How to Deal with your Department Chair?
A Story

• An “innocent” note to my Dean from a faculty member
• How do we look?
• Don’t go around your Chair – especially if you need your Chair as an ally in the future.
Pressure Points (for your Chair)

• The rules are changing
• The rules are ALWAYS changing!
• Support for higher education has eroded
• The meaning of tenure?
• Expectations of everyone have changed
• The Chair is not “the boss”
The all-important dimension of time

• Are YOU in this for the “long haul” – what is your time horizon?
• Is your Chair in this for the long haul as well?
• Is time your friend, your enemy, or merely a critical consideration?
Topics for Today

• Space
• Promotion
  • Should I talk about job interviewing elsewhere?
• Funding
• Budgets
• Challenging conversations
• What else do you want to discuss?
  – How often to meet
The Big Squeeze: Space at UW

Just as I thought, my cubicle is two inches smaller today than yesterday!

We installed real-time status adjusters in the cubicle walls. Sensors monitor your work and adjust the cubicle size according to your value.

It's amazing how fast you get used to it.
So you want out of your cubicle

• ARE THERE RULES?
• Are there constraints you can identify?
• Equity is often in the eye of the beholder
• Discuss with colleagues before you discuss with your chair – remember the big picture
So you want a promotion

• KNOW THE RULES!
• THINK AHEAD OF TIME AND “BACKWARDS”
• Where do you stack up with respect to appropriate colleagues?
• Listen to unwritten, nuanced, and nonverbal messages
• Be prepared to hold up your end (package preparation)
• Your success vs. departmental track record
Suppose You are Interviewing

• Do you talk with your Chair?
• It depends!
• Here’s a real story
• Did you seek the job?
  – If so, why?
• Do you want a counter-offer from your current department or the UW?
• How would you like to be treated in a similar situation?
Are you “fully funded”? 
How’s your funding?

• No one other than you wants more for you to have long-term stable funding than your Chair!

• View this as a shared responsibility with you having the lion’s share

• Try to get ahead of the game – last minute situations promote poor decision-making and really bad feelings
Pulling Budget Estimates “Out of a Hat”

I need a budget estimate for my project, but I don't have a scope or a design for it yet.

Okay, my estimate is $3,583,729.

You don't know anything about my project. That makes two of us.
Watch your fiscal burn rate!

• For your projects, YOU are responsible
• Monitor closely and document all decisions
• Work with your administrative staff on problems before you bring these to the chair
• KNOW THE RULES!
Will This be a Difficult Conversation?

- What is really at the core of any disagreement or difficult conversation?
  - “The Three Conversations”
- The Truth Assumption
  - What am I “right” about?
  - I am right that ...
  - You are NOT right
  - Difficult conversations are rarely about who is “right”
- Do not let the hard part of a conversation wait til the end of the meeting!
Peter Senge’s Ladder of Inquiry

- Select Data
- Interpret Data
- Add Assumptions
- Draw Conclusions
- Take Action

Increased advocacy of position

Increased inquiry into position

- Everyone that needs to be here is here. This effort will be success.
- The attendance indicated broad community support.
- The attendance was three times what was expected.
- One-hundred people attended our first meeting.
Summary

- Be prepared: know the rules
- Think ahead of time and think about time
- In difficult situations, go early and often to chat
- Document, as appropriate
- For the vast majority of discussions, your chair is your ally – and you have the same goals – think “win-win” where possible
Some resources

- Fifth Discipline Fieldbook. Senge, Peter, et al.
- [http://www.partnershipsforolderadults.org/resources/resource.aspx?resourceGUID=9a570653-413c-4ad4-8294-425d23f04a09&sectionGUID=753922c9-ded1-4921-82cc-b087db71bc8c](http://www.partnershipsforolderadults.org/resources/resource.aspx?resourceGUID=9a570653-413c-4ad4-8294-425d23f04a09&sectionGUID=753922c9-ded1-4921-82cc-b087db71bc8c)
- Difficult Conversations : How to Discuss What Matters Most. Stone, Douglas; Patton, Bruce; Heen, Sheila
- Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving in. Roger Fisher; William Ury
- Getting Past No: Negotiating With Difficult People. William Ury