

STEPPING IN: THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES FACED BY INTERIM LAW DEANS

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I. INTRODUCTION

THE opportunity to serve as interim dean is an enormous honor and privilege. The job presents many unique challenges and rewards, but most significantly, it is an opportunity to provide service and leadership to your law school during a transitional, and sometimes stressful, period. The success of an interim dean is of paramount importance to the law school and the university for a smooth transition in law school leadership.

Many, if not most, of the dean's responsibilities are completely new to the typical interim dean, who usually comes from the faculty. This is true even for the interim dean who has previously served as an associate or assistant dean. For the first time, you will be responsible for relationships with not only your colleagues and students, but also with the law school staff, a number of people at the university level (including your direct supervisor), and external constituencies, such as alumni, donors, and other members of the community. Most importantly, you will be responsible for the entire law school, rather than for one department or one aspect of it. If you previously directed a program or were an associate dean, your responsibility was to manage, administer, and advocate for your program or to carry out the responsibilities of managing a segment of the law school. As a dean, you will be responsible for leadership of the entire operation.

Often, training for interim deans is scant.¹ Yet, while you are in the interim dean position, you are "The Dean" and you have all the responsibilities of "The Dean." Interim deans must hit the ground running, often with little or no administrative experience and almost always with no decanal experience. Moreover, interim deans face many unique challenges resulting from the transitional and short-term nature of their appointments.

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1. The ABA Section on Legal Education sponsors an annual training conference for new law deans. Interim deans are welcome. It is a well-run and extremely informative conference and is well worth attending. In addition, a strong support network exists among law deans. You should not hesitate to draw on this resource for advice and support during your deanship. To my knowledge, there is no specialized training for interim deans, despite all the unique challenges faced by those of us holding the position. See ABA Legal Education Committees, <http://www.abanet.org/legaled/committees/committees.html> (last visited Jan. 16, 2009).

The purpose of this essay is to provide whatever assistance I can for new interim deans in the midst of this transition. Any expertise I have comes from my experience as an interim dean for over two years. Any advice I give is just that—advice based on my experience to be taken or left based on your own judgment and experience.

Every law school is different, of course. There are differences in culture, policies, politics, and procedures. There are differences in faculty dynamics and staff dynamics. There are differences in university structures and in law school administrative structures. The advice I provide in this essay might not work at your law school, or it might not work for your own leadership style. Some of the advice in this essay applies with equal force to a new permanent deanship, but I have focused most of my comments on ways in which the interim deanship differs from a permanent deanship and on issues that uniquely affect interim deans. In addition, this essay is not intended to be a thorough primer on the deanship, but rather to focus on some of the unique challenges and opportunities faced by interim deans.

Except for a specific section about being a candidate for the permanent deanship while serving as interim dean,² this essay assumes that the interim dean will be temporary and that a different person will assume the permanent deanship. Of course, an interim dean who is a candidate for the deanship would likely approach the interim period in much the same way, unless the interim dean's candidacy is merely a formality and the permanent appointment is a relative certainty. The interim dean's role is to continue to execute the law school's priorities and to maintain the status quo so that the new dean (whether the same person who serves as interim dean or a different person) will be able to make a smooth transition into the deanship and begin to move the school forward.

II. SHORT-TERM TITLE

Even though the average decanal tenure is very short these days, the word "interim" or "acting" attached to your title creates unique challenges.³ For example, donors are sometimes wary to spend time getting to know you or commit to large gifts without a sense of the longer-term future leadership of the school.⁴ Also, hiring faculty and senior administrators can be challenging. Obviously, faculty candidates want to know about the long-term direction of the school and the dean's expectations, particularly while they are on the tenure track. Senior administrator candidates are sometimes hesitant to work for an interim dean because they do not have job security and do not know what to expect in the new boss they will have when the permanent dean is appointed.

2. See *infra* Part VI.

3. See James M. Klebba, *Confessions of a Recidivist Interim Dean*, 33 U. TOLEDO L. REV. 91, 92-94 (2001).

4. See *id.* at 94.

III. DELAYED EFFECTS IN LAW SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

If you require instant gratification, you might be frustrated as interim dean. The results of many of your efforts and accomplishments are unlikely to materialize immediately. Much of what a dean does is to cultivate relationships, both internally and externally, that will benefit the school over the long term. For example, you might make a connection with a law firm that will result in more jobs for your students, but those jobs might not actually materialize for another year or more, or you might begin cultivating a donor who has the capacity to make a very substantial gift to your school, but the donor might not make the gift until later.

