Political Astuteness: Bridging the Gap Between Politics and Professionalism

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Objectives

• Describe gap between political acceptability and administrative sustainability
• Discuss politics as choices among conflicting values
• Compare political and administrative values and perspectives
• Identify translating and aligning roles for chief administrative officers and upper level staff (electeds value added)
Values

- RESPONSIVENESS =
  - Representation/Participation +
  - Efficiency/Professionalism +
  - Social Equity +
  - Individual Rights
## Characteristics of Politics and Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Administration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
<td>Game/allocation of values</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Players</strong></td>
<td>Representatives</td>
<td>Experts</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conversation</strong></td>
<td>“What do you hear?”</td>
<td>“What do you know?”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Passion</td>
<td>- Data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Dreams</td>
<td>- Plans</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Stories</td>
<td>- Reports</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pieces</strong></td>
<td>Intangible:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interests and symbols</td>
<td>Tangible:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CAO and Senior Staff in the GAP</td>
<td>Information; money, people, equipment</td>
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<td><strong>Currency</strong></td>
<td>Power (stories)</td>
<td>Knowledge (deeds)</td>
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<td><strong>Dynamics</strong></td>
<td>Conflict, compromise, change</td>
<td>Predictability, cooperation, continuity</td>
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Facilitating Roles

• **Translate** the logic of politics and administration

• **Bridge** the gap between what is politically acceptable and administratively sustainable

• **Align**
  – Staff priorities with governing body goals
  – Governing body and staff expectations
Summary

• Bridging the gap is essential
• Good politics is about values not right answers—stories matter (convey values)
• Do not ignore any value over time
• Democratic process is “messy”
• Politics/administration=ways of thinking
• Role of translator/bridge builder is critical
• Aligning governing body/staff expectations is crucial
• Difference between “representative” and “trustee"