



Faculty Work in a Changing World

By **Richard C. Turner**, professor of English, and **Sharon J. Hamilton**, associate dean of the faculties for integrating learning, both of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), like many of its peer institutions, has devoted sustained attention to faculty work during the past two decades. The commitment to ensuring that faculty can do their work and succeed in their professional aspirations recognizes that all roads to achieving complex and evolving university missions go through faculty work and faculty success. This commitment has led to four general initiatives: (1) formal and informal conversations about faculty work, (2) significant resources invested in faculty development, (3) a readiness to reconfigure faculty appointments to match faculty work with university missions and aspirations, and (4) efforts to restore a sense of cohesion as an academic community.

Faculty Work through the Years

Regarding faculty work as a problem that must be addressed originated in the work begun by Ernest Boyer and Gene Rice at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in the 1980s, which culminated in Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1990). Their surveys revealed that faculty in America felt their work was becoming fragmented, with disconnected parts competing for time and attention in an unhealthy dynamic. Addressing this threat, IUPUI engaged actively in the national conversations about faculty work ignited by the Carnegie Foundation, while concurrently engaging faculty on campus in reflective dialogue on faculty roles.

During the mid-1990s, Bill Plater, then dean of the faculties at IUPUI, and Gene Rice conducted a running discussion on how to deal with persistent sense of disconnection and dissatisfaction among faculty in American universities. Rice took the position in *Making a Place for the*

New American Scholar (1996) that each faculty member should be a “complete scholar” by maintaining their connection to all three traditional areas of faculty work. In subsequent working papers, *Future Work* (1995) and *Using Tenure*, Plater (1998) suggested that, in the face of these pressures, universities needed to reconfigure faculty roles and responsibilities to enable faculty to differentiate elements of their work and so manage it better. In various ways, IUPUI has tried to pursue both models of faculty work, keeping the “complete scholar” as the ideal of faculty work while supporting operationally differentiated faculty work. It has created many options for faculty appointments and sought to support and recognize faculty whose work contributes to university missions and aspirations, a path at odds with that of a unified “complete scholar.”

Institutions like IUPUI have operated with some form of differentiated faculty work since the expansion of American higher education after World War II. Full-time, tenure-track faculty have the time to fulfill their responsibility to pursue research and service responsibilities because other groups, such as part-time faculty and graduate students, have been hired to teach classes. These *de facto* delegations of traditional faculty teaching responsibilities, which have been expanded at our institution to include full-time lecturers, clinical faculty, researchers, scientists, and public scholars, have created campuses operating through a system of differentiated faculty work. These differentiated faculty roles necessitate the intentional approach to community building that we discuss later.

Responding to Challenges

IUPUI responded to the challenge of managing the difficult demands of the “complete scholar” and the disconcerting



effects of differentiated faculty work by building an important and extensive faculty and staff development organization, one that recognized the centrality of faculty work and put into place flexible and rich resources to enhance the success of faculty work across the three traditional areas. The Office of Professional Development (OPD) was established to bring together in one central location several distinct and mostly fledgling areas of faculty support, in order to mediate the demands of faculty work with the sometimes competing expectations of the campus and some academic units. With the well-established Center for Teaching and Learning as the nexus, OPD took the lead in supporting faculty efforts to develop a scholarship of teaching and learning, especially in making extensive and effective use of technology in teaching, provided support and opportunities for collaboration and consultation among chairs and deans, housed and nurtured the already-established campus-wide Office for Women, created the Office for Multicultural Professional Development and other diversity-focused initiatives, and offered other faculty and staff development programs in response to school or campus goals and aspirations.

Expanded faculty appointments offered IUPUI a way to incorporate valued and talented faculty members whose aspirations and/or credentials made a traditional tenure-track appointment unattractive or inappropriate. In 1985, one school converted five part-time instructors to full-time, non-tenure track “clinical” appointments and experimented with using them in teaching and service positions to support courses with

high enrollments and multiple sections. In the mid-1990s, the medical school expanded its use of clinical faculty and introduced “scientist” and “researcher” ranks to enable some colleagues to make important contributions to research without building the broad career that tenure requires. Other professional schools introduced clinical ranks to address important faculty work focused on curriculum without a direct connection to pursuing a productive research program. In 2002, the trustees of Indiana University, concerned about retention and graduation rates, asked some campuses to convert large numbers of their part-time faculty to full-time, non-tenure-track “lecturers.”

The new appointments and the accumulated effects of differentiated faculty work required increased campus attention to faculty work. The campus developed extensive promotion and tenure guidelines to help faculty move through the differentiated processes more easily and with greater control. The guidelines provided shape and focus to a process that often differed among twenty-two schools and five libraries, stimulating the articulation of the values and expectations shaping decision processes. Using detailed and explicit guidelines created a framework for developing transparent and clear expectations for all faculty appointments.

