

Physiology Chair Burnout

Steven R. Houser, Ph.D. FAHA
Vera R. Goodfriend Cardiovascular
Professor
Chair Of Physiology

What is “burnout”

Stress that can cause “burnout”

- *Administrative relationship* stress includes not knowing how the dean evaluates the chair's performance, resolving differences with the dean, trying to influence the dean, receiving insufficient recognition, not being able to satisfy conflicting demands from one's superiors, having insufficient authority, feeling that progress in one's administrative career was unsatisfactory, and receiving an inadequate salary.

Stress that can cause “burnout”

- *Administrative task stress.* The variables causing stress are writing letters and memos, meeting report deadlines, attending time-consuming meetings, having a heavy work load, trying to gain financial support for the department, preparing budgets and allocating resources, complying with rules and regulations, and seeking compatibility among institutional, department, and personal goals.

Stress that can cause “burnout”

- *Human relations stress* apart from the other stress dimensions. These consist of making decisions that affected the lives of faculty, staff, and students; trying to satisfy the demands of different constituencies; having too much delegated responsibility; and feeling inadequately trained for the job.

What are the causes?

- Expectations are unrealistic.
- Resources are inadequate.
- Leadership skills are inadequate and training is inadequate.
- New responsibilities overwhelm the Chair and their individual performance declines.
- Faculty leaders are not supporters of the Chair.

How we evaluate Chair performance at TU

- Annual performance evaluation is based on individual performance (funding, publications, teaching, etc).
- Annual performance is based on the collective performance of departmental faculty.
- University evaluates every 5 years.
- Most chairs serve 2 terms of 5 years. Some serve less and a few serve more.

Properties of a “successful” Chair

- A champion of the faculty.
- Leads by example.
- Respected by senior management.
- Well funded.
- Program builder.
- Great recruiter.

Properties of an unsuccessful chair

- Cannot sustain their research program.
- Are not publishing at previous rates.
- Recruited faculty are not developing.
- No multi-investigator programs.