

University Faculty Development: Driven to succeed

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Abstrakt The article aims at carrying out a profound comparative study of theoretical and practical key issues of faculty and organization development policy and activities at American universities with further implementation of the findings and the best practices into Ukrainian higher education establishments as well as with the necessary modifications to fit the peculiar setting conditions of the educational system in Ukraine. The research is also seen to contribute to the mutual advancement of teacher education and teaching excellence development in American and Ukrainian schooling. The strategic vision of possible faculty development cultural changes is suggested in the paper.

Key words: faculty and organizational development, mentorship, consultation, managerial style, orientation programs, career balance

1 INTRODUCTION

XXI century skills are not just a passing fad; they are a clear outline of skills and attitudes that students must be able to effectively apply and actively integrate into their lives when they leave their school experience. The skills being identified indicate that in order to successfully face rigorous higher education coursework, career challenges and a globally competitive and collaborative workforce, XXI century schools must work harder to align classroom learning with real world environment. This and the other related tasks impose a burden on the faculty who are supposed to be the main “producers” of the mentioned skills. To meet such needs of students university teachers and professors are faced with the necessary requirement to their efficacious and meaningful professional activity, which is continual and persistent development.

Thus, the issue of Faculty Development (FD) at a responsive, modern and successful university is seen as one of the key focuses of an institutional well-being.

Research universities, according to Gray, Diamond and Adam (1996), pay attention to teaching and teaching-related activities, but this is not enough, since such policy requires the commitment of dedicated and talented faculty, and only a supportive environment can provide their proper working capability. Such an environment can't exist without systematic administrative leadership.

There is no single faculty development model that will work in all settings. Deciding what model to use depends on one's goals and resources and the time participants have to commit. The best faculty development is continuous, varied, and intellectually robust. Bringing faculty up to speed in the pedagogy and scholarship is not a one-shot deal. It must be sustained over time with ample

opportunity for continued study, candid dialogue, and repeated self-evaluations (Caryn McTighe Musi, 2012).

According to the leading researchers in the field of FD (DeZure, Chism, Sorcinelli, Cheong, Ellozy, Holley, Kazem, & Atrushi, 2012), there has been a huge leap in the perception of FD centers' roles in American colleges and universities, being expanded from just providing instructional support for individuals to cross-campus initiatives to promote pedagogical innovation, curriculum reform and redesign, assessment, interdisciplinary work, re-accreditation, and leadership and organizational development training.

FD is a broad and complex topic, but no matter what is placed in the priority in this activity, the issue under our investigation is a phenomenon which engages current and future faculty in identifying their needs and provides specific strategies to navigate the challenges and opportunities of an academic career. This is relevant to all educators on the global scale irrespective of their geographical location, national or ethnic peculiarities, form of ownership (state or private), mission and goals.

Educational institutions in the USA, universities in particular, are complex establishments providing opportunities for students to gain new knowledge, skills and competences. To do this, universities need competent, knowledgeable and proactive teachers. Thus, the main participants of university education process are students and teachers. But there are a lot more things behind this process to be considered so that it can be smooth, desirable and productive. There are designers and managers of education (administrators and academic support staff) who together with teachers constitute the university as a unique body with typical of it inner and intra relations and interactions. Moreover, teacher-student (as well as teacher-teacher) interaction is a complex process; unlike machine/ computer communication, it involves human relationship which has a great impact on the student learning process.

Furthermore, for the university to be competitive in our ever-changing society there should be appropriate response to the input from the outside (the outreach community). Feeling such a necessity the university faculty started creating a variety of interest groups, associations, centers, societies, to name but a few, trying to collaborate for finding the best possible solutions to the ongoing problems in higher education.

FD encompasses activities that focus on individual faculty members first as teachers engaged in fostering student development. A second theme in FD focuses on faculty members as scholars and professionals and involves such tasks as career planning and development of various scholarly skills. A third area of FD addresses faculty members as persons, and involves activities that enhance a person's well-being such as wellness management,

interpersonal skills, stress and time management, and assertiveness training (Gillespie, 2002).

