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Faculty Development in a Decade of Transition

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A curriculum for change in higher education emerged during the 1970's which emphasizes, in the tradition of the three "R's", a course of study called reexamination, revitalization, renewal, retraining, and retirement, along with retrenchment. All of these exhortations calling on our institutions to reexamine, revitalize, renew, retrain, retrench, and retire have been operationalized in a process called faculty development which, in its best sense, recognizes that faculty members are the fulcrum for change in any educational institution. Change faculty and you change the nature of higher education. I suggest that the transitions that higher education institutions are making during this decade are either tolerable or intolerable, productive or destructive, in large manner as a result of the way faculty members are able to have some control over the factors that influence change in their institutions, and over the institutional responses which are made to confront the need to change.

Let me quickly indicate three conditions which I think will prevail during the 1980's that provide a context for transitions. These are by no means new to you. One issue which must be faced is the declining population of young people who traditionally have been our customers. While some variations exist in the predicted consequences of this decline, these people have already been born, or not born as the case may be, and we know that fewer of them are out there.

Various estimates have been made about the severity of this decline. The Bureau of the Census indicates that the number of eighteen year olds in the population will decrease by 15% from 1977 to 1985 and 23% by 1995, while the number of black and other minority eighteen year olds will decline by 2% through 1985, and will increase slightly by 1995. Of course, gross estimates such as these tell you nothing about the number of persons in the postsecondary age range who will choose to go to college or enter the work force instead. Also, we know very little about what appears to be a trend toward an interruption of the college experience with a period of work. The age of baccalaureate graduation seems to be getting older. Population declines will affect postsecondary institutions differently, especially when one takes into account the regional location of the institution and the geographical area it considers to be its market. Migration forecasting is a risky business. Nevertheless, the decline in numbers of eighteen year olds will probably be greater in the East and Midwest than the national average. The South and West will continue to show some population gains. This "demographic depression," as it is labeled by the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies, will not be able to be understood until each institution analyzes its potential effect in terms of institutional goals, market areas for student recruitment, and the gender and racial mix of the student body.

Another condition relates to the decline in economic rewards for faculty in higher education. Even if we are able to control inflation in an acceptable way during the next five years — an almost irrational optimism — salaries of faculty are not going to catch up for a long time. Labor intensive, declining industries cannot expect to keep up with inflation in the salaries they pay their employees.

This decline in the probability of stable economic rewards in academic occupations means that other kinds of reward structures will need to be explored which can compensate for the erosion of the economic well-being of the professoriate. What these may be I cannot say with any degree of certainty, but non-economic rewards will need to be a meaningful stimulus for maintaining acceptable levels of productivity. Otherwise, a decline in productivity will become the basic non-economic reward structure by default. Academicians will simply do less for the money they receive from colleges and univer-

sities. I should add that my definition of academic productivity is whatever a faculty member does to maintain and improve the quality of the educational programs he or she is responsible for maintaining. Both teaching and scholarship are central to this process of quality in our educational efforts. The third condition during this century is the increasing average age of the professoriate. The average age creeps up each year, and most forecasters agree that we will reach an average age of fifty for faculty by the early 1990's. The increasing age of faculty has some profound implications for the quality of higher education during the next decade, especially as we all grow old in the same institutions in which we initiated our careers. Growing old professionally in an environment which offers fewer surprises than the challenges of a new atmosphere can lead to professional malaise as a person encounters the repetition of the same year over and over again. As we age, we tend to become more conservative, less willing to take risks, and less venturesome in taking on challenges which might jeopardize the substantial gains already attained. Of course, there are exceptions to this overdrawn description; nevertheless, as more and more of us get older our environment will be less able to surround us with the stimulation of new and younger colleagues who provide the visions of the future which we had when we were their age. I consider the aging professoriate one of the most serious challenges for faculty development efforts in postsecondary education. Older faculty must find reasons for staying intellectually young in order to continue to provide visions of the future along with the declining numbers of younger colleagues who will be able to join us. Future prospects, then, for those of us who remain in higher education for the rest of our professional lives include being relatively poorer, absolutely older, more aware of how much smaller our classes are and how much younger the students seem to be.

The prevailing mood in academia seems to be to react to such a future as a threat rather than a challenge. We seek to manipulate the rewards in our curriculum of the 6 "R's", mentioned earlier, so that we might achieve some relief of the moment. Institutions of higher education have always had a tendency to react to needs for change and threats to their stability by resorting to one of several traditional strategies. One reaction is to imagine that such threats are an illusion,

or at least the perceptions of someone who knows nothing about our world. Another established reaction is to do nothing about what ever it is that threatens until it goes away. Still another strategy is to look to the past for help. Whatever was successful in similar situations in the past should be able to work its magic again. Let us not forget also that the use of past successes as a shaman in the tribes of academe depends upon the appointment of many committees to discourage the evil winds of change from becoming too gusty. Reacting to threat by appointing committees is yet another customary response. Higher education has a tradition of backing into the future with the armaments of a scholarship which is more useful for analyzing what has happened than it is useful for anticipating what may happen.

