hours</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (1)</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes Taught per Year</th>
<th>Slight Stress %</th>
<th>Normal Stress %</th>
<th>Above-Normal Stress %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 (100% Release)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 class</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 classes</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 classes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 classes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 8 classes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (1)</td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stipend Amount</th>
<th>Slight Stress %</th>
<th>Normal Stress %</th>
<th>Above-Normal Stress %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$ 0</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 1 000 – 3 000</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 3 001 – 5 000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 5 001 – 7 000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (1)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) With each comparison, Total includes the responses to both of the questions linked together: hours worked and stress level; classes taught and stress level; stipend amount and stress level. Total does not include Other responses nor responses to only one of the two questions linked together.

Table 23 links participants’ responses to the number of classes they teach per year to the number of hours they work per week. The data indicate no discernable pattern exists between the number of classes taught and the number of hours worked. For instance, a reasonable expectation is that the number of hours chairs reported working would increase in relation to the number of classes chairs reported teaching. However, neither a direct nor an inverse relationship between the two variables is evident for any number of hours. For example, the proportions of chairs working 51-70
hours do not gradually increase or decrease with an increase in the number of classes taught. While 66.7 percent of chairs teaching 1 class reported working 51-70 hours, 38.4 percent of chairs teaching 2 classes also reported working 51-70 hours, 42.9 percent of chairs teaching 3 classes also reported working 51-70 hours, 25.0 percent of chairs teaching 4 classes also reported working 51-70 hours, and finally, 45.0 percent of chairs teaching 5-8 classes also reported working 51-70 hours. Hence, the proportions of chairs working 51-70 hours is sporadic, not linked to the number of classes taught.

Table 23   Chairs’ Work Hours Linked to Number of Classes Taught

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Worked per Week</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>31-40 Hours %</th>
<th>41-50 Hours %</th>
<th>51 – 60 Hours %</th>
<th>61 – 70 Hours %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 (100% Release)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Class</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Classes</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Classes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Classes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 8 Classes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (1)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Total includes the responses to both of the questions linked together: hours worked and classes taught. Total does not include Other responses nor responses to only one of the two questions.

Table 24 links participants’ responses to the number of classes taught per year to the amount of stipend received. The data indicate no discernable relationship exists between the number of classes taught and the amount of stipend received. For example, 10.5 percent of chairs who teach zero classes receive no ($0) stipend, 0.0 percent of chairs who teach 1 class receive no ($0) stipend, 12.5 percent of chairs who teach 2 classes receive no ($0) stipend, 0.0 percent of chairs who teach 3 classes receive no ($0) stipend, 33.3 percent of chairs who teach 4 classes receive no ($0) stipend, and 8.8 percent of chairs who teach 5-8 classes receive no ($0) stipend. There is a similar lack of pattern between number of classes and the remaining amounts ($1000-3000, $3001-5000, $5001-7000) of stipend received.
Table 24  Chairs’ Stipend Amounts Linked to Number of Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stipend Amounts Classes Taught per Year</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>$ 0  %</th>
<th>$ 1000 - 3000 %</th>
<th>$ 3001 – 5000 %</th>
<th>$ 5001 – 7 000 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 Classes (100% Release)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Class</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Classes</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Classes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Classes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 8 Classes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (1)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Total includes the responses to both of the questions linked together: stipend amounts and classes taught. Total does not include Other responses nor responses to only one of the two questions.

As well as asking chair participants about the challenges and successes of the chair role, the online survey asked chairs to suggest ways to reduce the stress related to the chair role, to suggest ways to improve the chair position, and to offer advice to their successors. The chairs’ responses to all three questions are presented in the next section.

5.4. Chairs’ Suggestions and Best Advice

Survey participants’ suggestions to reduce chair stress and to improve the chair position and their best advice to successors all take into account the situations and factors identified by participants that cause above-normal stress and that constrain chairs from performing their job better. Chairs’ suggestions to reduce chair stress and to improve the chair position are presented first, followed by a recounting of chairs’ best advice to their successors.

5.4.1. Chair Suggestions

Participants’ suggestions to improve the chair position were consistent with their suggestions to reduce excess stress, and all the suggestions were reflections of the
factors that constrain chairs from performing their job better and of the situations that cause chairs excess stress. The survey participants suggested three main ways to improve the chair position: 1) reduce chair workload by increasing clerical support, introducing a co-chair or replacement chair position and reducing teaching duties; 2) encourage chairs to work collaboratively with faculty and to openly take the position that chairs are advocates for faculty; and 3) introduce a chair mentor/buddy program.

Reduce Chair Workload

The survey question asking for suggestions to improve the chair position was answered by 103 chairs and the question asking for suggestions to reduce excess stress was answered by 84 chairs. The predominant suggestion to improve the chair position and reduce stress made by the vast majority of participants (85%) was to reduce the workload of the chair role. Suggestions to reduce the chair’s workload included reducing chair’s teaching duties, re-assigning some chair duties to other faculty, providing adequate clerical support in the form of an assistant, introducing a co-chair or replacement chair position, and increasing the number of chair positions. Some participants favored increasing the chair’s teaching release to allow more time to perform all the duties of the chair role.

Increasing the teaching section release to 4/8 would provide more time for planning, developing new curriculum, program review. Even though I love teaching, the needs of students are not always well met by an instructor who is also rushing off to a meeting before spending hours on timetabling before turning attention to grading – and responding to emails – and being available for office hours… (Participant 109)

While other participants expressed a preference for increasing the number of chair positions rather than increasing teaching release so as to “spread the load of academic leadership”.

I would rather see more coordination positions created parallel to chair roles to spread the load of academic leadership amongst peers, in contrast to giving chairs more money or course relief. (Participant 123)

Several participants expressed the need for a co-chair or replacement chair instead of or in addition to increased teaching release. They explained that a co-chair or replacement chair would prove beneficial for succession planning and would also permit chairs to
take a complete break from the chair job during their vacation and while working on professional development projects.

I am not replaced when I am on holiday or PD. This leads to carrying over holiday, not keeping up to date professionally and burn out. Our work does not disappear when we are away, but builds. Lack of replacement also communicates a low sense of value for my work. My current belief is that I need to disengage from some of the concerns/Issues that we face at this institution. A certain level of dispassion is required. Better initial training, mentoring and, above all, replacement for Chairs so that they can take their earned holiday and PD are the main suggestions for reducing stress. (Participant 113)

It would help to have adequate coverage position so that I would be able to take allotted vacation and professional development time on a yearly basis without having to work a tremendous number of overtime hours to catch up when I return from vacation, for instance. (Participant 236)

Either reduce expectation or increase resources. I am very interested in exploring a co-chair model where the responsibility is shared. We are under resourced as our department has grown exponentially in the last 7 years with no increase to the chair position. (Participant 204)

I think my chair position can be improved with additional release so that I can more effectively work on bigger picture strategies as well as the daily operational needs of the department which seem to take all of my time and more. One thing that many chairs do not get is a complete break during their vacation. It would be helpful for succession planning and for vacation coverage if other faculty were given some release (maybe even half of what the Chair usually gets) from teaching to take on the Chair role. I also think that I would have benefited from some conflict resolution when I began my position. (Participant 182)

In addition to reducing the chair’s workload, participants suggested that chairs could improve the chair position by working collaboratively with their faculty colleagues and by openly advocating for faculty. This suggestion is further discussed in the next section.

**Practice Collaborative Leadership and Advocate for Faculty**

As previously noted in the sections discussing the conflicting nature and paradoxical nature of the chair role, chair participants acknowledged that the ambiguous, paradoxical, and conflicting dual nature of the chair role are inherent to the role and thus cannot be eliminated, however they did suggest ways to deal with these intrinsic
characteristics of the chair role. Specifically, participants suggested chairs treat the chair role’s paradoxical nature as an opportunity to earn respect and informal authority by recognizing that the chair position is not for one wanting to “wield power”. Rather, the chair role is for those who understand the value of “the gathering and dissemination of pertinent, timely information” so as to create conditions for the chair and faculty to work together and make informed decisions.

My experience is that chairs can increase or decrease the paradox element in how realistically they approach and handle the job. Frustration seems to come mostly from wishing things were different rather than developing strategies to work within the institutional system one inhabits (which changes from school to school). Over whom or what would such authority exist? To what end? The collective agreement should clarify the authority structure and if there is a problem the faculty association needs to address it in bargaining with the school. My feeling (with no facts or direct experience) is that those people who find they have a lack of influence are those people who are focused on having influence and are in the wrong position. The Chair is not a job for a person wanting to wield power. It is, rather, a position for a person who understands the values of Robert’s Rules and the gathering and dissemination of pertinent, timely information. (Participant 232)

With regard to the conflicting nature of the chair role, chair participants encouraged chairs to declare publicly that they are advocates for faculty and students, which should reduce the conflict of loyalties experienced by chairs and thereby reduce the negative consequences of the chair role’s conflicting nature.

Realize that this is a ‘cross-over position’, one that will have conflicts in loyalties and focus. It will never be wholly ‘on side’ with either group and that should be accepted rather than denigrated. My solution is (as always) to focus on the student. What I do in both areas is guided by what will provide the best student experience. (Participant 74)

As long as there are unions and management, some person needs to represent the faculty needs to management for effective corporate organization. So no, I don’t really see how the role can be improved. (Participant 191)

The implication of the last comment is that though the conflicting and paradoxical aspect of the chair role cannot be improved, effective management can still be obtained if chairs consistently advocate for faculty. In summary, participants suggested that chairs themselves can improve the chair position by focusing on the main purposes of
the chair role. These purposes include serving students, advocating and representing faculty’s needs to administration, and creating a collaborative working relationship by gathering and disseminating pertinent information so that faculty and chairs are equally informed to make decisions and work together.

Participants’ third suggestion to improve the chair position was to introduce a mentor or buddy program for chairs, which is the topic of the following section.

**Introduce Chair Mentor/Buddy Program**

Can the chair position be improved through training programs and mentor/buddy programs for chairs? Survey questions asked chair participants to share their views and experience with chair training and mentor/buddy programs. The majority of 124 respondents, 70.2 percent, reported that their colleges already provide training sessions for department chairs to learn about the role of chair. The training sessions include information sessions, workshops and access to college procedures and policy manuals, chair manuals and faculty collective agreements. Most respondents, 82.5 percent, reported they participate in the training workshops and information sessions and utilize the manuals and collective agreements provided.

More than one-third of 122 respondents, 38.5 percent, reported they had a mentor or buddy while holding the position of chair. In response to whether a mentor or buddy had assisted or would assist them in their role as chair, almost all the 62 respondents, 96.7 percent, stated that having a mentor or buddy had benefited them, or would benefit them, in their work as chair.

**5.4.2. Chairs’ Best Advice to Successors**

Another of the survey questions asked chairs to offer the best advice they could leave their successors. The chair participants’ words of advice to their successors were consistent with their suggestions to reduce excess stress and to improve the chair position. One hundred and fifteen participants offered advice to help their successors be successful when they take on the chair role. Seven main themes of advice emerged from the responses. The seven themes are: listen and advocate, be informed, be balanced, be objective, be efficient, be diplomatic, be yourself and enjoy success. Each
theme is listed below followed by a sample of respondents’ quotes illustrating each theme.

Listen and Advocate

Understand from day one that you are elected by your colleagues, and that you can be unelected very quickly if you are not a skilled listener and a strong advocate. (Participant 71)

Listen very carefully to what faculty are saying. Learn to know your faculty and how to motivate them. Different approaches are needed. Do not become a dictator! You are an advocate for the students, faculty, staff and your programs. It is not your views that you represent but of the groups that you are responsible for. (Participant 91)

Listen, listen, listen … find compromises that work. (Participant 235)

Communication – face to face. Follow up on issues and be sure you have input from everyone involved. If you make a mistake own up to it and ask for input for improving. (Participant 238)

Be Informed

Read all the policies and communicate with everyone. Ask questions (even if you may be thought a fool) … you need information. (Participant 74)

Don’t be afraid to ask lots of questions. (Participant 83)

Be familiar with collective agreement, college policy and know the senior people in administration. (Participant 95)

Jump to questions, not conclusions. (Participant 123)

Be Balanced

Don’t do any work from home. Have real separation between home and work. (Participant 97)

Try to find that balance not only between work and home but also between the admin and instructional tasks. I have always found that the admin tasks tend to usurp the time I need/want to dedicate to teaching. Ensure that admin is aware of your workload and find ways to delegate some of the admin or clerical tasks. (Participant 143)

The work will never be done. Do your best every day, then leave it at work. Work-life balance is paramount. (Participant 147)
Leave the work at work. Do not open emails on the weekend or on your vacation. Do not expect to make everyone happy. Try to be fair handed in everything you do.  (Participant 148)

Find balance in your life because the chair role takes 70 to 80 percent of your time, leaving very little for your teaching responsibilities.  (Participant 145)

Put more boundaries on work role than I have done. (Participant 229)

**Be Objective**

In so far as possible, don’t take it personally. Take a stand for excellence in education, and remember that our primary purpose is to serve our communities by enabling the best possible education for our students. (Participant 172)

Perform the job without a personal agenda. All that is done should be done in the best interest of the department – not for personal reasons. (Participant 194)

Don’t take the critique that you will regularly receive throughout your term as Chair personally; don’t take your problems to bed at night or you simply won’t sleep very well; and finally, if you feel you are right, then stand by your decision(s), however disliked they may be, particularly by the Dean. (Participant 177)

Need good sense of humour and thick skin. If it doesn’t feel right, talk to another chair. Try not to make decisions too fast. Know that you will be good at some things and not so good at others. Ask the department for help. Don’t let anyone bully you. (Participant 94)

Continue consensus building, be as transparent and objective as possible, and try to consult as much as possible in an equitable way. (Participant 203)

Never be a “yes man” (or woman) and fight for what you believe in. Never compromise on your principles or values. Lead with compassion and strength. (Participant 231)

**Be Efficient**

Organizational and multi-task skills are key. Also knowing who to go to for various questions. (Participant 87)

Get organized, keep on top of the work flow, pay attention to fine detail, keep meticulous records, and then step back, take the long view and breath. (Participant 109)
Have a filing system and stay organized. Learn your program area and master the numbers. Create allies in all service areas. Remember to listen. (Participant 205)

Handle quick response email immediately. Designate an hour a day for email & communication – stick to it. (Participant 232)

**Be Diplomatic**

Cultivate a good relationship with the Dean, the Dean’s assistant and your own program assistant. Don’t worry too much about the budget since you really don’t have any control over it anyway. (Participant 209)

Figure out who you can trust and rely on. Be wary of those you can’t trust. Accept that your relationship with people will change. Prepare to be in conflict. Accept some people will never change. (Participant 207)

Maintain a good relationship with the administration, be an ambassador for your program, get involved in the college outside of your department. (Participant 73)

Your success as chair depends a great deal on your people or negotiation skills. To run the department you need to cultivate good relations with faculty and administration. (Participant 93)

Start your PD early by participating on as many college committees as you can handle as well as any HR workshops offered. Start developing really positive relationships with your fellow faculty. Be what you want others in your School to be on every level. (Participant 77)

Build good relationships with other departments within the College. (Participant 200)

**Be Yourself and Enjoy Success**

Enjoy the small successes told by staff and students. (Participant 88)

Make the position yours, go with your strengths. (Participant 211)

Relax and rely on your best judgment. (Participant 191)

Have fun. (Participant 199, 218)

**5.5. Researcher’s Lived Experiences**

As noted in Chapter 1, this researcher served as an academic department chair in a BC public college for 10 years. While serving I experienced many of the same
challenges and successes experienced and reported by the chairs participating in the survey and those experiences are the subject of the following discussion.

