

**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 2:***

**Friday, December 12, 2014**

**From 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. in the West Gallery of Founders Hall**

Jane Fernandes opened the meeting with a moment of silence, welcomed attendees, and provided an introduction. This is the second of two meetings this week on this topic.

Notes are being taken during this meeting. A sign-up sheet is being circulating for the distribution of the notes.

This is a meeting to discuss the attributes needed for our next academic dean. We are also considering essential qualifications. Qualifications may be clearer, but it may be more important to be specific about attributes and qualities.

Jane Fernandes asked if there were any questions before the attributes were discussed.

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

Mark Justad asked whether the position will look the same with the same structure.

Jane Fernandes responded that there is too much that the dean is now required to do. The dean may need to have more help; there are many reports. I am not against considering a provost if that is what may be necessary or what is wanted.

Adele Wayman asked if that idea of a provost has been discussed. This person would be an advocate for the faculty.

Jane Fernandes noted that this topic keeps coming up.

Mark Justad stated that there is too much that must be done. This makes it difficult to do multiple roles: to advocate for faculty as well as for the curriculum and broader issues.

Jane Fernandes asked, Are those roles and areas necessarily in conflict with each other?

Mark Justad observed that the current situation makes it hard to do both but those two areas-of-focus must be connected.

Nancy Daukas highlighted the need for the new academic dean to be collaborative and foster this collaboration. There are many people working in separate areas. The dean needs to bring us together to work together and combine efforts.

Rudy Gordh cited former Academic Dean Sam Schuman. Sam was a great person with desirable attributes and we should look to him as an example. He thought across disciplines, came to the departments, was scholarly, and could administrate and deal with budgets. Sam Schuman is a good model.

Kathryn Shields expressed the importance that the dean work collaboratively and empower faculty to do things that are necessary.

Roy Nydorf noted that that Sam Schuman exemplifies great attributes of a dean. However, he was here during a different time and we must acknowledge that. It is important to have someone who can be an administrator and who can also work on the academic issues. As an aside, it is too much for one person to do. I want a scholar-teacher. Having a dean who is still a teacher is important. The dean should embody and support teaching, advising, scholarship, growth, and development. It is important to have someone in the classroom and who knows those dynamics through-and-through. Academics cannot be at the low end of totem pole. The academic dean has to be a strong advocate and make sure that resources, finances, and focus are put toward academics. Academics should not be at the bottom. The dean must also promote collaboration. Treating each program and department as equal is an important ability. Support for the support-staff is also key.

Jane Fernandes asked, Are there things in the past that have been done well or implemented well that can serve as examples?

Roy Nydorf stated that one small but deeply meaningful example was that Sam Schuman provided handwritten notes to acknowledge accomplishments or jobs-well-done.

Bob Williams expressed the importance of having a dean that understands the changes in the population and in society. There are many demographic changes in the applicant pool for students, including students of color and other underrepresented students. It is important to have someone who understands this and who can innovate to meet those demands. Serving these students effectively, retaining them, and graduating them are all a part of this. This is beyond a community issue, social issue, or financial issue. It is fundamental. It is an important survival issue for a College and across higher education. Another important attribute is the ability to promote shared academic governance. The academic dean must collaborate with faculty. Sometimes we want a strong leader, but each person's “promised-land” and interests may be different. A strong collaborator and understand those interests, navigate them, and work to achieve beneficial outcomes. The new academic dean must be able to inspire, support, and motivate an undercompensated and demoralized faculty. The dean must be someone who understands how to inspire and keep people engaged in the context of no budgetary resources. This inspiration is not in financial terms but in other ways. A dean who is adept at that is important.

Jane Fernandes asked for clarification on a previous point regarding applicants.

Bob Williams explained that the focus of comments was on the student applicant pool. This is also a matter of solvency.

Kathy Adams highlighted the ability to innovate and be creative as important skills of the next academic dean. Additionally, the dean must be good at conflict resolution and problem-solving. People need to feel listened-to and respected. Even if final decisions are not what others would have decided or desire, people need to feel listened-to.

Maia Dery commented that it is important to have someone who wants to be here at Guilford College, not just someone who wants to be a dean. Other important elements include flexibilities of mind, openness, and embracing Guilford. The dean must break down artificial impediments to collaboration. The dean must understand us and champion us.

Adele Wayman inquired whether there have been conversations concerning if we should have an inside or outside person as the next dean. An outside person may bring new ideas and perspectives. Sometimes this is in conflict with the challenge of having to learn Guilford, but Jane Fernandes is a good model.

Kathryn Shields offered a different perspective. Because the learning curve is so steep for the institution, there may be a good reason for an inside candidate and dean. It must be the right person, right fit, and the right time. We should not limit options. We should be focused on choosing the right person.

Adele Wayman stated that the right person trumps where they come from.

Roy Nydorf added that an “outsider” binging new ideas can be very important. For example, a corporate top-down model does not work and new perspectives can address these issues and bring alternative structures.

