

Thoughts from a 4-semester Dean: Working with Staff, Alumni, Donors, and other Critical Stakeholders

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Organizing Theme

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

Michael Watkins, Harvard Business School
Press, 2003

Promote yourself

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

Secure Early Wins

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

Secure Early Wins: University Administration

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

Secure Early Wins: Donors

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

Build your Team

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

Build Your Team: Staff

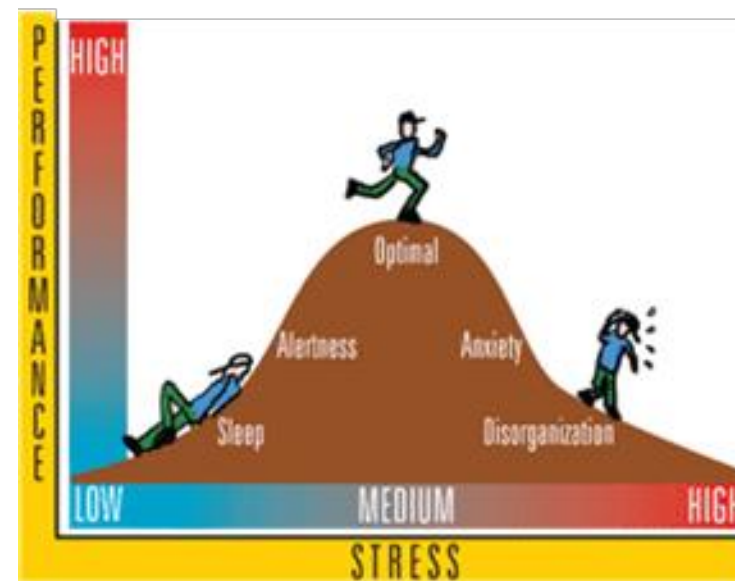
- May be one of the hardest things for us as faculty transitioning to management
- Getting a new supervisor is one of the top 5 stressors in people's lives
- Listen to your staff's concerns
- It can take time to get to a good relationship
- Accept them for the talents they have and look elsewhere to fill in expertise gaps
- Make staff changes when needed – may involve changing responsibilities to better exploit their talents.
- Have bi-weekly meetings with all Dean's office staff together

Create Coalitions

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

Keeping your Balance

Stress Performance Connection



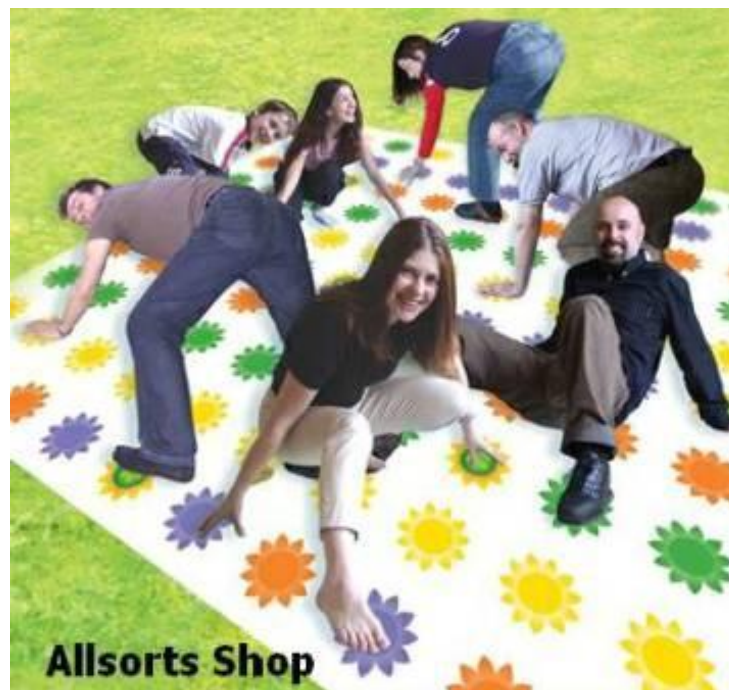
Yerkes-Dodson Human Performance Curve

secretgeek.net

Keeping Your Balance: Building Your Support Systems

- Family and partners – prepare them for the transition
- Build your Advice-and-Counsel Network
 - Learn how to “talk out” your upcoming conversations with your trusted advisors
- Build internal (university and college) support systems as well

Ending Comments



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