

Role of the Associate Dean: Preparation, Survival and Succession

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***Dr. Ken Jones
Dean Emeritus and Professor Emeritus
Distinguished Fellow, Academic Leadership Initiative
Ryerson University***

Why Did You Become an Associate Dean?

- Part of My Succession Plan
- Is it a Fit with Your Career Vision
- Needed a Change
- My turn
- Interested in Academic Leadership/Management
- Asked by the Dean
- Wanted to Make a Positive Contribution

What is Dean Looking For?

- Loyalty/Support
- Honesty
- Sound Reasoning – Skepticism
- Hard Work/Involvement
- Problem Solver
- Political Acumen

Roles of an Associate Dean

- Highly variable – need to understand the role
- Function of School Size/Complexity/Mission/Needs
- Associate Dean of:
 - Students;
 - Academic (undergraduate programs, curriculum)
 - Research;
 - Graduate Studies;
 - Executive Education;
 - Teaching and Learning
 - External Relations.

Are You Prepared?

- Right Competencies
- Past Supervisory Roles
- Personal Strengths
- Fit with the Leadership Style of the Dean
- Personal Relationships Matter
- Impact on Your Research
- Impact on Your Home Life
- What are Your Misgivings
- Is it the Right Time
- Must be Tenured

Dealing with Complexity & Change

- Impact of Technological Change
- Less Government Funding
- Constant Reporting – Accountability
- Labour –Management Issues
- Dealing with Increasing Mental Health Concerns
- Promoting Curricular Change
- Pressure of Accreditation
- Competition for Students
- Search for Talent

In Complex Environments

- Decisions are less binary and require multiple choices
- Leaders need to assess diverse set of inputs to make informed decisions
- Problem-solving requires collaboration, information sharing and transparency
- Leaders need resolve and creativity

Complex Environments Require Certain Leadership Abilities:

- Embrace Change
- Multi-task
- Engage and Negotiate with a Variety of Stakeholders
- Be Self Aware and Empathic
- Think Probabilistically
- Be Able to Adopt both Offensive and

Leadership in Complex Environments

- Signals Obscure and Blurred
- Decision Environments have Number of Biases and Constraints
- Lack of Expertise – Less Routine Decisions
- Our Intuition is Often Unreliable
- Be Initially Skeptical – Information Seek
- Paradox – We often have

Leadership Approaches in Complex Environments

- Adaptive – “Brainstorming
- Administrative - Planning
- Enabling – Minimize Constraints
- Team Building - Collective

Issues Facing the Leader: Are You Prepared

- Lack of Training to Face the Complexity of Issues that face Academic Leaders
- Are You a Leader or Administrator?
- Need to deal with Multiplicity of Stakeholders/Networks
- Ethical Challenges
- Being an Agent of Change

Needed Competencies

- Negotiating Skills
- Conflict Management
- Communication
- Emotional Intelligence
- Team Building Skills
- Understanding of University Budgets
- Political Acumen

Key Questions?

- How Much Decision Making Authority will you have as Associate Dean?
- Impact on My Career and Family – Is it the Right Time?
- Have You Negotiate a Fair Contract? Did You Get Things in Writing?
- Do You Have a Plan?
- What do You Want to Accomplish?

Keys to Success

- It's Not About You
- Listen and Hear
- Understanding the Culture
- Respond
- Embrace Change
- Have and “Open Door” – Be Available
- Roam the Building – Informally talk to students, staff and faculty
- Communication and Governance Matter
- Do the Right Thing
- Remember You are Part of Team
- Every Conversation is the Most Important Conversation of the Day
- Take Care of Your Self – Life Balance

Final Comments

- Most of Your Colleagues Won't Understand Your Role
- Know When to Step Down
- Exit Gracefully
- It Can/Should be Rewarding Work
- Remember - You are Not the Person in Control
- Potential Dean Positions will most likely require a move