Darryl Samsell remarked that there are many internal possibilities and people that do want to promote new ideas and changes. Our College is complicated and challenging. A dean and provost model may be beneficial and offer more help.

Nancy Daukas stated that we have many resources, especially among younger faculty. Additionally, we should not limit our thinking, but be open to the possibilities of both internal and external candidates and think first about choosing the right person.

Kathy Adams commented that faculty have often been hard on deans. Further, past relationships cannot end up limiting or constraining a candidate. That is a word of warning to the faculty as much as to the new dean. Additionally, we need someone who is energized. We need someone who will give their heart and soul to the position to not just be a dean, but be committed to the institution and the College.

Jane Fernandes stated that she wonders about what we need to do for the person hired as dean in order to ensure they are effective. The office and structure may need to change, especially related to the number of direct reports to the dean. The president may have a role in this, as she does not want the dean to be overwhelmed and become something or someone less-than-ideal. We want to ensure that the person and structure have support. We may have to determine a plan now.

Kathy Adams indicated that having a president who strongly prioritizes the academic program is important. That will go far.

Mark Justad expressed a desire to have an academic dean who has experience with a similar kind of work. The right person is important, but this administrational experience is important.

Gwen Erickson highlighted the issue of structure as important. We want a person to have a holistic and collaborative approach. The dean must see the entire institution. Whether we have a dean, provost, or both, the ability to take a College-wide view is important and an interrelated element.

Rudy Gordh commented that having a strong faculty advocate in the academic dean’s office is important. We also have to think about staff in the academic area. The dean should be an advocate of staff. The dean should also think College-wide.

Roy Nydorf discussed the context of limited resources and the need to have a dean that advocates for support of the academics. For example, very many resources have been spent on how things look on the surface and on facilities, buildings, and grounds. We must devote resources to the actual “infrastructure­”–the most important resource is the faculty and instruction. That is the priority for resources and support, and the academic dean should advocate for that.

Bob Williams reflected on the past and the way the curriculum was implemented and degree which faculty were supported. This was done with the help of taking some money out of the endowment. Institutions must be cautious doing this, but this strategy had some benefits for the College.

Jane Fernandes asked if this strategy was supported.

Bob Williams and Kathy Adams stated that it was supported. Instruction and the curriculum were provided with additional support in the past.

Edwins Gwako expressed concern about adding another position. The College should put the money toward faculty. Further, vice presidents could be scaled-down and reduced; they could be directors and we could those resources to support instruction. The other point is in regards to the issue of demonization of a dean over time. However, the problems are deeper than that symptom. A new dean must be able to face serious problems that are deep, systemic, and structural. Right now, we are engaged in “wishful thinking.” However, we also need to be realistic and think structurally. We have to be more sensitive to the fact that the office faces unique issues and challenges that we are not always privy too. Additionally, right now we have very limited resources. The dean needs to fight against the pressures of limited resources, which we are all also doing. It is essential that we support the academic area with more resources. We also need to think about constraints that are faced. Sometimes we think we can reach far, but when we know the constraints, we realize that it may not be achievable. The dean must think carefully about that context and work within it and together with all of us.

Jane Fernandes observed that an academic dean often lacks good choices or options. The dean is often in a hard place and must sometimes choose the “least worst” option. We have to organize and setup support to help with this issue.

Edwins Gwako added that we need to think about someone who has experience and a track-record with all of these challenges. We need to seek the best candidate who has encountered these issues and can tackle them in an inclusive manner, while thinking about faculty and students.

Nancy Daukas commented that the role of the academic dean has changed. Committee chairs and others have very important roles. The academic dean’s role in all of this is often to be the person that lets others do their jobs. That, in turn, can make the dean’s job more manageable.

Jane Fernandes noted that, yesterday and today, many faculty touched on the issue of transparency. One strategy is to assign the issue with no good choices to a committee. This involves different expertise and perspectives and also develops an appreciation of the limited options; we may have a problem to solve, but we are in this together.

Kyle Dell stated that it is important to have a dean who will want to continue some of the good things we that are doing now and build on achievements. Having this space to share wisdom is an example of opportunities that can be fostered so we can be creative together. Listening is essential. This can all link to our Quaker heritage. The more I talk to colleagues, the more I am impressed by how much they are accomplishing, especially with limited resources. The next dean should exemplify and enable a sense of openness and be accessible. This is toward the goal of understanding what the community needs, what is working well, and what not working well. In that manner, and in the abilities the dean brings, the dean will be someone who genuinely understands the constraints with which we are wrestling. The dean must deal with constraints but also empower faculty. We try our best and we are dedicated to our tasks. This often has great results. We help young people mature and develop. We meet local economic needs. We create new knowledge through research. We create beauty in what we do for students. I want a dean to understand this and who knows how to empower it.

Jane Fernandes asked that meeting attendees go around the circle so that each person has an opportunity to add thoughts.