**Chair Roles and Responsibilities**

For the most part, my experiences with chair tasks and roles were consistent with the survey participants’ rankings of chair tasks and roles. In particular, my experiences coincided with the participants’ high ratings of leader and manager roles and almost equal high ratings of the corresponding leader and manager tasks, indicating that leader and manager roles and tasks are very important and are also closely linked. An example of the link between manager and leader tasks is the management task of *scheduling courses and instructor timetables* and the leadership tasks of *mentoring, building faculty morale* and *teambuilding*. Engaging with faculty on an individual basis in the scheduling process provided the opportunity to discuss the faculty member’s teaching and scheduling preferences and challenges, professional development interests, best teaching practices, choice of faculty to team up with to work on academic projects and/or to teach specialty areas. The practice of consulting with faculty regarding scheduling helped build morale and team spirit by making me aware of their needs and preferences and making them aware of the big picture, the scheduling limitations and inflexibilities, the need to compromise, and it also demonstrated the effort made to treat faculty equally and to be inclusive.

As noted, my experiences corresponded with the majority of participants’ rankings of chair roles and tasks, however there were two exceptions: the importance of *providing references for students* and the importance of *monitoring/administrating student awards*. I think these tasks were more important to me as chair than to the majority of survey participants because our department’s academic programs lead directly to related employment for students and because employers of our students contribute awards and scholarships to the students. The survey participants’ low ratings of these tasks are consistent with my observations of other chairs’ reaction to students’ perceptions of their courses. I observed that chairs of departments not offering academic diploma or degree programs leading directly to student employment were more concerned and discouraged about students’ mistaken perceptions of their courses than were chairs of programs leading directly to employment for students. For example,
students in a marketing degree program may mistakenly perceive the mandatory accounting and humanities courses in their program as irrelevant and similarly students in an accounting degree program may mistakenly perceive the mandatory marketing and humanities courses as irrelevant. However, chairs of marketing and accounting departments seemed not as concerned and discouraged by the students’ mistaken perceptions as did chairs of humanities departments because marketing and accounting chairs know, based on their industry work experience and on feedback from their graduates, that students eventually experience the relevance of all the courses once they are employed in their fields. Whereas chairs of humanities departments typically do not offer programs that directly lead to related jobs for students and thus do not have the same connection as accounting and marketing chairs have to industry or to graduates’ positive feedback. Lack of positive feedback could lead to job dissatisfaction and stress which may explain some of the above-normal stress experienced by chairs of departments that deliver courses leading to or required by other programs but do not deliver programs leading directly to related employment for students.

**Number and Variety of Role Members and Number of Role Sets**

While serving as chair I experienced a change in workload, in stress level, and in the decision-making process, as the number and variety of role members in my chair role-set increased or decreased and as the number of my role-sets increased or decreased. For example, similar to survey participants’ experiences, my workload increased as a result of our department offering a bachelor degree program because it increased the number and variety of members in the chair role-set which in turn increased the volume and range of expectations. The number of role-set members was increased by the increase in student demand, the subsequent increase in continuing faculty and term faculty, and the increase in employers, chairs, colleges and universities with whom the chair engages. The variety of role-set members was increased as a result of the degree being a four-year program involving first, second, third and fourth year students, part-time and full-time students, chairs from other schools, new different employers, and additional colleges and universities. The expectations directed at the chair included tasks such as developing program curriculum, standardizing course content, scheduling courses, seeking transfer credit, ensuring courses meet professional
standards, and communicating with and hosting functions for employers and professional bodies to foster employment opportunities for students.

The increase in the number of members in the chair role-set also resulted in a shift in collaborative decision-making similar to that reported by chair survey participants. As the number of continuing and term faculty increased due to the increase in student demand generated by the degree, it became increasingly difficult to find a common block of time when all faculty were available to meet and there was less time to consult individually with each faculty member on every issue. Consequently, we resorted to separate group meetings and increased email messaging.

Another illustration of how the variety of role members affects the chair’s expectations and workload is the introduction of new members such as a mentor, a program assistant, a new inexperienced term instructor, or an associate-dean, into the chair’s role-set. Adding a mentor or program assistant to the chair’s role-set decreases the chair’s workload while adding an inexperienced term instructor or associate-dean increases the chair’s workload. Although a chair’s time and attention are required to meet and discuss issues with a mentor or program leader, the net effect is a reduction in the chair’s time and workload. My mentor provided a more efficient, effective, and timely method of learning the chair job than learning it by trial and error or through training sessions; and the program assistant assisted with word processing projects, with collecting, organizing and recording data, and assisting with student events. As well, both mentor and program assistant provided friendship and moral support which improved morale and reduced stress. On the other hand, an inexperienced term instructor who is learning how to teach and how the college system works in a very limited time frame has special needs and expectations that require the chair’s time and attention. Similarly, the associate-dean position, intended to reduce the dean’s workload, has the opposite effect on chairs’ workload. Instead of one boss, chairs have two bosses, the dean and associate-dean, resulting in two sets of expectations and increased workload for chairs, and also often causing confusion among faculty regarding the chain of command. An alternative way to reduce the dean’s workload without increasing the chairs’ workload is to provide the dean with a professional assistant. The position should be a staff, not a line position, so as not to confuse the direct chain of command from dean to faculty. The purpose of the professional assistant would be to
assist, counsel, advise the dean; and the successful candidate for the position should have professional academic qualifications equivalent at minimum to the qualifications of faculty members.

As indicated, in my experience the number of role-sets a chair belongs to also affects the chair’s workload and stress level. For instance, while serving as chair I usually taught during two of the three academic terms in a 12-month year. The term in which I did not teach included professional development responsibilities but since I had no teacher role-set, only the chair role-set, my workload and overtime hours were reduced and much more reasonable. A chair’s workload and work stress level could also be affected by the chair’s non-work commitments and responsibilities. For example, one reason substantially higher proportions of female chairs compared to male chairs reported experiencing above-normal stress, continuous above-normal stress and higher overtime hours may be because females traditionally take on more household and child care responsibilities than males. If female chairs are overloaded with the cumulative responsibilities of their personal and work lives, that overload could negatively affect their productivity in their work role-sets resulting in more overtime hours and increased stress. The same reasoning may explain why almost three-quarters of BC college chairs aged 46-55 years reported experiencing continuous above-normal stress. The 46-55 age group of people typically still have dependent children and may also have aging parents needing care, and are still young enough to have career ambitions so are pushing themselves professionally. As with female chairs, the cumulative responsibilities of personal and work lives could result in an overload of commitments and continuous above-normal stress.

**Chair Work Experience**

My experience is also consistent with the experiences of 2nd or 3rd term chair participants who reported a higher incidence of overall above-normal stress, of continuous above-normal stress, and of overtime hours than experienced by 1st term chairs. During my first months as chair I assumed that once I had learned the job and become more experienced I would become more efficient and my number of overtime work hours would be reduced. In fact, the opposite occurred. As I learned the job better, my expectations of my own performance increased and I also became
increasingly aware of additional expectations from other members in the chair role-set which led to an increase rather than a decrease in workhours.

**Chair Teaching Release Compensation**

As true for 82.4% of survey participants, I did not have 100% release from teaching. Chairs in my school each had a 50% release from teaching to allow time to perform chair duties. Also in keeping with the majority of chair participants, I found value and enjoyment in teaching. Actively participating in teaching kept me in touch with faculty’s current teaching issues and students’ current learning issues; helped me maintain credibility with faculty, and helped me stay current in my academic discipline and in the practice of teaching.

**5.6. Summary**

The challenges experienced by BC public college chairs, as reported by survey participants, parallel the six types of role conflict described in organizational role theory. The chair role’s dual nature results in inter-sender conflict, whereby faculty and administration sent contradictory messages to the chair, for more than two-thirds of chairs. The paradoxical nature of the chair role results in intra-sender role conflict, whereby the chair is assigned responsibility with no matching authority, for 84 percent of chairs. BC public college chairs also experience role-overload conflict, which results when the chair is assigned too many legitimate tasks to perform within given time limits. More than half the chairs (56.8%) reported having too heavy a workload and 76.9 percent of chairs reported they work in excess of the contractual 40 hours per week, up to 70 hours per week, in order to complete their tasks. Inter-role conflict, such as balancing chair work, teaching and home life, is experienced by more than a third (38.7%) of chairs. Role-ambiguity conflict, resulting from chairs having inadequate direction, information and training, is experienced by more than a third (35.8%) of chairs. Person-role conflict, having excessively high self-expectations, is experienced by almost a third (32.3%) of chairs.
The introduction of BC colleges’ four-year bachelor degree programs, though enthusiastically supported by the majority of chairs (82.1%), increased chair responsibilities and thereby added to chairs’ role-overload conflict.

Though many chairs reported experiencing frustration and stress as a result of the dual nature and paradoxical aspect of the chair role, many also reported experiencing benefits as a result of these inter-sender and intra-sender role-conflicts. For example, as reported by participants, a chair being both administrator and faculty member often results in conflicting loyalties. However, being privy to both faculty’s and administration’s opposing perspectives provides the chair a deeper understanding of the issue than either faculty or administrators possess which is a benefit in that understanding both sides of an issue contributes to reconciling the perspectives and solving the issue. Similarly, participants reported the benefit of the chair’s paradoxical situation, that of having little or no official authority to perform assigned responsibilities, forces the chair to apply inclusive, collaborative management techniques to earn the support and respect of faculty which turns into a form of informal authority.

Almost one-half of the respondents (45.6%) rated their overall stress level as above-normal, described as stress that may adversely affect an individual’s physical health, or mental health, or personal life. The categories of chairs experiencing higher than average levels of above-normal stress are Arts & Humanities chairs (55.5%), Business chairs (54.5%), female chairs (51.4%), chairs aged 56 or older (50.0%), chairs of large departments (76.4%), and 2nd or 3rd term chairs (48.7%). More than one-half of the participants (57.9%) reported they experience above-normal stress on a continuous basis. The categories of chairs experiencing higher than average levels of continuous above-normal stress are chairs from College Access (100.0%), Human Services (83.3%), Health (80.0%), female chairs (66.7%), chairs aged 46-55 years (73.1%), chairs of large departments (68.8%) and small departments (65.4%), and 1st term chairs (65.0%).

Chairs from College Access and Trades reported the highest proportion of chairs receiving stipends and granted 100% teaching and the lowest proportion of chairs enjoying being at work every day or most days. The vast majority of female and male chairs reported enjoying being at work every day or most days. However, compared to
male chairs considerably smaller proportions of female chairs reported receiving stipends and being granted 100% teaching releases and considerably larger proportions of female chairs reporting working overtime and experiencing above-normal stress.

Across all categories, chairs of large departments had the highest proportion of chairs granted 100% teaching release (47.6%), the highest proportion of chairs that reported experiencing above-normal stress (71.4%), the third highest proportion of chairs that reported working overtime (90.5%), and yet surprisingly, had a very high proportion of chairs that reported enjoying being at work every day or most days (95.0%).

The chair role situations that cause above-normal stress to the highest proportion of respondents are: dealing with unprofessional faculty conduct issues (60.2%); having too heavy a workload (56.8%); and dealing with conflicting concerns and demands from faculty and administration (48.4%). More than half of the respondents (53.2%) who experience above-normal stress explained they continue in their chair job, despite experiencing above-normal stress, out of a sense of duty and responsibility which is consistent with their primary motives for taking the chair job, to improve the department, personal development and a sense of duty.

Despite the challenges, all participants reported they experience satisfying aspects of the chair position and the vast majority of respondents (90.2%) reported they enjoy being at work every day or most days. The chair activities ranked as very satisfying or satisfying by a large majority of respondents are: student engagement, gaining new work experiences, building new work relationships, departmental planning and strategizing, and faculty engagement.

Linking the responses to selected survey questions resulted in several findings regarding the relationship among variables that effect the chair role and the people performing the chair role. Chairs who reported experiencing above-normal stress had a high proportion of chairs (87.7%) that reported working overtime, a lower than average proportion (78.9%) that reported enjoying being at work, and the lowest proportion (5.3%) that reported intent to pursue administrative positions.
Chairs who reported their intent to pursue administrative positions had the highest proportion (92.9%) that reported enjoying being at work, the lowest proportion (21.4%) that experienced above-normal stress, and the highest proportion (35.7%) of chairs of departments offering bachelor degrees.

Chairs of departments offering bachelor degrees reported the highest proportion of chairs that work overtime (94.7%), the lowest proportion granted 100% teaching release (5.3%), the second lowest proportion experiencing above-normal stress (31.6%), and the second-highest proportion enjoying being at work every day or most days (89.5%). A considerable proportion of chairs with 100% release time reported working overtime (72.7%) and this same group of chairs also included the highest proportion of chairs experiencing above-normal stress (54.5%) despite having no teaching duties.

There appears to be a direct relationship between stress and number of hours worked. As the number of hours worked increases, chairs’ above-normal stress increases and normal stress decreases. There also appears to be a direct relationship between the number of classes chairs teach and above-normal stress. As the number of classes increases, above-normal stress increases. Another direct relationship appears between the size of departments and stipends, 100% teaching releases, overtime work and above-normal stress. The proportions of chairs receiving stipends, receiving 100% teaching releases, working overtime, and experiencing above-normal stress are lowest in small departments, higher in medium departments, and highest in large departments.

No discernable pattern was evident between the number of classes taught and the number of hours worked by chairs. Nor was a discernable pattern evident between chairs’ teaching release compensation, representing the number of classes not taught, and chairs’ stipend amount compensation.

Chairs’ level of stress appears to effect chairs’ level of enjoyment being at work. As stress increases chairs’ enjoyment being at work changes from enjoying every day to enjoying most days. As stress increases from slight to normal to above-normal stress, enjoyment being at work every day declines from 66.7 percent to 38.0 percent to 9.1 percent while enjoyment being at work most days increases from 33.3 percent to 60.3 percent to 70.9 percent.
Chair participants’ responses to questions in the online survey confirm that the chair position does need improving. Chairs’ reported above-normal stress levels, the number of overtime hours they work, and the factors constraining them from performing the chair job better, specifically heavy workloads and insufficient clerical support, are all indications that the chair position needs improving.

The majority of respondents (84.4%) indicated that the chair position can be improved. The chairs’ primary suggestion to both improve the chair position and to reduce above-normal stress is to reduce the individual chair’s workload by providing clerical assistance, by creating a co-chair or replacement chair management model, and by reducing each chair’s teaching duties to 50.0 percent of a full-time teaching assignment. Participants also suggested that chairs be encouraged to work collaboratively with faculty and to take the position that chairs are advocates for faculty. A third suggestion was that a mentor/buddy program for chairs be introduced. The chairs’ best advice to their successors is to be a good listener, be balanced, strong, efficient, diplomatic, to be one’s self, and to enjoy successes.

In Chapter 6, conclusions based on the survey research findings regarding the chair position, the people performing the role of chair in BC public colleges, and their challenges and successes are presented and discussed. As well, the fourth main purpose of this study, to explore participants’ strategies to improve the chair position, is further explored and recommendations are presented.
6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research had four main purposes: 1) to gain an understanding of the position of academic department chair within BC public colleges; 2) to gain an understanding of the people performing the chair role in BC public colleges; 3) to identify the challenges and successes experienced by BC public college chairs; and 4) to explore strategies to improve the chair position in BC public colleges.

