

# Things I Wish I Had Known As a New Department Chair

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- More **email** than you've probably seen before
  - Inbox: 60-100 emails in a workday
  - Send: 30-50 emails/responses in a day
    - ...on top of other duties!
- Your **time** is in-demand
  - All of it will be taken if you don't protect it
  - This includes evenings and weekends!
- Hang in there
  - Most tasks can wait
  - Many challenging tasks become much easier after 3-6 months on the job

# Workload: What to Expect

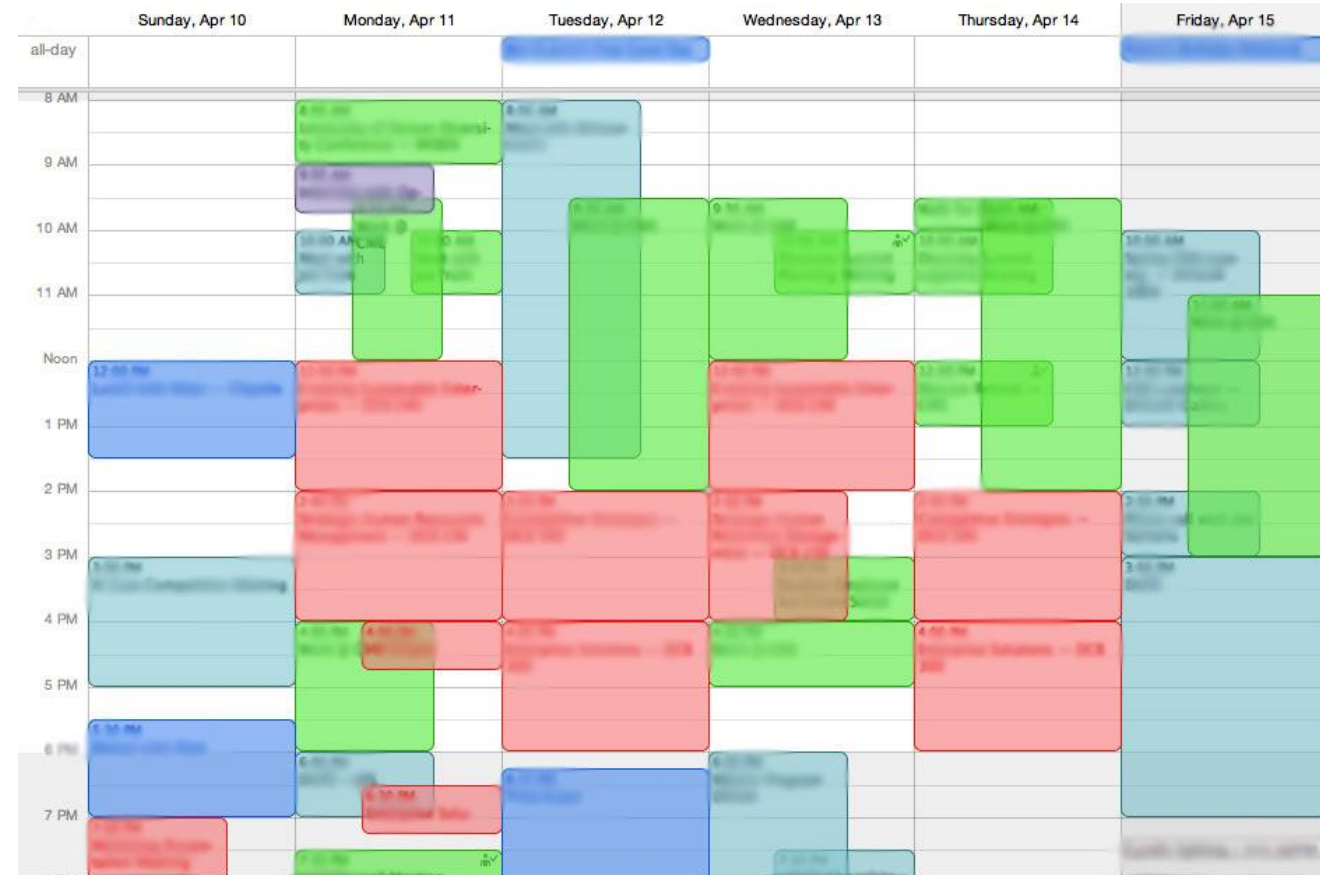
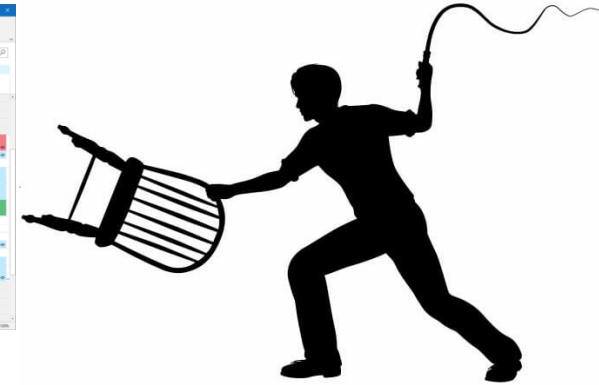
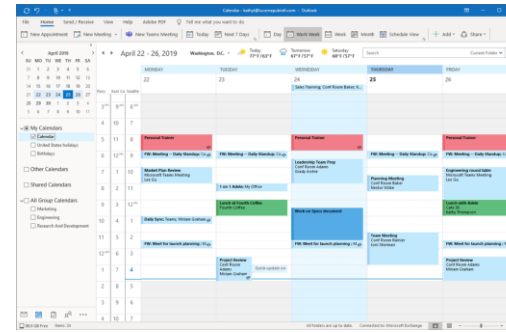


