Leadership for Learning

A New Faculty Development Model

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The authors provide examples of a model that develops faculty leaders for learning in all institutions that prize research. The examples come from seven university-wide initiatives, which were sponsored by the institution's faculty development center. The initiatives spanned a nearly ten-year period. Based on four conceptual groundings—scholarship of teaching and learning principles, educational renewal, the production of social capital through soft projects, and horizontal structures—the model has the power to transform faculty into leaders. Elements of the model include a call to participate, a diverse cohort of participants, commitment to providing resources, conference center planners, and peer review and assessment. In contrast to leadership models borrowed from business and industry, the model prizes what the academy values most—collegiality, intellectual curiosity, and the generation of knowledge.

In the fall 2007 issue of *Liberal Education*, the authors of the article titled “Where Are the Faculty Leaders?” delineate a set of goals that most universities and colleges assuredly embrace: “high-quality teaching, innovative curriculum, cutting-edge research, intellectual enrichment, student engagement, improved student outcomes, greater faculty citizenship, a more democratic environment, a campus more responsive to community needs” (Kezar, Lester, Carducci, Gallant, & McGavin, p. 21). Just as assuredly, meeting these goals requires faculty leadership, but as the title of the article suggests,

institutions often assume that faculty are natural-born leaders who will accept the call when it comes. In career paths already well defined by teaching, research, service, and extension responsibilities, how can faculty carve out time for leadership development? How can research institutions hope for anything more than the natural-born leaders stepping forward?

In this chapter, we describe a faculty development model that has shown potential for transforming faculty into leaders whose influence can be documented beyond their classrooms and their departments. In this model, faculty complete long-term inquiry projects that are intellectually rewarding and have transformative effects in their classrooms. Collaborating with colleagues outside their departments, they learn to value horizontal rather than hierarchical thinking. At the end of the projects, these individuals often exhibit the leadership characteristics identified by Tierney (1999): “good leaders are courageous, moral, willing to take risks, active listeners, excellent communicators, able to espouse a vision, and able to stimulate people” (p. 48). Enough of the participants in this model have created significant differences in university learning environments that we can propose an answer to the question, Where are the faculty leaders? Faculty will step into leadership roles when institutions invest in their leadership development.

Conceptual Groundings

Our faculty leadership model features four groundings: 1) the scholarship of teaching and learning, 2) educational renewal, 3) soft projects and social capital, and 4) horizontal structures. The groundings capture what is best about academic environments: intellectual curiosity, personal efficacy, and interest in community. The model helps to overcome the rigid vertical silos that often thwart change in higher education.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Our leadership development model originates with international initiatives created by the American Association of Higher Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of

Teaching, specifically the work of Pat Hutchings, Mary Huber, Barbara Cambridge, and Lee Shulman. In the mid-1990s, we had the great fortune of working closely with Hutchings when she was in residence at the University of Wyoming, working first for the American Association of Higher Education and then for the Carnegie Foundation. Her vision of scholarly teaching became embodied in the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, known as the CASTL Program. Our model is patterned closely on a part of the CASTL initiative called the CASTL Scholars Program and the “teaching commons” described by Huber and Hutchings (2005) in *The Advancement of Learning: Building the Teaching Commons*. In this book, they document the ways in which faculty who are engaged in the scholarship of teaching and learning experience transformations as they move pedagogy to center stage. Assembling them into a teaching commons results in work that is “deeply intriguing, hope giving, and worthy of investment of faculty time and institutional resources” (p. 35). To this list of benefits we would add career enrichment that leads to leadership.

