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## INVITED PAPER

### Universities Join in Mutual Encouragement to Readjust the Reward Structures for Teaching and Research

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In 1992, the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), U.S. Department of Education, made a three-year grant to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to disseminate what was learned in an earlier project on evaluating and rewarding teaching at a research-oriented university (Barrett, et.al. 1993). By invitation of the deans from the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) and the College of Arts and Sciences to their counterparts across the country the following seventeen institutions responded that they would like to participate:

- University of Alaska-Fairbanks
- CalPoly State University
- University of Cincinnati
- University of Florida
- Kansas State University
- University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
- University of Missouri-Columbia
- North Carolina A&T
- North Carolina State University
- Oklahoma State University
- Oregon State University
- Penn State University
- University of Tennessee-Knoxville
- Texas Woman's University

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- Wayne State College
- University of Wisconsin-Madison
- University of Wyoming

By participating in the joint project, participating colleges in the universities share the ideas learned from the three-year UNL FIPSE project and exchange ideas learned from their own campuses. The exchange of ideas is done as part of a yearly national conference on evaluating and rewarding teaching held at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and through an Ag\*SAT teleconference.

#### The Problem

Since World War II, priorities in American universities have shifted away from an emphasis on teaching. Ernest Boyer stated in his keynote address to the 1990 American Association of Higher Education Conference in Chicago that the Academy has accepted the old German model that research is what makes universities great and the word, professor, no longer means teacher but researcher. A paradigm shift in the way teaching is rewarded is urgently needed in order to restore teaching to the status that the public along with most professors think is appropriate.

Nearly a decade ago, the report 'Involvement in Learning' (Mortimer et. al. 1984) and a number of others which followed it (e.g., Bennett, NEH, 1984; AAC, 1985; Boyer, Carnegie Report, 1987) provided a renewed stimulus for improving undergraduate education in American colleges and universities. One of the key recommendations in 'Involvement in Learning' (Mortimer et.al. 1984) stated that: "College offi-

cials directly responsible for faculty personnel decisions should increase the weight given to teaching in the process of hiring and determining retention, tenure, promotion, and compensation, and should improve means of assessing teaching effectiveness." The nature of the problem of rewards for teaching was made clear in a 1987 FIPSE funded study that showed a majority of faculty members in the UNL College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) and the College of Arts and Sciences believed that teaching was not adequately rewarded (McClain, 1987). To confirm these claims, a study by Barrett, Edwards and Adeline, 1988, compared merit pay increases between CASNR faculty with high teaching assignments and those with high research assignments. Faculty with higher research percentage assignments were given higher merit increases.

Studies of evaluating teaching in higher education in the 1980's often focused on how rewards were determined, what systems were in place and the adequacy of such systems (Seldin 1980; Doyle 1982; Braskamp, Brandenburg and Ory 1984; Blackburn and Pitney 1988). These studies generally concluded that the systematic rewarding of teaching activity was not happening on the university level and the measure of teaching performance was often confined to student evaluation of instruction and to hearsay collected by the chair.

More recent attempts to address these problems are appearing on the scene. For the past two years, the AAHE Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards has brought teams together from a wide range of institutions to address these problems. The University of Cincinnati has provided faculty leadership with \$50,000 per year to initiate revision of the evaluation and review of the reward systems in departments, schools and colleges. The president of the North Carolina University System, L.D. Spangler, issued administrative memo #338 in 1994 in which he stated that every campus in the North Carolina System shall hold teaching "in high regard as research in decisions of merit, promotion and tenure; that all faculty will be observed in the classroom; that faculty will prepare teaching portfolios, and that teaching and learning centers will be established on each campus." The pendulum is beginning to swing toward the recognition of teaching in the reward structure and the provision of teaching support resources on some campuses but most are at the beginning stages.

During the course of conducting the FIPSE project on the UNL campus problems and barriers as to why faculty perceive teaching not to be rewarded were identified and more recently found to be similar on campuses across the country. Problems included:

- The strong influence of professional disciplines to do research.
- A conflict between institutional values and teaching values.
- Teaching not defined as a scholarly activity.
- The faculty perception that they are excellent teachers.
- Faculty assigned a high teaching load but evaluated on research.

