

Navigating Departmental and Institutional Politics

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Playing nice and getting along with others are skills we should learn in kindergarten. Why does it seem such skills are often missing in our colleges and departments that may host diverse personalities, complex group dynamics, effective leadership distinct from positional leadership, generation gaps, and communication gaps? Developing an awareness of academic politics and having strategies for navigating the changing political seas of your workplace is a skill set that may be as valuable as your research training. This session will focus on developing your awareness of, and skill set for, navigating politics in academic settings, and learning how to say "No" safely.

- Can't I just do my thing and ignore departmental politics?
- How can I accurately determine who the "movers and shakers" or "power brokers" are in your department? Do you think this matters? And what is your relationship to the "movers and shakers"?
- Faculty members Joe and Sue don't get along in the department. When does and doesn't this matter for me?
- What if your department head/chair is part of the problem? What can you do?
- Who can help you navigate departmental politics?
- When do you need to care about what the Dean/VP/President thinks?
- Your institution is making a big push to raise its research/teaching/service (take your choice) profile but you're getting mixed messages at the department level ... should you care?
- How does administrative turn over affect me?
- When is it safe to say, "NO"?
- How do I avoid feeling isolated?
- How can I foster departmental collaboration if what I see around me looks a lot more like (unhealthy) competition?
- Who decides about tenure anyway?
- I'm told that teaching and service are important. How do I decide if this is true? Or, how do I tell if anything besides research publications matter?
- So you want to have a family and get tenure too?!

Issues of department politics and the pre-tenure faculty member can become very personal and require confidentiality. For this reason, if you want to discuss a particular concern of yours in confidence on a one-to-one basis with either Randy or Kristen, or any of the other facilitators, time is scheduled for appointments at this workshop. Feel free to also contact either of us after the workshop and we can discuss your concerns.