

## GFA New Members Toolkit

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## GFA New Members Toolkit

### Principles of academic life - appointment, promotion, tenure

Most faculty affairs offices oversee the activities of appointment, promotion and tenure. It is a primary duty of the new faculty affairs dean to learn the content, principles and processes outlined in departmental, school and university documents that pertain to these activities. The faculty dean should be the most informed individual in the school about the documentation required. Your expertise will soon be seen as a valuable resource to faculty, chairs and the dean.

With respect to appointment, the interface of the Office of Faculty Affairs and that of hospital credentialing and licensure-seeking offices should be clearly understood. When faculty appointment occurs with respect to when credentialing and licensure is achieved is a critical timing issue and each institution handles this differently. Appointments at advanced rank (associate and full professor) and immediate tenure typically require a promotion committee review and delays can be a point of contention in recruiting a faculty member and a point of disturbance for chairs anxious to recruit. Processes should be streamlined and not impede recruitment.

Most medical schools have promotional tracks and being aware of the differences between the duties and expectations of faculty on different tracks and the different standards for each track is essential. The definition of what activities “count” and which ones don’t is also important. This is especially true when it comes to the institutional definition of scholarship. Be clear on what your institution finds acceptable as the coin for promotion and what it does not.

Promotion and tenure policies are written, however, attitudes are not. In order to advise faculty on their probability for success, or what remains to be achieved prior to promotional review, the faculty affairs dean should try to learn the institutional attitudes as they relate to promotion and tenure. The easiest way to do that is to sit ad hoc on promotion and tenure committee deliberations. Talking to chairs and the dean and observing trends of success and failure can also give insight into attitudes. The best faculty affairs deans will be able to “get in the heads” of the evaluators and help mentor and advise faculty.

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### Human Resources basics

Faculty Affairs deans may be charged with responsibilities that include aspects of faculty hiring, supervision, retention, discipline and separations, including retirement. These duties include procedures governed by law and by institutional policies and procedures for all employees and those that are specific to faculty personnel. Usually a Human Resources officer is designated with oversight responsibilities for “personnel” issues in four overarching categories: **Staff Acquisition**, including interviews, reference checking, international visa issues; new employee orientation; **Staff Support**, including benefits and compensation administration, performance appraisal, employee assistance programs, labor relations (if unionized), and maintaining personnel records; **Staff Retention**, including education and training programs, award and recognition programs, and; **Staff Separation**, including exit interviews, retirement counseling and separations among other things.

Although it is difficult to generalize across all medical schools you can anticipate that when faculty personnel are involved and particularly medical faculty who may also have credentialing issues as participants in your college practice group, the HR officer's typical duties may be managed in collaboration with others or certain aspects delegated in whole or in part. It will be helpful to know what functions your institutional HR Office does and does not perform related to faculty members. In addition, while departmental business managers or administrators may handle hiring support staff for faculty members, faculty may or may not have extensive experience with staff supervision and questions may arise. In those instances you may be a resource when faculty members have personnel related questions or concerns. To familiarize you with HR issues the following suggestions are offered:

- Meet your Human Resources (HR) colleague before there is a crisis. You can count on it that there will be one sooner or later.
- Documentation always matters. Keep brief factual notes for your file on personnel related discussions with faculty or staff.
- Talk with your HR officer about the “how to” of using positive discipline and appropriate documentation for personnel matters.
- Learn about your institution's Employee Assistance Program and if there are specific supports for faculty versus staff (e.g., Faculty Assistance Program) or if faculty assistance is provided through a contractual or community referral arrangement.
- Check in with HR to understand the basic federal and state laws that affect personnel matters at your school.
- HR officers and Legal Counsel often work closely. Never hesitate to call with your questions. An ounce of prevention or early intervention may change the course of a potential lawsuit.
- Remember that you may be the first point of contact for faculty and academic administrators who have limited knowledge of personnel law. Consider keeping a file with a few key reference materials and/or working with your HR officer on a list of frequently asked questions and answers.
- When in doubt brief your HR officer on the personnel situation and ask, “What questions should I be asking you?”

