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## NN 21 - Scholarship, Evaluation and Rewards Report

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# NN 21 - Scholarship, Evaluation and Rewards

## Report

### Chapter 1

#### Introduction

**Action Team on Scholarship, Evaluation and Rewards:** The Action Team on Scholarship, Evaluation and Rewards was a component of the Nebraska Network 21 project, one of 13 projects on the future role of higher education in American society funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Given its mission, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation focused its initiative on the land-grant mission of higher education and on food systems, broadly defined to range from the communities that produce the food to the communities that consume it. At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), the NN21 project has been centered in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR), but the focus has been enlarged beyond food systems to collaboration among higher education institutions, K-12 schools and communities in Nebraska. The purpose of NN21 is to meet the learning needs of Nebraskans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Action Team on Scholarship, Evaluation and Rewards accordingly did not limit its work to land-grant or food systems issues, but examined how academic work is defined, supported and rewarded across the campus and, to a lesser degree, across the state. Although a majority of the team members were from UNL, other institutions of higher education and the general public were represented on the team and as participants in the roundtable discussions and other activities. As this report indicates, the Team defined scholarship as the focal point for a wide range of academic work and approached evaluation and rewards from a variety of angles. The history of the Action Team is traced in Appendix A.

These findings are directed at institutions of higher education generally, although the Action Team made some specific recommendations for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln which are summarized in Appendix B. While this report makes recommendations, the answers to the problems discussed will be specific to the missions of different institutions and their subdivisions and should be approached through the decision-making structures inside an institution. The Action Team's goal is to encourage and inform further dialogue within institutional contexts, not to provide final answers on the problems raised. Col-

leges and universities and their subunits must work out their own accommodations among external demands, the work they assign and their internal reward systems. Reports such as this can at best generate ideas and provide some guidance.

**Overall recommendations:** Institutions of higher education need to rethink the ways they recognize, support, evaluate and reward academic work in order to make their formal systems receptive to change and to ensure equitable treatment of faculty and staff. This should be linked with a return to collaborative governance structures and leadership practices that set priorities and assign work with the active participation of the concerned members of the academic community. Better ways of setting priorities and assigning work are basic to effective evaluation and reward systems.

These general propositions can be divided into seven recommendations:

1. Higher education institutions should evaluate and reward all major forms of academic work. In particular, scholarship and creativity should be redefined to be inclusive of more forms of academic work.
2. Each faculty member should have an individualized position description which should include all the major portions of faculty members' assignment. Position descriptions should be flexible and subject to annual revision through negotiations with unit administrators.
3. While all forms of academic work should be recognized, it is appropriate to expect faculty to demonstrate scholarship and creativity as central components in the evaluation of their research, teaching and outreach.
4. Teaching should be seen as an activity with a central scholarly component closely linked with research and as a complex set of activities that promote learning to a wide variety of audiences.
5. Participation in major service and outreach projects, research and teaching as described in the faculty member's position description should be evaluated, supported and rewarded in analogous ways.
6. Evaluation and assessment procedures should be objective and equitable but also cost effective in terms of faculty and staff time,
7. The governance structures and leadership practices of higher education should ensure that work priorities are set wisely through practices that include the full participation of appropriate faculty and staff.

In short, the academic work that is important to an institution should be recognized, supported and rewarded in ways that encourage high-quality performance and ensure the fair treatment of the faculty and staff asked to perform the work. All projects and, in particular, new initiatives should be undertaken and planned with the active participation of all

those who have expertise on the topic and who will have to do the work involved. It is recognized that, to a large extent, improvements are always possible. Every phrase of these general recommendations opens out into a host of problems, particularly in a time when some aspects of academic work are changing rapidly. The remaining chapters of this report represent an exploration of the issues raised by these general recommendations.

## Chapter 2

### Academic Evaluation

**Academic work:** The Action Team focused on scholarship and creative work since these are at the heart of institutions of higher education, although it believes all major forms of academic work need to be recognized and evaluated. While the Team endorses the national movement to make the definition of scholarship more inclusive, it recognizes that not all academic work should be called scholarship and that non-scholarly as well as non-academic forms of work are also important to colleges and universities. Effective and challenging evaluation procedures are essential to all aspects of the institution's work, not just to the academic mission as traditionally defined. Nevertheless, scholarly and creative work are essential parts of the assignment of each faculty member and at the center of the mission of higher education institutions, so their evaluation and reward are justifiable priorities.

