

Dealing with Difficult Faculty

Laura Abrams and Liz Lightfoot
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Agenda



- Ice breaker**
- Typologies**
- Crookston's 6 steps**
- Buckets**
- Case scenarios**

**What faculty issues keep
you up at night?**

**Chronic
Underperformer**

**Passive-Aggressive
Colleague**

Bully/Bullies

The Pot Stirrer

Drama Queen

**The Litigious
Colleague**

The Expert

Early Retiree

Complainer

Guerilla Fighter

**Social Justice
Warrior**

Icicle

Faculty with Disabilities

Don't Diagnose Faculty Yourself

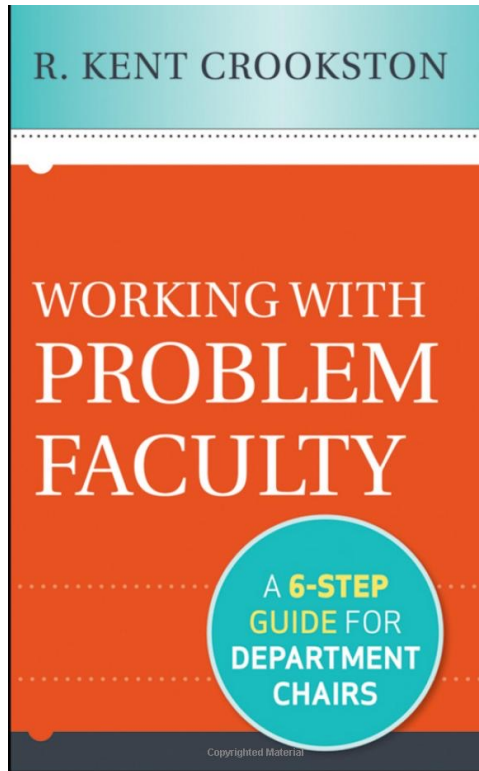
Refer to Appropriate Human Resources Office

Make Required Accommodations

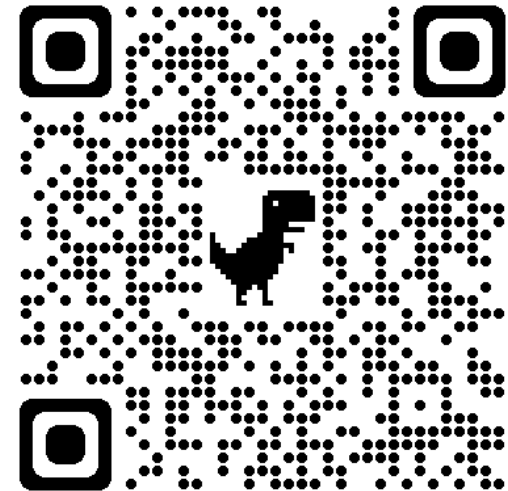
- You don't need to know the details of their disability
- Normalize accommodations



Working with Problem Faculty: A 6-Step Guide for Department Chairs



Other Resources



Step 1: Clarify Expectations

- Faculty expectations regarding teaching, research, service, administration
- Basic expectations
- Mission and vision

Step 2: Follow Policy

- Do a “policy check”
- Make policy exceptions carefully
- Civility policy?

Step 3: Build Trust with Colleagues

- With Upper Admin, Senior Colleagues, Staff, Senate/Union Reps, Faculty, the PWP
- How? Extend trust, open & transparent, don't put down people or policies, keep confidences, deal with problems

Step 4: Evaluate Yourself and Your Perceptions

- Be slow to label people as “problems”
- Evaluate your own prejudices
- Be quick to observe – ask thoughtful questions

Step 5: Listen

- Active Listening
- Welcome complaints & criticisms

Step 6: Effective Action

- Prepare adequately and act quickly
- Confront in private, have a witness for contentious meetings
- Expectations x Ability x Motivation x Consequences
- Assemble case, document!
- Three year process!
- Be patient, accept blame

