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BECOMING DEAN: SELECTION AND SOCIALIZATION PROCESSES OF AN ACADEMIC LEADER

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It's Friday afternoon and the provost is scheduled to appear at the school for a meeting with the faculty. The meeting is at 3:00 p.m. Interim dean Ricardo Garcia suspects that it won't be well attended given the day and time. He heads down to the meeting room a few minutes before 3:00. Opening the door, he notices that the room is packed and people are sitting quietly. As he enters, they rise to their feet and give him a standing ovation. Four and a half years after being appointed interim, Ric has formally become the School's dean.

The paths to becoming an academic dean are varied. Most individuals begin with faculty experience and scholarship in their discipline (Carroll, 1991; Moore, Salimbene, Marlier & Bragg, 1983). Usually they have held other administrative positions such as department chairperson, assistant dean, and associate dean (Jackson, 2004). For some individuals, the current dean might pick a likely successor and mentor that individual for academic leadership. Figuratively, the torch is passed from mentor to protégé (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001; Jacobi, 1991; Merriam, 1983; Russell & Adams, 1997; Stalker, 1994). For others within the organization, becoming a dean is a trial by fire. As insiders, they are thrown into the situation to serve as interim, temporarily assigned to the deanship. They learn their skills in a “catch as catch can” manner and are generally self-taught (Damico, Gmelch, Hopkins & Mitchell, 2003). Usually, more experienced administrators are brought in as outsiders. These individuals are “unknowns” who are hired to lead based upon past experience as associates or deans in other institutions.

In whatever ways deans are selected, reports point to a lack of qualified leaders in higher education institutions with often three or four cycles of searching before finding viable candidates (Andersen, 2002). Academic leadership preparation may be limited to experiences on the job in combination with socialization (Gmelch, 2000). Much can be learned by considering how deans are selected and socialized into their roles. This paper details the path of one dean through his challenges on the job from interim to appointed leader.

When we embarked on this exploratory inquiry, we had been discussing leadership and the aspects that make leaders successful in directing their organizations. We were also interested in how leaders serving in multiethnic communities might be successful in mobilizing diverse groups with conflicting interests toward common goals. We wondered what made for unique and authentic kinds of leadership. We did not know that we would be exploring how Ric would become a dean. This is what we began to do when in May 2000, Ricardo was named Interim Dean to head the School of Education.

For the purpose of confidentiality, all names are pseudonyms and there is a change in venue. Otherwise, the narrative reflects actual occurrences over a five-year period time from May 2000 to February 2005. This qualitative case study is specific to the individual, highlighting the challenges of an academic dean based upon his personal reflections about leadership and community building. The study aims to give an insider's perspective on the selection and socialization process of becoming a dean through on-the-job experiences.

Organizational Socialization

Socialization refers to “the learning of social roles” (Hart, 1993, p.10). When entering a new organization or assuming a different role within the organization, an individual initially experiences “leave taking” or breaking from the old (Louis, 1980). The next stage is of encounter, where the individual learns what is expected in terms of the routines, surprises, and relationships of the new position. The individual begins to internalize the

values, beliefs, and norms of the group, eventually becoming part of that group (adaptation stage). As Hart (1991) noted, “organizational socialization includes the major factors found to influence professionals on taking their first assignments and adds dimensions that help explain subsequent succession experiences” (p. 469).

Organizational socialization is viewed as a learning process where individual and organization interact to learn about each other (Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Newcomers are motivated to reduce their uncertainty in the work environment, making things more predictable, understandable, and thus controllable. They become more adept at performing their work, more satisfied, and more likely to remain (Falcione & Wilson, 1988; Lester, 1987; Morrison, 1993). Likewise, the organization is vested in familiarizing the newcomer with policies, procedures, norms, and work habits to ensure that person’s success and long-term employment. There might be specific socialization tactics, orientations, trainings, and mentoring activities (Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Units within the organization may also employ tactics, social support, and social learning processes (e.g., observation, instruction, reinforcement, and negotiation). For example, faculty within an electrical engineering department may have their own norms, setting them apart from other departments within the same school.

Although earlier literature on socialization tended to neglect individual differences and emphasize situational factors, Saks and Ashforth (1997) propose a multi-level model for organizational socialization. Their model recognizes that individuals within the organization can act independently to seek information, build relationships, and mobilize their own resources to succeed. Drawn from social cognitive, self-efficacy, and sensemaking theories (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Louis, 1980; Weick, 1995), the model proposes that individual differences (e.g. , personality traits, ideology, and demographic variables) will affect socialization processes. Socialization is not seen as unidirectional from the organization or subgroup toward the newcomer; rather it is bi-directional with the individual interacting with the organization and even interpreting the roles and responsibilities assumed.

> In the model, Saks and Ashforth (1997) make the following key assumptions: First, organizational and group socialization factors are likely to affect individual difference variables, and individual differences are likely to affect newcomer proactive strategies and behavior. Second, individual differences are predicted to directly affect cognitive sense-making, and information acquisition and learning. Third, individual differences are predicted to moderate the effects of the socialization factors on information and learning, and the effects of information and learning on the proximal outcomes. Finally, there are many potential feedback loops in the model, indeed too many to depict (p. 240).

