

When you have a boss, you learn their quirks pretty quickly and you make sure to stay clear of their pet peeves. I've had some pretty colorful bosses in my day, as I'm sure you have had as well.

In the past I have worked for a boss who carried a gun at all times in an office setting, and one whose mood was directly correlated with the winning percentage of the Cincinnati Reds. If they were having a bad year, we all had a bad year.

I had a boss who refused to let people wear perfume or cologne, sent back every meal ever received at a restaurant for one reason or another, gave people unsolicited unvarnished advice on their appearance, and once had a wall painted six times to make sure it was the right color and sheen.

I'm not talking about the six trustees that I answer to now. Like Mary Poppins, they are practically perfect in every way. (I know who signs my contract, if you couldn't tell.) And I'm not talking about my other boss, Jennifer, my wife. She too has no faults whatsoever and is a pleasure to be around with no pet peeves at all. Except maybe when she is hot or cold, if you wake her up one minute before the alarm, ask for her help but then get tired of waiting for her and do it yourself, interrupt her when she is on the phone telling a story, use your phone at the dinner table...maybe I should stop there. Forget what I said, she really is perfect! (She's also standing over my shoulder right now.)

I am a boss to quite a few employees now, and I'm sure if you ask them they would give you a similar list of my pet peeves - my 1968 heating/cooling unit in my office springs to mind. But the one pet peeve I share with all my employees is the No Surprises Rule. I want to know when the employee sees things coming down the track at us well in advance. I don't like to hear that someone knew of this potential problem months ago and didn't share it with me. To me, not sharing information is often a bigger issue than the problem that was being held back. If we know about an issue we can prepare for it and be proactive rather than reactive. Or at the very least, not overreact when the problem finally hits.

Transparency is important to me as it is to Neosho County Community College. Accountability to our stakeholders and open communication with all constituency groups are statements found within our mission and purpose statements - our core belief system. Within the confines of laws like the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, personnel law, and Gramm/Leach/Bliley Act we try to let you know what is going on at your community college.

We conduct open meetings that the Chanute Tribune covers. We post all of the minutes from all of our Trustees meetings on the website. In those minutes you can find out what is going on at the college from the various monthly reports, and the actions the Board takes. All of our salaries are posted on the web through those meeting minutes as well.

I believe that a public institution is a sacred trust from the taxpayer. To that end, on April 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm I have invited the Kansas Attorney General's office to the Chanute Campus Auditorium to offer training to all public boards in the region on the Open Meetings/Open Record Act. This vital legislation is important to transparency, but can be a bit tricky to follow both the spirit and the letter of the law at times. It's important to get trained and retrained on it as things change including the court's interpretation of the laws. The training is free to whomever would like to come.

At NCCC we conduct a public audit from an outside auditing firm and copies are available upon request each year. If they find an issue the auditors are very good about letting us know about it and we discuss

those in an open meeting. We have had clean audits over the last 14 years that Sandi Solander, our Chief Financial Officer, has been at the college.

A sub-part of the audit, the financial aid office, occasionally makes a mistake or two, and when you process hundreds if not thousands of requests and deal with ever-changing Federal regulations, mistakes are bound to happen. This year we did have two mistakes that we have already corrected.

The Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) keeps data books for all of the public institutions in the State, including NCCC. The book contains many different metrics including enrollment, retention, degrees offered, demographics of the students, and reserve fund totals for each institution. You can find these books at <http://www.kansasregents.org/> under the data tab.

The Higher Learning Commission, our main accrediting body, keeps a webpage for every one of its institutions, including NCCC. It's at [www.hlcommission.org](http://www.hlcommission.org). There you can read about our accreditation history and see if there are currently any sanctions in place for our college (there's not, but you can go see for yourself if you don't believe me – transparency!). If you or someone you know is shopping for a college or university, it's a good idea to check the appropriate accreditation website before you commit to that institution, especially those who promise an online degree in a month.

Within the institution we are even adding supervisor evaluation where employees get to evaluate their supervisors. We hope this will provide the context for a conversation between employee and supervisor on ways to improve that relationship and create a better department.

I'll be honest, we do have issues from time to time that occur, like at any large organization. We work to correct the issue so it doesn't happen again and try to make things right. Humans and computers make errors from time to time. We do what we can to limit these errors, but we are not perfect.

However, when these things happen we don't call the press and say, "Hey, we had an issue with a few of the student bills this week," or "Some pipes in the residence hall broke because someone turned off the heater on the wrong night." (Both of these things have happened recently, by the way.) It's not too interesting I'm guessing. So, newsflash, we are going to make mistakes from time to time, but we will fix them. We just don't publish our yearly errors to the website.

NCCC is proud to conduct its business in the light of day. This is your college. It is run by your elected representatives, the Board of Trustees, and you should know what the College and the Trustees are up to. Feel free to attend our monthly Trustees meetings on the second Tuesday of every month at 5:30pm on the Oak Room if you would like. Or keep reading about the meeting in the newspaper and check out our minutes at our website, [www.neosho.edu](http://www.neosho.edu).

And speaking of transparency, if you want to contact me directly with a comment or question please feel free to email me at [binbody@neosho.edu](mailto:binbody@neosho.edu).