

Assuming a Senior Leadership Position in Academia: Becoming a Dean of a Faculty

A. Introduction

Assuming the position of dean and/or a senior administrative position in academia is a very important event for the faculty (the relevant academic system) and for the dean as well. The process of taking on a senior administrative position in an academic system will have a defining influence on the incoming officeholder and provide an opportunity to use their personal experiences and their acquired abilities and values to build together with the leading staff a vision for the future and lead the effort to achieve it. Using an analogy from architecture, the process of assuming the position shapes the foundation on which the entire structure is built.

Given the central role of the process, it is very important to structure and plan it carefully and precisely. But this has pluses and minuses. Any attempt to structure a careful process will encounter a huge variety of components and situations. Clearly, a dean coming into office in the wake of a crisis will confront different circumstances to a dean assuming office following a “round of appointments” that is an integral part of a faculty’s life cycle. The same applies to a dean whose predecessor had a major impact as opposed to a dean whose predecessors each served for brief periods with no successes.

In addition to the circumstances surrounding the arrival of a new dean, the faculty’s situation varies from one process to the next. In some institutions and areas of study, the faculty is a single-discipline academic unit, and in others the faculty is a broad ideological framework that encompasses a considerable number of departments, divisions, institutes, and multi-disciplinary research centers. Similarly, a faculty that engages in clinical areas differs considerably from a faculty that engages almost entirely in the theoretical realm.

Lastly, there are of course major differences in the qualities of the senior staff and the actual incoming dean, his experience, capabilities, how he functions in uncertain situations and his perception of the reality. One dean might perceive some factors as a challenge and an opportunity, while another dean might view them as a threat and a risk.

To illustrate this, it is possible to consider the diverse responses of assorted administrators to the question: “When does the process of assuming the position end?” The responses are almost as



numerous as the number of administrators: “At the end of the second year, the grace period ends”; “At the end of the third year”; “Only at the start of my second term did I really feel that I was no longer worried”; “When I felt confident as a manager”; “When I felt like the staff was mine”; “When I felt like the processes were starting to be shaped in my image”; “When I no longer felt surprised”; “One day I suddenly noticed that they were no longer talking about the previous dean”; “When I felt ready to lead and not respond”; “When I successfully led a process of change from start to finish”; “After the graduation of an entire cohort of students... I started with and finished with...”; “When I was accepted by the surroundings”; and others.

Nevertheless, given the huge differences and the absence of the ability to structure an identical “prescription” for everyone assuming office, we will try in this article to map the main dilemmas that arise in the process of taking office and extract key principles that could facilitate a proper handling of the process.

B. The Process of Taking Office as a Leadership Event

The process of taking office is a complex one and can be considered from several theoretical perspectives. **From the psychodynamic perspective**, the administrators are occasionally perceived as some kind of father figure within the organization, who people approach out of their need for confidence, dependence and protection. Changing the focus of authority has different consequences, ranging from expecting a savior to anger over the loss and the breakdown.

In contrast, **Systems Theories** (Katz and Kahn, 1966) focuses on the system-wide imbalance that results from a change in the administration sub-system. Such a change, because it is so central and connected to all parts of the system, may prompt other changes and major upheaval in the entire system, which seeks to achieve balance and restore equanimity among all its sub-systems. From the broad system-wide perspective as well, upsetting the balance provides an opportunity (to improve, grow, realize potential and the like) while also posing a risk (decreased efficiency, less coordination, etc.).

Given these two theoretical perspectives, **the leadership perspective** presents an integrative framework for a meeting of individual, collective and systemic perspectives. The leader - a faculty dean in our case - faces the challenge of leading a system whose balance has been upset and



working to create a shared vision by rebuilding the array of expectations, relationships, and individual and collective identities.

From this point of view, the process of assuming a new position is based on three complementary narratives:

1. Who am I, the incoming dean – what do I bring with me?
2. Who are we (the leadership team) – what is created by our meeting together?
3. Where are we headed together – where do we take this to?

The more these narratives feed each other and intermingle, the greater the connection that is created among the parts of the system and its sub-systems, and energy to operate is generated.

