CASE #1: Tactfully Replacing a Research Director Whose Skillset Isn't Meeting Departmental Needs

Case author: Steve Zweig, MD, MSPH, University of Missouri - Columbia

Context: The family medicine department had developed a strategic objective concerning a succession plan for each leader in her department. The research director was a highly successful principal investigator who had been in the position for about ten years. As the leadership team went through the process of defining the role of the research director, it became clear that the current faculty member struggled with managerial aspects of the role. While a marvelous mentor and innovative scholar managing other people, developing metrics, managing conflicts and holding people accountable was not interesting to research director. Furthermore, these efforts were frustrating for not only the chair but for other members of the research group.

Questions for discussion:
1. How does the chair communicate the need for a change to the current highly respected and valuable senior faculty member research director?
2. What strategies should the chair use to identify a potential successor?
3. An existing faculty member was asked to serve as the new research director.
    a. What can be done to recognize and redirect the former research director as the new one is brought on board?
    b. How does the chair ensure the success of the new research director?

POSSIBLE RELEVANT COMPETENCIES:
   Leadership
       a. Utilize tools of strategic planning
       b. Build and sustain a leadership team
       c. Understand and change departmental culture and structure
   Administration/management
       d. Budget development
       e. Faculty development/talent management
             i. Matching talent with departmental needs
            ii. Mentoring faculty
           iii. Performance evaluation
            iv. Faculty retention
             v. Succession planning
            vi. Managing departmental communications
       f. Facilitate difficult conversations
   Personal development
       g. Manage transitions in leadership and roles

CASE #2: Job descriptions and job structures: finding the right fit for a clerkship program

Case author: Steve Zweig, MD, MSPH, University of Missouri - Columbia

Context: The clerkship director and director of medical student education was planning on retiring from a large family medicine department in the Midwest. The director ran the existing programs for over 20 years and understandably left big shoes to fill. Two members of the pre-doc team, one of who was the associate clerkship director wished to be clerkship director, but neither wished to take on the position by herself. Several other members of the department were also potential prospects.

After a comprehensive review of the job descriptions of the medical student education director, clerkship director and associate clerkship director (who mostly supervises a 4 week FM preceptorship), a decision was made to split the first job between the two faculty members who wished to work together. Another faculty member was brought in as associate director – with the assent of the clerkship co-directors. Finally a senior faculty member was asked to serve as overall medical student education director (responsibility for all 4 years of the curriculum).

Questions for discussion:
1. Why are job descriptions important in the leadership transition process?
2. What problems might arise from have co-leadership of the clerkship?
3. What advantages and disadvantages might ensue by basically replacing two people in three positions with four people in three positions?

POSSIBLE RELEVANT COMPETENCIES:
Leadership
  a. Understand and shape departmental culture – was change needed?
  b. Build and sustain a leadership team – accountability of a few vs. diversity of the many
  c. Embrace diversity and inclusion.
Administration/management
  a. Faculty development and talent management
       1. Positions development, recruitment, hiring
       2. Matching talent with department needs
       3. Matching effort with resources
       4. Mentoring faculty
       5. Performance evaluation
       6. Faculty retention

b. Succession planning
c. Manage departmental communications
External relationships
a. Network with others in the institution
b. Manage relationships with other external entities
7. Teaching partners – preceptors

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CASE #3: Emergency Transition after a Rupture: how to manage a leadership transition after a firing, quitting, death or other sudden end

Case authors: *Jeffrey Borkan, MD, PhD, Alpert Medical School of Brown University, Rhode Island*

Context: You have been a senior leader of a department and/or residency for a number of years and have worked with a department/residency administrator who, despite feedback and mentoring, has never been able to successfully accomplish many of the core tasks required by your department/residency, or by the larger organizations – the hospital, medical school, and health system. You and your other colleagues are dependent on this person for everything from budgeting to personnel management to interactions with other departments/residencies. Although there are other staff, much of the life blood of the department/residency passes through her office and her personal style is to be somewhat controlling and poor at delegation. As the activities and responsibilities of the department/residency increase, the inadequacies of the individual to fulfill the role become more glaring -- and problematic for you and your colleagues. Despite the best efforts by the administrator and the organization at remediation and mentoring, no improvements in function are achieved and the stress/pressure begins to build up on the person who "is not a quitter". After a particularly negative annual review, the administrator becomes anxious to the point of debilitation and is provided a sick leave from her primary care physician. Despite treatment, she never improves sufficiently to return and after a number of weeks/months, is terminated. In the interim, some of her tasks were picked up by others, but much of what she did was known only to her – and the electronic files were only on the person's work computer (and you lack the necessary passwords). The administrator is unwilling and unable to provide any orientation or training to the next person.

Questions for discussion:
1. How do you plan for the administrator's succession in the short term (filling the gaps) and long term (finding the right person or persons)?

