



THE EXTERNAL DEAN AS DETECTIVE

Nancy A. Gutierrez

Dean, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

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OUT WITH THE OLD
AND IN WITH THE NEW!



Previous Dean

- Male
- Political Scientist
- Relevant (?) experiences
 - Veteran: Sniper during Korean War
 - Traditional personal life, with wife at home
 - Longevity in role: one of founders of institution
 - Authoritative
 - Directed discussion
- Getting the work done
 - Technology: dictaphone

Me

- Female
- Literary Scholar—early modern
- Relevant (?) experiences
 - Married, with a working husband, school-aged children
 - Administrative development
 - Collaborative
 - Believer in process
 - NOT from the South
- Getting the work done
 - Technology: word processing

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DO NOT ASSUME THAT THE
DEAN'S OFFICE WORKS JUST LIKE
THE DEAN'S OFFICE WORKED IN
YOUR PREVIOUS INSTITUTION.



New dean as detective

- What does the College Office look like?
 - Structural arrangements
 - Level of formality / informality
- What does the Dean's Office look like?
 - What personal items did you see in the office?
 - Books? How many? What kind?
 - Artwork?



New dean as detective

– Technology

- Desk top monitors? Tablets? Smart phone?
- Social media?

– Office staff?

- How many?
- How diverse?
- How do they interact? Is there a break room? Do they eat lunch together?
- Do they have staff meetings? Does the dean attend?



Questions to Ask

- What were the work hours of the previous dean?
- Are there bylaws? How old are the bylaws? What does this document tell you about shared governance?



Questions to Ask

- What are the hidden behaviors?
 - Where does the dean sit at faculty council?
 - Who creates the agenda for faculty council?
 - How many times does the leadership team meet?
 - What time of day do these meetings occur?
 - What is the term of chair?

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You don't know
what you don't know.

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GOOD LUCK!



College of Sciences
& Mathematics
*Arkansas State
University*

“Zombies and Ghosts”

John M. Pratte, Dean

jpratte@astate.edu

Situation

- A-State is a research institution with 14,000 students
 - College of Sciences and Mathematics formed in 2003 with four departments: Biological Sciences, Chemistry & Physics, Computer Science, and Mathematics & Statistics
 - Has had 5 deans during this time, 4 within first 7 years
 - Stability and planning have always been an issue
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Ghosts and Zombies

- Of the 4 former deans, 2 are still at A-State
 - Two of the 4 were hired to be research-active deans
 - I worked for 3 of the past deans: two as Chair and one as Associate Dean
 - Other former administrators: Provost, CRO, Associate Dean, and Director of ABI returned to faculty
 - Current Provost and CRO are tenured in the College; CRO is a former dean
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Those Who Return to Faculty

- Change in relationship can create paranoid behaviors
 - They will have a base of support, both inside and outside the institution; size of this support depends on past actions and your behavior
 - Can push back against change to old systems; refrain of “If I were dean, I would not...” heard many times
 - Do not assume that they know policies and procedures
 - Building bridges can be difficult if their stepping back to faculty was not their decision
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Those Still in Administration

- Many of the same issues with those who return to faculty apply to those in administrative positions, i.e. might push back against change of their policies and programs
 - Creating your own leadership style as dean can require an inviting style on their part if you answer to them
 - If some of their old initiatives are in line with your strategic plan, this can be a plus
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Those Who Are Gone

- Faculty still remember them and refer to them; sometimes, faculty are responding to their actions
 - Need to know their impact so that can relate to your leadership
 - Your presence while they were in charge does not guarantee knowledge of their impact
 - Faculty will sometimes assume that you know all about their interactions with the departed and how they were perceived without telling you
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Living with the Ghosts of Deans Past...

CCAS November 2016
Dean Paula M. Lutz



UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Haunted by that Benevolent Spirit...and a long shadow

- Dean as icon (23 years in place—and an internal hire).
- Beloved (and popular) for saying YES to virtually everything.
- As emeritus dean (and fully retired), he “haunts” both campus and community.
- “So YOU’RE Dave’s replacement!”
- “Change anything you want!”

Benevolent Spirit...and a very long shadow!

- Very different styles—argument by rhetoric versus data.
- Fear of a dean from the ‘other side’—a SCIENTIST rather than a social scientist!
- Surprise! Over and over again...deeply embedded culture.
- Left a large budget deficit! Public knowledge...

New Dean as ‘Maytag Repairwoman’— with lots to do!

- **Communication:** Related clear explanations of budget issues to all in the College.
- Auditor’s reports, Academic Affairs memos—**all shared widely.**
- And shared over and over and over again...**repetition is key.**
- Department heads and directors helped decide budget reduction strategies—I **listened.**

...but still the loneliest job in town?!

- Shared required changes—without blaming my predecessor.
- Kept cordial relations with my Benevolent Spirit.
- “Change anything you want!” But they REALLY didn’t mean it.
- Re-trained heads as to how to argue and debate with ME.
- Yes, your dean is a scientist! And from OUTSIDE UW!

Lessons Learned (or Advice to Former Deans)

- **We will ALL be one someday...so be humble!**
- **Bite your tongue!**
- **Speak when spoken to. Offer help, then step back.**
- **A folder of 'critical info' is a nice welcome gift (things YOU wish you had known about the college and its units).**
- **Stay busy.**
- **Rebuff those who want to entangle you.**
- **Practice saying "S/he's the new dean...I'm sure s/he has lots of interesting new ideas for us!" Smile and nod.**
- **Dissolve all advisory boards, 'friends of the college,' etc.**

Questions?

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