On the other hand, when these narratives do not combine, as in the example story below, it seems as if the necessary conditions for further productivity and leverage are not created. At the same time, these examples and many others, more or less positive, do provide a source from which to extract several result-oriented and procedural measures that define the successful completion of the process of taking over a new position.

Three years have passed since a veteran and experienced dean took over the faculty and yet it still seems as if “this isn’t her home.” On the one hand, she certainly functions as a source of authority for the staff that is subordinate to her, and she definitely has an impact on the overall operations, yet it seems as if the key people in the faculty are still busy longing for the achievements of the past. Neither the department heads nor the center directors feel the faculty is moving forward. Every attempt to make even the slightest change in a central practice of the faculty (even it is not necessarily up-to-date or successful) is met with opposition from assorted parties. While the incoming dean has a clear direction where she wants to lead, it is not entirely clear that she has partners in this effort!

Based on the experiences of various managers it seems that there is apparently a combination of factors such as time, experiential-procedural perspectives, and perspectives that are more focused on productivity and results. True there are countless nuances, variables and differences in the positions, organizations and people, but there is certainly room to try and define a number of components that we can designate as points marking the end of her laying the groundwork for her plans or between planting, sowing and reaping. If we add to this divider the element of anticipation that her appointment would indeed create an infrastructure for achieving success, we can cautiously define the entry into the position as ending in success when:



- √ All the partners have developed some kind of basic trust and belief in the incoming dean.
- √ The faculty functions smoothly on all levels and without problems.
- √ The new dean has a fairly clear conception of the future (research, instruction and impact) towards which s/he wishes to lead the faculty.
- √ The key personnel in the faculty (leading staff, influential faculty members, administrators) are mobilized and connected to the future vision.
- √ The plan for the future, at least in part, is translated into a clear and immediate operating plan.

C. The Process of Assuming a Position – Dilemmas and Paradoxes

While moving between laying out a vision and resolving everyday problems, between leadership and inclusion, between content and process, the new dean completes the acclimation period and assumes the role of leader. In order to be positioned as a leader, the a new dean must confront numerous dilemmas, the most basic among them being the encounter between positioning and learning. While positioning is necessary to establish the trust and confidence of the partners, the learning is needed in order to establish the correct course to be followed and transformed into an operating plan. While the effort to position oneself requires the dean to present his/her experience, highlight his/her capabilities, make decisions and act, learning necessitates a measure of humility, great attentiveness, observations and gradually building up the necessary information in order to make informed decisions.

A short time after his arrival, the dean is required to act based on his/her responsibility and run the faculty and ensure that the faculty, being that it is a dynamic system, continues to function continuously and present the desired outcomes. At the same time, the new dean is not always able to do this because s/he still doesn't know the faculty, the environment and its potential. Even it turns out that s/he is familiar with it, s/he may not necessarily have acquired the organizational power and personal influence needed to guarantee that actions will be done out of commitment. Therefore, in order to the gaps in his/her knowledge, the incoming dean must invest a large part of his time in learning. S/he must collect a lot of information about the faculty and its closer and more distant surroundings. S/he must study the faculty's work processes, the routine operations, and the climate and cultural environment. At the same time, especially when it comes to a first administrative position, the dean must also learn about his/her own role and what is the most unique way for him/her to implement it in accordance with his/her style and personality. While still



studying, s/he is likely to create an experience of absence of management, be perceived as passive, or in an extreme case, incapable, and erode the credit and trust needed to lead the system.

While the tension between positioning and learning creates the framework, it is possible to refine other questions the dean must address as part of his/her entry into the position. These questions relate to the manner in which the dean wants to be positioned within the faculty. How does s/he perceive the essence of his/her job and how does s/he build the ability to achieve it further along the line? The order of activities the dean chooses, the way s/he divides his time, and the issues the dean chooses to address help provide answers to questions such as:

To whom and what is he committed?

A new dean who assumes the position prompts contradictory expectations from many players, each of whom are to him/her and is evaluating him/her carefully, in order to ascertain whether s/he is acting in a manner they deem desirable. This sharpens and emphasizes the question of whom the dean is identified with upon starting the job? Whose interests does the dean serve? Is it the senior academic staff, the university administration, the students, the administrative staff, or the research students? These questions are all the more important at the start of the job, because that is when the dean shapes the initial impression of each of these groups, an impression that will follow him/her further down the road.