Keep in mind that your Associate Dean for Administration or Business Affairs may be an excellent inter-

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### *Human Resources basics—continued*

nal resource person for additional perspective about key faculty personnel issues. As a new associate dean don't hesitate to consult your dean's office colleagues for their perspectives about on-going or emerging faculty personnel issues.

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### Where to find assistance

One of the interesting features of an Office for Faculty Affairs is that it is often the clearing house or triage point for a wide variety of problems or issues; while it is often easy to define what falls squarely under the purview of the office, sometimes it is not and sometimes it is obvious that it needs to be handled either solely by or in conjunction with another campus entity. This short treatise is focused on providing some guidance to Associate Deans for Faculty Affairs on “referral patterns”. It is not meant to be inclusive, but rather a bit provocative, as over time important relationships will develop that will determine how you work with your peers to solve problems, develop policies, and improve operations. Remember that one of the most important tasks that should be mastered for a new Associate Dean is an understanding of institutional policies and regulations, such as the University By-laws, Permanent Memoranda, Faculty Handbook, etc. The mini-guide that follows must always be set into the context of institutional governing authority.

#### Human Resource Management

The following situations or concerns would lead an Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs to consult with or refer a matter to Human Resource Management:

- Reporting on suspicion of discrimination of any type or harassment
- Investigation of suspected discrimination or harassment
- Reporting to EEOC, etc
- Finessing difficult faculty situations (negotiating retirement, resignation, or phased retirement)
- Providing faculty employment information to assist departments in determining options (extend employment/renew contract, notice of non-reappointment, timing for advancement review, retirement/separation planning)
- Managing complex leave situations (military deployments, prolonged illnesses, FMLA)
- Assistance in developing policies for complex leave situations (leave reporting, compensation – base vs. base and supplement regardless of source, such as clinical supplement, revenue from endowed chair or professorship)
- Assistance in defining qualifications for faculty positions
- Support for faculty recruiting, especially for leadership positions

If possible, the Office for Faculty Affairs (Associate Dean and support staff) should have access directly to the personnel information system for “quick checks” on basic faculty information and to allow for internal reporting on compensation, leave, and basic employee data.

#### Legal Counsel

As a preface, it might be useful to advise a new Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs that your institution might have a specific policy that limits access to in-house and/or external counsel; The school or campus might have a “filtering process” in place that validates the need for a legal referral and/or seeks additional information before a legal referral is made. (In our case, for the School of Medicine, the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs is the filter and department heads and faculty cannot “go directly” to

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### *Where to find assistance—continued*

counsel.) Matters referred to counsel for advice/recommendations include:

- Significant grievances/appeals not resolved by informal mediation
- Notices pertinent to Medical Review Panels or malpractice suits
- Complex inter-institutional agreements – affiliation agreements, memoranda of understanding with other universities, public and private entities and agencies, such as Conrad 30 programs, research institutes, etc.
- Assessment of potential conflicts of interests or institutional risk
- Interpretation of university policy or statute or law pertinent to a faculty circumstance
- Assistance with developing new university or campus policies or procedures
- Guidance with revision of Faculty Handbook

### **Campus or Employee Assistance Programs and Physician Health Programs**

Suffice it to say that it probably good practice to know whenever a faculty member is referred for the employee assistance program or reported to the state physician health program. Generally the department head or section head will initiate the request for the referral, but the Dean's Office should never be caught unaware of the general circumstances. Moreover, the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs (or other relevant Dean's Office representative) should be one of the individuals for whom the faculty member allows "release of information" or disclosure by the employee assistance program. In most instances, the campus or employee assistance program will handle the "employment contract" for the affected faculty member and any required reporting to the state physician health program. Individual states may vary, but the physician health program may manage reporting to the licensing board

### **State Licensing Board**

The Office for Faculty Affairs may be the school or college liaison with the state licensing board. When that is the case, you can expect to deal with the following issues:

- Validation of full time faculty status
- Validation of academic rank
- Validation of English language skills
- Clarification of visa status and institutional sponsorship
- Substantiation of institutional need for faculty candidate
- Licensing board disciplinary actions

### **Relating to the person you report to\***

*\*in this example: the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs*

Perhaps the best advice that can be provided in dealing with this near-immediate superior is that surprise is never good. As this individual oversees faculty issues across all schools and colleges on campus, any significant matter that cannot be swiftly resolved probably needs to be mentioned at least in passing to the Vice Chancellor. Often, because of the broader purview of the Vice Chancellor there is

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### *Where to find assistance—continued*

more advantage to gain than just unilateral information sharing; parallel or concomitant concerns related to the research office (IRB, IACUCC, animal care, grants management, etc), fiscal irregularity or problems with fiscal reporting, information technology, technology transfer, etc can all come to light. Regular meetings with the Vice Chancellor (*or the person you report to who has an eye on the bigger picture*) at the beginning of an Associate Dean's tenure can be invaluable in transitioning into your new role.

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### Conflict resolution/management skills

All Faculty Affairs Deans must be able to resolve conflict skillfully and effectively. Academic medical centers are among the most complex organizational cultures in the world and their highly competitive environments can breed tensions, jealousies, and insecurity among their talented staff and faculty. Add to this the communication difficulties resulting from well-defended silos, competition for resources, uncertain federal funding, and a general lack of training in emotional intelligence, management and leadership skills, and we have the perfect setting for conflict. Unresolved conflict can have many negative consequences including poor morale, career dissatisfaction, decreased productivity, high levels of stress, and ultimately, burnout.

There is a natural human tendency to avoid conflict; however, unmanaged conflict can spread in the workplace and cause disruption among entire teams or departments<sup>1</sup> (Rao et al., 2008). Faculty Affairs Deans must understand the sources of conflict and be unafraid to work on resolving them. Because most new leaders do not come to their positions fully prepared to deal with difficult conflict situations, they must learn and practice the skills of conflict resolution.

There are formal and informal resources to call upon including:

- Human Resources specialists offer advice and assistance (be forewarned that faculty and staff see HR as partial to management although they can provide valuable help and in some instances, must be involved in resolving conflict).
- Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and Faculty Assistance Programs (FAP) help with conflict arising from personal and family stress or psychological concerns arising from workplace tensions.
- Management consultants work with leaders and their teams to enhance interpersonal relationships, improve communication and team dynamics. These interventions can go a long way to clearing up old communication issues that hinder the team.
- Faculty management and leadership development programs provide the opportunity to learn skills for conflict resolution and allow new leaders to join a community of “leader learners.”
- The Ombuds Office is a new service offered in some academic medical centers. The Ombuds Office is designed to assist in all stages of problem solving and conflict. It is a confidential, neutral, independent, and “off the record” office where a faculty member can talk without worrying about legal repercussions. Faculty leaders can seek expert assistance in conflict resolution from experienced ombuds staff.
- Executive coaches are increasingly common in helping new leaders speed up the process of identifying and acquiring much needed interpersonal skills, including conflict resolution. Many of us in the AAMC Group on Faculty Affairs know of these experts and would be able to recommend coaches.

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### Recruitment strategies or how to work with search committees and search firms

As a Faculty Affairs Dean you will be involved in recruiting faculty to senior leadership positions in your institution. You may be expected to shepherd the search process, providing advice and guidance to the Chair of the search committee and its members. Here are some things that you may be called upon or may consider doing to help your school's searches go smoothly.

- Make recommendations to the Dean about the composition of the search committee ensuring broad representation and diversity
- Help the Dean develop her/his charge to the committee including:
  - an accurate description of the job responsibilities and the ideal candidate for the position
  - expectations of the committee members
  - instructions related to the number and composition (e.g. women, minorities) of finalist candidates and whether the list should be in rank order
  - a statement of the absolute need for confidentiality
  - detailed instructions for garnering candidates (e.g. phone calls to selected key leaders in the field, sending letters to societies, deans, etc.)
  - timetable for the search
- Create a standardized process for search committees given the variable amount of experience with searches that the committee chair or members may have.
- Develop standardized template letters for successful and unsuccessful candidates at various stages of the application and recruitment process.
- Craft an evaluation form that can be appropriately adapted for different searches.
- Work with an experienced administrative support person who has staffed search committees in your institution and have him/her create a standardized process for staff support.

