A Faculty Perspective on
The Business Officer

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Full Disclosure

- Faculty Member since 1976
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Reality Check

• All Faculty are Not the Same
• All Business Officers are Not the Same

• BUT Perceptions of Each are based on Experiences -- Good & Bad

Reality Check

• Stereotypes Abound
• Getting Past Perceptions and Stereotypes is our Goal
• BUT...
We’ll Have Fun With Them Anyway !!

Budget Officers’ View of Faculty

2 Types
Faculty View of Business Officer
Service

vs.

Servitude

“Let us not forget, please, who are the Servers and who are the Servees.”

-- a former UCD Senate Chair (not LBC) to the Registrar
Service vs. Servitude

- Service is using one’s skills, talents and experience to assist in getting the job done.
- Servitude is blindly following orders.
Service vs. Servitude

- Both faculty and staff provide service.
- Service is honorable.
- Servitude does not serve the university well.
- Service is critical to the functioning of the university.

Why Some Faculty are “Difficult”

- Not Aware
- Bad Experiences
- I’m the expert!
- Remembers the “good old days”
- Remembers “good old Tom”- the GREAT Business Officer
Why Some Faculty are “Difficult”

- Not Aware
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- I’m the expert!
- Remembers the “good old days”
- Remembers “good old Tom”- the GREAT Business Officer
- Some faculty are just a Pain

Good Old Days*

- Department Staffs were “stable”
- Business Officers moved up within the department and were well known to faculty
- “Family”
- Rules were few and made sense

*Perceived
Now*

- Lots of Movement and Turnover
- No time to develop relationships
- No time to develop trust
- Lots more rules
  - Or so it seems
- More Rules evolving from outside forces
- More CY(UC’s)A

*Perceived

An Example......
Carole, I would like to move some funds from 02 to 05. OK??

Let me Check The PPM
Oh for that you need to fill out a DD-15, a APR-723b and ... Then we need to get them signed by these 10 people...

That seems like an awful lot of STUPID work to me.. Can YOU get it done by Tomorrow??
OR

Carole,
I would like to move some funds from 02 to 05. OK??
You Can't Do That... It's Against the Rules

@$&*!#
Carole, I would like to move some funds from 02 to 05. OK??

Well, I think we can do that..... It just takes a little "tweak" of the rules.
Tweaking the Rules

- What’s Tweaking?
- How Far can you Tweak before it breaks?
- Who’s Responsibility is it?

Rules = rules, regulations, policies, procedures, et cetera, et cetera
Tweaking ??

• Careful -- tweaking is not ignoring
• Tweaking is more than navigating
• Tweaking is not finessing or otherwise “faking”
• Tweaking is (among other things) Working Collaboratively and Creatively

Faculty View of “Rules”
“Dumb” Rules

• Rules with no apparent rationale
• Rules that appear arbitrary
• Rules that seem designed to CYA
• Rules that appear to violate reason
• Rules written in “non-English”
• Rules that run counter to campus culture

• Dumb Rules + Smart People =
Avoiding the Explosion

• Try and keep the faculty from seeing the rules
• Translate the rules into local idiom
• “Explain” the rationale for the rules
• Let the Faculty know you will work with them to “work” the rules
Physics PIs,

Researchers and staff have been very busy lately with proposal submissions, several of which have required a very quick turn-around time. I write to ask, therefore, that in order to provide Georgie, Tracey & Elizabeth with enough time to do a thorough job, and to help maintain their sanity(!), PIs provide Physics staff with at least one week to prepare your proposals for submission to the Office of Research.

Remember also that the Office of Research requires proposals be submitted to their office at least five days prior to the funding agency deadline in order to provide a full review. Failure to provide five working days necessitates an emergency review by that office and the PI must assume full responsibility for all errors subsequently identified by the sponsor or the campus.

Thank you for your consideration!

Regards,
Tracy

Tracy Lade
Manager, Physics Department
Perceived Helpfulness Scale

&

Control-Service Scale

Control vs. Service

Control → Service
Maintaining Control while Serving the Faculty

• Create effective control via the perception of caring
• Create your local “rules” to support campus rules
  – local rules follow local culture
  – local rules support faculty over “them”
  – Local rules are flexible (within reason & “law”)  
  – Local rules are well communicated
  – Local rules are fairly imposed

Perceived Helpfulness Scale

Helpful ↔ An Obstruction
Perceived Helpfulness Scale

Helpful ↔ An Obstruction

Librarians,
Good Business Officers
Good Department Staff

Perceived Helpfulness Scale

Helpful ↔ An Obstruction

Physical Plant
IT
Parking Control
“Them”
Bad Business Officers
Why YOU are NOT Helpful

As Seen by faculty

• Control Freak
• “All I get are rules, rules, rules!”
• Not Communicating
• “I don’t know you!”
• “Good Old Tom never made me do that!”

How to move Toward Helpful

• Talk to me
• Listen to me
• Show me you care - that you are on my side
• Don’t just tell me that it cannot be done
  Help me do what I need done
• Remember I know physics, not audit rules
The Department Chair

• Your “Boss” ??
• In General Not a Trained Supervisor
  – Of either you or the faculty
• In general lead faculty by “big brother” not supervisor.
• Short Term (except Med School)
  – 5-6 years then back to faculty
• Come with their own experiences as faculty

HELP ME !!!

When you need “back up”,
who to call on for HELP!!
Faculty are from Mars
Budget Officers are From Pluto

Communications Utility
The Problem with Communication is the Assumption it has Occurred
Do Not Underestimate the Importance Of Interpersonal Relationships

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