Educational Renewal

During the 1990s, John Goodlad and associates at the Seattle-based National Network of Educational Renewal, through its Institute for Educational Inquiry (IEI), developed a leadership program dedicated to preparing leaders who could advance educational renewal. Their work is described in *Leadership for Educational Renewal: Developing a Cadre of Leaders* (Smith & Fenstermacher, 1999). Goodlad uses the term *renewal* rather than *reform* because reform suggests a one-time event “with corruption at one end and completion at the other” (p. xiii). In contrast, renewal is ongoing and acknowledges the complex culture of schooling and its many components. Goodlad’s model is distinguished by the goal of simultaneous renewal of P–12 schools, teacher education programs, and general education. Thus, a leadership cohort includes representatives of three groups who otherwise aren’t asked to—and don’t—talk with one another. The tripartite grouping, along with a set of readings new to all three groups, produces a

leveling that, in turn, creates a different, more dynamic conversation. Like the Carnegie Foundation's CASTL Scholars Program of thirty-five to forty participants, IEI leadership programs were limited to twenty to twenty-five participants, meeting in multiple sessions over the course of a year. Participants made a commitment to read and discuss four or five books and articles for each session. They also conducted an inquiry project that they reported out during the final session.

In an analysis of the IEI leadership program, Smith and Fenstermacher (1999) report that participants developed a deeper understanding of teaching, appreciated collaboration across groups, and became agents of change in their institutions. Participants also developed ways to value their work, along with "capacities for collaboration" that included stewardship, nurturing, and access (p. 316). The national model developed by Goodlad and others was replicated by the Wyoming School–University Partnership—a founding member of the National Network for Educational Renewal.

Soft Projects and Social Capital

Our model is also founded on the work of educational policy theorist Bill Tierney, who has been examining university cultures and ways to produce change. In *Building the Responsive Campus: Creating High Performance Colleges and Universities*, Tierney (1999) advocates for the soft project as an "intense form of working relationships that can develop organizational excitement and camaraderie and ultimately produce demonstrable goals" (p. 73). Within the otherwise rigid structures of the institution, soft projects can be launched quickly by reassigning or supplementing the work that faculty already do. Throughout this book, Tierney frequently uses such terms as *radical* or *revolutionize* to indicate the need for a different kind of faculty structure to galvanize action. In his later work *Trust and the Public Good: Examining the Cultural Conditions of Academic Work*, Tierney (2006) argues that the work of both standing committees and soft projects should be designed to produce social capital in order to benefit both the individuals and the institution. "The challenge for those who work in academic

organizations is to generate capital and overcome the concerns, fears, or objections of those who are reluctant to participate. . . . Low social capital suggests low levels of engagement, which in turn leads to disempowerment and low levels of trust” (p. 87). Both of Tierney’s ideas—the soft project and the creation of social capital—help explain how a faculty member can be transformed from a dutiful, or perhaps even reluctant, committee member into a risk-taking leader with broad influence and a commitment to stewardship.

Horizontal Structures

The authors of the articles on faculty leadership published in the fall 2007 issue of *Liberal Education* explain a fourth concept that underlies our model: the importance of horizontal structures. Horizontal structures are those that exist across an organization to connect programs, departments, colleges, and institutional divisions. Examples include general education programs and committees, overall financial managements, tenure and promotion policies, and committees that oversee institutional accreditation.

Vertical structures run parallel to each other and might not connect. Almost always, universities are structured vertically, reflecting the administrative units of departments, colleges, and professional schools. The vertical nature of disciplinary structures has engendered the metaphor of *silo* to suggest how vertical structures can, unfortunately, create barriers of elitism, entrenchment, and intractability. Although disciplinary-based departments are powerful institutional structures, they are difficult to change. Moreover, the department committee work that makes up a large share of faculty service does not help faculty to “recognize opportunities to couple their specialized expertise to larger interests that can expand their own horizons, engage students, and advance their institutions” (Gaff, 2007, p. 9).

In contrast, horizontal structures that cut across disciplines, departments, and colleges develop “organizational citizens” with skills in “creating a vision, developing networks, and organizing multiple people” (Kezar et al., 2007, p. 16). Our faculty development model is intentionally designed to be horizontal for these more dynamic ends.