Instructional development strives to enhance individual faculty members' – and their institutions' – effectiveness by focusing on courses, the curriculum, and student learning. Instructors serve as members of a design or redesign team, working with instructional design and evaluation specialists, to identify course or curriculum strategies or processes appropriate to achieving stated outcome goals (Gillespie, 2002).

Organizational development focuses on the organizational structure and processes of an institution and its units. This development seeks to help the organization function in an effective and efficient way to support the work of teachers and students. Leadership training for department chairpersons; effective use of group processes; review, revision, and active use of the mission statement; implementing organizational change processes; and institution governance are representative topics that fall within the purview of organizational development (Gillespie, 2002).

2 UKRAINIAN EXPERIENCE OF FD PROGRAMS

The experience of FD programs as discussed below is based on the general author's observation and FD program participation at a number of Ukrainian universities.

Having a 5-year experience of being a student plus 12-year experience of teaching at Ukrainian universities, we can state that Academic Department Management in terms of FD issue has so far been considered as something that should be self-managed, thus is generally reduced to the following possible options:

- 1) Once a five-year period participation in professional development activities which are usually practiced as an "internship" (but not a sabbatical leave, as practiced in a variety of types by American colleges) at other than home university educational institutions. Such endeavours should be done at the faculty's own financial expense. As a result, the faculty members choose the closest college or university, preferably in their home town (to decrease the amount of money spent). This would be not a bad option unless the whole policy of hosting "a faculty on internship" at the target university was so vague and unspecified. What actually happens is that a faculty member seeking professional development opportunities is not welcome at the hosting institution due to the absence of outreach activity policy, large amount of workload generally practiced at Ukrainian higher educational establishments (as well as other schooling domains) – varying from 500 (for Full-Professor position) to 1000 hours or even more (for Junior Faculty Position) a year, with about 80 % of that amount for classroom teaching hours – and other hindrances (such as being under pressure of temptation to use "precious" free time to catch up with a pile of tasks waiting to be done because of huge academic overload). Such kind of activity naturally results in zero contribution to professional development.
- 2) "Once in a blue moon" seminar (usually one seminar per year) for the selected faculty members (selected by the administration of the university) on the topic again chosen by the administration.
- 3) Annual requirement to participate at least in one scientific conference. This is also left for faculty's own financial responsibility (with insignificant differences among universities – some would provide reimbursement for national travel expenses only, but the majority wouldn't do even that, let alone the possibility of travelling internationally). The outcome is approximately similar to the previous case: a

person chooses the closest to home institution venue with not always the best desirable goals for professional development, which would rarely (but usually never) be beneficial for the final consumers of faculty development activity – students.

As a result of such drastically hopeless situation, a lot of the staff members burn out professionally, having reached nothing and leaving the students in dismay and doubts of the usefulness and further applicability of their university education. This fact, in its turn, leads to poor student attendance and knowledge and skill evaluation records.

There are though a handful of life-long-learning conscious teachers who would do their best to meet the needs of constantly knowledge and skill demanding generation of students, thus engaging in those possibilities available in Ukraine (but having a very limited choice of options; moreover, spending a lot of time and efforts to find those), wasting half of their family budgets, and striving hard to get a chance of participating in some international events. Actually, such educators comprise the pillars of Ukrainian higher education system and prevent it from total collapsing.

To summarize the analysis of the outline of FD policy in Ukraine, it seems necessary to identify its overall characteristic features as follows:

1. Unsystematic and fragmentary.
2. Scarce and insufficient.
3. Inaccessible.
4. Cost-burdening.
5. Imposed from the top but unwelcome by the faculty.

In order to improve FD policy at Ukrainian higher educational institutions we suggest that there should be found possible solutions of how to transform FD activities into:

1. Systemic and systematic.
2. Sufficient, with plentiful choices.
3. Accessible for all faculty members.
4. Less cost-burdening/ cost-effective.
5. Suggested and attractive for the faculty rather than imposed by requirements.

To search for and find the possible and effective action steps on the way to successful FD policy transformation it is essential to look at best international practices. The Michigan State University (MSU) experience may serve as one of them. The following are the findings based on the on-site investigation of FD management at the mentioned above American educational institution with prior theoretical background on successful models of FD.

