

**MEETING OF THE FACULTY TO DISCUSS ATTRIBUTES**

**FOR GUILFORD COLLEGE’S NEXT ACADEMIC DEAN**

**Convened and Led by President Jane K. Fernandes**

**MEETING NOTES**

***Meeting 1:***

**Thursday, December 11, 2014**

**From 3:00-4:00 p.m. in the East Gallery of Founders Hall**

Jane Fernandes welcomed attendees, opened the meeting with a moment of silence, and provided an introduction. It was important to hold this the forum as soon as possible and before break.

Jane Fernandes encouraged everyone to send her their ideas and feedback. Notes are being taken and will be distributed with the help of the email sign-up sheet being circulated.

Jane Fernandes stated that this is a meeting to discuss the attributes needed for our next academic dean. Through the open discussion, attendees are asked to describe some of the characteristics or qualities that they believe are important and want to see in the new dean at Guilford.

*The flow of the conversation and the specific ideas expressed included the following:*

Caryl Schunk stated that a new dean should want to take plenty of time to know what is going on in each department. Understanding everything that is happening in each department is important. There are many things that we could be doing together and that could overlap. The dean needs to be someone who can see the global picture and help us work together collaboratively to see our common and collective goals. Our longer-term goals are similar. Essentially, it is important to have an understanding of commonalities (to also help collaboration), as well as differences.

Damon Akins asked a clarifying question: Would the dean still have aspects of a provost’s job as well?

Jane Fernandes stated that she is leaning toward that, but that it is not an inflexible position.

Damon Akins suggested that this could determine the attributes needed in the new dean. Sometimes there is a tension that exists and that is structural. It may be difficult to represent faculty as well as represent what is best for the curriculum and have an administrative perspective. Others might be able to better articulate this idea regarding the structural issue.

Richie Zweigenhaft added that this structural issue is an important consideration. Regardless, the dean should be seen as the chief academic officer. Representing faculty is an important component of that. Providing help and resources is key. This is especially important in a resource-constrained context. Meeting attendees voiced support: Friend speaks my mind. The chief academic officer should be the vice president that will support faculty and academics and not see faculty as an obstacle or barrier.

Jane Fernandes stated that academic affairs needs to be the primary focus of the College.

Diya Abdo commented that the new academic dean must be an advocate for us. Additionally, the dean should be an advocate for the liberal arts. The new academic dean needs to love the liberal arts. Being inspired by liberal arts and advocating for us are important.

Jane Fernandes asked for clarification as to why is there a difference between advocating by curriculum and advocating for the faculty.

Damon Akins explained that sometimes there can be–and is–a tension. It is critical to have someone very clearly representing faculty and/or advocating on behalf of faculty. The dean should not be compromised by other issues. This is important when working with the curriculum committee.

Lisa McLeod remarked that she was not sure about this tension because faculty are responsible for the curriculum. The academic dean and faculty need to work collaboratively to determine the curriculum. They must also work collaboratively together on curricular needs, pedagogical needs, and makes resources for academics and faculty a primary concern.

Betty Kane remarked that she would like us, as a community, to see ourselves as that community and be a strong community; we are a faculty in support of the liberal arts, academics, and curriculum. Someone in the academic dean’s position should be able to facilitate us moving beyond that divisional feel that we now have. Helping us and providing leadership toward those ends is important.

Julie Winterich indicated that sometimes the divisions artificially divide us. An academic dean should meet with divisions and departments often. Guilford is a small college. There should be proactive communication with the dean to find ways for all of us to work together. Further, innovation in the classroom is important. We often ask students to do interdisciplinary thinking but we do not always facilitate that amongst ourselves and our areas.

Jane Fernandes commented that the dean should be the leader of the faculty. The faculty should hold the dean in the highest regard. The academic dean is the faculty’s advocate. That is the number one job of the position. Perhaps the dean should not be in in charge of emergency management or some other things that a provost often does. The dean should be focused on strengthening the academic and co-curricular program and, ideally, faculty would hold that person in highest regard as the leader of the faculty. Communication is key. Maybe we need to focus attention on some things and do them with excellence. Tearing down the divisions is also important.

Jill Peterfeso added that an academic dean should love us. The attributes and leadership of former Academic Dean Sam Schuman are a good example. He was an advocate for us and an advocate for students. The tone of the dean and culture fostered must be characteristic of an advocate for faculty.