Image courtesy AbhinovPMP

# Taming the Calendar



- Hold time for
  - ...Emails and paperwork (some hours each day, at least 8-10 hrs per week)
  - ...Anticipated last-minute emergencies (esp. start of semester)
  - ...Weekly student meetings (DQ/advisement/change-of-major/other issues)
  - ...**Yourself!** (make time for self-care, and protect it)
- Push (some) tasks forward as needed
  - But leave a fixed calendar event for the actual hard **DUE DATE**
- Color-code as appropriate, for example...
  - **Meetings**
  - **Paperwork tasks**
  - **Emails to return**
  - **Items you're waiting on**
  - **Items you finish (do not delete from calendar, but perhaps change color)**

# Email Maintenance

- Answering emails *could* take most of the day
- Remember...
  - Almost any email can wait 24 hours
    - Learn to skim emails without answering (*it's hard!*)
    - Record and prioritize the important ones
  - Your staff and faculty can answer some emails
    - As appropriate, loop them in
  - Buy time when appropriate
    - "By when can I get back to you on this...?"
    - ...and follow-through!
  - Don't delete! Organize...
    - Make email folders and use these to archive messages



# Opinions: When (Not) to Share Them

- Listen more than you speak
  - Opinions are subjective
    - Share when solicited, or if necessary
  - Save your complaints
    - Staff and faculty don't need them (and probably have their own)
    - Find an outlet
- Avoid divisive words
  - As possible refer to all colleagues as being on same team/family
- Remember...
  - People tend to remember what the Chair says
  - People may walk into the room while you're talking (...*about them!*)



# Running a Meeting

## Robert's Rules of Order

- A manual of parliamentary procedure by Henry Martyn Robert
- Cheat sheets and tutorial videos exist online
- Recommended for running Department meetings
  - Keeps discussions from becoming deadlocked
  - Keeps proceedings official
- Always have a scribe (taker of minutes)

## Department Meetings Needed For...

- Staffing Department/College Committees
  - Usually first meeting of Academic Year
  - Ask for nominations, including self-nomination, for committees, then a Dept vote to approve
- Curriculum Changes (New Courses/Programs or Modified Courses/Programs)
  - Each such change requires a Dept vote to approve before going to College level
- Faculty Hiring Ads
  - Require a Dept vote before posting
- Other actionable items as they come up



