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Motivating Faculty to Pursue Excellence In Teaching

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Introduction

The author is Director of Instructional and Faculty Development at a fairly large university (Oregon State University, student population of 16,500, faculty count of 1,200 F.T.E.). This has been an eleven year experience in patience, priority, and polish.

When the author began working at OSU, more funds were available for inspiring faculty to pursue excellence in teaching than is the case today. Faculty back then seemed motivated to attempt new "ideas" in the classroom, attend conferences on teaching effectiveness, and draft proposals for grants available through the State of Oregon Educational Coordinating Committee (\$3,000-15,000 each) and through innovation funds from campus sources (\$1,000-10,000). In years prior to 1974 we had the ability to reward good teaching by providing further resources to enhance classroom instruction. However, because of recession, inflation, and decreasing financial support to the Oregon State System of Higher Education, Oregon ranks forty-eighth among states in funding postsecondary education. Finding ways to motivate faculty to pursue excellence in teaching has become my main task and role. This paper will describe the potpourri of solutions we've implemented to deal with the problem.

Patience

Getting a Start. Successful faculty development programs conceived elsewhere could not be adapted at OSU, given fiscal constraints confronting higher education in Oregon (1974-present). The current concept of Instructional and Faculty Development at this institution has evolved (Osterman, 1979). Working successfully with faculty in the early years proved critical. Faculty were suspicious of motivational information and innovative teaching approaches. The attitude of most faculty was "show me." Reluctance appeared to be the bottom line. The author managed this attitude by working with a handful of faculty who strongly desired success. As a result, the student evaluation scores for those faculty went up and they began to feel teaching success. These faculty members became spokespersons for stimulating other more reluctant faculty. The stage was set for broader applications.

As important as beginning with a few converts was the strategy of approaching faculty on their own turf. My own research in motivating faculty pointed the way. My dissertation focused on the effects of personal approaches to faculty with new ideas for teaching; it indicated direct interpersonal communication was likely to be more effective than impersonal devices like media, brochures, newsletters and the like (Osterman, 1975). Therefore, the center at OSU initiated a "door-to-door" campaign in which we contacted faculty members by phone or in person and arranged individual meetings in faculty offices. We used these occasions to give faculty information about the value of teaching innovations. The campaign netted real gains: faculty often vented their frustrations about instructional problems or they asked questions about successful teachers and teaching ideas. Moreover, the spirit of individual sessions generated collegial relationships, if not lasting professional friendships, and for most faculty, there was a person identified with a campus support service, someone who would be available on request.

A formal program, the College and University (CAUT) Project, was launched in 1974 as a means of training 30 OSU faculty each year in a myriad of teaching techniques, including alternative teaching methods, instructional design and evaluation, and micro-computer literacy (Osterman, 1980a). Each year, participants attend a three-

week summer workshop and receive a year of support services consisting of consultation, course evaluation, aid in obtaining funds, and seminars and workshops designed specifically for their needs. Initially, we thought funding for the CAUT Project would be difficult to secure. Fortunately, with administrative support and involvement of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, funds were provided so that the Project could provide a stipend to each participant and enable top "outside experts" in the field to lead the three-week summer session. Since the Project's beginning, over 330 faculty have participated in the program. The Project has made an impact upon participating faculty, motivating them through new ideas for classrooms, enthusiasm for teaching, and awareness about where to seek support.

Curriculum of Seminars. During the academic year, nearly ten seminars or workshops are provided for faculty and students per quarter. These sessions began as follow-up to the CAUT Project. The seminars are developed so that they can be repeated as necessary, and with very little lead time. Upon special request seminars or workshops are provided for classes, departments, staff, or administrative groups. Such sessions are held on more than 40 topics, including Feedback Lecture; Matching Teaching and Learning Styles; Instructional Design; Micro-computers; Test construction; Evaluation of a course; Improvement of student-faculty relationships; Guided Design; Individualized Instruction; Advising; Obtaining campus funds and support; Combatting teacher burn-out; Sexism in the classroom; How to study, How to relate to difficult people, Philosophy and Psychology of Education; Notetaking for lecture preparation; Nominal group technique; and Instructional campus tours. Further seminars and workshops are offered based on data acquired from periodic needs assessment surveys.

