

# Should Bradley Establish an Academic Chairs Council?



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# Goal for Today

Discuss the possibility of establishing a Bradley Chairs Council or Chairs Forum

Provide a brief overview of such bodies at other institutions

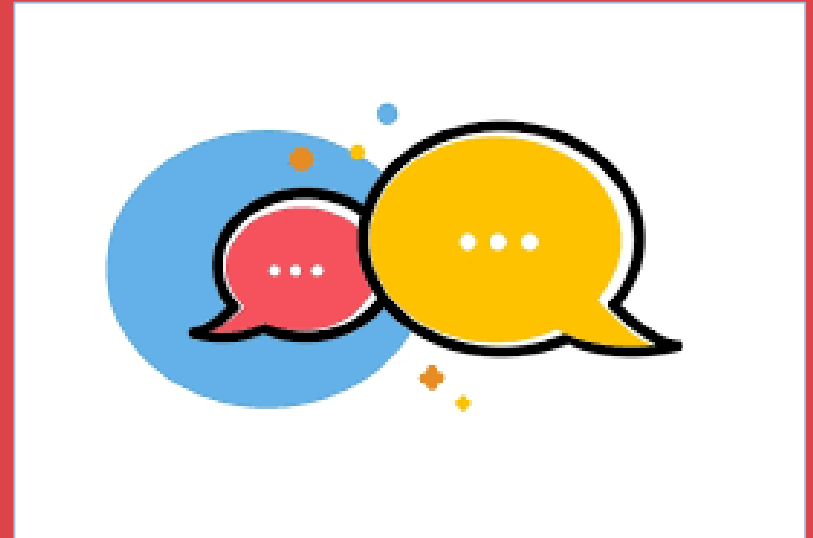
Explore the potential goals and operations of such a group on our campus



# Why a Chairs Council?

Department Chairs indicated that they

1. Wanted to increase their interactions and build relationships with chairs from other colleges
2. Share resources and ideas with chairs across the university
3. Have more opportunities to interact directly with administrators, such as the Provost



# What is a Chairs Council or Chairs Forum?

- Chair-only organization, open to chairs from all of the colleges
- Sets its own agenda and works on assigned or self-generated tasks independently of other administrators
  - May address public issues, such as policy, curriculum, budgets, and workloads
  - May address personal challenges, such as dealing with a difficult faculty member
  - Support and provide resources for new department chairs
- May provide an avenue for both horizontal communication between department chairs and vertical communication to higher administrators

# Why Might We Want to Establish a Chairs Council?

- Increase the interactions between chairs across all of the colleges
  - Discuss common issues
  - Foster collaborations and create synergies
- Provide direct interactions with key administrators and offices, such as the Provost, Student Services, Admissions, and Marketing & Communications
- Create opportunities for professional development
  - Technical training (eg. COP, budget)
  - HR training, such as how to supervise support staff
  - Communication and how to have difficult conversations
  - How to review and evaluate requests by faculty (eg. sabbatical requests)
- Share resources, best practices, and “how to” among department chairs
- Make suggestions, raise objections, and grant endorsements as a collective, and perhaps more influential, voice

# Possible Formats

- Formal:
  - Elected officers, by-laws for operation
  - Meetings with full agendas and recorded minutes
  - Defined expectations
- Informal:
  - No defined leadership structure
  - Limited agenda
  - No assigned tasks
- Hybrid or semi-formal model

# Example: Chair of Chairs

## Private Liberal Arts College in Indiana

- Informal meeting once a month
- Attendance is not required but it is considered part of chair duties
- One person (3 years term) serves as the Chair of Chairs and runs the meeting
- Agenda is set by the group, topics include things that affect people across the college
- Senior administrators attend if an issue rises that requires a broader conversation
- The Chair of Chairs meets with administrators as needed to communicate questions or concerns from the chairs meeting so they can report back to the group
- The Chair of Chairs advocates on behalf of the group
  - Useful during negotiations regarding compensation and when an updated list of chair duties was being drafted

# Discuss!

- If we were to develop a chairs council or chairs forum:
  - How do you envision the format of the group?
    - Formal, informal, or hybrid?
    - Would there be a governance structure, ie. chair of chairs?
    - How often should the group meet?
  - What do you think should be the primary goal(s) of this group?
  - What agenda items would you want to be included?
  - What agenda items are you NOT interested in?
  - Other thoughts and ideas



# What Do You Think?

Please also share feedback about  
this session to ADVANCE BU!



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