Some Key Points

Don't ignore troubling behavior

Never put people down

**Do not take sides or encourage
end runs**

Trust, but verify

Be quick to observe

Act quickly

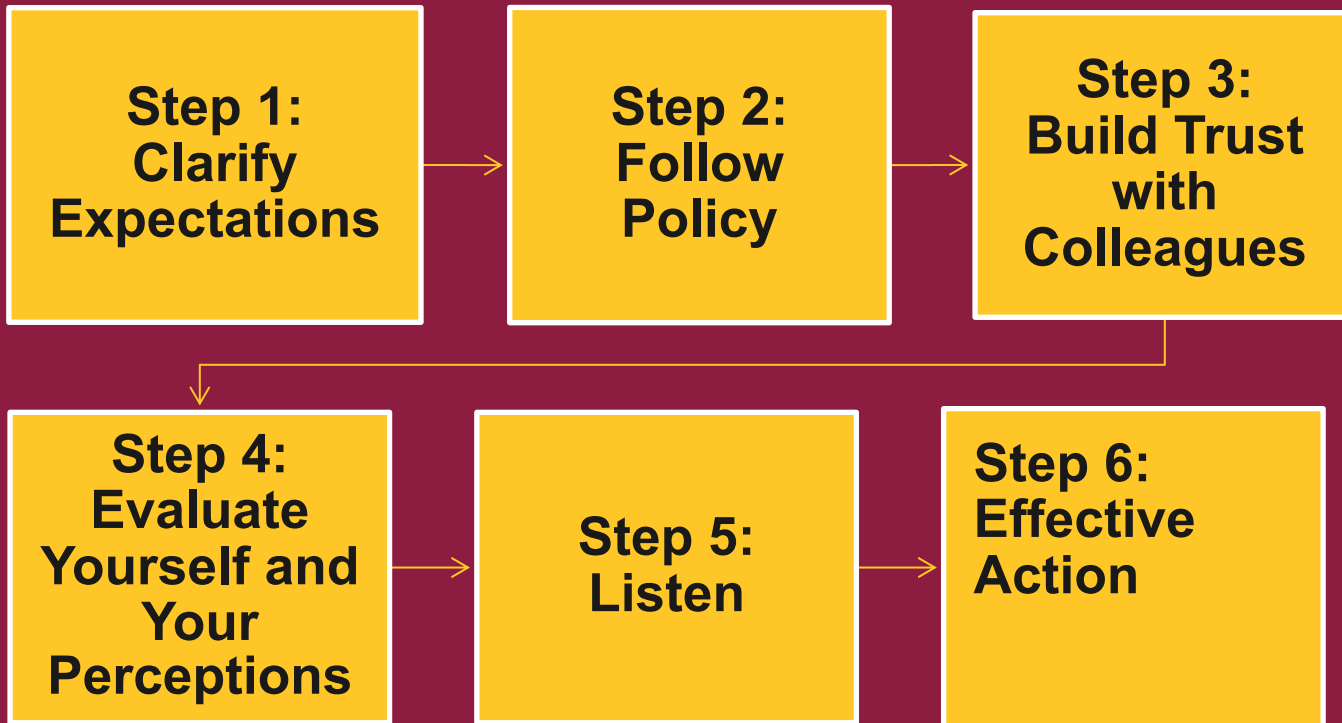
Be mindful of bias

Don't go it alone

Document, Document, Document

Chronic Poor Performer

“After all I’ve done for the school over the years, don’t you think it owes me.”



Expectations x Ability x Motivation x Consequences

Buckets

Where do you put issues?



Talk to a peer for advice. Perhaps this is just “you” ruminating and you can let it go?



Bring it to a higher level. Tell the person you are doing so and why.



Deal with the issue directly with the faculty member. It may be unpleasant, but we have to do it.



Don't do anything . Sometimes doing nothing is ok. Other times, not worth the risk for the rest of the faculty.

Questions to ask

-- Can I live with myself if I just let this go?

If yes, perhaps do nothing.

-- Will doing “nothing” cause an increasingly toxic environment for others?

If so- need to do something!

-- Can I deal with this without someone else knowing what is going on?

If not.. Involve a peer for consultation.

-- Is this a problem that involves a potential lawsuit.

If so...involve others right away!

Scenario 1: Steve

Steve (white male) has been talking negatively about other faculty for nearly 20 years. Sometimes he talks behind people's back, other times it's to their face. You are one of his main targets – he complains about you directly to you, and other faculty tell you he badmouths you all the time. He is disruptive at nearly every faculty meeting, undermining whoever is proposing anything. This has been going on a long time, and no one has ever called him on it.

How should you proceed?

Scenario 2: Ruby

Ruby is currently the MSW curriculum chair. She is one of the few tenured Black faculty in the school. She has had numerous issues in this role, ranging from student complaints to not filing curriculum documents to not showing up for committee meetings that she leads. After providing her a bit of feedback, you decide that it's best to remove her from her leadership position. You are concerned as she has multiple protected statuses (disability, race, gender).

How should you proceed?

Scenario 3: Owen

Owen is an endowed professor and beloved colleague at your school who you believe is taking advantage of university resources. You have some evidence that he uses his endowment to buy expensive desk furniture for his home office and travels to conferences in exotic locations without attending the actual conference. His finance officer has approved these expenses. He is also one of the most senior scientists in his field and mentors a lot of junior faculty and doctoral students.

How should you proceed?

Scenario 4: Maxine

Maxine is a hard working associate professor who has started sending you erratic emails on a wide-range of topics related to the school and other matters such as the political climate. She frequently sends you messages directing you on what to do or say, These emails are often more than 1,000 words long. She often copies the entire faculty, and occasionally the President and the Provost. She suggests that she represents the rest of the faculty, though other faculty frequently complain about receiving these mass emails to you.

How should you proceed?

Thank you

**Resource List and
PowerPoints**