3 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

There is a special Office as a university academic unit – the Office of Faculty and Organizational Development (F&OD) – which provides a variety of activities, holding a belief that all the faculty staff deserves support and should be given a lot of choices to meet their professional and career needs.

F&OD Office is within the expertise of the Provost and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. It also collaborates with its Advisory Board comprised of the members holding different administrative and academic positions at the university. It means that the coordinative efforts of F&OD Office are directed to beneficial goals accomplishment for all the faculty members at MSU.

Furthermore, a good deal of F&OD Office activities directed to providing support to various faculty career challenges are managed in collaboration with other academic units of the university (International Center, Office of International Studies and Programs, Office of Planning and Budgets, University Outreach and Engagements, Office of Academic Services, to name but a few).

The Office of F&OD clearly provides services in five selected most important domains, aligning all its activities with

MSU mission: 1) Faculty and Instructional Development; 2) Organizational and Leadership Development; 3) Orientations; 4) Community Building; 5) Scholarship and Research.

FOD Office builds its activity on the basis of such assumptions (DeZure, 2012):

- 1) Faculty and administrators deserve professional development support as the endeavor to fulfill all of their roles and responsibilities in higher education;
- 2) Few people come into higher education with all the skills they will need to succeed;
- 3) Change is constant. Expectations for performance change. Professional development is one important way to help faculty and administrators meet those ever changing needs.

In determining issues to address and priorities to set, FD program stands a better chance if it is designed in direct response to the concerns of all constituencies – faculty, teaching assistants, administrators, students (Gillespie, 2002). Thus the Office suggests the following available programs.

- I. Programs for the faculty.
 - Orientations with video and printed resources, events (orientation services are designed not only for newly recruited faculty but for mid-career, senior and tenure system teachers as well; this is practiced on the basis of a belief that people at different stages of their career path should have “a bit of more sense of what is ahead of them – something like reassessing their life – continue, stop or change?” (DeZure, 2012).
 - Faculty and Instructional Development: 1) instructional development seminars and workshops (for fall 2012 there are 7 Lilly seminars and workshops available on a variety of topics and 10 other events moderated by both on-campus and off-campus experts); 2) resources: video course “Online Modules on Teaching”, an expensive product produced by Epigeum; online instructional resources on 18 various topics (Learners and Learning; Curriculum/ Instructional Design; Teaching with Technology; Teaching Methods; Classroom Management and Academic Integrity and a lot more; 3) printed publications: toolkits (Annual Performance Review Toolkit; Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Toolkit).
 - Consultations. The Office has built a firewall between this activity and personnel decision-making processes. Such events include: consultations, coaching/mentoring, services.
 - Organizational and Leadership Development. The policy in this respect is built on the assumption that people at all levels of an organization can be leaders. “You don’t have to have a title to be a leader” (DeZure, 2012). The model of Leadership Competencies consists of 4 components: leading yourself, global and general competencies, leading others, leading the organization.
- II. Programs for administrators: 1) Orientation resources: online video and links on faculty and instructional development; 2) organizational and leadership development seminars and workshops; 3) leadership cohort programs; 4) printed publications (faculty mentoring toolkit; faculty search toolkit). In general, for the fall of 2012 there is a possibility for university administrators at MSU to participate in 10 seminars and workshops.

To ensure relevancy, attractiveness and timely provision of support for the faculty, F&OD Office has a number of activities that come in handy. These are once a two-year period surveys for faculty and administrators. The surveys define FD needs of the university staff members, and such findings are later used as one of the criteria for selection of events, services and topics for FD programs.

The Office also conducts self-evaluation procedure on the effectiveness of the suggested events and services, and the impact produced on teaching excellence and enhancement of student learning. This assessment report is then posted on the university website for campus community accessibility, thus making the whole policy of FD transparent, attractive, interactive, and responsive.

