

The Care and Feeding of a College Teacher

Ted E. Hartung

There are a number of dimensions that need to be accounted for when one thinks about the care and feeding of the college teacher. Adult development perspectives need to be taken into account, and also, career development concepts as we look at the "professoriate". The professoriate needs to be viewed as a total and it is specifically influenced by the institution within which we work. Roles that the professoriate must assume include teacher, scholar, researcher, extension specialist and service. The overall issue when one looks at the developing teacher is being able to blend together these perspectives and avoid what appears to be a very common phenomenon in the professoriate and that is career plateauing or even burnout. It is my contention that we tend to see more career burnout among college teachers than we see in other parts of the role of the professoriate.

Hartung is associate vice chancellor, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This presentation was made during the 1991 NACTA Conference.

(continued from previous page.)

its own areas of concern. Under separate administrations the programs are not forced to make the necessary accommodations that would be necessary if they were in one faculty. The worlds of science, agricultural economics and business have not proven that they can develop an integrated independent program that is capable of providing the leaders that rural society and agribusiness needs. Applied agricultural science with Business education and application molded in a non-threatening atmosphere are the tools needed to develop the leaders in agribusiness for tomorrow.

References

- DE CASTANADA VP [1968] "An Attainable Global Perspective". Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages for Business and the Professions.
- DYMOND J and M HAWKINS [1991] "Internship in an Agribusiness Degree Program, the Muresk Experience", presented at the First International Conference of the International Agribusiness Association, Harvard University, Cambridge Massachusetts, USA, March 1991.
- FAIRNIE IJ, STANTON JH and DOBBIN L [1989] "A Profile of Tomorrow's Agribusiness Leaders: The Australian Perspective". *Agribusiness - An International Journal*. Vol 5 No 3, May 1989.
- FUNSTON R [1988] "A Model Program for International Commerce Education". Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages for Business and the Professions.
- LITZENBERG KK and SCHNEIDER VE [1988] "Educational Priorities for Tomorrow's Agribusiness Leaders". *Agribusiness - An International Journal*. Vol 4 No 2, March 1988.
- SOUTHARD S [1984] "An Internship in a 'Lean' Economy". Annual Meeting of the International Technical Communication Association. Seattle, Washington USA. April 29 - May 2 1984.

One must examine the state of affairs at each institution when asking the question, "What do you do for the care and feeding of the college teacher?" The question needs to be raised, "Is there a faculty development planning process and is there a set of existing structure and processes that would facilitate personal and professional growth?" Based on the situation of analyzing our institution, it appeared that there were voids in the area of teaching development and voids associated with bridging the individual and unit goals and objectives. Further, there seemed to be a very laissez-faire approach rather than an intrusive approach to developing teachers, and there was very little evidence of any structured process for faculty development. I challenge each of you to take time to reexamine the state of affairs as you look at your own campus and apply it to your unit or department level.

Based on the assessment that I made at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln within the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, I concluded that there were very few intrusive and structured processes as related to the care and feeding of the college teacher. Therefore as Dean, I set into motion a process which built upon what was there and visibly reflected an institutional commitment. This has been an evolutionary process which needs to be a campus decision to intentionally establish a faculty development planning process and action plan. Within the last two years, we have established in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources an Office of Professional and Organizational Development (OPOD), and we have a coordinator who heads professional and organizational development planning working with the Dean of Instruction, Research and Extension and the department heads and faculty.

Making the Nurturing Visible

The course of events in the evolution of our faculty development program for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources grew out of the commitment at the Resident Instruction level (College of Agriculture). There has been a traditional interest and commitment for effectiveness of the classroom instructor. The College of Agriculture (now College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources), has had a history of high ratings by students as being a college that was concerned about effective teaching with caring faculty both in the classroom and as advisors. The climate for nurturing the teaching faculty has existed for a good long while. However, there was little visible commitment from the college point-of-view or the Dean's Office.

A specific paradigm shift was the first step associated

with instructional improvement. This dealt with the College's course objectives. Early in the 70's, the faculty adopted the use of measurable behavioral objectives. However, there was little evidence that these were really being considered seriously. A conscientious effort was made through the Curriculum Committee of the College to review every course in terms of its objectives to be stated in measurable, behavioral terms. That is what will be the student outcomes in satisfactorily completing the course. This led to a philosophical approach that was very significant in terms of looking at instructional strategies and improvement.

