
Academic Orthopaedic Consortium

How to Optimize Division Chief Performance

A Presentation by Ron Faulbaum and Brad Lee

Mid-Winter Business & Leadership Symposium- February 2021



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No conflict of interest nor financial relationships to any companies, products, or services discussed in this presentation

So just how important do Chairs consider the Division Chief to Department success?

- They rated it among the MOST important of their leadership initiatives (97.5% indicate either “very important” or “important”) based on the Chair survey recently published by the AOC

Chair Feedback for 2021

How important are these leadership initiatives to being a truly effective Chair and leading your musculoskeletal enterprise? Several of our AOC Leaders are working with me and with J3P Healthcare Solutions to develop free webinars and also cost-effective leadership development programs for those who desire more since so many Chairs routinely contact me about these services.

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Low Importance	Not Important at all	Weighted Average
Department Culture- Culture is NOT a program. Define for people the behaviors you value and how you do the work. Make culture real and tangible. Give stakeholders a sense of ownership over creating your culture, every day. Create a culture of quality, collaboration, innovation, pride, leadership, and connectedness.	87.50%	12.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4.88
Strategic Planning- Engage physician and executive leaders in a meaningful process that creates consensus around a clear vision, and defined goals that are aligned with the institution. Begin to build a sense of team, and a culture of accountability.	80.00%	17.50%	0.00%	2.50%	0.00%	4.75
Establishing a welcoming and nurturing sense of cultural wellbeing for Residents and Fellows within a culture of quality, collaboration, innovation, pride, leadership, and connectedness.	75.00%	20.00%	5.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4.70
Leadership Role Clarity/Job Descriptions- Define what's expected of physician and admin leaders, including job descriptions, leadership structure, quantifiable goals, timelines, performance evaluation tools, and accountability.	55.00%	42.50%	0.00%	2.50%	0.00%	4.50
Establishing and managing regularly scheduled meetings with your Vice Chairs, Division Chiefs, and key leaders that are built around effective agendas and actionable items that engage all.	55.00%	37.50%	7.50%	0.00%	0.00%	4.47
Effective tools, and processes to identify and assist physicians who are struggling	45.00%	47.50%	5.00%	2.50%	0.00%	4.35
Building business acumen in the physician leadership team	37.50%	52.50%	10.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4.28
Annual Retreats - Engage stakeholders in a practical annual session to ensure steady progress, stay focused on the vision, measure results and adapt to changing dynamics, and reinforce team accountability.	25.00%	37.50%	30.00%	7.50%	0.00%	3.80

This presentation will provide ideas on how to establish structure, define roles, quantify deliverables, and use a rigorous process to recruit for these positions.

Note: *We will be distributing this presentation and a detailed job description for Division Chiefs that can be modified/adapted for the use of AOC Departments.*

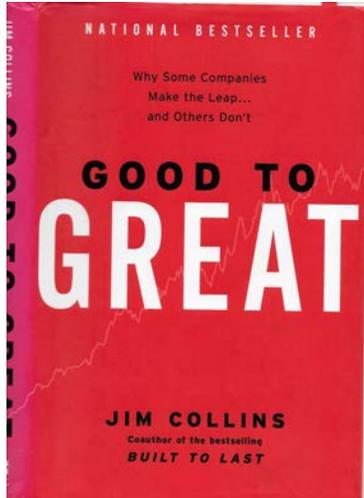
If you have a Division Chief job description that you feel is solid, please let us know.

- *Division Chief positions are common to all academic orthopaedic programs and the most successful programs leverage this leadership talent pool to advance the department mission*
- *Where programs are unable to leverage this talent pool, common reasons are a lack of role definition, engagement, accountability, and/or poor recruitment processes*
- *The result is the Chair continues to do a lot of “heavy lifting” in terms of strategic planning, faculty recruitments, faculty evaluations, operational decision-making, problem solving, etc.*

Let's step outside the academic environment for a moment to consider how other organizations approach leadership roles

In a book entitled "The Generals" by Tom Ricks, the author describes the leadership model used by one of the most successful leaders of WWII, General George C. Marshall. In his model, Marshall:

- 1) identified the leadership attributes he required
- 2) used his military network to find candidates that fit these attributes
- 3) promoted these individuals into positions where they could be most successful
- 4) moved quickly to relieve a commander (over 10% were replaced) based on results
- 5) re-assigned these replaced commanders many of whom found success later in the war



In Jim Collins classic book, the author describes a consistent pattern with organizations that make the leap from good performance to exceptional performance.

