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The Advantages of a Reciprocal Relationship Between Faculty Development and Organizational Development in Higher Education

Leora Baron
University of Nevada Las Vegas

No campus organization exists in a vacuum, nor can it afford to be an island unto itself. Thus, the functions of faculty development need to be viewed in the context of the entire institution. The effectiveness of faculty development, and sometimes its very survival, are dependent to a large extent on its ability to influence and participate in organizational development outside of its own confines. This chapter suggests practical ways in which faculty development can contribute to, and indeed benefit from, a reciprocal relationship with institutional organizational development.

Introduction

Too often, the functions of faculty development are confined to a narrowly defined area of the institution and viewed through a very limited prism. Its constituency, similarly, may be very narrowly identified, usually full-time faculty only. When faculty development moves away from this restrictive vision and encompasses other constituencies such as part-time faculty and graduate teaching assistants, it is usually due to some contingency or the expedient need to address a burning issue. Seldom is a broad, institution-wide vision applied to the structure, functions, and approaches of faculty development.

This chapter is based on several simple, straight-forward premises. First, teaching and learning are the core mission of higher education, whether an

institution is small or large. Second, the importance of the teaching and learning mission places every related aspect, and especially faculty development, in the center of every hot button issue faced by colleges and universities such as student retention, the changing student population, and student preparation. Third, faculty development is a major key to the success of the teaching and learning mission. Fourth, no campus organization can alone support and fulfill the teaching and learning mission—it takes the vision, commitment, and involvement of academic leadership (from president down to department chairperson), student support services, and technology infrastructure, to name a few. Fifth, through deliberate approaches to marketing itself, involvement in campus-wide activities, and the credibility of its leadership, faculty development can be positioned in a way that allows it to become politically neutral.

This chapter details a variety of possible approaches that will provide faculty development practitioners, as well as academic administrators, with frameworks, specific guidelines, and examples that can be easily adapted, adjusted, and built upon to suit a broad array of environments.

Faculty Development and Organizational Development Defined

The definitions for both *faculty development* and *organizational development* come mainly from the premier professional organizations associated with each. For the purposes of this discussion, the definitions suggested by the professional organizations should provide the most generic and neutral description possible, thereby providing for the most flexible and broad-based interpretation and adaptation of the suggestions made in this chapter.

Faculty development refers to programs and activities whose purpose is to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. There are some ambiguities involved, of course, as occasionally faculty development may also support scholarly activities or career development activities. Similarly, in many cases the “learning” part of the faculty development mission is a desired outcome of the focus on teaching activities, and the actual support of learning is undertaken by separate campus entities such as learning centers or academic support centers. The campus teaching community—full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and graduate teaching assistants—forms the largest faculty development constituency but may not be the only one. Furthermore, faculty development may or may not be operating under a single administrative umbrella or even have a formal operational structure. For instance, in small

colleges, faculty development may be done on a part-time basis by a single faculty member who is released from some teaching commitments, while in some larger institutions faculty development may be done separately within each college or academic unit, creating a large variety of operational schemes within a single institution.

The Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD) defines faculty development as follows:

Faculty development generally refers to those programs which focus on the individual faculty member. The most common focus for programs of this type is the **faculty member as a teacher**. Faculty development specialists provide consultation on teaching, including class organization, evaluation of students, in-class presentation skills, questioning and all aspects of design and presentation. They also advise faculty on the other aspects of teacher/student interaction, such as advising, tutoring, discipline policies and administration. (POD Network, 2002)

This very broad definition has allowed faculty development to expand in many diverse ways in various types of institutions. Since its formulation, however, many additional aspects have been added in practice to the ones enumerated under *consultation* and *advice*.

As new insights into teaching and learning have evolved, the scope of faculty development activities has expanded. POD itself embraces two additional categories of activities that in its view round out the broadest scope of faculty development.

Instructional development usually takes a different approach for the improvement of the institution. These programs have as their focus **the course, the curriculum and student learning**. . . . The philosophy behind these programs is that members of the institution should work as teams to design the best possible courses within the restrictions of the resources available.