This Saks and Ashforth model is useful in examining the deanship process for several reasons. First, socialization is considered to be dynamic, ongoing, and process-oriented, not strictly outcomes-based. Additionally, the focus is not restricted to an individual's socialization but includes other members of an organization who might be re-socialized as their roles and responsibilities change. Second, specific socialization tactics (e.g., sequential rather than random ways of socializing a newcomer) could be explored. Efficacy might be determined in terms of the individual's and the organization's benefits from the learning process. Third, the model acknowledges individual variability and agency within organizational socialization, leading to more or less effective socialization for the newcomer as well as other organizational members. With this theoretical framework for socialization, we describe more specifically the academic dean's work and its challenges.

Academic Dean's Work

Organizationally, the dean is the head of a college (e.g., Arts and Sciences, Engineering) or professional school (e.g., School of Medicine). He or she generally serves at the appointment of the university provost or president with formal approval of a board of trustees (also called governors or regents). Deans are viewed as academic leaders of their

respective organizational unit, acting toward "building a community of scholars to set direction and achieve common purposes through the empowerment of faculty and staff" (Gmelch & Wolverton, 2002, p. 33). Deans are authorized to chart the course for their college or school by setting the unit's goals, allocating resources, and assessing the productivity and performance of faculty and staff. Critical to the university, deans can potentially exercise much influence over their respective college or school (Rosser, Johnsrud & Heck, 2003).

Specific job descriptions and scope of work might vary depending upon the type of institution in which they work (Jackson, 2004). For example, differences occur if the university is a research, doctoral degree granting institution as contrasted with a liberal arts, four-year undergraduate institution. The former might placed greater emphasis on grants and scholarship productivity than the latter institution; the dean's scope of work would vary accordingly.

Among the challenges that all deans face, Montez, Wolverton, and Gmelch (2002) state that deans must negotiate the demands placed upon them by their superiors (administrators, board of trustees), by their constituents (faculty and students), and by their benefactors (taxpayers, legislators, and endowers). Deans often negotiate conflicting interests among these groups to accomplish their work. Role conflicts for deans occur when they are faced with incompatible expectations that arise from serving their faculty while also serving the university's administrators and the greater academic organization. Role ambiguity exists when there is no clear direction about expectations or assignments. The deanship as it currently exists can be "enigmatic" with internal and external pressures imposed upon the one leader (Montez, Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002, p. 254).

In considering how deans perceive managing the role conflict in their work, Wolverton, Wolverton, and Gmelch (1999) report that perceptions of role conflict varied significantly across subgroups defined by institutional and personal variables. For example, deans at urban institutions were found to be more prone to having role conflicts than their

rural counterparts. And deans in business colleges experienced significantly higher levels of role conflicts than deans of other types of colleges. In terms of personal variables, the dean's gender and minority status factored less than did the years in the deanship, whether s/he had children or not, and whether s/he were under 50 years of age. Professionally if deans viewed themselves as faculty members and if they were satisfied with their scholarly productivity, they experienced less role conflict.

Another aspect to consider is administrator job satisfaction. Volkwein and Zhou (2003) examined predictors of work satisfaction in a survey of 1,178 administrators at 120 public and private universities. Significant predictors of satisfaction were administrative rank, personal/family problems, interpersonal conflict, perceived level of teamwork, and job insecurity. Intrinsic and interpersonal satisfaction directly predicted overall job satisfaction. The authors demonstrated that perceived work climate related to overall satisfaction for academic administrators. "Organizational, environmental, and individual traits prove to be less influential than the features of the immediate work environment" (p. 168), such as teamwork and interpersonal harmony.

In sum, the work of an academic dean involves serving multiple constituencies from top administrators to faculty and students as well as those external to the institution, such as benefactors, business and community members, with interests that relate to the services provided by the university. The role of dean is steeped with conflicts and ambiguities that can factor into how satisfied an administrator is and whether she or he chooses to remain in the position. Yet the position will remain a "vital component of higher education administration" and will likely increase in responsibilities and expanded role as university priorities change (Montez, Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002, pp. 261-262).

Method

Qualitative Case Study

According to Merriam (1998), a qualitative case study is an "intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 27). It offers an intensive description and analysis of that unit, be it an individual, group, institution, or community. Thus, the investigation for a case study rests upon the unit of analysis, rather than the topic per se. In this study, we propose an in-depth look at a dean's selection and socialization process. We consider the particular individual as a "bounded system" and unit of analysis, examining his perspective and unique experiences (Stake, 1995).

A single case study design is deemed an appropriate research method when the study demonstrates three primary criteria (Yin, 1994). First, the researcher asks "why" or "how" something occurred. Our study sought to explore how an individual became an academic dean and how he learned the roles and responsibilities of that position. The second criterion is that the researcher has no control over events, which was the situation in this inquiry. We did not begin our examination and analysis of data collected until we learned that the deanship had been achieved. Third, the events of the case are contemporary, not historical. Our study meets that criterion as first person accounts were obtained. Using the single case study design, we present an exploratory study with rich descriptions of the events leading to Ricardo's becoming a dean.

In addition, we posit that this is a critical case, which Patton (1990) notes "if it happens there, it will happen anywhere" (p. 174). From a critical perspective, we attempted to raise questions about the influence of race, class, and gender, the convergence of power and control, the nature of truth and the likely construction of knowledge (Merriam, 2002). Specifically in this study, we questioned how the selection and socialization of an individual for a key leadership role might have been influenced by the institutional context and political dynamics.