What position to take in the academic leadership of the faculty? How to integrate the organizational and academic roles?

This dilemma confronting the dean touches on the method and areas s/he focuses on before the staff, and solidifies his authority. When it is a dean who is a new arrival and/or from outside the institution, s/he is likely to be uninformed about what goes on in the faculty and sometimes lacking enough experience as an administrative and/or academic authority relative to the senior staff. On the one hand, the dean will strive not to make hasty decisions and continue to allow the senior staff, department heads, and research center directors to operate according to the accepted standard that existed prior to the dean's arrival. On the other hand, by waiting, the dean will fail to convey the message that s/he considers the comprehensive management of the faculty as being at the heart of his/her work as dean. It may be tempting to reduce the job to specific academic



aspects (such as appointing senior academic staff and hiring new staff members), but there is a chance that in doing so, s/he will lose the ability to influence the faculty in many other areas.

How much change should be made and how much of what already exists should be preserved?

A newly installed faculty dean must decide whether to keep many of the existing arrangements in place or to already seek changes from the outset. Preserving the status quo reduces risks, guarantees a reasonable level of operation and may be an expression of the dean's appreciation for the existing tradition. In contrast, introducing changes is a way of making his/her presence known, indicates an ability to make decisions and is an indication of the dean's way of doing things, including new directions and future trends.

To what extent should the focus be on the mission and to what extent on the people?

In order to demonstrate efficient functioning and clear and visible output, the dean should focus clearly on the academic mission (research outputs, research infrastructure, research directions and its independent and shared nature, the absorption conditions, faculty representation before the university and others). Simultaneously, in order to earn the staff's trust, the dean should be attentive to their individual needs, becoming a dean with the power to work for them. The incoming dean must focus on the people who are with him/her. It is important to note that because the academic institution, even more than other organizations, is one that is based entirely on its human capital, focusing on its people is in and of itself directly fulfilling the objective.

How much authority should be decentralized and how much control should be concentrated in the dean's hands?

A new faculty dean has still not consolidated his/her administrative authority and s/he is trying to position himself as a dean. S/he may sometimes feel worried about losing control over the senior staff and what happens in the faculty as a whole, and may therefore be dragged into an exaggerated concentration of power. In contrast, because of a lack of knowledge and low self-confidence, the new dean may decentralize authority in a way that might hinder his/her functioning in the future.

D. So what do you do?

On first thought, linearly, upon assuming the position it seems that an effort should be made to find the "golden median" between positioning and learning, that is: some learning about the





faculty and some positioning as an authority. However, a more effective position for an incoming dean is a leadership approach, whereby in many situations s/he **transforms learning processes into positioning steps**. For example, while the incoming dean convenes a forum to brainstorm and share, s/he positions himself as attentive, deep, knowledgeable and able to think. Beyond that s/he transforms his/her individual learning into organizational learning; the questions are “ours and not mine as the new dean.” Similarly, the dean can transform positioning processes into learning steps. Visits to departments and research centers, focus groups with students and researchers, meeting with people in the eco-system in early stages of the job send a message regarding priorities and approaches to the job. At the same time, they are also an opportunity to extract information, listen and invite collaborations.

A new dean starting the job in a faculty decides in his second week to meet new young staff members and research students. He does not feel it is early to criticize the existing processes, but on the other hand, he can start asking questions about the way they are received, the way their individual and professional needs are addressed and the academic and administrative decisions that were made. In this case, the incoming dean also learns about the state of the faculty, the work processes and existing procedures, but at the same time s/he directs his attention to evaluating the existing routine and considering their perspective: addressing a symptom or an underlying problem, perhaps even suggesting a new value regarding the importance of absorbing new staff members, as well as the importance of the research students’ experiences as an investment in the future.