Jane Fernandes responded that Sam Schuman is a great model because he could navigate the debates. In thinking about the debates in other institutions about mission and the liberal arts, this ability to navigate the debate is key.

Julie Burke observed that being a good listener is critical. Additionally, treating others with consistency and making decisions with consistency is important. A good listener helps to develop trust, which is also another element. Hearing concerns and consistently responding with integrity are important.

A question was raised regarding whether the College is going to have an internal or external search.

Jane Fernandes replied that it will be external but also open to internal candidates.

Kami Rowan expressed the importance of trust. There is momentum at Guilford right now. Choosing a leader that does not already have set ideas is crucial. We are strengthening trust and we need to build on that progress.

Edwins Gwako observed that, because of trust and because of situations, it is an extraordinary time right and that calls for the following: We need an external dean. We need someone who is proven. We need someone who can–and has–built trust; a proven leader and who is willing to listen to multiple divergent voices. The new academic dean must understand people’s traits and find ways to harness them in a manner that is positive to build the institution, rather than harnessing them in negative ways to divide us. The new dean must deal with the deep-seated issues that exist. Those challenges can be harnessed to build community. Racism and other issues exist and are serious problems. A track-record of dealing with difficult situations or facing internal challenges is important. The interest is in someone who can listen and be open to those challenges before helping to address them. Someone from inside Guilford may be from among the challenges and problems and is already from this environment. Someone from the outside can help us see things from new perspectives and help us move forward by looking through new lenses.

Lisa McLeod remarked that someone with vision is key. For the academic area, the academic dean should be aware of the outside opportunities, potential, and possibilities inherent in partnerships. This vision can help us move forward.

Melissa Daniel Frink voiced support for someone who embraces the variability in our learners. The academic dean should be someone who understands the differences in the learners that come to this campus. The dean should support all types of learners and develop new methods to serve these learners (or support faculty as they develop new methods). This is for everyone from adult learners, to ESL students, students with disabilities, alternative learners, and many others. It is important to have a dean who is excited about learning and can communicate that to faculty and increase the excited about that.

Julie Burke stated hopes for considering liberal arts inclusively. Aside from–and supporting–what was previously said, we also need sense of reasonableness about what we can do given our resources. We certainly want to serve all students and serve them well, but we have to consider what is reasonable in our context. We must consider individuals as learners. It is challenging to be asked to do new things with limited resources.

Dave Dobson noted that it is important to have a dean who is completely open and who wants to keep things open and transparent–to shine a light on everything. A critical element is the ability to involve us all to open processes and shine a light on things so we can develop them together. This may be hard to determine in the search process, but it is important.

Jane Fernandes suggested that we can ask about past experiences or ask references. Not every institution considers this important.

Gail Webster expressed appreciation for colleagues. We are a very hard-working faculty. We are incredibly dedicated. The genuine love that faculty give to their jobs is apparent. The desire is for a dean that will see this and celebrate with us.

Julie Winterich noted the challenges inherent in resource constraints at Guilford. Expectations often increase even as enrollment decreases. Committee work and serving as department chairs on top of teaching responsibilities and research are among the examples. The new dean should be prepared to help us address this issue. Further, the new dean must support faculty development. When I go to conferences, I am excited and reenergized to educate students and serve the College.

Richie Zweigenhaft commented that he heard what colleagues said about an outside candidate and reflected on this. I want us to be open to an inside perspective. Some of the most celebrated external appointments have had detractors and challenges. Some internal appointments have been very supportive of faculty. We need to pick best person. We need to wait to see who applies. There may be an argument for an external candidate and perspective, and for good reasons, but we should be open to internal.

Barbara Lawrence reflected on the positive things that have happened and the need to build on those. However, we want to be sure we rise above the existing challenges and those issues that divide us. The new dean should be cognizant of workload constraints. Knowledge of accreditation standards and processes is also important. The dean should work to bring us to a higher level of academic reputation and quality. The new dean should see the importance of engaging in the national debate about issues and support that endeavor. Finally, the new dean should be dedicated, care deeply, and embrace innovative ideas and our core values. Innovation is very important.

Joyce Eaton stated that the academic dean needs to be a “financial tiger.” It is important to have the ability to fight for resources at the table and be sure that enough financial resources go to the academic area.