Julie Winterich commented that somehow Guilford has become a workplace that can be very unhealthy and burn-out the dedicated faculty and staff. One way to try to counter this is to model healthy behavior. The dean has a role in this. Managing workload is a way to do this. Working hard is good, but we cannot to push ourselves until we are exhausted and sick (and then try to push through that). This is not a good and sustainable situation. We need to model this individually and as an institution. Our students often go on to serve others and energies must be preserved within them, as well as for them and their preparation. We need a dean who is a leader and who will promote and model this a healthy and balanced approach to our work.

Gwen Erickson noted that we are not going to get someone with all the attributes. Further, structural issues are very important and should be addressed to help the dean and the situation.

Nancy Daukas expressed a desire for putting a system in place to where feedback is given. This feedback should provided every few years. This should be a formal structure and system of assessment that is done collectively. Term limits for the dean should be established. Evaluations should be done just prior to that particular time when the dean’s future in that position is considered.

Michele Malotky highlighted collaboration and coordination. The dean should be able to foster this. The dean should also be knowledgeable of other models at other institutions that could benefit us and should implement them if possible and if they could help.

Phil Slaby stated that, in addition to the “wish list,” it is important to look at experience. Experience working through these issues matters greatly. The structure is also important.

Vance Ricks also noted that experience matters. Experience at a place where there are values is key – not necessarily Quaker values, but values. The dean’s ability to actively link the values to their work is essential.

Kyle Dell commented that the dean must not only advocate for faculty but also advocate externally. The dean must be able to find and develop connections. We have great networks within which the academic program is prioritized. The dean must champion faculty and the academic program.

Rob Whitnell stated that the dean should be open, transparent, and collaborative. There are so many great things happening at Guilford College. We also continue to get good people. The dean should see those and build on them. The dean should champion them and lift them up.

Edwins Gwako expressed the importance of having an academic dean who has the ability to make hard decisions that might not be popular. We are going to have to address structural issues. As a simple example, do we grow large with no clear competitive advantage, or do we grow smaller and stronger with a sense of excellence. That and related or different strategies must be considered. The dean will be a leader in this process. We may have to make reductions. The dean has to be able to help the president manage this process.

Kathy Adams echoed earlier comments about the importance of the structural issue. Ideally, this would be addressed before the new dean starts. Further, we need to look at the entire College and not just the academic area when considering changes and cuts. Changes elsewhere are important.

Barbara Lawrence cited collaboration and transparency as critical attributes. Structural issues and the other ideas expressed are all very important. The new dean has to be fearless and experienced in having the necessary courageous conversations with everyone. These will get us to be the very best at what we are and what we do. The dean also must ensure that we keep good people.

Susan Ikenberry noted that we have great resources at Guilford. We need to tap into them and empower them. Coming from an institutional research perspective, we also have great information from surveys and assessment tools. The new dean must know how to pull key information together, understand the implications, and actively use it for institutional improvement.

Kathryn Shields expressed thanks to Jane Fernandes for holding these forums. With regard to the new dean, that person has to be able to take advantage of these–and many other–ideas we are generating. We need to follow-up on these ideas and not loose them. The dean must consider all ideas and connect the necessary resources and talent. Things should not be done on top of what we are already doing, rather be done by working smarter and more efficiently. Structural changes are very important and should be completed before the dean arrives.

Ben Marlin cited community time as an example of something that exists and has significant potential, but which is not being fully utilized (additional opportunities such as this meeting, perhaps on a smaller scale, would be great). Department meetings also have great potential. For many reasons, it is important that the new dean come to department meetings. This should not be the dean calling faculty to him/her, but reaching out; humility is important. This effort takes time. Restructuring is tough and adding a person difficult in challenging financial times, but having another person and that support might make this engagement possible.

Dave Dobson stated that the dean should be someone willing to experiment and try new things. Sometimes these initiatives will not work and be laid down, but the willingness to give them a chance is important. New ideas should not be shot down or dismissed. Additionally, collaboration is very important. The dean should foster collaboration. Team teaching is one example. In my experience it makes each person better. We should try more collaborative efforts such as that.

Maia Dery expressed that there is potential for collaboration from all areas of the College. There is untapped potential across all areas. A positive tone at the administrative level, a sense of openness, and a desire for fun all help the culture of the College.

Jane Fernandes thanked attendees. It was important to hold this meeting sooner rather than later so the input can help us move forward. She will look at these ideas carefully and they will help in the design of a job description.

Jane Fernandes stated that she always treasures time with the faculty. Our faculty are creative, smart, energized, and dedicated. Jane Fernandes noted that she is optimistic and energized when connecting and meeting with faculty. She knows faculty are working hard for the College and are extremely dedicated.

Jane Fernandes thanked the attendees for their honesty, ideas, and help. She encouraged attendees to send her additional feedback.

Jane Fernandes closed the meeting with a moment of silence.