Data Collection

The primary method of data collection was through interviews with the candidate, which were conducted informally over the course of a five-year period, beginning in May 2000 and continuing into 2005. In all, there were 23 interviews that took place at periodic intervals, more frequently initially and less during the midyears. During the final year, we worked together to develop a better understanding of what the process had been and what the deanship meant after Ricardo Garcia's appointment.

The one-to-one interviews consisted of open-ended questions that generally identified the incidents that were occurring, key individuals, and issues involved. Ric would often reflect upon what he thought or felt about the situation. There was no set order of questions or attempt to reflect the totality of what was occurring. As noted earlier, we began the inquiry in the deanship as a way of having Ric reflect on the meaning of leadership and his on-the-job learning. It was intended to be an insider's view of the role and responsibilities. The limitation of that perspective is that it does not fully account for the multiple perspectives of others, either within the institution or outside. However, as we were considering Ric's socialization process, we chose to retain our focus on the candidate and emphasize the meaning that he brought to his experiences.

Documents were a secondary source of data. These included email exchanges, correspondence, school brochures, newsletters, and reports on the school's progress. These documents served to clarify questions about the school, the work of the search committees, the communication within the school and university.

Analysis

It is often the case that researchers simultaneously collect and analyze their data in conducting an exploratory study. Miles and Huberman's (1994) describe "iterative cycles" as the process of data collection and thematic development. This was not our process. We had begun this endeavor as a way to reflect upon Ricardo's experiences ongoingly. We did

very little analysis as we conducted our interviews. At certain intervals, we did summarize themes on leadership to promote deeper reflection. Only when the selection process was complete and his appointment had been made did we begin to assess our notes and analyze our findings.

Our analysis consisted of first drawing from the literature on organizational socialization and the deanship to provide theoretical and conceptual understanding for our study. Second, we proceeded to do data synthesis, reflection, and analysis. Writing served to focus the analysis, moving our thinking from initial descriptions of events to tracing the socialization process. Miles and Huberman (1994) call this “memoing” in shifting from descriptions to interpretation. Beyond that, we considered the critical perspectives as noted in order to deconstruct assumptions about what deanship meant and how one might become a dean.

Because this qualitative study was about an individual, we drew from Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis’s (1997) method of portraiture. Rather than present pattern coding or emerging themes about a phenomenon, we sought to “capture the complexity and aesthetic of human experience” (p. 4). A portraiture “creates a narrative that is at once complex, provocative, and inviting, that attempts to be holistic, revealing the dynamic interaction of values, personality, structure, and history. And the narrative documents human behavior and experience in context” (p. 11). Setting the individual within his situated context was our intention as we developed that portraiture.

Context of the Study

The university at which the study was conducted is a research-extensive, public institution located in a metropolis. It is governed by a board of trustees and nationally accredited. At the beginning of the study, there were approximately 17,300 students (undergraduate and graduate degree seekers), served by over 3,800 faculty and staff members. In this university, the academic deans manage units of varying sizes (from small

schools with less than 50 faculty to colleges with staff of over 100) and different academic types (e.g., language and literature department in contrast with a professional school like law). In addition to deans, there are midlevel managers who head research institutes, service, and support units.

Leadership and organization at the university were in flux in 2000. The current president, Dr. Anderson, had decided to step down and a national search was initiated for his successor. Dr. Anderson had come to the university at a time when resources were limited and programs were in need of support. His reputation was that of a “hatchet man” with a fiscally conservative approach to management. Under his direction, the leadership team implemented a financial plan to cut costs across all schools and colleges.

Organizationally, he advocated to reorganize the higher education system, consisting of the university, two baccalaureate liberal arts colleges, and seven community colleges. Rather than have one president for the system and the university, Dr. Anderson proposed creating separate offices of president to head the system and of provost to be the academic/operations leader of the university. Another dramatic change was in the relationship between the university and its primary funding source, the state government. Under Dr. Anderson’s tenure, a public referendum was initiated and passed in November 2000 to grant constitutional autonomy for the higher education system. This arrangement would enable the university to be more enterprising and entrepreneurial, not solely reliant upon the state government for financial resources.

Known to be the “premier school” of its kind in the region, the School of Education was nationally ranked and accredited to offer programs in bachelors, masters, and doctoral studies. Initially accredited in 1948, it provided professionals in its field serving throughout the state as well as the greater geographic region. The school was renowned for its diverse student body (enrolling approximately 300 students annually), 20 faculty members many of whom were nationally and internationally recognized, and an emphasis on multiculturalism.

There were three immediate challenges facing Ricardo Garcia as incoming interim in the spring of 2000. First, the school was up for national accreditation. Ric would need to mobilize efforts to gain re-accreditation for the next term. Second, the building in which the school was housed was scheduled to be renovated. This had been planned for some time and would take place in the upcoming year. Ric needed to organize and direct the school's move to the other end of campus. Faculty offices needed to be packed up, transported, and unpacked at the new site. The new location although in better condition would also need to be inspected, remodeled, and refurbished accordingly. The third challenge was ongoing, that of finding instructors to teach when tenure-track faculty bought out their teaching responsibilities. These buy-outs brought in money to the school, but with increased enrollment and more demand for classes, the dean would need to arrange for and monitor adjunct faculty.

