Dealing with Difficult Scenarios -- Untenured Faculty Network

Scenario #1: Classroom issues

A) A student in your class wants to be the class clown and is becoming progressively more disruptive through the semester. At first it is humorous and fun but now it is affecting the flow and tone of class. What is your next moved?

B) Grading challenges and Issues
   i) You want to give partial credit for answers but students are not writing down the equations or steps for their solution. The students are just writing down the final answer so it is hard to give partial credit. How do I communicate the importance of the problem steps and equations versus the final answer?

   ii) I handed back a test and have students after the class and in my office complaining about the points I took off and being aggressive for me to change their grade.
Scenario #2: Dealing with low performing graduate student or conflicting graduate students

A) A graduate student in your group is missing deadlines and not getting his/her work done. The student’s activities are now also affecting other students in the group as their lab activities have compromised data for another student. What do you do?

B) After multiple discussions and interventions the student in A is not making progress. Is it better to continue to work with him/her or to “fire” him/her? If you choose to fire the student, how would you do it?

C) Your PhD student, based on current performance, does not have the skills to be able to complete dissertation research. How do you handle the situation?

D) Two students in your group have complementary, but different skills. Each of them does not appreciate the skills of the other because they are not like me. You want them to work together to teach each other aspects of their skills to help both advance but they seem to butt heads more than collaborate.
Scenario #3 – Ethics and Politics

A) Someone slides a copy of a Facebook status of one of our UG students where s/he boasts that it is easy to cheat in engineering classes? I have not personally observed any cheating. What should I do?

B) The student from item #A just asked me to do a letter of recommendation. How should I handle this letter considering what I learned in item #A?

C) During a search committee phone or on-campus interview, a senior faculty member asks a question about how specific personal factors might affect a candidate’s decision to come to K-State. While well-meaning, these questions are not appropriate.
   i) A junior faculty member is also on the call with the faculty member and candidate. What should the junior faculty member do on the call to help modify or change the direction of the question? What should s/he say to the senior faculty member or others after the call?

   ii) A junior faculty member is part of a larger group of participants including other senior faculty. What should the junior faculty member do on the call to help modify or change the direction of the question? What should s/he say to the senior faculty member or others after the call?