

Faculty Roles---and Rewards?

Mark sat in the empty conference room and let out a long sigh. Ten minutes earlier the Faculty Development Council (FDC) came to a close. The major item on the agenda at today's meeting – the planning for the Fall Faculty Symposium -- usually would have been discussed with very little confusion in the Faculty Roles and Rewards (FR&R) Committee. However, since the FR&R had been merged with the FDC, the number of new members had increased. Further, most of the members now were Faculty Senators who were on 3-year terms and had very little involvement with the symposium or SoTL in the past. The purpose of the symposium with its focus on SoTL, the symposium's role in faculty development, and the work involved in organizing it had to be discussed in detail.

The discussion of the agenda items made two things clear. The time and work commitment and the additional networking required came as a surprise to many of the members who had not been part of the FR&R. It was also clear to Mark that the new members lacked knowledge of these initiatives and how they contributed to faculty development.

Paula, a Physics professor who came to the Council when the FR&R was absorbed into the FDC, had been quiet until these items on the agenda were discussed. The atmosphere in the room quickly changed.

"I'm so glad I'm already tenured," Paula blurted out. "We sit here discussing faculty roles and how we should be balancing teaching, research and service, yet the messages that we send our new faculty are not consistent with true matters of promotion and tenure. Why should I encourage our department's young, untenured faculty to attend FDC's Spring Symposium when all that really matters is how many grants and publications they receive?"

In an attempt to pacify Paula, Mark explained that the FRR had been developed to support grass roots participation in faculty development initiatives. He tried to convince her of the importance of encouraging faculty, both junior and senior, to become engaged in university initiatives that emphasized the importance of excellence in teaching, research and service.

"I'm out of here," replied Paula. "It's impossible to achieve it all. The money that we are spending on this upcoming symposium could be better spent sending new faculty to conferences in their field so they can find colleagues to collaborate with on grants. I thought the university's budget was tight this year. Why should we support this endeavor if it is NOT something we all directly benefit from? You're starting to sound like a real administrator now," she mumbled as Mark was heading out the door.

The meeting came to an abrupt end (with Mark dying for a glass of Merlot).

Faculty Roles----and Rewards? Case Questions

- 1) In your estimation, what percentage of faculty actively participate in faculty development activities in your campus?
- 2) What barriers, if any, inhibit their participation?
- 3) What incentives does your college/university have in place to encourage this participation?

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- 4) How can the senate (faculty governance) and the administration encourage the social culture, commitment, and leadership that have been the underpinning of the faculty roles and responsibilities initiatives thus far?
- 5) What are some good ways to measure the impact of the various initiatives on faculty development?