

## Her Deanship

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My meditations today assume that each of you would like to be a dean. I have had some experience with this role, and so I'd like to share strategies, plans, and important-things-you-should-know while you are searching for and then negotiating for the dean's position which is ideal for you. [Slide 1]

Well, what does Her Deanship do? [Slide 2] The paper load is enormous - and you should meet those deadlines for approving, delegating, deciding, and all the other things the papers ask. Paper occupies the bulk of Her Deanship's time. The second task is people. Meeting singly or in groups with faculty, staff, administrators and external personnel is the next largest chunk of Her Deanship's time. Then there is travel: conferences, alumni events, meetings around the town, talks you will be asked to give, and fund raising events. Ceremonies occupy much of Her Deanship's time. She sometimes gets the feeling that she is wheeled from event to event, asked to smile and say a few words, and then wheeled on again. Teaching is part of the load. This may be the only way you will get to speak with students; this is an important group; do not ignore them. And finally: scholarship. Yes, scholarship is there so that Her Deanship does not sink into the role of Manageress cum Figurehead.

There are questions to ask yourself before you begin the quest for the ideal position. [Slide 3] Underlying these questions is the truth that your strengths and interests will continue when you become dean. If you understand your strengths and interests you will be able to evaluate the offered jobs. If the job suits these strengths and interests, bravo! If the job asks for talents and interests you do not have, alas. How many younger siblings have you, and how much management do you exercise in your extracurricular activities? Do you enjoy and seek out people-related activities? And, most important of all: can you balance chaos with procedures and order? What really matters to you? Are you a mentor? People management skills, enjoyment of people, and the ability to remain calm will all be assets when you enter the dean's suite as its new owner.

To find an administrative position is not difficult. The engineering faculty in the United States is 4% women. Since most universities are truly (well, some more truly than others) recruiting women to administrative and management positions, you will get the call. If you spread the word among your influential colleagues that you are interested in administration - and ask for their help - believe me, the calls will come. (You are not keeping your administrative interest a secret, are you??)

 WOMEN IN ENGINEERING CONFERENCE: EFFECTING THE CLIMATE

1994 WEPAN National Conference

Evaluate the calls you get. There are false searches, and these should be avoided. Do not waste your time if all the committee wants is a woman's name, any woman's name, for the short list. But do go for the interview in all other cases.

The next slide [Slide 4] outlines the rest of my talk. Know your strengths; search intelligently for the position which matches your strengths; think carefully about your match with the offered position; negotiate intelligently and firmly; and then I will close with a few brief words of advice so you will be the world's most successful dean.

[Slide 5] Your mentors and influential colleagues will give you the greatest help. They can suggest your name to their colleagues at appropriate institutions; they can advise you; and they can write the telling nomination letters. But first you must tell them you want all this to happen. Use referees and nominators who are known to and respected by the institution offering the dean's position. Check to see if your management style suits the institution of interest to you. And think about the damage your enemies can do you. During the interview you will be asked to talk about professional problems, weaknesses, or areas where you will have the most difficulty. Use this opportunity to casually and briefly make the interviewers aware of enemies lurking in your past. This openness (and your casualness and brevity) cancels the negative effect an enemy would have if he or she was asked about you. Does luck enter into finding the proper position? Yes. Usually luck is a matter of timing. You must be prepared to seize luck whether the time is right or not (and it never is).

And finally the point of seeking a position as an internal or an external candidate must be faced. The internal person has a shorter learning curve but is hobbled by growing up within the institution. The faculty and chairs will know her weaknesses too well. The internal candidate will not necessarily have the fresh approach or insight that can move her faculty past long standing problems. However, she will have champions within the administration - and this is a boon, indeed. The external candidate will have a longer honeymoon than her internal colleague; she can solve long standing problems more easily because she does not have a history or collegial relationship with the people in the center of the problems; and she brings new energy. However, the external candidate has a greater chance of stepping on minefields. How you will be most successful depends on your strengths and interests. Only you will know which route is best for you.