The overriding goal of this dissertation was to contribute to the relatively small documented body of literature on BC public colleges by providing a comparative description of BC public college chairs and the chair position from the perspective of the people performing the chair role. The description is comparative in that the survey participants’ experiences with the chair position’s features and function were compared to the features and function of the chair position as documented in colleges’ faculty collective agreements and job descriptions. In addition, participants’ responses were categorized according to the chairs’ fields of study, gender, age, department size, and chair work experience, which allowed further comparisons among those selected variables. Also, the responses to several survey questions were linked and compared to determine if patterned relationships exist among other variables influencing the chair role and chairs’ experiences.

As reported in the literature review, organizational role theory, the study of human behaviour in organizations (Kahn et al, 1964) had been purposely selected by some researchers, specifically Carrol and Gmelch (1992, 1994), Ferst (2002) and Young (2007), to inform their research on academic department chair roles. Although this dissertation began with no theory, no hypothesis to test, it turned out that organizational role theory provided a fitting theoretical framework in which to describe and analyze the role of chair in BC public colleges. In particular, the six types of role conflict described by Kahn et al (1964) aptly described the challenges experienced by BC public college chairs.
This chapter draws conclusions based on the major findings of the data collected, relates the conclusions to the four main purposes of the study, and makes recommendations regarding the chair position in BC public colleges.

6.1. Conclusions

Four main conclusions, each one corresponding to each of the four main purposes, emerged from this study. The conclusions are stated briefly below and then each conclusion is discussed in relation to the study’s research purposes.

1. The academic department chair position in BC public colleges is a faculty appointment with a defined term, assigned with multiple administrative and teaching tasks and roles that guide the chair person in performing the position’s main function, that of serving students and faculty.

2. BC public college chair people are leaders with no official authority who are guided more by altruistic motives than by self-serving financial motives and/or career ambitions in accepting and performing the role of academic department chair.

3. Though it is possible to reduce the challenges related to four types of role conflict experienced by BC public college chairs, the inherent nature of the chair’s dual role and the professional bureaucratic nature of post-secondary educational institutions make the elimination of the remaining two types of role conflict highly improbable. Further, the data revealed that some types of role conflict are constructive and lead to chair successes.

4. To be effective, strategies to improve BC public colleges’ chair position will include a reduction in chairs’ work load; a plan to educate members in the chair’s role-set about both the dual, paradoxical nature of the chair role and the professional bureaucratic nature of public colleges; and a plan to improve communication among the members in the chair role set.

In the next sections, each of the four conclusions is discussed in relation to the study’s four research purposes and the data supporting the conclusions.

6.1.1. Conclusion One: Chair Position

One of the purposes of this research was to gain an understanding of the academic department chair position in BC public colleges. The conclusion arising from the data collected is that the chair position is a joint faculty and administration...
appointment with a defined term assigned with multiple tasks and roles that guide the
chair person in performing the main function of the position which is to serve students
and faculty. An understanding of the chair position includes a description of the
position’s features and an analysis of the ten roles and tasks rated as most important by
such an overwhelmingly majority of BC public college chairs independent of chairs’ field
of study, gender, age, size of department and chair experience, so as to render the top
ten roles and tasks an accurate, realistic description of the function of the chair position.

The features of the chair position include the position status and title, the
selection process, the reporting relations, the term length, additional compensation, and
the performance evaluation process of the chair position.

In BC public colleges, the academic department chair position is a temporary
faculty appointment with both teaching and administrative responsibilities, no official
authority, and a prevalent term length of three years. The position title is predominately
chair. The selection of chairs is typically a collegial process, involving the selection or
election of the chair by the chair’s faculty colleagues and dean. The vast majority of
chairs report directly to their dean. All BC public colleges report documented additional
compensation for the job of chair, typically in the form of stipends and teaching releases,
though in reality, 25.6 percent of BC public college chairs reported not receiving a
stipend. More than half the colleges also report documented performance evaluation
processes for chairs, however in reality, only 35 percent of BC public college chairs
reported being evaluated for their work as chair.

As indicated previously, the top ten ranked roles and tasks presented in Figure 6
and Figure 13 in Chapter 4, can be taken as an accurate, realistic description of the
function of the chair role since they were ranked as such by the vast majority of people
performing those roles and tasks, regardless of their field of study, gender, age, size of
department and chair experience. Based on these top ten chair roles and tasks selected
by chairs, it is evident that BC public college chairs’ understanding of the chair positon’s
function is primarily to serve students and faculty. The time and energy chairs spent on
the first three tasks, resolve student issues, inform and advise students, and keep
current in academic discipline, are focused on benefiting students and align with the
roles: problem solver, listener, and advisor/counselor. The remaining tasks involve
faculty primarily and demonstrate how chairs fulfill their multiple roles. For example, the tasks, champion department within college, maintain and build faculty morale, and mentor faculty, are focused on serving faculty and relate to the roles of spokesperson, advocator, diplomat, leader, team captain, and mentor. The tasks initiate and participate in department faculty meetings, coordinate review of existing courses and programs, recruit faculty, and schedule courses and assign timetables directly benefit both faculty and students and demonstrates the chair's manager/administrator role. Though some roles and tasks fit together and complement each other, many of the roles, for example problem solver, listener, leader, are manifested in all the tasks.

### 6.1.2. Conclusion Two: Chair People

Another purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the people who perform the role of academic department chair in BC public colleges. The conclusion drawn from the data collected is that BC public college chair people are leaders with no official authority who are guided more by altruistic motives than by self-serving financial motives and/or career ambitions in accepting and performing the role of academic department chair.

Examples of chairs' altruistic nature are many, beginning with 79.2 percent of chairs' primary reason for taking the chair job, to make a difference and improve the department, while the motive, for financial gain, was cited as a motive by only six percent of chairs. Consistent with chairs' altruistic motives for accepting the chair job are their short-term aspirations, which are to build a strong faculty team, to improve and develop relevant curriculum, and to improve student access to educational programs. Also consistent with chairs' motives and short-term aspirations are their long-term aspirations which are to return to teaching and research rather than to advance their administrative careers. As well, the activities chairs find most satisfying, such as mentoring and engaging with students and faculty, gaining new work experiences and relationships, and departmental planning and strategizing, are focused on helping others rather than advancing their own financial and career ambitions. Further examples of chairs' altruistic nature are their willingness to work overtime with no financial gain; their willingness to continue in a stressful job not for financial gain, but rather out of a sense of duty, responsibility and obligation to their faculty colleagues and students; and their
enjoyment being at work every day or most days despite the overtime hours and other challenges they face.

The linking of participants’ responses to several survey questions also provided evidence of chairs’ altruistic nature in revealing that the amount of stipend received and numbers of classes taught, which is a reflection of teaching release compensation, have no discernable impact on chairs’ enjoyment being at work. The overwhelming majority of chairs continue in stressful jobs and enjoy being at work most days or every day regardless of the compensations received, demonstrating that chairs are not motivated by financial stipends compensation or teaching release compensation.

Despite having no official authority BC public college chairs regard themselves as leaders. Their perception of themselves as leaders is reflected in their high ranking of the chair position’s leadership role (91.9%) and in their responses to the open-ended survey questions related to leadership and the chair role. Chairs reported they perceive themselves as leaders because of their leadership role in designing and developing curriculum, in upholding academic standards, in providing advice, direction and feedback to faculty and administration, in participating in leadership training sessions, in being the public face of their departments, in being the spokesperson of faculty, and in being the link between administration and faculty.

BC college chairs’ lack of official authority is a symptom of the professional bureaucratic nature of post-secondary educational institutions and is reinforced with the inclusion of BC public college chairs in unionized faculty associations. Since all members in a professional union are considered equal and since faculty require professional autonomy in their teaching and research activities, it follows that chairs should/would have no official authority to discipline and direct faculty colleagues. However, despite having no official authority chairs reported they still regard themselves as influential leaders for reasons cited in the previous paragraph, and further, chairs espoused the notion that their lack of official authority actually produces more positive results than negative results. The positive results include chairs’ use of persuasion, negotiation and a collaborative approach to decision-making, all of which ultimately lead to a broader acceptance and support of decisions by both faculty and administration. The nature of professional bureaucracies and the benefits of a collaborative
management style are further developed in the discussion of chairs’ challenges and successes presented in the next section.

6.1.3. Conclusion Three: Chairs’ Challenges and Successes

The third purpose of this research was to identify the challenges and successes of BC public college chairs. The data collected from the online survey revealed that BC public college chairs’ challenges are comparable to the six types of role conflict identified in organizational role theory, and the data also revealed that not all the role conflict experienced by chairs is destructive; some types of role conflict are constructive and lead to chair successes. The findings support the conclusion that though it is possible to reduce the challenges related to four types of role conflict experienced by BC public college chairs, the inherent nature of the chair’s dual role and the professional bureaucratic nature of post-secondary educational institutions make the elimination of the remaining two types of role conflict highly improbable.

The two types of role conflict experienced by BC public college chairs that are unlikely to be eliminated due to the intrinsic nature of the chair role and colleges’ professional bureaucratic structures are intra-sender role conflict and inter-sender role conflict. According to role theory, the focal person’s (i.e. the chair’s) feeling of responsibility is based on communicated expectations from role-senders (dean, faculty, support staff, students, chair) within the focal person’s role set. Recall that intra-sender conflict is when one or more role-senders send incompatible messages to the focal person such as assigning responsibility to perform tasks for which the focal person has no matching authority. For example, the situation causing above-normal stress or intra-sender conflict for 60.2 percent of chairs is dealing with their faculty colleagues’ unprofessional conduct. The communicated expectation resulting in the chair’s feeling of responsibility in dealing with this issue may come from the dean, or a faculty member, or a student, or support staff, or from the chair himself. However, since chairs do not have official formal authority to direct and/or to discipline faculty the role-senders’ expectation for the chair to address the situation and the chair’s authority to address the situation are incompatible, leading to intra-sender role conflict.
Chairs do not have official formal authority to direct and/or to discipline faculty because they belong to the same professional union in which all members are considered equal and because of faculty's need for academic professional independence/autonomy. Both these reasons are due to the professional bureaucratic nature of post-secondary educational institutions. Recall that Mintzberg (1995) categorized colleges and universities as professional bureaucracies and explained that the defining characteristic shared by professional bureaucracies is being populated with formally trained specialists/professionals who perform the primary purposes of their organizations. Consequently, professional bureaucracies have highly decentralized structures in which the decision-making operational authority resides with the professional workers, such as faculty at a college, and is derived from their specialized knowledge and formal training, referred to as the power of expertise (p. 283). The tasks faculty perform such as preparing lectures, assignments and tests require extensive knowledge, training and the freedom to work directly with students, separately and independently of their dean, their chair, and other faculty. Because there is little or no direct supervision of faculty as they perform their teaching duties and because as professionals, faculty are deemed equal, it is reasonable and consistent with the nature of professional bureaucracies that chairs do not have official authority over faculty.

The beneficial aspect of the professional bureaucratic nature of post-secondary educational institutions is the collaborative approach a large majority of BC college chairs (78.1%) reported they used in managing their departments. Chairs preside by consensus. Their selection of the collaborative managing style is a reflection of chairs’ lack of official authority which, in turn, is a reflection of the professional bureaucratic nature of BC public colleges. Thus, the chairs’ selection of the collaborative style of decision-making and managing their departments is understandable, pragmatic and also beneficial in that involving all faculty in making decisions improves the odds of faculty accepting those decisions and actively supporting the implementation of the decisions.

In addition to intra-sender role conflict, it is also highly unlikely that inter-sender role conflict can be eliminated. The reason chairs’ inter-sender role conflict is unlikely to be eliminated is because of the inherent dual nature of the chair role, meaning the chair role includes both a faculty and an administrative role. Recall that inter-sender role conflict occurs when two or more role-senders in a role set send contradictory messages
to the focal person. For example, assume the dean sends the chair a message to increase class size while faculty sends the chair a message not to increase class size. Both dean and faculty may have equally legitimate reasons for their perspective messages. The dean’s reasons may include increasing access to education by accommodating more students, improving budget requests, and increasing tuition fee revenue. While faculty’s reasons may include decreasing the quality of education and increasing faculty workload beyond contractual agreement. The contradictory messages provide two legitimate points of view which causes the chair to experience inter-sender role conflict since chairs perform both faculty and administrative roles and therefore understand each opposing message from a practical perspective since they will personally experience the execution and the consequences of whichever decision is made.

The constructive aspect of inter-sender role conflict is that the chair’s practical experience with both sides of the issue gives chairs the insight and the credibility with both faculty and administration to help both parties understand each other’s position and by so doing improve the possibility of compromise, of arriving at a decision acceptable to both parties. In that sense, inter-sender role conflict leads to constructive results and is therefore best not eliminated. As articulated by Participant 205: “This conflict is its strength. The role blurs the lines between faculty and administration and enables problem-solving.”

The types of role conflict that are possible to reduce and perhaps even eliminate are role-overload conflict, inter-role conflict, role-ambiguity conflict, and person-role conflict. BC public college chairs’ role-overload conflict, evidenced by the 76.9 percent of chairs who reported working overtime, can be reduced by reducing chairs’ administrative and/or faculty teaching workloads, the same suggestion made to reduce stress by 85 percent of survey participants. The ripple effect of reducing chairs’ workloads will be to provide more time for chairs to complete chair duties within contractual time guidelines and to deal with demands from role-senders in chairs’ other role-sets such as professional association and family role-sets. Satisfying all role-set demands will reduce the chair’s inter-role conflict, which occurs when demands from role-senders in the focal person’s multiple role-sets compete for the focal person’s limited time. Similarly, reducing chairs’ workload will provide chairs more time to perform
their administrative duties and teaching duties to his/her own standard of performance and self-expectations thereby reducing person-role conflict which occurs when the requirements of a role violate the focal person’s personal code of ethics, moral values or professional standards.

Chairs’ role-ambiguity conflict can be reduced by clarifying the information and providing adequate direction to the chair regarding the tasks he/she is expected to perform. This clarification and information requires regular and effective communication among members of the chair’s role-set and an understanding by all members of the chair’s role-set of the inherent faculty-administration dual nature of the chair role, the types of role-conflict experienced by chairs, and the professional bureaucratic nature of post-secondary institutions.

6.1.4. Conclusion Four: Strategies to Improve Chair Position

The fourth purpose of this research was to explore strategies to improve the chair position in BC public colleges. The data collected support the conclusion that to be effective, strategies to improve the chair role in BC public colleges will include a reduction in chairs’ work load, a plan to educate members in the chairs’ role set about chairs’ dual role and about the professional bureaucratic nature of BC public colleges, and a plan to improve communication among members in the chairs’ role set.

Data supporting the conclusion that a reduction in chairs’ workload is needed include the high percentage of chairs (76.9%) who reported working overtime, the high percentage of chairs (73.9%) who reported that lack of time to complete an overloaded work schedule was the leading factor constraining them from performing the chair job better, and the 56.8 percent of chairs who reported that having too heavy a workload caused them above-normal stress. Similarly, the linking of responses revealed that as chairs’ workload increases, their above-normal stress increases. For example, the incidence of above-normal stress increases as the size of department increases and number of classes chairs teach increases.

Data supporting the conclusion that educating members and improving communication among members in the chair’s role set are needed include chairs’ ratings
of situations causing them above-normal stress, such as having inadequate information (35.8%) and having inadequate direction (27.6%). As well, one of the three suggestions made by chairs to improve the chair position was to encourage collaborative leadership which involves “the gathering and dissemination of pertinent, timely information” (Participant 232) so as to create conditions for chairs and faculty to work together and make informed decisions. Similarly, chairs' best advice to their successors included to listen, to communicate and to work at being informed.

