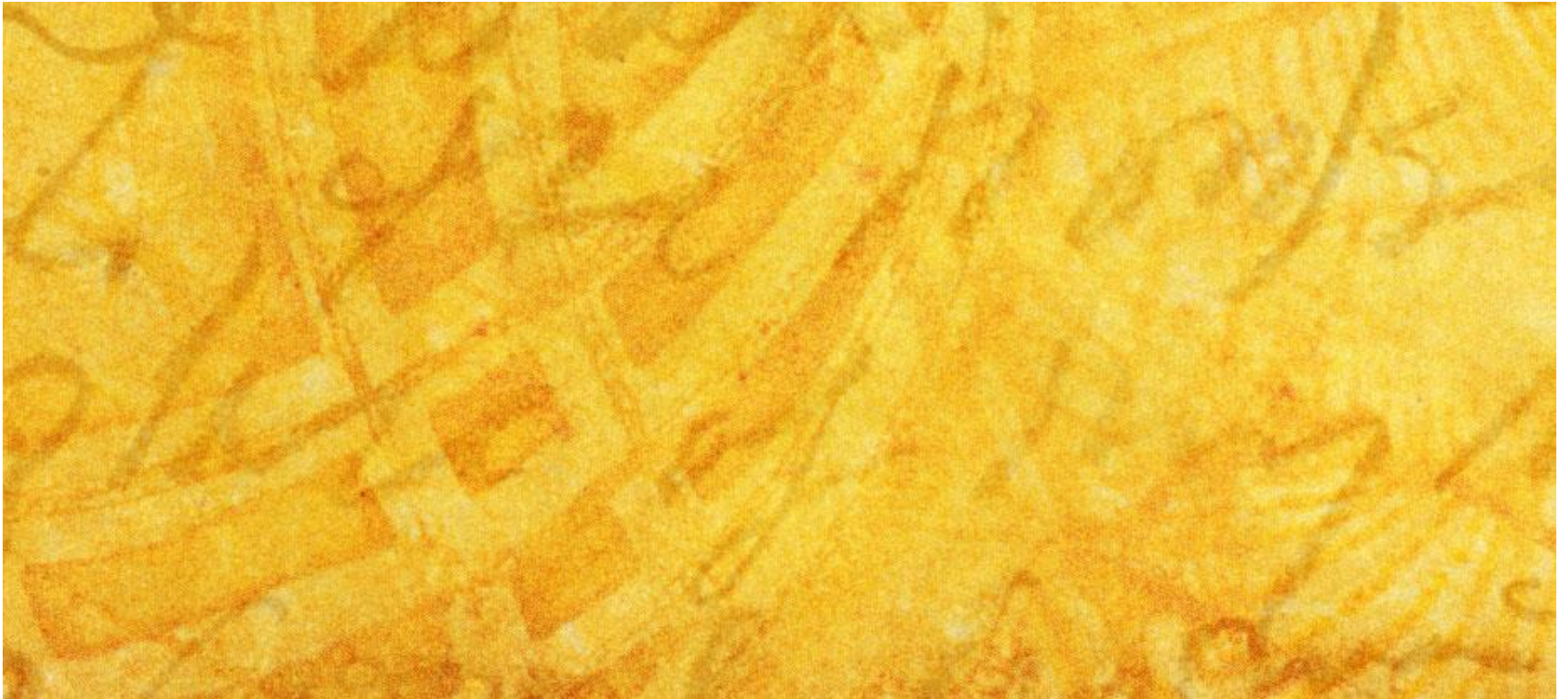




# Gaining Momentum Quickly: Working with Staff, Alumni, Donors, and other Critical Stakeholders

Laura J. Steinberg, Dean, College of Engineering & Computer Science, Syracuse U.



# Organizing Theme

The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies  
for New Leaders at all Levels

(How to quickly build momentum to bring  
about desired change)

Michael Watkins, Harvard Business School  
Press, 2003

# Promote yourself

- Make a clean break
- Realize that what you did well to get you to the Dean's position may not be the things you need to concentrate on as Dean. May need to stretch yourself.
- Develop and exploit your “emotional IQ”: intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, empathy, adaptability, stress management, optimistic outlook (Stein and Book, 2000)
- Re-learn how to learn and learn from mistakes and missteps
- Assess your vulnerabilities and stay aware of how they may hinder you



# Secure Early Wins

- Think of your term as being 3-5 years. First decisions and actions are key as they set the tone and perception of your leadership.
  - Two NSF grants with Engineering junior faculty as PIs
- Tread carefully so that you don't inadvertently take on any sacred cows or leaders of powerful organizations
- Choose your associate deans, staff, dept. chairs carefully

# Secure Early Wins: University Administration

- Need early wins for the upper administration as well as the faculty.
- Examples:
  - Hired an executive recruiter to help us search for two endowed chairs in the first year.
  - Appointed to key national science policy committee

# Secure Early Wins: Donors

- Important to have university-wide development staff as well as your own, believe that you can do a good job representing the College and the University
- Hold a university-wide event for alumni on the road, attended by University development
- Alums are really thrilled to talk with the Dean
- Impress your board
- Look for ways to engage your board in the College
- Go to a CASE conference on Development for Deans and bring your development person with you
- You can never spend too much time on development but it gets easier as time goes on.

