



Letter from the Chair: I am the Bullfrog



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I was prepared to have this UPOJ Chairman's letter be the fourteenth and last time that I would write this report. Over the years, I have tried to highlight achievements of our Department and our people. As a team we have made enormous progress in all missions. The last three years have been challenging due to the effects of the pandemic that have had impact on how we deliver

clinical care, educate our students, residents and fellows, and conduct clinical and basic science research. That being said, every challenge is an opportunity to think differently and execute in new ways. Despite some headwinds- we are stronger now than we were three years ago. Our clinical care and expansion of Penn Orthopedics locally and globally is significant. For example, Samir Mehta, Derek Donegan, Steve Kovach and I have been helping our Ukrainian Orthopedic colleagues manage civilian and soldier extremity injuries using a ZOOM platform four days a week. In real time at 6 am, we review x-rays, pictures of major wounds and advise on treatment given some of the limitations of our courageous and tireless colleagues. Dr. Stephen Kovach and I travelled to Heidelberg Germany last December to teach soft tissue reconstructive techniques to 16 Ukrainian surgeons. Give a man or woman a fish- they eat for a day, teach them to fish- they eat for a lifetime. Recently Dr. Kovach travelled to Ukraine to perform free flaps on several patients. Our Orthoplastic efforts will continue and intensify- the need is great and sharing experience and knowledge is helping to make a difference.

Under the leadership of Daniel Farber, Stephen Liu and Cara Cipriano we continue to optimize education at every level. Our commitment to Penn medical students is reflected in our ratings and feedback from our students who participate in the 200 course. Our residents continue to matriculate in their first or second choice for fellowship-year in and year out. Our written and oral board examination pass rates remain extremely high, and our resident ranks continue to reflect our commitment to diversity at every level. The named lectureships and visiting professor program I consider to be the best in the country. Optimizing utilization of the Human Tissue Laboratory enhances anatomic knowledge of our learners and faculty.

Our research mission has an amazing track record. Although we were ranked #2 in the country this year for NIH funding, Dr. Soslowsky and several of our clinical and

research faculty were awarded an 8 million dollar NIH grant to study the Achilles tendon. We certainly will be recognized for this monumental achievement next year.

We continue to use our strategic plan, crafted in 2020 to guide our day to day activities, and we have made considerable progress in "C. L. I. G" (Culture, Leadership, Innovation and Growth).

As part of our strategic plan, we have doubled down on the importance of Leadership. The Michael Kelly Wharton leadership program is a crown jewel of our residency and distinguishes us from other trained programs. I study leadership and read a lot about leadership- and in turn I believe I have "learned" to lead the department more effectively.

Now I come to the story of "the Bullfrog". Admiral William McRaven's most recent book is titled: *The Wisdom of the Bullfrog* (Leadership Made Simple- but not Easy) . Admiral McRaven served as the longest active duty SEAL in the Navy- hence the name Bullfrog which designates this longevity. I am the most senior clinical department Chairman at Penn Medicine following the transition from Dr. Sean Grady in the Department of Neurosurgery to Dr. Daniel Yoshor in 2020. Every Clinical Chair at Penn was appointed after me and so by self-decree- I am "the bullfrog" of Chairs.

My term as Chair will continue for another year at the request of Dean Larry Jameson and Penn CEO Mr. Mahoney during which time a new search for my successor will begin. I am confident that the search committee will identify a new leader, and I will do all I can to support the search and further optimize the Department's outstanding national profile while we complete the search. In every enterprise a change in Leadership is essential to assure continued success. In fact, leaders can "overstay their welcome" to the detriment of the organization. The manner in which the change of authority and command occur and a seamless transition is essential to continue our momentum and trajectory.

In reading Admiral McRaven's book, I reflected on the leaders I have observed, leaders that I have reported to, organizations that I have led, and leadership roles I have had in academic medicine.

Let's take the principle in each chapter and allow me to interpret the Admiral's message as it relates to my role as Department Chairman.

