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Faculty Exchanges as a Means of Renewal and Development

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Currently, many colleges and universities are experiencing a period of steady-state or decreased enrollments. Gone are the days when departments regularly hired new faculty members who provided a steady influx of new ideas, energy, and enthusiasm to departments. Faculty members now tend to stay longer at one institution and often experience "burnout" as they continue to teach similar courses at the same place for long periods of time.

Some faculty members have sabbatical leaves or temporary jobs that allow them to spend time away from their home institutions. Many others are not eligible for sabbatical leaves or cannot afford to live on the less than full pay provisions of such leaves. Many professors foresee long periods of time teaching at the same place with little likelihood of new colleagues to bring new ideas to them. Many different faculty development ideas are being tried in an attempt to keep professors feeling enthusiastic about their teaching and academic growth. This paper is a personal account of one form of faculty renewal, namely, trading jobs.

During the 1983-84 academic year, I traded jobs with a colleague at another institution. I had been teaching for nine years in the Mathematics Department of Humboldt State University, where I was a tenured Associate Professor. For various personal reasons, I had decided I would like to spend a year in Florida. In Spring, 1982, I wrote a letter to the chair of each mathematics department of a university or college in Florida asking if anyone would be interested in exchanging jobs and living quarters with me for 1983-84. I received inquiries from about six people. None of them had what I considered adequate housing for my family. I was beginning to think about renting a home and just exchanging jobs when, in Fall, 1982, I received a phone call from someone at the University of Central Florida in Orlando asking if I was still interested in faculty exchange. As we began discussing details, this seemed like an ideal trade for us. Our institutions had similar teaching loads and expectations, and the two of us had similar homes and families.

Having established between the two of us a desire to trade jobs, the next step was to arrange administrative details. We exchanged resumes and sample student evaluations, which both departments used as a basis for judging whether to accept or reject the trade. This approval process was very informal, especially compared to the screening procedure followed before a potential new faculty member is offered a job.

Next, each of us needed to obtain administrative approval for our exchange. Humboldt State University has had several people involved in faculty exchanges in the past and has developed a very simple letter of agreement for such exchanges. (See Appendix for a sample of this letter.) Within two weeks, all signatures had been obtained on both campuses and only informal personal arrangements remained. In our case, we exchanged homes and contents intact with each family bringing only clothing, a few personal possessions, and its own automobile, which each family chose to drive cross-country.

Each of us found the year very renewing. We had an opportunity to bring our areas of expertise to new colleagues

and to be exposed to many new ideas. Seeing different ways that the two departments and universities handled various academic and administrative situations gave us new ideas to take home to our institutions. Both of us had been heavily involved with committee assignments, academic advising, and administrative tasks on our campus. While we were welcomed wholeheartedly into our host departments, we participated in non-teaching assignments by choice only. This made our work loads slightly more enjoyable than what we had been used to carrying. In my own case, I was able to devote a great deal of time to joint mathematical research with two colleagues in my area of interest at the University of Central Florida. Because I am the only one in my particular field at Humboldt State University, this collaboration was a tremendous extra benefit of the exchange.

The exchange was a good experience for our families as well. Each of us has two children. All saw new parts of the country in our travels as well as in our new homes. Three of the four children made friends easily at their new schools. One felt isolated and lonely for several months but wound up forming some very close friendships. At the end of the year, all concerned were pleased to return to their "own" homes and friends but were also sad to leave their "temporary" homes and new friends. Having experienced the joy and intellectual stimulation of a faculty trade once, I would be pleased to turn around and arrange another one for 1985-86. My family, however, will probably convince me to stay settled down a few more years before I leave again.

Financially, a faculty exchange is perhaps one of the least expensive ways to get away for year. There is no loss of salary or benefits. I am not a tax consultant, and I suggest that anyone proposing to make a faculty exchange should check with current government publications or a tax expert. According to the IRS (1981, pp. 62-3), faculty exchange constitutes a temporary assignment if it lasts less than one year; that resulted in significant tax advantages in 1983-84.

Anyone involved in a faculty exchange during the

spring should be sure to take or send all relevant tax records to his or her temporary home for income tax filing. Both of us involved in this exchange inadvertently left some records at home and needed to call the other to find and send some important information.

Although I arranged my own exchange and was guided primarily by geographical considerations, there are other ways to set up a faculty exchange. For example, The National Faculty Exchange (NFE) is a program funded by the Exxon Educational Foundation and institutional member fees to assist in arranging faculty exchanges. According to their 1984-85 Exchange Opportunities booklet:

NFE is a centrally directed, campus-based, membership program which facilitates opportunities for the exchange of a faculty and staff among colleges and universities in the United States and its territories. The variety and number of opportunities in higher education across the United States, coupled with the cultural and geographic diversity in this country, provide countless combinations of exchange environments.

