Developing Faculty Leadership and Identifying Cultivating Top Talent at Clemson

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“Attract, retain and reward top people.”

Strategic Priority — The Clemson 2020 Road Map
Attract, Retain, Reward . . .
Permanence and Change

Every Complex Organization . . .

- needs effective, stable, and reliable leaders
- needs leaders with institutional memory
- needs leaders who recognize tradition, time-honored values, and core objectives
- is always in a state of emergent chaos and order

Every Complex Organization . . .

- needs leaders who can change and adapt
- needs leaders not bound to the past
- needs leaders who can plan strategically for change, future growth, and new opportunities
- is always in a state of emergent chaos and order
Interim, Acting, Permanent?

What Difference Does It Make for the Administration, the Faculty, Reputation, and Retention?

- **Interim:** “necessary,” “emergency,” “treading water,” “holding down the fort,” “triage,” “keeping the ball rolling,” “saving the ship,” “temporary,” “transitional,” “bridge,” “between,” “rescuer,” “ambiguous,” “unresolved,” “savior”

- **Acting:** See “interim.” OR “possibly permanent,” “all but in title only,” “for all intents and purposes,” “provisional,” “filling a seat,” “rescuing,” “uncertainty,” “indefinite”

- **Permanent:** “empowered,” “mandated,” “resolved,” “decided,” “certain,” “definitive,” “settled”
When and why are open (or “national”) searches to fill leadership positions preferable? (need fresh perspectives, new ideas; limited local talent; economy allows it)

What are the costs? ($70K and higher; delayed decisions; risk of poor fit)

What happens when an open search fails? (Interim and Acting appointments; further delays in decision-making)

How do we attract the best of the 75% not on the market? (Clemson brand; start-up packages; resources; competitive salaries)

When we hire the best, how do we retain them? (?)
Open Searches for New Leadership

In academia . . .

- Open searches add talent (like strategic hires) or fill gaps; new talent signals change or growth, creates new opportunities, and builds new networks and connections; but outsiders take time to understand the local culture and internal talent may resent the lack of opportunity for advancement; encourages local talent to look elsewhere.

In business and industry . . .

- Open searches add talent or fill gaps but they are often responses to crisis and turmoil or ways to overcome internal resistance to change; cultivating leadership internally is a priority that protects investments, saves time and money, builds morale, and improves retention.
Falling into Administrative Leadership

- Most people I know didn’t grow up dreaming of being an academic administrator (present company excepted, of course!)

- Faculty often become academic leaders accidentally and as an act of service to their institutions

- As you know (and The Boss says), people were born to run, not lead

- Sometimes we see administration as a learning opportunity, on-the job training, trial by fire, an uncertain risk, or as a way to improve skills we want but don’t have
Developing Faculty Leaders
Sources of Resistance

- Faculty see administration as service (sometimes unrewarded or undervalued), a necessary evil
- Faculty fear uncertainty in a climate of change
- Academic appointments are comfortable
- Service is encouraged but unrewarded
- Faculty don’t always know what leadership entails
- “If you want to move up, you have to move out . . .”
Developing Faculty Leaders

One Model

- **Leadership Academy**
  - Each year, two faculty members appointed by deans from each school or college receive small stipends for leadership training.
  - Throughout the year, faculty learn from administrative and industry leaders about strategic thinking, decision-making, shared governance, institutional thinking, innovation, entrepreneurship, communication, accreditation, long-range planning, and more.
  - Over time, a pool of top talent grows, creating a legacy for current leadership.
Developing Faculty Leaders

Back to Retention . . .

- Create leadership opportunities for faculty by encouraging and rewarding upward mobility

- Provide resources and administrative support for top talent; create the conditions that help people achieve potential; deliver on the promises that attract people to Clemson

- Expend as many resources to retain as we do to recruit, and boost both, or else . . .
For Further Reading

Barden, Dennis M., and Janel Curry. “Faculty Members Can Lead, but Will They?” The Chronicle of Higher Education. 8 April 2013.


Thank you for your time and attention . . .

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