Having analyzed our findings, we can identify the following fundamental principles in the delivery of services provided by the F&OD Office:

1. Providing profound support to the current faculty members in the domains of teaching, research and outreach services (the areas being taken into account while assessing the faculty performance at the university and then used for promotion and tenure system tracking).
2. Engaging faculty in voluntary participation.
3. Being responsive and reflective.
4. Practicing transparent policy and self-assessment procedures.
5. Fulfilling and promoting realization of the university mission.
6. Accessibility for all the faculty members; though eligibility for specific programs and services being advisable.
7. Collaboration on the university and national levels.
8. Consistency, relevant and up-to-date application of the outcomes.

The comparison of earlier mentioned features of FD policy at Ukrainian universities and the principles which guide the activity of F&OD Office at MSU clearly illustrates their opposite character. This gives us the right to assume that following the patterns of FD positive experience at MSU by Ukrainian universities and taking into account the outlined theoretical background issues of FD policy might eliminate the obstacles in the realm of FD and help find solutions to existing problems.

4 DISCUSSION

Investments in faculty development, however, pay large dividends across institutions. Engaging a faculty member in new scholarship and pedagogy changes more than a single course; it potentially alters all the courses a faculty member might teach. Faculty development is also the only way to make lasting curricular change. Such initiatives also lead to other kinds of institutional change. Professors begin to realize the value of a diverse student body. They press for new hires that might expand the campus' expertise on diversity. They continue to work for curricular changes both in general education courses and in their own departmental majors programs.

The necessity for introduction of elaboration of effective and productive FD programs and services is topical and crucial. MSU proved to be a perfect example to be followed in this respect, though application of fundamental transformations and changes should be considered profoundly, taking into account national and regional peculiarities, weighing the benefits and risks of negative change effects on the learning environments for the students and the faculty.

If major and fundamental change at a Ukrainian university is to occur all leaders must be working together toward that change, and the process must be carefully planned. Leaders should be understood to include board members, vice-rectors, deans, chairpersons, and faculty leaders. Such policy will increase the potential for impact and success.

Implementation of the suggested sample of FD program at Ukrainian universities will possibly bring the following outcomes:

- 1) Demonstration of the university's concern for the individual: FD activities will not be perceived as an arm of administration, but an initiative for support;

- 2) Improvement in the productivity of individual faculty members through improvement of their teaching effectiveness which will facilitate the focused change with more emphasis on what students learn and less on what the teachers cover (Gillespie, 2002); this will also lead to improvement of faculty attitudes toward teaching, increase in faculty and student satisfaction with courses and programs;
- 3) Relevant and timely diagnosis of the university's problems and search for their salvation by means of clarification of relationships, enhancement of communication and feedback among units, clarification of the university goals and mission; this will improve the university climate which will add up to job satisfaction and increase teaching effectiveness.
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5 CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the educators in Ukraine should still stick to the following key guiding principles while trying to bring about any innovative procedures in the field of FD: 1. Systematic approach. 2. Collaboration on all possible levels of university life. 3. Initiative welcoming. 4. Voluntary participation. 5. Diversity and variety of choices. 6. Topicality and relevancy interest areas. 7. Satisfaction of faculty's needs. 8. Support, not control. 9. Continuous quality improvement. 10. Transparency of procedures and results.

If these principles are to be followed, best practices of MSU are to be implemented, new healthy and important are ideas are to be realized, Ukrainian universities will grow into sustainable and effective centers for faculty to develop professionally, thus bringing about the best benefits for the society, providing it with students – future powerful citizens – with the up-to-date skills and competences and readiness to face the challenges of the future.

In summary, it has to be admitted that the current study is still far from being conclusive. Elaborating and implementing any FD program (even the most successful) is difficult without key figures devoted to lead the way. It is critical to find people who have the vision, commitment, time, energy, and desire to take the lead in creating, developing, maintaining, and evaluating FD services of the university. It shouldn't be one person, but a team of dedicated academics who might be charged with successful application of FD program. To find such people, and more importantly – have the rest of the faculty follow their lead, a change in academic culture should take place. This culture should possess specific and appropriate for Ukrainian society coloring. Thus further studies must be undertaken to find the ways how to do that – to incite and inculcate the faculty for a totally different approach to career building, self-conscious and inner-incentive grounded FD process. Such will be the focus of study in our further research.

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