

## Four Leadership Practices for New or Aspiring Deans | 06.14.17

### Jim Weese

Please find a list below of additional resources from the “*Four Leadership Practices for New or Aspiring Deans*” webcast. These resources include the Checkpoint worksheet as well as an article authored by Dr. Weese. If you wish to print only certain resources, you may click their respective links to jump directly to them in the packet.

#### Pre-Webcast Resources

1. [Checkpoint Worksheet](#) – Pages 2-3 – This checklist can help you assess your progress in building faculty relationships.
2. [Article by Jim Weese: “The Exceptional Dean: Four Leadership Practices that Make a Difference”](#) – Pages 4-22 – This article was authored by the speaker for Higher Ed Impact, AI’s publication.
3. [Quote from webcast](#) – Pages 23-24 – Quote from *Still Surprised: A Memoir of a Life in Leadership*, by Warren Bennis with Patricia Ward Biederman

## A Dean's Guide to Building Faculty Relationships Checkpoint

On a scale from 1 (Not yet or just starting) to 5 (Very successfully), please rate your progress on building faculty relationships as a Dean.

1. Have I built a strong/formidable leadership team?

1      2      3      4      5

2. Do I empower and inspire members of our leadership team?

1      2      3      4      5

3. Do we present a clear, consistent, focused and inspiring vision for our Faculty / unit?

1      2      3      4      5

4. Is the vision understood and adopted by the leadership team / the overwhelming majority of colleagues?

1      2      3      4      5

5. Do specific, measureable, and time-bound objectives exist to help us measure progress / take corrective action?

1      2      3      4      5

6. Do I communicate openly, honestly, thoroughly, effectively, and frequently with members of the leadership team? Dean's Office staff? Members of the Faculty?

1      2      3      4      5

7. Do members of the Leadership Team communicate openly, honestly, thoroughly, effectively, and frequently with each other?

1      2      3      4      5

8. Do I use emotional intelligence in my leadership practices/style?

1      2      3      4      5

9. Do I take time to reflect on our progress? My leadership practices? My developmental needs? Do I invest in self-development?

1      2      3      4      5

10. Do I provide the same for members of the leadership team and Dean's Office Staff?

1      2      3      4      5

**Add each number above: \_\_\_\_\_/50**

**Areas of Strength (i.e., 4-5/5) – Continue**  
**Areas for Development (i.e., 1-2/5) – Strategies to Improve**

The Exceptional Dean: Four Leadership Practices that Make a Difference.

Contact Author:

W. James Weese Ph.D.  
Professor and Dean  
Faculty of Health Sciences  
The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
N6A 5B9  
Phone: 519-661-2111 ext. 84239  
Fax: 519-850-2347  
e-mail: [jweese1@uwo.ca](mailto:jweese1@uwo.ca)

## **The Exceptional Dean: Four Leadership Practices that Make a Difference.**

### **Abstract**

*Deans play a critical role on a university campus. Many suggest that success garnered at the Decanal level determines, in large measure, the overall effectiveness of the institution. Given this importance, how does one prepare for, emerge into, and operate effectively, within this role? Contemporary leadership theorists are calling for a new leadership paradigm, one that places a greater premium on teamwork and member engagement. Now more than ever, Deans must be leaders who work by, with and through others for collective good of the Faculty.*

*This article tracks the latest developments in leadership and encourages Deans to adopt (or reaffirm) four leadership practices that will help them create sustainable success for their Faculties.*

**Key words:** leadership, teams, higher education, effectiveness

### **Introduction**

So you're the Dean? Congratulations. Speaking from experience, you are in a position that has the potential to be one of the most rewarding of your academic career. You will be inspired when you see members of your Faculty develop as academics and leaders (and in some cases you will observe with pride as they get promoted to higher level positions at your institution and elsewhere). Invariably, you will also experience the "lows" of decanal leadership when you will be discouraged and disheartened by the behaviour and/or performance levels of your members and/or the Faculty.