**Recognition and support:** It is difficult to understand the accomplishments of a modern institution of higher education because academic work is complex and often very specialized. Moreover, prevailing models of faculty professionalism are often narrowly focused, so important academic work is often not visible or understood within an institution. Some work is widely publicized, but the internal communication systems of institutions are often unsuccessful at making the full scope of academic work clear to administrators and colleagues (nor to external constituencies or the public). Many faculty members would take comfort in a simple acknowledgment of their less visible efforts. If appropriate forms of support followed, some of the dissatisfaction the Action Team heard from faculty and staff in its roundtable discussions already would be addressed. The foundation of sound evaluation systems is a comprehensive understanding of the actual academic work underway, and the most basic reward is the appropriate support that follows from the recognition of the full range of academic tasks performed by faculty and staff.

**Evaluation of academic work:** Once a form of academic work is recognized, understood and supported, evaluation is often desirable. Evaluation ranges from informal feedback to more formal systems that have significant consequences for the careers of those being evaluated. Evaluation can be classified as "formative" in the sense of helping an individual or program improve performance or as "summative" in allowing for the appropriate allocation of support and rewards. In practice, these kinds of evaluation overlap, although the ends are very different. Evaluation procedures need to be appropriate to the activity

being assessed, and overall evaluations need to be responsive to the variety of tasks undertaken by faculty members in different contexts (and at different stages of their careers). Very general evaluation procedures that merely serve the abstract goal of "accountability" are wasteful, particularly when no one is actually doing the "accounting" by reviewing the results in any depth.

The more complex and innovative the task undertaken, the more valuable evaluation becomes as a way of improving performance. The growing complexity of academic work and the increased pace of change have caused evaluation to emerge as an issue in higher education in the last few decades of the twentieth century (less sound but perhaps related causes are the breakdown of trust in the governance of higher education and suspicions about the professionalism of faculty). Even academic work that once seemed routine has often become more complex and in need of continual review, while newer forms of cooperative research, teaching and service often depend on detailed assessment procedures. Faculty and staff are understandably critical of excessive or merely bureaucratic evaluation requirements, but evaluation has become an essential part of academic work, as a way of both improving performance and making informed decisions about the use of resources.

**Multiple evaluation systems:** In practice, most institutions have several evaluation systems that use different standards and purposes. Reappointment decisions for adjunct faculty or untenured tenure-line faculty are based on recent performance of assigned duties. Overall records of excellence in research, teaching and service/outreach are likely to be deciding factors in tenure and promotion decisions. Annual or ongoing performance reviews in a wider range of areas provide the basis for merit salary increases (where they exist). Post-tenure review is directed at unsatisfactory work that might be a cause for special attention and possible termination. Many institutions have other evaluation systems from still different angles, including various assessment procedures which focus on programs rather than individuals. Complete standardization of these systems is probably not possible, but in the interest of clarity and efficiency the overlapping areas among different evaluation protocols should be regularized to avoid confusion and cut down on the time spent on evaluation. Institutions need to be vigilant to see that their several evaluation and reward systems do not duplicate effort or contradict each other in ways that send mixed messages to the faculty being evaluated.

The highest standards prevail for tenure and promotion, which are usually recommended on the basis of high levels of performance in research, teaching and, to a lesser extent, service/outreach. The Action Team supports this in a context of a definition of scholarship and creativity that is inclusive of the best work in teaching, service/outreach, and the diverse forms that research often takes. In practice, a merit pay system will and should recognize a wider range of academic work than would be assessed for promotion and tenure. For example, lower-level administrative assignments might not weigh much toward promotion in some units but be rewarded by merit pay increases and other forms of recognition. The threshold is likely to be even more basic for post-tenure review, where routine but valuable work is evaluated as satisfactory in a way that it might not be for promotion and tenure or merit pay raises. Trying to make all these standards the same

would not be useful, but the different evaluation systems should link with each other in a way that makes sense overall.

