SAC Meeting

An assessment of the year

A year of mixed reviews...
...Some good news
...And some bad news

Good news

Capable of real brilliance at times...
...PC talk
...Michigan Mandate
..."political sensitive" talks
Good antenna...helpful in early warning

Bad news

Have difficulty keeping to schedule
...still plagued by last-minute syndrome
...really not getting the support I need when I need it
Major strategic efforts take a very long time
...e.g., PC talk...
Continue to be frustrated by our inability to get more stuff out in written form...
...have a growing pile of speeches in desperate need of help in reshaping into papers and op-ed pieces
...teaching vs research
...college sports
...PC talk itself

Another serious concern

Believe that too much in the way of campus politics is being drawn directly into President's Office
Realize that you enjoy interaction with broad range of these issues...triggered in part by
...your relations with minority community
...assignments to MSA and Michigan Daily
...interaction with Ann Arbor News
Some of this is very useful...
But several concerns here:
i) First, it is terribly important to make certain that we don't shift responsibility from those who should deal with such issues to the President's Office
ii) Second, these issues really do distract you from responding to my primary need...
...which is writing
iii) Three, to the degree that people view you as directly linked to the President, this also draws me directly into the fray

Proposal

Walt and I have been talking about an organizational change that could help all of us to deal with these issues.
This would involve shifting your reporting line from me to Walt.
Implications
i) Most of assignments would not change
...you would still provide support for my speech writing
...you would still provide logistics support for key committees such as the Change II Group and PACMA
ii) This reassignment would give more credibility to your various "university relations" roles (MSA, etc.)
Advantages:
i) Would allow us to better coordinate speech writing

with “production”...since Walt’s other staff could also assist in getting things translated into “publishable” form...as op-ed pieces or papers

ii) Since some of your assignments are media relations anyway (Michigan Daily, Ann Arbor News), this would be a natural

iii) This would put a buffer layer between many of the political issues you like to deal with and the President.

iv) It might also give you growth opportunity in other activities. We plan to reassign to Walt the federal relations function this fall (and perhaps the state relations function the following year), so that he evolves into a “full-services” Vice President for University Relations

v) Finally, and very important from my perspective, this would allow Walt’s shop (perhaps with a team consisting of Walt, Lisa, and you) to get more of a strategic handle on the wide range of communications flowing from the President’s Office.

Summary

It is clear that my needs in the presidency are becoming increasingly well-defined as I complete the building of the leadership team.

With Walt in place, my needs in your area are becoming both narrower and more intense.

I need a FULL-TIME speech writer and editor ...or some combination of folks who can achieve this.

Staying in a direct reporting line to me will inevitably mean that you will be asked increasingly to focus almost entirely on speech writing, editing, and other “production” writing efforts.

By shifting over to Walt, you can still provide the key speech writing function while retaining some involvement in university relations--and we can then use others in Walt’s shop for “production” writing.