Exceptional companies would invest in a ***rigorous selection process to find talent***, and make every effort to retain that individual, even finding a different “seat on the bus” if their initial performance was below expectations. However, if despite these efforts the performance did not improve, the exceptional companies moved quickly to sever the individual.

lessons to be drawn from these examples:

- Identify the talent attributes needed to be successful in this position
- Determine the role and responsibilities
- Establish specific outcomes to assess performance
- Conduct a rigorous recruitment effort
- Move decisively if someone is failing in this leadership role

what attributes should a successful division chief possess?

Division Chief Attributes

Clinical Skills

Academic Skills

Communication Skills

Personal Qualities

Excellent Surgical Skills and Reputation

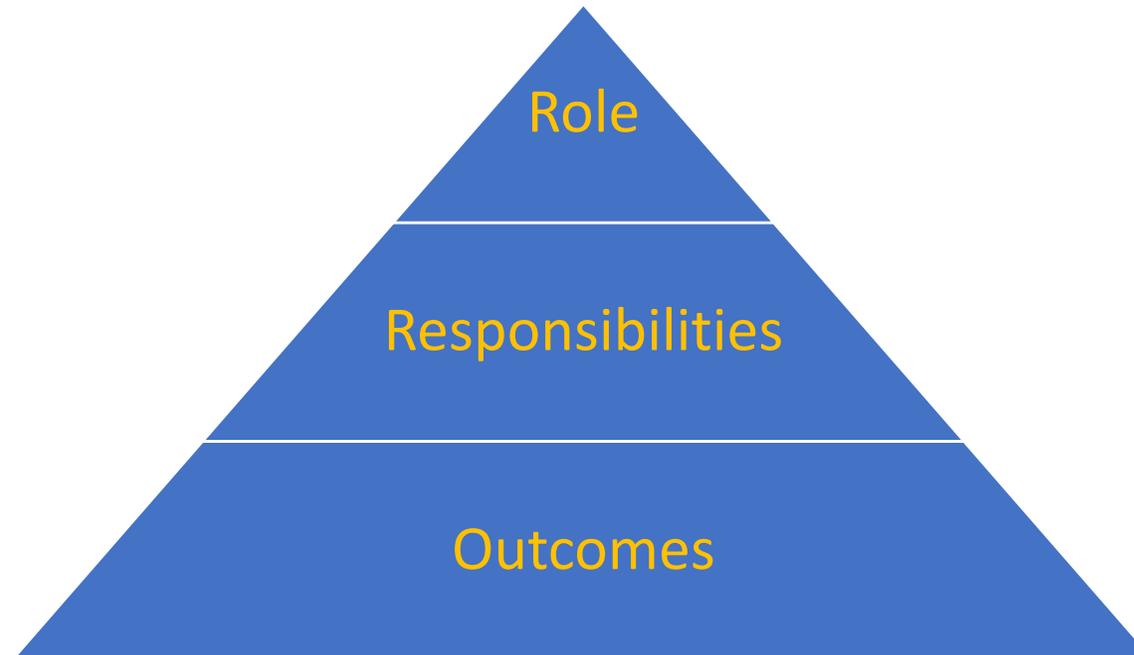
Rank $\geq 50\%$ tle WRVU within sub-specialty