The decanal role is a challenging post. As Jeffery Buller (2007) suggested in his insightful book entitled, *The essential academic dean: A practical guide to college leadership*, the Dean's role is extremely complex and immensely challenging. Deans are charged with leading and focussing bright, opinionated colleagues who often hold contrasting perspectives with their colleagues. Deans are required to mediate these situations, and often illustrate a way forward. Deans are also expected to have the business savvy of a Fortune 500 CEO, the oratory

skills of a politician, the mindset of a psychologist, the planning skills of an engineer, the sympathetic nature of a social worker, the analytical skills of a Wall Street investor, and the fund-raising skills of a United Way executive. Deans soon realize that their time is not their own. Their days are filled with meetings and solving the problems of others. They often find themselves conflicted with the demands of their members (and in some cases the people who voted them into the role) and those held by senior administrators to whom Deans report. Students, and in increasing numbers of cases, their parents, look to Deans for the resolution of their issues and concerns.

Undoubtedly, the role will test and challenge you. However, don't look to the literature for guidance. Gmelch, Wolverton, Wolverton and Sarrors (1999, p. 717) suggested that "the academic deanship is the least studied and most misunderstood position in the academy". Is there any wonder why many Deans find themselves stressed out, burned-out, and with alarming frequency, kicked out (Smothers, Bing, White, & Absher, 2011)? This article provides readers with an overview of the current thinking in leadership, shaped to the realities of the decanal role as experienced by the author, a long-time Dean and leadership scholar. Four leadership practices are presented to help Deans thrive and survive in the role. Disciplined application of these practices will help Deans be the dynamic change agents they aspired to be when they assumed the role.

### **A Team Approach to Leadership**

Leadership has often been described as one of the most studied, yet least understood concepts in the social sciences. Theorists have pursued a number of lines of inquiry, from the early trait theories of leadership, followed by the behavioural models, to the situational leadership theories, and finally the transactional and transformational models of leadership. Other scholars have focused on the charismatic attributes of leaders. Critics argue that the study and practice of leadership must change with the times. Gary Hamel (2009) suggests that the prevalent approaches to leadership are outdated, ineffective, and in need of a complete overhaul. Leadership guru, and former University Provost, and later University President, Warren Bennis (2009) agreed, suggesting that it was time to discard the heroic, "larger than life" leader concept.

The team approach to leadership is ideally suited to higher education and the decanal role given the complexity of issues facing Deans (Mathieu, Tannenbaum, Kukuenger, Donsbach, & Alliger, 2015). Professors seek, if not demand, intellectual stimulation, engagement, and opportunities for participative governance. Effective Deans need to unleash the creative talents of these members, especially in these times when the need for effective leadership in higher education may be at an all-time high due to: (a) the economic downturn and its impact on Faculty/Institutional resource bases (Rubenstein, 2009); (b) the escalating competition for faculty, staff, and students between institutions; and (c) the decline in the number of college-aged students in many regions due to demographic shifts (Foot, 1996).

Contemporary Deans face immense challenges, and if they are to be successful, they will need to assemble a strong, inspired, and cohesive leadership team that participates actively in Faculty-wide leadership. They need to clearly, repeatedly, and convincingly articulate a shared vision for the Faculty and an agreed-upon plan for making it a reality. Performance needs to be measured and where appropriate, celebrated. The Deans also need to ensure that they have the resources and support systems in place to attain, and sustain positive change and inspire the hearts and minds of their members. Last but not least, Deans need to invest in themselves. They must take the time to reflect, to recharge, and grow themselves so they can stay current, effectively carry out their position responsibilities as well as model the way for others. This article was prepared to help keep Deans on the path to leadership prosperity, especially during turbulent times that both George (2009) and Lencioni (2009) suggest offer the best test of effective leadership.

### **Leadership Practice #1 - Build, Empower and Inspire a Formidable Leadership Team**

Deans have usually demonstrated the discipline necessary to advance their teaching and research programs. These skills have served them well and qualified them for greater attention from their peers, perhaps leading them to middle management positions in the Faculty where they further demonstrated both managerial and leadership acumen. While some of these skills are transferable to, and helpful to those in the decanal role,

new skills are also required for this level of leadership (Goldsmith, 2007). Member and Faculty successes are now the critical measures.