Using a search firm is not critical to the success of a search but may add credibility to the search, showing the institution and the outside world that the process will be free and open to all appropriate candidates. Search firms may also increase the diversity of the candidate pool. The decision to use a search firm may include factors such as resources available for the search, anticipated difficulty of the search, and relative importance of the search to the institution. Part of your role when using a search firm is to help ensure that the committee remains "front and center," is continually engaged and not preempted by the firm consultant.

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### Managing troubled faculty

Faculty Affairs Deans are sometimes challenged with situations involving the health and well-being of individual faculty members. Typically, these individuals are identified as *troubled* faculty, but some may be identified as *impaired* faculty members. The literature on physician impairment is robust. Information about impaired faculty members (physicians, scientists, and others) is less available, but there is a wealth of literature related to dealing with troubles or impaired employees in the workplace. In fact, an industry has been built to address these issues. Many universities have Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) or other programs designed to help faculty members with substance abuse or other personal problems. EAPs and other resources can be very helpful to deans seeking assistance for troubled or impaired faculty members. Some of the more common problems you may encounter include:

- Substance abuse
- Neuro-degenerative illness
- Major injury or illness
- Family crisis
- Personality disorder

Dealing with the troubled or impaired faculty member requires skill. If you have seen one troubled / impaired faculty member, you have seen one troubled / impaired faculty member. As every case presents its own set of idiosyncrasies and nuances, it is likely you will want to consult with others who have experience in this field. Having a professional background in mental health and experience working in a university-based EAP, I am happy to serve as a resource to others. Feel free to call or email.

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### Managing *troubling* faculty

An equally daunting challenge faced by Faculty Affairs Deans relates to handling situations involving the health and well-being of the *organization* because of the troubling behavior of a faculty member. It is very possible the *troubling* faculty member is also *troubled* – and those issues should be addressed in the intervention process. However, protecting or improving the health and well-being of the organization may be contingent on reducing, managing or eliminating negative behavior on the part of a faculty member. The violent or potentially violent faculty member may come to mind. However, most of these are not violent. Some of these persons might be described as:

- Negative attitude/hypercritical
- The *prima donna*
- The under performer
- “Both feet planted firmly in the air”
- Needy/dependent
- Identifies self as a “victim”
- Abrasive/disruptive

Dealing with the *troubling* member requires skill. Every organization has its own set of idiosyncrasies and nuances. You may want to consult with others who have experience in this field. Psychologists, social workers, organizational development professionals and others on your campus may be available to assist you. Again, I have encountered many of these persons in my professional career and I am happy to serve as a resource to others. Please feel free to phone or email me.

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### Navigating University administration

Trying to chart your path through university administration? Think about the organizational chart as a roadmap. The names and titles on the chart can serve as directional and milestone markers for you by helping route questions to the right office and serving as a guide for where authority rests in the decision making process. Like any good road map when you look at the organizational chart for your college/university keep in mind that there are probably different routes to a given destination and the starting point may not always be the same. *However, the legal benefit of an administrative infrastructure is that decisions should be consistent when the conditions are consistent* (see resources for working with your University Legal Counsel).

Universities often use hierarchical organization and decision management structures. Routes for information gathering and dissemination, problem-solving, policy development and implementation may include: **administrative/business channels**; **academic channels** and the “roads less travelled” that can include key, but not day-to-day functions such as **governance and academic committees**. Each titled administrator will have specific duties, responsibilities and authority delegated to him or her through the most senior or “chief executive” officer of the institution. Standing and *ad hoc* governance bodies and committees should also have a specific charge, duties and designated representation. Resources for learning about these roles include your institutional policies and procedures manual, staff handbook and faculty handbook. Some of these materials may be available on-line.