Description of the Candidate

Ricardo Garcia is a Hispanic American male, originally from Los Angeles, and is married with two school-aged children. He has a social science background with a BA in social sciences, MA and Ph.D. in educational psychology. He was first appointed as an assistant professor at the school in 1985, tenured at the associate level in 1991, and attained the rank of full professor in 1996. In all, he had been at the same university for nearly 20 years. Over the years, he had been the principal investigator or program coordinator for more than 20 projects, often supervising teams of personnel comparable in size to the faculty at the school. His administrative experiences on those projects included research and community relations, responsibility for fiscal and personnel matters, and overseeing student affairs. At the time of his appointment, he had published 27 journal articles, eight book chapters, one book, 13 technical reports, and made 36 conference presentations. He was professionally active on national committees and boards, and served as a consultant and expert witness in his field.

Path to Becoming Dean

As a faculty member, Ric had spent his academic career successfully doing research and teaching at the school. Well established in his field, he had attained the rank of full professor and had served the school as the chair of the personnel committee (two terms) and of the masters degree program (one year). The opportunity to serve as interim dean came up when the current dean announced her departure. As a senior faculty member in the school, Ric decided to accept the appointment in May 2000. He looked forward to this leadership opportunity but acknowledged there were pressing challenges with re-accreditation, relocation, and faculty needed. In addition, the school's faculty was split into factions and had had limited involvement in decision-making, participation, and collaboration over the decade prior.

After several months on the job, Ric expressed frustration, commenting that it was the "worst job." He could not speak his mind as he had as a faculty member. He had to deal with several difficult faculty members and staff, many who were "taking pot shots" at him over the relocation, accreditation, and dean's search. Even his supporters were sometimes paranoid and warned him about "watching his back." He felt that he needed to be "on guard all the time." He wondered about whether he wanted to apply for the permanent deanship.

Despite the frustration, Ric felt he could make a difference in the school and in the community at large. He wanted to be more inclusive of others and work with those whom he had "inherited." He was beginning to look for ways to be more collaborative and build community both inside and outside the school. By mid-August, he was planning for a student orientation and arranging to have more frequent meetings with students. He also had luncheon meetings arranged with alumni to get their ideas about the school's work in the community. As dean, Ric could take the opportunity to speak with these professionals who had been educators for as many as 40 years. The former dean had not done that and alumni felt honored to be recognized. Those aspects of the job he thought actually seemed "fun."

Over the months, the days were longer, beginning early and ending late. More meetings were held with the Dean's Council and even a retreat. Consisting of all deans and directors at the university, the Dean's Council was dominated by white males, with few women and minorities like him. "I don't act like a dean" Ric said, reflecting upon the individuals on the Council who appeared "glossy and impressive," often competitive and jockeying for position. As a faculty member, he could choose to speak or not. But as one among the deans, he felt that he was "front and center." He could no longer sit back but needed to be more prepared, yet sometimes he barely had read the agenda and previous meeting minutes.

On the home front, his wife had to carry the load with their two boys. Ric could no longer coach soccer or supervise the boys' homework as he had done in the past. But if he did get the deanship, he would be making more money so that his wife would not need to work. As interim dean, he was not making as much as he could as faculty with paid contracts and overload money.

By the end of 2000, over six months into the job, Ric had experienced some successes. The school-sponsored get together of faculty, staff, students, and community members had had the largest turnout in the last decade. He established a community advisory group with leaders from the local community to provide feedback and support for new initiatives. Ric attended a national dean's conference with peers from around the country. His former advisor, now an established dean, introduced him to other deans. At a special session for new deans, Ric was able to discuss issues like accreditation and personnel matters similar to those at his school. He was pleased to be learning more.

Yet, the challenges at school were looming large. Faculty were demanding that a building inspection occur before the move to the new location. This was necessary because the building had been a science lab that was being remodeled and the concern about asbestos was an issue. In communicating with university administration, Ric felt that he needed to provide the faculty's viewpoint. "If I don't speak for them, who will?" He was also

having difficulty dealing with the administrator in charge of relocation arrangements. The administrator would say one thing and then recant. Eventually Ric drew up a memorandum of agreement for the administrator to sign in order to move forward. Another challenge was a personnel matter. A faculty member filed a racial discrimination grievance against Ric and the school. The individual had been up for tenure and previously denied. This would be his final appeal. The matter was time-consuming, requiring meetings with legal counsel and writing responses to the faculty member, university, and so on.

Despite all that was occurring, Ric decided to apply for the permanent deanship. In his application, he wrote about his “strong commitment to the promotion of education and professional development in the state and greater geographic region, and to further the development of new conceptualizations and strategies for multicultural education practice and research.” He viewed his role as promoting collaborative relationships among the many constituencies, within the school, university and community. Such relationships, he felt, were “essential for the school at this time of social and cultural change, as new directions and priorities for both research and practice emerge” (Letter of Application, December 1, 2000).

The search committee for the new dean was headed by another dean and included several members from Ric's faculty who did not favor his leadership. Having reviewed the applicant pool, the committee forwarded two names to Dr. Baird, the Executive Vice President in charge of the administrative appointment. Because Ric’s name was not forwarded, a group of his supporters quickly mobilized in protest. They arranged to meet with Dr. Baird on February 28, 2001.

