

The Center for Organization Research & Design invites you to attend the  
Inaugural Arizona Centennial Lecture given by:

# Andrew Whitford

Thursday, February 25, 2015

UCENT 822a

Downtown Phoenix campus

11:00-12:30 pm

## **Above Politics:**

## **Bureaucratic Discretion and Credible Commitment**

### **Abstract**

Economic development requires secure contract enforcement and stable property rights. Normal majority-rule politics, such as bargaining over distributive and monetary policies, generate instability and frequently undermine economic development. Gary Miller and I argue that bureaucracies can contribute to stability and economic development, but only if they are insulated from unstable politics. A separation-of-powers stalemate creates the conditions for bureaucratic autonomy. But what keeps delegated bureaucrats from being more abusive as they become more autonomous? One answer is the negotiation of long-term, cooperative relationships - that (when successful) typically bind subordinates to provide more effort in exchange for autonomy. Even more compelling is professionalism, which embeds its professional practitioners in professional norms and culture, and incidentally mitigates corruption. Financial examples provide a measure of evidence for our thesis.