A GUIDE TO FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

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EFFECTIVE PRACTICES AT RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

THE PRODUCTIVE PAIRING OF RESEARCH AND TEACHING

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RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES PRIORITY RESEARCH, of course, but teaching excellence is also a priority. Educational development centers often thrive at these institutions. In fact, the proportion of doctoral and research universities (as defined by the 2005 Carnegie Foundation classifications) that have educational development centers is greater than the proportion at other types of higher education institutions. A pilot study found that 65 to 70 percent of doctoral and research universities have a center that offers the faculty support for their teaching (Kuhlenkshmidt, 2009).

Besides being the higher education institutions with the largest proportion of centers, research universities were the first to establish them. Founded in 1962, the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) at the University of Michigan was the first educational development center in the United States; Stanford’s Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), established in 1975, was also one of the earliest. Both centers have grown over time and become an integral to their universities’ support for faculty members, graduate student instructors (GSIs), and curricular reform. The authors’ centers have benefited from enlightened university leadership and unusually large resources, but it is clear that certain principles for faculty development at a research
institutions have also contributed to the success of these centers and those of research university center colleagues at other institutions. What follows is an articulation of these principles that shape what research university teaching center directors do to create and sustain a shift in institutional culture. The strategies are divided into three sections: teaching center mission, leadership guidelines, and faculty development activities. To illustrate these principles, examples are included from a variety of research universities.

Teaching Center Mission

_Highlighting Innovation, Not Remediation_

The teaching center's mission should be about innovation, not remediation. Prominent faculty members do not think of themselves as deficient in their professional roles, nor should they. Nationwide, nearly 90 percent of faculty members consider their teaching to be above average in effectiveness (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Bok, 2006), and the typical Michigan and Stanford teaching evaluation scores confirm this perception. Especially for research-oriented faculty, talking about special achievement or novel approaches has proven the most effective way of motivating them to improve their teaching.

At the University of Pennsylvania, for example, the Center for Teaching and Learning hosts Faculty-to-Faculty Lunches, during which faculty members lead discussions and teach peers about innovative pedagogical approaches they are using in their own classes. At Harvard University, as part of the new General Education program, the Bok Center for Teaching and Learning has been a central player in assembling and coordinating "SWAT Teams" of support services, with members drawn from instructional computing, student writing programs, and the libraries as well as from the center. The goal of these teams is to help faculty members plan new courses with a full awareness of the pedagogical and institutional resources available for nontraditional teaching methods (for example, approaches other than lectures, labs, and discussion sections) at an early stage of course development.

It is also wise to highlight programs that fit the research culture. Therefore, programs should be focused on cutting-edge research insights, innovative approaches, and emerging issues such as teaching ethics in the professions rather than focusing on more general teaching techniques, a topic that experience has shown tends to have less intellectual appeal for research-oriented faculty members. Studies show that faculty
development centers at research universities are more likely than centers at other types of institutions to provide support for faculty members having difficulty, that is, 27 percent of research university respondents versus 17 percent at all types of institutions (Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy, & Beach, 2006, p. 48). The Michigan and Stanford centers do so as well, but their improvement services are not the ones highlighted in their literature and communications.

**Emphasizing the Complementarity of Teaching and Research**

In an early classic of the faculty development literature, Ken Eble (1972) noted that teaching and research were pitted against each other on many college campuses, with teaching the inevitable loser. To put teaching in a competition that it cannot win is especially destructive at a research university. Therefore, the close and productive relationship between teaching and research should be emphasized in center programs and literature, along with the recognition of faculty members who use imaginative ways to make these two professional responsibilities mutually reinforcing. The development of undergraduate research opportunities has been especially effective in helping faculty members combine teaching and research. The Teaching and Learning Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is one of the teaching centers that provides pedagogical support to faculty members who oversee undergraduates in their research projects.

