**Department Chair and Division Chief Interviews**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of interviewing your department chair and division chief is to understand the responsibilities each has in these roles, their vision for the department/division, their challenges and pressures about which you may be unaware, and how you as faculty can contribute to the vision of the department/division.

**INTERVIEW PROCESS**

* Meet with your department chair and/or division chief individually. Arrange a 1-hour interview. As part of the email requesting the interview, include information about your participation in *SPRINGBOARD* and indicate that this request is one of your assignments in the program, as well as information about what you are hoping to achieve from the meeting (*see Request for Interview template* *below*).
* Prepare a list of questions to ask (*see* *List of Sample Questions below*). Sending these questions ahead of time is not necessary; however, some department chairs and division chiefs may ask to see them in advance. It is unlikely that you will have time for all of the suggested questions. Select the ones that seem most important and interesting to you.
* This interview is an opportunity for you to get to know your department chair and division chief and to understand their positions as leaders in your department/division. Nonetheless, your Chair/Chief may want to ask you some questions about you and/or your needs while they are meeting with you; be prepared to address this when you ask if they have any questions for you at the end of the interview. You never know – this meeting may lead to future opportunities for you.
* At the start of the interview, to establish common ground and to understand the professional path of your leaders, ask about his/her background and professional training and why they chose this career path. In addition to the questions you prepare, feel free to add more or to adjust your “script” as the conversation develops. This is an ideal opportunity for you to spend time with your Department Chair and Division Chief. Most everyone enjoys telling about who they are, what they do, and their vision. Be respectful and appreciative of the time that has been made for you to interview him/her, and stay on schedule.
* Take notes during the interview, so that you can discuss the information you learned from the interviews at the final *SPRINGBOARD* session. Keep confidential all information shared by others during this session.
* Follow-up with a thank you note following the interview which includes a summary of the key points that you took away from the interview.

**DEBRIEFING AT *SPRINGBOARD* SESSION**

Be prepared to discuss these interviews with your advisors and fellow participants at our closing session. Some things to consider:

* the similarities and differences in how departments and divisions are organized and what is considered of value;
* how your goals align with those of the leadership in your department/division;
* what you learned that you were unaware of prior to the interview;
* the importance and value for you of this assignment; what you will do differently now after having these interviews; and
* who you might wish to interview next.

**REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW TEMPLATE**

Dear Dr. [Name]:

I am a participant in this year’s Health Sciences *SPRINGBOARD* program for junior faculty. This formal mentoring program is designed to enhance my career development through peer mentoring and senior advising. One of my assignments for this program is to interview my [Department Chair/Division Chief] to gain insight into your responsibilities and to understand your vision, current challenges, and major initiatives for the [Department of X/Division of X].

I hope you will be willing to meet with me for a one hour interview. Thank you for considering this request, and I look forward to your response and availability for a meeting.

Sincerely,

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW**

1. Why did you become Chair or Chief? How did you get to this point in your career?
2. Would you have taken a different career path if you had known what you know now? Why?
3. Who were your mentors? Who are your mentors now?
4. What do you see as your main function as Chair or Chief?
5. What do like most about this role? What do you like least? What was the biggest surprise?
6. What are your greatest rewards in this position? Why?
7. What are your greatest challenges in this position? Why?
8. What is your vision for the department and division?
9. What are your short term (1-3 years) and long-term (3-5 years) goals for the department or division?
10. What current initiatives are important to you and what are the initiatives that you want to implement over the next couple of years?
11. How do you balance the University/School mission of education, research and clinical care both in your own profession and as a chair/chief?
12. How do you balance your professional and personal life?
13. What has been the most significant pressure that you have faced from the dean and/or hospital leadership in the past 5 years or since you have been in this position? How have you addressed it?
14. What major fiscal issues do you face currently?
15. How do you get information on faculty regarding their professional development and success?
16. How do you get information on faculty regarding satisfaction/morale/concerns?
17. In an ideal situation, what information would you like to know and hear from faculty and through what mode of communication?
18. How could faculty contribute more to your vision and in what ways?
19. As the organization and the department/division change, how can faculty be more engaged and included in the change process?
20. How could I specifically help you as a faculty member achieve your vision and goals for the department/division?

**TIPS ON INTERVIEWING**

1. Try to schedule the interviews at the end of the day. That way, the person you are interviewing will not feel rushed to get to another meeting.
2. Send the questions to the person you are interviewing ahead of time. This helps orient them to the intended conversation.
3. Remember, your Chair or Chief is juggling numerous things. Be respectful of their time and do not be late for your meeting.
4. Respect scheduling difficulties. Do no misrepresent urgency.
5. Be polite to the administrative staff. S/he is the one who can get you appointments in the future when needed.
6. Make eye contact, shake hands, introduce yourself, and actively listen to his/her responses. Review your questions ahead of time, but you don’t need to strongly adhere to them. The purpose is to get to know your Chair or Chief.