In a University system the President or Chancellor is typically the most senior academic and administrative officer with his or her authority delegated by a **Board of Trustees or Regents**. The President/Chancellor typically delegates all other responsibilities to executive officers. Although all of the following officers may not be represented at your institution, typical executive officer titles at an academic institution may include:

- President
- Provost
- Senior or Executive Vice President
- Secretary of the Board (or University)
- Vice (President or Provost) for
  - Administration
  - Academic Affairs
  - Community Affairs
  - Development
- Facilities
- Government
- Health Affairs
- Information Technology
- Public Affairs
- Research
- Student Affairs
- General Counsel
- College Dean

Various staff offices report the University's executive officers. Staff offices typically are involved in policy implementation and oversight while executive officers are involved with policy development and review. Institutional offices typically include: Finance and Accounting, Information Technology (or Computing Services), External or Alumni Relations, Equal Opportunity Officer, Facilities Management, Parking, Human Resources, Internal Auditing, and Student Services among others.

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### *Navigating University Administration—continued*

Institutional committees may be involved in proposing new policies, monitoring policy implementation, recommending how policy should be applied in specific situations (for example by conducting the admissions process, or grievance hearings, or reviewing research proposals for compliance issues and recommending a course of action) and/or commenting on proposed policy as a representative body (of faculty, staff or students, for example). Committees vary from one university to another but typical committees include: Admissions, Awards, Animal Care and Use, Curriculum, Human Subjects Review Board, Promotion and Tenure, Radiation, Biological and Chemical Safety, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate.

University administrators must at times walk a difficult path because their responsibilities include mediating between the academic, business and human needs and interests of the higher education organization. Understanding what routes are available to solve problems you encounter as a faculty affairs dean can help you navigate the roads ahead by conferring with appropriate University administrators.

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## GFA New Members Toolkit

### Strategy and planning for the future

Strategy means, in its simplest definition, the means to accomplish ends. Therefore, the discussion of strategy will be approached in terms of goals and the goals of an office of faculty affairs depend on place in time.

#### **Establishing an office of faculty affairs**

The simplest statement of the goal of a new faculty affairs office and the usual primary rationale for initiating a new office is to facilitate faculty development, including both skill acquisition and promotion to higher rank and tenure as appropriate. Strategy for establishing an office includes the following items, perhaps among others, in some similar order.

- Interview and consult with administrators of the school and academic health center to understand their goals for the office, the level of their understanding of faculty needs and their notions of faculty duties and roles. Much can be learned from these interviews to help one understand the situation at the institution.
- Unless recently done, send out a faculty satisfaction survey to assess faculty perceptions. This will provide complementary insights into the institution.
- Establish and use a faculty advisory committee for the office of faculty affairs. This may well be delayed until one has a better idea of what the situation is and who in the situation is both insightful and level-headed.
- Ask for time to report to the faculty governance body and to the administrative body of the school. This is enormously helpful for understanding the institution and how people interact. It also gives a face to the faculty affairs office.
- Use all these sources of information to develop new programs. A slow careful start is generally more effective and durable than a fast, diffuse start.

#### **Maintaining a faculty affairs office**

The goal of maintaining a faculty affairs office is to edit and enhance the services offered for faculty development. For instance, new categories may be needed in the track system for promotion as vital functions are recognized as a basis for promotion. Other programmatic improvements and enhancements will be needed as the institution and the office mature.

- Develop or adapt measures of effectiveness through assessment of success in the promotion/tenure process, annual faculty reviews, retention protocols, etc.
- Utilize exit interviews to identify areas of faculty stress or dissatisfaction. Use the exit interview as an opportunity to help the exiting faculty member leave with a good attitude toward the institution.
- Serve as an advocate for the faculty to the administration and with the faculty advisory committee as consultant on administrative initiatives.
- Foster faculty renewal particularly for mid-rank, mid-career faculty. Help faculty keep the flame of passion for the academic life burning brightly.
- Develop programs for faculty in transition from predominantly academic activities to administrative and teaching activities or retirement.