2. What could you have done to prevent the situation from occurring and from occurring again?
3. What have you learned from this experience which will help with other succession planning, including your own?
4. What competencies and proclivities do you seek in the next candidate?
5. Who should be on your search committee?

POSSIBLE RELEVANT COMPETENCIES:

Administration/management
    a. Understand departmental finances, including:
        i. Sources of income
        ii. Matching revenues and expenditures
        iii. Budget development
        iv. Budget growth and budget cuts
    b. Understand Human Resources issues, including:
        i. Federal/state employment law
        ii. Local institutional policies
        iii. Leadership structure for faculty/staff
        iv. Assessment of departmental resources
        v. Faculty development and talent management, including:
            1. Position development, recruitment, hiring
            2. Matching talent with departmental needs
            3. Matching effort with resources
            4. Mentoring faculty
            5. Performance evaluation
            6. Promotion
            7. Faculty retention
        vi. Succession planning
    c. Manage departmental communications
    d. Negotiate effectively across the departmental and organizational spectrum
    e. Facilitate difficult conversations

Personal development
    a. Manage calendar, communications, administrative support
    b. Cultivate self-awareness with effective interpersonal communication
    c. Assess one's own skills and leadership style
    d. Manage time effectively
    e. Balance various roles of a department chair
    f. Evaluate and choose external leadership roles
    g. Manage transitions in leadership and roles
    h. Develop resiliency and self-care routines

External relationships
    a. Understand where the department fits in institutional culture, including:
        i. Communicate value of the department to the institution
        ii. Communicate values of the institution to department
        iii. Network with others in your institution

      iv.   Partner/negotiate with other departments for mutual gain
      v.   Understand overlapping and different needs of medical school and hospital/health system
      vi.   Manage departmental image in the institution
      vii.   Manage your relationship with your Dean/President/CEO
  b. Manage relationships with other external entities, including:
      i.   Payers - Insurers, employers, government
      ii.   Teaching partners – preceptors, FQHCs
      iii.   Partners in patient care – community agencies, nursing homes, affiliated practice groups
  c. Define role within the practice plan
  d. Develop relationships with family medicine organizations
  e. Build endowments and philanthropy

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CASE #4: Being Intentional About Succession Planning and Professional Development

Case author(s): John Franko, MD, Carolinas HealthCare System

Context: As an external candidate you were chosen to be the Chair of a moderate sized Department of Family Medicine in a community medical school (i.e. the medical school does not own or control the hospital(s) where resident and medical student clinical education occurs). There are three separate residency programs in three separate outpatient offices as well as an administrative office in a fourth location. The department is very involved in teaching in the medical school during the pre-clinical years as well as during the clinical years. Several faculty are Course Directors for clinical instruction during the pre-clinical years and there is a FM Clerkship Director. In addition, the department runs a four-year rural training track for the medical school.

The leadership structure includes a Vice Chair for Education, a Director of Rural Programs, a Director of Research, three Residency Program Directors and a department Executive Director (Administrator). On the clinical side, each clinic has a Medical Director and Office Manager. There are 30 total faculty: 25 physicians, 3 clinical psychologists and 2 PhD researchers. The Vice Chair for Education is nearing retirement as is the Director of Research. There are no clear successors.

The concern is that most programmatic leadership is only one person deep. Associate Program Directors are inconsistently named and there are no Associate Medical Directors. The Executive Director has a sizeable staff yet none of the

positions has the scope needed to understand the entirety of the departmental operations.

Questions:
1. How might you reorganize the department to create opportunities for advancement?
2. What resources might you need to develop leadership skills for faculty at multiple levels in their career development?
3. What succession planning needs can you identify?
4. What might you ask for from the Dean as part of your "package" for the department to help with department leadership/professional development with an eye on succession planning?

POSSIBLE RELEVANT COMPETENCIES:

Leadership
    a. Create, sustain, and reassess mission, vision and values
    b. Utilize iterative tools of strategic planning
    c. Understand and change departmental culture
    d. Understand and shape departmental structure
    e. Build and sustain leadership team

Administrative/Management
    Understand Human Resources issues, including:
        i. Federal/state employment law
        ii. Local institutional policies
        iii. Leadership structure for faculty/staff
        iv. Assessment of departmental resources
        v. Faculty development and talent management, including:
            1. Position development, recruitment, hiring
            2. Matching talent with departmental needs
            3. Matching effort with resources
            4. Mentoring faculty
            5. Performance evaluation
            6. Promotion
            7. Faculty retention
        vi. Succession planning

Personal Development
    g. Manages transitions in leadership roles

External Relationships
    a. Understand where the department fits in institutional culture, including:
        i. Communicate value of the department to the institution
        vii. Manage your relationship with your Dean/President/CEO