Once the dean's position is offered to you, you must decide whether or not to accept it. [Slide 6] If the expectations of the faculty, the students, the administration, and the hiring committee are similar the job will be easy. The more discord among these groups, the more you will be a referee. And, yes, to be an effective facilitator and administrator you must work well



with all the university groups. Your job will also be easier if the President and Provost make a good team, and if you sense common purpose with the Provost. Is faculty morale high? And, who controls the processes and events which matter most to you? Being a cheerleader, a referee, or a bystander may befall you if morale is poor, civil war is rampant, or serious decisions are made beyond the dean's office. Find an informed member of the institution which wishes to hire you and ask about morale and decision making. If your heart sinks at the specifics of the position, this is not the job for you.

Negotiating, once the position is offered, is serious business. [Slide 7] Usually salary offers do not allow much negotiation. If you gracefully give up salary negotiating power, turn your mind to items which will make your working conditions better and your living conditions easier. Here are some items which would assist your working effectiveness. Hiring your own assistant and hiring your own Associate Dean are almost mandatory. Ask that this message be passed on and that transfer arrangements be made by the person offering you the position. A laptop computer may make your work easier. Funds to help maintain and manage your research activities would aid you. You may ask an apartment allowance if your position requires extensive travel to the state capital. A car phone would aid your work. Assistance from the Development Office would make your Advisory Board more effective. To be an effective dean your living conditions must not create barriers. Club memberships, day care, a generous moving allowance, and special travel arrangements when you attend night functions would certainly help your peace of mind.

And now let us conclude with last minute advice. [Slide 8] Both self confidence and a sense of humor will get you through the dean's day. The attitude you take will be reflected back by your faculty and chairs - shouldn't it be pleasant? Learn about budgeting and university accounting. Bad budgets are the death of any administration. Be prepared to work harder than your male colleagues. Yes, Virginia, the glass ceiling exists and we still have to work harder. Risk taking, especially to the advantage of faculty will gain their respect and support. Since the dean's real job is to promote the productivity, self esteem, and creativity of the faculty and students, you must be willing to go out on a limb for them all. And don't take favors and do be scrupulous in your money dealings. It is (unfortunately) amazing how much credibility you gain with these two simple traits.

There are many books and many conference talks which deal with university management. Are these useful? Only you can judge. In my experience the books and talks perform the same function as murder mysteries: diversions and entertainments but not useful. Saying this I conclude my university management how-to lecture. Take from it what is relevant to you and your quest. Ignore the rest. And - good luck!



Slide 1

## Her Deanship

- You want to be a dean ...
- What will work for you in this quest?

Slide 2

## What does Her Deanship Do?

1. Paper work
2. People
3. Travel
4. Ceremonies
5. Teaching
6. Scholarship

(Yes - in that order.)

Slide 3

## Questions to Ask Yourself

1. How many siblings have you?
2. Have you played or coached organized team sports?
3. Are your volunteer activities interactive people-related events?
4. What is your tolerance for order coexisting with chaos?
5. Mentoring - are you a mentor for others?
6. What do you really care about?



Slide 4

## **Strategies for Finding and Achieving the Perfect Dean's Position for YOU**

- Line up the ducks
- How to find the perfect position
- The position is offered: should you take it
- Tah Dah!! (Negotiations)
- Strategies and pitfalls

Slide 5

## **How to get THE JOB**

- Your mentors
- Well known and highly respected references
- Your fit with the institution
- Your management style
- Your outreach activities
- Your enemies
- Appropriate recommendations
- Luck?
- Internal vs. external candidate

Slide 6

## **Whether to take THE JOB**

- What is the match among the expectations of faculty, senior administrators, and the hiring committee?
- Do the President and Provost get along?
- Will you get along with the President and Provost?
- What is faculty morale?
- Would you be a faculty member there?
- Who controls the events and processes which matter to you?
- Find an informed insider.

Slide 7

## **Her Deanship-to-be Negotiates**

- **Salary**
- **Working Conditions**
- **Living Conditions**
- **Timelines**
- **Leaving Conditions**

Slide 8

## **Important Last Things**

- **Self confidence and humor**
- **Budget and accounting knowledge**
- **Profile of women college presidents**
- **Productivity, self-esteem, and creativity of faculty**
- **Risk taking**
- **American Council on Education (ACE)**
- **How-to books and other "expertise"**
- **Taking favors (don't)**
- **Money**