In the 1982-83 academic year, 640 faculty, 285 graduate students, 204 staff, and 20 administrators attended these seminars.

Advisory Committee. In the early stages of setting up an instructional and Faculty Development program, campus resources, units, media, library, computer, learning laboratories, and instructional support constituted separate empires and did not work well with one another. Faculty reported difficulties in gaining proper instructional support. Our strategy was to encourage the directors of each of these

units to serve on an advisory committee to the CAUT Project. Consequently, each support unit found that it could clearly define projects and a sense of unity and compromise developed among the directors. The advisory committee met over lunch on a rotating basis at a committee member's home. This small idea contributed much to improve working relationships on campus. Additionally, faculty use of these institutional units increased.

Networking Campus Resources. Establishing a network of resources for faculty has been directed by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. Each campus resource unit develops a visual display to be presented at each new-faculty orientation and to the faculty at large. The network links resources together which are considered most useful to faculty working on teaching and/or research. An Undergraduate Studies newsletter discusses how to network the resources and where to begin in one's development. Because each faculty member progresses through a series of professional "passages", different resources are used by an assistant professor as compared to those used by a full professor. Resources are organized according to where they are most useful in establishing an effective network of opportunities.

Innovative Funds. In the early years, approximately \$55,000 annually were made available to faculty to implement innovative ideas in teaching. Legislative cuts in the budget eliminated this funding. Faculty continued to look for help. Working with the Research Office and OSU Foundation, we located new sources. Several successful proposals were written for equipment, travel, seminar and workshop expenses, computer software, teaching materials, and various needs related to improving teaching and learning. The Office of Instructional and Faculty Development became a valued source among faculty for aid and support in writing grant proposals.

Establishing Ownership of a Program. Often programs become too large and complex. Very early in our own history, we established the policy that the Instructional and Faculty Development Office and its programs belonged to faculty and students. They are included in all the office planning, scheduling, and implementation functions through advisory groups. The Advancement of Teaching Committee serves as a valuable resource in advising on seminar and workshop

possibilities and suggesting needs that should be addressed. Additionally, this committee screens proposals submitted by faculty for instructional mini-grants.

Using Student Assistant/Volunteers. One method of making funds stretch is to employ student assistants through the federal work/study program. Students are trained by the Office to work with faculty in various capacities such as helping teachers find and produce teaching materials, evaluate their courses, counsel students, research content material, develop art work. They often do some of the leg work involved in instructional development. This training enables students to practice job tasks similar to those they will perform in career settings.

Individual Consultation. From the start, faculty have shown a desire for individual consultative assistance through our office. Faculty members set up appointments for different reasons. Specifically, these differences need to be recognized and dealt with throughout the instructional development process, but especially in determining the nature of the individual project. We developed a model for working with the different clients: we identified *band-aid* and *major surgery* jobs in client-consultant relationships (Osterman, 1978). In any instructional improvement program, consultative interviewing is the prime mode of communication between the faculty member and the instructional developer (Osterman, 1980b). By addressing faculty needs as faculty describe them, the individual consultation session takes on flexibility in planning and developing projects. Faculty members may simply come into the Office to check out materials or they may choose to establish a long term commitment for redesigning and implementing a course. Faculty respond positively to the flexibility, prepared materials, and opportunities they find in the office. A major part of what we (and others can) provide is helping faculty to select and evaluate teaching approaches in higher education (Osterman, 1979b). In the 1982-83 academic year, 225 faculty received individual consultation in the office.

Priorities

Two Approaches at Innovation. After establishing a productive

program on campus, certain priorities had to be recognized. These priorities provided guidance in developing plans with motivational possibilities.

As the number of faculty motivated to use the services of the Instructional and Faculty Development Office increased and changes in teaching methodologies rapidly grew, a situation developed in which less personal contact time was available. Further, with increased cut-back in funding, we had to look for alternative strategies to meet these demands. One strategy was the CAUT Project (discussed earlier). While it provided intensive training annually to 30 OSU faculty to enable them to realize their own instructional development possibilities, initially we overlooked their new potential for working with other faculty. We sought and obtained a grant from FIPSE which provide the funds to train five faculty per year in extensive skills to manage an instructional and faculty development function within the College of Liberal Arts, one of the larger faculty units on campus. These individuals are identified to other faculty as professional persons willing to assist (Osterman, 1979c).