Over 40 of Ricardo’s supporters attended, representing not only the school but also faculty from other colleges as well as professionals and community members. After introductions, the spokesperson put forth the group’s concerns and support for Ric’s candidacy. Dr. Baird responded by describing the search process and the desired outcome, the best person for the job of dean. He stated that he would not go against the search

committee's recommended short list because that would undermine the process. But if he found that the search process was flawed, he would ask for reconsideration. Further, if after onsite interviews, there was no top choice or no match with the persons brought in, then the search would be discontinued. After some discussion about minimum and desired qualifications, and issues related to the community's needs and alternative options, the meeting ended.

Later Ric sent an email to those who had supported him. "I wanted you to know that although the struggle focuses on me and not making the short list, I believe that it is only partly about me" (email 3/5/01). The larger issue, according to Ric, had to do with a split in vision for the school. Some in the school favored imposing academic standards and "qualities" that were elitist, discriminatory, and perpetuated the status quo. By contrast, Ric and others sought to apply their research and proposed the school's program could be a "model for university community collaboration for the rest of the country." Ric acknowledged,

> I have made enemies among those who have advocated raising admission standards, promoted pure research while devaluing training grants and qualitative research, and lobbied against minority faculty candidates in favor of the "best" the country has to offer. The opportunity to serve as interim dean has increased my awareness of the school's untapped potential. We can be so much more than we have been. I believe good change is coming.

On March 5th, two finalists were named in the dean's search. One finalist had applied to the faculty previously but not been offered a position. The other individual was currently a dean at another institution. Both were brought in for on-campus interviewing. Supporters for Ric organized to participate in the process and provide input on each candidate. The group met again with Dr. Baird to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each finalist. By

mid-May, it was anticipated that one of the finalists would be offered the job and that Dr. Baird would appoint that individual to be dean.

However, the top leadership at the university changed hands. The board of trustees selected a new president Dr. Howell, who in turn appointed an interim provost, Dr. Karrin, to replace Dr. Baird. Ric's supporters appealed to the board of trustees and the new administration to hold off making any decision about the deanship. Although not to be officially appointed until the summer, President Howell stated that he would not hire a dean for the school until he could review the matter. Ric remained as interim and the search for a new dean was placed on hold. It was likely that he would be in the position for at least another year. Again, he resolved to do what was best for the school, not simply be a lame duck administrator.

In the meanwhile, a deanship at a major public university opened up and Ric was encouraged to apply. He had done his master's degree there and had a mentor at that university. It would be an opportunity to try for the deanship at a top-ranked professional school with 60 faculty members and an entire building! He found the change "refreshing" from his own school. By July, he had done a phone interview and was invited for an on-campus interview. He actively prepared for the visit, which occurred later that summer. In speaking about the visit afterwards, Ric was positive. At the job talk, he addressed a full house of over 70 people. After 45 minutes of lecture, he opened to questions from the audience. "They asked hard questions!" But his experience as interim had prepared him well to answer questions from staff as well as faculty. His meetings with the board of trustees and president also went well. He felt at ease with everyone including the leadership.

It was a different experience than he had had in his school's dean search. He contrasted a statement made earlier by Dr. Baird who told him that he was "too young to be dean." At that point, Ric was not sure whether or not he would want to be permanent dean. "I am also prepared to tell (the new provost) that I would not apply for the position in order

to disentangle notions that some people have that I am only interested in my career" (email 7/12/01). But his supporters asked that he reconsider.

By July, the university's new administration was ready to hear the issues raised by Ric's supporters. A meeting was held on the 17th with Dr. Karrin, now named the senior vice president replacing Dr. Baird. The issues were about the flawed search process and the need to have a dean for the school who understood the community and its diversity. The supporters reiterated that they were advocating for a fair, representative search process that valued particularly the knowledge and experiences of working with indigenous cultures. For his part, Dr. Karrin made time to meet with Ric later that evening to hear his views. According to Ric, "We had a very pleasant and honest discussion. I found (Dr. Karrin) to be a good listener, wise and very astute. He made no promises and I didn't ask for any" (email 7/18/01). In responding about the dean's search, Dr. Karrin wrote a letter to Ric and the school on July 26, stating:

> My conclusion is that insufficient agreement exists over the candidate under current consideration to argue well for the future of the school and the services it needs to provide to its students and to the broader community to which it supplies needed professional graduates. I am, therefore, suspending the current search at this time, to be reopened and reconstituted under a more extensive review of the school and its needs.

Through the summer, Ric continued to deal with personnel matters and two grievances now on the books. One was from an untenured faculty in a racial discrimination suit. That had been ongoing from early in Ric's appointment. The second grievance was filed by a staff specialist who had worked closely with the former dean. Ric had hoped to work with her initially but she had begun to speak out publicly and work against him. He redefined her job and basically chose not to hire her. Despite her grievance, he eventually was able to replace her with someone more aligned with his thinking.

Now more experienced with various networks established inside and outside of the university, Ric identified four discrete constituencies with whom he worked. First, there were the faculty, staff, and students of his school. On a daily basis, he would "trouble-shoot, problem solve, and soothe people's woes" by listening to their concerns. Second, the university administration included the vice president (later provost) to whom he reported, the Dean's Council that was his peer group, and the numerous staff that kept the institution operating. A third constituency was the community whom the school served by educating teachers, counselors, administrators, and other professionals. Ric's outreach to alumni was much more than his predecessor had done during her tenure. A fourth group was the national dean's conference and his networking with other deans through that affiliation.

