The Office of the President

* The office of the President has grown tremendously over the years (wasn’t until 1857 that the Pres was given a paid secretary and no Secret Service until 1901 after McKinley is assassinated)
* Now the President has hundreds and hundreds of people assisting them along with “the Beast”, helicopters, Air Force One, etc.
* This does appear to be a massive transformation in power for the Presidency, however, as the White House bureaucracy has grown it has also become much more difficult to control (just talk to President Trump about that...or just read his Twitter feed)
* How important are any of these appointees to the President? We use the rule of propinquity for this – what is their proximity (both physical and political) to the President. There are three degrees of propinquity – the White House Office, the Executive Office and the cabinet

The White House Office

* The President’s closest advisors all have offices in the White House
* Most are given titles like assistant to the president, special consultant, counselor, etc. - the titles mean pretty much nothing and change from administration to administration
* These “advisors” are hired by the President at will – there is no need for Senate confirmation and the White House Office currently has a budget of over 700 million dollars and 4,000 staff
* The WH Office can be organized in a pyramidal, circular or ad hoc structure – what do you think these things mean? What does President Trump utilize?
* Most of the senior WH staff will be generated from the campaign team that helped elect them and some others will be experts in various fields that the President and his campaign team don’t have expertise in (this is why President Trump got himself in hot water adding Carter Page, Michael Flynn, etc. To his foreign policy team)
* Most of the leaks from the Trump White House have been due to various WH officials jockeying for the favor of the President by making others look bad – it is an episode of Mean Girls at the highest levels of power with enormous effect on policy depending on who sees and “signs off” on memoranda before they become policy – there are dozens of examples of this with the current White House

Executive Office of the President

* The principal agencies in the EOP are OMB, CIA, CEA, OPM and Office of the US Trade Representative and the leaders of each of these agencies are appointed by the Pres and confirmed by the Senate
* Unlike the White House Office positions these agencies are not located in the WH and therefore lack in the degree of propinquity relating to proximity to power
* The most important agency in the EOP, by far, is the Office of Management and Budget. Was created in 1921 as the Bureau of the Budget, but now deals with far more than the budget working on reorganizing various departments and agencies and helping to advocate policy (OMB is caught up in the Trump Ukraine deal right now)

The Cabinet

* By custom, cabinet officers make up the heads of the 14 major executive departments
* The main problem with the cabinet for the President is that he/she does appoint the heads of each department, however, there are thousands of career employees that he/she doesn’t appoint and they all know that the cabinet members are temporary. This will be discussed more in the next section on bureaucracy