Lencioni (2002, p. vii) believes the key to long-term organizational success is teamwork. He noted that it “... remains the ultimate competitive advantage, both because it is so powerful and so rare”. Leaders need the wisdom, energy and perspectives of team members. As Bill George (2009) notes in his “*7 Lessons for Leading in Crisis*” book, leaders can’t do it alone. They must surround themselves with other strong leaders and benefit from their contributions.

Deans generally lead units headed by Department Chairs or Directors in addition to leading their Associate Deans. These individuals must see themselves as part of a team and accept the duality of leadership. They also need to have the background and courage to offer dissenting opinions before clear courses of action are determined. The Chairs and Directors who also form the leadership team must be held accountable for effectively leading their specific units, and for taking an active role in leading the Faculty. This facilitates active engagement and development of members, leads to fuller understanding of issues, and usually, better decision making. This level of engagement also facilitates heightened organizational clarity and understanding by having members accurately, and effectively, communicate high-level decisions and their underlying rationale to members in their units. Deans lay the groundwork for this approach through an honest commitment to transparency and integrity. This helps build trust, pride, and commitment to the larger goals of the Faculty.

Lencioni (2009) believes that assembling and deploying a strong, cohesive team is critical to the success of a unit, and that this is a leader’s most fundamental task. This is especially true in an academic environment where leaders have a multitude of demands placed upon them, some requiring of complementary and contradictory skill sets (Smith & Wolverton, 2010). Deans need leadership colleagues with different skill sets, strengths and perspectives. As Lencioni (2009) highlights, strong functioning teams usually make better decisions, foster higher levels of clarity and commitment, and help cascade understanding of purpose and



direction. Finally, strong teams are comprised of members who are more committed, focused, and ultimately, more effective.

Lencioni's *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* book is required reading for members of our leadership team. The approach is ideally suited to the university environment, but it often breaks down and/or operates at less than full capacity. As Lencioni (2002, p. viii) explains, "success comes only for those groups that overcome the all-too-human behavioural tendencies that corrupt teams and breed dysfunctional politics within them". Academic leaders have strong opinions and egos that can get in the way of effective team functioning. At times, and if unchecked, members of a group can selfishly search for what is best for their School or Department at the expense of what is best for the other units and/or the Faculty. Authentic teams adopt the fundamental principle that they will actively participate in shared governance, designed to ensure that the Faculty and all its units reach their potential. Deans need to charge their team leaders with the duality of focus, ensuring members: effectively lead their respective School/Department; actively participate in the leadership of the Faculty; support and encourage other members of the leadership team; and learn, grow, and enjoy the experience. Deans must work strategically to identify, recruit and promote members with this orientation to academic leadership. Furthermore, members of the leadership team must fill leadership positions in their respective Schools/Departments with people who share this perspective. Adopting this leadership paradigm can lead to these positive transformations.

Lencioni (2002) offers suggestions for building and deploying highly functional teams. First of all, he notes that high functioning teams are comprised of members that trust each other to be open, honest and supportive. Members admit when they are wrong. Lencioni suggests that leaders go a long way to building trust in their teams and establishing this mode of operation when they show their own vulnerability and a willingness to change positions and/or admit when they are wrong. Secondly, Lencioni suggests that strong teams enthusiastically explore ideas. Members vigorously debate their positions on issues that will help move the collective unit forward, without fear of persecution or ridicule. This has special application for academic

environments as members are intelligent, insightful and articulate. It is only natural that members have different viewpoints and opinions. Leaders of strong teams welcome contrasting viewpoints because they know that detailed analysis usually leads to better decisions. Deans can build this approach into their teams by encouraging members to push back their ideas as well as those of other members. Team members will soon welcome the opportunity to have their ideas explored in the spirit of doing what is best for the Faculty.