His vision for the school was to create a professional development program that served the community, not necessarily fitting into a traditional academic program for developing educational professionals. To achieve this end, he felt that personnel would be key. "Ultimately good personnel make things work. You have a job to do and you need to get the best people for it." He hired two new faculty members, one a senior scholar with research on indigenous communities, and the second an international scholar bringing a wealth of multicultural experiences. In making these decisions, he felt that "your values and character are always being tested."

By mid November, things seemed to have turned a corner. Ric had gone forward with a partnership with a foreign university, opening cross-cultural collaborations. He had established an advisory board, selecting esteemed community members to serve. He was meeting regularly with students to hear their concerns and respond to their needs in the school. There had also been numerous changes among the faculty and staff. Two senior faculty moved to another department more aligned with their interests. At this time, Ric learned that he was not selected for the other university's deanship. Although somewhat disappointed, he was clear that he would remain as interim dean at least for the year

because there were faculty tenure and other matters that he felt committed to see through completion.

The university was also involved in changes. One worry was how the school would fare given the recent state auditor's report, which called for trimming the institution's budget. The school was particularly vulnerable with no permanent dean, a small faculty, and relatively small size. Consolidation with the College of Social Sciences was a consideration. To counter attempts to consolidate the school with other units, Ric began working with his advisory board and contacting state politicians and community advocates. He anticipated that if the school could bring in its own funding and attain self-sufficiency like the Law School, then it could retain autonomy. He worked on obtaining research grants, contracts, and external funding to make that possible.

The university was also beginning strategic planning efforts and attempting to involve everyone from all programs, schools, and colleges. Ric encouraged his school's faculty, staff and students to participate in order to have their ideas placed on the university's agenda. He also arranged for the school to do its own strategic visionary sessions and that, he felt, was moving in a good direction. He wanted to move the school forward, not spend so much time on negativity but rather encourage faculty, students, and alumni to work together. That collaboration was beginning to take shape.

Still serving as interim dean in Fall 2002, Ric now reported to a new provost, Dr. Graham who replaced Dr. Karrin. Again a dean's search was being organized. At first, Ric said that he would apply for the deanship. But several months later under the new administration, he was reconsidering his application. The minimum qualifications for the deanship specified five or more years of experience as an administrator. Ric did not qualify on that basis as he had only three years as administrator. As before, his supporters rallied and voiced objection about this qualification.

By May 2003, Ric decided that he would apply for the deanship because he felt there was more that he could do in moving the school forward. Aligning the school's mission,

vision, and resources would be a large part of that effort. In three years as interim dean, Ric felt that he had demonstrated his administrative and leadership skills. Notably he had lead the school in gaining national reaccreditation for the full term of eight years, hired eight new faculty members, successfully completed the school's strategic plan, acquired over a $1 million in extramural contacts, increased alumni and corporate donations, and chaired a dean's committee on international research and training. His letter of application cited these accomplishments as well as offered directions toward establishing a top-notch professional school for the region.

Begun in Spring 2003, the dean's search proceeded with starts and stops, often being placed on hold by the administration. Nevertheless, Ric felt that Provost Graham liked the school and that they had a good working relationship. He found the provost to be blunt and forthright, a person with whom he could speak directly. In contrast to the first search process, the provost chose to hire an external search firm, charged with soliciting prospective candidates for the deanship. The firm also was charged with learning about the school, its priorities, and screening likely candidates in terms of their strengths and limitations with regard to the specific needs of the school.

A university search committee was constituted and headed by a dean with 10 members (five faculty from the school, one student, one staff person, and three community members). After considering the search firm's list of candidates and evaluating the top contenders, the search committee advanced three names, of which Ric was one. Rather than ranking the candidates, the assessment was presented as strengths and limitations of each individual. Provost Graham made the final determination and presented his recommendation to President Howell and the Board of Trustees.

Those opposing Ric's appointment took their case directly to the trustees, arguing that the search process was flawed. The opposition succeeded in stalling any appointment decisions for two months while the university's legal affairs reviewed the matter. It was not

until the following February 2005, nearly two years after the dean's search was begun, that Ricardo Garcia was selected and formally confirmed as the school's dean.

Discussion

A useful framework for considering Ric Garcia's selection and socialization into the deanship, the Saks and Ashforth (1997) model offered a way to consider how the individual and the organization interacted over the nearly five-year process. In considering the selection and socialization process, we discuss how the individual acted autonomously as well as was shaped by the organization. However we found that this case had political dynamics, which needed to be factored into how the selection and socialization of the dean took place.

Individual's Socialization Process

Initially in the socialization process, the individual breaks off from his previous role to learn what is expected in the new position (Louis, 1980). For Ric, this was evident early on in his distinction between being a faculty member and being dean. He expressed not being able to speak freely as he had as a faculty member. Frequently in conversations about negotiating with difficult faculty and staff, he commented about how as dean, he needed to listen to everyone, even those who were troublesome. Having to be "on guard all the time" could be draining. Yet it was clear from his comments that he felt that he needed to be an advocate, assuring all sides were heard. Ric also needed to be the spokesperson for the faculty and the school. This was particularly evident when he was negotiating with the administration on relocation issues. He took the faculty's concern about requiring a building inspection to the administration and ensured that it was acted upon with due diligence.