**Evaluation models:** The Action Team has no specific evaluation model or protocol to promote. One effective approach to evaluating academic work is outlined in the Carnegie Foundation report, *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate* (1997) by Charles E. Glassick and others. This report proposes six standards that apply to research, teaching and outreach projects:

1. Clear goals.
2. Adequate preparation.
3. Appropriate methods.
4. Significant results.
5. Effective presentation.
6. Reflective critique.

These standards have the virtues of being simple, inclusive and adaptable to most kinds of academic work. They are particularly recommended as a starting place for evaluating new forms of academic work although they also apply to traditional research, teaching and service/outreach.

Another protocol, suggested by Robert M. Diamond, raises some of the same issues as the Carnegie report but is more narrowly focused on promotion and tenure. Comparing different disciplines, he proposed that the following features characteristic of scholarly activities be evaluated for tenure and promotion (Robert M. Diamond and Bronwyn E. Adam, *Recognizing Faculty Work: Reward Systems for the Year 2000*, New Directions for Higher Education Number 81, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993, p.12):

1. Require a high level of discipline-related expertise.
2. Break new ground or are innovative.
3. Can be replicated or elaborated.
4. Can be documented.
5. Can be peer reviewed.
6. Have significance or impact.

These criteria also can serve as an operational definition of scholarship, whether in research, teaching or service/outreach activities. Of course, many useful things done by faculty will not meet such stringent criteria, but institutions of higher education rightly prize work that does.

**Equity and fairness in evaluation:** Effective evaluation must both be fair and be perceived as fair by those being evaluated. If the system or practices seem biased, then the evaluation will breed cynicism rather than encouraging better performance. Bad procedures and practices destroy morale and generate time-consuming internal appeals and legal actions. It is hard to avoid all disagreement and confusion, since many of the criteria used by institutions of higher education must have a subjective element. Units should not simply say that all scholarly articles are equal to each other, but as soon as work is evaluated for quality, the results can be accused of being subjective. Similarly, teaching evaluation systems that are perfunctory or too dependent on the raw data of student evaluations will not be taken seriously by faculty. Evaluation systems must build on trust, but trust will not be generated by systems that are vague or mask differences among priorities with obscure language. Even a system that has "worked" for years will malfunction if it becomes disconnected from the actual work of faculty as it is bound to do over time.

Sound evaluation procedures are ethically, legally and pragmatically desirable. More formal evaluation systems should include opportunities for appeal at every stage where an appeal makes sense. The prospect of litigation has made most institutions cautious about procedures, which is desirable, but unfortunately it also means that institutional by-laws and faculty handbooks are often legalistic and defensive. New faculty may well feel that they face a maze of procedural hurdles rather than an understandable process that helps them and the institution achieve shared goals. Procedures for evaluation need to be in writing and they must be complex to reflect the diversity of academic work, but they need to be reviewed regularly in terms of their comprehensiveness and clarity.

**Excessive evaluation:** The Action Team recommends that evaluation be "cost effective" in terms of the effort expended in relation to the benefits conferred. Evaluation is not an end in itself but a means to improve performance and ensure equity. Excessive evaluation and assessment drain energy from more essential work. Partly to provoke discussion, the Action Team suggests that 5% or less of an academic unit's time should be expended on evaluation and assessment procedures (the amount would vary for individuals within a unit). For this purpose, evaluation includes all the formal systems of evaluating individual performance and assessing programs in operation at an institution, but not grading or external research service (such as reading for an academic journal). It includes assembling one's own files for evaluation, but also participating in reading the files and discussing the work of colleagues. At the 5% limit, a 20-person unit would be, in effect, devoting one full-time faculty equivalent to evaluation and assessment procedures.