6.2. Recommendations to Improve Chair Position

Based on the findings of this study, this researcher proposes two main recommendations to improve the chair position in BC public colleges. One recommendation is to reduce chairs' workload and the other is to educate members and improve communication among members of the chair role-set. Additional training for chairs is not recommended because this study revealed that a large majority of BC chairs already have access to training within their colleges and more importantly, that BC chairs are concerned with the volume, not the complexity of chair tasks. They requested more time, not more training, to perform the tasks.

6.2.1. Reduce Chair Workload

Work overload is the most often cited obstacle identified by BC public college chairs preventing them from doing their job better, causing them to work overtime, causing an imbalance in their work and home life, and overall causing them above-normal stress. In essence, BC public college chairs have declared that the volume of their chair tasks, though each task may be legitimate and mutually exclusive, is not possible for one person to complete within the given contractual time limits. This researcher’s recommendation to improve the chair position is to reduce chair workload in one or more of the following ways: (1) allocate some of the chair tasks to other faculty members; (2) determine the optimum academic department size and corresponding teaching release percentage and apply to all fields of study; (3) build release time into the chair position equal to faculty’s contractual professional development and vacation time.
**Allocate Some Chair Tasks to Faculty**

Allocating some chair tasks to other faculty members will reduce the chair’s workload and it will also educate and provide chair work experience to other continuing faculty members. The understanding of issues, policies, and the administrative perspective gained by faculty members performing chair tasks will serve to enhance collaborative decision-making. As Mintzberg (1995) explained, since specialists perform the primary purposes of their organizations, collaborative decision-making is essential in a professional bureaucratic organization such as a public college. Chair tasks that could be allocated to continuing faculty include advising and counselling prospective and current students, mentoring term faculty in specialized academic disciplines, and hosting information sessions. The allocation of chair tasks may require creating new faculty positions for which only continuing faculty are qualified to apply and which carry a course release compensation to provide the time needed to perform the tasks. Possible titles for these faculty positions could be Program Leader or Course Leader.

**Establish Optimum Size Departments and Equal Teaching Releases**

The size of the department is a compelling factor in chairs’ experience with above-normal stress and overtime work. Survey data confirmed that the larger the department size, the higher the incidence of above-normal stress and overtime work. Chairs of large departments (≥19 faculty) had the highest proportion of chairs experiencing above-normal stress (71.4%) and working overtime (90.5%). Chairs of medium departments (10-18 faculty) had the second highest proportion of chairs experiencing above-normal stress (42.1%) and working overtime (84.2%). Chairs of small departments (1-9 faculty) had the lowest proportion of chairs experiencing above-normal stress (39.4%) and working overtime (67.7%). As well, chairs reported that department size also influences their style of managing. Though a substantial majority of chairs (78.1%) reported using a collaborative style of managing, almost two-thirds of participants reported that the higher the number of faculty, the more logistically difficult it is to consult with each faculty member and to bring all members of a department together for discussion and collaborative decision-making.

The optimum department size is defined here as the size that allows the chair to complete both administrative and teaching duties to satisfactory standards within the
contractual hours negotiated by administration and faculty union representatives. The chair’s performance of administrative tasks at a satisfactory standard includes practising a collaborative managing style which allows time to consult with faculty members and to bring all members of a department together for discussion and collaborative decision-making. A suggested procedure to determine the optimum department size and optimum teaching release percentage includes the following steps.

(1) Identify the factors that determine the chair’s administrative workload; factors such as number of continuing faculty, number of term faculty, number of students, and number and length of programs and courses.

(2) Calculate the administrative workload in hours per week generated at different levels of the identified factors. For example, a department consisting of 10 continuing faculty members, five term faculty, four programs and 10 courses may generate an administrative workload of 20 hours per week; while a department consisting of 15 continuing faculty, no term faculty, no programs and 10 courses may generate an administrative workload of 15 hours per week.

(3) Establish guideline criteria such as ensuring that administrative workload is, for example, not more than 50% of chair tasks and that chairs’ teaching release compensation is less than 100%. This researcher agrees with chair participants that chairs should not be granted 100% release from teaching duties except for specific projects for a temporary time period. One reason it is a good idea for chairs to continue to teach while also performing administrative tasks is that actively participating in teaching provides chairs the opportunity to stay current in their academic discipline and in the practice of teaching. Another reason is that actively participating in teaching helps chairs keep in touch with current faculty teaching issues and with student learning issues. Yet another reason is that actively participating in teaching helps chairs maintain their credibility with faculty. In addition, the vast majority of chairs reported they value and enjoy teaching. Also, this study revealed that BC public college chairs with 100% teaching release still reported a high incidence of overtime work and a higher than average incidence of above-normal stress, suggesting that 100% teaching release is not a viable solution to chairs’ work overload situation.
(4) Create standardized departments with one chair per department by combining or dividing fields of study so as to equalize chairs’ workload across departments. This may mean dividing one field of study into two or more departments and creating the same number of chair positions to administer operations in the departments, while other smaller fields of study may be combined into one department with one chair position to administer operations.

(5) Determine an equivalent teaching release compensation for chairs of all departments based on the equivalent administrative workload generated by the optimum sized departments. For example, if the optimum department size generates an administrative workload of 18-20 hours per week which represents a 50% administrative workload, then the teaching release compensation would also be 50%.

(6) Review department sizes and chair administrative and teaching workloads on a regular basis. Department sizes change over time as a result of changes in demand for courses and programs and this change in department size may require a further division or combination of departments with a corresponding adjustment in number of chair positions.

**Build PD and Vacation Release Time into Chair Position**

The chair positions within BC public colleges with faculty collective agreements which include scheduled development (SD) or professional development (PD) time for faculty should recognize and allow for an equivalent SD or PD time for the chair. An acting chair should be appointed to perform administrative chair tasks while the chair is on vacation and involved in PD activities. Releasing the chair from administrative duties provides the chair a break from chair responsibilities and the opportunity to update his/her knowledge in their academic discipline and/or conduct research; and it also provides administrative chair work experience to the faculty members performing the acting chair role. The chair work experience acquired by other faculty is beneficial both for succession planning for the chair position as well as for faculty’s participation in the process of collaborative decision-making, a process that is characteristic of professional bureaucratic organizations such as colleges.
6.2.2. Educate and Improve Communication in Chair Role Set

Members in the chair’s role-set need to be educated about the dual role of chairs and the roles of faculty, administration and support staff, about the types of role conflict experienced by chairs, and about professional bureaucratic organizations. Education is needed primarily because of the need for collaborative decision-making in a professional bureaucratic organization. To make optimum decisions, the decision makers must be informed, must understand all the issues, and must also be willing and able to execute the decisions. One approach to educating faculty is to involve faculty members in operations by allocating some chair tasks to other faculty members which would provide them with practical administrative work experience. Another approach is to appoint other faculty members as acting chairs to temporarily perform chair tasks while the chairs are involved in PD activities and on vacation. Yet another way to educate members in the chair’s role-set is to offer information sessions and/or workshops for administrators, chairs, faculty and support staff to learn about roles, role conflict and professional bureaucratic organizations. These sessions could be offered as PD activities for faculty and conducted at the department level, school level, and college wide. Finally, the approach to educate chairs themselves about their role should include establishing a chair mentor/buddy program.

The process of educating college employees will also serve to improve communication among the employees. For example, faculty members performing acting-chair roles will need to communicate with people outside their usual role-set, such as other faculty, chairs, deans, support staff, in order to perform the chair tasks. As well, information sessions and workshops will bring college employees together and provide a format for employees to discuss their roles and issues and to get to know each other. Communication can also be improved by issuing regular electronic news letters and discussion papers, initiated by administration, which set out and encourage discussion about current issues and policies.
6.3. Suggestions for Further Research

The academic department chair role in BC colleges and universities is an understudied area of research. The contribution of this study is the rich data set describing the BC public college academic chair role both from college documentation and from the perspective of BC public college chairs. The data set lays the foundation for future research studies. A few suggestions for future research studies are discussed below.

6.3.1. Administrators in BC Public Colleges

Explore the administrator position and the people who perform the role of administrator in BC public colleges. Administrators in BC public colleges include deans, associate deans, vice-presidents and presidents. Vice-presidents and presidents are often referred to as senior administration or the senior executive team, while deans and associate deans are referred to as middle management. As explained in the Literature Review, it has been observed by some researchers that, unlike university administrators, college administrators usually chose administration as a career choice rather than as a temporary leave from an academic role, and thus college administrators have become a “class” separate and distinct from faculty (Dennison, 2006, p. 119). Is this observation accurate? What are BC public college administrators’ professional backgrounds? Prior to being college administrators, were they academics, business people, professional practitioners such as engineers, medical doctors, musicians, lawyers, accountants, or do they have other backgrounds?

What are the challenges and successes of each group of administrators? Do they experience role conflict? How do the challenges and successes of administrators and chairs compare? Do administrators experience role conflict similar to chairs do or are their challenges more related to job security?

Deans are responsible for operations within their schools and are also the link between the college’s senior executive team and faculty. Since faculty are often represented by their chairs, deans’ opinions of and relationship with their chairs are key to the operations of the school. What are deans’ opinions of the chair position, dean
position, vice-president position and president position? How do deans think of themselves, as faculty, as educators, as administrators, or as a combination of these roles?

6.3.2. **Support Staff in BC Public Colleges**

Explore the role of support staff in BC public colleges. This researcher's opinion of support staff, based on her experience as a faculty member but even more so as a chair, is that the role of support staff is crucial to the successful operations of departments, schools, and the college as a whole. Examples of questions that could form an inquiry of BC public colleges' support staff are as follows. What is support staff's purpose and what is their impact on college operations? Is the role and purpose of support staff to assist administration, faculty and students? Do support staff report to and take orders and direction only from administration? What is the relationship between faculty and support staff, and between chairs and support staff? How has social network and technology changed the role of support staff in their work relationship with faculty? For example, prior to faculty members being allocated personal computers, support staff performed a word processing function, such as typing faculty assignments, exams, notes, course outlines. Who performs that particular word processing function now, and what support staff tasks have replaced it? Can support staff's role be altered to better enhance operations in BC public colleges?

6.3.3. **Female Chairs in BC Public Colleges**

Further explore the roles and experiences of female chairs in BC public colleges. This study revealed that considerably larger proportions of female chairs compared to male chairs reported experiencing above-normal stress and working overtime; and that considerably smaller proportions of female chairs compared to male chairs reported receiving a stipend and being granted a 100% teaching release. What accounts for these differences? This study also revealed there more female chairs (59.2%) in BC public colleges than female chairs in Canadian public universities (34.0%) (Boyko, 2009, p. 203). Does this difference in chair gender proportions reflect an increase in female faculty hires in post-secondary education over time, or does it reflect the differences in
faculty gender ratios in colleges and universities, or a combination of these and/or other factors?

6.3.4. **Fields of Study Chairs in BC Public Colleges**

Further explore the similarities and differences in chairs’ demographics, stress levels, motivations, aspirations, successes, challenges, management styles, and compensation packages across the fields of study. For instance, this study revealed that considerably higher proportions of College Access (100.0%) and Trades Chairs (90.9%) compared to Health (59.1%) and Human Service chairs (50.0%) receive annual stipends. Similarly, higher proportions of Trades (36.4%) and College Access chairs (31.2%) compared to Natural Sciences (7.1%) and Social Sciences chairs (0.0%) are granted 100.0 percent teaching releases. Lower proportions of Technologies chairs (37.5%) compared to Arts & Humanities (55.5%) and Business chairs (54.5%) experience above-normal stress. Considerably higher proportions of Human Service chairs (99.7%) and Health chairs (95.5%) compared to Arts & Humanities chairs (55.6%) reported working overtime. What accounts for these differences, and what accounts for the similarities across the fields of study?

6.3.5. **Impact of Baccalaureate Degree on College Community**

Explore the impact the offering of four-year baccalaureate degree programs by BC public colleges, initiated in 2003, has had on the entire college community. This study revealed that a substantial majority of chairs are enthusiastically in favor of colleges offering bachelor degrees, and that the offering of a four-year bachelor degree program increased the workload of chairs of departments offering the degree program. What is the opinion of other members of the college community and what impact, if any, has the offering of bachelor degrees had on the culture and the workings of the broader college community? For example, how has bachelor degree programs impacted overall student enrolment, student sports teams, student drama clubs, student unions, students’ academic confidence in themselves, registration, advising and counselling staffs, faculty and deans of schools offering degree programs and of schools not offering degree programs?
6.3.6. **Compare Academic Department Chairs in BC Public Universities and BC Public Colleges**

Further explore the similarities and differences in the features and function of the academic department chair position, and of the chair people in BC public colleges and BC public universities. This study revealed that the features of the chair position in BC public colleges and Canadian public universities as reported by Boyko (2009) are predominately alike. In both BC public colleges and Canadian public universities, the chair position is a faculty position with both teaching and administrative responsibilities and the position title is predominately *chair*. The selection of chairs in both groups of institutions is typically a collegial process, involving the selection or election of the chair by the chair’s faculty colleagues and dean (Boyko, 2009, p. 214). The vast majority of chairs in both groups of institutions report directly to their faculty dean (Boyko, 2009, p. 214). Both BC public college and Canadian university chair positions are temporary appointments with prevalent term lengths of three or four years (Boyko, 2009, p. 215). Both groups of institutions show documented additional compensation for the job of chair, typically in the form of stipends and teaching releases (Boyko, 2009, p. 217). Although in reality, 25.6 percent of BC public college chairs reported not receiving a stipend. The documented performance evaluation process is similar in both groups of institutions. In reality however, only 35 percent of BC public chairs reported being evaluated for their work as chair while more than two-thirds of university chairs reported being evaluated for their work as department chair (Boyko, 2009, p. 219).

Both Canadian university chairs and BC public college chair people are mostly middle-aged (Boyko, 2009, p. 201), and virtually all college and university chairs were full-time faculty members prior to assuming the chair position (Boyko, 2009, p. 345). Both college and university chairs’ primary motive for taking the chair job was *to make a difference, to improve the department* while the lowest ranked reason was *financial gain* (Boyko, 2009, p. 209). As well, the vast majority of both groups of chairs, apart from those retiring, expressed the intent to return to research and teaching rather than pursue administrative positions.

The majority of Canadian public university chair people are male (66%) (Boyko, 2009, p. 202), while the majority of BC public college chair people are female (59.2%).
The vast majority of university chairs (81%) hold doctoral degrees (Boyko, 2009, p. 203), while only 19.2 percent of college chairs hold doctoral degrees. As well, the majority of Canadian university chairs are career academics (55%) with 45 percent indicating they have professional practice outside the university although they do not specify if this is concurrent or previous experience (Boyko, 2009, p. 203). On the other hand, all (100%) BC public college chairs indicated they have prior industry work experience with 57.0 percent reporting 10 or more years’ prior work experience in their professions.

Recall that BC public universities are equally teaching and research institutions, mandated to offer both undergraduate and graduate degree programs and to conduct research. BC public colleges, on the other hand, are primarily teaching institutions, responsible for delivering certificate, diploma and more currently, bachelor degree programs. Keeping those mandates in mind, how do the similarities and differences in BC college and university academic department chair roles and chair people mirror the similarities and differences in the primary mandates of BC public colleges and Canadian public universities?

