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Statement of Consulting Approach

My consulting approach is based on several guiding principles: (1) one size doesn’t fit all; (2) to be strong externally a department must first be strong internally; and (3) a department’s quality is increased to the degree that it can draw on the abilities of all its members. I have applied these principles to my work as an associate dean (2009-2014), department chair (12 years), local faculty union president (Akron-AAUP, 2015-2017), and as an external consultant.

There are several additional aspects of the department and my background that are worth mentioning. First, for my first several years as chair, we also were home to an interdisciplinary program in anthropology (as it grew, we helped to spin it off into its own department). Second and related, one of our degrees is in criminology/law enforcement. Third, our Ph.D. is offered as part of a joint doctoral program with Kent State University. Prior to joining Akron, I taught for 12 years at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where for 5 ½ years I coordinated an interdisciplinary Ph.D. program in urban studies, a program that was sponsored by sociology, urban affairs, and history and that also drew on faculty from economics, geography, political science and social work. Fourth, as the president of our AAUP local union has given me a campus wide perspective on a considerable number of issues pertinent to various aspects of faculty and department life. Finally, my main responsibilities as Associate Dean involved faculty affairs, and as such, I worked extensively with faculty, chairs and administrators across the university and in professional Arts and Sciences associations.

In sum, let me add one concluding remark. It seems that most external reviewers recommend additional resources for departments, with the following argument: give them more money and they will be better. Although I’ve also recommended more support, with tight budgets in many institutions, what I’ve learned is that the best way to get more resources is to be better. Thus, perhaps my own best asset is to help departments be the very best that they can be with current resources as the necessary first step to obtaining additional support.