While considering spiral and multi-dimensional operations like the ones described above, the dean can effectively cross over the four points of success noted in the office-taking described above: **gaining the trust and confidence of the partners, taking responsibility for ongoing management of the faculty, formulating a plan for the future and starting to implement small changes that transform the future plan into an operating plan.** It is important to note that it is not necessary to do these things in order, while focusing on one point is not contingent upon completion of another point. However, based on a procedural approach, it is possible to observe development over a period of time.

Learning	Leading changes on the way to actualizing the future vision.			
		Formulating a desired future vision for the faculty.		
			Ongoing quality management of routine operations in the faculty.	
				Gaining trust and confidence.
Positioning				

Focus 1: Gaining Trust and Confidence – Prior to Taking Office

Once appointed, the dean should gather information and learn about the new faculty (qualities, challenges, burning issues on its agenda) and start focusing, by looking inward, at how his/her experience, capabilities and perceptions mesh with these characteristics. At the same time, the dean should engage in positioning and making an impression on future partners, out of a desire to gain the initial trust and confidence that will enable him/her to commence work and operate within the faculty.

It is important to note that, despite prior familiarity with the faculty as a senior researcher, sometimes even as department head or assorted other roles, it is appropriate to consider the matter of learning and gathering information in the early stages. A dean who is appointed from within the faculty must study the faculty s/he is well acquainted with, and with the people he knows well, from a different perspective than the one he is used to – from the perspective of the dean and not that of a senior staff member. At the same time s/he must reposition himself. The systematic learning process that includes encounters with key figures in the faculty makes the change that has occurred in the dean's point of reference clear to those around him/her. Consequently, and without saying too much, it is possible to invite them to change their attitude to him.

- Does the incoming dean know what the burning issues he will have to deal with in the near future are?
- Does the incoming dean position himself as attentive to the assorted needs and desires of in addition to the agenda he deems appropriate to promote?
- Did the dean manage to position himself as dean of the entire faculty, despite the fact that he is identified and associated with one discipline”
- Did he gain enough trust from his faculty colleagues and credit for a systematic entry into the job? In other words, did he succeed in opening “a window of opportunity”?



Several Recommendations and Tips

- ✓ **Focusing and refining “your own story as dean.”** The clearer it is to you why you are here (in the job, at this time and place) and how this relates to different stages in your development, the more effectively you will be able to sharpen your perception of the job and your destiny as a dean.
- ✓ **Focusing and sharpening some principles that are critical for you to implement, starting from the first day.** Demands like being strict about schedules, open/closed doors, written summaries of meetings and more are examples of demands based your experiences and perceptions that should be presented immediately upon taking office (even if some of them contradict existing practices).
- ✓ **There is a good opportunity for informal information gathering before taking office.** You are still not considered the dean and sometimes are not even recognized that much, which enables you to gather information that will be harder to obtain once you are formally installed as dean.

Shortly before she assumed the post of dean of the natural sciences faculty, there was a meeting of the acquisitions committee which sets priorities and the acquisition plan for the coming years. Because she was only well-versed in one relevant area, it appeared that an intelligent decision would require the dean to fill in large gaps in knowledge. In contrast, and also even if one assumes that the committee’s work thus far covered all considerations in a balanced manner, refraining from intervening because she is new on the job could be perceived in a problematic and misleading way.

Interim solutions that combine decisions on urgent and immediate matters and postponing the other decisions until a later time could provide an ideal solution to the dilemma. In the same way, the possibility of adding a dimension that was not addressed until now and is connected to the values aspect of using and storing resources in the existing equipment as a factor supporting the decision, could buy more time to learn without paying a price with regard to positioning.

Focus 2: Routine Faculty Operations – Upon Formally Entering Office

Running the routine daily faculty operations requires both learning and understanding of the faculty but is also a pure positioning act, because it is the first practical test of the incoming dean in office – s/he must begin making decisions and determining what will be. In order to make intelligent decisions, the dean must be full of questions and learn the faculty’s strengths and



weaknesses, its relative advantages and the things to keep an eye on. Some of these issues necessitate quick decisions, while others (usually strategic in nature) can be delayed until the systematic handling of the decision-making process. In some areas, through the very act of decision-making, the dean enables the ongoing functioning of the faculty, and at the same time displays his ability to make decisions and signal his intentions regarding changes in the future. Every decision the dean makes affects his deputies and department heads – his/her colleagues in the faculty's management - therefore, along with learning and gathering information about their needs, the dean must gradually disclose his/her expectations and perceptions about his/her desired kind of teamwork.