IV. UNCERTAIN DURATION OF TERM IN OFFICE

The estimated length of your interim deanship will affect your priorities. One of an interim dean's challenges is that the length of the term might be uncertain and depend on the success of the ongoing dean search. While most interim deanships last about a year, some are as short as a few months and others are as long as several years.⁵ When you start your interim deanship, you might not know how long it will last. My own experience provides an example. I was originally given a one-year contract as interim dean. Only about two-thirds of the way through the first year did it become apparent that I needed to stay a second year. So, although I was the interim dean for two years, in many ways, my term amounted to two separate one-year interim deanships.

This uncertainty of duration makes planning difficult. If you expect to be in the position for a very short time, your priority will likely be maintaining the status quo in anticipation that the new dean will set the direction of the school. The longer you are in office, however, the more important it is for you to be concerned about the school's long-term priorities.⁶

V. IT IS NOT YOUR TEAM

The composition of the senior administrative team is crucial to a dean's success. When a senior administrator acts or speaks, people assume that the dean supports what that person is doing or saying. Moreover, as the dean, you will rely on the senior administrators for information that you will not otherwise have simply because people convey information to them that they might not bring to you directly, no matter how open your open-door policy. Accordingly, you must be able to trust your senior administrators to bring you the information necessary to understand the dynamics of your institution and make decisions.

You will also need the senior administrators' advice and ideas. They probably have more experience in law school administration than you do. Even

5. See Michael Dean Sabbath, *Should You Accept the Position of Interim Dean? Some Observations from Someone Who Did*, 36 U. TOL. L. REV. 159, 162 (2004).

6. See *id.*

if you were an administrator before you were the dean, your expertise was likely limited to your particular area of administration, such as academics or faculty development. In addition, the adage “two heads are better than one” is especially apt in the context of law school administration; you will have better results if you have an administrative team that effectively works together for the good of the school.

Importantly, you need administrators who do their jobs well. You cannot do their jobs for them, and nothing can derail you from your priorities faster than having an ineffective administrator for whom you and others have to pick up the slack. This does not mean you need administrators who think just like you and never disagree with you. You need senior administrators who are committed to the same values and priorities to which you are committed, but who think for themselves and are not afraid to disagree with you. You want smart, creative people who are good at their jobs, including both the technical aspects of their jobs and the managerial and supervisory aspects of their jobs. You need people with integrity whom you can trust and who trust you. You want people who complement you and whom you complement, so that, together, you have a team that is more effective than any one of you would be without the others.

The challenge is that once you know what you need and want in an administrative team, as an interim dean you will probably be unable to assemble your team like a permanent dean could over a longer period of time. Although you might face a serious personnel issue that you must resolve by replacing an employee, you will likely want to minimize disruptions in the administrative staff when possible. You will need an experienced staff, the members of which know their jobs and will be able to keep functioning without serious interruption. In addition, hiring a senior administrator consumes an enormous amount of time and will divert you from your other priorities.⁷ Significantly, the new permanent dean will need the opportunity to assemble a team that complements his or her own strengths and weaknesses.

As a result, your staff—particularly your senior administrative staff—is not *your* team; it is your predecessor’s team. Thus, you might face challenges with your staff. Any change in leadership is stressful for staff, especially senior non-faculty administrators who lack the job security of tenure. When an interim dean steps in, not only do staff members have to adjust to the immediate change in leadership, but they know another change in leadership is probably coming in the near future. The stress of the transition can affect the dynamic within the staff as well as their responsiveness to your ideas and priorities. In addition, many other factors, such as the circumstances of your predecessor’s departure, the staff’s relationship to your predecessor, their thoughts on your role in the dean’s office, and their assumptions about your expectations for their jobs, might affect staff members’ responsiveness and acceptance of you.

7. This does not necessarily mean you should not fill vacancies. See *infra* Part XII.

VI. BEING A CANDIDATE FOR DEAN WHILE SERVING AS INTERIM DEAN

There are numerous benefits to being a sitting internal candidate for the permanent deanship. You know your school, its strengths and weaknesses, and its mission and strategic plan. You know the politics of your institution and have already proven yourself capable of working within the existing culture. You already have relationships with the internal and external constituencies and, thus, can ensure a smooth transition.

