Dean as Connector
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David Burrows, Lawrence University
Jon Chenette, Vassar College
Marc Roy, Goucher College
Jerry Seaman, Ripon College
Dean as Imposer

Traditional Model- The Dean has a vision for the institution and attempts to create support for that vision

- Example: A new core course for all first year students
- Is comprehensive
- Difficult to implement- Faculty may be asked to do things that conflict with their own wishes
Dean as Connector

The Dean looks for existing ideas or programs and attempts to find areas where joining together these existing ideas can create new perspectives. Often the persons who are being brought together are not aware of the work of the others.
– Example: Senior Experience program that builds on existing upper level requirements in most or all departments. What can emerge is a set of principles about capstone characteristics and goal

– Example: Combining a pedagogical emphasis on learning by doing with a desire to have students engaged in work that is of practical value. This can result in a program that merges theory and practice
– Builds on existing strengths and interests
– May not follow a comprehensive path—is opportunistic
– Further comment: In academic areas, these are often interdisciplinary programs. E.g. a program in creativity studies.
What it Connects

• Academic affairs
• Undergraduate and Graduate programs and faculty
• Finance
• IT
• Development
• Many, many more offices
Connections for New Programs

- Undergraduate Faculty
- Graduate Center Staff

- IT infrastructure
- Office of Communications: marketing materials
- Collaboration: Creating New Low-residency programs
- Graduate Faculty: curriculum and course design
- Finance: costs, revenue, startup expenses, billing, financial aid
- Registrar, Events and Conference Services, Library, Development
Opportunities and Outcomes

- 4 + 1 BA and MA
- Connections with local communities
- Dual degree options for Masters students
- Connections between programs
- Increased revenue
The Dean and Philanthropy
Working in Other Dimensions

- Settings and circumstances beyond our usual background, knowledge, influence, and involvement
- A specific and unique vocabulary
- A hierarchy of actions and individuals
- A distinct set of priorities
The Dean’s Influence

• Connecting to Advancement & the President
• Learning specialized vocabulary
• Seeking Training
• Playing a personal role in philanthropy
• Playing a public role in philanthropy
• Understanding larger interests
Making Music

• A gift whose purpose is not narrowly defined
• Solid relationships
• Well-established faculty wishes
• Successful programs
• Surprise
How to buy a Steinway

- Connecting multiple dots: dealer, faculty, artist, seller, Dean, Advancement, President, audience
- Raising the bar
- Expanding programming
- Enhancing the overall experience
- Creating new knowledge
And build an Observatory

- Ceresco Prairie Conservancy
- Connecting academic departments, the Dean, Physical Plant, builders, suppliers, and the Department of Natural Resources
- Creating a new academic center and a new local resource
Lasting Benefits of Surprise

• A web of connections with the Dean at its center
• Serendipity and surprise plus preparation are important sources of progress
Discussion Questions

• What similar scenarios have you encountered?

• What happens if a gift does not align with academic priorities?
The Joys of Connecting
Multidisciplinary learning-living community on food at Vassar College

• Intense, semester-long exploration of a topic crossing disciplinary (and other) boundaries

• Live and study with a small cohort of people with common interests

• Common schedule opens up opportunities for field trips, projects, unusual meeting arrangements
What it Connects

- Faculty across disciplines
- Academic affairs
- Student affairs
- Alumnae/i affairs
- Campus and community
- Dining services
- JYA (JY-stay)
Dean’s Roles as Connector

- Matchmaker
- Moneybags
- Reality check
- Catalyst
- Staffing authority
- String-puller
- Cheerleader
- Dreamer
- De-siloizer
- Listener
- Persuader
- Negotiator
- Croupier