Instructional Improvement Committee

Based on advice from faculty in the College, a standing committee was established entitled the Instructional Improvement Committee. The Committee was composed of a cross-section of faculty elected at large by the faculty to consider specific instructional improvement strategies. Further, the faculty urged that the newly established instructional improvement committee work closely with the University's Teaching and Learning Center. It was through a developmental grant from the Teaching and Learning Center that the College was able to initiate an instructional development program. The College was able to employ on a half-time basis an instructional development consultant and establish a structure for dealing with specific subjects in so far as the tools for a successful teacher in the College.

It was apparent early that there is great variety of teaching style preferences, and it also became apparent that there was a variety of learning preferences among students. In order to assess this, the College embarked on the testing and use of a personality assessment or index using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). A series of workshops were conducted for the faculty with several being certified to be able to lead in the application of the Myers-Briggs Type Index (MBTI). This has been a tool used in understanding differences among students and to create a database of the distribution of the personality types (16 types) within the College for the student body and the faculty. We have published the findings of this in the NACTA Journal and have established this as a very important tool in dealing with instructional design and strategies.

Through the efforts of the Instructional Improvement Committee working with the Dean's Office, it was determined that an initiative needed to be made for a more structured faculty development program for the College's teachers. The feeling being that more attention needed to be given to the development of the teacher side of the professoriate contrasted to that of the research or extension side. A pilot project was initiated and ultimately a grant was secured through the Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). This was jointly initiated with the University of Minnesota, College of Agriculture, labeled as COPROF (Cooperative Professional Renewal of Faculty). During the three years of the grant, a program was established for a more structured faculty development process.

COPROF (NUPROF presently) established a process for post-tenured faculty for their renewal. It currently consists of

the following steps:

- a) Invitation for faculty to a late summer orientation about NUPROF objectives.
- b) Interested faculty make application to participate in the NUPROF class accompanied by the department head's endorsement.
- c) A class of 15 faculty admitted to NUPROF.
- d) Required participation in a 2 1/2 day Faculty Development Institute.
- e) Each class member begins exploration to prepare a professional growth plan.
- f) Negotiation with department head in finalizing the growth plan.
- g) Growth plan submitted to NUPROF Steering Committee and awarded \$1,500 for implementation.
- h) Completion and evaluation of growth plan.

An invitation was extended each of the three years, to form a "class" of college teachers from the College of Agriculture to participate in the faculty development program. This resulted in a very successful experience of a more systematic process to faculty development. Considering instructional development along with personal development, an external evaluator looked at the results of COPROF and concluded that a very important shift in attitude had occurred within the teaching faculty as to the importance of their professional growth and development.

A major outcome of COPROF was the recognition that the faculty member must be looked at as a whole and that their responsibilities need to be considered not only from the instructional or teaching role but from other aspects. In most of our institutions, we have faculty that have responsibility in scholarly activity or research as well as service. It became apparent that there was a need to accommodate the total responsibilities of the faculty member as a professional growth plan was developed. One of the very significant things that occurred during the preparation of growth plans was the opening up of a wider variety of faculty development opportunities. This further opened a wide set of options for faculty development leave contrasted to the traditional approach of sabbatical or development leave. These leave opportunities included assignments with industry, with government agencies or spending time at another institution with a focus on instructional development as well as a research focus. Historically, faculty development leaves or sabbatical leaves have been utilized focusing primarily on research development. COPROF allowed us to break that mold and allowed faculty to negotiate their individual development goals and objectives blended with the unit goals and objectives. A small amount of money (\$1,500) was built into the faculty development plan available to the individual in fulfilling their growth plan utilizing that money for special travel and visitations, acquiring reference materials or attending special seminars. In many instances, the growth plan lead towards the planning for a faculty development leave. We experienced a tripling of the number of faculty taking development leaves. During the first three years and the initial pilot year which proceeded the FIPSE grant, a total of 60 faculty members participated in the program. With the

phasing out of the grant, the Institute made the commitment to broaden the perspective to include teaching, research and extension or service. It is now institutionalized as NUPROF, University of Nebraska Professional Renewal of Faculty. It is administered through OPOD and has been able to continue the structured process which now has entered its eighth year involving 120 faculty.