As a sitting interim dean, however, you will face special challenges if you decide to be an internal candidate for the permanent deanship.⁸ In particular, some faculty and staff members may seek special favors, including financial favors, in exchange for an explicit or implied promise of loyalty. Some might become envious or overly critical of you. Some might give you even more advice than usual and be offended if you do not follow it. Some might try to become very friendly with you, thinking they had better stay on your good side (even if you don't really have a bad side). Some might retreat from you, wanting to avoid appearing that they are overly loyal to you. Your faculty and staff colleagues will react in all sorts of different ways to the discomfort—no matter how slight or how severe the discomfort—of having the sitting dean “campaigning” for the job he or she currently holds.

This presents challenges not only for your candidacy, but, more importantly, for your ability to continue to execute your priorities.⁹ If you are going to be a candidate, the earlier in your interim deanship you are a candidate, the better, both for you and for your law school. The longer you serve as interim dean while a candidate or before becoming a candidate, the greater your opportunity to make decisions that, though best for the school, potentially disadvantage a member of the faculty or staff and the greater the potential for divisiveness and disharmony in the process. Of course, no matter what the consequences for your candidacy, your responsibility as interim dean is to make decisions and carry out the responsibilities of your office with undivided loyalty to your law school and your university.

VII. UNUSUALLY STRESSFUL TRANSITIONAL SITUATIONS

All the ordinary challenges of an interim deanship transition may be exacerbated significantly depending on the circumstances that spurred a change in leadership.¹⁰ If the previous dean left due to a sad and traumatic event, such as serious illness or death, the entire law school community will be grieving. You will have the unique challenge of simultaneously comforting people and motivating them to continue doing their jobs to move the law school forward. This challenge will require you and your senior administrators, who will also be grieving, to exercise great sensitivity and diplomacy.

8. See Sabbath, *supra* note 5, at 161.

9. *Id.*

10. See Klebba, *supra* note 3, at 92.

A different type of stress is created when the previous dean leaves under unpleasant circumstances, such as having been fired or having become unpopular with some segment of the law school or university community. In this situation, you will face the challenge of a divided, unsettled faculty, staff, and perhaps even student body, who might not share a unified sense of the school's priorities or direction. This is a special challenge for the interim dean, who probably is charged with restoring unity, minimizing political divisiveness, and getting the law school community on track to move forward once the new dean is in place.

VIII. SETTING PRIORITIES

Although you will have plenty of day-to-day issues to keep you busy during the entirety of your interim deanship, you owe it to your school, your university, your faculty and staff, and yourself to set two or three main priorities that you would like to accomplish during the period of your interim deanship. Most of these will probably relate to transitional matters, such as finishing something the prior dean started and laying the groundwork for the new dean to take over. Focus on identifying the priorities that are the most pressing and will best enhance the long-term strength of the school.

Remember that in a one- or two-year interim deanship you cannot fix everything that has been bugging you during all the years you have been a faculty member at the school. In setting your priorities, you must distinguish what is really important for the school's transition and future from what has simply been an annoyance to you as a faculty member and set priorities accordingly.

It is a good idea to talk to the outgoing dean about what she or he sees as the unfinished work of his or her administration. What does the outgoing dean identify as the pressing issues? Also, talk to your university's president or provost. Depending on their management style, they will be more or less involved in setting your priorities. In any event, it will be helpful for you to know what the central administration would like to see happen at the law school and what the central administration views as the most important issues facing the school over the next year. Talk to your faculty and staff about the school's priorities. Consult your law school's strategic plan.

Conventional wisdom suggests that an interim dean ought not take the law school in entirely new directions and ought to maintain the status quo for the most part—to tread water, so to speak. The extent to which you merely maintain the status quo, however, depends on the length of your interim deanship.¹¹ You can only tread water for so long before you either drown or have to start swimming. In addition, taking a long-term approach to the management and direction of your law school is extremely important and will pay off for your school in the long run.¹² This is, I think, the central responsibility of an interim dean: to set and execute priorities that will enhance the long-term strength of the school, but that will not set the school on a new course and limit the opportunities

11. See Sabbath, *supra* note 5, at 162.

12. See *id.* at 162-63.

for the new permanent dean to establish his or her own priorities and vision for the future.

IX. COMMUNICATION AND MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

Once you have determined what your priorities will be, or even before you have set your priorities, it is important to begin managing the expectations of your constituencies.¹³ First and foremost, it is a good idea to clearly communicate your priorities to faculty and staff and to frequently remind people of these priorities.