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### *Strategy and planning for the future—continued*

The following list contains perennial hot topics that will appear and reappear in the life of the faculty affairs office. The single most important strategy for all of these, but especially for the first four, is transparency. In all of these it is important to address each faculty member as an individual and to remember and teach that being fair is not always being just.

- Salary equity
- Gender equity
- Faculty diversity
- Promotion/tenure
- Faculty retention
- Mid-rank/mid-life transition
- Senior faculty transition

### **Planning for the future**

Planning for the future has two aspects, planning for the future work of the office and planning for the future of the office.

### **Planning for the future work of the office**

Planning for the future directions of the office depends greatly on what occurs within the medical school/academic health center. Change in leadership at the level of the center or the medical school will likely bring new tasks as priorities change with leadership. Often these changes in priorities are at least somewhat predictable based on what precipitates the change in leadership. An internal promotion to higher leadership role often allows prediction of new foci since, to at least some extent, the newly promoted individual is known. A recruit from the outside is less well known. Sometimes the results of an LCME or SACS accreditation site visit will adumbrate the need for new policies, records or procedures.

### **Planning for the future of the office**

Changes may also be made by the faculty affairs office itself on recognition of unaddressed needs of the faculty. The faculty governance body may also initiate studies that result in the need for new policies, etc. These movements can be recognized by keeping in touch with the faculty. Methodologies for keeping in touch with the faculty include having regular meetings with the advisory committee for the faculty affairs office (*vide supra*). Faculty opinion surveys can also be used but the periodicity of such a survey should consider other surveys requested, efficacy of the previous surveys and the “over-surveyed burn out” factor. Inviting faculty in small numbers to a coffee in the faculty affairs office or other venues for conversation is also a way to take the pulse of the faculty. Exit interviews also help understand faculty opinion and often suggest initiatives for the office.

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### *Strategy and planning for the future—continued*

#### **Succession planning**

It is the rare person who enthusiastically plans for the time when s/he will not be present. For institutions, however, this is vital and is a measure of institutional health and its confidence and satisfaction with what an office or group has done for the institution. The functions of and within a faculty affairs office are complex and varied, ranging from recordkeeping, to credentialing, to providing skill sets for faculty success, to managing the promotion and tenure process. Each of these functions has components of knowledge of the rules and local lore. Both aspects need to be preserved for effective succession.

The first task in succession planning is to know how the office works and why the office works. The answer to both questions lies in the people who comprise the office and their unique skill sets and personalities. While one cannot replicate personalities, one can seek to identify compatible personalities and adjust the work assignments appropriately. Moreover, it behooves everyone to bring in potential successors early, in order to assure a seamless transition. Most corporations provide support for this process knowing how markedly the lack of a seamless transition can disrupt and penalize the corporation. Most academic health centers are less able to underwrite the cost of succession planning but are no less aware of its importance. Faced with this reality, cross-training to the point of understanding each function and knowing where to look for the files is necessary in all who staff a faculty affairs office. This requires continual communication within the office which focuses on what each person does and on the goals and issues of the office. Effective communication is an absolute necessity for the function of the office as much as it is for succession planning.

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### Developing relationships with the Chairs and Dean

The faculty affairs dean walks a fine line between being a faculty advocate (mentor/advisor/guide) and a university official. In all encounters be clear on your role both in your own mind and to others. In most cases unless you hold the title “ombudsperson” at the end of the day you are primarily an administrator and it is your responsibility to secure the Institution’s well-being, even if faculty needs are not met. Fortunately, these two goals are usually mutual. You should be clear about your role and responsibilities when you advise faculty. A good example is helping faculty with promotion and tenure advice, but holding them to rigorous promotion and tenure standards in the end.