### 6.4. Summary

Four main conclusions emerged from this inquiry. (1) The academic department chair position in BC public colleges is a joint faculty and administrative temporary position, assigned with multiple tasks and roles that guide the chair person in performing the position’s main function which is to serve students and faculty. (2) BC public college chair people are leaders with no official authority who are guided more by altruistic motives than by self-serving financial motives and/or career ambitions in accepting and performing the role of academic department chair. (3) The inherent nature of the chair position’s dual role and the professional bureaucratic nature of post-secondary educational institutions make the elimination of all role conflict experienced by chairs not possible, however some types of role conflict are constructive and lead to chair successes. (4) Effective strategies to improve the chair position will include a reduction in chairs’ workload and a plan to educate and improve among members of the chair role-set.
Two recommendations to improve the chair position are proposed. One recommendation is to reduce chair workload and the other is to educate members and improve communication among members of the chair role-set. Suggested ways to reduce chair workload are to allocate some chair tasks to other faculty; to determine an optimum department size and teaching release for chairs and apply these optimum parameters to all fields of study in the college; to build faculty professional development time and vacation time into the chair position. Suggested ways to educate and improve communication are to allocate some chair tasks to other faculty, appoint acting chairs to relieve chairs of their duties so as to free them to engage in PD and vacation activities; offer information sessions, workshops and encourage discussion of college policies and events college-wide.

Suggestions for further research include the following. Explore the roles and experiences of administrators, support staff, and female chairs in BC public colleges; examine the impact of baccalaureate degree programs on the entire college community; and further explore the similarities and differences among chairs across the fields of study and in the chair position and chair people in BC public colleges and BC public universities.

6.5. Researcher’s Reflections

Participating in this activity called research has taught me many things. The things I learned that may be of interest and use to researchers new to the game involve the importance of: thesis supervisors, a theoretical framework, sharing ideas and knowledge, carving out an uninterrupted period of time to work on the research study, and viewing obstacles as opportunities.

The job of thesis supervisor is of paramount importance. Those excelling at the job are interested and knowledgeable in the topic researched and studied. They guide, they encourage, and they challenge the researcher with honest, constructive and timely feedback.

The importance of a theoretical framework is that it guides the design of the analysis and the interpretation and connectivity of the data. In this study, Mintzberg’s
theory of Professional Bureaucracies sets the stage by explaining the academic environment and culture within which academic professionals operate and why academic professionals require independence to perform their job. Organizational Role Theory by Kahn et al. provides a structure to explain the challenges of the chair role and the causes of those challenges, which in turn can help us determine how to manage the challenges. The two theories combined help us interpret and connect all the data collected into meaningful information about BC public college academic department chairs.

Sharing knowledge and ideas is important because doing so increases the possibility of advancing knowledge since sharing increases the number of minds thinking about the knowledge and ideas. It is also a win/win activity because, unlike the giving of material wealth, both the giver and receiver of the knowledge wins. The receiver wins because of an increase in his or her knowledge base and the giver wins because he or she does not lose knowledge by giving it away. Indeed, the act of articulating the knowledge may even increase the giver’s knowledge base. In this study, many shared their knowledge; thesis supervisors, pilot testers, survey participants, friends, and family members; and I shared what I learned by writing this dissertation.

Carving out an uninterrupted period of time to work on the research study is essential to the process of absorbing information, understanding theories, analyzing data, reasoning through and articulating arguments, focusing, and writing. It also saves time and unnecessary angst. The longer the process is drawn out, the greater the risk of forgetting details, theories, reasoning and thought processes, and the more time is wasted in reviewing and reiterating thought processes, procedures, the literature, the theories, and the data.

Viewing obstacles as opportunities is an important and pragmatic attitude for a researcher to adopt in dealing with happenings outside the researcher’s control. One of several obstacles I encountered was the decline of my request to use another researcher’s online survey questions. Initially mystified with the rejection and overwhelmed with the prospect of developing an online survey, I ultimately chose not to seek permission to use other researchers’ surveys and risk more rejection and delay, and instead chose to delve deeper into the literature, into college documents, into my
own experiences, and to consult with a developer of online surveys and a form designer, in an effort to develop a survey. In the end, the rejection turned out for the best. The final developed survey was a much better fit for this study than the requested survey would have been.

What did I learn in my time serving as chair? During my first few months of being chair, I badly mishandled a situation involving department faculty. An offended faculty member blamed me, rightly so, for not fixing the situation and admonished me with the words: “You should have fixed it. You’re the leader.” The words rang true and I pass them on to prospective chairs. Like it or not, a chair is a leader, albeit at a junior level with no official authority. The absence of official authority is a reminder that the chair is not a boss. So, the age-old sibling retort “You’re no boss of me” directed at a chair in anger by a department faculty member is a hint that chair is not performing the intended role of a chair.

I learned that collaborating with faculty and other chairs is much more constructive, productive, and enjoyable than competing with faculty and other chairs. I learned that being chair of faculty with their own professional code of ethics and high standards of conduct enhanced the status of the chair position and made the job of chairing less challenging and more rewarding. I learned that a dean receives back from faculty and support staff the same understanding and respect he or she gives to faculty and support staff. And I gained new respect and appreciation for the role of college administrators, of deans, vice-presidents and presidents in BC public colleges.
References


Appendix A

Ethics Review Approval Letters
Dear Agatha:

Re: An Exploration of Academic Department Chairs in British Columbia Public Colleges
- Appl. #: 2010s0700

I am pleased to inform you that the above referenced Request for Ethical Approval of Research has been approved on behalf of the Research Ethics Board. This approval is in effect until the end date December 16, 2013, or only during the period in which you are a registered SFU student.

The Office of Research Ethics must be notified of any changes in the approved protocol. Request for amendments to the protocol may be requested by email to dore@sfu.ca. In all correspondence relating to this application, please reference the application number shown on this letter and all email.

Your application has been categorized as "minimal risk" and approved by the Director, Office of Research Ethics, on behalf of the Research Ethics Board in accordance with University policy R.20.01, http://www.sfu.ca/policies/research/r20-01.htm. The Board reviews and may amend decisions or subsequent amendments made independently by the Director, Chair or Deputy Chair at its regular monthly meetings.
"Minimal risk" occurs when potential participants can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms incurred by participating in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the participant in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the researcher, or the responsibility of the Student Supervisor if the researcher is a graduate student or undergraduate student, to maintain written or other forms of documented consent for a period of 1 year after the research has been completed.

If there is an adverse event, the principal investigator must notify the Office of Research Ethics within five (5) days. An Adverse Events form is available electronically by contacting dore@sfu.ca.

All correspondence with regards to this application will be sent to your SFU email address.

Please notify the Office of Research Ethics at dore@sfu.ca once you have completed the data collection portion of your project so that we can close this file.

Best wishes for success in this research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director
Office of Research Ethics

c: Dr. Geoff Madoc-Jones, Supervisor

/jmy
Camosun College Research Ethics Board  
C/o Centre for Applied Research and Innovation  
Continuing Education & Contract Training  
Interurban Campus

20th December, 2010  
Agatha Thalheimer  
Accounting  
CBA 224  
Camosun College  
Interurban Campus

Dear Agatha

Re: Application number 2010/10

On behalf of the Camosun College Research Ethics Board, I am pleased to inform you that your research project entitled "An Exploration of Academic Department Chairs in British Columbia Public Colleges" has been granted ethics approval. In reaching its decision, the Board took note of the revised documentation that you provided addressing issues raised during review of your original application.

Please note that:

1. approvals are granted for a one year period and any extension of the project beyond this time requires reapplication to the Research Ethics Board

2. any significant modifications to the proposal, even after commencement of the research project, require approval from the Research Ethics Board

3. principal investigators are required to promptly notify the Research Ethics Board of completion of the research project

Please quote the above application number on any further correspondence. We wish you success with your project.

[Signature]

Ahmed Wawda PhD  
Chair  
Research Ethics Board
April 15, 2011

Agatha Thalheimer,  
Faculty of Education  
Simon Fraser University, 

Dear Ms. Thalheimer,

The Douglas College Research Ethics Board reviewed your request for approval for a study entitled *An Exploration of Academic Department Chairs in BC Public Colleges*. The Board recognized the ethical approval granted by SFU and approved your request.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kathy Denton, PhD  
Chair, Research Ethics Board
Hello Aggie:

I'm very sorry that it has taken me so long to get back to you.

The documents that you have sent me are fine and what I need to complete your file. So you can proceed with your research at Langara, if you are still interested. By copy of this message, I'm asking Diana to forward you the names and e-mail address of our chairs, so that you can contact them to participate in your project. A number of our chair positions will be turning over as of May 1, and in those cases Diana will give you the names of both the outgoing (til April 30) and incoming chairs, and you can decide which will be more appropriate to approach.

Cheers -- and apologies, once again, for taking so long to get back to you.

M.

On Thu, Feb 10 at 12:33 am, Agatha Thalheimer wrote:

Hello Martin,

Please see below the email from Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director of the Office of Research Ethics, and find attached the Research Ethics Board Certificate of Approval referred to by Dr. Weinberg in his email.

Thank you.
Aggie Thalheimer
Appendix B

Letter of Request to Pilot Test Online Survey

Dear Tester,

This is a request for you to pilot test the proposed survey for the thesis I am working on in partial fulfillment of a doctorate degree in Education at Simon Fraser University. The topic of the thesis is *An Exploration of Academic Department Chairs in BC Public Colleges*. A public college is defined to be one that receives operational and capital funding from government. There are currently eleven BC public colleges, and about 400 department chairs working in the eleven colleges. The purpose of this research is to understand the role of academic department chair and the people who hold the role.

The objective of the pilot test is to check the clarity of the questions, the length of the questionnaire, and the participant’s ease in typing responses and negotiating back and forth to check questions and answers. If you are willing to test this survey, please read and respond to each question and then comment with respect to the following questions:

1. Are any of the questions difficult to understand, and is any wording unclear? (Please identify the questions and words.)
2. Did you find any of the questions leading? Please indicate the questions.
3. Did you find the sequencing of questions confusing? Please indicate the sequences.
4. Is the presentation of the questions and response spaces confusing?
5. Did you have any difficulties typing in responses and negotiating back and forth to check questions and answers?
6. Is the survey too long? How long did it take you to complete? Did you complete it in one sitting? Were you able to save it and return to complete it?
7. Please indicate any other difficulties you encountered with the survey, and any suggestions to improve the survey.

The link to the survey is:

Please let me know if you would like to discuss any of this with me, and we can arrange a phone conversation, at your convenience.

Thank you for taking the time to pilot test this survey, and for your advice and support.

Sincerely,

Aggie Thalheimer  Phone:  Email:
Appendix C

Online Survey Questionnaire for Department Chairs (MS Word Version)

BC College Academic Chair Survey

Thank you for participating in this web-based survey. As explained in the emailed letter of invitation, you need not complete the survey in one sitting. You can save it, then exit and return to complete it at your convenience. You may omit any questions you feel uncomfortable answering. You may also withdraw your participation at any time, without explanation or consequence, by emailing chaircoord@camosun.bc.ca. The survey consists of 76 questions and takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. Please note that by completing and submitting this online survey you are consenting to the collection and use of the data for the stated study. This research study, Application # 2010s0700, has been granted ethical approval by SFU Office of Research Ethics; approval effective 12-21-2010 to 12-16-2013.

A. Chair Person Profile

1) Your Gender
   ☐ Female
   ☐ Male

2) Your age
   ☐ under 30
   ☐ 30 - 35
   ☐ 36 - 45
   ☐ 46 - 55
   ☐ 56 - 65
   ☐ Over 65

3) Do you have Regular/Continuing faculty status?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ Other (please specify)
   If you selected other, please specify

4) Number of years as a faculty member at this college:
   ☐ 1 - 10
   ☐ 11 - 20
   ☐ 21 - 30
   ☐ More than 30
   ☐ Other (please specify)
   If you selected other, please specify
5) Is this your first time (term) as a department chair?
   - Yes
   - No

6) If this is not your first term as chair, how many years have you spent as chair prior to this term?
   - This is my first term
   - 1 - 2 years
   - 3 - 4 years
   - 5 - 6 years
   - More than 6 years

7) How many years have you spent as chair in your current term as department chair at this college?
   - Less than 1 year
   - 1 - 2 years
   - 3 - 4 years
   - 5 - 6 years
   - More than 6 years

8) Do you enjoy being at work?
   - Every day
   - Most days
   - Half the days
   - Seldom
   - Never
   - Other (please specify)

   If you selected other, please specify

9) Please name your last earned academic degree and/or professional accreditation, and granting institution.

10) Please indicate other employment experience and indicate number of years employed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Zero Years</th>
<th>1-4 Years</th>
<th>5-9 Years</th>
<th>More than 9 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other please specify below</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Department Profile

11) Please select the category in which your department resides:
   - Arts and Humanities
   - Business
12) Number of regular/continuing faculty members in your department:

- 1 - 4
- 5 - 9
- 10 - 13
- 14 - 18
- 19 - 30
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify

13) Number of term/sessional faculty members hired per year in your department:

- Zero
- 1 - 3
- 4 - 8
- 9 - 14
- 15 - 20
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify

14) How many classes do the full-time faculty members in your department teach per 12-month academic year? (#classes = #courses x #sections taught; i.e. Math101 x 4 + Math201 x 4 = 8 classes)

- 4 classes
- 5 classes
- 6 classes
- 7 classes
- 8 classes
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify

15) Number of programs (selection of courses leading to a credential) for which your department is responsible:

- Zero
- 1 - 2
- 3 - 5
- 6 - 8
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify

16) Number of students in the programs for which your department is responsible:

- Zero
- 1 - 40
17) Number of courses for which your department is responsible:

- Zero
- 1 - 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 30
- 31 - 40
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify

18) Do you have an administrative assistant who assists only you?

- Yes
- No

19) Do you share administrative assistance with others in your school?

- Yes
- No

C. Chair Position Features

20) What is the title of the individual to whom you report directly?

- Dean
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify

21) How were you selected?

- Elected by department faculty members directly
- Selected by your dean
- Appointed on the advice of a selection committee in an internal competition open to candidates within your college
- Appointed by a selection committee in an external competition open to candidates outside your college
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify

22) Are you likely to seek reappointment if you are eligible?

- Yes
- No

23) What will you do upon completing your chair appointment, or completing a reappointment?

- Return to full-time teaching
- Take a leave
- Take an administrative position
If you selected other, please specify

24) If you are paid an annual stipend because of your responsibilities as department chair, what is the amount?

- No annual stipend is paid
- $1,000 - $3,000
- $3,001 - $5,000
- $5,001 - $7,000
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify

25) If there is a reduction in teaching duties because of your responsibilities as department chair, what is the reduction in number of classes per 12 month academic year?

- There is no reduction in teaching duties
- 1 class
- 2 classes
- 3 classes
- 4 classes
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify

26) How many classes per 12-month academic year do you teach while performing chair duties?

- Zero classes
- 1 class
- 2 classes
- 3 classes
- 4 classes
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify

27) Is there a job description for your chair position?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

28) Does it provide an accurate description of what you do?