Faculty members may be able to influence what happens at their institutions during the 1980's and thereby affect both the nature and the quality of the transitions which are inevitable for all of us during the next ten years, and perhaps beyond. One strategy for managing transitions is effective planning. Planning should involve all the participants who have a vested interest in their institution — faculty, staff, students, administrators, trustees, and alumni. During the next decade faculty development must meet the challenge of helping to prepare faculty for their planning roles. Faculty development initiatives must broaden their scope beyond exercises to excite faculty about their own potential as persons or programs to help us become better teachers. Certainly, these are important as faculty development needs, but the agenda for faculty development must be expanded to include roles for faculty members which have not in the past been part of the traditions of an academic commitment. Faculty must begin to become involved in planning for the future of their institutions. In instances where no governance structure exists to involve faculty in the planning function, we must initiate a structure, not by demanding it, but by demonstrating that faculty members can muster collectively the most logical and informed arguments about what is best for the educational communities which nurture us. We must all become specialists in higher education in addition to maintaining the role of teaching scholars in an academic discipline. Faculty development should be the mechanism which gets us *beyond* our discipline to a competency for understanding institutional budgets, arriving at just and humane decisions

about promotion and retention which serve the best interests of our institutions, and recognizing the difference between a fad in educational practice and a reform which weaves a lasting and creative pattern in the fabric of learning.

A recent report from the Educational Testing Service about faculty development in colleges and universities in the United States indicated that the present state of the art has not progressed far beyond "tinkering" with teaching. Most programs for faculty development emphasize the improvement of teaching, and most do so by attempting to improve those who want to get better rather than those whose need for improvement is clearly indicated. Helping the productive stay that way rather than changing those who are clearly ineffective may be a characteristic of all human resource development programs, at least in their beginning years. Faculty development during the 1980's must reach beyond this limited commitment, however, if institutional change in the interest of educational quality is to be forthcoming. The future of faculty development programs lies in confronting a number of agenda in higher education not now identified as legitimate concerns for faculty development efforts. Among these are:

1. **Faculty Governance**—The vitality of post-secondary institutions is directly related to the commitments faculty make to keep them vital. Participation in decision making is one way of maintaining this vitality. Faculty governance represents the structure for this participation. Faculty development should include activities to help faculty learn to participate in this governance procedure in an informed and rational manner. Those institutions which survive the hard times of the present will be the ones which have learned to govern themselves with the kind of collegiality expected of the academy but seldom found in actuality. Most faculty members are totally unprepared for the informed and knowledgeable participation needed to analyze budgets, make rational decisions about promotion and retention, judge effective teaching, and assess the importance and impact of curriculum changes. Graduate training programs do not include learning about the issues which cut across departments. Faculty development programs should begin to accept the responsibility to provide activities for faculty which will help them approach their task of governance with some

insight about their institutions other than those gained around the coffee pots in their own departments.

2. *Collective Bargaining*— Collective bargaining agreements between faculty and the Boards of the institutions they represent appear to be the wave of the future with respect to distributing power in higher education. Such agreements may or may not involve affiliation with a union or a professional organization. Much of the activity of bargaining collectively in higher education involves meetings between an elected faculty body such as a senate or a General Faculty Committee and members of the administration. Collective bargaining as a process represents a means of negotiating solutions to problems which involve one or more of the constituent groups making up an academic community. Bargaining only about economic issues and/or job security is one way of making the process an instant and constant mechanism of confrontation which goes against the need in higher education to keep barriers weak rather than strong and impenetrable.

Faculty must learn how to bargain without destroying the ethos they are trying to maintain. Faculty development issues belong at the bargaining table as well as individual self-interest. Bargaining should be about the quality of the education offered by the institution. This kind of bargaining involves giving as well as getting. Those involved will have no basis for long-range judgments about when to give and when to ask unless faculty, administration, trustees, and students have some sense of collective purpose. Faculty development programs can be a powerful agent for the discovery and maintenance of this sense of collective purpose.

3. *Evaluation and Faculty Development*— The evaluation of teaching has been a central theme in most of the faculty development programs active in colleges and universities. Evidence to indicate either a change or an improvement in teaching skills is not difficult to obtain. Perhaps this is one reason most faculty development programs concentrate on the act of teaching as a central theme by emphasizing a specific orthodoxy for improvement or a general system of instruction based on technological supports. What remains to be accomplished is the testing of strategies and techniques of evaluation useful for the assessment of the full range of faculty efforts and of the impact of faculty development programs on the institutions they serve. The

assessment of institutional change has always been a nebulous one. Nevertheless, its difficulty should not dissuade those who are competent in the field of evaluation from applying their skills to the special demands of evaluating the impact of programs while the dimensions of these programs are evolving in response to the many demands placed on them. Historically, education has tended to view evaluation as a univariate phenomenon which deals with one variable at a time. Faculty development presents complex multivariate issues which cannot be understood by dealing with one variable at a time. The evaluation of faculty development programs remains a serious problem which must be addressed if faculty development is to have a creditable knowledge base.

