

## **Characteristics of the Ideal Department**

Taken from: <http://www.pkal.org/documents/CharacteristicsofIDEALDeptSurvey.pdf>

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For each item, please consider whether it is important, as well as whether it exists within your department.

### **With respect to VISION, the ideal department:**

1. Has a common agenda, or at least non-conflicting agendas
2. Has everyone “pushing the wagon” in the same, agreed upon direction
3. Has a clear vision with effective (and flexible) leadership
4. Has a stated and understood mission statement
5. Has clearly stated rules and regulations
6. Has a strategic and rational plan for pursuing grants

### **With respect to RESOURCES, the ideal department:**

1. Has sufficient resources (budget, facilities, people, equipment)
2. Has a great administrative assistant
3. Has a good physical plant with excellent technical support
4. Is rich !!!!

### **With respect to LEADERSHIP, the ideal department:**

1. Has a politically astute department chair
2. Has a chairperson with no agenda except to facilitate
3. Has a chair who represents the department well to the administration and to colleagues across the institution
4. Has a chair who provides constructive feedback
5. Has an open-minded management
6. Has a chair and dean who are transparent in decision-making
7. Has enthusiastic leadership which ensures all faculty are rewarded for the contributions
8. Has shared leadership/governance
9. Has strong, sustained leadership
10. Is one where all faculty realize they exist because of the students

**With respect to STUDENTS & STUDENT LEARNING, the ideal department:**

1. Is focused on student learning and student retention
2. Is responsive to student needs
3. Has a student-friendly environment
4. Has a dynamic curriculum with continual evaluation and strategic change
5. Offers challenging courses for both majors and non-majors
6. Has universal commitment to excellence
7. Can quickly respond to changes in technology
8. Has coordinated course offerings
9. Has large enrollment of sharp, motivated majors
10. Has good advising and mentoring of students
11. Has good placement testing of students
12. Has programs where students can get involved in research as early as possible
13. Is one where students feel they are a part of a group and are excited to be in college

**With respect to SCHOLARSHIP, the ideal department:**

1. Has faculty who are professionally current in their fields
2. Has good scholarship with a strong, broad research base
3. Has faculty that regularly publish in peer-reviewed journals
4. Has faculty with academic colleagues beyond the campus
5. Has faculty with credentials appropriate to the institutional mission

**With respect to COLLEGIALITY, the ideal department:**

1. Is one where everyone can agree to disagree
2. Is one where members are not threatened by having personal views challenged, and where there is a willingness to “park” egos
3. Is one where everyone works and plays well with others
4. Has cohesive and cooperative faculty
5. Is one where there is consensus building, and where members are able to compromise
6. Is one where there is a minimal amount of “deadwood”

7. Is one where senior faculty are not automatically treated as “deadwood” or “conservative” just because they have been around longer and have more experience than the younger faculty
8. Is one where there is collegiality, common goals, and fairness in decision-making has relaxed friendly atmosphere
9. Has shared sense of humor
10. Is alert to needs and special circumstances of faculty members
11. Is one where “scores” are not settled by encouraging student unrest
12. Is one where there is respect for all members (faculty, staff, students) and their contributions to the mission.

**With respect to ENVIRONMENT, the ideal department:**

1. Has an environment conducive to innovation and risk-taking
2. Is willing to try novel approaches with emerging technologies
3. Has a mixture of perspectives, communication styles, and experience
4. Has good diversity among faculty in terms of age, gender, background, ethnicity, and experience
5. Has fair workload and compensation
6. Has shared responsibilities
7. Nurtures new and established faculty
8. Is a place where ideas are freely exchanged and objectively debated
9. Has frequent assemblies to share work with colleagues
10. Has a sense of communal mission
11. Is one where there is harmony between faculty and students
12. Is one where there exists good relationships with other departments
13. Is an effective learning community that serves the needs of both faculty and students

**With respect to SPIRIT, the ideal department:**

1. Has a sense that when the department as a whole succeeds, all faculty members benefit
2. Has a shared spirit of adventure
3. Is secure and has an entrepreneurial spirit
4. Has faculty that are engaged beyond the job description

5. Has at least some people that think “outside the box”
6. Has a “can do” rather than a “we have already tried that” spirit
7. Has a common sense of purpose, but with individual expertise
8. Has support and recognition for efforts in research, teaching, and service
9. Has more than one department cheerleader
10. Is made up of people who have ideas and are eager to hear the ideas of others
11. Has social interactions outside of the department
12. Is willing to give up an idea when something better comes along