

physical degradation in Sweden than in Sudan: should ethics (and not only politics) establish what is permissible to query in the former but impermissible in the latter? Is there some threshold of material well-being that human beings must achieve before they may be targeted as "respondents" or "informants"? Does a society's standard of living determine the kind of research that may legitimately be conducted in it?

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Ultimately, this is not just a "social science in the Third World" issue. For if the answer to the above questions is affirmative, then one may wonder more generally just how much leeway should be given the second component of the phrase "political science." It also opens the Pandora's Box of situational ethics for research-active political scientists. This is not a topic with which the profession is keen to deal: the APSA is far from drafting a Code of Conduct for its member researchers. Yet even if it cannot be addressed on an organizational level, the uncomfortable dilemma of professional and moral responsibility is one that political scientists may be asked to address on a personal plane. Even if the dilemma is starkest for those working in and "on" the Third World, it may also apply, shorn of their nuances and subtleties, to colleagues concentrating on the Second and First Worlds.

About the Author

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Notes

1. John Bendix, "Reflections on Doing Dissertation Research Abroad." *PS* 21 (Summer, 1988).
2. William F. S. Miles. "Self-identity, Ethnic Affinity and National Consciousness: An Example from Rural Hausaland." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 9 (1986).

Searching for Deans: A Political Perspective

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In the past 14 years I have experienced the various pains and pleasures of working with 6 Presidents, 9 Deans and 6 Chairmen; some of them were acting, others gave every impression of permanence, but all were in some form of passage—a common state in academic politics. From this experience in observing administrative turnover, together with the knowledge of political science which I profess, I have developed some guidelines about the political pitfalls involved in the search process which account for the most common errors made by faculty members involved in such searches. Although I cast the problem in the form of searching for a new college dean, I expect that this political perspective has a more general application to academic politics.

The politics of searching has five levels, with faculty involvement primarily in the first four: definition, structural organization of the search, timing of the search, evaluation, and negotiation. Each stage has its own set of common political malfunction.

Definition. Defining the job to be filled is not as easy as turning to the university's

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job description for deans. It is likely that faculty and administrators see the job differently. Whoever holds such a position soon discovers that the tasks of representing the faculty of the college to university administrators and carrying out the responsibilities as part of the administrative team present a contradiction which can never be completely resolved in practice. Any search committee unaware of the inherent conflict in the job is likely to search for and find candidates who will never bridge the gap between faculty and administration. Putting candidates on the short list who cannot live in both worlds is a likely source of conflict between the faculty and the president who makes the final hiring decision.

Nonetheless, it is not uncommon for top administrators (and not only university presidents) to want to treat principal line officers as staff.

Another area of conflict with the president comes in the definition of the job as line or staff. All administrators I have ever met seem to be aware that deans should be line officers. And, of course, all speak with pride of their practice of delegating responsibility. Nonetheless, it is not uncommon for top administrators (and not only university presidents) to want to treat principal line officers as staff. The committee must consider the actual circumstances the new dean will face. How much authority will this dean have to act independently? To make decisions without prior clearance in each case from the top? Will the other top administrators accept a new dean who will move independently in new directions? Or who will push for changes in policies? Or who will press the cause of the college within the university and outside the walls? If the search committee fails to understand the type of dean that the ad-

ministration expects, the committee will only produce disharmony. A sense of the way other actors perceive the role of the dean, however, gives the committee some possibility of turning up a candidate who can work within the expectations of both groups.