This 5% limit caused confusion when some respondents to a draft of this report thought that it was calling for an increase in the amount of time put into evaluation and assessment activities. What emerged was a wide range of beliefs about how much time faculty

now put into assessment, some seeing 5% as high and some as low. The Action Team was reluctant to impose on faculty by doing a formal evaluation of the time put into evaluation, anticipating the ironic reaction such a survey would elicit. Nevertheless, it would have been of value to do such a study since the Action Team found little agreement among the subjective views of the faculty it did canvass. Those who conduct such a study would have to be very careful of its definitions and probably ask faculty to monitor the time spent on evaluation, rather than simply estimate how much effort was expended on it. The total time put into "professional monitoring" of all kinds, including the evaluation of students, research, colleagues, and oneself probably adds up to as much as half of some faculty members' work.

The Action Team concluded that excessive formal evaluation is a problem. Every unnecessary hour put into evaluation is an hour not spent on research, teaching and outreach activities. For a large institution like UNL, this can cost dozens of faculty lines and many thousands of dollars in state support or tuition income. It is a paradox that distrust of the efficiency of higher education can lead to mandated evaluation procedures that are themselves inefficient.

The fact that evaluation and assessment are often experienced as an extra level of academic work added on to more basic tasks is evidence that it is not effectively integrated into individual and programmatic operations. The best evaluation procedures become a natural part of academic work in a way that makes them seem essential rather than an imposed burden. For example, many teachers find the soliciting of feedback from students and colleagues an essential part of their teaching procedure rather than an imposition. Many scholars experience the monitoring of research results for journals, publishers and granting agencies to be an integral part of their professional lives. Evaluation is most acceptable to faculty and staff when it is clearly linked to the goal of improving performance, either because of formative feedback or personnel decisions. It is possible to meet the goal of accountability within this more positive framework.

## Chapter 3

### Rewards

**Kinds of reward:** After it has been understood and assessed, significant academic work needs to receive an appropriate reward. Rewards take many forms, from support of the work itself to salary increases or tenure and promotion (or simply being left alone in the case of post-tenure review). Support is, in part, the practical support of the work itself, but it also can become a form of reward when it includes faculty leaves, grants-in-aid, and the funding of trips to national meetings. There are also less tangible rewards that are very important to faculty which follow from participation in the academic life. These can include pride in the overall vitality of the institution and its programs. Faculty even feel "rewarded" by the success of colleagues when they feel any rewards given to the col-



league are deserved. It is a mistake to assume faculty and staff are only motivated by personal gain or the achievement of competitive advantages for themselves.

As professionals, academics are perhaps less influenced by extrinsic rewards than administrative theory would suggest. Faculty like to see themselves as self-motivated and autonomous, not as persons who will change their work habits to suit an external reward system. This may be somewhat of a delusion, but it is a powerful delusion that makes faculty resentful and recalcitrant when they feel they are being manipulated by a reward system. The ironic humility with which many faculty accept awards and honors is partly a reluctance to seem externally motivated. Too much emphasis on extrinsic rewards undermines the sense of intrinsic rewards that faculty believe are strong motivators of their actions. Extrinsic rewards are important, but they always should be conferred with an awareness that faculty are also motivated by professional ideals and personal satisfactions that are often as important to them.

**Marketplace for faculty:** A reward system usually will achieve equity within a pragmatic framework set by the institution and by the academic profession nationally. Often the national markets for different kinds of faculty will be a factor that makes salaries seem unfair in terms of the absolute value of individuals to an institution. The accounting professor is paid more than the classics professor as a response to markets, not as the result of an institutional judgment that the one is intrinsically more valuable than the other (even granting that the marketplace has some logic to it). This same pragmatic argument can be used to justify a greater salary for a person who is outstanding in a nationally recognized way and, therefore, likely to receive outside offers from other institutions. Faculty can accept such pragmatic market approaches when they make sense and are administered wisely, since they can rise above their self-interests to recognize the overall needs of an institution. At institutions where trust between faculty and administration has been stretched thin, faculty may resent such inequity in rewards. At some unionized campuses where faculty have little trust in administration, contracts do not allow differentiated pay for different disciplines, the matching of outside offers or merit pay increases.