Organizational development takes a third perspective on maximizing institutional effectiveness. The focus of these programs is the **organizational structure of the institution and its sub components**. The philosophy is that if one can build an organizational structure which will be efficient and effective in supporting the faculty and students, the teaching/learning process will naturally thrive. (POD Network, 2002)

This definition of organizational development is concerned more with structure than with process. For the purposes of this chapter, organizational development can be defined in a less limiting way: *Organizational development*, in a most generic sense, refers to overall institutional activities that are aimed at promoting and expanding institutional effectiveness, changing institutional culture, or modifying structures or substructures to adjust to changing circumstances. Philosophically and practically, organizational development encompasses a variety of approaches and subfields. The Organization Development Network (1998–2005) defines it as follows:

Organization Development is a dynamic *values-based* approach to systems change in organizations and communities; it strives to build the capacity to achieve and sustain a new desired state that benefits the organization or community and the world around them.

An interesting and often referenced early definition by Richard Beckhard (1969) states,

Organization development is an effort (1) *planned*, (2) *organization-wide*, and (3) *managed* from the top, to (4) increase *organization effectiveness and health* through (5) *planned interventions* in the organization's "processes," using *behavioral-science* knowledge. (p. 9)

In recent years, organizational development has referred to both the scope of an organization and to the process of change. Readers may be familiar, for instance, with the terms *learning organization*, coined and developed by Peter Senge (1990), *corporate culture*, a concept introduced by Edgar Schein (1992), and *appreciative inquiry*, developed by Suresh Srivastva and David Cooperrider (1990). All of these concepts and their attendant approaches are widely viewed as aspects of organizational behavior. For the purposes of this chapter, organizational development will be used to describe an institution-wide process that is both systemic and ongoing.

Another early description of organizational development specifically in the context of higher education makes observations that in many cases are still true today. Although the reference is mostly to individual faculty members and to academic departments, it clearly describes realities that are pervasive among all internal organizations.

Institutions of higher education have other internal organizational properties which are different from industrial organizations. There is a low degree of task interdependence among groups and between individuals. Departments and colleges tend to go about their activities in

relative isolation from other units except on issues related to budget and schedule. Individual faculty design, conduct, and evaluate their teaching without extensive consultation with colleagues, fostering an organizational pattern which is more like a collection of individuals than an integrated team working toward a common set of educational goals. (Boyer & Crocket, 1973, p. 343)

Two Types of Relationships Between Faculty Development and Organizational Development

There are two distinct approaches for effecting a reciprocal relationship between faculty development and organizational development, and they are not necessarily mutually exclusive—they can coexist, support each other, and even increase the other's viability. Furthermore, reciprocity can sometimes be intentional and at other times incidental. Examples given in this section should be viewed just as examples and not as exemplary practice. Their purpose is not to suggest emulation but to provide a context for the practices described.

Faculty Development-Centered Approach

In the faculty development-centered approach, activities such as programming are focused on the organizational development of the faculty development organization itself. In other words, faculty development is “the organization,” and therefore, its functioning over time is of central interest. For example, a midwestern research university has dispersed faculty development, in which each of the academic colleges has its own faculty development unit; some are single practitioner operations and others have small centers. The organizational development activities at this institution revolve around creating a common set of goals and assessments while allowing each unit to develop its own operating systems. This organizational development focus is very necessary because the regional accrediting organization is more interested in institution-wide performance than in individual college performance. The approach used is one of collaboration among the faculty developers through a variety of groups and task forces, each focusing on a single aspect of organizational development related to faculty development. After the small groups complete their assignments, an umbrella group made up of representatives from each of the faculty development units determines the overall set of goals and assessment criteria. Under this plan, each internal faculty development unit will continue to have its own way of operating.

In another example, a small liberal arts college has determined that faculty development is a good and necessary idea. After many years of department chairpersons taking responsibility for working with their faculty members on enhancing teaching skills, the president has determined that faculty development has to be more centralized. The motivation is largely economic in that the school needs to position itself in a competitive posture in a geographical area that has a number of similar colleges as well as a couple of regional community colleges. As a result of the president's decision, the chairpersons' council will now be responsible for faculty development. The immediate organizational development tasks at this college are to define and describe the college-wide faculty development and to set up policies and procedures that all can agree to follow. In this case, while each chairperson will continue to be responsible for the faculty development in his or her department, there will be common standards and practices developed to which all departments will have to adhere.

. Institution-Centered Approach

The institution-centered approach to reciprocity between faculty development and organizational development will form the backdrop for much of the rest of this chapter. While faculty development is still concerned with its own mission, operating procedures, and standards, it is very much involved in organizational development activities that are essentially campus or institution based. In this approach, the direct benefits to faculty development may not always be immediately obvious or accrued in the short term; they are but one part of the larger picture. Taking this approach does not in any way detract from faculty development's need to engage in faculty development-centered organizational activities. What it does provide is a much larger context and tableau against which faculty development's needs, activities, and accomplishments can be positively measured. Reciprocity is very evident here; the engagement with institution-wide organizational development activities can have a direct effect on the success of faculty development.

