



## Time To Go - Quick Tips

*Good leaders identify the appropriate time for an exit and effect a successful transition. Shakespeare once said “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women in it merely players. They have their exits and their entrances.” And so, it is inevitable that your time of leadership will eventually come to an end. The questions are only when and under what circumstances? An unplanned exit for any reason is undesirable and has the potential of damaging both the individual and institution. Here are some quick tips to help you prepare a thoughtful and orderly transition to your next professional chapter.*

### Start With Your Personal Life

- Do you enjoy getting up in the morning and doing the job? Or do you feel disheartened by the frustrations and conflicts you face?
- Are your current responsibilities having a negative impact on your ability to enjoy life outside of work?
- Do they impinge in negative ways on your relationships?
- Has your health changed in ways that indicate you should alter, rearrange or reduce leadership responsibilities and their associated stresses?
- Are you at a point in life where retirement or other interests are beckoning?

### Honestly Assess Your Performance

- Is it clear that you are a strong “match” for the required duties of the position?
- Have your original goals been accomplished and the time to look forward has arrived? Or,
- Have you stalled in making progress and feel you are unlikely to overcome roadblocks?
- Do you have positive, effective working relationships with:
  - ♦ faculty?
  - ♦ peer leaders?
  - ♦ your superiors?
  - ♦ the community?
- Have you built an effective, compatible management team?

### Consider Your Career

- Do you hope to remain at your current level of organizational responsibility for the remainder of your career, or are you interested in seeking higher-level assignments?
- Does your current assignment provide sufficient opportunity to “grow” intellectually *and* as a leader?
- Are you regularly sought after or recruited for other positions?
- Would you consider shifting from university work to service in government, the private sector, or another non-governmental organization?

### Consider the Best Interest of the Unit

- Have you been able to build a highly functional environment or is there dysfunction that impedes your unit’s fulfillment of its mission or that of the larger institution?



- Within your unit, is there a well-understood and widely shared vision for the future, or is every (even minor) decision hotly debated?
- Is the unit characterized by quality scholarship?
- Is the post-graduate placement of students reflective of a well-regarded curriculum?
- Is it clear to you that you are not doing well enough?
- If you have been in the job for many years without making progress on these fronts, it may be time to consider moving on for the benefit of the unit.

## *Ensure it is Your Decision, Made on Your Timeline*

- Avoid creating an expectation that you will soon make an announcement regarding decision. That will either foster an unnecessary anxiety about the future and a concerted effort to “retain” your services, or elicit increasing pressure for you to leave.
- Seek honest, thoughtful and confidential conversations with your superior about the input that they are receiving about your performance, as well as that individual’s perspective on your continued tenure.
- Are there overt / gray-area legal or ethical issues that have the potential of compelling your departure in the near future? If that is the case, then you should consider whether a preemptive resignation is in the best interest of the unit. If that is the case, proceed to engage with your superior to plan the best possible transition out of the position.

## *After You’ve Gone...*

- Post-departure interference in the unit through criticism or attempts to manipulate your successor from a more senior position almost always have a negative impact on one’s reputation and is harmful to the enterprise.
- If you have retired, simply avoid engagement in the day-to-day affairs of the unit.
- If a sabbatical is offered by the university, take advantage of the opportunity to prepare for the next phase of your life.
- A wise successor will seek your advice from time to time. Accept the opportunity to provide a balanced perspective - both positive and negative - on the issue at hand and avoid any attempt to advocate a specific viewpoint or agenda.
- Some find it enjoyable to document the experiences that shaped their perspective on their time of service for the university’s archive.