A Leadership Development Model for Faculty

The Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning—the University of Wyoming’s faculty development center—has sponsored numerous soft projects to support both the scholarship of teaching and learning and the development of organizational leaders. The projects have been funded through a variety of sources. Internally, the Ellbogen Center has devoted a portion of its operating funds for these projects and has also received grants from other university organizations. External funding has resulted from successful grant proposals to regional and national private foundations and to the U.S. Department of Education’s FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education) program. Some of the projects have a specific curricular or pedagogical focus, while others are broadly conceived to allow for flexibility of interests among the participants. Although they vary slightly in length, purpose, and structure, they are all founded on the conceptual groundings described in the previous section. Table 8.1 lists some recent examples of these projects.

The faculty development model that we describe here departs significantly from the brown-bag or seminar structure that informs much of a typical teaching center’s work. Brown-bag workshops or seminars help instructors to revise a course assignment, reframe a syllabus, and in general infuse energy into teaching, but they are not likely to develop scholarly leaders for teaching and learning. To achieve this more enduring goal, we have patterned a model on a grants process that requires mutual commitments of time, thought, and collegiality. This process consists of four features: 1) an invitation to participate, 2) a diverse cohort, 3) a commitment of resources, and 4) a dedication to peer review and assessment.

Invitation to Participate

We start a faculty development initiative by shaping a long-term, inquiry-based project around some broad themes. We then issue either a competitive call for written proposals or an invitation to participate, based on demonstrated previous work. Project participants understand that they are committing at least a

**Table 8.1. Examples of Faculty Development
Projects in the Ellbogen Center**

<i>Project Name and Description</i>	<i>Funding</i>	<i>Cohort Length</i>	<i>Cohort Numbers and Dates</i>	<i>Number of Participants</i>
inVisible College A year-long SoTL project with external consultants featuring stipends, readings, and a publicly presented project	Internal	1 year	3 cohorts: 2000–2003	8–23 for each cohort
e-Portfolios A year-long study, with external consultant and stipends to implement e-portfolios at the departments and program level	Internal	1 year	1 cohort: 2001–2002	6
Warming up the Chill A SoTL book project focused on diversity and the improvement of classroom learning environments	Internal and External (AAHE)	2 years	1 cohort: 2001–2003	6 plus 3 book editors
Senior Scholars A year-long SoTL project for senior faculty featuring stipends, readings, and a publicly presented project	External (private)	1.5 years	1 cohort: 2005–2006	7 plus collaborators
Connecting Learning Across Academic Settings (CLAAS) A three-year FIPSE project focused on general education resulting in numerous scholarly projects	External (FIPSE)	3.5 years	1 cohort: 2003–2007	6 plus collaborators
Kaiser Ethics Project A three-year project to embed ethics content into courses	External (private)	1 to 2 years	3 cohorts: 2006–2009	7 plus collaborators for each cohort

year's worth of work that will involve the scholarly tasks of reading, having discussions, engaging in research, and conducting assessment.

Diverse Cohort

The most successful calls or invitations encourage faculty to start with disciplinary problems in teaching and learning but also include the promise of cross-fertilization that might be multidisciplinary, intergenerational, cross-sector, and cross-institutional. Throughout its history, faculty have consistently thanked the Ellbogen Center for the opportunity to talk with other faculty from across campus or at other institutions, especially those in disciplines far removed from their own. What is true of single brown-bag discussions is tenfold more powerful for long-term development projects. In narrowly defined disciplinary groups, faculty leap too quickly to conclusions or outcomes, perhaps because they assume that everyone in the room shares values and knowledge. In more diverse groups that cross disciplines, faculty are willing to challenge each other, ask fundamental or beginning questions, seek clarification, and admit ignorance. In the ensuing discussions, faculty often start with puzzlement and then become risk takers as they sort through differences. Cross-fertilization helps faculty become innovators.

Resources

In return for the commitment of time, thought, and collegiality promised by faculty in their agreement to participate in a long-term project, the Ellbogen Center obligates resources to enable their achievement of project goals. In other words, the center must assume long-term investment risks to produce long-term results.

Acting as a Conference Center. To successfully sponsor significant faculty development projects, we understand what it means to be a convener of meetings. As chief worriers, we provide the scaffolding for a successful set of meetings, which includes creating the schedule, agenda, and structure for intellectual work. It also includes committing office staff to the dozens of tasks related to scaffolding: finding meeting rooms, providing catering, cleaning up, duplicating,

working with university staff from multiple offices, creating Web sites, paying bills, managing spreadsheets, and communicating multiple times with participants by e-mail, phone, and snail mail. We cannot overstate the importance of this function. A high-quality leadership project requires considerable attention to detail.