For example, at a large metropolitan commuter state university, faculty development is a stand-alone unit under the vice president for academic affairs. It has had its own staff and operating budget, and it has offered a wide array of workshops and individual consultations. It has been noticed, though, that the pool of faculty members taking advantage of the faculty development services and programs has become fixed over the past couple of years. The same individuals and departments are involved, and it is very rare that a faculty member who has not previously participated becomes involved in

faculty development. In a somewhat parallel fashion, the library has reached a point of frustration in trying to engage faculty in its very effective and necessary training programs in information literacy. An academic department, for instance, would sign up for a customized workshop in which databases and other resources from the specific discipline would be used as content and context. Of the 25 faculty members in the department, only five will actually show up for the workshop. It is quite clear that faculty development and the library share a common problem.

A joint organizational development approach can provide a more than satisfactory solution for each of the organizations. Only a semester ago the faculty senate adopted a resolution that identified information literacy as an institution-wide initiative. The reasons for the adoption of the initiative were numerous, not the least of which was the realization that no matter what discipline a student, undergraduate or graduate, pursues, one of the ultimate tests for the success of the academic program will be the ability to navigate the ever-expanding world of information. A great deal of motivation for the adoption has also come from new standards set by the regional accrediting agency. Therefore, the Information Literacy Initiative has become part of the university's overall organizational development process. Realizing the potential for successful collaboration, faculty development and the library have joined forces to modify and combine several of their existing programs into a new, joint program. The response from the faculty has been overwhelming as members recognized that the information gained through the new program would be important not only to their students' success, but also to the success of their own scholarly activities. In this case, without any new resources being tapped, two key university organizational development objectives—future employers' expectations and accreditation standards—are being met, while at the same time faculty development is able to greatly expand its sphere of activity, reach a much larger segment of the faculty than before, and establish credibility as being on top of important pedagogical issues.

In another example, at a 2,000-student rural community college, frustration has been mounting as incoming freshmen, both traditional and nontraditional, have been found to possess less than adequate basic skills in language and math. A few years ago, remedial courses were developed that are required of all students who do not meet admission standards in order for them to enroll in the regular program. It was obvious that the hot button issue of student underpreparation was not being adequately addressed. Enter faculty development. In the past, at the request of many faculty members, faculty development programs were implemented that addressed the issues inherent in large enrollments of underprepared students in nonremedial

courses. Techniques and approaches were described and practiced that could alleviate some of the problems.

To the campus-wide curriculum committee it was obvious, however, that faculty development could take a leadership role in this area by engaging in an institution-centered organizational development activity that would address the core problem. A task force made up of representatives from faculty development, the student enrichment program, and college admissions recommended that a new faculty development initiative be implemented. In this new program, coordinated by faculty development, regular faculty from a variety of disciplines, mainly from those most directly affected, learn to teach remedial courses. A stipend provided by the administration allows each of the participants to devote time during the spring semester and the early part of summer to redesign remedial courses and eventually teach them during the latter part of the summer. The success rate of participating students has increased, and faculty's challenges in the mainline courses have decreased. In this case, too, the needs of faculty development are met through an initiative that addresses larger institutional needs.

Catalyst Versus Participant

There are two distinct ways by which faculty development can become engaged in institution-centered organizational development: as a catalyst or as a participant. To be a catalyst, faculty development is aware of institutional hot button issues and is continuously engaged in institution-wide activities and conversations through membership on committees and other means. This ongoing involvement places faculty development in a good position to observe hot button issues and subissues in order to assess what the teaching/learning angles may be and how pedagogically oriented interventions or solutions may move the institutional agenda forward. Once such an opportunity has been identified, faculty development can proceed in a variety of ways, either by designing (or redesigning) segments of its own programming, or by suggesting collaborative programming with other units (e.g., the information literacy project described earlier). In either case, the impetus for change and development for an institutional need comes directly from faculty development.

As a participant, aside from programming initiated by itself, faculty development is looking for opportunities to join existing programs and initiatives across the institution. Programs of interest in this approach are ones that could benefit from faculty development's expertise, its credibility with

faculty, and its (usually) apolitical nature (e.g., the remedial course redesign described earlier).