Diya Abdo expressed desire to have a dean who is aware of diversity issues and their significance, including issues such as sexism. The dean must understand how leadership and structures are constructed and how they may actually institutionalize these problems. It is critical to break down these constructs. Support for antiracism efforts is important. This transformation and this process are important.

Jeremy Rinker observed that we are crafting an amazing description of an amazing person. However, it is also important to get someone who is humble. The dean must be that person with all (or many) of these qualities, but not exude an air of superiority because of them.

Lisa McLeod stated that support for antiracism and diversity will help us be a competitive as an institution. This should not be thought of after financial issues. These things are not necessarily in tension or in competition. They to go hand-in-hand and antiracism and diversity can be priorities; they can rise together.

Julie Burke noted the mention of humility. It is not necessary for one person to have all of these qualities, but it is important to find someone who can act interdependently to bring us (and our different skillsets) together to do the work together. The dean can bring us all in. This may help to level the notion and pressure that we are necessarily looking for all of these great attributes in one person. Perhaps we can look for particular specialties or skills (the knowledge) but also this characteristic of good leadership.

Jane Fernandes added that, in her experience, one person who does not have all the attributes. The quality of knowing what one does not have, and then to be able to get that out of others is a very important ability.

Jane Fernandes asked that attendees go around the circle to ensure everyone has an opportunity to share their additional thoughts.

Tim Kircher stated that the ability to create and promote partnerships is a good attribute to have. This is essential in higher education, especially the current context of higher education.

Rachel Riskind voiced agreement with the ideas and important specific abilities previously expressed. Another wish is that the academic dean be kind, have a sense of humor, and be charismatic. This builds respect and trust.

Richard Schilhavy described the importance of transparency. It is important that decisions not be made haphazardly or in a manner where the community does not understand the rationale.

Anne Glenn stated that she would like to echo and support the ideas expressed. It is very important to have a dean that may not have all the attributes but knows how to reach out. Further, the dean must also actively develop those attributes among others (and within themself). This touches on the topic of faculty and staff development and the importance of supporting that area.

Caryl Schunk agreed with that point. Shared leadership is important. We have to understand what we can do and our own gifts as well as the time constraints. The desire, ability, and practice of reaching-out are all key. It is important to have the perspective that we can accomplish things as a team and together.

Anna Pennell noted the importance of consistency and clarity, as well as leadership and what that means. Finding a compassionate tiger with a sense of humor can be quite a challenge. However, it is clear from comments today that we want someone to stand for what we believe in and stand-up for us. Faculty will support that.

Joyce Eaton stated that the dean needs to be out-and-about. Being with faculty, staff, students, and the life of the College is important.

Janet Starmer suggested that an important attribute is the ability to be creative in addressing and boosting faculty morale.

Terry Hammond voiced supports for prior ideas. Transparency and collaboration is essential. For example, we have the Gallery, Multicultural Education Center, Principled Problem Solving, and many other areas. These all report to the dean. As such, we need someone to help us collaborate and work together.

Georgie Bogdan noted that being a team player is important. The dean must be able to harness the incredible resources in faculty, staff, and students and bring them together as one strong community.

Kami Rowan stated that the dean needs to advocate for faculty and also get along well with Jane Fernandes. The person and position of the dean has to be able to mediate among many interests and constituencies, including faculty, staff, and the president. The dean has to be able to work well with the board of trustees. The president has to be able to trust the dean.

Jeremy Rinker highlighted two key attributes previously stated: the ability to advocate and transparency. Further, students need to know who the dean is and the dean must be able to foster that relationship.

Mark Dixon stated that he is proud to have a woman as president and a black woman as the dean. Diversity is important in the higher ranks and this should be important in the search. A person of color could bring a lot to the deanship.

Gail Webster cited an earlier comment that was important: The dean has to be an aggressive advocate for resources for the academic area.

Maria Amado noted the importance of transparency and collaboration. The dean should promote an environment where faculty can grow and develop.

Jill Peterfeso suggested that the length of tenure is important; the dean should not stay too long.

Jane Fernandes indicated that, while it is difficult to fully articulate the reasons for this, the length-of-tenure issue is very important.

Damon Akins voiced support for a future dean who fully understands Quaker process.

Julie Winterich asked for clarification about a previous comment regarding fighting for resources. What was meant by the “table.” What setting? Is it among the vice presidents? The board?