Contracting Outside Expertise. Through our projects, we have confirmed the importance of anchoring faculty development in the intellectual work of others, especially those who have gained the respect of peers in published work. We are committed to finding powerful or provocative books published by leading scholars in teaching and learning, providing their books free to participants, and featuring book discussions as central parts of the project meetings. We also invite book authors and other experts to our meeting sites, where they not only give plenary talks to a community-wide audience but also meet in smaller sessions with project participants. We have invited such scholars as Mary Catherine Bateson, Larry Cuban, Bill Tierney, John Bean, Stephen Brookfield, Ken Bain, Pat Hutchings, Barbara Cambridge, and Lee Shulman. Among the wide-ranging benefits of this investment is the modeling of scholarly leadership that these invited experts provide.

Providing Stipends. The modest stipends we provide to faculty participants for many of our projects pay significant and ongoing dividends. For \$1,000 to \$3,000, faculty will commit to a project for fifteen and even twenty-four months. Only occasionally will a faculty member use the stipend for summer salary. A prized use of their stipends is travel, sometimes for disciplinary conferences, sometimes for specialized training. Frequently, faculty manage their stipends for more collaborative uses. They pull together their own working groups of peers, graduate students, and undergraduate students. They bring in outside experts to meet with these groups. As we analyze faculty use of stipends, we are often impressed by their ability to turn a quarter into a dollar and invest this earned interest in teaching and learning.

Peer Review and Assessment

The project structures described here, which involve mutual investments of time, thought, and resources, involve several

forms of accountability. In project meetings over the course of one, two, or three years, faculty report to each other about the progress of their work. These reports often include early drafts for revised course materials, assessment instruments, conference papers, and articles for publication. The persuasive quality of these reports rises several degrees when we invite administrators to attend the meetings: deans and their associates, directors, vice presidents and their associates, even the university president and trustees. The quality escalates when we create public forums for their work in connection with on-campus visits of outside experts and when faculty use their stipends for presentations at conferences. Scholarly work is founded on peer review, and infusing peer review into teaching and learning projects guarantees an important measure of quality.

Most impressive to us has been a dedication to assessment that develops through the life of these projects. Starting in the early project meetings, assessment becomes the anchor for thinking about student learning. Faculty frequently develop major assessment projects. They use their stipends to hire a variety of collaborators that include undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty peers. Some of these partners observe every class session of an instructor's course, providing a rich set of notes about student performance. Others help the instructors in data collection and analysis. Typically, by the end of a project, faculty participants are wholly committed to assessment as a central way of understanding teaching and learning. They also become spokespeople for assessment in their home departments and disciplines.

A Move into Leadership

One important effect of the leadership model is a change in identity. According to Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, and Damon in *Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet* (2001), a change in identity is really the development of competence and character in an individual: "The most developed individuals exhibit a sense of autonomy and maturity, while at the same time maintaining a connection to the wider community, to vital traditions of earlier times, and to people and institutions yet to come" (p. 243). At the start of an Ellbogen Center initiative, individuals sign on because they are curious, in need of help and nurturing, or simply

looking for a way to fund an idea for a course they are teaching. At the end, these individuals often exhibit leadership characteristics that we cited in our introduction. They are “courageous, moral, willing to take risks, active listeners, excellent communicators, able to espouse a vision, and able to stimulate people” (Tierney, 1999, p. 48). They are able to persistently and effectively advocate for change in the teaching and learning culture.