In the second stage, the individual begins to encounter the routines, relationships, ambiguities, and conflicts of the new position. Early in his position as interim, Ric mentioned the numerous meetings with the Dean's Council, a group with which he did not feel much alignment. That there were few women and minorities was a troublesome statistic.

Reflecting on the council members, Ric spoke of how he didn't act like a dean in persona, not outspoken as many in the leadership group seemed to be in advancing their needs and concerns. During this time, Ric pondered the different styles and approaches to be dean. For example, he mentioned one dean who, unlike the others, was generally quiet yet well respected in the group. He found that dean's example to be encouraging. In a study of deans of nursing, Redmond and Andrew (1987) note the importance of understanding the development of personal characteristics and professional behaviors in successful leadership experiences. Ric's struggles during this stage demonstrate the developmental process of identifying personal characteristics and considering how to act as dean.

Ric acknowledged that he had spoken to a number of the deans as well as those who had been in the university's top administration in order to learn the ropes. Among the most helpful were those individuals who gave him useful ideas and facilitated networking. He mentioned two individuals, both retired but with insider knowledge of the university and the community. Seeking assistance from outsiders as well as university insiders, Ric exemplifies straddling between the off-campus professionals and on-campus academics. Gmelch (2000) refers to attending to the "management module" of critical relationships. Viewing the deanship as a cross-cultural experience, English (1997) highlights the importance of communicating across these cultures. He notes the need to develop special skills, such as encouraging collaboration and respect for faculty governance, while maintaining one's administrative perspective.

At this time in Fall 2000, Ric attended a national dean's conference with peers from around the country. His connection with that group and the informal contacts with other administrators enabled him to learn more about the work of being dean. Ric's connections with peers from his own professional association enabled him to be socialized from that national context. He felt more affiliation with that group than with the Dean's Council. In his words, "I have stronger relationships with that group. We have more in common." Anderson and Thomas (1996) identify this affiliation as work group socialization, indicating the

importance of the connection. Also Ric's former advisor took on a mentoring role in providing contacts with others in the profession. Wolverton, Wolverton, and Gmelch (1999) state that mentors can play a role in the work lives of deans, enabling them to define their responsibilities, set priorities, delineate authority, and manage time effectively.

In the third stage, the individual adapts to the new role by internalizing values, beliefs, and norms of the group. He or she experiences more success, work satisfaction, and better control over the work environment. This was evident early on in Ric Garcia's case. Within the first six months on the job, he had already experienced numerous successes, including establishing better relationships with student and alumni groups, creating a community advisory board, and negotiating the relocation of the school. Ric acknowledged that while there were many challenges facing him as interim, there was good reason for applying to be the permanent dean. He saw that he could make a difference as the school's designated head, was dedicated to its mission, and aimed to bring a more collaborative, collegial atmosphere to the unit. He remained committed to this view through the intervening years, eventually applying for the deanship in both searches.

Given the four and a half-year process of searching for and selecting a permanent dean, one might ask why Ric chose to persist in his application to become the school's dean. This was a frequently asked question over the months that the first and second searches took place. As noted by Saks and Ashforth (1997), individuals can take independent action to seek information, build relationships, and mobilize their resources in order to succeed. Such personal agency operates to make individuals both producers as well as products of their social networks (Bandura, 2001). This was exemplified in Ric's relationship with Provost Graham. While he felt that he could speak directly to the Provost, he was open to building other relationships and tapping alternative sources for support and funding. Accordingly, Ric said,

> If something is not forthcoming, I'm not going to beat a dead horse. I'll do something different to get the resources. Since we don't have a lot of resources, we develop our network outside the school. The pot's dried up on campus. Our university is running on a shoestring. We'll nurture our relationships with the provost but build outside as well.

When confronted with obstacles, Ric identified individuals who could provide knowledge and expertise to enable him to act within the university as well as outside. He tapped networks within the university, among the community, and within his professional association. He drew upon previous contacts in the community but also attempted to connect with those in the political and business areas. Importantly, he remained open to the changes that were occurring in the school and in the university. While committed to the vision of the School of Education, he was willing to be patient as he forged new ways of doing things, built faculty morale, and encouraged involvement in decision-making. He was responsive as well, taking advantage of opportunities, such as partnering with a foreign university and consolidating activities where possible to do more with less resource and administration. During his interim appointment, he acted not as a "lame duck administrator" or "bench warmer" but as the person in charge.

Organizational socialization

According to the Saks and Ashforth (1997) model, organizational and group socialization factors interact with individual differences, thus affecting the socialization process. In Ric's case, organizational socialization might be called "ad hoc" for several reasons. First, the university was involved in change that related to its top-level administration. During the five-year period, there had been two different university presidents, one executive vice president, and two provosts who held critical decision-making power over the school and its deanship. These administrators were key in determining whether to extend or halt the search processes. Second, the organizational structure itself

was in flux, with the change from a single campus focus to a multi-campus, systemwide redirection. Related to this was the move toward autonomous funding, meaning schools and colleges were being redirected to raise their own revenue for programs and other endeavors. Ambiguity and confusion existed from these organizational changes that promoted individual and independent actions from those in leadership positions.