To be successful and ongoing, the catalyst and participant approaches are based on an entrepreneurial approach and on an ability to work collaboratively with a variety of campus organizations. In their discussion of lessons learned about academic affairs and student affairs partnerships, Martin and Samels (2001) suggest the following steps for building and rebuilding successful partnerships:

(1) be opportunistic, (2) control the budget, (3) capitalize on turnover, (4) avoid collisions of culture, (5) design links to ongoing institutional assessment initiatives, (6) get press, and then get more press, (7) develop board awareness and support, and (8) don't become attached. (p. 89)

In the case of faculty development, because the focus is better and more narrowly defined than the generic "academic affairs," Martin and Samels' steps (1), (4), and (6) are the most important to remember. Finding the right opportunities for collaboration, creating a cultural synergy for the particular purpose or project, and letting the campus community know about the effort are keys to making an organizational development involvement successful and thereby paying off dividends for faculty development.

Hot Button Issues

Hot button issues are the key to a successful faculty development and organizational development reciprocity. So what are hot button issues? While specific issues vary from one institution to another as to their relative importance, their timeliness, or their formal designation as core issues, they share several features in common. First, their life span is rather long—at least several years—and they are not issues that can be resolved quickly or that go away once they have been addressed. Second, to be addressed effectively, they require institution-wide involvement. Third, they are complex and multilayered. Fourth, they tend to create controversy because different constituencies have very different opinions as to the priorities, the approaches to be taken, and the significance of the outcomes.

The following hot button issues are meant to be representative, not exhaustive. Their purpose here is to suggest some key areas in which faculty development may have both a stake and an opportunity for organizational development contribution. Such involvement will be described through a

possible program or initiative. The order of issues should not be taken to suggest relative importance. Some of the functions and units identified are mentioned generically for inclusiveness purposes.

• Accreditation

Regional and discipline-specific accreditation is an ongoing, usually stress-producing process. As accrediting organizations are focusing increasing attention on student-centered and/or learning-centered programming issues, opportunities exist for faculty development participation in all its phases: preparation, site visit, and follow-up. Examples:

- Faculty development assists units through customized programming to develop a unified format for faculty teaching or course portfolios.
- A visit with faculty development personnel or to the faculty development location is part of the site visit agenda.
- In response to any feedback requiring revisions related to faculty development areas of expertise, faculty development teams up with the affected unit (or in the case of regional accreditation, with affected campus groups) to address the issues raised and report back to the accrediting agency.

• Student Retention and Graduation Timelines

Retention in this category refers both to retention of enrolled students in individual programs and courses and the retention of students at the institution. Graduation timelines refer to the amount of time it takes students to graduate. The two issues are joined here because they tend to have some similar causes, and so the possible solutions are similar. Since student retention is often directly linked to the academic program, faculty development's possible connections are clear and they provide opportunities for involvement. Examples:

- A frequent, at least partial, solution is improved academic advisement. A collaborative program by faculty development, the advising council, and student academic support services is developed to focus academic advisors' and professional advisors' attention on learning advisement (i.e., study skills, academic discipline differentiation, etc.) as a companion piece to standard administrative advising (i.e., courses to take, scheduling, requirements, etc.).

- Faculty development either initiates or joins planning activities for programs that have shown a positive effect on retention and achievement levels. These may include learning communities, expanded freshmen orientation, or peer (upper level) student mentoring, all of which require and involve varying degrees of faculty development activities.

Learning Technologies Integration

The push to integrate learning technologies into the teaching/learning matrix is growing, and its motivation is frequently other than pedagogical. In many cases, the move to use learning technologies can be described as an ongoing wild dance in which the institution knows that it has to keep up due to a variety of pressures. Therefore, the financial and political realities as well as the ever-changing nature of the technologies themselves keep getting in the way of a smooth integration. Few institutions have the learning technologies functions integrated into faculty development, a situation that creates a dual (and often competing) track for faculty development activities and which does not address the need for pedagogy to lead technology. Faculty development, as the “expert” unit on pedagogical matters, can play an important role in making the learning technologies’ integration into the teaching/learning environment more rational and productive. Examples:

- Faculty development can initiate conversations with administrators and the technology unit(s) about moving the teaching/learning/technology (TLT) faculty development functions to faculty development.
- Faculty development can offer to add pedagogical components and materials to the faculty training in TLT wherever it is housed.
- Faculty development can initiate conversations among the appropriate stakeholders—information technology, student academic support services, academic units—about the desirability of establishing an institution-wide TLT roundtable that will discuss all technology matters that affect teaching and learning, such as classroom configuration, software priorities, technical support for faculty and students, and more.