Expanding Professional Roles and Identity: Two Profiles

In two noteworthy cases, faculty participants in our faculty development model are now directing innovative university-wide projects. Mark Lyford directs the Life Sciences program, and April Heaney directs the LeaRN program—an academic success center. These programs and their faculty leaders epitomize the possibilities for horizontal structures in the academy. They cut broadly and deeply across academic colleges and departments; they include statewide P-16 participants in their work and are carrying their local and regional success to national initiatives. These faculty leaders have communicated successfully with department and other university colleagues, persuading them to teach courses in substantively different ways. They cast their nets wide, establishing collaborations across several levels, and they create frequent, varied, and productive development opportunities for the faculty who teach in their programs. Both of these faculty have also created a comprehensive assessment culture in their programs as the bedrock for their decision making and for their faculty development projects.

Mark and April’s identity transformations might be described as meteoric. Three to five years ago, they worked at the lowest faculty rank—temporary academic professionals. They now direct significant, complex university programs focused on student learning. In part, their transformation results from fortunate timing, which in the discipline of rhetoric studies is called *kairos*. Programs needed leaders at the same time Mark and April were demonstrating their interest, commitment, and leadership skills. Through the several years that we observed and reported on their work to the U.S. Department of Education FIPSE program,

we also know that their participation in Ellbogen Center faculty development projects considerably shaped their leadership style. Both credit their participation in the three-year CLAAS (Connecting Learning for Academic Settings) faculty development project for teaching them how to plan for change in environments that include multiple disciplines and levels of expertise. They learned how to feature sustained faculty conversation as central to their work, how to develop a commitment to long-term collaborations and assessments, and how to create opportunities for others to be rewarded.

Examples abound of how they have adapted and transcended these lessons in their leadership. For the Life Sciences program, Mark has created a cross-department and cross-college executive committee and smaller stewardship committees that meet regularly to review teaching, learning, and assessment in the program's courses. Notable committee successes include the identification of common learning outcomes that cross course boundaries and the beginning of substantial conversation about assessment. For the Synergy program, which is a first-year learning community required of all conditionally admitted students, April runs a yearly summer faculty development institute to help the course instructors and peer mentors plan course connections. The success of Synergy has led top university administrators to envision an ambitious learning community concept for all first-year students—an initiative that April has been asked to lead.

At the regional level, Mark has collaborated with the Wyoming School–University Partnership to sponsor three years' worth of statewide science summits that include public school, community college, and university instructors. The focus of these meetings has been simple but powerful: at every meeting, the participants look at student work from all levels to locate the challenges of teaching life sciences. Among other values, participants have praised these summits for prizing the horizontal rather than top-down structure that results in a democratic discussion of ideas. With the same collaborative and horizontal model, April and the Partnership are now launching a series of statewide meetings called Teaching Writing in Wyoming.

At the national level, April assembled a winning nomination packet featuring the Synergy program for the TIAA-CREF's 2007

Theodore M. Hesburgh Award, which recognizes exceptional faculty development programs designed to enhance undergraduate teaching and learning. The award carries a \$25,000 prize. Under Mark's leadership, he and two other biology faculty members were named as Education Fellows in the Life Sciences by the National Academies for completing a summer institute on innovative teaching. Mark has also assembled a group of colleagues from other major universities to form a national consortium of life sciences or biology program directors. Thus far, the directors represent eight large public universities, including the University of Wisconsin at Madison, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Georgia State University, Michigan State University, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Michigan, and San Diego State University. The group plans to meet regularly, expand its membership, create materials for dissemination, collaborate on grant writing, and study such issues as the effectiveness of Advanced Placement biology courses and students' later success in college.

Leadership for Assessment

Thus far, we have demonstrated the transformations of individuals who move from faculty to leadership status in unique university programs. The profiles of April and Mark illustrate dramatic changes in leadership role and responsibility. Those changes directly result from their involvement in projects, based on our model's four groundings: the scholarship of teaching and learning, educational renewal, soft projects and social capital, and horizontal structures.

We can also document leadership transformations within the conventional university structure of departments and colleges. Of the fifty-four people who participated in at least one of the Ellbogen Center projects listed in Table 8.1, 22 percent, almost one-fourth, have become department heads, college deans and associates, program directors, and in one case an associate vice president. In most colleges and universities, of course, faculty routinely change or expand roles into leadership positions. Such changes depend on personal interest, timing, and institutional need. Faculty also take on leadership roles, based on peer pressure

to “take their turn.” Leaders transformed by the model we describe here go well beyond taking their turns at filling a position. Instead, these leaders play pivotal roles in leadership for learning.