**Helping Implement the Agenda of the Institution’s Leadership**

At a research university, resources are more likely to flow to teaching improvement projects if they are associated with research priorities. Because many research university centers are part of the office of the provost or vice president for academic affairs, perhaps reporting to a vice provost, centers can learn early of new initiatives of the provost, president, or trustees and can then align their activities with these initiatives. If center staff members serve on key university committees, they can be prominent campus advocates for the teaching and learning aspects of new initiatives (Sorcinelli, 2002; Wright, 2000). Involvement in university decision-making processes also allows the faculty development center to be proactive, not just reactive (Chism, 1998). For example, when the provost seeks to promote interdisciplinarity, the center can include interdisciplinary teaching as a key component of its programs, publications, and grants.
Over the past decade, to help promote the provost's agenda, Michigan's CRLT has organized semiannual Provost's Seminars on Teaching for invited faculty, hosted by the provost on a topic chosen by her (http://www.crlt.umich.edu/faculty/psot.php). At Harvard, to help implement the institutional commitment to increasing the low rate of internal promotion and tenure, the Bok Center offers a three-day program for new junior faculty. Called the Junior Faculty Institute and held just before the fall semester begins, the program introduces participants to key members of the Harvard teaching community, gives them practice teaching, and offers a syllabus workshop. At Vanderbilt University, in preparation for the reaccreditation process, the Center for Teaching partnered with the provost's office to offer a workshop for department chairs and deans on learning outcomes assessment plans. Center consultants then met with chairs individually on the design of these plans and strategies for implementing them.

Surprisingly, many centers do not effectively align their priorities with those of the institution's academic leadership (Sorcinelli et al., 2006), especially in their early years. A new center may bring faculty members in the door by accepting almost any request for assistance; but, as centers mature, they may find it more strategic to prioritize requests by their relationship to the center's mission and the initiatives of the institution's leadership.

Leadership Guidelines for a Research University Center

Ensuring That the Center Has Faculty-Credible Developers

While the credentials of effective faculty developers vary widely, those on a research campus are likely to find it easier to earn credibility if they have not only faculty development experience but also university teaching experience and doctorates, just like the faculty they serve. Research university centers often have staff whose degrees are in a variety of disciplines, from biology to engineering to German Studies, so that the centers are better positioned to serve the many colleges and departments at their institutions. Faculty in some disciplines, especially science and engineering, seem to respond best to faculty developers with backgrounds in their own fields. Some of the Michigan consultants have responsibilities around specific functions (for example, instructional technology, multicultural teaching and learning, and evaluation research), while others are responsible for disciplinary groupings (for example, the humanities, interdisciplinary programs, or engineering). To ensure high-quality work in the profession of faculty development, as in all professions, it is important to train new staff members and then engage them in regular professional development activities.
Providing Discipline-Based Approaches and Working with Departments

Disciplines and departments dominate higher education. However, at a research university they have even more power than at other institutional types (Becher & Trowler, 2001). For this reason, the allegiance of research university faculty is often focused more on the discipline than on the institution (Hatva & Marincovich, 1995). It makes sense, therefore, for a teaching center to work within the departments and programs at the institution. Discipline-based work usually begins with needs assessment in the department and then responds to departmental priorities. It is often the teaching center’s most effective work because it responds to specific concerns, is tailored to disciplinary cultures, and involves collaborating with local faculty to design customized programs and services.

Surprisingly, most centers do not prioritize their work within the departments (Sorcinelli et al., 2006). The teaching centers at Michigan and Stanford, however, do emphasize discipline-specific services. The range of these services varies widely each year based on the requests the centers receive; but it usually includes retreats, workshops, and research projects that support curricular and pedagogical reform. The Stanford CTL signals to new faculty its appreciation of the importance of their disciplinary perspective by giving them not only an institution-specific introductory teaching handbook (Marincovich, 2007) but also a handbook more tailored to their fields, such as Showalter’s (2002) Teaching Literature for humanists or Davidson and Ambrose’s (1994) The New Professor’s Handbook for engineering faculty. CRLT at Michigan recently created the university’s first department chairperson training program, which gives staff members more frequent contact with chairpersons and the ability to work more closely with them on teaching and learning improvements. It is important to realize that the chairperson is the key to creating a culture of teaching in a department (Wright, 2008).