Lencioni (2002) notes that the third barrier to effective team functioning is the lack of closure and commitment to rendered decisions. He says that leaders can quickly and effectively overcome this dysfunction by insisting on closure and a clear and unified course of action once adequate discussion/debate has transpired. Committing actions, accountabilities and timelines to paper assists teams in overcoming key barrier to effective team functioning.

The fourth barrier to effective teamwork according to Lencioni (2002) is the unwillingness of team members to hold other members accountable for following through on actions. Leaders can overcome this barrier by ensuring that the third barrier is covered off, consistently following through on commitments themselves, and calling members out when they do not follow through on commitments (and encouraging all members to do this). This will establish accountability as an operating principle and help make the team highly functional. Members will soon know that meetings, discussions and decisions are taken seriously and they will be held accountable for action.

Finally, Lencioni (2002) suggests that the most effective teams focus on the collective goals, not unit goals. Leaders can facilitate this by what they emphasize, measure, and celebrate. This process is facilitated if new members have this orientation to begin with, and are also oriented to this approach early in their tenure as a member of the team. Leaders can build this into the culture for their teams through their words and actions. Other members need to be encouraged and acknowledged for holding demonstrating this orientation through their words and actions. Soon this will become the norm for the highly functional team.

As noted above, a team approach to leadership has captured the imagination of contemporary leadership theorists. This approach has an ideal application in academic leadership and Deans would be well-served in implementing this leadership style in their day-to-day practices, with members of their leadership team, and within the Schools/Departments that comprise their Faculty.

### **Leadership Practice #2 - Ensure an Inspiring, Focused, Strategic, Values-Based Vision for the Faculty**

Leaders must ensure a clear direction. However, the vision must reflect the goals and aspirations of the members. The best academic deans create an environment where people freely share their ideas, and the leader deploys his/her experience to shape the ideas into a vision commensurate with a plan and the resources to making it a reality. We all can't produce visions of Disneyland or Apple, but we can create an environment where exciting members share their views and visions, and Deans can deploy their experience to shape these ideas into a clear strategic direction for the unit. In the end, members need clarity about what the unit is attempting to accomplish and who it can be attained. A basic tenet of leadership is the striving towards a shared aspiration. Deans, and those they lead, need to know what the Faculty is attempting to accomplish. However, developing an effective and authentic mission statement that has life and vibrancy for those charged with making it happen is an arduous process that takes the investment of time and energy.

Contemporary leadership experts consistently highlight the importance of a values-based mission statement. Inherent in this visioning paradigm is the need for the values to be clearly and consistently identified, articulated, communicated and celebrated. Deans, and their leadership teams must enact a process to identify, test, and validate the aspired values for a Faculty.

An example of how this process can unfold can be taken from my most recent Decanal post. After assuming the role and taking the time to meet members and stakeholders and better understand the opportunities and issues, we embarked on a highly ambitious, but important process to identify and clarify our values, formulate our strategic vision and prepare a number of objectives (with accompanying accountabilities and time lines for completion) that would help move our Faculty forward in a strategic and united fashion. We studied

and integrated the strategic direction of the institution (i.e., heighten student engagement, advance interdisciplinary research and teaching programs, grow graduate programs, and creating performance indicators in the teaching, research and service areas).

The process took one-year to complete and it was time well spent. It helped crystallize our direction and our purpose. It led to the development of a Faculty Strategic Plan that was values-driven, and founded on extensive consultation, reflection, and discussion with our numerous stakeholders (professors, staff members, students, alumni, and campus and community partners).

We started with a census survey of our membership to garner wide and full input on the values we should uphold in the Faculty, as well as, gather member perspectives on the strategic priorities we should pursue as a Faculty. Each member was then invited to sit on one of five Faculty of Health Sciences Task Force Committees (i.e., creating and sustaining a positive and productive workplace culture, delivering the “best student experience”, enhancing our research activities, identifying our strategic priorities, and planning an effective retreat).

