

To: Faculty Senate Colleagues and Campus Community  
From: Kimberly Jensen, Professor of History  
Date: October 11, 2016  
Re: Process for Selection of Deans

Across the past several weeks I've encountered a number of conversations on campus about Western's next steps in the search for a new Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Adele Schepige asked me if I would be willing to facilitate a discussion about this at faculty senate as a new senator this year. I welcome the chance for us to have discussions about this important topic and am happy to facilitate.

Over the course of these discussions several possible models have emerged for the upcoming search for a new LAS Dean: having a traditional national search; implementing a search from within our campus for the position; creating a new structure in which the Dean position would rotate from among faculty members who would return to their departments after a term of service; and restructuring the duties of the college Dean so that faculty administrators would rotate in to a shared governance panel for the tasks of administering the college. I'm sure there are other models that you may have discussed in other conversations. In my own institutional work I have experienced three of these models.

When Adele asked me to facilitate this discussion several days ago I did a brief search for information about conversations and practices outside of our campus and share these here as possible discussion starters. There are pros and cons for what commentators call "professional" or "managerial" administrators versus "citizen" or faculty administrators, and important discussions of shared governance and faculty morale and investment and institutional memory. I hope these will be of use as we think about the specifics of our campus and how we want to move forward in these vital next steps.

"Colleges and universities miss important opportunities to capitalize on institutional memory and dense campus networks when they locate essential skills and responsibilities in just a few individuals whose ties to the institution are relatively thin. Many deans don't last more than about three years. By privileging and expanding managerial administrator hires, we miss the opportunity to distribute academic leadership skills across highly educated, deeply analytical employees with robust institutional ties and a finger on the pulse of university life. Leadership skills are transferrable, making investments in faculty-administrators contributions to the quality of faculty service across the entire institution."

--Michael J. Cripps, "The Faculty Administrator," *Inside Higher Education*, May 12, 2014, <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2014/05/12/essay-calls-new-model-job-faculty-member-administrator>

"I am increasingly convinced that consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of internal promotions ["citizen-administrators"] and external searches is a must for every leadership transition."

David J. Evans, “Professional Administrators,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 14, 2011, <http://www.chronicle.com/blogs/onhiring/professional-administrators/29211> and Evans, “Citizen-Administrators,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 8, 2011, <http://www.chronicle.com/blogs/onhiring/citizen-administrators/29180>

## Academic Deans

Evergreen’s academic structure is unique and especially designed to model the college values in collaboration and shared governance. We are all members of the faculty and we rotate into the deans positions from teaching for fixed three or four year terms. Instead of representing academic divisions, we are each responsible for specific administrative functions within our academics as a whole and we work as a team to support faculty and students.

As deans, we evaluate all 250 faculty members. We review student contracts and work with other offices in many ways to support teaching and learning at the college. We work closely with the Provost and Academic Vice President to set academic policy and work through daily concerns.

It is a privilege to serve as deans of Evergreen—a service we have all taken on because we believe so firmly in the values of the college. We welcome your questions and comments—in person or by email.



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Academic Deans at Evergreen State, <http://evergreen.edu/deans/home.htm>

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Jensen