Faculty and staff members will have vastly different and conflicting ideas about what your role is and what you ought to accomplish as the interim dean. Some will think you are merely a placeholder who will sit at your desk awaiting important letters and documents to be presented for your signature, which you will unhesitatingly provide without so much as a question about what it is you are signing. Others will expect you to magically transform the law school, in about six months, into whatever these people would like the law school to become, which is probably the law school with the world's largest endowment and the top-ranked school in the next issue of *U.S. News and World Report*. Still others will expect nothing of you but to grant all the favors for which they have been patiently waiting through numerous decanal tenures. They will think that since you are merely temporary, you have no need or motivation to inquire into the true merits of their proposals but will simply wave your magic wand over their heads. Because of these unrealistic expectations, it is important to help the faculty and staff to gain an accurate understanding of your role as interim dean.

As the dean, you are the most visible advocate for the school. It is crucial for you to tout the school's strengths to both external and internal constituencies. Do not get carried away, however, and create unrealistic expectations by promising the moon when you cannot deliver the stars. Beware of unrealistic expectations of your provost, president, faculty, staff, student body, alumni, and donors. It is your job to educate all these constituencies about what can be realistically accomplished and what the challenges are.

It is tempting to assume that because you have been a long-time faculty member and participant in the law school community, people understand you, your values, and your goals. But it is a mistake to think that faculty, staff, and others know what you are thinking and what your plans are unless you tell them. Even if they really did understand you when you were a faculty member, they will assume you changed when you became dean, and, indeed, your perspective may have changed in some ways.

It is important to maintain open and two-way communication with all constituencies.¹⁴ Most people will support you if they understand why and how you plan to accomplish your priorities. Particularly during a transition, all of

13. JEFFREY L. BULLER, *THE ESSENTIAL ACADEMIC DEAN: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO COLLEGE LEADERSHIP* 39 (2007).

14. *See* Sabbath, *supra* note 5, at 160.

your constituencies are curious and nervous. They wonder what issues you are facing and how you are moving the law school's agenda forward. They want to feel valued and helpful and are gratified when you seek their advice. Conversely, it will help you to know what other people are thinking about the law school. You will benefit from the advice and ideas of others, whether they are faculty members, staff members, students, alumni, donors, members of the university community, or members of the bench or bar.

X. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

Typically, the budget has already been set for the first year of an interim deanship. The budgeting process probably occurred during the late fall or early spring of the prior year. You will inherit a budget, but you will likely be responsible for administering it and for participating in the budgeting process for the next year. Thus, although you might be limited in your ability to change the law school's budgetary priorities in the current year, you will have input into the budgetary priorities for the next year.

This also means that—absent serious, pressing financial issues—you may have a tendency to not worry too much about budget or financial operations during the first few months of an interim deanship. This is a mistake; the law school's financial operations are one of the dean's central responsibilities, and it is very important to get a firm understanding of the law school's financial operations as quickly as possible. The dean must become familiar with the current budget as well as the budgeting process and what is expected of the dean in that process. Universities vary widely on how budgeting is accomplished and what the law dean's role in that process is, both for the law school's budget specifically and the university's budget generally. Regardless of the budgeting process, the law dean is the law school's advocate in the process and must be actively and enthusiastically involved.

If the law school has a staff person responsible for the law school's financial operations, that person can be very helpful in educating you about the budget and financial operations, the budgeting process, and the law school's most pressing needs. It is important to be sure the financial officer is willing to provide you with a candid picture of the law school's financial situation. It is also a good idea to have an understanding with your financial officer about what sorts of financial decisions he or she will discuss with you on an ongoing basis. There will be frequent ordinary expenditures about which you probably do not need to be consulted in advance (for example, office supply purchases and electric bill payments). In contrast, you probably do want to be involved in certain other financial decisions, whether budgeted or not (for example, a decision to install a new million-dollar security system).

If the law school does not have a financial officer, you will have to figure out the budget and financial operations with the help of those who have worked with the budget in the past. Perhaps the prior dean can assist you in learning about the budget and financial operations. Department heads with budgetary responsibilities can also help educate you about how their part of the budget works. The president, provost, or university financial officer might be able to

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assist you in understanding the law school's financial operations and budgetary process.

Learning the intricacies of the law school's financial operations and participating in the financial decision-making is of central importance as you seek to accomplish your priorities and fulfill your budgetary responsibilities. Improving the financial strength of the law school is one of the most important things you can do to enhance the long-term success of the school. It is essential, therefore, to effectively assess the financial situation and advocate for the law school during the budgetary process.