**Implicit punishments:** The punishments that are always implicit as the other side of the coin in a reward system may do more damage than the rewards confer. Many faculty consider evaluation a questioning of their professional competence and the ensuing distribution of rewards as a slighting of their particular contributions. Through the strange calculus of ego sensitivity we all think of ourselves as above average the distribution of rewards can discourage more people than it encourages. This is perhaps unavoidable, but it can be alleviated by shifting attention from the summative to the formative role of evaluation and recognizing that understanding and support of faculty work and recognition of its intrinsic values are often as important as formal rewards. Sometimes administrators and colleagues are provoked into being overtly punitive, but this is seldom productive. The concept of "deficit motivation" is appealing when faculty seem particularly unresponsive, but a "growth motivation" approach produces more positive results.

**Unrewarded work:** Rewards can only fairly be given for work that is assessed, but it is impractical to evaluate every bit of academic work, so it follows that some of the work

institutions want to encourage will fall outside the formal reward system. Programs cannot track every incident where a faculty member helps a student during office hours or suggests a research approach to a colleague. This is why this report emphasizes recognition and support as a form of reward. Trying to get all academic work under the reward system would be both impractical and counterproductive, but recognition and support of the full range of academic activities is an achievable goal. This should include provisions for recognizing unforeseen opportunities for meritorious performance that may emerge during the period being reviewed.

**Hierarchy of recognition and reward:** This overview of how academic work is recognized, evaluated and rewarded can be summarized as a series of steps:

1. *Recognition:* The institution, the chair or head and the faculty member must understand what work is to be accomplished. This is not easy in a complex institution, but not to see work is to punish it.
2. *Support:* The academic work must be supported appropriately. This can include advice and encouragement as well as more tangible support like clerical assistance or space.
3. *Evaluation:* The work should be evaluated formally as a way of improving performance or ensuring the equitable treatment of the program or the people doing the work. Informal evaluation should be continual and designed to help the individual and the program.
4. *Individual Rewards:* The work must be rewarded when it is a valued and major part of a person's assignment (although rewards also can be given to teams and units).

Focusing on the final step, individual rewards, as the apex of the whole system, can be misleading. Much of the frustration expressed at some of the Action Team roundtables was directed at the first three steps. Faculty and staff are demoralized when their efforts are not recognized and supported. They also expressed considerable discontent with evaluation that did not, in fact, help to improve a project or lead to equitable rewards. Promotion, raises and other tangible rewards are obviously very important, but they work best as part of a complex reward system that shades into other forms of support and recognition. The need for the latter is related to the need to acknowledge the substantive role played by intrinsic motivation.

## Chapter 4

### A New Conception of Academic Work

**Rationale for a new conception:** In its review of the literature and discussions with faculty and staff at UNL and elsewhere, the Action Team concluded that the nature of academic work has changed and will continue to change in significant ways that need to be

acknowledged by institutions of higher education. Of course, there are intellectual fads and enthusiasms and too much cataclysmic rhetoric about the death of traditional colleges and universities. But there are legitimate new forms of scholarship not recognized by traditional models, new modes of learning other than traditional classroom teaching, and new forms of outreach that require considerable amounts of scholarly and technical expertise. External social changes and the emergence of an international "information" economy are putting new demands on colleges and universities that add to the work assignments of faculty and staff and strain administrative structures. Perhaps more than ever before in the history of academe, the university has become more a part of the market economy and society generally. The university is expected to make a difference in both economic and social realms. Many of these changes are already a significant part of the academic work of an institution such as UNL, and technological evolution and societal pressures will lead to more such changes in the near future.

**Diversity of academic work:** The Action Team was constantly reminded that the modern academic institution incorporates a wide range of work assignments with significant differences among units and among individual faculty and staff. This differentiation in assignments is increasing and strains "one size fits all" institutional procedures inherited from a simpler past. This trend calls into question an idealized concept of the teacher/scholar who is a microcosm for all the priorities of the unit. That idealization puts unfortunate pressure on individuals to excel in all areas simultaneously, rather than shifting emphases at different stages in a career. It also renders adjunct instructors invisible in ways unfair to them and damaging to teaching. The sheer variety of academic assignments has rendered dubious traditional conceptions of the ideal performance model for faculty.