Faculty Day Orientation and Departmental Presentations. During each OSU Faculty Day, which begins the academic year in the Fall, signs about the services of the Office of Instructional and Faculty Development, together with brochures and handouts, are displayed. At a booth, faculty may make contact with the Office's personnel and ask specific questions about what is available for them during the new school year. Letters are sent out in advance to department heads to inform them that the Office will be pleased to provide a short presentation about the services available to faculty. As a result of these informal contacts, several faculty each year follow-up to determine the value of these services for themselves.

In the Fall of 1983, twenty-eight different departments invited the Office to provide an informative presentation. A few departments requested workshops to the entire department in areas covered during the short presentation. These departments invited the Office personnel to fall faculty retreats held away from campus. Another four departments requested full workshops in specific areas of improving teaching. The Colleges of Liberal Arts, Veterinary Medicine, Engineering, Health and Physical Education, and Pharmacy invited the Office

personnel to plan a systematic approach for planning for future curricula (1985-90).

Faculty Recognition for Quality Teaching. The OSU president attends many of the training sessions offered through workshops, seminars and conferences organized by the Office. In his address to faculty, the president often writes three letters on the chalkboard: "TDC", Teaching Does Count. Each year four institutional awards are offered to faculty and several awards are provided in the various colleges. Some of these awards are in the form of both cash and recognition, others of plaques or cups. The Office participates in the awards process by providing recommendations, suggestions, and nominations. As faculty come up for promotion and tenure, deans, department heads, and faculty request letters of recommendation from us pertaining to the quality of teaching.

Establishing Visibility. Our experience suggests that a key to motivating faculty to use our services is to maintain our visibility on campus. Thirty-eight half-sized brochures were developed to put in the hands of faculty. Each brochure briefly informs faculty about a specific service, seminar or workshop available. In the administration building is displayed a very large collection of pictures, descriptions and samples of innovation developed by the Office on the OSU campus. Several thousand people pass by the display each day. Administrative assistants and secretaries are invited to attend a session for them on what is available for faculty and students through the Office.

Gaining Support from Administration, Faculty, and Students. Only with broad support from the campus can our programs evolve and progress. We believe that actively *involving* groups in programs is essential. Since its inception, the Office of Instructional and Faculty Development has included administrators in planning, obtaining needed funds, evaluating programs, providing directions, even leading seminars and workshop sessions, and welcoming to the campus groups that are sponsored by the Office. Faculty clients not only have been positive spokespersons for the Office, but a number of them have demonstrated their success in teaching in faculty meetings. Their input has been vital to inspiring other faculty. Student groups have requested several of the seminars developed by the Office for fraternities,

sororities, student senate, and other campus organizations. Students are invited to the seminars provided to faculty. Additionally, students are kept informed about the Office and what is available to faculty and students.

An illustration of the success of the broad-based inclusion strategy: in 1976 and 1978, student body presidents from all the campuses of the Oregon State System of Higher education recommended that the Office at OSU be duplicated in the other eight schools. As a result of cooperation between the presidents and this Office, two legislative bills were drafted to provide funds to OSU for training faculty and administrators at other campuses to set up similar programs and to provide continual support to each program. A tremendous amount of positive energy went into drafting the bills and getting them accepted by the legislature. Faculty, faculty-senate committees, administration and students all supported the bills. Both bills passed, but were tabled as a result of the lack of state funds.

Serving on Committees. I suggest that faculty development officers get involved strategically in the nitty-gritty work of faculty committees. Let me illustrate. We all know that nothing hurts teaching innovation so much as having an idea or new practice rejected by colleagues as a result of misunderstanding in a committee. For example, "dead week" is an OSU tradition, a short period of time toward the end of a term when final exams are disallowed. Individualized courses, however, are structured so that students can take their tests when ready—even during dead week. Because of enforcement of the restriction, instructors using individualized approaches recently threatened to discontinue this effective teaching and learning method. By becoming a member of the Examination, Advancement of Teaching, and Instructional Media committees, I was able to mediate a solution. Provisions were made to allow competency-based exams to be taken even during dead week. Other problems that have developed are being handled in a similar manner in order to keep faculty from losing inspiration.

