



The Essential Academic Dean: A practical Guide to College Leadership

Jeffrey L. Buller; Jossey-Bass 2007

Reviewed by Brian J. McCue, Campus Dean, Strayer University

Jeffrey L. Buller's cookbook style manuscript entitled *The Essential Academic Dean: A Practical Guide to College Leadership* is a no holds barred work (Jeffrey L. Buller, 2007). It's "how to do it" style is very reminiscent of the *Dummy Series*. This book certainly could be called *deanship for dummies* in nine sections. Dean Buller is a practitioner of the craft of deanship and has definitely walked a mile in our shoes as evidenced in his writings and case study scenarios. For, each of the nine parts finishes-up with what the author calls a "Dean's scenario analyses."

The role of an academic dean as indicated in the cookbook involves a multitude of tasks, concerns, joys, challenges, successes, and/or failures. These items range from the mundane to the complex and cover the gambit of both the public and private institutional higher educational sectors. Buller deals with the expected performance tasks of budgeting, personnel decisions, vision selling, interaction with the various interest groups, etc. What intrigued me most was the coverage of what Buller calls "The Deans Next Step" (p. 394). In this section, he covers such topics as "Knowing When It's Time to Go, Returning to the Faculty, Changing Institutions, and Planning for a Higher Administrative" (pp. 394-421).

Perhaps it's my orientation, however, in this 431 page cookbook, there was no discernable mention of the growing adult education market. His orientation is toward traditional academic institutions. It is a book worth reading both as a guide for dean want-a-bee's and as a reference for those already in the game.

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