The Task Force Committees met over the course of the year, reviewing relevant data gathered from the survey, engaging in brainstorming and reflection sessions, hosting focus group sessions with our members and stakeholders, and preparing a formal presentation that would be delivered to all our members at the retreat. Task Force Committee presentations at the retreat were followed by small group and plenary discussion sessions designed to thoroughly test, validate or discard, and in some cases, extend the ideas forwarded by the working groups. All information collected was considered in the drafting of the Faculty Strategic Plan. Information that was important, but not strategic, was noted in Faculty Improvement Document, and these ideas were immediately pursued following the retreat. We also celebrated and incorporated our identified values, and they are captured in a concept we called CLEAR (i.e., Community: working together to achieve the vision of the Faculty within a caring community that had Mutual Understanding, Mutual Meaning, and Mutual Respect; Leadership: deployment of clear, honest, positive and team-based leadership at all levels of the Faculty;

**Expectations:** that people would be treated fairly, have voice, and be appreciated in exchange for the Faculty expecting accountability for performance and citizenship behavior; **Appreciation:** people know that they are valued and members appreciate the benefits of working in this environment, and; **Respect:** upholding a positive workplace culture intolerant of harassment but supportive of teamwork and inclusiveness and the diversity of opinion).

The CLEAR concept, and the values that underlie it, have governed behavior across the Faculty and serves as the blueprint for decision-making for team members. These values have been clearly and repeatedly articulated, communicated and celebrated in our formal and informal communications. They have been widely shared across the campus, and their adherence at the School level is a primary responsibility for each Director. The School Directors and their staff members are encouraged to take every opportunity to speak to external audiences about the Faculty, what it stands for, its strategic direction, and how it contributes to the overall mission of the institution.

The draft plan was shared with other campus Deans and campus leaders with a view of increasing inter-Faculty synergy. We also posted the document on our Faculty web page, and invited feedback from interested parties. The document was also shared with our community partners and their input was invited and considered prior to the Plan being formally developed and approved at a special meeting of Faculty Council. These steps allowed us to capture many ideas and perspectives, and create a crisp, focussed, and progressive strategic blueprint for the Faculty that has served us well.

Ensuring an inspiring, clear and measureable strategic direction that is based on clearly articulated values is critical for a leader. The process of uncovering and articulating this blueprint must be a highly participative one. Deans would be well served to employ a process like the one outlined that engages the hearts, minds, and spirits of members in the creation of an inspiring strategic document that they own and are committed to realize.

### **Leadership Practice #3 - Communicate Openly, Honest, and Often and from an Emotional Intelligence Base**

Leader must take opportunities to effectively communicate clear and consistent messages (Bronstein & Fitzpatrick, 2015). Leader must make goals clear and public. They must also measure their progress towards their attainment and celebrate successes along the way. This is particularly important early in a Decanal term when members are anticipating change and want to be assured that things will be different (Jennings, 2009). Bennis, Goleman and Ward Biederman (2008) noted that effective communication is fundamental to strong leadership. They note that leaders must provide the right information to “the right person at the right time and for the right reason” (p. 4). Providing this information, in the right format, is one of the Dean’s most important responsibilities. Irene Rosenfeld (2009), Chief Operating Officer of Kraft Foods and a leadership expert, states that leaders must “communicate frequently, consistently and honestly”. Lencioni (2009) believes that great leaders ensure organizational clarity by **over-communicating** their message. They leave nothing to chance. They make goals clear and public. They focus their members by measuring Faculty performance against clear, specific, and time-bound objectives. Stakeholders understand what both the Faculty and the leadership team values and how both will operate. The key rests in both the clarity and consistency of the message.

Deans need to effectively communicate at the macro and micro levels of the Faculty. They need to take the valuable opportunities afforded them at Faculty Council, School or Departmental Council Meetings to reinforce the vision and values of the Faculty, to acknowledge and trumpet the success of the unit and its members, and to highlight the upcoming challenges and opportunities that will help advance the Faculty. However, these cannot be one-way exchanges. Deans need to invite feedback and questions to truly engage members in their Faculty.