Diversity

This complex area includes but is not limited to issues of student diversity, faculty diversity, and curricular content. All of these issues are institution-wide and touch on so many areas of campus life that faculty development’s

approach may be both faculty development centered and institution centered. Examples:

- Faculty development creates sample materials that demonstrate the integration of diversity into the curriculum in different disciplinary areas, and such materials are made available through the faculty development's web site as well as through customized workshops for academic units.
- Faculty development and student life create a joint program to identify and address for faculty, advisors, and other academic support personnel the diversity issues that impact students' abilities to learn and to succeed in their college studies.

Community Engagement

In addition to traditional outreach activities, community engagement may include student preparation for college learning, recruitment of nontraditional faculty, or repositioning the institution to become a central entity in the community. Faculty development may be instrumental in this area in several ways, all of which also directly impact its ability to perform well its standard tasks. Examples:

- Faculty development establishes collaborative programming with the K–12 educational system to provide continuing professional development to its teachers, especially those in grades 6–12, in the area of college preparation in both content and skills.
- Faculty development spearheads the integration of a service-learning program.
- Working with individual colleges or departments, faculty development facilitates an ongoing structured dialogue between the colleges and employer segments that leads to curricular adjustments and assessment activities to ensure students' preparation for the world of work.

Faculty Development Characteristics That Support Organizational Reciprocity

There are many more roles that faculty development can play in institutional organizational development, and their success depends greatly on faculty development's ability to demonstrate specific traits and use deliberate approaches that may be advantageous to any campus organization.

- *Entrepreneurship.* The ability to seek and identify opportunities for expanding the boundaries of programs, relationships, and possibilities
- *Risk-taking.* A willingness to experiment with new alliances, cede some turf for the sake of successful collaborations, and the courage to know up front that not all efforts will yield the desired results
- *Collaboration.* A deliberate effort to work with other organizations on and off campus, realizing that pooled resources, human and material, can bring about enhanced results; offer programmatic support to other units
- *Neutrality.* Being able to work equally well with faculty, administrators, and campus organizations in other divisions by keeping a focus on the collective desired outcomes and avoiding turf issues
- *Strategic planning.* A constant recalibrating of short- and long-term goals, alignment of faculty development and institutional visions and missions, and the ability to keep the big picture in focus while concentrating on the details
- *Initiative.* A willingness to take a leadership role in all matters of teaching and learning and use proactive rather than reactive approaches to problem solving
- *Creativity.* Seeking new solutions to old problems

Summary and Statement of Benefits

Faculty development is in a unique position to help affect institutional development while making progress on its own agenda. Consciously or otherwise, in many instances faculty development is well positioned to play this dual role because its mission is directly tied to the core mission of the institution—teaching and learning. While playing the institutional role, it is also strengthening itself in significant ways.

- *Longevity.* The more involved faculty development is with key institutional activities and the more it is seen as contributing to the betterment of the institution, the more likely it is to survive hard times or administrative whim.
- *Economy of resources.* Collaboration expands the scope of possibilities as shared activities also mean shared resources.

- *Advocacy.* Faculty members realize that faculty development serves as an informal advocate for their ability to perform teaching and other functions well.
- *Modeling.* Faculty development is able to model many of the practices it advocates for faculty such as entrepreneurial thinking, creativity, consistency, good communication, interactivity, and so on.

Nancy Chism (1998) has suggested that faculty development "... can develop a good track record for being helpful and knowledgeable. We can cultivate channels of communication, and by the usefulness of the information, ideas, and process facilitation we provide, improve our access, authority, and resources" (p. 148). Additionally, Mary Deane Sorcinelli (2002) discussed the various locations within an institution in which faculty development can be based.

... a number of successful programs place the director of the teaching center in a direct reporting line to the top. ... This reporting structure lets faculty know that the staff of the center have a direct line to the administration. In addition, proximity to the provost and other academic leaders ... can allow the office to consult readily with and apprise key administrators about development. Finally, this reporting line can help facilitate the kind of faculty and administrative connections that the program needs to advance the institutional teaching mission. (pp. 16–17)

In other words, faculty development has to be able to serve its direct constituency, the teaching community, while at the same time working to address institutional priorities. "Trust," says Warren Bennis (1973), "is gained over time through repeated interactions. ... Consensus is the end of OD [organizational development], a consensus based on trust, openness, confrontation, and feedback" (p. 391). Faculty development, as a campus entity that has the trust of faculty—a huge attribute for its own success—can build upon this trust and contribute significantly to the larger organization.

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