One of the most significant features of their leadership for learning is the responsibility they take for assessment. Of the 22 percent we identify as institutional leaders, all but two are providing leadership for assessment work at the program, college, and university levels. As department heads and program directors, they have been the early adopters and advocates for completing a full cycle of assessment that includes identifying learning goals, collecting and analyzing data, and implementing change. Given the right circumstances and timing, they have sometimes been able to effect larger changes. For example, one of our faculty participants, now a department head and an associate dean, has led her college to complete assessment cycles and to prominently feature assessment of student learning at both the undergraduate and graduate levels on the college’s Web site.

Of particular note is the role that the Ellbogen Center faculty participants have played in university-wide assessment efforts. The Office of Academic Affairs formed a university assessment coordinators committee more than ten years ago to help college and department leaders institutionalize ways to implement, document, and revise the assessment of student learning. In effect, the committee had the daunting challenge of selling the university community on the importance of student and program assessment and creating a university-wide presence that stewarded assessment conversations and action plans. Over the past eight years, faculty participants in Ellbogen Center programs have constituted 25 to 30 percent of this group, and they have helped to redefine the committee’s role from vertical regulator or overseer to developer of an assessment culture. With their help, the assessment coordinators adopted the vision articulated in Peggy Maki’s (2004) *Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution*. Maki argues that an institution will achieve an assessment culture by encouraging faculty to develop principles of commitment to student learning. Through a collaborative and iterative process, with “nested discussions, decisions, and actions” (p. 4), Maki envisions that an institution can adopt

assessment as a central “way of knowing, learning, and evolving” (p. 8) as it pursues its primary mission of teaching and learning.

The assessment coordinators meet twice a month and engage in numerous activities. They attend national assessment conferences, sponsor university-wide assessments using national instruments, provide yearly reviews of every department’s assessment efforts, develop workshops, and publish assessment news on a Web site and in a newsletter. They also sponsor major campuswide assessment forums and fund competitive grants to help departments achieve assessment outcomes. The forums have been successful events with broad attendance from all colleges and faculty levels. In the past few years, assessment experts for these forums have included Peggy Maki, Susan Hatfield, Linda Suskie, and Peter Ewell. In addition to working with these experts, participants in the forums learn from their campus colleagues who describe the results of local assessment projects, many of which were spawned through assessment assistance grants.

Although many departments and programs continue to struggle with assessment, several have profited from these efforts. They have adopted assessment as a way of developing their teaching to increase student learning and of determining curriculum revisions. In iterative and collaborative processes, they systematically commit to the collection and analysis of data about student learning, and they rapidly respond to the need for change. For these departments and programs, assessment has become a method for increasing their social capital. Significant leadership for this result has come from faculty members who learned about the power of assessment through the Ellbogen Center faculty development programs.

Conclusion

Models of leadership abound. In the current milieu, as colleges and universities come to be viewed as businesses, it is not surprising that they look to business and industry for ways to develop leaders. The faculty leadership model we describe here is distinguished by the principles that the academy values most: collegiality, intellectual curiosity, and the generation of knowledge. A structure that prizes intellectual work within a supportive, diverse

cohort yields personal renewal and growth for individual faculty members. Faculty gain confidence and competence—qualities that transfer to other aspects of their work in and outside of the classroom.

Some might argue that convening small faculty cohorts into soft projects is a slow and costly way to grow leaders. We contrast the cohort model to typical leadership programs for which central administration selects a rising star to leave campus and participate in a one-time, intense summer program. Such programs enjoy considerable popularity and have good results. They are, however, genuinely expensive. They are not intended to create leaders for horizontal structures and fail to generate the kind of social capital our model creates. In fact, we assert that a university has an institutional obligation to invest in groups of faculty, working in cohorts around immediate instructional, curricular, and assessment issues. Who benefits? The institution, the faculty member, and, above all, students.

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