Using Faculty Development to Promote Diversity and Inclusivity on Campus

A center is well positioned to focus campus attention on issues of diversity, a topic of considerable concern to research universities where the faculty and graduate student body may not be truly diverse. To stimulate excellent teaching, the center can provide programs addressing multicultural issues in specific academic contexts, classroom differences (for example, issues of student identity, preparation level, and styles of
learning), transformation of course content, and management of instructor identity and authority in the classroom (Cook & Sorcinelli, 2005; Kaplan & Miller, 2007). These issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter Thirteen, entitled “Conceptualizing, Designing, and Implementing Multicultural Faculty Development Activities.”

The Web sites of the teaching centers at both the University of Michigan and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) provide online resources for faculty interested in issues of multicultural education. At IUPUI, the Center for Teaching and Learning sponsors a Multicultural Teaching and Learning Institute organized in association with several other campus units. The institute focuses on promoting student voices in the classroom, improving intercultural communication, cultivating global competencies, fostering inclusive teaching pedagogy, using innovative technology to foster student learning, and exploring grants and partnership opportunities.

Involving Faculty Opinion Leaders in All Aspects of the Center’s Work

Faculty development structures work best when they are created and owned by the faculty. Faculty buy-in is essential to a center’s success (Cook & Sorcinelli, 2002; Eble & McKeachie, 1985; Sorcinelli, 2002; Sorcinelli et al., 2006); no lasting changes, including improvements in teaching, occur on a campus without a sense of faculty ownership.

The University of Michigan’s CRLT was originally created by the faculty and makes good use of a faculty advisory board composed of opinion leaders. Since a teaching center should not be guided solely by the usual suspects (that is, faculty members who are known primarily for teaching excellence), it is important that those board members also be prominent researchers. Board members and other faculty members participate in the design of CRLT programs and then facilitate the programs or serve as speakers or panelists. At Stanford’s CTL, faculty members who have won major university teaching awards and who, in most cases, are also prominent researchers are showcased in the award-winning “Teachers on Teaching” lecture series (http://ctl.stanford.edu/AWT/). These talks highlight excellent teaching on campus as well as discipline-specific pedagogical content knowledge.

Collaborating with Other University Offices

At a research university, a faculty development center is only one of multiple offices serving faculty needs, so centers can enhance their impact by regularly collaborating with other offices and programs
(Albright, 1988; Sorcinelli, 2002). Collaboration can involve joint and complementary programming, funding assistance, and publicity through the Web site and other communications with faculty. A center can take a new university initiative and build in a component on pedagogy such as, for example, helping a service learning office assist faculty members in designing their courses. At The Ohio State University, the University Center for the Advancement of Teaching partners with the Graduate School and the department of Education Policy and Leadership on a Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization (minor) in College and University Teaching.

Making Good Teaching Highly Visible

Many faculty members on a research university campus will never make use of the faculty development center. Nonetheless, its visibility signals that the university leadership cares about good teaching, and the literature shows that faculty members respond positively to institutional priorities (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). To create and sustain a culture of teaching, campus leaders must make teaching and learning excellence a priority (Seldin, 1995). One way to do so is for university leaders to mention it frequently in their communications with the faculty. For example, at Michigan, CRLT organizes and hosts the annual new faculty orientation. By doing so, the faculty’s first contact with the university features sessions on good teaching; the president and provost always emphasize teaching excellence in their welcoming remarks. They also recommend that faculty members utilize CRLT services, thereby giving them permission to ask for teaching support and implying that attention to teaching is normative behavior. Similarly, at Stanford’s orientation program, faculty members hear that teaching is a major component of a successful faculty career. They learn that, at tenure time, the appointment papers will ask for evidence that they are “capable of sustaining a first-rate teaching program” (Stanford University Faculty Handbook, 2007, Appendix B, Form B3, p. 15).