These formal platforms must be augmented with less formal communication programs. Deans must work the halls of their building, taking the time to visit with members informally and build a strong relationship with them. They must attend professional and social events held in the Schools/Departments to help enrich and

extend these relationships. They need to reach out to their members on a regular basis with *Dean's Updates* (electronic newsletters) and other social media platforms to update members of important events happening in the Faculty or across campus, inform them of opportunities and deadlines, and congratulate them on special achievements.

Deans and members of the leadership team need to find ways to connect with their members and keep them up “in the know”. In our case, this process starts from the time members are shortlisted as candidates for positions in our Faculty. Prior to their campus visit, they are sent information on Faculty including our goals, our success stories, and our vision. The Dean also has a 30 minute meeting with all shortlisted candidates where he reinforces the Faculty’s vision and values and discusses performance expectations. Members who join the Faculty are clear about what is important in the unit, how they fit in the unit, and how they will be evaluated. Once hired, these members are invited to a lunch where they once again hear about our vision and values, as well as, the support systems that we have in place to help them succeed. Finally, new members are introduced to all members of the Faculty at an annual Fall Garden Party where the Dean has another opportunity to speak about the Faculty vision, values, and success indicators before welcoming the new members to the Faculty and formally introducing them to their new colleagues. These processes help members understand what the Faculty is attempting to accomplish and leaves nothing to interpretation.

Effective Deans communicate regularly, especially with their leadership teams. Regular communication meetings are also held with the Dean’s Office staff members so they can be apprised of this information in advance of reading it in the *Dean's Update*. Members are instructed to bring information and questions to these meetings. According to Bennis (et al., 2008, p. 4) for information to flow freely within an institution, “. . . followers must feel free to speak openly, and leaders must welcome such openness”. Deans can set the stage for this type of openness through their words and actions. They must do the same with members of their leadership teams. According to Goldsmith (2009) leaders should frequently ask their members the simple

question: “How can I be a better leader?” He encourages leaders to thank their members for the feedback before working diligently to implement their valid suggestions.

Deans need to ensure that members of the leadership team have all the information required to participate in fruitful discussions at the leadership table. If members are going to be true partners in leading the Faculty they must have all the information needed to make decisions. Deans must be fully transparent with this group and keep them informed of issues and challenges so they can help find workable solutions. Members should bring School-based issues to the table and ask other Chairs and Directors for their “best practices”. Members should also be encouraged to speak openly about issues and concerns pertaining to the Faculty. Only then will Deans realize the true benefits of a team approach to decanal leadership.

Some Deans are more effective communicators and leaders than others. Some connect with people. Others do not. The recent advances in emotional intelligence may hold the key for Deans seeking to heighten their effectiveness. This is especially true in the case of inspiring and empowering members of the Dean’s leadership team. Authentic leaders take a genuine interest in their members. They seek member’s opinions. They get to know their members (and their families) beyond the workplace. In doing so, they build powerful relationships that are foundational to authentic leadership. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) are experts in this area. They assert that great leaders understand the role that emotions play in the leadership process.

This approach to leadership will appear to be counterintuitive to those who hold the opinion that leaders must be strong-willed, driven individuals who command and control their followers. An emotionally intelligent leader is self-aware and socially-aware (Nadler, 2011). They are confident enough to let go of power, and focus on the emotional needs of their members. However, his approach gets results (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Emotionally intelligent Deans ask and inspire members of the leadership teams, rather than direct them. These Deans must be self-confident, committed to those they lead, and sensitive to their own emotional needs as well as those of their members. They work hard to build strong, trusting relationships with members of the leadership team. They awaken their curiosities, heighten their levels of commitment, and



channel member energies to the accomplishment of Faculty goals. Boyatzis and McKee (2005, p. 4) noted that leaders operating from this base know that “. . . emotions are powerful drivers of their people’s moods, and ultimately, performance”.

The emotional intelligence literature base is garnering greater attention from contemporary leadership scholars. The concept has direct applicability to Decanal leadership given the types of people who are typically drawn to academic leadership. Deans seeking to improve their performance would be well-served in studying and integrating these concepts in their leadership practices.

