

Case Study A: The Persuadee's role: The Dean

You are the Dean of a College/School with several departments at Universal Public University (UPU). The School has faced a lot of challenges in the past few years that you have diligently been working to address. Some of those include the ever-present budget challenges that have led to budget cuts across departments for the past few years. You face competition from other universities and programs, which has kept your enrollments flat in most areas and dwindling in a few programs. The state of the economy hasn't helped at all and the State budget looks like its going to be another bad year. None of your administrators have had raises in the last two years and the faculty and staff haven't gotten much that really feels like an increase either. With the economy suffering, the students who are most likely to want to enter into the type of programs your School/College offers are feeling the pinch, which has also meant a hit to applications.

One of the challenges you face is an uneven profile across your departments. Predictably, three of your departments take up most of your time, as they face some serious struggles. Another few take some of your attention but overall they are doing all right. In better times, you would be able to focus far more time and attention on helping them with their goals to grow and strengthen into becoming first class programs. And then you have a couple of departments which are your strongest. While having strong departments is a welcome asset, they can also seem to be demanding with their particular concerns and sometimes unempathetic attitude towards the challenges the rest of the school faces. One department in particular comes to mind—Department Fantastic—which is doing well in extramural funding and research activities. While you had hoped they would be a growth area, they have had even student enrollments over the past few years. In the School, they are a powerhouse department and you get the impression that some smaller departments wish they would be more collegial. No one uses the word “bullied” or “pushed around”, but sometimes you wonder if that is just because everyone is trying very hard to be very political and polite.

You are meeting with the Chair/Head of one of these departments today. S/he comes to you with an incredible persistence for money to support their new experiential lab, which launched just about two years ago. Frankly, you are a little fatigued of hearing about how wonderful this department is, how much more cutting edge their educational ideas are than everyone else's, how all the other departments should model themselves after this particular department. It's hard to hear this bragging and fail to remember the uncomfortable press spotlight during the PETA protests about the animal components of the lab experience. There were some significant bumps to getting that lab up and running. Overall, you would really appreciate this department to show some empathy and understanding that different departments have different concerns and issues and students and frankly educational programs. Budget cuts are imminent (again) and you can't protect the strong department at the expense of their less mature siblings. And—

you have learned that you can't simply leave these strong departments unattended since a few years ago you had lined up a couple of donors for some school-wide projects but then those donors suddenly pivoted to singularly support Department Fantastic's new experiential teaching laboratory! That was a surprise and felt a bit like the Department Chair/Head running an end game around you. That didn't build a lot of trust although any donors are good donors and the lab was not a bad project to invest in. The outside donors money did mean that you could then repurpose some of the College/School's support towards other activities.

While you greatly appreciate that the School/College has some strong anchor departments, strengthening the already strong is not at the top of your priority list—you need to focus on bolstering the departments that are facing deeper challenges to retaining students and faculty and research funding. The Chair/Head of Department Fantastic is meeting with you today.

CASE STUDY B:

Getting The New Institute Director On Board!

Leader Practice Scenario: YOU ARE DOING THE PERSUADING IN THIS SCENARIO

You are *The Center Director*. The Center provides services (direct services, consulting, etc.) to individuals and groups who often have neglected concerns and thus face a lot of challenges and is just a part of a larger, fairly complex organization. The Center gets the occasional “nod” from the Organization for its “good work” [formerly called “charity work”]—but no financial support. Several months ago, Dr. ABC moved across the country, accepting the brand-new position of “New Institute Director. This role is supposed to bring together disparate parts of the organization to create a more collective presence. Dr. ABC is higher than you in the org chart and you were “voluntold” to give him/her a 25% FTE “practice” appointment working for your Center (the other 25% is oriented to division-wide concerns and 50% to research). You have been trying to figure out a clear role for Dr. ABC in your Center. Dr. ABC is a strong proponent of cultural competence and meaningful partnerships with underserved communities, which fits in with the stated values of the upper administration of your organization.

You have noticed that there have been some bumps in the road with Dr. ABC's entry into the organization. First there were conflicts with how your Center operated and how team members (“Specialists”) carried out the mission of the Center. Your Center is fully and solely financed by donations and a limited number of contracts—you have scarce resources that must be stretched in order to provide baseline services to the overwhelming number of groups who come to you for help. This translates into difficult decisions about how much and what kind of services your Center can provide. While best practice guidelines in the industry (which has paying customers)

call for services that “should be” routine, in actual practice the Center Specialists must be quite judicious about the depth of research, the extent of services given to any single group/recipient, etc. Dr. ABC has been rather insistent that “standard best practice guidelines require us to provide services by conducting a thorough exploration of the applicant’s concerns.” S/he has been unresponsive to the idea that every other expert in the Center has reconciled themselves to the reality of sparse funding in the face of a multitude of needy applicants for services. You have talked with her/him several times about needlessly ordering expensive assessments, tests, procedures and approaches on the outside chance that it will reveal an important issue.

Secondly, s/he has given several presentations about the New Institute in which the activities of your Center have been included and presented—but presented in a way that could easily be interpreted as Dr. ABC branding everything done in your Center as being under his/her umbrella. While *technically* all the projects serving marginalized groups fall under the New Institute, the lack of sharing credit came off as if it was Dr. ABC’s own work. There was no mention of being grateful or thankful to all those who had either helped Dr. ABC to come on board or to those who actually do all the work Dr. ABC seemed to take credit for. This has left several other Center Specialists who work for you incensed and complaining about misrepresentation of others’ work. Some Specialists have informed you that they will not work with Dr. ABC any longer. This is a total headache for you. Your staff has asked you to speak to Dr. ABC, as they don’t want to engage in the difficult conversations themselves. They want you to fix it.

You need to have a persuasive conversation with Dr. ABC. He/she needs to see the outcome of his/her actions. You are concerned about this conversation because you’ve broached the subject at least three times and it has always fallen on deaf ears. You decide to use Perfect Persuasion and the S-P-I-N Selling approach this time.