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Finally, the search committee has to decide what it expects in the way of background and previous experience. What does a dean need to know? What skills should have been mastered? Scholarship? Scientific, humanistic or artistic methods? Should the candidate be well-known in the community (local, academic, religious, national, or some other)? Is proven fundraising ability important? Or is detailed knowledge of this particular college essential (thus limiting the search effectively to in-house candidates)? Various aspects of history and circumstance make each search unique. The committee needs to take into account that a college just emerging from a traumatic time may need to hire a conciliator while another college anticipating a time of change (or a time of troubles) will require a more dynamic dean. A college with a young faculty may want a dean to be a leader or a role model; a college with a more mature faculty might prefer a dean who quietly handles the paperwork. There are likely to be differences of opinion on these questions but the more fundamental problem is that consideration of such specific points of background and ability can overshadow the most important point—that deans are administrators and administrative ability is separate from many of the specific talents being administered. A talented artist or scholar, a skilled professional in any field is not necessarily able to make the transition

to administration. Skilled deans, on the other hand, do not necessarily need the skills or even detailed knowledge of the specifics of each profession in the college. The skill they need is skill in administration and the ability to encourage others to do their best work with the support (and not the interference) of administrators.

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Nonetheless, some members of the search committee may insist upon consideration only of candidates who are knowledgeable about specific professions. This can produce factionalism within the committee which interferes with its operation. But, nonetheless, the committee and its work can be structured to lessen the impact of such factionalism.

Structural Problems. Search committees are usually de facto creations which are given specific charges by the administrator to whom the committee reports. These charges give the committee a particular structure. The selection of members, which may be by appointment or by election from specific constituencies, also affects the structure. Nonetheless, search committees usually have some leeway in determining their modes of operation and the manner of conducting their business; if the committee recognizes the structural problems which can limit its success, there are usually ways available within the limits of the committee's charge to compensate for them.

I have observed three principal structural problems: factions within the committee; conflict between committee and administrative agendas; and management of input from non-committee members. Factions on the committee can make the work very bitter for everyone involved.

Unless some faction is isolated and ignored (often a sign of deep-rooted social problem in the university structure as a whole), such factional conflict is frequently resolved through compromise. Despite the general American preference for this method of conflict-resolution, compromises in dean selection may produce only candidates who are less than optimum by everyone's standards. A more successful way of handling factions which simply cannot agree on what they are looking for is to allow each faction to generate its own list of the best candidates. When credentials are researched and interviews are conducted by telephone or in person, candidates who at first looked very good often fade in the eyes even of their most ardent supporters. And, committee members who were initially reluctant to consider some candidates, because they did not fit into their original selection criteria, may find that a candidate selected by another faction is, in person, a better choice than the paper credentials indicated. The factional conflict may in fact resolve itself if the confrontation between groups is put off until the discussion can be about persons rather than be abstract or over paper images of candidates.

As more people outside of the committee become involved in the search process the cost of failure increases.

The conflict over agendas can be more serious. Is the committee actually being used to find a dean, or a small number of acceptable candidates, or is the committee being used to drag out a search process to entrench an acting dean who is in fact the administrative choice from the beginning? The different definitions of the job that may be held by faculty and administrators can mean that candidates highly qualified to one side may be unacceptable to the other. A committee is likely never

to fill the job if it recommends candidates who do not fit the president's definition. The committee might try to force the president to pick its favored candidate by not recommending other good choices but such a strategy is more likely to fail than to succeed.

If the university is serious about getting the best possible pool of applicants, nothing is gained by artificial closing dates.

The work of the committee will inevitably attract the attention of constituency groups within the university who are not represented on the committee; undoubtedly there will be some individual faculty members who will expect to have an opportunity to influence the selection. As more people outside of the committee become involved in the search process the cost of failure increases. The committee, if working only with the administration, has a range of options which could stretch out the process, transform an acting dean into a permanent one, restructure the administration to eliminate the position, or evade the whole problem of hiring in a variety of other ways. This becomes more difficult as the process becomes public and both administrators and committee members have a personal stake in the success of the search. In a public mode, then, it is more likely that a decision will be forced out and a candidate hired who was never really thought to be a good choice—but this was the only way available to avoid complete failure. Since keeping such a matter as a dean search secret or private is rarely possible, the most successful way to avoid the catastrophe of a bad choice is to structure the process from the very beginning to keep the search open until a good candidate is found. The timing of the search

process, then, presents a range of political options to the committee as well as presenting another set of problems.

