Role of Chairs from a Dean’s Perspective

Alexander Wolf, Dean
Baskin School of Engineering
University of California, Santa Cruz
How many of you...

knew your dean before becoming chair?
met 1-on-1 while “just” a faculty member?
have a dean who is also (relatively) new?
have a dean who is new to your institution?
have a dean who is not in computing?
are in a school/college/division of “computing”?
are not chair of the “top” department?
are chair of the “problem” department?
control your own budget and staff?
What is the role of the dean?

- academic, financial, and facilities officer: 40%
- administrator of the deanery: 10%
- arbiter of tradeoffs, disputes, complaints: 20%
- interface to central administration: 25%
- ambassador to other academic units: 15%
  - other institutions: 5%
  - general public: 2%
- fund raiser: 50%
- faculty member: 3%
What annoys a dean

working at cross purposes
problems that surface “too soon”
problems that surface “too late”
complaints without proposed solutions
threats and intransigence
being “worked around”
What makes a dean happy

creativity
positivity
decisiveness
clear vision
partnership
responsiveness
What is the role of the chair?

- advocate for your department
- represent viewpoints fairly
- build strong, trusted relationship with your dean
- build partnerships with other chairs

enjoy your time as chair and use it wisely
build a succession plan and process now