This stage is completed when the response to the questions is in the affirmative:

- Is the faculty operating smoothly and efficiently?
- Did the dean manage to make a number of determinations in real time and thereby avoid delay or postponement of key systemic and personal issues?
- Was the dean able to obtain short-term results that are perceived in the faculty as positive signs for the future?
- Did the dean succeed in embracing the opposition he encountered or alternately, did he present borders for what he is willing and unwilling to endure?

Furthermore, it is important to understand that, while some of the reactions reflect a practical approach to the matter, others reflect a dynamic (emotional) reaction to the fact that the dean is a source of authority (a senior staff member who was a rival candidate for management positions, the previous dean's confidante and others). In these cases, which recur frequently, the dean must "handle the objections" and move between inclusion and setting boundaries. In other words, not to let it continue constantly, but also not to clash about it all the time. Dealing with objections is an important step in the dean's positioning, but it is best to learn and understand the faculty before this happens, and not to do it hastily. The objection may be seen as a risk and threat to the status quo, but it can also be seen as an excellent opportunity for positioning and strengthening the new dean.

Tips and Recommendations





- ✓ **Delving into the core processes.** On taking the position of dean you must clarify above and beyond any doubt that you are not continuing your occupation as a senior researcher, and that you are here to influence and lead the entire nexus of operation in the faculty. You must address complex issues in the first weeks, not just for the sake of familiarity but for the sake of intimate gatherings with the research students, new staff members, department heads, and research center directors. Delving deep into matters is essential for achieving all of the above.
- ✓ **Building administrative routines.** In order to position yourself as a dean you are asked (even if not openly) to begin managing practically from the moment you set foot in your new office. Therefore it is very important to begin organizing your work environment and create administrative routines that help you do so.
- ✓ **Conveying messages and setting a personal example.** When starting the new job, you are the focus, and everyone is observing you very closely. “Personal example” and managing by circulating enables strong transmission of nonverbal messages.
- ✓ **Dealing with opposition.** Your presence as a new dean is a significant event which impacts differently on your colleagues. From the start, you will most likely encounter a phenomenon known as “opposition.” There will be opposition to you as dean or to the actions you have taken. Therefore, it is important to plan and arrange your steps in this context in a way which facilitates your positioning of yourself as dean.
- ✓ **Building a leadership team.** Determining the makeup, placing and positioning the management/team that functions as a partner in leading the faculty. Right from the start, this placement can help you reduce the potential opposition in the short term and help lead medium- and long-term processes.
- ✓ **Initial flooding with strategic and procedural questions.** While engaging in ongoing management it is important to designate important issues that you would like to work through in a strategic process. Indicating the questions enables delaying decisions to a more convenient time, and also indicates the direction of later changes.

Focus 3: Formulating a Desired Future Picture – Several Months after Taking Office

What is the desired future image of the faculty? What proposed added value does the faculty want to present to the various interested parties, staff members at differing points in their careers, young students, research students, other faculties at the university, relevant parties in the area and international partners? What should be kept and what should be changed in the current handling of the faculty? How can the faculty be channeled toward a growth and development track? These are some of the questions the dean must address in the process of formulating the future image – **formulating a statement on where they are headed**. While the journey begins with posing questions regarding the faculty's destiny, vision and core values, it ends with their being embedded in four areas of leaderships, areas that will help ensure ongoing and sustainable success.

1. Academic leadership

- a. **In research** – where the emphasis is on the dean's possible contribution to promoting the research core, refining the "desired research products," assessing the research outputs (funds, impact, areas of influence and interest), concentrating the necessary leaps forward for internal/external collaborations.
- b. **In instruction** - where the emphasis is on the quality of the instruction, formulating an approach to integrating on-line and frontal instruction, formulating valuable proposals for students, focusing on improvement targets in the quantity of the staff-student ratio, positioning the importance of training and instruction skills development, considering issues related to instilling values, skills and abilities beyond knowledge, and more.