Timing. When should the committee begin its work? How fast should it move? And when should it wrap up its business? A slow-moving committee can serve the interest of those who wish to make permanent the temporary arrangements by which the college is being administered. It can also give a preference to the in-house candidate who will likely still be available whenever the committee finishes, unlike the off-campus candidates who may well become tired of waiting or may accept another position during the interim. A good search begins quickly and moves with dispatch. Any delay reduces the pool of candidates and entrenches the temporary status quo. Delay can also increase the frustration level within the committee and in the college and university; this often makes agreement on an acceptable choice even more difficult.

A search committee keeps alive its opportunity to control, or at least influence, the selection of the dean only so long as the committee has not closed off its own ability to act promptly.

Four mistakes in timing seem to be most common even though many of them are easily avoidable. First of all, committees often wait until the closing date for applications as indicated in the position announcement before they begin to review the files. A closing date for applications, in fact, only restricts the time at which an offer can be made: no one can ethically be

offered the position before the last day announced to receive applications. But the committee can begin to review files as they come in. A preliminary sorting of acceptable and unacceptable applicants can be made; credentials checked; references contacted; telephone interviews conducted. If all this is done for the most attractive candidates as soon as they are identified, the committee will be ready to act on campus interviews and recommendations to appoint relatively quickly after the closing date. This increases the chances of hiring the preferred choice both because there is less risk that the candidate will have received, negotiated and accepted other offers, and also because good administrators will be impressed with the efficiency with which the committee has done its work.

... a successful college dean must operate within the politics of persuasion.

A second error of timing is to hold the names of the best candidate until a full list can be completed. Committees are often asked to recommend three to five names. The first one or two choices may be much more easily found than the final names to complete the list and they are the ones most likely to have other offers. If this is the case, the committee simply reduces the university's chances of hiring the first choice by delaying until third, fourth or fifth choices are found. Of course, the president may refuse to accept names or to begin his own negotiations until the committee completes its work. But this choice ought to be the president's and, if the best candidate is lost because of delay, the president should take the responsibility for that, not the committee.

The third and fourth errors in timing both concern closing deadlines. There is no reason, beyond narrow administrative punctiliousness, for the committee not to keep applications coming in after the closing date, nor is there much reason to finally reject candidates from consideration as the list narrows. The position announce-

ment should indicate that applications are accepted until the position is filled although a specific date will be announced as the earliest at which an offer will be made. If the university is serious about getting the best possible pool of applicants, nothing is gained by artificial closing dates. Once the committee has begun its work, it should be able to handle new, incoming materials with little difficulty. In some cases the announcement is republished even after the closing date to encourage more applicants.

Some candidates are obviously unacceptable and, of course, it is only polite that they should be notified that they are no longer being considered as soon as this is clear. But with the reasonably large number of possible choices, nothing is gained by rejecting them too quickly. The best candidates may become unavailable (especially if there is delay in the committee or after the committee recommendations are made); further consideration may make them seem less attractive; they may be unacceptable to the president, or contract negotiations with them may break down. In these cases the committee must get back to work quickly. Having a pool of applicants to turn to is absolutely essential.

The contract the dean negotiates, usually not with the committee but with the president, can be hard and expensive to break.

This will make it possible for the committee to move promptly in making new choices and it will also prevent (or make less likely) an administrative decision to abolish the committee and to start the process again from scratch; such an act only benefits those whose interest from the first was in delaying the search process. A search committee keeps alive its opportunity to control, or at least influence, the selection of the dean only so long

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as the committee has not closed off its own ability to act promptly.

Evaluation and Negotiation. The final areas of political difficulty in the search process come in determining the standards for evaluating the applicants and in conducting the final negotiations. Evaluation is closely related to the problems of defining the job, as described above. What is needed in a dean is the ability to administer, but how can this be identified? The committee would want to know the candidate's administrative style: Will there be compatibility with existing persons and groups? Is this person likely to fall under the influence of a specific clique? Does the candidate have empathy with the persons, groups, issues and circumstances which characterize this college and with which a successful dean must relate? Like Richard Neustadt's President, a successful college dean must operate within the politics of persuasion. Evaluation of candidates, then, can proceed along Neustadt's lines for evaluating Presidents. Candidates with a record of performance should be evaluated on the basis of their legacy: what will they leave behind when they leave the position they now hold? What pattern can be discerned in how they have done their jobs? What were their commitments? It is probably both unfair and imprudent to draw conclusions on the basis of single successes or failures: we need to know how these are linked together. What are the applicants' professional reputations? That is, how are they perceived by their colleagues, their superiors and their subordinates? Many of these questions can be answered even for those candidates who are seeking their first administrative job. They too have had colleagues and they too have reputations.

