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Until recently Professor Sarah Bryant Bower served as the dean of the College of Business Administration at Clarion University of Pennsylvania. In this brief essay, she has distilled her experience of the dean's office to offer valuable advice to new deans that is rich in deep insight. [Krishna Dhir, Feature Editor]

Lessons for New Deans

by Sarah Bryant Bower, Shippensburg University

Some faculty and staff members believe that deans have more fun, even though most of them will quickly say that they would never take the job. They see all the myriad of tasks and issues that must be dealt with. Of those of us who do take the position of dean, there are at least three paths, "inside" faculty who are asked to move up, now called "accidental" deans, and those who plan the steps from faculty through chair, possibly MBA director and/or associate dean to the head office, whether internal or externally. The third route is from corporate to academe. Many academics take bets on how long those deans will last in the unfamiliar world of academic governance. Some deans progress to provost and president, but most of us enjoy the confines of our familiar worlds of our discipline, here, business.

The point of this article is to discuss the many issues to learn as a new dean. There is little guidance or direction for new deans, potentially leading to short terms as deans. Just when we are at the point to make the most difference within our schools, we step back to faculty or leave. Each of us needs to develop support systems that result in increasing our confidence in our decision making. This confidence can be developed through taking seminars offered by accrediting bodies, leadership courses, and developing just-in-time learning opportunities through trusted mentors and colleagues, developed through networking. Even with this network, however, these supports are not enough. There are lessons that can

strengthen and expedite the new dean's adaptation to the job.

Time and Duties of the Job

There is discussion among business deans as to how to entice more of us to stay in our positions longer. The current average length of stay is about four years. That means that a large number leave in a short time. This is a relatively short average stay, given the slow pace of change in academe, and the needs many schools have to change. On the other hand, pace is rapid and competition steep outside the confines of the ivy walls. Many members of the faculty want the dean to protect them from the ravages of outside influences. Frequent changes in leadership can be unsettling to schools.

Keep in mind that most faculty work is done from September through part of December, and mid-January through the first of May. Deans have a short window of opportunity to accomplish big tasks. The pace of change is measured in semesters or years, 16 weeks at a time.

Is there any wonder the life of deanship is relatively short? One clear reason given by many deans is that there is insufficient training to prepare us for the rigors of the job. Issues abound. Below is a partial list.

- Human resource management (these are real people with real problems), hiring, retaining, tenuring, promoting, firing. Life changing events occur for people because of our decisions.
- Budgets—enough, too little, priorities, how to distribute and increase?



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- Accreditation, a critical priority, and everyone's role in it. At issue is how to get/keep busy or uninterested faculty involved?
- Student issues and recruitment.
- Care and feeding of advisory councils.
- Meetings and time management.
- Curricular management and updates and assessment.
- Reports to write and to read.
- Strategic planning.
- Endless emails.
- Sexual harassment (yes, it does still occur among the supposedly enlightened on campus).
- Trips to take, business visits to make, fundraising to accomplish, speeches to write and deliver.
- Papers to read and sign (do read them).
- Taking care of yourself and your family.
- Keeping yourself up to date in your own field, if this is a need for yourself.
- Possibly teaching a class.

Each one of us probably has a list of "what I will change when I am in charge." Well, it might be that Dean Newbie runs headlong into instigating change that (1) no one else wants, (2) is against faculty governance or contracts, or (3) was a good idea, next year. "But I want to make a difference now, people are expecting action!" Dean Newbie cries.

If he or she moves up from the inside, he will at least know the issues and personalities. He might be able to smooth/finesse change more easily than someone from the outside that has to learn the culture and people (see Bower & Hogan, 2006).

Dean Newbie also needs to understand the issues, constraints, and expectations of higher administration. Moving from faculty to the deanship gives one more of a global view of the university. Now instead of taking care of his department, he must care for all disciplines in the school, and balance this with university needs.

Finding a good mentor is critical, but still there needs to be a "how to"

course offered to help "newbies" who awake one issue at the time to their new responsibilities. Dean Newbie will probably attend the AACSB Aspiring Deans Conference and the New Deans' Conference. These do help. He should go, but he must realize that there is far too much to learn of his own unique position to feel he has learned all he needs to know from a seminar. The other newbies he meets will stay his friends and network colleagues. It is also interesting to measure one's time as a dean by how many of that class of newbies is still deaning, a few years down the road.

Lessons for New Deans

Lesson 1: Negotiate going in. This is Dean Newbies' best chance to take care of himself and his school. Universities are all different in what they are willing to offer to attract the dean, so he needs to ask what he needs and wants. He should be sure to know ahead of time how badly he wants each item and his stop-or-go limits to each. There are salary, moving expenses, rank and tenure, potentially housing for a year or longer, a one- or two-semester sabbatical as well as salary level when he steps down, time off, teaching requirements, research time, if desired, and many other items he might negotiate. Doing his homework is critical. If these items are not addressed in negotiation, Dean Newbie might experience early dissatisfaction that might cause him to gain some experience to move elsewhere or to go to faculty again.