Joyce Eaton replied that she referred to both groups and in other venues such as committees.

Julie Winterich stated that this is a tone set by the president. Academics are our core mission, our priority, and must come first.

Darryl Samsell shared a list of necessary attributes, including having expertise in: current challenges facing colleges and in higher education in general, curriculum and academic evolution, strategic planning and how to implement plans, comfort with donors, and leadership and structural issues. It can be very hard to manage all of the direct reports in the academic area of the College’s organizational chart.

Edwins Gwako conveyed the importance of a dean with a special gift for building community and trust. The new dean must listen to multiple faculty voices and actively include them in the decision-making processes in a way that is very transparent and respectful. The dean should be resilient and gifted in crisis-management in a way that can calm people and the situation when emotions run high. The College is in a precarious position. We need reassurances to calm us and to build confidence. When crisis intervention is necessary, it should be done sooner rather than later.

Barbara Lawrence stated that the dean should support advocating for diversity among faculty especially in hiring for tenure-track positions. We also need to ensure additional support for the dean; it is hard to believe that the dean has been operating with such limited direct support.

Dave Dobson commented that the dean should be curious and able to go to any program and department and be genuinely interested in what they do. That is best part of the liberal arts and what we do. The dean should also be relentlessly positive–not Pollyannaish–but see the positive in people and the good in what we do. Additionally, the dean should be good at numbers, including budgeting and finances, surveys, outcome measurements, and statistics. The dean should have a basic comfort and ability in this area.

Kyle Dell stated that the former mayor of Boston, Thomas Menino, comes to mind when considering the attributes desired in a new academic dean. Thomas Menino had many of these abilities and did many of the things mentioned. He was popular and became a long-serving mayor. Among the important elements is the sense that someone is authentic. Genuineness in who they are, in who Guilford is, in what we need, in what we have, and in what we hope to be. This also plays into the area of self-awareness and trust. Whether in a park, at official functions, or in individual conversations, Menino was a genuine person. He was authentic and deeply cared about others’ wellbeing, serving, and the city. It is also important that the dean be good at planning (i.e., identifying and clearly stating “here is what it takes,” developing processes, identifying resources, and determining steps to take necessary actions). Then the dean must go around, meet people and engage them in the process, find out what they need, and help them get to that mark–together.

Steve Shapiro noted that the new dean must have good emotional intelligence. Being a good communicator is vital to success. The dean needs good interpersonal skills to assist and benefit people they are working with. I see many opportunities because we have a lot of great work being done in subgroups. Much of the work is related and we could be working together. The ability to make better use of personal and limited-financial resources (by working together) is important. The upcoming Quality Enhancement Plan is just one example of many.

Jim Hood suggested that the new academic dean should have a Ph.D. in one of the areas taught at the College. That is an important sensibility. The dean should be tenacious in making decisions based on evidence and these data-driven decisions should be done whenever possible. It is also important that the dean comes from a teaching background and approach the job from that perspective–the kind of innovative teaching that Guilford College has to offer. We are unique. We have a way of teaching and a student experience that is not always well-articulated. The dean needs to champion and understand that.

Betty Kane added *(immediately following the meeting)* that the new leader should have the requisite knowledge and skills regarding adult education. In so many meetings among faculty, assumptions and conversations revolve around traditional students. The future of Guilford is also going to depend upon whether we can strategically address and grow the adult education program. Additionally, much of the focus of the previous conversation was on the four (or more) years that students spend in the Guilford College experience. Faculty are important, but it is our students who are the most central to the College. The process is one that begins with letting students know what they may be seeking that we have to offer so that we can attract more of them to the Guilford experience. We cannot lose focus on what lies ahead for them after Guilford. We are failing them if we do not help them find, and prepare for, opportunities after Guilford. The new academic dean should understand and help support all of these efforts.

Jane Fernandes thanked attendees for their time, encouraged all faculty to continue to submit their ideas, and provided concluding remarks: Guilford College has great faculty and I am proud to be your president. The new dean may not have every single one of the attributes, but I look forward to working with you to find a dean that has most of these important attributes and that can be a great champion and advocate for faculty and our academic program. It will also be important to create an office and systems that allows the dean to be effective at serving the faculty and College. With this meeting, I have great hope that we can both find a way forward and work together to move forward positively.

Jane Fernandes closed the meeting with a moment of silence.