In order to promote inter-disciplinary thinking and also create uniqueness and distinctiveness, the faculty defined a multi-disciplinary issue around which it wants to create an impact (immigration, solving food shortage problems, social gaps...). This created an opportunity for different parties to refine their contribution, created a basis for collaboration and partnerships in conducting research and existing teaching methods, created a space for developing new programs internally and also together with outside parties, and created marketing leverage in new venues.



2. **Systemic Organizational Leadership**: The emphasis is on developing and improving processes, arrangements, work teams, building capabilities, and adopting technologies to advance the faculty's operation as an efficient system. **This is alongside a focus on the development of resources and implementing growth and development plans such as: building new centers, labs, teaching infrastructure, staff and student lounges and spaces, and more.**
3. **Leading "Human Resources"** : The emphasize is on the possible contribution to the functioning of the faculty's entire human resources in all its components (involvement and commitment of current staff, collaboration of academic and administrative staff; absorbing new staff, transparent and proper appointment of key personnel, et al) and promoting key organizational values (innovation, excellence, service).
4. **Communal-environmental leadership**: The emphasis is on strengthening the faculty's ties with the area and community where it operates and striving to generate an impact based on reciprocal contributions and local collaborations that promote the different systems. In this context, and in connection with disciplines within the faculty, the surroundings can include a built-in connection to industry, the relevant service systems, human resource development programs, non-profits and civil organizations, and more.

The new dean of a law school wanted to continue empowering the school's activist agenda as a principle to distinguish from other law schools. In his perception, this principle deepened the relevance of engaging in tangible action, enabling the transformation of the learning experience into something more meaningful and the integration of basic and applied research. Because of this, in the process of formulating the future image, the dean integrated more representatives from the eco-system, relevant graduates who combined professional activity and impact, and in-depth study of leading schools around the world that systematically combine action and involvement in the teaching process.



Questions for Self-Evaluation

- Does the manager clearly know exactly where he is leading the faculty?
- Is what needs improvement and what should stay the same clearer?
- Are the key people connected to the future image?
- Is it possible to connect most parts of the faculty to the future picture?
- Are the relevant key players in the faculty, the institution and the external spaces ready to assist on this?

Tips and Recommendations

- ✓ **The process of formulating a future image as a joint process.** Based on your study of the faculty system and its surroundings, you must spearhead a process in which various elements in the faculty, the university, and the surroundings gradually become partners on the basis of a common language that conveys a shared story for the future.
- ✓ **Concrete translation.** In order for the destiny, vision and values to serve as a platform for action, it is important that they are translated into an everyday, tangible reality.
- ✓ **Tours and physical visits.** Visits to and meetings with other faculties/institutions will enable you to lead, question and ponder long-standing underlying assumptions and traditions. In an experiential and bonding method you can spark a desire for renewal and action among your staff.
- ✓ **Expanding the circle of partners.** The process of considering the future image creates an opportunity for partnership and expanding the circle of action to other parties that are less involved in ongoing management. Similarly, connecting veteran and newer staff to the process can present a sense of continuity as well as instilling responsibility and support for continuity in the long term. The collaboration alone generates reciprocal commitment, reduces possible objections and facilitates the implementation of decisions that were made.

Focus 4: From Plan to Action – Ahead of the Annual Preparations

Formulating a vision, as detailed, clear and whole as it may be – is not sufficient. In order to transform a vision into a real leadership process, it has to be implemented. Implementation means turning the vision into something as tangible as possible, instilling and embedding it in all the parties and partners in office. An instilled vision is expressed in the everyday actions and behaviors of everyone affected by it. In effect, this is the real test of the entire process and the only measure of its success.

As part of the expansion of the cross-disciplinary approach in the humanities and social sciences faculty, the dean instituted a binding decision regarding a certain number of credits for all undergraduate degrees earned based on a defined list of courses that expand the core studies.

As part of the policy, promoting relationships based on openness, transparency and collaboration, it was decided to increase the socio-metric component in the selection and absorption process of staff members.

