Difficult Conversations

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- Public, Land Grant institution (total enrollment ~21,000)
- Doctoral University, Higher Research Activity
- CSE department housed in the Bagley College of Engineering (one of eight departments)
- Rural location with no other major employers in the area
- ~13 TT faculty, 1 Clinical faculty, 2 instructors
- Enrollment: ~370 UG, ~39 PhD, ~35 MS
- 6 years as DH after 6 years as assoc. dean
Annual Evaluations

• Know the policies and procedures at your institution
• Think about how these mesh with
  – Promotion and tenure
  – Workload assignments
  – Compensation structures
Faculty Evaluations @ MSU

• Done on a calendar year basis vs. academic year

• Faculty completes and submits information (teaching, research, service, awards, center participation)

• Department head ranks (words, not numbers) in big three and overall
Practical Process

• Get all forms before meeting with any individual so you can get the big picture
• Send review to faculty member 1-2 days in advance
• Pre-schedule to avoid “crunch time”
• Focus meeting on “what can I do to help you improve/meet goals/get the next promotion”
Staff Evaluation

• Equally as important as faculty evaluations
• Understand your university process
  – Are raises tied to rankings?
  – What flexibility (if any) do you have on pay
• Staff will compare their ratings
  – With each other
  – With their previous years
• Solicit input from faculty
• Unhappy staff can make the job harder!
Dealing with Faculty/Staff Issues

- Focus on the impact on the department and their career, not personal issues
- Provide concrete examples of problem areas
- Lay out clear expectations for improvement including how you will support the person in their goals
- Practice with a colleague – anticipate arguments
- Follow up with an email to document discussion
- Underperforming faculty/staff member has a negative impact on morale
Difficult Cases @ Tenure

• Should not be a surprise at year 6!
• Annual evaluations should be pointing the way
• Meet with the candidate to go over reasoning – draw on past reviews
• Discuss the process for appeal
Things I Have Learned – sometimes the hard way!

- There are (at least) two sides to every story – make sure you hear both before acting
- Sometimes people just want to vent and don’t want you to *do* anything
- You may be perceived to be biased if you are (or are perceived to be) friends with certain individuals/groups
- Take all of the blame, give away all of the credit
- Be an advocate for your faculty and buffer upper administration requests
When to Ask for Help

• Early – when the issue can perhaps be resolved without blowing up!
• Any time a parent, faculty member, staff member or student involves an attorney
• Any time there is a hint of Title IX or harassment issues – know your university policies on disclosure
Who to Ask for Help

• Chain of command
  – Particularly for faculty issues
  – Give folks a heads-up so they are not blindsided

• HRM
  – Particularly for staff but also faculty
  – Usually provides support for Title IX, Harassment, etc.

• Dean of Students – for student issues
• General Council of the university
Title IX

• Could be a whole session by itself!
• Know your university policy/procedure
  – Who is your Title IX coordinator?
  – Who is required to report?
  – Who can individuals talk to and maintain confidentiality?
  – What training is required and who enforces?
Questions?