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An Informational Brochure about Instructional, Faculty, Organizational Development

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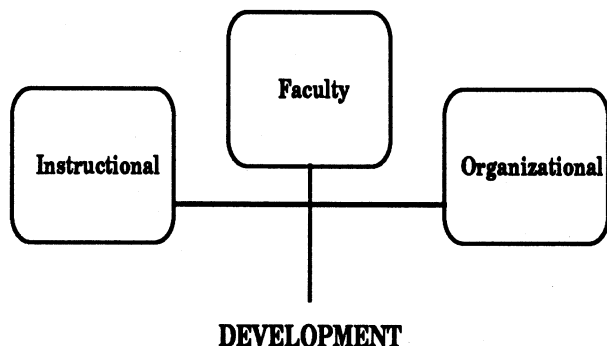
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Why Consider a Program?

An Informational Brochure about



Faced with the twin dilemmas of a static or declining financial base and a changing student population, institutions of higher education have to do more with less while still maintaining the quality of life which leads to the growth and learning of all involved. Many institutions have responded to the challenge by establishing programs of **faculty, instructional and/or organizational development**.

While the specific uses of the terms often overlap, the common goal of these programs has been to develop the potential of the existing resources and structures of institutions by viewing and using them in creative ways. These resources include the faculty and staff, the courses and programs, all of which can become self-renewing once we become aware of the possibilities.

Prepared
for
Faculty
and
Administrators

by

The Professional and Organizational
Development Network
in Higher Education



Common Program Activities

Although a traditional interpretation of the term “faculty development” has been the use of sabbaticals, research grants and so on, many institutions are expanding that interpretation to include a wider range of activities.

Faculty development generally refers to those programs which focus on the individual faculty member. The most common focus for programs of this type is the **faculty member as a teacher**. They provide consultation on teaching, including class organization, evaluation of students, in-class presentation skills, questioning and all aspects of design and presentation. They also advise faculty on other aspects of teacher/student interaction, such as advising, tutoring, discipline policies and administration.

A second frequent focus of the programs is the **faculty member as a scholar and professional**. These programs offer assistance in career planning, professional development in scholarly skills such as grant writing, publishing, committee work, administrative work, supervisory skills, and the wide range of other activities expected of faculty.

A third area on which faculty development programs focus is the **faculty member as a person**. This includes wellness management, interpersonal skills, stress and time management, assertiveness development and a host of other programs which address the individual’s well-being.

While not all faculty development programs include all these areas, most of them have as their philosophy the faculty member as the driving force behind the institution; therefore, assisting that person to be as productive as possible will make the entire institution more productive.

Instructional development usually takes a different tack for the improvement of the institution. These centers have as their focus **the course, the curriculum and student learning**. In this system instructors become members of a design or redesign team, working with instructional design specialists to identify appropriate course structures and procedures to achieve the goals of instruction.

These programs examine how a course fits into the overall departmental and institutional curriculum; they help define instructional goals and methods which will maximize learning; they evaluate course effectiveness in goal achievement; they produce or evaluate learning materials for use in the course. Many include a media design component.

Some programs have expanded this focus a bit to include training faculty members and teaching assistants to perform these functions themselves. This involves the presentation of workshops on course design, alternative instructional methods, materials production and so on. This expansion also frequently includes a research component which either studies a variety of questions about instructional effectiveness or assists faculty members to conduct their own studies of course methods.

The philosophy behind these programs is that members of the institution should work as teams to design the best possible courses within the restrictions of the resources available.

Organizational development takes a third perspective on maximizing institutional effectiveness. The focus of these programs is **the organizational structure of the institution and its subcomponents**. The philosophy is that if one can build an organizational structure which will be efficient and effective in supporting the faculty and students, the teaching/learning process will naturally thrive.

One activity such programs offer is administrative development for department chairs, deans and other decision-makers. The reasoning is that these are the individuals who will be making the policies which affect how courses are taught, how faculty are hired and promoted, how students are admitted and graduated. If those policies allow for growth and flexibility while maintaining standards, the amount of learning which occurs will increase.

Other activities include helping subunits understand how curricular decisions are made, how courses are staffed, and other organizational matters. Do these administrative matters reflect the mission of the institution? What is the mission of the institution? Is it still valid or should it be changed? What is the change process?

Still other programs deal with personnel issues involving faculty. How are faculty evaluated and rewarded? How are they prepared for changes in the institution, including their own retirement? Where do faculty fit into the overall governance structure of the institution? What is the effect of unionization, departmentalization, professionalization?

Thus it can be seen that these programs look at interactions within the institution and how they affect the functioning of the individual as well as the institution. Then they seek ways of making those interactions more humane and thus more effective.

Combinations of the above: In reality many programs offer activities in all of these areas. Each program must define for itself what is appropriate for the institutional needs and philosophy. There is no magic formula for what makes a perfect program. In choosing a program focus appropriate for your institution, consider the following variables:

The Faculty

To what extent are faculty accustomed to working independently? How much interaction among colleagues is there around the topic of teaching or personal development? How much do faculty participate in institutional governance on a regular basis? If faculty are relatively independent individuals, programs which focus on their needs will best suit their style. If they frequently work in groups as units, instructional development will be very successful. If they regularly participate in governance, they will appreciate programs in organizational development.

The Institution

How stable is the institution? How centralized is the administration? At what stage in its development is it? What is the relationship of the parts to the whole? In times of change and growth, instructional and organizational development programs can be an exciting way to explore new alternatives and seek solutions to problems. At those times faculty development programs tend to focus more on helping the individual cope with change. When the institution is stable, faculty development helps the individual grow within the security of that stability.

The Realities

Above all, the direction of a program should be that which is desired by the faculty, supported by the administration and consistent with the resources. Before choosing a focus for the program an institution would be well-advised to identify the desired program outcomes, determine what kinds of activities are likely to bring them about and then decide if the resources are available to carry out the plan.

Alternative Program Structures

Regardless of the focus of the program, there are many different structures used to carry out these activities. Some of the most common are shown below:

Faculty committee run programs: Many programs just starting are run by a faculty committee made up of individuals who have a special interest in the quality of teaching. They are usually volunteers, unpaid, who organize and oversee the offerings. When this is the organizational structure of the development program, there is a great dependence on the cooperation of peers to conduct the actual workshops, consultation, research or other activity.

Programs run by a single individual: Alternatively, many new programs have a single individual who oversees the entire program. This individual might be an administrator responsible for faculty matters or a faculty member with a part-time assignment for development activities. As with the previous structure, this individual must rely on the cooperation of peers to do the actual work. He or she is often advised by a committee of faculty.

Centrally located centers: Some institutions, particularly larger institutions or those which have had programs for a number of years, have an administrative unit staffed by professionals and responsible for development activities. The number of staff members varies depending on the types and extent of the programs. For example, faculty development programs tend to be smaller, while instructional development programs, which often also house media services, tend to be larger. These centers are usually administratively located under the Office of Academic Affairs.

Decentralized centers: Some larger institutions house development programs within subunits of the institution. Many programs at smaller institutions began in such a fashion.

The POD Network in Higher Education

About 15 years ago when these development programs were first starting, a group of individuals responsible for the programs on their respective campuses came together for mutual support and encouragement. They formed the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education. That small group has since grown to over 500 individuals on campuses throughout the United States and Canada. If your institution has or is considering a program for development along the lines described, we invite the individuals responsible to join us and take advantage of this network of professionals at all stages of the process from all types of institutions. Our purpose is to learn from one another and so the emphasis is on the word "network" in all we do. We would like the opportunity to learn from you as well.

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