

# **Complexities of the Associate & Assistant Dean Role**



## **PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM THE CCAS ASSOCIATE & ASSISTANT DEAN SURVEY**

**NOVEMBER 6, 2014**

# Impetus for Survey



- Committee on Associate and Assistant Deans of CCAS interested in knowing more in order to better serve and assist Assistant/Associate Deans
- Shedding light on the structure and demands of the roles
- Providing information to Deans to use in training, mentoring, and RETENTION
- Exploring whether general themes in literature on Associate/Assistant deans seem to apply to liberal arts and sciences
- Two Associate Dean PIs researching academic leadership and seeking to integrate scholarship with their administrative roles

# General Themes in Literature



- Little to no direct preparation or training – “growing into the role”
- Amorphous or emerging job description
- Wide variation in level of specialization/breadth
- Much responsibility and little/ambiguous power
- “Managing versus leading”
- Devaluing of administrative role/skills
- Distrust by faculty – “dark side”
- Changes in long-time relationships with colleagues
- Influence of organizational culture of dean’s office
- Spotty or inconsistent performance evaluation/feedback
- Stress
- Difficulty maintaining connection to academic work

# Survey Method



- Review of selected literature
- Identification of themes and categories for exploration
- Small field test of questionnaire
- IRB Certification – SUNY
- 514 CCAS member institutions – estimated 1,000 or so possible subjects
- Multiple submissions/reminders to CCAS Associate/Assistant Dean via listserv
- Quantifiable and open-ended questions
- Analysis using SPSS – mostly frequencies/descriptive

# Characteristics of Sample of 224 Informants



- 85% Associate Deans
- 50.5% Female – 49.5% Male
- 41% 50-59 Years of Age
  - 31% 40-49
  - 21% 60-69
- 87% White, non-Hispanic
  - 5% Hispanic/Latino(a)/Mexican-Descent
  - 4.1% Black/African American
  - 1.8% Asian American
  - 1.4% Alaskan Native/Native American/First Nations
  - 1% Asian

# Informant Background, Continued



- 87% Doctoral level (Ph.D. or equivalent)  
10% Master's level
- Mean #years as a FT faculty member = 20
- Mean #years as a faculty member - current place = 17
- Mean #years in Assistant/Associate role = 6
- Mean #years in Assistant/Associate role -current div = 5.4
- Academic Background
  - Science 38%
  - Humanities 30%
  - Social Science 24%
  - Arts 8%

# Institution



• <u>Basic Carnegie Classification</u>	<u>CCAS*</u>	<u>Sample</u>
Research Very High	10%	18%
Research High	17%	21%
Doctoral Research	9%	19%
Master's Large	35%	13%
Master's Medium	13%	15%
Master's Small	4%	5%
Baccalaureate/A and S	6%	6%
Baccalaureate/Associate	.5%	.9%

\*2013 Membership Profile

# Division



- Half – 200 or fewer full time faculty in division  
Mean (estimate) = 69% tenure track
- Mean #undergraduate majors in division = 3929
- Mean #graduate students in division = 533
- Mean #academic departments in division = 16 (3-55)
- Half – NO Assistant Deans. Most common – 1  
30% - 1 Associate Dean  
30% - 2 Associate Deans  
30% - 3-4 Associate Deans
- Mean #years Dean in current position = 5 1/2 years



# Role



- Most (74%) are full-time administrators
- Primary Responsibility Area(s) Groupings\*:

Curriculum/EM/Scheduling – Undergraduate Primary	20%
Academic Programs and Student Affairs Combined	12%
Student Affairs/Success	11%
Faculty/Department Affairs	11%
Discipline Specific – Broad Administration/Unit Head	6.5%
Graduate Affairs and Research Combined	5.5%
Research and Research Facilities	5%
Undergraduate and Graduate Programs Combined	5%
No Specialization – Anything/Everything Required	5%
General Academic Administration and Planning	4.5%

\*All have other duties and many have many other duties

\*Statistically significant differences based on sex

# Responsibilities, Continued



- Mean #Hours Per Month per Category of Most Time Consuming

Personnel/DH Management (Including P&T)	70
Curricula and Scheduling (& Assessment/APR)	40
Reading and Writing Memos/Reports	32.5
Students (& Advising Oversight)	25
Facilities Management	11
Representing College at University Meetings	11
Personal Scholarship	10
Budget Planning/Management	9.5