In evaluating applicants, committees must also make some projections about the future. When people seek to use an institution to make a career move, we should find out where they are headed. Is this deanship a move up for them? or over? or down? In the applicant pool there will be some who are moving from a more demanding position than this deanship will

be. Will they be burned out here or will they bring to this job fine-honed skills which they can apply in a more relaxed setting? Some candidates will be the ambitious up-and-comers. Will they bring the benefits of their drive and ambition or will the college be sacrificed on some careerist altar? How long will this person be expected to stay? How easily can the college rid itself of a bad choice if that becomes necessary?

There is a tendency in search committees to assume both that the new dean they are hiring will remain with them forever (if it turns out to be a good choice) and that a poor dean can be easily removed. Neither is in fact the case. The contract the dean negotiates, usually not with the committee but with the president, can be hard and expensive to break. On the other hand, a dean who clearly plans to spend only five or so years in this job before moving on often can contribute to the college a good deal more than someone who can be expected to die in the job. In this as in other matters, the committee can easily go wrong in evaluating candidates if it has no clear sense of what the college really needs. Since the final negotiation is so often out of the hands of the committee, the members of the committee need to protect their interests, as they see them, in the selection process. They should not expect that there will be something in the contract that will compensate for or correct a committee error.

Over the years, I have seen many search committees go wrong—and sometimes with disastrous results. Although I have been fortunate, I suppose, never to have seen one search which has fallen into all of the pitfalls I have catalogued, the frequency with which committees do make what seem to be easily avoidable mistakes give me little hope that academic politics is any more likely to be completely reformed than politics in other arenas. Nonetheless, political scientists should not ignore the study of such political processes nor should we fail to apply our understanding of political operations in general to the circumstances closest at hand.

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Access to the National Archives

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The condition of the National Archives concerns all political scientists.* Many political scientists use Archival records for research on American government or on international relations. The National Archives currently holds 800,000 cubic feet of federal records in its main building, and stores another 500,000 cubic feet of records in other buildings in the Washington, D.C. area. These records constitute a rich resource for understanding political history, developing hypotheses and testing theories.

*For the National Archives,
as the eventual repository
of valuable federal records,
the declassification
problem compounds
existing handicaps.*

Those who do not themselves use the Archives are indirectly affected by the ideas and findings of those who do. This is the multiplier effect: the research done by a few political scientists, social scientists and historians cumulatively informs the work of other academics, as well as government officials, journalists and the public at large.

Finally, the Archives has preeminent

status as a cultural and political institution. The research done by social scientists, historians, biographers, genealogists, journalists, lawyers, educators, employees from other Federal agencies at the National Archives interprets and defines American government and society. Such research makes possible the establishment of detailed and differentiated history. But the records at the National Archives and those of the Presidential Libraries (both under the aegis of the National Archives and Records Administration) also disclose the operation of liberal democratic government. The Archives constitute a unique resource for this exploration.

Because declassification

procedures necessitate

approval by each agency

participating in the

creation of a document,

requests for declassification

under the Freedom

of Information Act may

take up to two years.

I had three separate occasions over the last two years to conduct research at the National Archives. My surprise at the lack of access to records from the 1940s and at the lack of knowledge of the existence or whereabouts of other documents prompted me to inquire into the situation at the National Archives. These remarks summarize my brief investigation.

Many of the military records I wanted to see were still classified—even where the preponderance of records were over forty years old. Ten thousand cubic feet of Navy Department records alone remain classified, and over 300,000,000 pages overall await declassification at the