- Yes
- No
- There is no job description
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify

**D. Chair Responsibilities and Roles**
30) **Faculty focus** - Listed below are 11 faculty focused activities typically performed by department chairs. Please indicate the degree of importance you place on each activity; 1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=important, 4=very important, or 5=not applicable; as appropriate to your situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Recruiting faculty</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mentoring faculty</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Evaluating faculty performance</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Dealing with serious teaching performance issues</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Resolving differences with and among faculty colleagues</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Promoting/encouraging best teaching practices</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Scheduling courses and assigning teaching timetables</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Maintaining/building faculty morale</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Advising faculty about contractual rights, obligations, professional opportunities</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Teambuilding in the department</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Planning for next successor to chair position</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

31) **Student focus** - Listed below are 6 student focused activities typically performed by department chairs. Please indicate the degree of importance you place on each activity; 1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=important, 4=very important, or 5=not applicable; as appropriate to your situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Informing and advising students</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Resolving student issues</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Monitoring student progress</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teaching students</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Providing job and/or university program references for students</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Coordinating/supervising student tutors/lab assistants</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32) **Department focus** - Listed below are 11 department oriented activities typically performed by department chairs. Please indicate the degree of importance you place on each activity; 1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=important, 4=very important, or 5=not applicable; as appropriate to your situation.
### College focus

Listed below are 6 college oriented activities typically performed by department chairs. Please indicate the degree of importance you place on each activity; 1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=important, 4=very important, or 5=not applicable; as appropriate to your situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining relations with college bookstore, admissions office, library, technology department, other support departments</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building relations with other academic departments within the college</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Championing the department within the college</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending convocation, award ceremonies, other celebratory events</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in committees outside the department</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging in promotional activities to recruit students</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### External focus

Listed below are 4 externally focused activities typically performed by department chairs. Please indicate the degree of importance you place on each activity; 1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=important, 4=very important, or 5=not applicable; as appropriate to your situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining relations with college bookstore, admissions office, library, technology department, other support departments</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building relations with other academic departments within the college</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Championing the department within the college</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending convocation, award ceremonies, other celebratory events</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in committees outside the department</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging in promotional activities to recruit students</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
35) **Self focus** - Listed below are 3 self-focused activities typically performed by department chairs. Please indicate the degree of importance you place on each activity; 1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=important, 4=very important, or 5=not applicable; as appropriate to your situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Keeping current in academic discipline</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Being active in professional association (Consulting, coaching, mentoring, facilitating, etc.)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Professional development activities (research, conferences, publications, graduate work)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36) How much time do you spend on work-related activities on average per week?

- ☐ 21 - 30 hours
- ☐ 31 - 40 hours
- ☐ 41 - 50 hours
- ☐ 51 - 60 hours
- ☐ 61 - 70 hours
- ☐ Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify.

37) What role(s) do you think you fulfill in your position as department chair? Please indicate the degree to which each role listed applies to you as: 1=not applicable, 2=somewhat applicable, 3=applicable, 4=highly applicable.

|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------|----------------------|

253
38) Please specify other roles and the degree to which they apply to you; 2=somewhat applicable, 3=applicable, 4=highly applicable.

## E. Satisfying and Stressful Aspects of Chair Job

39) What are the most satisfying aspects of your role as chair? Please identify the following activities as: 1=not satisfying, 2=somewhat satisfying, 3=satisfying, 4=very satisfying, 5=not applicable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty engagement</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student engagement</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building new work relationships</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining new work experiences</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial compensation</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum development</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental planning and strategizing</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrating/managing</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing college policies and plans</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40) Please specify other satisfying aspects and identify as 2=somewhat satisfying, 3=satisfying, 4=very satisfying.

41) What are the most stressful aspects of your role as chair? For each of the following 21 situations, please indicate the degree to which you consider your job stressful as follows: 1=slight stress rarely bothers you, 2=normal stress helps focus you, 3=above normal stress may adversely affect your physical health or mental health, or personal life, 4=not applicable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>1. Slight Stress doesn't</th>
<th>2. Normal Stress helps focus you</th>
<th>3. Above Normal Stress may adversely affect your physical health or mental</th>
<th>4. Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

254
| 1. Dealing with unprofessional faculty conduct issues | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. Dealing with other faculty personnel issues | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. Ensuring high teaching standards | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. Enforcing academic standards, rules, regulations | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. Budgeting and managing financial resources | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. Completing paperwork/reports on time | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. Responding to emails in a timely fashion | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8. Attending meetings | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 9. Handling many different tasks simultaneously | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 10. Performing teaching duties to self-imposed standards | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 11. Staying current in academic discipline | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 12. Dealing with student complaints and conduct issues | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 13. Dealing with conflicting concerns/demands of faculty and administration | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 14. Engaging in promotional activities to recruit students | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 15. Balancing work and home life | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 16. Having too heavy a workload | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 17. Having inadequate direction | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 18. Having excessively high self-expectations | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 19. Having inadequate information | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 20. Having little or no formal authority | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 21. Having inadequate training for the job | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

42) Please specify other stress issues and indicate level of stress; 1=slight stress, 2=normal stress, 3=above normal stress.

43) How would you rate your overall stress level with your chair job?

☐ Slight Stress, doesn't bother you
44) Is your overall stress with the chair job continuous or occasional stress?

☐ Continuous stress
☐ Occasional stress

45) If you experience above normal stress in any aspects of your chair job, can you please explain why you continue in your chair job?

46) Can you suggest anything that can be done, other than resign as chair, to reduce the above normal stress?

F. Impact of Baccalaureate Degrees on Chairs

47) In 2003, BC public colleges were given authority to grant baccalaureate degree programs. Please indicate if your college, school, department offers a baccalaureate degree program(s).

☐ Your college offers a baccalaureate degree program(s) but your school and your department do not
☐ Your college and school offers a baccalaureate degree program(s) but your department does not
☐ Your college and school and department offers a baccalaureate degree program(s)
☐ Your college does not offer a baccalaureate degree program
☐ Other (please specify)
If you selected other, please specify

48) If your college offers a baccalaureate degree program, have you noticed changes in your department chair responsibilities as a result of your college offering a baccalaureate degree program? Please indicate the degree of difference for each area specified below as follows: 1=no difference, 2=small difference, 3= difference, 4=major difference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>1. No difference</th>
<th>2. Small difference</th>
<th>3. Difference</th>
<th>4. Major difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building relationships outside the college</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building relationships within the college</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling/timetabling classes</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty recruitment</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty engagement</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student engagement</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum development</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcing/raising academic standards</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generating revenue/fundraising</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional activities</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Teaching (learning new methods, best practices) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○
12. Scholarly activity (research, graduate studies) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○
13. Budgeting and managing financial resources | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○

49) Please specify other changes in your responsibilities and the degree of difference as: 2=small difference, 3=difference, 4=major difference.

50) Are you in favour of BC public colleges offering baccalaureate degree programs?
   - Yes
   - No

51) Please explain why you are or why you are not in favor of BC public colleges offering baccalaureate degree programs.

G. Chair Aspirations

52) What was your reason(s) for taking the job of department chair? Please indicate each reason as 1=not relevant, 2=somewhat relevant, 3=relevant, 4=very relevant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial gain</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was my turn</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sense of duty</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one else was available or eligible</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruited by dean and/or faculty colleagues</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal development/challenge</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To advance administrative career</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make a difference/improve the department</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

53) Please specify other reasons and rank as 2=somewhat relevant, 3=relevant, 4=very relevant.

54) Do you perceive the chair position as a stepping stone toward the dean position or other senior administrative positions in the college?
   - Yes
   - No

55) What is your perception of yourself in the position of department chair?
   - Faculty, primarily
   - Administrator, primarily
   - Faculty/Administrator, 50-50

56) Would you like to be remembered professionally as a teacher, or as an administrator, or as another professional?
   - Teacher
   - Administrator
H. Chair Development

57) Does your college provide professional training for department chairs to learn about the role of chair?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

58) If professional training is provided, please identify training and also identify resources provided. (Please check all that apply)
   ☑ Information session/workshop organized by your college for all department chairs in the college
   ☑ Information session/workshop for department chairs in your school only
   ☑ Your college procedures and policy manual
   ☑ Your faculty collective agreement
   ☑ Other (please specify)

59) Do you participate in the professional training provided?
   ☐ Yes
   ☑ Other (please specify)

60) If your college provided professional training, would you participate?
   ☐ Yes
   ☑ Other (please specify)

61) While holding the position of chair, have you had, or do you currently have a mentor or "buddy"?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

62) If you had/have a mentor/buddy, how did/does he or she assist you in your work as department chair? If you did not or do not have a mentor/buddy, how might a mentor or buddy system benefit you in your work as chair?

I. Open Ended Chair Survey Questions

63) Thinking back to when you first took on the chair role, what aspect of the role did you feel least prepared to deal with? What aspect of the role did you feel most prepared to deal with?

64) Thinking ahead to when your term ends, which accomplishment(s) do you want remembered by others?

65) What factor(s) constrain you from performing your chair job better?

66) Do you perceive chairs as performing leadership roles? Why or why not?
67) Do you think other faculty members perceive chairs as performing leadership roles? Why do you think that?

68) Do you think Administration perceives chairs as performing leadership roles? Why do you think that?

69) Do you intend to pursue a dean position or other senior administration position in the post-secondary educational system? Why or why not?

70) What is the best advice you could leave for your successor?

71) How do you describe your managerial style as chair - how you run your department? (Please check all that apply)

- Autocratic
- Democratic
- Laissez-faire
- Collegial
- Collaborative
- Consultative
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify.

72) Does your academic discipline influence your managerial style as chair? Please explain.

73) Does the size of your department influence your managerial style as chair? Please explain.

74) Another common theme in the literature is the paradoxical nature of the chair role. The purported paradox inherent in the chair role is that, though the chair position is touted as one of the most influential positions in academe, chairs have little or no formal authority.

What is your view of, and experience with, the paradoxical nature of the chair role?

75) Another common theme in the literature is the conflicting nature of the chair role. It is suggested that conflict arises because, upon accepting the position, a chair becomes an administrator but also remains a faculty member; and as a wearer of two hats, the chair is expected to be loyal to and advocate for faculty and academic discipline while also being loyal to and advocating for administration. When issues arise which place faculty and administrators on opposing sides, the chair is caught in a conflicting situation.

What is your view of, and experience with, the conflicting nature of the chair role?

76) In your opinion, can your chair position be improved? If yes, how? If not, why not?

Thank you.
Appendix D

Letter of Introduction and Consent Request to Academic Vice Presidents of BC Public Colleges

Dear Academic VP,

My name is Aggie Thalheimer. I am working on a thesis in partial fulfillment of a doctorate degree in Education at Simon Fraser University. The topic of my thesis is *An Exploration of Academic Department Chairs in BC Public Colleges*; and all eleven colleges are included in this study. The purpose of the study is to understand the role of academic department chair and the people who hold the role. To that end, I would like to invite the chairs in your college to complete a web-based survey which asks questions about the chair’s demographics, responsibilities, roles, rewards, stresses, aspirations and needs.

The title “chair” and “coordinator” and “head” are used by different colleges in reference to the same position. The main features of this position are as follows:

- It is a faculty position, occupied by a member of the faculty.
- The position has a stipulated term of office.
- The chair person reports to a non-faculty administration person, such as a dean.
- The chair person manages an academic unit/department and is the liaison between the department faculty and administration.

I have three requests. First, would you please grant me permission to contact your college’s chairs for the purpose of participating in this study?

Second, would you please provide me with a list of the names and email addresses of the chairs and the names of their departments within your college? Based on your college and faculty collective agreement, the position which most closely satisfies the criteria stated above is titled __________. Please email the list to    or fax it to .

Third, would you please grant me permission to mention your support in the email asking chairs to participate in the survey? The wording would be:

“YOUR NAME has given me your name to be invited to complete a survey to understand the role of department chair and the people who hold the role in BC public colleges.”

Thank you for whatever assistance you can provide me. I would be pleased to share the results of the research with you when complete. Please contact my thesis supervisors, Dr. Geoff Madoc-Jones and Dr. Tom Roemer, or me, if you have any questions about this study. Please contact Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director of the Office of Research Ethics if you have any concerns or complaints about this study. Contact information is listed below.

Sincerely,

Aggie Thalheimer MPA, B. Com, BA    Email:    Phone:

Dr. Geoff Madoc-Jones PhD, Associate Director, Graduate Program (External) Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University    Email:    Phone:
Dr. Tom Roemer EdD, Vice President, Strategic Development, Camosun College
Email:       Phone:
Dr. Hal Weinberg Director, Office of Research Ethics, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6
Email:       Phone:
Appendix E

Letter of Introduction and Request to Complete Online Survey to Department Chairs of BC Public Colleges

Dear Chair,

My name is Aggie Thalheimer. I am conducting research in partial fulfillment of a doctorate degree in Education at Simon Fraser University. The topic of my thesis is *An Exploration of Academic Department Chairs in BC Public Colleges*; and the entire population of chairs in the eleven colleges is included in the study. The purpose of the study is to understand the demographics, responsibilities, roles, satisfactions, stresses, aspirations, and needs of department chairs in British Columbia public colleges. To that end, I am requesting your participation.

Dr. ___ has granted me approval to invite you to participate in this survey to understand the role of department chair and the people who hold the role in BC public colleges. The web-based questionnaire, accessible through the link at the end of the page, should take you about 30 minutes to complete. You need not complete the survey in one sitting; you can save, exit and return to complete it at your convenience. You may omit any questions you feel uncomfortable answering. You may also withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence or explanation, by contacting me at the email address below, and if you do withdraw, any information you have supplied will be destroyed and not included in the analysis. By completing and submitting this survey you are consenting to the collection and use of the data for the stated survey.

The survey results are password protected. Access to the database is limited to my thesis supervisors, the survey technical specialist whose position includes a confidentiality clause, and me. A secured server, located in Sidney, BC, Canada will be used. Though email recruitment anonymity cannot be ensured, the data collected from the chair survey will be confidential and not directly associated with any respondent. The survey data will be reported in aggregate form only. Chairs will be grouped according to academic categories for the purpose of reporting data collected from the chair survey. No college or participant will be identified or individually identifiable.

The database and all data will be stored in a secure location at my home office and destroyed three years after the thesis has been completed. The findings of this study will be made publicly available in a doctoral thesis, and possibly in subsequent reports, journals and presentations. The actual data upon which the findings are based will remain confidential. If you wish to receive a summary of the findings, please contact me at ___

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and consider my request. As a current active chair in a BC public college, I realize asking you to participate in this survey adds one more demand to your already busy schedule. But I ask anyway, because your insights are both invaluable in gaining an understanding of the nature of your work as a chair, and may lead to improvements in the overall management of academic departments.

If you choose to participate in this study, please access the survey through the following link: ___ Please respond by May 2011.
Please contact my thesis supervisors, Dr. Geoff Madoc-Jones and Dr. Tom Roemer, or me, if you have any questions about this study. Please contact Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director of the Office of Research Ethics if you have any concerns or complaints about this study. Contact information is listed below. Thank you.

Aggie Thalheimer MPA, B. Com, BA      Email:  Phone:

Dr. Geoff Madoc-Jones PhD, Associate Director, Graduate Program (External) Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University
Email:                      Phone:

Dr. Tom Roemer EdD, Vice President, Strategic Development, Camosun College
Email:                     Phone:

Dr. Hal Weinberg Director, Office of Research Ethics, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6
Email:     Phone:
Appendix F

Letter of Introduction and Request to Complete Online Survey to Department Chairs of Camosun College

Dear Camosun Chair,

My name is Aggie Thalheimer. I am conducting this research in partial fulfillment of a doctorate degree in Education at Simon Fraser University. The topic of my thesis is An Exploration of Academic Department Chairs in BC Public Colleges; and the entire population of chairs in the eleven colleges is included in the study. The purpose of the study is to understand the demographics, responsibilities, roles, satisfactions, stresses, aspirations, and needs of department chairs in British Columbia public colleges. To that end, I am requesting your participation.