Image courtesy SeekPNG

# ...More on Meetings

- Letting Faculty steer the ship
  - Chair should not make (many? any?) motions during meetings
  - Consult with faculty prior to the meeting, particularly senior faculty
    - Ask appropriate faculty to make motions
    - Determine the overall feeling of the department
    - Build consensus with stakeholders *in advance of meeting*
- If participant speaks too much...
  - Can respond: "I think you made some excellent points and made yourself clear. Let's hear from others on this matter."
  - Can invoke Robert's Rules of Order
    - If the board has no rule regarding length of speech, default limit of **10 minutes**
- Document *all* meetings (even meetings of 2 people)
  - As appropriate, distribute these notes by email (especially if there are deadlines within!)
  - *At least* maintain this documentation for yourself



## The Job Is Never Done

- Even if you get everything straightened out...
- Even if everything has been going smoothly...
- Even if you are months ahead of schedule...
- *More work will find you!*
  - Students need help
  - Faculty need guidance
  - Administrative requests come in
  - You must often engage in *difficult conversations*
    - Sometimes again and again with the same people



# Handling Student Complaints

- There are (at least) 2 sides to every story
  - Be sure to listen before making a judgment
  - Be careful to keep the judgment to yourself until necessary to share
- Try not to make enemies
  - Some relationships will last longer than others
- When to involve Associate Dean...
  - They often receive complaints from students
  - They can join you in a meeting with faculty, which can help support the strength of the agenda
  - Learn your AD's approach...
    - Are they pro-active and hands-on in addressing issues?
    - Do they prefer to defer to Chair?

# Resources

- Faculty Affairs
  - RTP, full-time hiring, part-time hiring
  - Sabbaticals, Difference-In-Pay, Personal/parental leave
- Human Resources
  - New staff/lecturers hiring/evaluation, student-assistants hiring
- Associate Dean and Other Chairs
  - Curriculums, students, faculty
- Admissions and Records / Office of Undergraduate / Graduate Studies
  - DPRs, graduation checks, student forms
- Dean
  - \$, new faculty positions, RTP



Photo by [Sharon McCutcheon](#) on [Unsplash](#)