Demonstrated research & teaching skills

Excellent listening and speaking habits

Integrity
Team Player
Work Ethic
Goal Driven

*Assembling a division chief job
description*





Role
Description

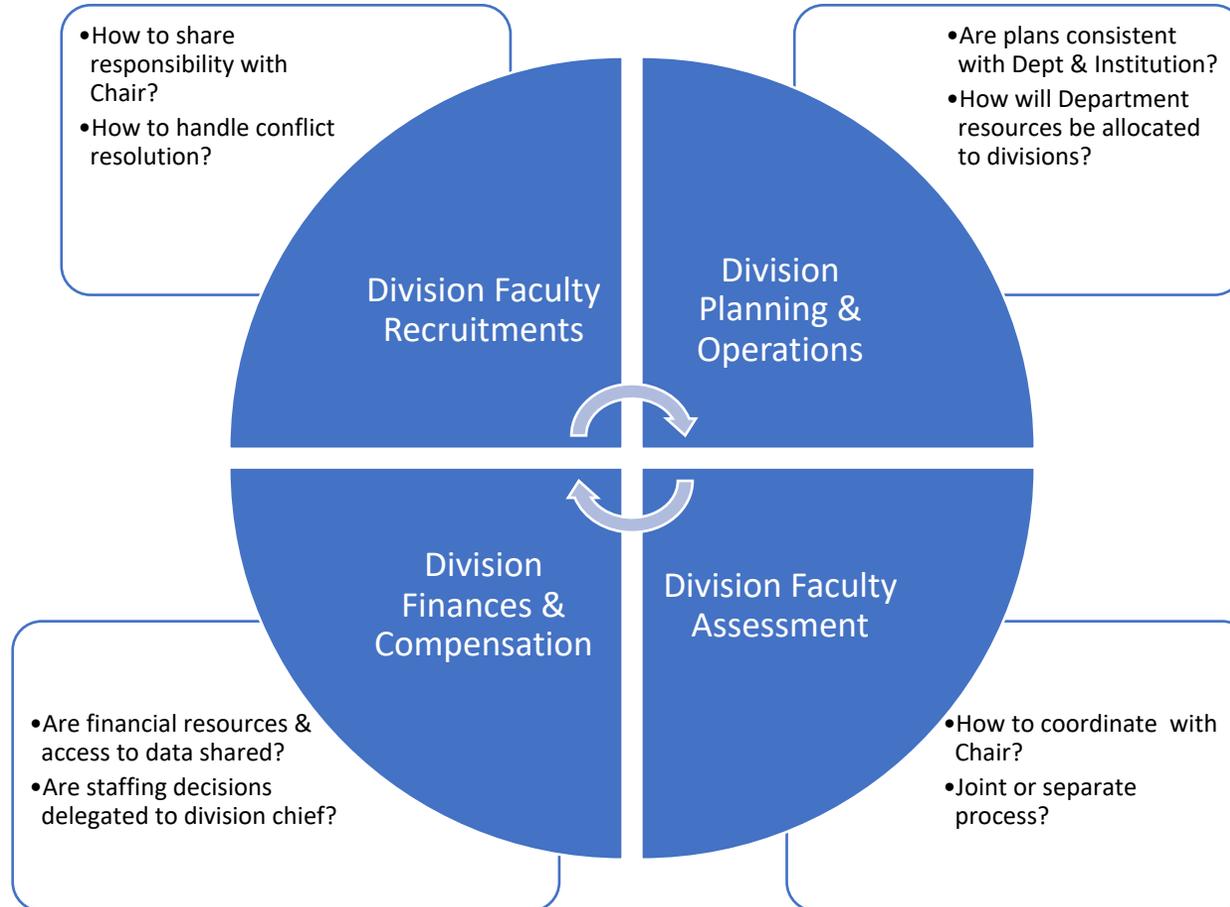
The Division Chief is a key leadership position within the Department and is responsible for:

- Implementing the department's mission of excellence in clinical care, education, and research for their division
- Optimizing division development, performance, and reputation

This position reports directly to the Chair and division faculty and staff report to the division chief.

Responsibilities

what are the responsibilities of the division chief and how do they intersect with those of the Chair ?