Further evidence of the commitment of the care and feeding of the college teacher is contained in the recently completed 3-year IANR Strategic Plan. The plan identifies faculty development as an essential part of fulfilling the changing demands of the role and mission of IANR. It is my recommendation that each institution look carefully at whether or not it has a statement of intention for faculty development, and if it doesn't, why not? It is becoming an essential part of the formula for dealing with developing teachers and dealing with change.

A Career Span Plan

The IANR faculty development plan under the leadership of OPOD is characterized by a set of strategies for the total career span. The concept being that this is a lifelong career development process and specific categories of emphasis need to be built into the program.

The career span faculty development plan has been divided into the following broad areas with a series of activities:

- a) Getting started -- orientation and position description expectations.
- b) Feedback process -- annual evaluation of performance.
- c) Pre-tenure and promotion consultations and programs.
- d) Post-tenure and promotion activities and programs.
- e) Mid career evaluation and programs.
- f) Late career development programs.

These areas are amplified in the following discussions. First, "getting started" -- young faculty need to have special attention to get off to a productive start. Seminars, selected topic workshops, as well as college preparatory courses that the new faculty member can participate in are helpful in order to gain the understanding of instructional strategies for effective teaching. New faculty need assistance in order to understand the existing supporting services that are available on campus. Many departments consider a formal mentoring process. I would recommend an approach which recognizes not only the mentoring role that is important among colleagues, but also that the unit administrator (department head or chair) assume a proactive role in coaching faculty. Each College should consider establishing an instructional improvement committee to provide a visible commitment for developing the college teacher.

The second major area for consideration in the career span strategies is that of assisting and supporting faculty in the understanding of the tenure and promotion process. This can be greatly facilitated by an annual evaluation process as well as efforts of coaching and mentoring new faculty in making progress toward their tenure and promotion.

The third area is the activities available to faculty after

tenure has been granted. This is extremely important as one looks at the faculty person who has many commitments and working at a level in which there is the risk of burnout. It is important to have an intrusive program that is available to those faculty for them to turn to for support and assistance. That is where our NUPROF program has been particularly important for us. It has been very remarkable to see faculty who have achieved their tenure and moved to the rank of Associate Professor regain their vigor after teaching the same course for over ten years and felt they were going stale. There needs to be a provision for a renewal process.

The fourth stage or phase for renewal that should be considered comes after the individual has reached the rank of full professor. A full professor can assist young faculty in the care and feeding of them as a college teacher. This can be a college or department expectation as well as serving for their own continued professional growth and development.

In conclusion, the care and feeding of the college teacher requires a combination of commitments. It requires the perspective of understanding career development, in general, adult development and fitting the individual's role and responsibilities. An adequate infrastructure and support needs to be developed that allows renewal to provide the continuation of the excitement and vigor that truly makes higher education "higher" through a highly motivated and rewarded teaching faculty.

I suggest as a part of assessing institutional health in the care and feeding of the college teachers that serious consideration be given to review important publications that deal with faculty development. I would list the following as important references to consider.

The highly effective college teacher perceives many rewards besides that of the advancement through the ranks and receiving tenure. The true reward is having influenced the development of individuals and seeing over a period of time the number of professionals one has had a key role in helping develop. A faculty development program has been extremely rewarding to me from the standpoint of having seen young faculty persons grow and develop in extremely productive and satisfying roles and then being able to sustain that level of professional energy. That is what the care and feeding of college teachers means to me; individual success and recognition for the faculty as college teachers.

References

- Enhancing Faculty Careers.* J.H. Schuster, D.W. Wheeler and Associates. 1990. Jossey-Bass, Inc. Publishers. CA.
- Please Understand Me. Character and Temperament Types.* David Keirse and Marilyn Bates. 1978. Prometheus Nemesis Books. CA.
- Preparing Instructional Objectives.* Robert Mager. 1975. Fearson Publishers, Inc. CA.
- Proceedings of Seventh Annual Conference. Academic Chairpersons: Developing Faculty, Students and Programs.* 1990. Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development. Kansas State University.
- Real Power.* J.O. Hagberg. 1984. Winston Press. Mo.
- The Academic Chairperson's Handbook.* J.W. Creswell, D.W. Wheeler, A.T. Seagren, N.J. Egly and K.D. Beyer. 1990. University of Nebraska Press. NE.
- The Inventurers. Excursions in Life and Career Renewal.* J. Hagberg and R. Leider. 3rd Edition. 1988. Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Inc. MA.
- The Three Boxes of Life.* R. Bolles. 1981. Ten Speed Press. CA. [A]