By the same token, negotiating for the school can be critical. Dean Newbie will have expectations of his performance. If he does not have proper help, he will experience tremendous stress, and potentially will not accomplish what is expected. An assistant and/or associate dean to handle internal issues, as well as necessary faculty lines, are two items to address. The need for each depends on expectations of the job. If the job is to be heavily external, then a development officer needs to be assigned to the school, as well as associ-

ate dean support. Flexibility and capacity of faculty time to lead or assist with accreditation, including assessment, and curricular issues are needed.

There may be other school-specific items that Dean Newbie might learn about in interviews. For example, the dean's office might be physically "closed off" from outside interference. Dean Newbie might like this, or he might negotiate to have the office renovated to open it up more to the public. Another example that is not unusual is for faculty to expect the new dean to negotiate items he cannot deliver, such as higher salaries or reduced teaching loads. These could be brought up in negotiations. There are ways that the new dean might suggest to the president and provost to answer these expectations, such as merit pay or taking two new faculty lines to distribute the salary to existing faculty, if faculty agree to spread the work load. How this negotiation goes depends on overall university and school culture and priorities.

Lesson 2: How well Candidate Newbie interviews with the provost and president must be considered. There must be a good comfort level before accepting any offer. Since the dean will be new, will upper management support decisions made by the dean, or can faculty run around the new dean to the provost or president to undermine the new dean's authority? Do not accept a position in which this pattern appears likely. Discuss it openly with upper management to discern their views and method of handling such faculty attempts. This issue is a critical deal breaker, if correct patterns are not established early.

Lesson 3: Take time to learn the people and issues on campus. This includes people and issues all over campus, not just in one's immediate world. The more Dean Newbie understands the largest picture available to him, the better he will be able to negotiate for the school over time, and the better he will be able to explain to faculty the "whys" of any issue. He will be knowledgeable if anyone tries to mislead him, for any reason.

Lesson 4: As a corollary to lesson 3, lesson four is to take time to meet with all constituents. Dean Newbie should hold open houses in his first few weeks as dean. Invite students, alumni, faculty, staff, business and other town people, to meet him and discuss issues from their perspectives. He should show his genuine interest in everyone and what they have to offer. The key here is to listen to the issues. Many new ideas and solutions can be found just by listening.

He should have them come to him for two reasons. This method of meeting everyone, even university members, saves the new dean much needed energy and time, and causes many people to visit the business school, who may have never seen it before. There is plenty of time for Dean Newbie to selectively venture out to other offices, as need and time permits.

Lesson 5: Take time early on to *study* accreditation expectations and the school's documentation, faculty and staff contracts, and the budgets. Dean Newbie should know his responsibilities and rights under them all. Faculty and staff may test his knowledge and understanding of his power. For example, faculty may claim that the contract does not permit the dean to deal with curriculum or even see syllabi. The dean needs to know his limits and expanse. He should always call the head of human resources with any questions as issues arise or are foreseen. HR should be on speed dial.

Lesson 6: Do not be afraid to ask questions of the right people. Dean Newbie has valuable resources all around him, and should use them. If he feels intimidated by anyone or mistrustful within his school or university, then he should seek council outside the university. He should call that dean who offered to help at the New Deans' Conference or elsewhere. The other deans have been in the same shoes before and will help. He should call two or three, if need be.

Lesson 7: Do not take other roles for granted. The dean should learn all he can about other people's jobs. His

assistant or associate dean will perform better if Dean Newbie understands each role and function. Accreditation and assessment are two critical areas that the dean needs to understand and be informed. Plus, if the support person falls ill or leaves, the dean can better keep the office functioning smoothly and replace the person, if he knows what the position requires.

Lesson 8: Know what you are signing. Dean Newbie may assume that the department chair has checked on the student issue that now goes for the dean's signature. This assumption may be a big mistake. Some chairs or other administrators will sign anything, expecting the dean to stop it (be the bad guy). He should have his staff double check course schedules, graduation forms, whatever. He is responsible for mistakes. There is no passing the buck.

Lesson 9: Get involved in dean events. Dean Newbie should make himself current on the issues by reading higher education publications, and attending regional and national conferences. All deans need these social networking opportunities, if we are going to survive the aloneness of this job.

Discussions with other deans can help in several ways. Solutions can be found that we might not have seen; we could discover new methods and program offerings, commiserate, and even learn that we do not have it so bad where we are.

Lesson 10: Check your ego at the door on the first day. Dean Newbie may feel, "Wow, look what I have done! I am dean of a large (or small), prestigious school." He might feel that for a moment as he takes his seat in the BIG chair. He might write furiously what he plans to accomplish. He might live the good life (in his mind), as he projects where the next deans' conference will be held. Then he should come back to reality to understand that faculty members create the interesting programs and courses; faculty will be off on weekends, holidays, and summers. Dean Newbie's job is to oversee and support the faculty to make their jobs easier, and to stay out of their way. He must always

be there to remind all others that students matter.