NFE, unlike clearinghouses or regionally isolated exchange programs, is national in scope and centrally brokers faculty and staff through a pool which accommodates multi-lateral replacements. This approach eliminates the need for a campus:campus exchange of individuals. A replacement for an outgoing exchange participant is likely to come from a campus other than that receiving the exchange. Applications are processed using procedures and timetables common to all member colleges and universities.

The National Faculty Exchange provides a great deal of flexibility in placements, exchange periods and assignments. Administrative personnel may often find time periods of several weeks or months more manageable than the semester or year exchange more appropriate for faculty members. Assignments may be teaching, research, administrative, consulting, observation, or any combination thereof. In most cases, the exchange participant remains on the home institutions's salary line.

NFE is funded by the Exxon Education Foundation to encourage interchange of ideas among professionals at institutions of higher education by increasing the mobility of faculty and staff. NFE member institutions, realizing

the value of investing in their professional personnel, are committed to assisting faculty and administrative staff to pursue professional growth through exchange. (National Faculty Exchange, 1984, p. 3)

Several professional organizations, including the Mathematical Association of America, also maintain lists of people interested in faculty exchanges. If your professional organization does not, it may still be possible to publish a notice of interest in a national or regional newsletter.

While this article has focused primarily on the benefits available to an individual through a faculty exchange, I would like to conclude with a statement from the NFE regarding benefits to the institution.

For the institution, exchange offers the opportunity to schedule new courses or offer existing courses with new faces and varied approaches. The exchange of ideas between the participant and his/her new colleagues may spark new instructional or administrative approaches. Introduction of new faculty and staff may provide an institution with the opportunity to create new programs or services, solve administrative problems, improve existing programs, or identify approaches to areas of reorganization, retraining or retrenchment.

Other advantages for the institution may include developing projects and working relationships with other colleges and universities, accessing a pool of prescreened faculty and staff as alternatives to short-term hiring situations, increasing staffing opportunities, providing for mobility of faculty and staff while retaining them as continuing employees, and expanding opportunities for sabbatical and other leaves by replacing the outgoing individual with an exchange counterpart in the same or another discipline.

As one component of an institution's faculty and staff development program, the National Faculty Exchange introduces new people with new ideas into academic programs, faculty and student services, and the administrative structures of the institution. In addition, it provides ways for faculty and staff to have an experience which will stimulate them to discover and try fresh approaches to professional tasks. (National Faculty Exchange, 1984, pp. 3-4)

APPENDIX

Agreement for Exchange of Faculty

In consideration of mutual benefits to be gained by exchange of faculty, Professor _____, _____, and Professor _____, Humboldt State University, agree as follows:

1. _____ will serve as a full-time faculty member at Humboldt State University during the ____ - ____ academic year, under the direction of the Chair of the Department of _____*, and other duly designated officers of Humboldt State University, and subject to the regulations governing faculty at said University.
2. _____ will serve as a full-time faculty member at _____ during the ____-____ academic year, under the direction of the Chair of the Department of _____, Dean of the _____, and other duly designated officers of _____, and subject to the regulations governing faculty at said University.
3. _____ will pay _____ his full salary for the ____-____ academic year, in accordance with the established salary schedule at _____, just as if he were on full-time duty at said University/College.
4. Humboldt State University will pay _____ his full salary for the ____-____ academic year, in accordance with the established salary schedule at _____, just as if he were on full-time duty at said University.
5. All privileges and benefits of faculty status, including credit towards sabbatical leave eligibility, salary increases, and the like, shall continue to be accorded both participants of this exchange as if each were in continuing service at his respective home institution.

*"Program Leader" and "Division Chair" will be substituted as appropriate for Department Chairs and Deans as indicated. (A revised form should be prepared for this purpose.)

6. _____ will maintain appropriate records on such technical personnel matters as sick leave usage, accrual of vacation, and accrual of retirement credit for _____.
7. Humboldt State University will maintain appropriate records on such matters as sick leave usage, accrual of vacation, use of personal holiday, and compilation of retirement credit for _____.
8. Both faculty participants to this agreement agree to pay for all transportation costs and any personal expenses incurred by virtue of their participation in this exchange.

(Signed) Date

(Signed) Date

School/College Dean Date

School/College Dean Date

Vice President, Academic Affairs

Appropriate Univ. Administrator

Date

Date

REFERENCES

- Internal Revenue Service, (1982). *Your federal income tax* (IRS Publication 17, Rev. Nov. 1981). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- National Faculty Exchange. (1984). *NFE 1984-85 exchange opportunities*. (Available from Bette Worley, NFE, Indiana University at Fort Wayne, 2101 Coliseum Blvd. East, Fort Wayne, IN 46805)