Although the university might have been interested in familiarizing the newcomer with policies, procedures, norms, and work habits to insure success on the job, it was not focused upon doing so given the management and organizational changes occurring. The specific socialization tactics, orientations, and trainings that might have been present in a stable organization were not evident. There were, however, more frequent meetings of the Dean's Council and even a retreat held during this period. This peer group acted as a socializing agent for the deanship, but as Ric noted, it was not one with which he felt especially comfortable. Fortunately he had access to professional socialization at the national level that occurred by his attending the national deans' conference. His connection with new deans in his own field and the ongoing relationship he had with a mentor at the national level probably did more for his learning to become a dean than participating on the Dean's Council.

The organization's role in socializing its deans follows that of a study of 24 deans conducted by Damico, Gmelch, Hopkins, and Mitchell (2003). The authors report that "socialization of academic leaders appears to be left to chance. While this may be a strategy in itself, institutions must realize the impact socialization techniques have on the dean's productivity and propensity toward longevity and departure from their institutions" (p. 10). Likewise, Wolverton, Wolverton, and Gmelch (1999) comment that although universities could do more to help deans in coping with the role conflict and ambiguity, they do little of that. "Universities are notoriously vague about what it is they expect deans to do…Rarely do they set agendas, even initial ones, for new deans; instead they let deans flounder around trying to determine in what direction their new charge should be headed (p. 101)

Political dynamics

The Saks and Ashforth (1997) model does not adequately capture the involvement of special interest groups of supporters and opponents that factored into this socialization process. In the first search, the group of supporters rallied on Ric's behalf to meet with the university's Executive Vice President, Dr. Baird. Without such an intervention, it is likely that one of the two finalists named in that search might have been appointed to become dean. The supporters were able to mobilize quickly and effectively on behalf of having a different candidate as the school's dean. They also raised issue with the minimum qualification of five years experience to enable Ric to be considered in the second search. The active engagement of the supporters kept Ric's candidacy at the forefront throughout the two search processes.

There was much resistance that mounted against Ric's candidacy over the five years. As he mentioned several times in the course of his time at the school, he had his enemies as well as his supporters. Several individuals were vocal in their opposition to his becoming dean. With seniority and years of experience, they continued to persist in raising issue about his qualifications, commitment to the school, poor decisions, and so on. After the second search and the provost's decision to appoint Ric, the opposition brought their complaints to the Board of Trustees. This halted the process for several months while the university could determine if the search was indeed flawed. When the university's legal counsel overruled the opposition, the Trustees could formally confirm Ric's appointment.

The political dynamics of the selection process needs to be factored into understanding how one becomes a dean. Without the involvement of supporters, Ric's candidacy probably would not have been advanced. Likewise, without the opposition mounted against his appointment, his deanship would not have been delayed.

Implications for the Academic Dean and the University

Although unique, Ric's experience of becoming dean illustrates how one can be selected and socialized into the position of academic leader. From the start, he demonstrated independent thinking and acted to meet the challenges of re-accreditation, relocation, and staffing. Beyond that, he began building coalitions with partners within the institution, among community members, and beyond the state and region to take prospects abroad. Because the university was in upheaval during his appointment and service as interim, the socialization that he received was more ad hoc than planned and he did not feel especially connected with the other deans on the campus. However, he did take full responsibility to develop his own leadership style and enacted what he deemed to be best for the school. He also worked collaboratively with those who supported that style and vision, both within the school and outside in the community at large.

Ric's case exemplifies that of a self-starter who does not need to wait for the university to accommodate or support him. In reflecting upon his deanship, Ric suggested being a minority made him into a self-starter. Where someone from the majority might demand that the system meet his needs, Ricardo, as a Hispanic American, sought other avenues. For example, in working with the administration, he said, "I don't put a lot of stock in the (president's) advocacy for our school. I make connections outside so that the president will come to the table." In other words, you do not wait for others to provide for you; rather you learn ways to work the system. Ric's initiative relates to similar factors for women and minorities (Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002).

Moreover, with the university's ad hoc socialization in his deanship, Ricardo demonstrates less allegiance to the organization as a whole. This fits with Weick's (1976) notion of loosely coupled units like schools and colleges within universities that have more loyalty to their own individual missions than to that of the university organization. As a result, the units are more fragmented and less coordinated. Although deans are in part

middle-level management, they can act more independently as was demonstrated in this case.

Ric's socialization into the deanship was influenced by external factors, notably the peer network that he developed with the help of his mentor. The national dean's conference provided a place to meet with peers and discuss issues and concerns that he experienced in his own school. This case suggests that external associations might provide valuable professional socialization opportunities for academic leadership. In Ric's case, attending the new deans' session was particularly useful because of the information and networking available.

The political dynamics of this case should remind readers that universities, particularly public institutions as this university exemplifies, are political by nature with conflicting interest groups jockeying for power and control. The supporters and the opponents of Ric's candidacy played critical roles in his becoming dean. It is certain that he would not have been advanced without the advocacy, nor would he have been delayed without the opposition. The organization was also in tremendous flux, enabling different decision-makers to be solicited and influenced. Thus politics among the key players and groups should be considered in any process of socialization.

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