It is important for a center to maintain high visibility by communicating regularly with the faculty and graduate student instructors. Communications may include brochures and e-mails about upcoming programs and grant deadlines, letters to campus leaders publicizing services, papers about the literature and research on good teaching, and Web sites with links to relevant literature and best practices (see http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/teachings.php and also http://ctl.stanford.edu/).
Evaluating the Work of the Center

Regardless of institutional type, strong competition for resources exists. To gain support, a center must demonstrate good management and accountability. Many faculty developers enjoy informal, nonhierarchical approaches. For example, the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education, the North American professional organization for faculty developers, is called a network; and its governing body is called a core committee. As a center grows, however, it should be run with clear lines of responsibility and with data collection that leads to feedback and improvement of services. Both the Michigan and Stanford centers use productivity-tracking software to compile a list of programs and services, and their data show the large number of units and individuals they serve. Budget requests fare better when the director can demonstrate the center’s value with annual data reports. (See also Chapter Nine, “Program Assessment for Faculty Development.”)

Center directors typically encourage careful evaluation of campus curriculum and pedagogy. So they, too, need to evaluate and improve their own work continuously. In addition to gathering feedback on programs at the time they are given, the McGraw Center at Princeton University sometimes sends e-mails several months later to participants, asking, “What idea from our workshop(s) have you used (or are you likely to use) in your teaching?” They also send follow-up messages to those who have used their consultation services.

Faculty Development Activities at a Research University

Rewarding Good Teaching with Resources and Prestige

University leaders often create teaching awards in order to signal the value of teaching (Chism & Szabo, 1997; Menges, 1996). At research universities, the growing importance of good teaching is evident in the growing number of teaching awards. Centers help to improve publicity for the competitions, oversee selection processes and make them more transparent, and then celebrate the winners. As a result, the prestige associated with the awards has increased, as has the number of applicants or nominees.

At The Ohio State University, the teaching center provides staff support for the Academy of Teaching, which consists of those faculty who have won the university’s Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching. The Academy sponsors annual one-day conferences on teaching and learning, as well as the publication Talking About Teaching at The Ohio State University (http://ftad.osu.edu/read/teaching_showcase/talkingaboutteaching.html).
Supporting Curricular Reform

At all colleges and universities, curricular reform is a topic that the faculty considers important. By playing a role in the reform process at the department, college, and sometimes even institutional level, centers can contribute to better decision making and also demonstrate the expertise and value of center staff members. Center staff can use focus groups, interviews, and surveys to gather data about the current curricula so that faculty decisions about improvements are based on empirical evidence. Center staff can also organize and facilitate meetings and retreats at which the faculty makes curricular decisions. They can provide pedagogical expertise to help with course design and enhancements, as well as generating ongoing data for formative evaluation of new curricula (Cook, 2001). They also make connections among faculty members with similar objectives: for example, the University of Iowa’s Center for Teaching has worked with multiple colleges (Engineering, Pharmacy, Liberal Arts & Sciences, Business, Education, Nursing, and Medicine) to create a service-learning course in Mexico in partnership with the local Rotary Club.

Using Instructional Technology to Engage Faculty

For research universities, like other institutions, instructional technology (IT) is a hook that brings faculty members to a center for pedagogical innovation, not remediation; but surprisingly few teaching centers have staff with IT expertise (Sorcinelli et al., 2006). At many research universities, the responsibility for IT is decentralized, and the faculty development center serves as only one of many campus players. IT should not, however, be the primary focus of a center, because new technologies (that is, the required financial resources and the expertise required to keep current with technological developments) can easily swamp a center and prevent it from discharging its other responsibilities. Nonetheless, centers should have staff who are knowledgeable about IT and who can focus faculty attention on pedagogy and course goals as well as on the hardware and software (Zhu, 2008).