XI. EXTERNAL RELATIONS (FUNDRAISING, ALUMNI RELATIONS, MEDIA RELATIONS, AND CAREER SERVICES)

Perhaps, as a faculty member, you have experience commenting to the media on legal issues within your expertise. You might occasionally or even regularly attend alumni events. Maybe you even attend donor events or have experience in writing applications for and managing grant funding. Perhaps you have helped your students get jobs by helping them make contacts in law firms. Chances are that, as a faculty member, you had little or no contact beyond these examples with donors, alumni, the media, and the local bench and bar.

Yet, external relations will be a central part of your job as interim dean. Even if your established priorities do not involve heavy fundraising, you are your school's primary external liaison. Be prepared, at a moment's notice, to speak in public, with the media, or with a new acquaintance who might become an important friend to your law school. Don't be surprised if, without any prior notice, you are introduced at a dinner with the phrase, "Would you like to say a few words, Dean?" You will frequently be asked, "What's new at the law school?"

Have an "elevator speech"—a brief, conversational message about your school—ready to deliver at a moment's notice. It is a good idea to have multiple versions of your elevator speech—the two-story version and the eighty-story version—so that you are always prepared to speak in different contexts, to people with different interests in various aspects of your school, and for different lengths of time.

Effective external relations boil down to building effective relationships with people. This is true whether you are fundraising, seeking to improve alumni relations, trying to enhance job opportunities for your students, or dealing with the media. The relationship-building skill applies in all of these contexts. Through their personal relationships with you, these external constituencies build and strengthen their commitments to your law school.

Treat reporters like your friends and hope they treat you like their friend. A reporter is much more likely to give you positive publicity if you have treated the reporter with respect and courtesy. This can be very important in a sensitive situation when you really need the media to be on your side.

As noted previously, you will face some unique challenges in fundraising as an interim dean. In particular, fundraising is about developing personal relationships. As long as you have the "interim" title, some donors might view

their relationship with you as somewhat short-term. Consequently, these donors might want to wait until the permanent dean is in place. This does not mean that you will not be a successful fundraiser as an interim dean; indeed, you might be very successful. What it does mean is that it is important to set realistic, yet challenging, fundraising goals.

Improving alumni participation in law school giving is a particularly appropriate fundraising priority for an interim dean. As a faculty member who is now the interim dean, you are in an excellent position to enhance alumni relations. Your former students probably remember you fondly and they are likely to be responsive to you. You already have a relationship upon which you can build. Even former students who were not in your classes are likely to be eager to meet you in your new role.

Set your fundraising priorities, but always be on the lookout for additional fundraising opportunities. For example, perhaps your goal will be to stimulate increased alumni participation in giving to the law school and to raise scholarship money, but you meet a donor who would like to make a gift to create a faculty chair endowment. It is a good idea to remain flexible enough to recognize this donor's interest and take advantage of the fundraising opportunity.

If you have not done a lot of fundraising before, get as much training as you can as fast as you can. A good fundraising professional dedicated to the law school will be enormously helpful to you. An effective fundraiser will work with you as a team and identify where and when your participation will be most effective. A good fundraiser will introduce you to the people you need to meet and will help you develop the relationships that will be crucial to the success of both you and your successor in long-term fundraising for your school.

If you do not have a dedicated fundraising professional at your law school, perhaps the central administration's fundraising department will work with you. In addition, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)¹⁵ has many resources available to help you learn about fundraising, and it sponsors a variety of fundraising training conferences. Also, every other year, the ABA Section on Legal Education sponsors a fundraising conference for law deans.

Career services is very much like fundraising, except that the goal is to raise jobs instead of funds. You probably have a knowledgeable career-services professional at the law school. This administrator will work with you to make the most effective use of your participation. You can enhance your career-services professional's success by introducing him or her to judges and lawyers for cultivation as prospective employers of your students. Your role in trying to enhance job opportunities for your students and graduates consists of relationship-building activities in which you extol the strengths of your students and the legal education they are receiving, both of which will make them an asset to prospective employers.

15. See Council for Advancement and Support of Education, <http://www.case.org> (last visited Jan. 16, 2009).

XII. PERSONNEL ISSUES

Personnel issues can divert you from accomplishing your priorities. You might have problem faculty or staff members who are disrespectful or abusive to other employees, disruptive, not promoting the best interests of the school, or underperforming their work responsibilities. Whatever the issue, you will have to make important decisions regarding personnel matters during your time as interim dean.