Mean #hours per month in DH meetings = 3

Mean #hours per day on email/voicemail = 2.5

# Selection Process



- Mode of selection for role
  - 59% Internal search
  - 35% External search
  - 24% Appointed without search

# Preparation for the Role



- Most (76%) had higher education administrative experience before accepting role
- Just over half (55%) had not participated in any form of higher education leadership training/program before accepting the role

# Embracing the Opportunity



## • Primary Reason for Becoming an Assistant/Associate Dean

17%	Serve students and faculty
15%	Work/administration is interesting in itself
10%	Seeking a challenge
10%	Contribute to needed improvements in college/reform
7%	Career advancement/path to Dean and beyond
6%	Committed to mission and direction of college (and Dean)/institution
6%	Learning opportunity/professional development
6%	Recruited and encouraged
5%	Needed change (including out of DH role)
3%	Represent underrepresented voices in college/fairness
2.5%	Develop new programs/college
2.5%	Salary
9%	Other (including avoidance of alternative candidate/ good match with skills)

Note: Rounding error

# Clarity of Expectations/Goals



- 60% of informants indicated that the duties and responsibilities of the role were not clear when they assumed the role

## Once in the role:

- 19% Received written performance goals/expectations
- 30% Received goals/expectations verbally
- 39% Had vague information on goals/expectations
- 10% Had no information on goals/expectation

# Revisiting/Revising Role and Responsibilities



- How often are your role and responsibilities revisited or revised?

As needed, frequency varies	48%
Twice per year at least	2%
Once per year	19%
Every two or more years	9%
Rarely	17%
Never	6%

Note: Rounding error

# Most Relevant Reasons for Remaining in Role



- Percent of Informants Responding “Very Important”

71%	I want to help lead my college
67%	I feel like I am making a positive difference
63%	I am continuing to learn and grow
60%	I feel valued and respected by my Dean
53%	I feel like a valued team member
52%	I like working with faculty/heads from college level
49%	I like working with my dean's office colleagues
46%	I enjoy working with students
38%	I feel valued and respected by department heads
35%	I feel valued and respected by staff
34%	I have access to university information/processes
33%	I feel valued and respected by faculty
33%	I feel valued and respected by the university administration
31%	I like the salary
28%	I feel valued and respected by students
22%	I like working with staff
23%	I want to promote a particular academic direction
17%	I like faculty/head development
12%	Path to the next level



# Dean Review of Performance



- 82% Annual Performance Review by Dean
  - 3% Every Three Years
  - 3% Never
- 43% Formal Based on Clear Performance Expectations
  - 25% Formal Based on Vague Expectations
  - 21% Not Formal, Not Written (10% Vague Goals)
  - 7% Don't know

# Ongoing Professional Development



- 22% Have no formal on-campus opportunities for professional development in their roles.
- Most have on-campus opportunities at least once per year
- 10% Have no formal off-campus opportunities for professional development in their roles.
- Most have off campus opportunities at least once per year

# Most Pronounced Differences Between Expectations and Experience in Role



- Support from Dean - 53% Said More than Expected (+)
- Number of Meetings – 53% +
- Meaningful/Rewarding Experience – 49% +
- Amount of Time Required to Do Job – 49% +
- Amount of Paperwork – 47% +
- Teamwork – 44% +
- Autonomy – 35% +
- Opportunities to Make Positive Impact - 34% +
- Personal Growth – 34%
- Support from Faculty - 26% +
- Note: 2<sup>nd</sup> most common response – “about what expected”

# Most Pronounced Differences Between Expectations and Experience in Role, Cont'd.



- Training – 53% Said Less than Expected (-)
- Opportunities For Scholarship – 51% -
- Opportunities for Professional Development – 37% -
- Opportunities to Teach – 27% -
- Strain on Relationships with Faculty – 25% -
- Opportunities for Advancement – 24% -

Note: 2<sup>nd</sup> most common response – “about what expected”

# Discussion and Implications



- Additional qualitative results
- One dean's perspective on implications
- Presider's facilitated discussion

Thank you.