The Teaching and Learning Laboratory at MIT was part of a particularly ambitious institutional collaboration between MIT faculty and Microsoft Research through iCampus (http://icampus.mit.edu/), a multidisciplinary initiative to create educational technologies that would have an impact both within and outside the classroom. Hundreds of faculty and research staff members have participated in iCampus projects, which include, for example, visualization and simulation software, remote laboratories, and experimentation with pen-based computing.
Providing Efficient Support to New Instructors

Research university faculty members typically work more hours than faculty at other types of institutions (National Center for Education Statistics, 1992). Given the workloads, it makes sense to use faculty members’ time spent on professional development as efficiently as possible by having the faculty development center provide just-in-time instruction. For example, if a faculty member decides to try group work for the first time in an upcoming course, he or she should be able to find immediate help on this topic. To do so, a center needs a very broad range of programs targeted to all stages of a faculty career (Seldin, 2006), that is, junior (Austin, 2003), midcareer (Baldwin & Chang, 2006), and senior faculty members (Wheeler & Schuster, 1990).

It is wise to focus special attention on new instructors. Junior faculty members are especially receptive to teaching advice in their pretenure years, so center staff should let them know that an early investment in their pedagogical knowledge will save them time in the long run. Staff can also emphasize strategies that allow them to combine their teaching and research responsibilities and make these responsibilities mutually reinforcing.

Many research universities are involved in the Preparing Future Faculty effort and offer conferences, seminars, and internships (for example, Cook, Kaplan, Nidiffer, & Wright, 2001) for this group. Graduate student instructors are future faculty members, and the training they get in graduate school may be the most in-depth training they will ever have as instructors. This development effort is important not only in its own right; it also contributes significantly to faculty development efforts (Marincovich, Prostko, & Stout, 1998) because often it is the graduate student instructors who first use center services and then recommend them to faculty members. (See Chapter Twenty, “Graduate and Professional Student Development Programs.”)

Offering Funding for Teaching Innovations

At a research university, the coin of the realm is grant money. By definition, institutions have large research budgets, and those funds will always outpace funds available for innovative teaching projects. Nonetheless, it is helpful to offer multiple teaching grants with differing levels of funding and for multiple purposes and to publicize the grants well. Some of the grants should be large enough to fund substantial projects and offer prestige to their recipients. The Michigan and Stanford centers help organize
the proposal review process; they also help faculty members develop proposals and assist them with project implementation and evaluation. Grants competitions bring in faculty members who may not have had previous contact with the center.

IUPUI's Center for Teaching and Learning has an interesting approach that combines technology and grant support. Called “Jump Start into Online Course Development,” the program assists participants to envision new ways of facilitating learning and to redesign courses for improved student learning and more efficient use of their own time and resources. Faculty members participate in an intensive orientation to online learning; work with instructional design and technology consultants to redesign their courses; and are given a stipend that is matched by their department or school.

Using Faculty Development Resources for Community Building

On a large research university campus, it is easy for faculty members to be so immersed in their own discipline (both on campus and at conferences elsewhere) that they have little contact with campus colleagues in other fields. While many faculty development programs should be department or school/college based, centralized programs can provide a chance for faculty members with similar interests to come together across disciplines. Cross-disciplinary programs may draw faculty with an interest in new pedagogy or with expertise in the same topic—teaching statistics for example. Regardless of topic, faculty development centers provide an opportunity to network and create a critical mass of faculty members who are committed to teaching excellence (Sorcinelli, 2002).

