

Vision and Strategic Planning

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Some General Advice for New Chairs

- Relax: Nobody is going to die!

- Set your own expectations of yourself: If you spend the day working as chair and feel that you have accomplished nothing at the end of the day, you haven't internalized the fact that being chair is your *job!*
- Don't procrastinate: If you know the answer to somebody's question and the answer will be unpleasant for that person, go ahead and tell him or her. You will have to do it eventually and there's no point in your losing sleep over it.

- Recognize that you will make decisions in the absence of complete data: Often it is better to make a decision and correct it later than to study the problem further. For some kinds of decisions (“How many grad students shall we admit this year?”) it is better to be almost right and ahead of schedule than “perfect” but at the expense of delaying whatever process is waiting on you.
- Use the CRA: The CRA website provides a lot of data on CS departments. It can be invaluable in

making your case to your Dean.

- Network with other chairs: Attend Snowbird; meet other chairs; feel free to email them to ask for advice. We're all in this together.
- Be proud of your service as chair: You will almost certainly look back on it as something you are glad you did.

Vision and Strategy

My advice on this topic is in complete agreement with Marc Snir's.

I would only add that if you find that you cannot “educate” your Dean, Provost, or President through your own efforts, leverage the influence of the people to whom they listen.

For example, form an Advisory Committee of influential industrial or state leaders with an interest in the success of your program, work with them to formulate a vision and strategy, and then have them “sell” it to your administration.