Different units in any sizable college or university have in any case developed different conceptions of what constitutes scholarship, teaching and appropriate outreach activities. Within a unit, subdisciplines and individual faculty members often make different kinds of contributions to the overall unit goals. This has led to many different unit cultures and procedures differences which are inevitable and worthy of respect. However, these differences become a problem when they cause institutional inequities, discourage collaborative work across unit boundaries or confuse newcomers to the system.

Uniformity in the conceptions of scholarship, evaluation procedures and kinds of rewards is an impractical goal, particularly for universities. However, sound institutional and college administration and effective internal communications depend on the systems used by diverse units being commensurate with each other. As much as possible, institutions need to use common accounting techniques for things that can be measured and a common set of terms for qualitative assessments. The different parts of an institution need to be able to talk to each other. This is a particular problem at a complex, land-grant university where the liberal arts and the various professional colleges often seem to use incompatible systems and speak different languages. The natural tension between disciplinary goals and other missions adds to the difficulty.

**Faculty roles redefined:** The highly individualistic conception of the faculty member as an autonomous professional needs to be modified to recognize the increasing interdependence of all forms of academic work. The typical project of the future will often involve a team of faculty (and staff) from different disciplines collaborating on a task that could not be done by any individual alone. The appealing image of the heroic scholar who does it all, subsuming a massive project in a capacious brain, can lead in practice to badly conceived and executed programs. As the model for faculty aspirations, it also can cause stress and burnout. The expertise of faculty should be respected and the autonomy necessary for academic freedom protected, but higher education needs to evolve better models of how faculty can work together and develop better institutional structures for supporting and evaluating such work.

**Nontenure-line faculty:** Nationally, institutions of higher education are increasingly dependent on temporary or part-time adjunct instructors who are most often employed as teachers of lower-level courses. At universities, graduate students have long played this role, but they are increasingly supplemented by nontenure-line faculty who are not currently enrolled in a degree program at the institution. The problem is not true temporary and part-time faculty, long a reasonable part of any academic program, but the growing cadre of faculty who teach nearly full loads year after year while lost in a limbo between graduate student and faculty status. While their teaching may be evaluated for purposes of reappointment, they often do not participate in the reward system. The faculty is reluctant to include these adjunct instructors in the ongoing life of a unit on the grounds that their employment is a mere expediency until the administration can free up funds to replace them with tenure-line faculty. This strategy may make some sense, but not when it disenfranchises the adjunct instructors from being participants in the programs that employ them. Institutions of higher education need to find better ways of involving adjunct faculty, drawing on more of their abilities and rewarding them more equitably.

**Professional staff:** While these findings focus on the academic mission of institutions of higher education and on the work of faculty, the Action Team is concerned that professional staff also be recognized, evaluated, rewarded and included in decision making when their assignments include academic work. Professional staff at institutions of higher education are increasingly involved in academic work often publishing research and teaching classes. Even when staff are not directly involved in academics, there is a growing scholarly component to their work. Most institutions have seen an exponential increase in the number of professional staff, and these colleagues often have considerable expertise and high levels of academic attainment. Moreover, at an institution like a university that deals with knowledge and information, the lines between clerical and professional and professional and faculty blur in practice. Professional staff are very much a part of the research, teaching, and outreach activities of an institution and should be recognized for their contributions and included in discussions of projects in which they will participate. Professional staff also should be involved in unit management and be given committee and team assignments.

**Role of administrators:** The Action Team was not charged to look at the role and evaluation of academic administrators, but it recognizes that they face the same complex

realities as faculty and staff. In particular, the roles of department chairs and heads (or other unit administrators) have changed in ways that make traditional practices inadequate for the future.

Perhaps more emphasis in chair and head appointments should be placed on evidence of administrative and leadership abilities and less on disciplinary standing (albeit both are needed since disciplinary knowledge will remain a key factor due to the role these individuals often play as the evaluators). There should be more opportunities for administrative development activities.

Administration can be creative, often in ways that involve scholarship. The most effective administrators develop a complex understanding of professional issues and procedures and find innovative ways of resolving old and new problems. Administrators participate in national professional meetings and in "administrative development" programs at their own institutions. Part of the evaluation of administrators should be recognition of their knowledge of the professional literature on administration, their contributions to the profession of administration and their promotion of sound administration at their institutions.