Faculty development centers may also host festive events as a way to honor the best teachers and contribute to a sense of community. For example, the CTL at Stanford hosts an end-of-year “Celebration of Teaching,” featuring a panel of committed and effective scholar-teachers of various ranks who discuss a theme such as keeping teaching fresh. Some centers also provide programs that are largely social in nature, such as Michigan’s CRTL’s dinner for international faculty, because networking leads to comfort in a new location and comfort is often an important ingredient in good teaching. Studies have shown that the community-building work of a teaching center is important to faculty (Sorcinelli et al., 2006). Since the provision of food can help facilitate the creation of community, catering is often a key budget item for centers.
Using Research to Inform Teaching Center Work

Faculty development centers should engage in action research, a research-oriented way to effect change. Action research usually involves several steps: identifying a problem and possible solutions, developing options for action plans, choosing and implementing a plan, reflecting on the data collected, evaluating the plan, and then using the data to inform an improvement process (St. John, McKinney, & Tuttle, 2006).

Action research can be used for curricular reform or improvements in faculty development practices. For example, CRLT recently studied the role of GSIs in undergraduate retention in the sciences. Through analysis of science student survey data, CRLT was able to recommend and then provide the staffing for curricular changes and improvements in GSI training (Cook et al., 2007; O’Neal, Cook, Wright, Perorazio, & Purkiss, 2007; Wright, Purkiss, O’Neal, & Cook, 2008); preliminary data indicate that retention has improved as a result.

To the extent possible, all faculty development center work should be data-driven for better needs assessment and better results—and also to establish the professionalism of the center’s work. In 2007, for example, the Stanford CTL was able to present a very well-received report to the campus faculty senate because it could share hard data showing that the average end-quarter evaluation scores of TAs in the institution’s largest school were going up steadily during the same years in which Stanford was stepping up its investment in training programs for graduate instructors. Data carry a lot of persuasive power at a research university.

Assisting Faculty with Research on Their Own Teaching

Faculty at a research university may be interested in doing research on their own teaching. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching under the leadership of President Emeritus Lee Shulman has long promoted the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), a kind of action research in which faculty members test hypotheses about their own teaching, reflect on the results, share them with peers, and then make teaching improvements (Cambridge, 2004). Centers at research universities typically support SoTL through consultations that provide referrals to the relevant literature, funding to pay for the staff needed to do the research, programs to bring SoTL researchers together so they can share ideas, and publicity through local Web sites and newsletters or through referrals to faculty development journals. Indiana University offers a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Leadership Award of up
to $35,000. The winning teams propose a SoTL research initiative that promises to have a sustained impact upon instructional development and/or education and could serve as a model for others on and off campus.

Connecting to Others and External Resources

Research universities typically engage in collaborative efforts with peer institutions. Thus, what happens at a peer institution often matters at home. It is especially useful, therefore, for centers to refer to peer institutions’ activities as a catalyst for local adoption. Development of a consortium of center directors has proven to be a good way to learn about peer institutions’ practices and help university administrators remember that centers are integral to most institutions and are not just a local phenomenon.

As faculty development has become common in other countries, so, too, has the importance of international connections for centers. It is common for centers at research universities to work with counterparts at institutions around the world, just as faculty members work with their counterparts elsewhere. (See also Chapter Fifteen, “International Faculty Development.”)

External grants are the bread and butter of a research university. It may not be a wise use of resources for a service-oriented teaching center to expend its energy writing proposals and prioritizing external initiatives, but attracting some external funding from federal agencies or foundations (for example, the National Science Foundation) certainly adds to a center’s prestige on campus. The Michigan and Stanford centers, as well as centers at other research universities, also often serve as university liaisons to national projects, thereby acquainting faculty with trends and innovations and bringing more attention and expertise to teaching and learning on campus. Additionally, center staff members provide assistance on proposal writing and evaluation to faculty members working on their own research-related educational proposals.

Conclusion

Most centers across the country share certain goals, but there are differences among institutional types in the prioritization of those goals (Soricinelli et al., 2006). The commonalities among research universities and the differences between them and other types of institutions give research university centers both opportunities and constraints. The fact that the vast majority of research universities have educational development centers indicates the extent of interest in teaching excellence on these
campuses. When the mission, management, and programming of these centers reflect the realities of research university life, they serve an important role in creating a strong culture of teaching excellence.

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