Deans must be aware of their emotions and recognize the impact of their words and actions on others. They must be able to maintain their composure, and listen empathetically to the needs, wants and desires of their leadership team members. They must be clear and honest in all their interactions. This is hard work, but the benefits are worth the investment. Boyatzis (2009) suggests the best leaders understand that the emotions are the “backbone of leadership” and effective leaders bring out the very best in those around them, to the benefit of the Faculty and the specific Schools/Departments they lead.

#### **Leadership Practice #4 - Model and Encourage Continual Leadership Learning and Development**

Leadership is not easy. It takes a considerable investment of time, energy and foresight. However, as noted earlier, the task becomes manageable when a leadership team is recruited, focused, empowered and inspired to share in the leadership role. That said, the leadership role remains a challenging position. As noted earlier, Deans often have a short shelf life. Many leave the role frustrated and happy to have the experience behind them. It doesn’t have to be the case.

Effective Deans know that they must attract a highly competent group of full and part- time staff members and inspire/empower them to high levels of achievement. Effectively leading the members, and developing them into strong leaders in their own right, are both critical components of a Dean’s role. Leadership can be learned and improved (Parks, 2005) and if Deans are to enjoy long-term success in the role, they must also stay current with developments in the field. They must renew themselves (Covey, 1989).

Ongoing professional development and renewal are both critical for the long-term success of Deans and their Faculties. Deans must model the way through their own behaviours, and encourage and support the developmental needs of leadership team members.

Deans are also encouraged to review the work of Stewart Friedman (2008) and his concept of *Total Leadership: Be a Better Leader, Have a Richer Life*. He invites leaders to expand their influence beyond the workplace and into their homes, their communities and with themselves. Leadership is ubiquitous and leaders need to see themselves this way. He would encourage Deans to apply leadership to all of their life roles, and in doing so, be more effective, increase their personal, professional and organizational productivity, and lead/model more enriching lives. He also advocates the teachings of management/leadership experts like Mintzberg (1989), Bennis (2009) and Drucker (Beatty, 1998) who have all suggested that leaders need to invest more of their time in reflection, thinking and planning, and less time concerned with the micro issues of their day-to-day work life. Common sense, but according to Covey (1989), not common practice.

We must consider these viewpoints. Decanal and Faculty performance is very important to the success and vitality of an institution of higher learning. Deans can improve as leaders. Friedman (2008, p. 187) suggests that leaders will improve if they see themselves as “a developing leader, watch other leaders, practice, and remain open to good coaching”. This author agrees – totally.

## **Conclusion**

The role of Dean is a complex one that usually does not come with an owner’s manual. Deans are often recruited into the role because they have distinguished themselves in their career. However, their previous skill set may be counterproductive to success in the new role.

This article introduces Deans (and prospective Deans) to the latest developments in the field of leadership. Deans can heighten their effectiveness by implementing the four leadership practices outlined in this article. Current Deans are encouraged to evaluate their leadership behaviours and consider implementing the four leadership practices. Some Deans may need to hit the reset button for their leadership style. An honest self-

assessment and feedback from superiors, peers and direct reports will be needed to determine if the Dean is delivering on all four of these leadership practices. To measure progress, and facilitate decanal success (and survival), Deans should regularly ask themselves the 10 questions outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1. Questions to Determine if Deans are on a Path to Success and Survival?**

1. Have I built a strong and formidable leadership team?
2. Am I empowering and inspiring members of the team to exceptional levels of achievement?
3. Have I ensured clarity and focus in the Faculty as evidenced by a clear, strategic and inspiring Faculty vision?
4. Is this vision understood and adopted by all members of the leadership team and by colleagues in the Faculty?
5. Have we developed specific, measureable and time-bound objectives that will help everyone determine if we are making progress towards realizing our vision?
6. Do I communicate openly, honestly, thoroughly and frequently with members of the leadership team, the Dean's Office Staff, and members of the Faculty?
7. Do members of the leadership team communicate openly, honestly, thoroughly and frequently with each other?
8. Do I employ the tenets of emotional intelligence to my leadership and communication practices with members of my leadership team, the Dean's Office staff, and members of the Faculty?
9. Do I take the time to reflect on my leadership effectiveness and invest in commensurate in leadership development activities when appropriate ?
10. Do I invest in the leadership and professional development of the leadership team members and the members of the Dean's Office staff?

