



# The Ins and Outs of Deaning: Why We Become Deans and Why We Quit

**64<sup>th</sup> Annual ACAD Meeting**  
**January 25, 2008**

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# Introduction

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# Why we become deans

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# What motivates academicians to become administrators?

- To improve and make contributions to the college
- To influence development of faculty
- To seek personal growth
- To advance administrative career
- To seek power and authority
- To gain financially

# Motivation to Serve as a Dean

<b>M. Wolverton &amp; W. Gmelch, 2002</b>	<b>% High</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Liberal Arts</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Education</b>
<b>Desire to contribute/improve college</b>	<b>.95</b>	<b>.95</b>	<b>.95</b>	<b>.96</b>	<b>.95</b>	<b>.96</b>
<b>Influence faculty development</b>	<b>.83</b>	<b>.74</b>	<b>.83</b>	<b>.81</b>	<b>.68</b>	<b>.79</b>
<b>Personal growth</b>	<b>.77</b>	<b>.81</b>	<b>.86</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>.79</b>	<b>.83</b>
<b>Advancement of career</b>	<b>.53</b>	<b>.21</b>	<b>.58</b>	<b>.43</b>	<b>.46</b>	<b>.24</b>
<b>Financial gain</b>	<b>.25</b>	<b>.24</b>	<b>.24</b>	<b>.22</b>	<b>.16</b>	<b>.26</b>
<b>Power/authority of position</b>	<b>.20</b>	<b>.18</b>	<b>.28</b>	<b>.16</b>	<b>.19</b>	<b>.15</b>

# Why do academicians decide not to serve as deans?

- Prefer to focus on research and teaching
- Deanship appears to be too stressful
- Deans have to make difficult decisions and deal with complex problems
- Deans have to satisfy numerous constituencies
- Deanship requires too much time
- Becoming a dean appears to lead to a disconnection with the faculty member's discipline
- Avoidance of engagement in political issues
- Dislike and/or distrust of administrators

# Chairpersons' Reasons for Not Seeking Deanship

(D. McCarty & P. Reyes, 1987)

Reasons	Percent of Total Reasons
Enjoy research more	24.3
Like teaching better	22.9
Dislike administration	21.6
Position too stressful	6.8
Decisions too difficult	5.4
Insufficient leadership opportunities	5.4
Too time consuming	4.1
Deal with other people's problems	4.1
Totally disassociated from discipline	2.7
Too much politics	2.7

# Paths to the Deanship

(V. Morris, 1981)

1. Professional ascension – from tenured faculty member to department chair and/or associate dean to dean.
2. Trained administrator – from the line positions of assistant dean to dean.
3. Managerial outside transfer – bring outside leadership into the college, perhaps a former business executive.
4. Political appointment – “knowing the right people and/or being in the right place at the right time.”

# Dean Career Paths

(M. Wolverton & W. Gmelch, 2002)

Position	Overall	Institution Type			Discipline		
		Res.	Comp.	Bac.	Lib. Arts	Business	Education
Previous dean	<b>.30</b>	.31	.32	.20	.30	.32	.33
Assoc. dean	<b>.40</b>	.50	.36	.15	.33	.39	.35
Dept. chair	<b>.60</b>	.62	.63	.63	.69	.54	.64
Other academic pos.	<b>.35</b>	.32	.33	.37	.36	.29	.40
Senior mgmt. outside H.E.	<b>.18</b>	.15	.20	.17	.08	.31	.14
Previous dean and Chair	<b>.20</b>	.19	.21	.15	.21	.18	.23
Assoc. dean and Chair	<b>.20</b>	.28	.19	.10	.20	.14	.23
Dept. chair and Other	<b>.17</b>	.15	.18	.17	.20	.12	.21
Dept. chair and Sr mgmt	<b>.10</b>	.06	.11	.11	.05	.13	.08

# Deans' Years of Administrative Exp.

(M. Wolverton & W. Gmelch, 2002)

Position	Average Years	Institution Type			Discipline		
		Res.	Comp.	Bac.	Lib. Arts	Business	Education
Years as dean	<b>5.6</b>	5.6	5.8	5.4	5.3	5.0	5.6
Years as dean prior to current position	<b>1.7</b>	1.9	2.0	1.1	1.7	1.7	2.2
Years as assoc. dean	<b>1.7</b>	2.4	1.6	0.8	1.5	1.9	1.8
Years as dept. chair	<b>3.6</b>	3.2	3.8	3.5	4.7	3.2	3.5
Years in other acad. admin. position(s)	<b>1.5</b>	2.0	2.2	3.2	2.0	2.2	2.9
Years as manager outside academy	<b>2.3</b>	1.1	1.8	1.7	0.5	3.5	1.0