4. *Disciplinary Associations and Faculty Development*— Much has been written about the ambivalent nature of disciplinary associations in confronting the need to help their academic members become better professionals. Faculty tend often to identify with their own kind to a greater degree than they identify with the institutions they serve. Disciplinary associations ignore a significant need for their memberships by neglecting to recognize professional responsibilities other than scholarship as legitimate aspects of the role of scholar-teacher. These associations have recently given evidence of viewing their members as professionals with demands in addition to those of research, scholarship and artistic activities. The role of disciplinary associations in faculty development is critically important. Associations should accept this responsibility by providing opportunities for educating their members for a broader competency other than through scholarship alone.

5. *The Older Faculty Member* — Much has been written about the mid-career crisis; enough, in fact, to encourage all older faculty members to have one. The older faculty member does represent a special case for faculty development. As I indicated earlier, by the 1990's, the average age of faculty in higher education could approach fifty years of age. Most of these faculty members will have spent them major portions of their careers at the same institutions. The mid-career issue for faculty development programs will not involve the problems of the worn-out academician who has retired long before his or her time. Rather the issue will be that of providing opportunities for faculty

to extend and sustain an already demonstrated excellence which loses its power to motivate in proportion to the number of repetitions involved in its expression. Maintaining excellence requires finding new ways to express it. The quality of educational experience in the future will depend upon maintaining the excellence in a faculty which won it with enthusiasm at a younger time when the rewards for its attainment were different than those available for sustaining it. Most faculty at this stage in their careers are unwilling to admit publicly that their enthusiasm is waning because they view themselves as being valued because of it. Faculty development efforts should give this problem the attention deserves lest higher education find itself in the predicament of the young being taught by those who are several generations removed, with neither showing enthusiasm for the encounter. Perhaps at that stage in the evolution of higher education, the illusion of learning will become the goal, and the cosmetics of teaching will dominate the science of institution.

I suggest that transitions in our institutions during the 1980's can include the substitution of an industrial model of management to accommodate the planning need for change if faculty themselves are unwilling to assume this task. Many institutions are already committed by policy to an administrative structure which places management skills up front. The management approach to containment is effective in higher education as long as the managers realize that postsecondary institutions are not factories. I would much prefer to have my institution managed by persons who themselves have completed an apprenticeship as a teacher-scholar and thus had learned the difference between an industry and a school. Peter Drucker has this to say about the need for management in higher education:

In their own self-interest, faculty members need radically new policy in three areas. They need an effective substitute for a self-defeating tenure policy. They need systematic personnel development to enable them to benefit from future opportunities. And they need organized placement of the middle-aged, "average" professor in work careers outside of academe. But, above all, faculty members need management — either self-imposed management or management by administration, (Drucker, 1977).

The business model for developing human resources may appear on the surface to be the solution for managing academic transitions. However, a number of basic differences exist between the worlds of business and academe:

1. The industrial, or business, model for human resource development values the human resource for what can ultimately be contributed to productivity. To develop a human resource in this context is to either sustain or increase the human contribution to economic growth.

2. Higher education is not committed to making money. Its product is the high quality of the educational effort it is able to organize and sustain.

3. The quality of education in most postsecondary institutions is determined by faculty decisions made about curriculum, admissions and degree requirements, and promotion and retention of peers. Workers at General Motors do not vote on the best design for the cars they produce each year.

4. Industrial workers and business professionals do not usually participate in the governance of their organizations. The distribution of power in the world of business is arranged much more hierarchically than in higher education where power is distributed diffusely.

5. The options available to faculty members for having an impact on the quality of education are more numerous than options available to most workers in industry and business.

6. Human resource development in the context of a business or an industry is specifically related to the needs of the system it serves and is designed to enhance performance on specific jobs within that system. The evaluations of these programs involve determining the contributions they make to the outputs of the systems.

7. Faculty development for higher education is not directed as much toward the specific needs of a well defined system as it is concerned with the growth and development of individuals within the system. The ultimate evaluation of faculty development programs should be the contributions made to the social and intellectual maturity of faculty and students. Faculty development is a process for keeping faculty responsive to the basic reason for their existence as faculty — to educate students and *each other* in a manner which is best for each.

8. Human resource development in non-educational settings lacks this basic value of self-determination in decisions about the aims and purposes of development.

What happens to higher education in the next twenty years may well depend on what faculty make happen. I am convinced that the options are more numerous than we now imagine. Certainly the "new revolution" envisioned by the Final Report of the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies, "Three Thousand Futures: The Next 20 Years for Higher Education," contains enough challenges to be overwhelming when contemplated in aggregate. The report points out that "by the year 2000, colleges and universities will enroll more women than men; as many people over 21, as 21 and under; and nearly as many part-time as full-time attendees. A quarter of all students will be members of minority groups." A more reflective consideration of this future, however, produces the prospects of some exciting times ahead. If the transitions of the future are to preserve the best of higher education, then our society must be convinced that postsecondary institutions represent the last major avenue available for the expression and education of talent.

If faculty are able to defend what is valued with a logic which is persuasive rather than divisive; with a base of knowledge which is definitive rather than speculative; and with a faith which permits the accommodations of the fads of the moment without losing sight of the permanence of purpose necessary for the future; then, higher education should survive the crises ahead.

Bibliography

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