It is encouraging that the formal review of administrators has been instituted at many institutions, although it is sometimes the case that administrators are encouraged to be good managers rather than innovative leaders and scholars in their own realms. There is little incentive for unit heads to take risks. Often unit administrators are not recognized or rewarded for their most important contributions. The Action Team also recommends that evaluation procedures for administrators recognize that administrators work in collaboration with other people. Their successes are most often shared successes, and sometimes their best contributions are not overt. Evaluation schemes that focus exclusively on a list of characteristics of good leadership need to be balanced with the assessment of outcomes of the programs that are the administrator's charge. Administrators, like faculty members, cannot be demigods who do everything well themselves, but they can work with others whose strengths complement their own in ways that mean that tasks are done effectively.

**Actual practices of institutions:** Institutions have responded to changing conditions by recognizing forms of academic work that would have been unimaginable a generation ago. In its consultations with faculty, the Action Team did not find that the present system has broken down or caused wholesale injustice (except, it might be argued, for adjunct faculty). Newer forms of work often are accommodated. There is, though, dissatisfaction with the present system because it often simply fails to recognize never mind evaluate and reward significant areas of faculty and staff effort. This lack of recognition and support has the effect of undermining the work being done and the self-confidence of the person doing the work. For example, a person who puts considerable effort into developing a web site for a department and receives no recognition for the effort may feel exploited. Higher education is in a transition period where different levels of acceptance for newer forms of academic work still cause inequities and confusion.

**Encouraging innovation:** While some new forms of academic work may begin dramatically with major funding and high visibility, many important innovations begin in small ways that fall outside the formal evaluation and reward system for the first few years of their life. Institutions need to maintain a work environment that encourages such small scale innovations by at least recognizing their potential importance. At a minimum, the institution should encourage small, informal projects and provide appropriate support (given inevitable budgetary restraints). This depends on administrators and colleagues knowing what faculty and staff are doing, a goal best achieved through lots of discussion and informal evaluation outside the formal evaluation system. In the absence of such knowledge and support, an institution will unconsciously discourage the modest initiatives that over time might grow into significant new approaches and programs.

## Chapter 5

### Faculty Assignments

**Differentiation in assignments:** The Action Team recommends that institutions differentiate among faculty assignments within a unit and that these assignments should be allowed to change over time. Differentiation is already an accepted concept when it comes to areas of scholarly expertise. Faculty are hired with distinct specialties. Many units have come to recognize that subdisciplines do not work in parallel ways. This needs to be carried a step further with the recognition that individuals may have different assignments that may change at different periods of their careers. This year a faculty member may focus on basic research, next year on applying scholarship in a collaborative project, in another year on developing a distance education course. This is not a radically new concept; it happens in practice frequently at colleges and universities and is already recognized in many areas.

For clarity, it is important to distinguish between different levels of assignment. The initial letter of appointment sets the basic assignment of a person, which is to be a specialist in an area, with certain research, teaching and service/outreach expectations. Within this frame, faculty have always been assigned specific tasks for a semester, such as courses to teach and sometimes service/outreach or research duties. The recommendation of the Action Team is that an annual position description allow for the recognition of changes in the initial terms of appointment and that it also recognize all major academic work assignments. The position description is intended to close the gap between the basic appointment as a professor in a discipline and the routine changes in yearly assignment. It is in this gray area where a disjunction between a faculty member's basic assignment and his or her actual work is likely to have the consequences of discouraging innovation and improvement.

**Individual position description:** The Action Team recommends formalizing differentiated assignments through a system of flexible position descriptions that are subject to an annual update. While a position description can remain the same from year to year (and may be virtually the same for many individuals in some units), increasingly the assignments of individual faculty members are diverging and changing over time. Some institutions and departments already acknowledge this, but many others need to take the next step and establish a reward system that recognizes the actual diversity among faculty roles. The chief value of a flexible position description for both the faculty member and the institution is that significant shifts in the apportionment of faculty work and the undertaking of new forms of academic work are recognized and agreed upon in advance rather than after the fact. Of course, the annual position description can itself lag behind the fact of a person's assignment, so the description should allow for changes in assignment and new opportunities that arise during an academic year.