Developing Materials and Using Micro-Computers. Faculty can be motivated by the experience of developing usable teaching materials during a workshop. Interested faculty are invited to specific work sessions to develop specific teaching materials. Micro-computers are

used along with graphic artists, script writers, and supporting staff. As a result of these sessions, materials are created in rough draft. The support staff take the materials, develop them further, then send the work to the instructor for final review, thus saving a considerable amount of instructor time for preparation.

Teaching Courses on Campus. Motivation often develops by seeing others teach. I try to model innovation. Each year the author teaches a few classes on campus: Alternative Teaching and Training Techniques for Business and Education, and College and University Teaching. In addition, several instructors invite the author to teach a class or two in their courses. Faculty will sit in on these classes to observe alternative forms of teaching and learning. Through this contact, faculty follow-up to become trained in creating teaching and learning materials as modeled before them.

GTA Workshop. Each fall, a week-long workshop is offered to graduate teaching assistants (GTA's). Forty participants, nominated by various departments, are trained in lecture delivery and organization, communication techniques, policies and procedures, discussion technique, use of campus instructional resources, and student-faculty relationships. The GTA's selected to attend the workshop are students without much teaching exposure. Each GTA will teach a course in the fall shortly following the workshop. GTA's return to their department and often inform faculty about the techniques and skills acquired during the workshop. As a result of these workshops, faculty become aware of innovative approaches and techniques that they can use in their own courses. This has proved to be a subtle, but effective motivational technique, an incentive for faculty to pursue new ideas.

Evaluating Faculty. We've had considerable success in getting faculty to use a new evaluation method: the Small Group instructional Diagnosis (SGID) (1). Faculty users have been most positive about the results. The SGID sessions, scheduled toward the middle of a course, are conducted in the classroom. One of the staff of the Instructional and Faculty Development Office gathers information from students who meet in small groups. Students identify both strengths and needed improvements of the course. The staff member then meets with the instructor to convey the information and to make

suggestions about strategies for making any necessary improvements before the term is over. The SGID session is usually conducted for 44 instructors per quarter.

Informal Involvement with Faculty. To help “break the social ice” for some faculty, our office promotes involvement in informal contexts such as gourmet cooking, running and athletic groups, community and local gatherings and coffee shops. We believe such involvement is motivating for those involved.

Writing with Faculty. Faculty are under a “publish or perish” expectation. Several faculty have requested help in co-authoring articles about teaching effectiveness and we’ve responded. This cooperative work can extend an extra bonus in the work of motivating faculty.

Polish

Keeping Innovation Alive. A unique program has been established through the Office of Instructional and Faculty Development. The Faculty Productivity Award (2) enables OSU faculty members and their departments, schools, and colleges to apply for loans to increase instructional productivity and make the classroom environment more efficient (Joe Clark, Oregon Univ.). The FPA makes loans to departments, individuals and offices at OSU for the purpose of improving instruction and faculty development. The FPA is a three-year grant received from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE). There are no rigid restrictions on the use of funds. Departments can use loans to purchase needed equipment, pay for part-time instructors, produce teaching and learning materials, travel, purchase software, and provide other productivity incentives. Individual faculty members may use funds to attend professional meetings, launch new classroom projects, or hire clerical help to get a book or research paper published. To receive the loan, the applicant must demonstrate that the project is related to faculty development and/or improvement of classroom instruction. There are no loan fees to pay and loans may be paid back over a five-year period of time with *no* interest. The FPA is designed to return money to campus, and it is possible that the FPA will extend for several years. Applications for

the FPA are screened by the advisory board consisting of three deans, one business officer, and two faculty members.

The FPA was initiated in the fall of 1982, at a time that higher education in Oregon was suffering from tremendous financial cut-backs. We saw a perceptible lift in gloomy spirits of faculty as a result. Several creative projects have been initiated with FPA funds. Faculty has reported that it gives them "hope and motivation" to keep innovation alive.

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Footnotes

1. SGID was developed by Joe Clark, Biology department, University of Washington, with a FIPSE funded project.
2. FPA is a three-year loan project funded by FIPSE Information may be obtained from Dean Osterman, Instructional Development Office, Benton Annex, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon 97331.