Dean Newbie must realize that he is responsible 24/7 for the health of the school, enrollments in the programs, the well-being of faculty and staff, internal and external meetings, and all of the other job-related items listed above. The size of the school and support staff dictate how much involvement he will have in each of these duties. Most schools are medium to small, so the dean must also be one who will sweep up and take out the trash. Some of these duties are not the elements of a large ego. Plus, faculty and staff respond much better to, and speak more highly of, someone who can just be themselves. Never be "too good" for any role.

Lesson 11: Do not talk too much and do not be the source of rumors. This tendency is acute especially when deans are too tired and stressed. Dean Newbie might feel he needs to express his opinion on a colleague or issue, but would be better off to keep it private and unsaid. This feeds the loneliness mentioned earlier. How he feels about some hot issue, negative reactions to the provost or budget woes, and especially any faculty issues are not food for discussion. Words can come back to haunt us.

Dean Newbie might trust a faculty member and tell him what is bothering him, but reactions of the dean to Professor Cook might be just too juicy not to share with the faculty member's trusted colleague. The only secret is one never told. Professor Cook deserves privacy and respect, regardless of his issues. If you must vent, carefully speak to your provost, another dean within your university, your associate dean, or to that trusted external mentor.

Lesson 12: Realize the rumor mill will attack you. Dean Newbie will find that some faculty and staff may create stories that others will accept without question. He should establish a reputation of openness, honesty, and friendship to everyone. He should establish a strong communication with the president, provost, and other deans on campus, so that they know his character, if any negative issues arise. He should

also remember that faculty do not have the big picture view of issues that he has, and may blame him for decisions out of his control. He must develop a thick skin and broad shoulders.

Lesson 13: Take care of yourself. Dean Newbie may well have taken this job, as many of us have, because we are caretakers of others. Many of us find it easier to take care of others than of ourselves. Dean Newbie should take his vacation and use his travel budget to go to conferences and other professional development. Sometimes, just go home! Ask others to attend that dinner or open house.

Lesson 14: This is an article on lessons to stay in a deanship longer than average. However, embedded in this, Dean Newbie must work hard to keep himself marketable, just in case the grass becomes greener elsewhere (headhunters will call and email), the school and/or provost do not appreciate his hard work, or he finds he just misses teaching and free time. He should give the job at least a couple of years, even if he changes schools. The experience will be necessary to change to a new, more informed position. Some deans report being miserable until they find the right

fit. It is OK to change. Just have experience to know the right move, and to be marketable. Do not just move to get away from a stressful position.

Lesson 15: Know when to leave and plan an exit strategy. Do not overstay out of habit or ego. Dean Newbie might find, and mentor, someone else who might take his place. If there are no potential acting deans within his school, and if it feels right, he might announce early enough in the year that he is stepping down to allow enough time for the university to replace him. However, he should seek advice from his colleagues on the when-to-announce decision. Being lame duck can feel really freeing, but it can hamper what he wants to accomplish before leaving.

Final Words and Summary

Dean Newbie needs to remember that deaning is a tough job, with few “thank yous.” It helps to have a strong internal sense of oneself to quietly pat oneself on the back, while loudly congratulating others. He needs to remember too that faculty make jokes about being dean, while deans make jokes about faculty. Each considers the other strange

creatures, even though most deans were faculty once, too.

There is not much formal training for new deans, and none that can prepare them for what will occur day to day. A new dean must set himself up to interact and hungrily learn from the experiences of higher administrators, other deans, staff, long-time faculty (who love to criticize and give advice), seminars and books, as he finds them, and his own gut instincts.

Dean Newbie was chosen by the university and school to lead them, among many other candidates. Ego aside, this is an awesome, exciting, exhausting responsibility to positively lead a school that affects our communities and future generations. We should all wear the mantle well and survive as long as possible. Surely faculty are correct. Deans do have more fun, if they keep their jobs exciting and in perspective.

References

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New Directions for Supply Chain Design

Associate Editor Team

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The past two decades have witnessed a proliferation of supply chain designs. In many cases, supply chains have become more global and complex, with vast challenges in the coordination of material, information, and finances. In other cases, supply

chains have become more streamlined, with fewer players and much shorter lead times. With more choices available for structuring supply chains, the question of “What is the best design for our supply chain?” remains as important and challenging as ever. Only recently have academics given serious consideration to the question of supply chain design and how to best structure a supply chain to align with other competitive decisions. This Special Topic Forum calls upon

researchers to challenge our disciplines to consider new directions for supply chain design research ones that provide critical managerial insights for strategic and operational managers.

Building on the editorial mission of *Decision Sciences*, this Special Topic Forum (STF) seeks manuscripts utilizing diverse research approaches such as theoretical, empirical, and analytical research methods addressing supply chain design

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