- The perception by faculty that teaching is not rewarded.
- Faculty resistance to changing the 'rules of the game'.
- The imbalance of funding between research and teaching.
- The belief that teaching is not measurable.
- Striving for preeminence in research.

## The UNL Model for Reward Change

The UNL model is based on four premises: 1) that an effective model for changing the evaluation and reward system must involve committed faculty leadership supported from the beginning by visible administrative backing; 2) if teaching is going to be rewarded with merit, promotion and tenure, additional evaluation data on teaching beyond student evaluations is needed; 3) the norms and values of the institution toward teaching must change; and 4) that each department needs autonomy to structure and plan a reward system that is consistent with the norms and values of the unit.

The UNL model included the following steps to implementation:

- 1) **Select pilot departments or units.** At UNL, the departments of Agricultural Education, Agronomy, English and Psychology were the first to volunteer. The early departments should be recognized for the high value placed on teaching and the likelihood for success.
- 2) **Select faculty leadership.** A small team of 3-4 faculty were sought out for their recognized respect and ability to persuade colleagues of proposed changes. Most departments included the chair of the promotion/tenure committee and the department chair/head.
- 3) **Administrative support.** Early in the process, high ranking administrators endorsed the proposed initiative and invited key faculty leaders in each unit to support the effort.
- 4) **Initiate the plan.** At a public meeting (usually involving food!) the general task was laid before each unit. The task was to develop a plan to reward teaching that would include substantive measures of effective teaching. Administrators gave their blessings to the proceedings.
- 5) **Measuring faculty perceptions.** Faculty in each unit were given a 70-item questionnaire to determine perceptions of faculty with regard to rewards in teaching and the adequacy of the current evaluation system to measure effective teaching. Results were shared with faculty and became the basis for estimating the need for change.
- 6) **Exchanging ideas.** Faculty leaders from across disciplines were brought together periodically to exchange progress reports and 'cry on each other's shoulders'.
- 7) **Public reports.** Two months into the process faculty leaders made public reports to their colleagues and deans regarding problems encountered and progress. Information was provided in a workshop format on alternative evaluation procedures that may be considered along with substantiating research.
- 8) **Address barriers to teaching.** While the process was going on in departments, deans and high level administra-

tors were making plans to address institutional barriers that obstructed the reward of teaching.

- 9) **Administrative actions taken.** When requested, administrators would be present to show their support. However, more support was needed. A sampling of actions taken to show that teaching was being taken seriously included:
- Position descriptions for each faculty updated with reward more closely linked to faculty expectations.
  - Promotions to full professor made on the basis of an outstanding teaching record and an adequate research record.
  - Discretionary money used to upgrade salaries of exceptional teachers.
  - Faculty requested to develop teaching portfolios to document their teaching activities.
  - Faculty with teaching appointments expected to have previous teaching experience. Faculty with demonstrated stronger teaching than research experience hired.
  - Encouragement for "teaching-in-a-classroom" session for all candidates interviewing for positions involving teaching.
  - Endowments and other support requested for Teaching Chairs.
  - College Action Plans reflect importance of teaching.
- 10) **Plans to evaluate and reward teaching unveiled.** At a celebration banquet each department presented its plan to evaluate and reward teaching to colleagues and administrators. Administrators reacted to proposals.
- 11) **Evaluation/reward plans into policy.** In order to insure implementation, plans became part of departmental policy.
- 12) **Evaluate.** After a trial run, the new policies were evaluated and changes made.

## Summary and Conclusions

Although the task to redefine the role of teaching in higher education is difficult, progress is being made. There is a growing national awareness that the public wants changes in the way teaching is valued, especially at research-oriented universities. This awareness is translating into action with universities in the project. So far, major strides have been made at the University of Cincinnati, North Carolina A&T and the

University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Other universities are at various stages in addressing the issue.

Five major lessons have been learned:

- 1) It is difficult to get the momentum going, but after the initial 'pains', progress becomes easier;
- 2) Effective faculty leadership is critical at the unit and college level;
- 3) Generally, administrators are supportive of the initiative;
- 4) Faculty time and time again provided the greatest resistance, and
- 5) It is important that the evaluation and reward of teaching not be viewed as competition to research.

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