# Build your Team

- Ron Heifetz in *Leadership without Easy Answers*: “The myth of leadership is the lone warrior: the solitary individual whose heroism and brilliance enable her to lead the way... the lone warrior model of leadership is heroic suicide”
- Associate Deans
  - Help run the college while you are fund-raising, planning, being the face of the college
  - align organizational structure with goals
  - May need to redistribute responsibilities to play to individual strengths
- Dept Chairs
  - consistent with the values and broad goals you have



# Build Your Team: Staff

- May be one of the hardest things for us as faculty transitioning to management
- Getting a new supervisor is one of the top 5 stressors in people's lives
- Listen to your staff's concerns
- It can take time to get to a good relationship
- Accept them for the talents they have and look elsewhere to fill in expertise gaps
- Make changes if needed
- Make sure you meet with your staff often enough

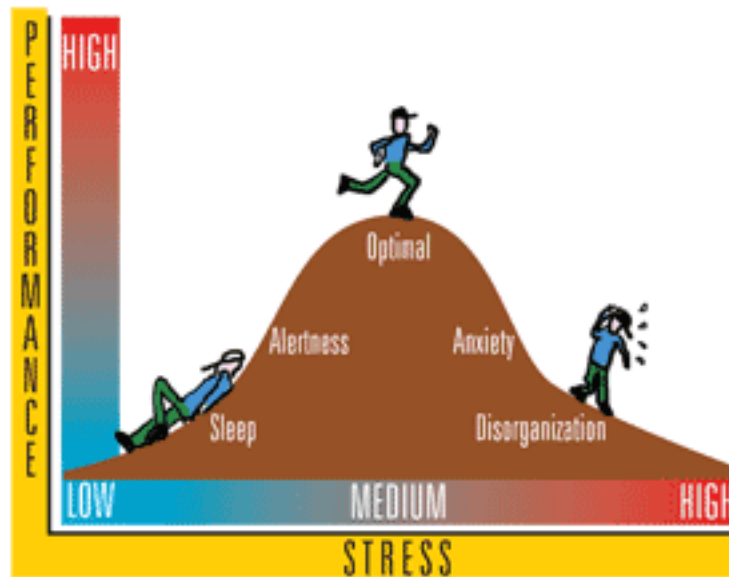


# Create Coalitions

- Base of Support of people over whom you have no direct authority who can help (or hinder) your efforts
  - Advisory Boards and Dean's Council members, especially those on the Board of Trustees, or those who are potential BoT members
  - Other Deans
  - VP of Research
  - Dean of Libraries
  - VP for University Advancement
  - Financial Aid and Admissions

# Keeping your Balance

Stress Performance Connection



**Yerkes-Dodson Human Performance Curve**

secretgeek.net

# Keeping Your Balance: Building Your Support Systems

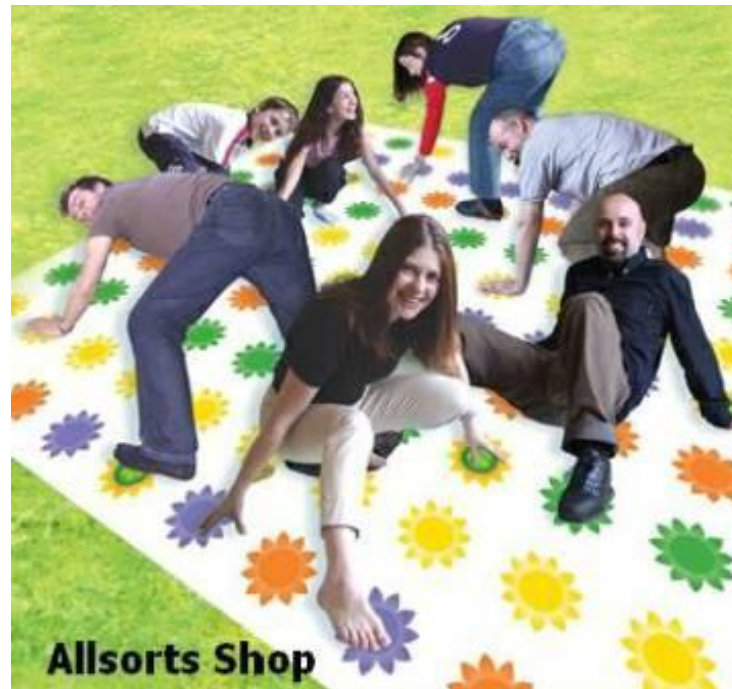
- Family and partners – prepare them for the transition
- Build your Advice-and-Counsel Network
  - Learn how to “talk out” your upcoming conversations with your trusted advisors
- Build internal (university and college ) support systems as well
- Seek out advice from other deans; helpful for benchmarking, too

# Ending Comments

- Leadership is ultimately about leverage. A dean is just one person, and one person can accomplish very little alone.
- We need to leverage ourselves – our ideas, energy, relationships, and influence to create desired change.
- The ability to create leverage rests on perceptions of our stakeholders of our personal credibility and demonstrated effectiveness. Small successes yield leadership capital that can be invested to yield larger returns. So, the underlying goal of your first year or two is to build momentum.



# Ending Comments



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