# Recent Trends in the Career Paths of Deans

- Increasingly, deans have served previously as department chairs. This trend is especially true within research universities.
- Previous experience as an associate dean or a program director/coordinator has become at least as viable training ground as the department chair position.
- A growing number of deans seem to be gaining management experience outside the academy before coming to the deanship as well.
- *In sum, some form of training for the deanship appears to be crucial.*

# What motivated me to become a dean at Bucknell?

- To seek challenges beyond the more routine demands of a faculty position.
- To extend my leadership and management skills that I had exercised as a department chair and coordinator of our College's general education program.
- To play a greater role in creating new academic programs and revising the College's core curriculum for the benefit of future students.

# What motivated me to become a dean at Bucknell (cont'd)?

- To hire talented faculty members and help them grow as teachers, scholars, and members of our community.
- To help solve problems (both professional and personal) faced by our department chairs and faculty members.
- To help make the academic affairs division of our University even stronger.
- Finally, I was motivated by the encouragement of my mentor and colleagues in the administration.



# Discussion Segment #1

**To what extent have you been able to address the goals associated with your decision to become a dean?**

**What have been the barriers to your ability to address your goals?**

**What are some possible solutions for overcoming these barriers?**



# Why deans quit

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# Why We Quit

- **Disconnect from Faculty Roles**
  - **Leading from the Middle**
  - **Stress: The Cost of Being Dean**
  - **Critical Dilemmas**
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- **Study of liberal arts deans who have stepped down**

# Disconnect from Faculty Roles

- Lack of preparation for deans' tasks
- Irrelevance of disciplinary preparation
- Intention to return to the faculty

# Leading from the Middle

- Need to look in two directions at once
- Different expectations of those above & below = role conflict
- Two masters
- Two cultures
  - Self-regulated professoriate
  - Managerial hierarchy
- Mediation between the two cultures

# Stress: The Cost of Being Dean

- Role ambiguity and role conflict
- Types of stress
  - Administrative Task Stress
  - Provost-related (or President)
  - Faculty or Chairperson-Related
  - Time or Personal
  - Time Scholarship
  - Salary or Recognition
  - Fund-raising

from Wolverson & Gmelch (2002)

# Administrative Task Stress

- Meeting report and paperwork deadlines
- Feeling that I have too heavy a workload
- Being frequently interrupted by telephone calls and drop-in visitors
- Attending meetings which take up too much time
- Having to make tenure, promotion, and advancement decisions

from Wolverton & Gmelch (2002)

# **Gerdes (2003) Study: Senior Women Deans (n = 40)**

- **Average stress = 4.36 out of 5**
- **80% high or very high stress**
- **Sources of stress**
  - **Resource problems**
  - **Volume of work, time pressure, difficulty balancing different work demands**
  - **Responsibilities to and for others, others' expectations, conflict**

# Liberal arts deans who had stepped down (n = 19)

- Average stress = 3.9 out of 5
- Sources of stress
  - Relationship with president or upper administrators
  - Relationships with faculty or mediating conflict
  - Workload
  - Personnel problems
  - Financial problems

# Critical Dilemmas

- Career-defining or career-ending
- Serve at pleasure of superiors and of faculty
- Quitting on principle

# Liberal arts deans' reasons for stepping down

- Finished this phase of career and wanted to do something else
  - Retired
  - Returned to teaching and/or scholarship
- Stress or burned out
- Relationship with superiors/president

# Time to go?

- Can I still be effective in my position?
- Can I still receive the satisfaction I need from my position?
- Is remaining in my current position the best thing for my college and institution?

from Buller (2007)



# Discussion Segment #2

**What critical dilemmas would make it impossible for you to continue as dean?**



# Conclusion

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# Reasons for Continuing as Dean (J. Buller, 2007)

- I can continue to be effective as dean.
- I still receive the satisfaction I need from my position.
- Remaining in my current position is the best thing for my college and institution.

# Buller's Checklist for the “Essential Academic Dean” (J. Buller, 2007)

Deans are most likely to be effective and satisfied in their jobs if they ...

- are accessible.
- keep things in perspective.
- care for and respect the people in their college.
- delegate effectively.
- demonstrate quiet confidence.
- neither ignore nor become preoccupied with details.
- preserve a good work-life balance.
- have a sense of humor.

# Closing Thoughts

- It is important to remember that there is no single career path in the academy that fits each and every individual.
- Deans should do what is *right*, rather than what is easy, popular, or expected.
- Let your experience and conscience guide you throughout your career.

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