In order to be successful in your role as dean of faculty, a strong relationship with the chairs and the dean is a must. You will want to be able to call on the help of both chairs and the dean, should you need it. This is especially true when you are playing the role of faculty advocate. The chairs must feel secure in their belief that one of your primary roles is to help them (of course unless they are doing something illegal or unethical). Foster those relationships by identifying something that each chair would find valuable and helping them achieve it. Be sure that Chairs have ready access to you and your office and come to see your unit as a resource they can call on when they need help. Consciously build these relationships one at a time.

Similarly, you report to the Dean. An optimally functioning faculty affairs office is one that the Dean should learn to depend on. Make sure that you provide an early heads up in areas that will require the Dean’s involvement such as recommendations for failed promotion/tenure reviews. Provide a detailed explanation of the issues – both sides –so that the Dean can judge for her/himself. You are the expert and your job is to inform and serve as a trusted and reliable resource.

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### Developing trust with faculty

A leader's ability to build trust with faculty and staff is critical to his or her success. Trust is not something that happens overnight. It has to be earned. Building trust requires developing an environment of openness and candor where individuals feel listened to and respected, and where they know they will be treated fairly and equitably.

Trust takes time to develop in a group. It requires consistent work on the part of the leader to provide opportunities for faculty and staff to openly share ideas, discuss differences of opinion in a constructive manner, freely admit their mistakes, ask for help when needed, get input and feedback from team members, and work together on a shared vision and goals.

There are many "soft" skills involved in becoming a trusted leader. Getting to know faculty and staff personally and building those relationships is one of them. Acknowledging the importance of each individual is another one. What a leader wants to do is become a skillful team leader who can create a place of work where highly competitive people who are protective of their reputations respect each other's talent and competencies, and reveal their vulnerabilities without fear of exposure or derision. In sharing experiences over time, establishing sound ground rules for team interactions, providing fair and timely feedback, encouraging open and honest communication, resolving conflict quickly before damage is done, and celebrating achievements and successes, a leader lays the groundwork for a high trust environment in which individuals enjoy their work and each other.

The integrity, honesty, truthfulness, and fairness of a leader are quickly assessed by all who report to or work with that individual. Trust is fundamental to your success.

Your colleagues in the AAMC Group on Faculty Affairs are good sources of advice and counsel on trust. Feel free to talk to me or others in the GFA.

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## GFA New Members Toolkit

### Understanding your role: Faculty Advocate or University Administrator

It is important that an Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs understands the scope and duties of the position. Often this begins with a review of the “Position Description” and the Table of Organization for the school or college; in some instances the scope of responsibilities for the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs is quite limited and in others it is very broad. Regardless, as an Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, most of us ultimately realize that we serve to represent the best interests of the university. To that end, some may view us as purely “university administrators”, or rather pejoratively as “THE ADMINISTRATION”. There are perhaps more nuanced perspectives to take on the matter.

In serving the best interests of the university, we also report to the Dean; we serve as an advisor to and an implementer for the Dean. Just as in other working and reporting situations, this reporting relationship can put us in conflict with our immediate supervisor, our boss, the Dean. (Just remember not everything is an emergency and not every directive needs to be implemented immediately.) Some process is dictated by strict timelines (grievance, etc) and, as a consequence, reconsideration may not be logistically feasible; those are the exceptional situations rather than the usual. There usually is time to work through disagreements on administrative directives.

In serving the best interests of the university, we also represent and advocate for the faculty. It is important that we provide access for the faculty, as we are often the messenger to the Dean or to the Vice Chancellor or Chancellor. But the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs in most medical schools or colleges is not an Ombudsman. That is a very distinct role from a person who oversees recruitment, appointment, advancement, career development, professional evaluation, department review, etc.

Specific tips that might be helpful:

- Know the content of the Position Description
- Understand the Table of Organization
- Review your duties with the Dean
- Undertake annual review yourself
- Modify the Position Description over time, if needed

While serving as Associate Dean for Faculty you should serve the best interests of the university and support the academic traditions of your school or college. In doing so, you will not only be an effective advisor and aid to the Dean (an “administrator” if you will), but you will also serve as a faculty advocate.

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## GFA New Members Toolkit

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