The need for strong and effective Decanal leadership has always been present, but recent times may be placing a higher premium on, and calling for strong and effective leadership. Crises such as those brought on by the recent economic downturn require strong, passionate leadership that embodies the thinking of the top leadership minds whose concepts are profiled in this article. As George (2009, p. 2) noted "a smooth sea never produced a strong mariner". There will be more choppy times ahead for Deans, and hopefully the contents of this article will serve them well.

Effective leadership is a journey, not a destination. Leadership theorists consistently agree that the investment of time and energy invested in support of this leadership style will pay significant dividends for Deans, and by extension, for those they lead and serve. This experienced Dean and /leadership scholar wholeheartedly agrees. Croce (1972) was right. *It doesn't have to be that way.*

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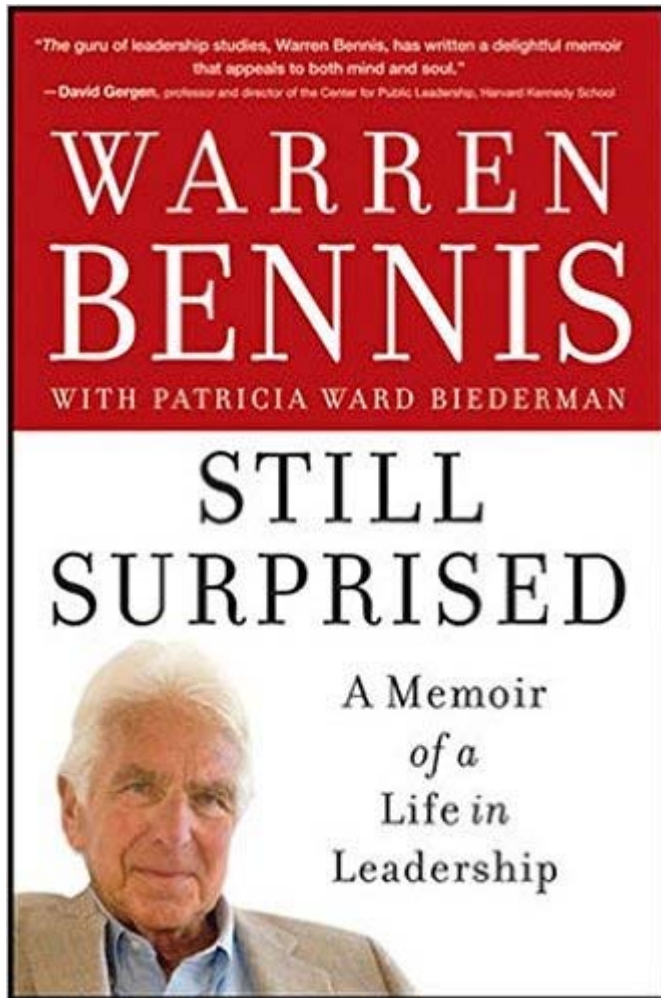
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May be good to share with colleagues who complain about who tough they have it or how hard they work.

Remind them that they have the privilege of working with 18-24 bright, industrious agents of change – leaders of tomorrow.

They get to pursue ideas that they think are important.

As Bennis stated ....

“In a faculty position, you are spared the hamster wheel of unrewarding work. You have the time and freedom to think, and, wonder wonders, you are paid to do so. You teach. You do research. You share ideas and laughs with smart, generous people around you. You write, and, if you have are fortunate, there is an audience for what you write. If you are lucky, people are interested in your work. They call

you – invite you to come (at their expense) to talk with them. You share your ideas – you learn from them. You become a name– And all you did was work hard, get lucky, and stay alive”

Quote from Warren Bennis – age 85 - reflecting back on is life as a professor.

.....  
*Dr. Jim Weese*  
*Professor and Special Advisor to the Provost*  
*Western University*  
*London, Ontario, Canada*

*519 495 0015*