

New Deans Forum

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Discussion of relations with faculty
members, students and direct-reports.

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Students

For a college of any appreciable size, it will be impossible to have a close relationship with a large fraction of the student body.



The following techniques can help you stay connected.

Students

Meet regularly with student organizations and leaders. Vet new initiatives with them.

Host student groups that have gone on the road with you to professional meetings.

Involve students – especially design teams – in other events, such as open houses, home football games and reunions.

Students

Connect using social web sites such as LinkedIn, but be very careful in how you present yourself and the college.

Feature students on your web site, alumni mailings, etc.

Use students judiciously on search committees and strategic planning committees.

Students

Be more willing to say “yes” to an invitation if it comes from a student; e.g. interview with the campus paper, dinner with a fraternity, etc.

Spend some time at the campus recruiting fair. Congratulate the recruiters – preferably in front of your students – on their wisdom at coming to *your* campus.

Use students in awards ceremonies.

Faculty

As with student groups, for a college of any appreciable size, it will be difficult to maintain a close relationship with most faculty members.

Here are a few things to consider in your relationships with faculty members.



Faculty

Show up at departmental faculty meetings, but only if invited. Don't invite yourself.

Promote your good colleagues for external recognition.

Resist “grade inflation” at promotion and tenure time, but do be prepared to move aggressively early with your best people.

Faculty

Resist the expectation that an endowed chair or professorship is as regular a “promotion” as that to associate or full professor.

Be aggressive with raises. Preemptive retention is better than retention.

Be generous with sabbatical leaves, IPA opportunities, etc., but don't give leaves-of-absence to people who don't intend to return.

Direct-Reports

As dean, you will likely have the following individuals reporting to you: department heads; associate deans; and directors for development, diversity, communications, alumni relations, and college-based research institutes.

Here are a few ways to help them be as successful as possible in their jobs:



Direct-Reports

Remember that they are doing the “heavy lifting.”
Give them the resources they need.

Insure consistency across departments.

Make sure that you are also consistent in your actions. (It will be assumed that you favor your home department, except in your home department where it will be assumed that you overcompensate against them.)

Direct-Reports

Benchmark with peer institutions.

Beware of unintended bias.

Provide administrative training for your direct-reports, and be at peace with the fact that this will hasten the day that they leave you for some other good opportunity.

Enjoy!

The job of Dean of Engineering is important and demanding, but it is also highly rewarding.

Best wishes from 