Responsibilities

- Recruitment, retention, and evaluation of division faculty
- Planning and achievement of division goals
- Manage division clinical operations to include clinical quality, safety, productivity, and efficiency
- Oversee division training and research programs
- Assure compliance with department, institutional, and regulatory policies
- Achieve division financial sustainability

Outcomes

what are the deliverables from the division chief?

Personnel Management

- Recruit one additional division surgeon next year and a second surgeon in three years
- Prepare and deliver [specify frequency] faculty evaluations
- Collaborate with team leaders to develop high-performing support staff

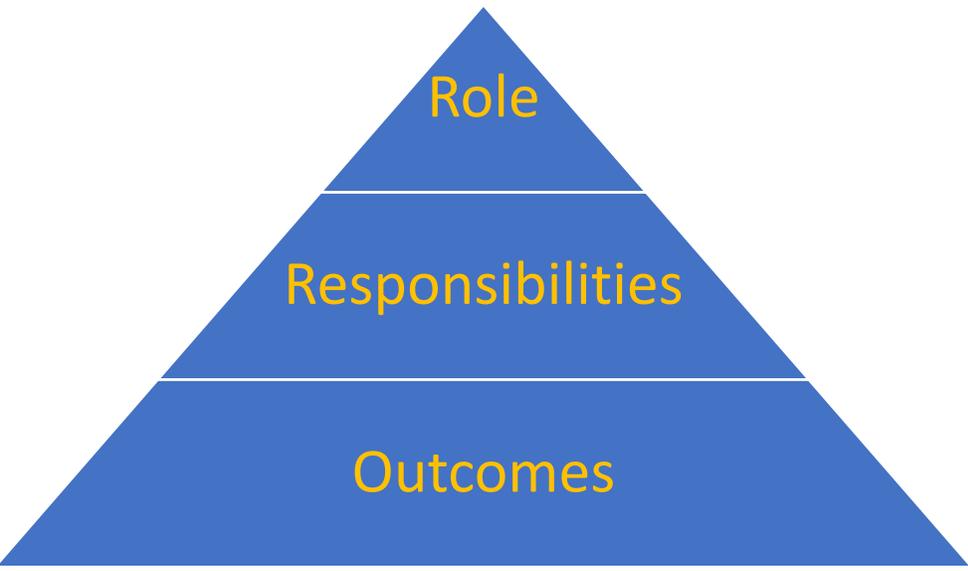
Planning and Execution

- Develop annual division strategic plan using department templates
- Manage resources effectively to achieve goals – workforce, facilities, equipment, financial assets, etc.
- Regularly assess division performance using department provided dashboards
- Implement data driven solutions to problems in collaboration with division faculty & staff
- Collaborate with CAO to achieve financial sustainability consistent with division plan
- Achieve top quartile results in patient satisfaction, patient safety, clinical productivity and other metrics as determined

Communications

- Meet [specify frequency] with division faculty & staff, prepare agenda, distribute meeting notes
- Meet [specify frequency] with Chair and Chief Administrative Officer
- Maintain division training plan that includes trainee orientation, training objectives, and assessment process
- Prepare annual division research report that summarizes lines of investigation, faculty % effort, funding sources, resource requirements, grant applications, publications, etc.

Given the responsibilities of a fully engaged division chief, how should their compensation be structured?



Role

Responsibilities

Outcomes

Anecdotal information suggests that programs typically provide a bonus in the \$ 10K to \$30K range

Another approach would be to lower the targets for calculating production-based incentives [e.g. wrvu] to account for the additional administrative time

More detailed information on division chief compensation across the member programs would be useful

final thoughts

- To optimize division chief performance, it is important to carefully define their role, their responsibilities, their expected outcomes, and to create an open and honest communication pathway
- Creating daylight between the Chair and Division Chief positions on faculty recruitments or faculty evaluations can be potentially devastating to leadership development
- Invest in a development program for the division chief(s) to include leadership training, peer mentoring, business and HR educational opportunities, career planning
- Consider a policy of term limits with appointment renewal periods or standard rotation of the division chief position as a means to engage and reward other high performing faculty or to remove poor performing division chiefs

recruitment process best practices
by Brad Lee