

The Leadership Role of the Dean internally

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It is not easy to answer in the simple way to the question: "What is the role of the dean internally?" because it's very complicated issue and we need to look at this problem in many ways. So first of all we should understand what the term "dean" means.

Well, everyone can find on Wikipedia such definition of this term, as: "In academic administration, a dean is a person with significant authority over a specific academic unit, or over a specific area of concern, or both. The term comes from the Latin *decanus*, a leader of "ten," taken from the medieval monasteries (particularly those following the Cluniac Reforms) which were often extremely large, with hundreds of monks (the size of a small college campus). The monks were organized into groups of ten for administrative purposes, along the lines of military platoons, headed by a senior monk, the *decanus*. The term was later used to denote the head of a community of priests, as the chapter of a cathedral, or a section of a diocese (a "deanery"). When the universities grew out of the cathedral and monastery schools, the title of dean was used for officials with various administrative duties".

In fact the role of the academic dean is still a difficult one to describe. So is the academic dean a manager, a leader or maybe rather he has a respected but only an honorable position at the university and with no power or active role at all? Probably the true is somewhere between these two positions and the status of a deanship depends on historical and cultural factors of different universities. Actually there are many models of deans who work in many various sectors of a higher education system and after all there are different kinds of higher education institutions in which deans can work. For example an university faculty of law may have several deans at different areas who are working in various capacities. Moreover the higher education system is still changing and according to these changes the role and functions of the dean have also changed over time. Then again a technology still expands and that also affects on the role of the dean because his or her knowledge and skills have to intensify and increase. Well I think we can say honestly that there is no something as a standardized dean status.

However there are so many positions, functions or ranks of the deans in higher education systems but most people see them as the leaders of many types of university faculties or other education institutions.

And that is the way I see the dean - as a leader, a leader in higher education of every university's faculty. The dean has to take an active role in the life of his or her faculty, has to lead, direct, manage and govern. His role is also to administrate and supervise the faculty in many various areas. There are many challenges to face for the dean especially because of the ever-changing face of higher education all the time.

For me personally the role of the dean is challenging and multifaceted. The truth is that a dean has to have the required skills, abilities and knowledge to perform fairly in that demanding engagement. Naturally I think also that the dean has to perform service for the university or collage community and as well for the entire nation. The dean should in some way fulfill a moral role in the community, has to act both as a leader and also as a steward. The dean's role is also to maintain human values in an atmosphere of inceasing scholarship and the dean is also very important for the students because the dean is a person they can go to in times of problem and troubles but also in times of prosper. The dean should be not only an empiricist but also a humanist.

I suppose that not only faculty and scientific matters are largest dean's responsibilities but students as well. However nowadays we can say that a faculty demands the biggest part of each dean's energies and is their principal concern.

At present the dean has to cope with many functions, such as:

- fundraising
- budgeting
- education program oversight and supervise
- curriculum planning and development
- personnel management
- work factors management
- faculty governance
- solving internally conflicts
- development of partnerships among internal and external constituents
- external public relations
- promoting the faculty externally

Now we see with how many problems the dean has to cope, so that's why I think he has to be a leader – because a leader needs to be an active person who likes to overcome challenges and problems.

In the XXI century a dean's roles and responsibilities are multitudinous. For example the budgetary matters are very improtant for whole faculty and the dean should to be an expert in this area because bad and unguarded financial policy can be very dangerous for the entire university.

For me the leading role of the dean means that he has to have a knowledge of the mission – of the goal, the objective which he wants to achieve and also the knowledge of the mission and history of the institution where he is a leader. So the dean should be a person who is in some way like a driver of a bus – he has to know where he and the passengers want to go, what is their destination. The dean has to know the direction and has to lead whole the academic community in that direction.

The dean needs to be also almost an expert in information and educational technologies and has good administrative preparation. The dean should always think ahead to the future while deal with the present issues.

It means that deans have to be multiskilled and have knowledge in different fields. But we need to perceive that it doesn't mean the deans know always the right answers to all the questions and problems they are asked. It is just impossible not only for them but neither for anyone.

So in my opinion the dean of a faculty or other educational institution should always assume a leadership position and of course we should understand that the dean as a leader does not mean a dictator or an autocrat. Every university faculty in Poland has a democratic structure and it is not possible to create some authoritarian rules there. That is why the leadership role of the dean means always democratic leadership. It is important to remember this especially in the countries where in the past were dictatorial governments.