It is a good idea to become friendly with your university's human resources department. The human resources department can be enormously helpful in dealing with ongoing personnel issues that could otherwise derail you from your priorities. You will need to familiarize yourself with your university's policies for hiring, promoting, and firing staff (obviously, these policies are likely to be dramatically different from policies for the hiring, promotion, and tenure of faculty members). You also need to know what your responsibilities are for reviewing the work performance of staff and for faculty and staff salary reviews and adjustments.

You are likely to have some staff vacancies during your time as interim dean. You will have to decide whether to fill the position or leave it open for the new dean to fill. The answer to this question depends on a variety of factors, such as how senior the position is, how crucial the position is to the school's immediate functioning, how long it will be before the new dean is in place, and how difficult it is for other employees to cover the job responsibilities.

Indeed, filling a vacancy is essential if an open position is crucial to the school's functioning, a well-qualified candidate is available, and there is likely to be a need for the vacancy to be filled before the new permanent dean arrives. Leaving open a key position in your administrative staff puts a burden on the other employees who have to cover the job duties of the vacant position. Yet these considerations must always be balanced against the importance of protecting the new permanent dean's opportunity to assemble his or her own administrative team.

XIII. YOUR FACULTY COLLEAGUES

As an interim dean who comes from the faculty and might plan to return to the faculty at some point, you already have an established relationship with your faculty colleagues. You likely have a very positive relationship with your colleagues, since your selection to be the interim dean was probably based, at least in part, on the fact that you are a faculty leader. This has implications for your transition to being interim dean. Suddenly, when you become the interim dean, you enter a new and different type of relationship with your colleagues. You will be surprised, both pleasantly and unpleasantly, at what you learn about your colleagues.

It is difficult to maintain personal friendships on the same level as you might have had with colleagues before you were the dean. As the dean, you must maintain the appearance of neutrality and fairness, and you must *actually be* neutral and fair to all faculty members. Personal friendships with some faculty

members will make you appear biased. In addition, there might be some awkwardness in fairly evaluating faculty members' performance if you maintain too close a personal friendship.

Sometimes it is necessary to have difficult conversations with your colleagues to encourage improvements in teaching or scholarship or about retirement or other issues. These difficult conversations are even more challenging when the faculty member is a long-time friend, senior colleague, or mentor. Nevertheless, the conversation must be conducted honestly, fairly, and candidly.

Some faculty members need constant praise and recognition. Depending on your prior relationship with these faculty members, you might find this to be a challenge. You must rise to the challenge, but don't let this challenge divert you from your other priorities. Your school will function better with a contented faculty; your students will get a better education and your faculty will be more productive. As the dean, there is a lot you can do with minimal effort to maintain a contented faculty. Praise and recognition do not cost a dime, but they buy a lot of contentment. Be sure to dole out the praise and recognition fairly and uniformly, however; if you only praise and recognize a few, others will feel unappreciated and become discontented.

As the dean, it is your job to facilitate the work of the faculty. One of the greatest joys of being the dean is that you are in a position to enable your faculty colleagues to be the best they can be. Your colleagues are energetic, creative, brilliant scholars and teachers who need the support and encouragement of the administration to meet their potential. Your job is to provide that support and encouragement.

XIV. WORKING WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

As an interim dean, you will have the opportunity to work within the larger university organization, and gain a better understanding of the overall university operations and how the law school fits into the university community and can enhance the university's mission. If you have not previously worked in university administration, this can be one of the most rewarding aspects of your job. Your relationship with the university will enable you to identify and take advantage of opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations with other schools or departments, as well as to inform and educate others within the university community about the unique qualities and strengths of the law school. In addition, you will likely have the opportunity to participate in university governance and to advocate for the law school in that process.

XV. CALLING IN THE HIRED GUNS

Know when to call a lawyer. You are the client, not the lawyer, when legal matters arise. It is a good idea to become familiar with your university's policy on when and how to turn a legal matter over to the university counsel or to outside counsel.

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XVI. GET ALL THE ADVICE YOU CAN, BUT TRUST YOUR OWN JUDGMENT

You were probably selected for this job because you have some combination of several attributes, including good judgment, effective leadership skills, strong interpersonal skills, a tendency to be fair and open-minded, good listening skills, an even temper, a “pitch-in” attitude, a sincere commitment to the school’s best interest over your own, and an understanding of and commitment to the school’s and the university’s mission. Do not be autocratic in your decision-making, but trust your judgment. Be yourself. Adhere to the attributes that made you the right choice to be the interim dean. They will serve you well as you face the new challenges that await you.