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# Making decisions that faculty support: healthy systems for administrative collaboration

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- 1) Primary presenter information and curriculum vitae or short biographical sketch:

Thomas Gilmore Masse, Dean, Stetson University

Thomas Masse is dean of the Stetson University School of Music and professor of music. Prior to his appointment at Stetson University in 2013, Masse was the associate provost for the arts at Yale University where he had academic, financial and strategic responsibility for the schools of architecture, art, divinity, drama and music, as well as the Institute for Sacred Music and the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival/Yale Summer School of Art and Music. A clarinetist, Masse holds the DMA from the University of Michigan and MM and Artist Diploma from Yale.

Noel Painter, Associate Dean, Stetson University

Noel Painter, associate dean since 2007, is an associate professor of music and the director of the music theory program at Stetson University. Painter received his Ph.D. in music theory from the Eastman School of Music. His earlier studies include a master of performance in percussion, a master of arts in music theory from Eastman and a bachelor of music degree from Furman University. In 2009, Painter was awarded the William Hugh McEniry Award for Excellence in Teaching. The award, first presented to a faculty member in 1975, is the most prestigious honor given to a Stetson University faculty member at the DeLand campus and represents excellence in both teaching and scholarship.

- 2) Additional presenter information
- 3) Title of presentation: Making decisions that faculty support: healthy systems for administrative collaboration
- 4) Abstract: An in-depth examination of the traits that lead to healthy decisions, and the pitfalls that may undermine the decision makers.
- 5) Keywords: decisions, dean, relationship, values, communication
- 6) Presentation topic themes: leadership and management, communication
- 7) Target audience: All department chairs and administrators
- 8) Type of presentation: Best Practice Presentation
- 9) Objective(s) of the presentation: the audience will

- a. Gain perspective on building systems that make for easier decision making
- b. Know the importance of communication—before and after—in the decision-making process
- c. Learn about what can build, and also what can undermine, successful decision making
- d. Hear feedback from a successful dean/associate dean team

#### 10) Description of the session:

From the pages of Malcolm Gladwell's 2007 phenomenon *Blink: the power of thinking without thinking*, readers are encouraged to understand the speed with which we make our daily reactionary choices.<sup>1</sup> Decision makers in higher education—from presidents and provosts to deans and chairs—carefully craft strategic decisions that are right for the institution, for the students, for the faculty, for the situation at hand. Institutional partners—like the dean and department chair pair—are challenged to make decisions in ways that promote a healthy, collegial, and trustworthy administrative team and still garner the support and trust of the faculty (or student) body.

This presentation will be a fun look at the Dean – Associate Dean relationship from the perspective of two individuals who have very different backgrounds. They have found, through the examination of shared values, a streamlining of their strengths into a powerful and effective voice.

From our experience as Dean and Associate Dean (also *de facto* Department Chair) in the School of Music at Stetson University, we will examine the aspects of our individual and joint leadership styles that promote healthy decision-making. Specifically, the presentation will center on seven key points that promote good *team* decision making, including

- respecting boundaries;
- understanding values: financial strategies, educational mission, confidentiality;
- the importance of defining and following process;
- consistency;
- making decisions based on reliable information;
- accountability; and above all,
- communication and consultation.

The presentation will include several illustrations of the decision-making process, as related to university, school, faculty, and student issues on our campus. For this seminar, we will ask attendees to consider some scenarios in which the decisions

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<sup>1</sup> Gladwell, Malcolm. *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking*. New York: Little, Brown, 2005.

required are likely to create some conflict among faculty. Discussion, and guided responses from the presenters, will give attendees the opportunity to implement the practices that we have found successful at Stetson.