

## **What Is The Role of The Dean Internally?**

Associate Professor Joash Amupitan\*  
University of Jos,  
Nigeria

### **INTRODUCTION**

This abstract discusses the Internal Role of the Dean of a Law Faculty from Nigeria perspective. Most of the materials relied upon are based on the statute, regulations and practices of the University of Jos, Nigeria.

The University of Jos was established in 1975 by an Act of the Federal Government. The enabling legislation is the University of Jos Act. The Faculty started in 1976 as a department under the Faculty of Social Sciences. In order to meet the increasing demand for places to read Law sweeping the country at the time, the Department was transformed into a full-fledged Faculty of Law in 1980.

The Faculty started with two departments, namely, the Department of Public and Private Law and the Department of Property and Commercial law. In 2004, two additional Departments were created consistent with the objectives and goals of the Faculty for year 2005. The two Departments are International Law and Jurisprudence while the department of Public and Private Law was splitted into two. The four Departments are: Public Law, Private Law, Commercial Law and International and Jurisprudence.

The Faculty is headed by the Dean and there are four Heads of Department that assist the Dean in the day to day administration of the Faculty. There is also a deputy Dean and a Faculty Officer

### **FUNCTIONS OF THE DEAN**

The functions of the Dean of the Faculty includes the following-

- (i) *Day to day running of the faculty:* Generally speaking, the Dean of the Faculty is the academic and administrative head of the Faculty. This is apparent from section 8(4) of the University of Jos Statute No. 1<sup>1</sup> which provides-

The Dean of a faculty shall exercise general superintendence over the academic and administrative affairs of the faculty...

From this provision, it is clear that the Dean is saddled with the day to day running of the affairs of the faculty. He is to attend to every correspondence and carry out every directive from the Vice-Chancellor who is the Chief Executive and Academic Officer of the University. He also ensures that every decision of the University

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<sup>1</sup> Contained as the Third Schedule to the Principal legislation.

Senate is carried out in the faculty. In administering the faculty, he responds to every correspondence from within and outside the University. He ensures that all staff and students matters requiring the attention of the Senate of the University are brought up for its consideration.

- a. *Leader of the faculty:* The Dean chairs the Faculty board and every other meeting of the faculty including every committee of the Faculty Board of which he is a member. He also chairs the Faculty Administrative Committee consisting of the Dean, the Deputy Dean, the four Heads of Departments with the faculty officer in attendance. The faculty board consists of all the academic staff of the faculty with the faculty officer in attendance as the secretary of the meeting. The Dean also chairs all other faculty's meeting such as: Appraisal Committee which consists of the Heads of Department and all professors; Curriculum Committee; Admission Committee; ICT Committee; Post Graduate Committee.
- (ii) *Academic leadership:* The Dean provides academic leadership in the faculty. In most cases, he is the most senior academic in the faculty and a mentor to most of the faculty staff. Apart from administrative responsibility mentioned earlier, he teaches some courses at undergraduate and post graduate level and also involved in research. He presides over every M.phil/Ph.D seminar presentation. He also leads the faculty board of examiner and ensures that student's results are prepared in line with the University's regulation. He presents the students examination result to the Senate of the University. In consultations with the Heads of Departments and Professors in the faculty, he nominates external examiners for the approval of Senate. He also leads the faculty for accreditation by the regulatory agency and ensures that all facilities required for accreditation are put in place. The Dean is also a member of university Senate and he makes useful contributions to the Senate apart from defending faculty's matters at Senate meetings. He ensures that the faculty curriculums are reviewed from time to time in line with the regulation of the University.
- (iii) *Responsibility to the Vice-Chancellor:* In accordance with Rule 15(ii)(a) of the University of Jos Regulations, the Dean is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor on all matters relating to the appointment, promotion and discipline of academic and senior technical staff after due consultation with the Heads of Departments.
- (iv) *Responsibility for promotion of staff:* The Dean presents his staff that are due for promotion on yearly basis to the University's Appraisal Complex Committee. This was after the departmental and faculty's Appraisal committee have recommended the staff for promotion. The Dean makes necessary recommendations on staff appraisal Form either for promotion or for annual increment.
- (v) *Responsibility for appointment of staff:* The Dean advises the Vice-Chancellor on staff recruitment. He ensures that competent staff are recruited based on the need of the faculty. He, along with the relevant Head of department, is a member of the Interview Panel. In exceptional cases, he can make recommendations for the appointment of a staff on a temporary position pending a formal interview.

- (vi) *Responsibility for discipline:* The Dean is responsible for the discipline of staff in consultation with the Head of department concerned. He ensures that all disciplinary cases are referred to the Vice-Chancellor and also to the Council/Senate Disciplinary Committee.
- (vii) *Responsibility during Convocation:* The Dean is a member of Convocation. It is his duty to present to convocation for the conferment of degrees persons who have qualified for the LL.B (Hons) degree of the faculty after a successful examination. He also ensures that the names of successful candidates are sent to the Nigerian Law School for admission into the school so as to qualify them to practice law in Nigeria. Successful candidates' names below the age of thirty years are also forwarded by the Dean to National Youth Service Corp for a compulsory national service.
- (viii) *Collates faculty's budget:* He collates, co-ordinates and present the budgetary proposal of the faculty to the University Management. This he does in consultation with the Heads of Departments.
- (ix) *He advises the Vice-Chancellor on Academic Matters:* The Committee of Deans is saddled with the responsibility of advising the Vice-Chancellor on academic matters. The Dean of Law is a member of that Committee. He is also a member of all Senate Committee bothering on academic matters. These include- Senate Business Committee, Senate Curriculum Committee, Senate Affiliation Committee, the Library Board.

With all these responsibilities, the Dean helps to achieve the goal of the faculty. For instance the vision of the faculty is to nurture an ivy faculty of the highest standard which is rated as the best in Nigeria and among the three best in West Africa. This goal has been achieved as the faculty is one of the few Universities in Nigeria with full accreditation from regulatory agencies.

The Deanship is an honourable, sought after and respected position in the University. This is because in line with the University's regulations only very senior academics are eligible to vie for the position. The years of experience are put to bear and he commands the respect of all faculty members. Where there is more than one professor, the faculty board elects the Dean. In order to avoid a distraction from research pursuit, the tenure of a Dean is two years subject to a renewal for another term of two years.

The Dean's responsibilities are enormous and there are other external pressures that could affect the performance of the Dean. For instance pressure over admissions and other responsibilities outside the University such as membership of Governing Council of other institutions. The situation is compounded where there are no trusted and competent deputies to assist the Dean. The pressure from families is perhaps peculiar to most African countries.