

How to Train Your Dragon (a.k.a. Your New Dean or Hiring Partner)

Questions to Ask Your New Leader and Yourself

Communications

- ASK → What is your communication pattern preference? Email, phone, zoom, drop by in person? Are there times or days that work better than others?
- CONSIDER → What are your personal communication preferences? Be honest with yourself about what your practices are, and make sure you are integrating what your new leader wants with your own habits.
- ASK → What about times of emergency or when you need a response quickly?
- ASK → What are their expectations regarding responsiveness? What about evenings and weekends?
- ASK/CONSIDER → Is your new leader open to inquiries throughout the week, or would they prefer you to save up all questions for a scheduled weekly meeting? Consider what your preferences are, and what the best practices might be for getting your work done and your goals accomplished.

Goals

- ASK → What are your goals for the Office of Career Services, the Hiring Committee, etc. for this year/cycle?
- ASK → Are there any obstacles to achieving these goals?
- CONSIDER → What are your personal goals? How should you work with your new leader to accomplish their goals and yours? Are they open to innovation, or will they always want to know what other firms/schools are doing, or both?
- CONSIDER → Does your new leader have lots of ideas and priorities, do they have reasonable goals but understand they have some things to learn, or are they a “let’s keep the trains running on time” kind of leader?
- CONSIDER → What seems to be most important to your new leader?

Stakeholders

- ASK → Who are your stakeholders? Get a sense of who your new leader needs to please or answer to.
- CONSIDER → Think about the wider world of your new leader, and the pressures they feel that have nothing to do with your function.

Support Team

- ASK → Who are the people who support you (assistant, etc.)?
- CONSIDER → Start or strengthen your relationship with those people.

Nitty Gritty

- ASK → Do you have pet peeves?
- ASK → How have others worked well with you? How have people impressed you? What do you find disappointing in people who work with you?
- ASK or DISCOVER → Are there non-negotiables, whether express or implied? Do they care about punctuality? Are they sticklers about writing, grammar and typos? (Yes.) Do they want written agendas before meetings? Would they appreciate a pre-meeting with you to prepare?