In response to the increasing pressure on faculty to do more with less, especially the increased pressure on faculty time, OPD began to move some of its formative faculty development work closer to the Office of Academic Affairs to create an overlap with and a closer connection to the various summative review processes. Through its Office

of Faculty Appointments and Advancement, Academic Affairs gathered in activities connected to appointments, such as orienting new faculty, advising chairs and deans on mentoring junior faculty, and ensuring that annual reports and reviews led to productive conversations. Academic Affairs strengthened the formal ongoing conversations with faculty about advancement as they progress toward tenure and/or promotion in the form of individual consultations, repositories of sample materials, and workshops anticipating three-year, promotion, and tenure reviews. The goal of keeping faculty development and faculty advancement closely connected was to enable faculty to see their progress toward tenure and/or promotion and the help needed for advancement as located within the same arena. Faculty who often regard themselves as too busy to reflect on faculty work have an easier time incorporating workshops and consultations into their schedules when these support activities appear as part of the central and compelling process of advancement.

Taking Ownership and Responsibility for Professional Development

Centralizing faculty development in one large organization played a crucial role in providing a rich resource of support for faculty. Faculty who use the resources of OPD value this support very highly, and virtually all faculty are served one way or another by OPD, through new faculty orientation, tenure, promotion, sabbaticals, honors and awards, and the myriad of consultation and events offered. Recently faculty have indicated a preference for formal and informal in-school faculty development opportunities



sensitive to different disciplinary traditions and cultures, with additional and complementary centralized support primarily for key campus-level issues, such as multicultural teaching and learning, diversity, promotion and tenure, chairs and deans orientation, new faculty orientation, honors and awards, and the like. In response to faculty interests, OPD is transitioning to become a Consortium for Learning and Scholarship. This smaller office will be closely aligned to the three traditional areas of faculty responsibilities of teaching, research, and service, and collaborating with other support units and the schools to address both campus-wide and school-specific needs. We are working currently with the School of Medicine and the School of Dentistry to develop “in-house” models of faculty support that will draw upon the expertise of the consortium as needed, but will function independently when appropriate. In this way, faculty are taking more ownership in and responsibility for their professional development. Even the Faculty Club is providing professional development through programming that brings faculty together over lunch for structured talks about faculty research and publications. Still in its evolutionary phase, it remains to be seen whether this more faculty-driven decentralized approach engages more faculty in professional development activities and results in a stronger overall sense of the quality of faculty life at IUPUI.

The complexity of IUPUI, its responsibility-centered management system, and its strong emphasis on disciplinary or professional excellence has, for decades, made it difficult for faculty to come to a sense of

community as a faculty. Thus, enriching faculty work requires special attention toward building community. Faculty development activities make a point of including community building and set goals for those projects in terms of creating a sense of community across professions and disciplines. For instance, new faculty orientation builds group work into all its activities so that new faculty get to meet at least some other members of their cohort. The faculty who come together to reflect on their three-year review and plan for their upcoming tenure review collaborate on a letter to new faculty, sharing what they learned in the first three years and offering advice on what works best.

Community building is important because the diversity of appointments and differentiated faculty work results in some very real disjunctions among the faculty ranks, threatening the principle of peer review. By hiring faculty members who in their training, their assignments, and/or their commitments to university missions differ deeply from each other, universities have created faculties made up of colleagues who may not be peers, and who cannot evaluate the work and the promise of each other because they lack experience and/or training in the work to be evaluated. Without the pervasive point of definition provided by the notion of peer review, a faculty is just a collection of experts hired to carry out specific university missions. Recent trends in hiring that look to lower-cost teaching faculty as a way to meet teaching responsibilities in tight-budget environments have created differentiated

faculty, without doing the work to find the common ground of university work and experience that might make them peers and so able to operate as a traditional faculty. Without some effort to create that common ground, faculties cannot maintain their traditional independence about the work they do. Facing this threat requires faculty to return to their values and assumptions about peer review and reestablish the parameters of their responsibilities, finding ways for faculty with varied responsibilities and training to act as peers in all aspects of faculty work. IUPUI's next challenge lies in nurturing the conversation about faculty work. Conversations of this sort will articulate the common values and assumptions, the responsibilities and aspirations, which drive all faculty work, however differentiated. The new consensus emerging from such conversations should assure all faculty that all contributions to the three traditional responsibilities of faculty are measures of faculty success and achievement and thus benefits to the entire academic community. We are attempting to meet that challenge in our current organizational restructuring of OPD. ■

References

- Boyer, E. L. 1990. *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Plater, W. M. 1995. Future work: Faculty time in the 21st century. *Change* 27(3): 23–33.
- . 1998. Using tenure: citizenship within the new academic workforce. *American Behavioral Scientist* 41(5): 680–715.
- Rice, R. E. 1996. Making a place for the new American scholar. Working Paper #1. Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education.