1. Sua Sponte: The motto of Army Rangers. Broadly translated it means "by their own accord". Entrust those you lead to do the right thing...to take matters

into their own hands knowing what is expected. I have complete trust in our residents, faculty fellows, PAs and administrative staff to work for the common good of our patients and our other missions. Our code of conduct, Professionalism committee and defining expectations all help our team members know what is expected of them.

2. Stamina-The SEALS motto is-"The only easy day was yesterday". While our day to day work is intense and demands much of each of us, our strong work ethic highlighted by Sir William Osler (which he considered the key to success) lets us overcome the challenges that face us each day. As a matter of fact, I get up in the morning and ask myself- "what problem will I try to solve today?" I hope you do the same. Day in, day out we work as effectively as we can, with recognition that burnout can occur and we must guard against that.
3. "Who Dares Wins" This was the Special Air Service WWII motto coined by Sir David Sirling. It means-"take risks". It does not mean gamble or fail to prepare for a surgical procedure. It means that every day, as caregivers and surgeons we take risks routinely-with the intent to serve all with skill and trust.
4. "Hope is not a strategy" We routinely perform detailed preoperative planning and develop a surgical or clinical treatment plan for our patients so that our strategy is sound and outcomes can be predicted with a high degree of certainty. Out patients expect this planning.
5. "No campaign survives the first contact with the enemy" Have plan A and a backup plan B for any endeavor. This is true in the clinics, operating room and in the research laboratory.
6. "Run to the sound of guns". Where there is smoke, there is often fire. I try to be aware of obstacles, conflicts, and impending failures and engage the personnel, stakeholders and our health system to mitigate problems before they get out of hand. Solving problems is the job of a leader. Problems are always present-consistency in finding the problems, addressing the issues and finding solutions are critical to the success of the leader.
7. Integrity and honor. Leaders must demonstrate integrity in everything they do. Leaders must approach their charge considering it an honor to lead. Those that are led watch the leader constantly. Character matters. Leadership is character.
8. "You cannot Surge Trust" This expression was stated by Marine Corps General James Amos-referring to the citizens in Iraq and Afghanistan and the military relationship with governments and tribal leaders. Trust can only be built over time by openly communicating and being receptive to different points of view. Honesty and truth telling are essential to build trust. I am proud of the trust

I have built with all of the individuals that define the Penn Department of Orthopedics as well as my fellow Chairs and countless Penn healthcare leaders.

9. When in Command, Command. A quote by Navy Admiral Nimitz. If one takes the reins to lead, then lead as if the welfare of your entire enterprise depends on you. It does. Certainly one should delegate responsibility to others in the organization. However, Command is lonely- the leader is ultimately responsible for what goes wrong but should acknowledge team members and teamwork when things go well.
10. Hold people accountable. We do not do this often enough in my opinion. I believe that our team succeeds when we hold each other accountable, set standards and deliver on commitments.
11. Strong management and oversight is essential. I want to recognize the efforts of Deborah Rose, James Henry. Following the departure of Neal Ravitz they have stepped in and managed operations. Andrew Duncan is our new Chief Administrative officer who is off to an outstanding start and is a seasoned Orthopedic administrator.
12. "Troop the line" Good leaders are in the trenches with their soldiers. I have made it a point to take call, and operate in each of the downtown hospitals. "Walking the factory floor" place as CEO or leader on the "battlefield" to witness firsthand the issues that need to be addressed.
13. "A good Shepard should smell like his or her sheep". It is essential that a surgical leader practice surgery and demonstrate clinical excellence. If you are in the trenches....you are one of the team. This is important.
14. "Have a swim buddy" A swim buddy is a fellow SEAL team member who has your back, supports your career and cares about your success. It is an individual that you trust (literally for SEALS with your life) to praise you when you do things well, and constructively criticize you when you are not doing things well. Bonds like this are made between residents, among faculty and can be forged outside of Penn Orthopedics.

The themes and 14 chapters above all need to be credited to Admiral McRaven. However as the Chair of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery over the last 14 years, I have tried to be an effective leader. I can relate to the principles and try each day to meet your expectations. I will continue my commitment as Penn's Bullfrog, knowing that the next leader will take us farther exercising the same principles.

With gratitude for your support and accomplishments in 2023. LSL

With best regards,
Scott