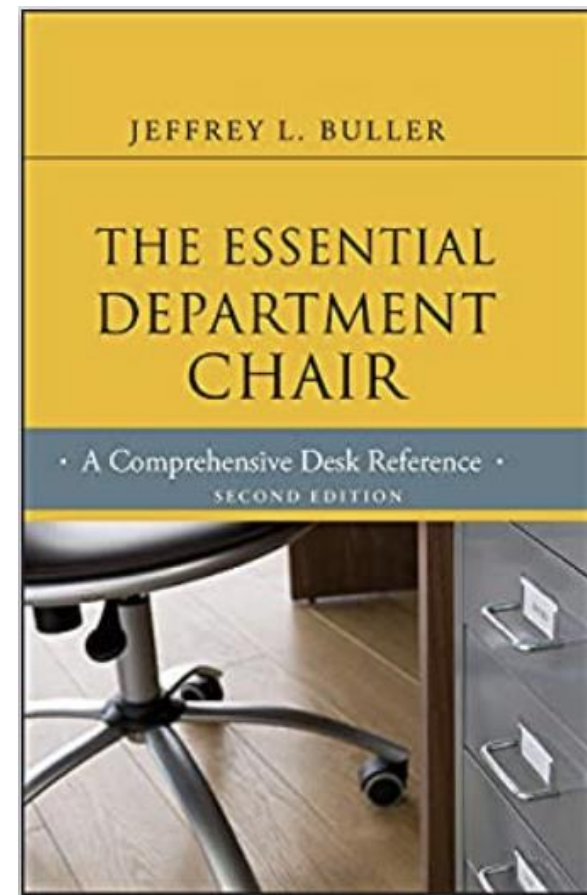
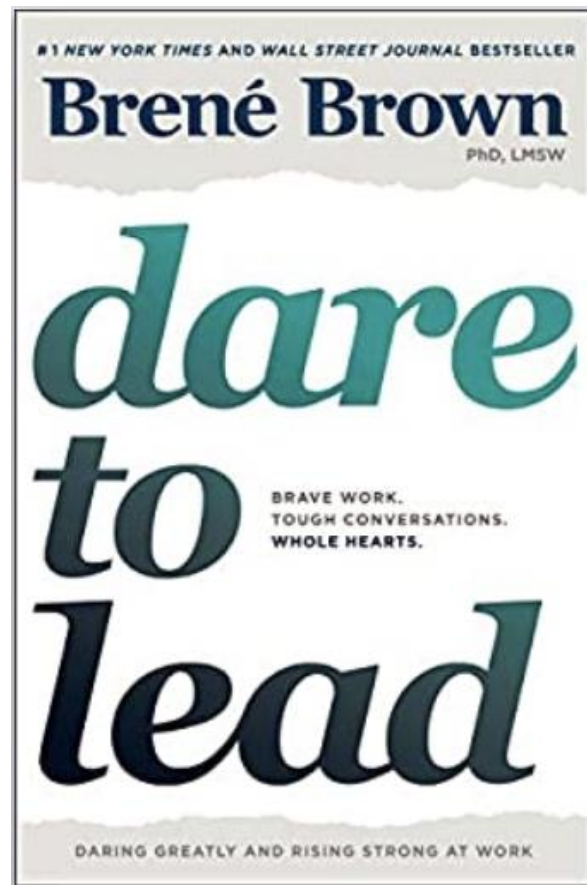
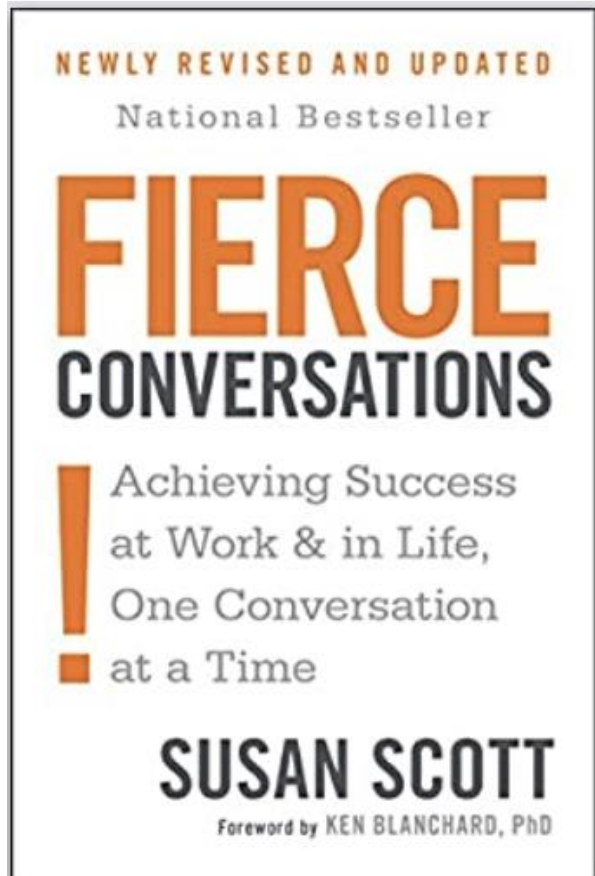
# Proactively Communicate

- Regular communication with Dean
  - Keep reports to maximum of 30 minutes
  - Keep emails *very* concise
  - Summarize department updates and difficulties as they arise
- Keep an open communication with reliable Senior Faculty
  - They know the history of Department and College
  - They have experienced many challenges that you will also face
  - Some of them may have been Chair (if you are lucky)
    - Can provide mentorship
- Make friends with Chairs in your College
  - Can help you find solutions to problems they have solved, and vice-versa

# Common Chair Tasks *(in descending order of time-commitment)*

- Develop/maintain Schedule of Classes (SOC) and assign sections
- RTP Letters / Class Visits
- Disqualification Contracts (Conditions for Readmission)
- General Student Advisement
- Change of Majors
- Curriculum Consultation/Approval
- Course Substitution Forms / Manual Course Transfers
- P-Card Approval, *toward end-of-month*
- Master Payroll Certification (MPC), *mid-month*
- Absence/Timesheet Approval, *beginning-of-month*
- Signing Miscellaneous Paperwork
- Chargebacks and Requisitions
- Grade Change Approval
- Cayuse Sponsored Projects Approval

# Supplemental Reading



Questions?