The dean must be stringent and make sure that everything s/he does in these moments corresponds with the vision. If s/he doesn't exhibit total commitment to the vision, there is no chance that it will be realized. If s/he does prove that is possible to create change, then the faculty as a system will obtain key ability to change continuously and experience growth and development.

- Has the general direction the dean is striving to lead the faculty been translated into a clear, operative plan?
- Are the measures the faculty management will use to evaluate progress in assorted areas sufficiently clear?
- Did the dean manage to motivate the faculty to act in the direction he wanted to lead them to?
- Does the plan that was formulated actually reflect meaningful systemic change in the core faculty actions?
- Does the plan reflect changes in the areas that are close to the dean's heart and express his/her vision?

Tips and recommendations



- ✓ **Keep inspiring. In this context,** Jack Welch wrote: “Every time I had an idea or a message I wanted to instill in the organization I did not stop talking about it. I repeated myself time after time, in every discussion, and at every meeting, for years, until the words almost got stuck in my throat” (p. 304).
- ✓ **Expanding the partnership circles beyond the faculty.** Connecting the university administration and enlisting the relevant surroundings (nearby industry, social organizations) deepens the inner commitment and creates a support system.
- ✓ **Small successes.** Your ability as a dean to spearhead changes in the faculty is related to your ability to break down a large process change into a continuous flow of small successes. These successes create confidence and energy.
- ✓ **Dean’s position.** As dean, your commitment to change is distinguished by your behavior, the amount of time you invest and your physical presence at key events related to change.

5. Summary

Starting a job is a transformational period in the life of a faculty and of the incoming dean. As such, it is usually a period filled with intellectual, emotional, personal, interpersonal and systemic stimulation.

Stimulation upsets the existing balance and creates a window of opportunity for change – for transformation. This means that the leadership challenge confronting you, the incoming dean, is to attempt to use this window of opportunity and channel the energy towards the growth and development of the faculty, all out of a deep understanding that it is a sensitive, active, creative, human system where every little change may lead to (positive/negative) change for all the parties connected to it.

While the process of transforming and structuring the faculty is an ongoing and never-ending process throughout (and, for many deans, beyond) the course of the administrative term, the process of entering the position is for a defined period of time. During this period the seeds for future development are planted but beyond that, the relationships and connections that will enable their growth are formed.



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Appendix 1 – Process of Assuming a Position

Focus	Learning	Positioning	Measures of Success
Enlisting trust and credit (Before assuming the position and in the early stages)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The dean learns and assesses the faculty he is about to enter. 2. The dean learns from his experience as a senior researcher and takes on roles in the academic space. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The dean utilizes his interactions with different people in the faculty to create a positive first impression and gain trust and credit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The dean begins to get to know the faculty he is about to join. ✓ The dean knows what knowledge gaps he must fill. ✓ The dean knows which gaps exist between values he deems important and the prevailing organizational culture. ✓ The dean gains the faculty's initial trust and credit in his ability to succeed in the job. ✓ The dean gains his own trust in his ability to succeed in the job.
Formulating a future image for the faculty (several months after starting)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The dean learns the perceptions and needs of his partners on the job. 2. The dean searches for ways to mobilize the power brokers in the organization to formulate and implement the vision he outlines 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The dean outlines a vision and strategy for the faculty. 2. The dean leads the team in a process of defining the vision and determining strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The dean knows where he is leading the faculty. ✓ The dean understands the spirit that will guide him and his team there. ✓ The dean enlists and mobilizes the main partners (administrative deputy/vice dean/institute directors) in a preliminary way to assist him in leading the faculty in the chosen direction.
Starting to lead changes derived from future image (end of first year)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The dean continues to constantly review the forces that block and advance the realization of the vision. 2. The dean evaluates what his team needs to be able to realize the vision. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The dean formulates a working plan derived from the vision. 2. The dean presents the vision and the working plan to the organization's key figures. 3. The dean manages to enlist the entire faculty in the effort to achieve the vision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The dean translates the vision into a clear operating plan. ✓ The dean succeeds in mobilizing the university and other partners in the faculty space to join the program. ✓ The dean successfully leads to small change in the spirit of the future vision.