Mr. Baldev Pooni has granted me approval to invite you to participate in a survey about the role of department chair and the people who hold the role in BC public colleges. The web-based questionnaire, accessible through the link at the end of the page, should take you about 30 minutes to complete. You need not complete the survey in one sitting; you can save, exit and return to complete it at your convenience. You may omit any questions you feel uncomfortable answering. You may also withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence or explanation, by contacting me at the email address below, and if you do withdraw, any information you have supplied will be destroyed and not included in the analysis. By completing and submitting this survey you are consenting to the collection and use of the data for the stated survey.

The survey results are password protected. Access to the database is limited to my thesis supervisors, Dr. Geoff Madoc-Jones PhD, Associate Director, Graduate Program (External) Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University and Dr. Tom Roemer EdD, Vice President, Strategic Development, Camosun College; the survey technical specialist whose position includes a confidentiality clause; and me. A secured server, located in Sidney, BC, Canada will be used. Though email recruitment anonymity cannot be ensured, the data collected from the chair survey will be confidential and not directly associated with any respondent. The survey data will be reported in aggregate form only. Chairs will be grouped according to academic categories for the purpose of reporting data collected from the chair survey. No college or participant will be identified or individually identifiable.

The database and all data will be stored in a secure location and destroyed three years after the thesis has been completed. The findings of this study will be made publicly available in a doctoral thesis, and possibly in subsequent reports, journals and presentations. The actual data upon which the findings are based will remain confidential. If you wish to receive a summary of the findings please contact me at chaircoord@camosun.bc.ca.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and consider my request. As a current active chair in a BC public college, I realize asking you to participate in this survey adds one more demand to your already busy schedule. But I ask anyway, because your insights are both invaluable in gaining an understanding of the nature of your work as a chair, and may lead to improvements in the overall management of academic departments.
If you choose to participate in this study, please access the survey through the following link:

Please contact my thesis supervisors, Dr. Geoff Madoc-Jones and Dr. Tom Roemer, or me, if you have any questions about this study. Please contact Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director of the Office of Research Ethics if you have any concerns or complaints about this study. Contact information is listed below. Thank you.

Aggie Thalheimer MPA, B. Com, BA    Email: 

Dr. Geoff Madoc-Jones PhD, Associate Director, Graduate Program (External) Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University    Email:    Phone: 

Dr. Tom Roemer EdD, Vice President, Strategic Development, Camosun College Email:    Phone: 

Dr. Hal Weinberg Director, Office of Research Ethics, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6    Email:    Phone: 

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## Appendix G

### Documented Features of BC Public Colleges Chair Positions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLEGE 1</th>
<th>Source Documents: Faculty Collective Agreement, Chair Job Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position Title</td>
<td>Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Term</td>
<td>3 year term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Relations</td>
<td>Report to Dean and/or Associate Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>Each chair position will be filled by a member of the given department unless there are no suitable applicants from the department. In any event, the successful candidate will be qualified in at least one (1) area of the department’s expertise. (6.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection Process</td>
<td>Each position shall be advertised internally and filled without external advertising if a suitable candidate is found. The President, or his/her designate, shall appoint chairs on the recommendation of the Dean, who specify in writing procedures for adequate faculty consultation in the selection process. (6.05) The term of office shall be three (3) years with the position being declared vacant and posted for one (1) month, at least two (2) months prior to the end of the three (3) year term. The appointment of the incumbent will be automatically renewed if no applications for the position besides the incumbent’s are received. When a chair position is vacated during the term, the position shall be posted for two (2) weeks, and a replacement appointed as soon thereafter as is practical. (6.06)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Key Tasks | For each department (career program or subject cluster defined by the College) which consists of three (3) or more faculty, a chair shall be appointed. Every faculty member shall belong to a department. (6.04) 

The duties and responsibilities of the position shall be established by the President or his/her designate, following consultation with the faculty members of the department. Such information shall be made available to all prospective applicants and shall be subject to review by the Joint Faculty/Administration Committee. (6.03) 

Essential Job Functions (Job Description Posting, 2003) |

1. Facilitates student learning and student success within the department
   - Leads the development and maintenance of departmental standards of service
   - Ensures provision for academic advice and guidance to prospective and current students
   - Facilitates and attempts to resolve student complaints and student... |
conduct issues including referring students for appropriate information and services
  • Ensures student orientation sessions are conducted
  • Ensures student progress is monitored from intake to graduation
  • Coordinates all requests for transfers, PLAR.

2. Works with external organizations/interests
  • Ensures that curriculum design, implementation and delivery are relevant to community needs
  • Ensures regulatory standards are met
  • Ensures representation of the department and programs on local, provincial, and national organizations.

3. Leads the department in establishing and maintaining quality curriculum standards
  • Participates in the development and implementation of new courses/programs and the revision of existing courses/programs, and ensures approval processes have been followed
  • Coordinates review and evaluation of departmental courses and programs on a regular basis to ensure compliance with course/program standards, and that appropriate actions are taken after evaluation
  • Initiates departmental planning for curriculum and major programs
  • Coordinates the schedule of courses to be offered in accordance with college guidelines
  • Seeks adequate resources for the department curriculum including library holdings, supplies and equipment.

4. Leads the department in planning activities
  • Assists in the development and monitoring of the annual departmental budget
  • Coordinates the annual planning process
  • Creates and assesses and reports on annual department goals
  • Monitors trends and issues pertaining to courses and programs.

5. Leads the effective operation of the department
  • Provides orientation and mentoring to faculty and staff as required.
  • Delegates responsibility for various duties among departmental personnel in an equitable fashion
  • Facilitates compliance with safety and security regulations
  • Leads the overall human resource management within the department
  • Coordinates regular and substitute staffing process
  • Authorizes department expenditures to the prescribed limit
  • Schedules and monitors the workload of the department and effects adjustments as required
  • Plans course timetables
  • Mediates and attempts to resolve personnel issues or conflict within the department
  • Facilitates and promotes development opportunities for department faculty and staff
  • Assists faculty in the planning of Scheduled Development activities
### Key Tasks
- Coordinates and participates in departmental recruitment processes
- Participates in performance reviews
- Holds regular department meetings
- Liaises with Student Services departments.

6. Other related duties of similar scope and complexity.
- Facilitates entrepreneurial activities

#### Performance Review Evaluation Process
An evaluation will be conducted at least once in each chair’s term. An evaluation may be conducted at any time during the term of the appointment and may result in an early termination of the Chair’s assignment. In addition, an evaluation will be conducted upon a request of other employees within the department. (6.06)

#### Compensation
Each chair will have a reduced teaching load established from time to time by the Dean or Director and Vice-President in consultation with the Chair. (6.04)

Administrative stipend (LOU #12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLEGE 2</th>
<th>Source Documents: Faculty Collective Agreement, Chair Job Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position Title</strong></td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Term</strong></td>
<td>1 year, renewable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shall normally not serve more than three consecutive terms</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reporting Relations</strong></td>
<td>Report to Dean/ Director/ Regional Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Must be full-time or regular part-time faculty employee. Academic qualifications and experience commensurate with academic and professional standards expected of senior faculty and professionals of each discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selection Process</strong></td>
<td>Faculty employees in each program area select a faculty member to serve one year term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Tasks</strong></td>
<td>Coordinator is a faculty position and, as such, is not supervisory. Its purpose is to provide assistance to both the faculty and staff and the relevant Administrator. When coordinators assist with various matters, it does not mean they have responsibility for those matters; rather, that they help with them. Coordinators should not be viewed as administrators or managers by their colleagues. Provide leadership by promoting a climate supportive of and encouraging a spirit of enquiry, and be a resource with respect to services, programs and course matters including, but not limited to, quality, content, selections, development, review,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
articulation with other agencies, and negotiations of transfer course credit.

Advise the Dean/Director/Regional Director and provide liaison among faculty and staff and between faculty and the Dean/Director/Regional Director with respect to curriculum and services.

Advocate for discipline, program, services and faculty on program and instructional matters and services as needed.

Advise students with respect to program matters and services.

Assist with budget, workloads and timetable preparation.

Chair meetings of faculty and staff on program and discipline matters.

Assist with student advising and records as needed and appropriate.

Assist with faculty and staff recruitment and orientation.

Assist with advisory committees, articulation committees, accrediting agencies, internal discipline articulation, Education Council, and regional matters.

Handle routine paper work for the discipline or program or services and have signing authority for some matters, eg. Printing, textbook orders, etc., as appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Review Evaluation Process</th>
<th>None stipulated.</th>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Compensation</th>
<th>Normal release time from teaching duties will be approximately 20% of the maximum workload in a normal instructional unit, or 20% of the contact hours where no normal instruction occurs.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinator 2009 annual allowance = $2,313.32</td>
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<tr>
<th>COLLEGE 3</th>
<th>Source Documents: Faculty Collective Agreement, Chair Job Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position Title</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Term</td>
<td>1 year probationary period, upon successful completion appointee will be confirmed an additional 2 years. (6.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Relations</td>
<td>Report to Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>A Regular Instructor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Selection Process | Each vacancy with a full job description shall be advertised within the College. For each vacancy a recommendation committee shall be formed, normally consisting of:
- The Senior Instructional Officer (or designate) as Chair
- Dean of Instruction
- A representation of the Human Resources Department
- The President of CORFA (or designate)
- Another faculty member as chosen by the President of CORFA. (MOU, 2009)
The recommendation committee will review all eligible candidates, short-list, interview candidates, and make recommendation(s) to the Dean/delegate. (6.4.2) (MOU, 2009) |
| Key Tasks | The Department Head will be assigned duties and responsibilities by the Dean, including, assisting the appropriate Dean of Instruction on an on-going basis, with the day-to-day general administration, supervision and coordination of a department; direction of departmental curricula, standards and instruction; and liaison between the faculty within the department and other Department Heads, and the Dean(s) of instruction, and between the department and personnel at the campuses involved with the programs and courses comparable to those within the department in Cranbrook. (5.11.1)
The job description for the positions will include management responsibilities, including responsibility to hire, evaluate, and discipline employees who are members of College 3FA or of CUPE. (MOU, 2009) |
| Performance Review Evaluation Process | The College and Faculty Association shall co-develop an Evaluation process for Department Heads. The appropriate Dean of Instruction will complete the evaluation within three months prior to the end of the probationary period. (10.7)
The evaluation will be per the College’s Management Performance Review processes, not the faculty performance review process. (MOU, 2009) |
| Compensation | Each Department Head will receive forty percent (40%) release time from instructional duties (5.11.2.1); and an annual stipend of $5,322 (MOU, 2009) |

<p>| COLLEGE 4 | Source Documents: Faculty Collective Agreement, Chair Job Description |
| Position Title | Chair |
| Length of Term | A one-year period |
| Reporting Relations | Report to the Dean or Dean Designate. |
| Qualifications | All regular faculty members of the Department/Discipline/Program or closest related Department/Discipline/Program shall be eligible to vote for and be elected as Chair. |
| Elections for Chair will occur at a meeting of faculty, which is duly constituted by the... |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection Process</th>
<th>Dean/Director, who will provide a written announcement of a meeting during which a Chair election will take place, at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting. Participation of faculty in such meetings for the purposes of elections may be facilitated by telephone or teleconference. Chair elections will be determined by majority vote of the faculty, by either a show of hands or by ballot, as determined appropriate by the Department/Discipline/Program. Following the election, the Dean/Director will offer an appointment to the faculty member so elected and will advise the Employee Relations Department, in writing, of the name of the elected Chair and any associated time release. (10.1.b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Key Tasks | The faculty member in this position is responsible for facilitating the development and implementation of the (department’s) programs and courses. This faculty member will also coordinate the work of the Curriculum and Program Evaluation Committee and facilitate the (college’s and profession’s) program approval process. This individual will explore, develop, coordinate and collaborate in innovative education and scholarship projects and proposals related the curricula. In addition, the faculty member in this position is responsible for providing leadership and i-unit administration related program completion functions. The faculty member in this position has:  
• the responsibility to seek collegial decisions;  
• the authority to act on emergency issues requiring a decision, pending collegial resolution of the issue; and  
• the responsibility to implement collegial decisions. (Chair Job Description Internal Posting, August 29, 2012) |
| Compensation | Time release for Chairs shall be as follows and shall only apply to the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences; Language, Literature and Performing Arts; and Pure and Applied Sciences and Technology. One section of release time annually (one three-credit equivalent section) for each Department/Discipline with 7.0 faculty FTE, or less.  
(ii) Two sections of release time annually (two three-credit equivalent sections) for each discipline with more than 7.0 faculty FTE, except in those disciplines where coordination time is provided. Where coordination time is provided in a discipline with more than 7.0 faculty FTE, one section of Chair release time shall be provided. Sociology/Anthropology shall be treated as one Department/Discipline. (10.1) Supports: formal training coordinated by Employee Relations, generic continuing activities specifically designed to assist in better carrying out duties, the provision of markers at the discretion of the Dean/Director. (10.3) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Title</th>
<th>Department Chair, (Assistant Department Chair, Coordinators like program leaders?) Division Chair (also a faculty member, teaches 25% of full-time, 10.7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of Term</td>
<td>A three-year period. An appointee shall be limited to 2 consecutive three-year terms, subject to turn over rule. (10.6.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Relations</td>
<td>Report to the Dean of the Faculty to which the Division belongs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>Must be a regular faculty member who works a minimum of one-half time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection Process</td>
<td>The Division Chair or appropriate Dean shall initiate the selection process at least 12 months prior to the date of vacancy. The faculty member is selected for recommendation by a process agreeable to the faculty of the department or program. (10.6.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Key Tasks | Division Chairs are responsible and accountable for providing leadership to their divisions and for carrying out a wide variety of duties. They are the senior leaders within the faculty bargaining unit. As such, they are a very important communication, administrative, and decision-making link between their faculty departments and all aspects of College Administration.  
The Division Chairs work with Department Chairs, Assistant Chairs and Coordinators to ensure their duties and responsibilities are carried out and departments and programs follow College policies, procedures as recorded in all applicable Collective Agreements and the Policy and Procedures Manual and other appropriate College practices. The range of Division Chair duties was outlined in a document* dated October 16, 1996 approved by the College and the FA.  
Division Chairs are expected to represent their division as well as apply a cross-college perspective when providing advice and assistance to the Deans, to the Provost and Vice President, Academics & Students and, where appropriate, to the President, regarding the overall management of the College. Division Chairs are further responsible and accountable for the management of their Divisions within the parameters established by budgets, Collective Agreements and College Policies and Procedures and for representing the Division and College on committees and at College functions as appropriate.  
This faculty position is subject to the terms and conditions of the FA Collective Agreement (Article 10.7). Division Chairs are released from instructional duty at three-quarters of full-time for the purposes of performing leadership and administrative duties on behalf of the College. |
<p>| Performance Review Evaluation | Not stipulated. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Compensation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Department Chairs normally shall instruct three-quarters of full-time (25% release from instructional duties) (10.6.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual stipend $2,282.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLEGE 6</th>
<th>Source Documents: Faculty Collective Agreement, Chair Job Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position Title</td>
<td>Department Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Term</td>
<td>A three-year term; normally a maximum of two consecutive terms. (3.5.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Relations</td>
<td>Report to Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>All regular faculty members are eligible. (3.5.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection Process</td>
<td>An Election Committee, composed of faculty, none of whom shall be candidates for the position, shall conduct a secret ballot, and refer the elected candidate to the Dean for appointment. (3.5.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Tasks</td>
<td>1. Department Chairs shall act independently in routine administrative matters pertaining to their program area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Department Chairs assist in the identification and development of external contracts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Department Chairs may, from time to time, supervise CUPE members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Department Chairs may be required to facilitate across disciplines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Department chairs are involved in establishing policies for the program areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Department Chairs provide work leadership to fulfill the day to day functions of the programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Department Chairs shall be elected by their peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. The role of Department Chairs in the evaluation process will be negotiated by the parties under the Collective Agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Department Chairs are responsible for ensuring departmental participation in the selection process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Department Chairs do not have a role in the formal grievance procedure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Department Chairs will recommend to the Dean on matters relating to vacations and short term leaves of absence within their department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. Department Chairs have the authority and responsibility for monitoring approved expense plans for their department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. Department Chairs shall advise students and the public with regards to the nature and scope of their program area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14. Department Chairs shall participate in the recruitment of students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15. Department Chairs shall provide input into program or service evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Appendix A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Evaluated for performance of duties specifically associated with the Chair position at</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Review Evaluation Process

least once in each term of office, and at any time after the first 4 months at request of Departmental faculty, the Dean or the Chair. The process shall be coordinated by an appropriate administrator and a Chair of another Department. Input will be provided from other Department Chairs, the Chair being evaluated, departmental faculty, other appropriate college employees and community respondents. The evaluation summary shall include one or more recommendations:

- A continuation of the term of office
- A change in performance
- A further evaluation to be performed within a specified period
- A termination of the assignment

Compensation

Department Chairs in instructional areas perform regular teaching functions, and would normally have release time for administrative duties within the range of 20% to 60% (no less than 50% of this release from teaching duties), The amount of release time necessary will be determined by the Dean in consultation with the Department. (3.5.7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLEGE 7</th>
<th>Source Documents: Faculty Collective Agreement, Chair Job Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position Title</td>
<td>Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Term</td>
<td>Normally for a period of two-years. (27.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Relations</td>
<td>Report to the Dean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>Minimum Qualifications:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Post-secondary qualifications consistent with teaching discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Three years of full-time teaching or educational development experience, preferably at the post-secondary level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Willingness to undertake Leadership training as required. (Job Description, March 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection Process</td>
<td>Selection of Chair will be the responsibility of the appropriate Dean and will be approved through the Dean’s Committee, in accordance with Appendix 4(b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Tasks</td>
<td>&quot;Chair&quot; - Primary role is to coordinate, under the direction of the Program Director, the activities of a designated group of instructors and/or ancillary staff. (Some instruction may be required.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Review Evaluation Process</td>
<td>Not stipulated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Compensation | Chair release time will be determined by the Dean’s Committee, and shall not exceed
fifty percent (50%) of the assigned workload.

Annual stipend $2,223.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLEGE 8</th>
<th>Source Documents: Faculty Collective Agreement, Chair Job Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position Title</strong></td>
<td>Academic Head (Associate Academic Head, Assistant Academic Head, Coordinator)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Term</strong></td>
<td>Term of one year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reporting Relations</strong></td>
<td>Report to Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Not stipulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selection Process</strong></td>
<td>The members of the bargaining unit shall elect one of their members. The election of an Associate Academic Head and an Assistant Academic Head will be made by the faculty from the appropriate centres. The names of the elected nominees will be sent as a recommendation to the College Board. (8.5) At a Union meeting in December of each year, the members of the bargaining unit shall elect one (1) of their members to each department and regional coordinator position for a term of one (1) year commencing on the following July 1. The election of coordinators will be made by the faculty from the department. The names of the elected nominees will be sent as a recommendation to the appropriate management representative. (8.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Tasks</strong></td>
<td>Not stipulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Review Evaluation Process</strong></td>
<td>Not stipulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compensation</strong></td>
<td>The teaching workload for the Academic Head shall be reduced by a margin of sixty percent (60%) to compensate for the additional administrative and related duties necessary to fulfill the functions of the Academic Head. The teaching workload for the Associate Academic Head shall be reduced by a margin of forty (40%) percent to compensate for the additional administrative and related duties necessary to fulfill the functions of the Associate Academic Head. The teaching workload for the Assistant Academic Head shall be reduced by a margin of twenty (20%) percent to compensate for the additional administrative and related duties necessary to fulfill the functions of the Assistant Academic Head. The teaching workload for Programme coordinators in any College location shall be reduced by a minimum of twenty percent (20%) to compensate for the additional administrative and related duties necessary to fulfill the functions of the programme coordinator. (13.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position Title</strong></td>
<td>Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Term</strong></td>
<td>Three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reporting Relations</strong></td>
<td>Report to Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Only continuing faculty members in the department are eligible for the position of chair. (25.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selection Process</strong></td>
<td>A Chair shall be appointed according to the following procedure: &lt;br&gt;a) Only continuing employees in the department shall be eligible for the position of Chair and shall be eligible to vote. &lt;br&gt;b) The recommendation to the designated supervisor of a department member for the position of Department Chair shall be determined by an election. &lt;br&gt;c) The members of the department shall be notified by the designated supervisor of the pending election at least two weeks prior to the date of the election. &lt;br&gt;d) The nomination and voting shall take place at a meeting of the department unless the designated supervisor and the department agree upon an alternative electoral process. The designated supervisor shall act as chair for the election. (29.5.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Tasks</strong></td>
<td>A Chair shall represent and act on behalf of the department in the Faculty and OC matters; ensure that the department performs the administrative functions described in clause 29.3.2; ensure that the department operates in accordance with established guidelines of the department, and other policies and procedures that are adopted by the department and the portfolio and OC; facilitate communication among department members, and between the department and other departments, the designated supervisor, OC, other educational institutions, professional associations, and program advisory committees. (29.4.2) &lt;br&gt;A Chair shall also make recommendations to the Dean or Director on the annual educational plan and workload assignments. The Chair shall endeavour to ensure that departmental recommendations on workload assignments reflect a fair and equitable distribution of workload in accordance with clause 19.1. (29.4.3) &lt;br&gt;A Chair shall also ensure that departmental selection committees and other relevant departmental committees are struck and proceed in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement. (29.4.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Review Evaluation Process</strong></td>
<td>Department members shall participate in the periodic review of the performance of the Chair. Such review may result in the department members recommending recall of the Chair to the College President. (25.6.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compensation

Chairs of instructional departments shall be released from a portion of their teaching assignment for the performance of the chair duties. Based on the normal instructional year teaching load of eight (8) TLUs, a Chair shall receive workload credit according to the following: (25.7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of FTEs in the Department</th>
<th>Teaching Load Release</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than or equal to 10</td>
<td>4 TLUs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 10</td>
<td>6 TLUs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chair Stipend (25.8)

Effective at the date of ratification, a Chair shall receive an annual stipend, payable bi-weekly, for performance of duties based on Step 1 of the Salary Scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of FTEs in the Department</th>
<th>Annual Stipend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than or equal to 10</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 10</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLEGE 10</th>
<th>Source Documents: Faculty Collective Agreement, Chair Job Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position Title</td>
<td>School Chair/Department Head (School Chairs are the equivalent to Department Heads and will be members of the appropriate instructional bargaining unit. School Chairs will be selected from within the respective School. 2003 LOA #5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Term</td>
<td>Three years, may be re-appointed for a subsequent term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Relations</td>
<td>Report to the Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>Educational qualifications must be at least equal to, but preferably greater than, the general educational requirements for the instructors in the majority of the programs for which she/he is responsible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In all cases, a Master’s degree is preferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Minimum of 5 years instructional experience in a discipline within the School, including curriculum development experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Previous experience in a supervisory capacity is preferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Attributes for Entry Level:</td>
<td>- Demonstrated commitment to continuous improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ability to work effectively and collaboratively with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Demonstrated organizational and interpersonal skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Chair Job Description, November 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection Process</td>
<td>School Chairs will be selected from within the respective School. 2003 LOA #5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Tasks</td>
<td>A school chair is a faculty member appointed by the College to administer the work of a School. A School Chair is responsible for making recommendations to a Dean in matters related to the overall operation and performance of a School and acts as a formal link between faculty and the administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Review Evaluation Process</td>
<td>Chairs and Department Heads are evaluated after completion of their first year in the position, and again six months prior to the end of their three-year term. Chairs and Department Heads who continue into subsequent terms will be evaluated six months prior to the end of their appointments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>Instructional Department Heads will receive additional workloads credits in recognition of their duties as head of a department in accordance with the following guidelines. (a) Three percent release time for each College employee whom they supervise. (b) An additional 20% of an annual workload may be provided where the department must maintain continuous contact with agencies which are an integral part of the department's instructional activity. (c) An additional 10% of an annual workload may be provided where the departmental non-personnel budget exceeds $50,000. Additional release time may be provided to meet other departmental needs not specified in 8.4.1 (b) or (c) above. Notwithstanding any of the above, the total release time for an instructional Department Head shall not normally exceed 80% of a normal workload. Department Head release may only exceed 80% for a period of twelve (12) months without the approval of the Association. (8.4) School Chairs will receive a total of 80% release time and a stipend equivalent to the Department Head stipend identified in the current collective agreement Department Head and School Monthly Stipend $360.28, Annual Stipend $4,323.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>COLLEGE 11</strong></th>
<th>Source Documents: Faculty Collective Agreement, Chair Job Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position Title</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Term</td>
<td>Three years; may be renewed to maximum six consecutive years. (13.3.4.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Relations</td>
<td>Report to the Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>A Department Head must simultaneously be a full-time regular instructor. An applicant does not have to be a full-time regular instructor at the time of the interview. The applicant, if appointed to the posted position, shall automatically become a full-time regular instructor at the time of appointment. (13.1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection Process</td>
<td>A selection committee process is used to select Department Head in Departments with 3 or less full-time equivalent instructors. Departments with more than three full-time equivalent instructors will vote by secret ballot to use either a selection committee or an election procedure to choose their</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Department Heads (13.4.1)  
| Election Procedures (13.5)  
| Selection Committee Procedures (13.6)  

## Key Tasks

### 2.1 Contribution to Learning Environment
1. Fosters quality in instruction;  
2. Ensures course and curriculum objectives are achieved;  
3. Ensures appropriate methods of assessment are in place;  
4. Guides the development of course and curriculum materials;  
5. Recommends desired changes in courses and/or programs to the appropriate governance and administrative bodies; and  
6. Assists in the provision of adequate instructional facilities and equipment.

### 2.2 Contribution to Student Success
1. Treats students with respect and interest;  
2. Deals with students in ways that recognize their diversity;  
3. Advises students of available College resources;  
   (student support, financial aid, admissions, etc.)  
4. Advises students appropriately for admissions/course placements;  
5. When appropriate, aids in placing graduates in employment; and  
6. Deals effectively with student issues.

### 2.3 Contribution to Faculty and Staff
1. Encourages participation in departmental committees and activities;  
2. Assists and supports staff and faculty professional development;  
3. Supports faculty and staff in their work; and  
   VCC/VCCFA Local Agreement 111  
4. Keeps members of the department and/or program informed about College developments.

### 2.4 Leadership
1. Communicates well verbally and in writing;  
2. Demonstrates understanding of the College as a whole;  
3. Deliberates before making a decision;  
4. Consults appropriately;  
5. Takes action in an effective manner;  
6. Fulfills responsibility relevant to position; and  
7. Demonstrates commitment to the department and the College.

### 2.5 Department Management
1. Supervises faculty and staff appropriately;  
2. Responds in a timely manner;  
3. Actively participates in the recruitment and renewal of the faculty and staff complement;  
4. In cooperation with faculty and staff, effectively schedules all duty, leave, holidays and professional development activities;  
5. Conducts effective department meetings;  
6. Coordinates and delegates appropriate duties and responsibilities;  
7. Effectively orients new faculty and staff to the department, the School, Centre and the College;  
8. Prepares and monitors the departmental budget;  
9. Participates in the evaluation and appraisal procedures set out for faculty and staff effectively and appropriately; and  
10. Resolves conflict effectively and fairly.

### 2.6 Department Planning and Development
1. Initiates departmental planning;
2. Supports faculty in planning; and
3. Participates in ongoing program review.

### 2.7 Contribution to College and Community

1. Maintains effective liaison with other Instructors with Responsibility
   Allowance and College services;
2. Maintains effective liaison with other institutions;
3. Maintains effective liaison with industry, business and government, as
   appropriate;
4. Ensures appropriate representation at Program Advisory and other provincial
   committees;
5. Represents the department effectively; and
6. Maintains good public relations for the College, as appropriate, and for
   departmental programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Review Evaluation Process</th>
<th>Evaluation Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 For a Department Head or Coordinator II, the evaluation process will be initiated and administered by the appropriate Dean or Director. For an Assistant Department Head, the appropriate Department Head will fulfill this role. The evaluation process will be supported by Human Resources and Research and Strategic Services. All comments and documentation will be kept strictly confidential and in accordance with Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy requirements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 A confidential survey questionnaire based on Joint Steering Committee approved criteria will be distributed amongst the agreed-to list of respondents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 All faculty and staff within the person’s department will be included on the list.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 The Department Head, Assistant Department Head or Coordinator II will also provide a list of employees from outside the department that they wish to have included.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3 The College may suggest a list that would be appropriate for most Department Heads, Assistant Department Heads or Coordinators II to consider for inclusion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Research and Strategic Services will tabulate the results of the questionnaire and send the results to the valuee.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 For a Department Head or Coordinator II, a copy of the tabulated results will also be sent to the appropriate Dean or Director and the two parties will meet to discuss the results. The Dean or Director will make a determination as to whether the evaluation is either satisfactory or not satisfactory pursuant to Article 13.3.4 and provide a rationale when an evaluation is deemed unsatisfactory.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 For an Assistant Department Head, a copy of the tabulated results will also be sent to the appropriate Department Head and they will meet to discuss the results. The Department Head will make a determination as to whether College 11 Faculty Local Agreement 113 evaluation is either satisfactory or not satisfactory pursuant to Article 13.3.4 and provide a rationale when an evaluation is deemed unsatisfactory.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 The Department Head, Assistant Department Head or Coordinator II may prepare a response or commentary on the results and recommendation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4 Evaluation Report

4.1 The tabulated results of the questionnaire, any response or commentary by the Department Head, Assistant Department Head or Coordinator II and the decision of the
appropriate evaluator will form the evaluation report. It shall be signed by the appropriate evaluator and the evaluatee and shall be included in the evaluatee’s official Personnel File. The evaluatee’s signature only indicates evidence of the report having been read.

4.2 The evaluation report shall be considered by the appropriate Vice-President or delegate in determining whether the Department Head, Assistant Department Head or Coordinator II is confirmed for the remainder of the term of appointment pursuant to Article 13.3.4.

4.3 A Department Head, Assistant Department Head or Coordinator II will be deemed to have received a satisfactory evaluation if one has not been completed within the first year of their appointment.

**5 Joint Steering Committee**

The Joint Steering Committee shall be responsible for approving the instruments and procedures of evaluation and will hear any submissions on their efficacy. The Joint Steering Committee may make revisions to the instruments and procedures and shall notify the College and Association when it does so.

**6** These procedures shall be subject to the grievance procedure contained in the Agreement.

| Compensation | A 50% reduction in teaching load; A Department Head shall normally instruct one-half of full-time. (13.9) Annual Instructor Responsibility Allowance $2,957 |