Individual position descriptions perhaps were not necessary a generation ago when consensus was greater and institutions were simpler, but they will be essential and inevitable in the new structure of higher education that is emerging. It is the best way to protect academic freedom while encouraging scholarly creativity, but it will be resisted by those who fear it is a way of increasing the power of the administration to leverage change. Implicit in this resistance is a lack of confidence in those changes likely to be proposed by administration and suspicion of the process by which faculty assignments would be negotiated. The Action Team sympathizes with the resistance that this proposal is likely to generate: it does not think differentiated assignments should be used as a way of forcing faculty to adopt unwanted changes. This report will address issues of institutional governance and leadership below, where it will be argued that shared governance is the only approach that makes sense in terms of the new concept of academic work that is emerging.

**Allocation of effort:** Often the complex nature of faculty assignments is recognized by dividing positions proportionately in terms of a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) assignment. This is the practice in the UNL Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Under such a system a faculty member might be .40 FTE research, .40 FTE teaching and .20 FTE service and outreach, although in the IANR the two-way positions are more common. But this level of specificity is not desirable for all units and should not be used to fragment excessively what is in reality the unified work of a single person. A faculty member's research, teaching and outreach activities may be closely related, and this should be recognized in the position description and evaluation procedures.

It might help to make a distinction between the position description and the actual time expended, since in practice these may not be the same. Teaching could be half of a faculty member's assignment, but actually consume somewhat more or less of his or her actual time. Establishing the actual proportion of time given to a task is complicated by the fact that most faculty work more than the 40 hours a week that an institution can legally expect. Faculty on 9-month appointments often spend a portion of their summer doing research for which they are not officially paid, but it is very much a factor in their evaluations. There will always be somewhat of a loose fit between the description of a faculty

member's position and the actual work, particularly when the description calculates the parts of a person's assignment as percentages. The goal for a position description should be a balance between priorities and time expended, not exact congruence. And, of course, the position description is not intended to be restrictive it always can be adjusted to reflect new assignments or opportunities that arise during an academic year.

**Terms of negotiation:** The actual procedures that govern the negotiation of a faculty member's assignment need to be set by the institution and unit, but some guidelines can be suggested. First, a position description is a relatively stable overview of the allocation of effort, rather than a performance contract which lists specific results, although general expectations would be included. The Action Team is not recommending a form of "management by objectives" that expects faculty to predict the results of their work in advance. The amount of change and degree of specificity in the annual setting of a faculty member's position description also will vary greatly from unit to unit. In some traditional academic units, most of the faculty will have quite similar position descriptions that rarely change. In other units the position descriptions may be more individual, change often and specify research, teaching and outreach activities. In all cases, change should occur through a true process of negotiation between the faculty member and the unit administrator. When it comes to the basic nature of a faculty member's assignment as specified in the original letter of appointment, the professional expertise of faculty must be recognized.

The negotiations need to respect both the priorities of the institution (as vested in the unit) and the professional expertise and academic freedom of the faculty member. Tradition and common sense indicate that the expertise of faculty are not interchangeable: the professor of physics cannot teach history. On the other hand, the institution already determines course assignments, and may have other legitimate expectations depending on the unit and the original terms of appointment. The negotiations will be less likely to become difficult if the overall evaluation and reward system provides encouragement for faculty (as well as chairs and heads) to take on the risk associated with new kinds of academic work. There is bound to be disagreement when a limited definition of scholarship and a rigid evaluation system mean that a chair or head cannot promise support or rewards for a new assignment requested of a faculty member.

**Appeal procedures:** If negotiations on a position description come to an impasse, one or more appeal procedures should exist. The traditional appeal against a department chair or head is to the next level of administration, often a dean. In some cases, disagreements could be resolved within a unit by appealing to an executive or other committee of peers. Some institutions also have ombudsmen or grievance committees, and beyond the institution lies the legal system for cases where a person's basic rights might be violated. It would also be possible for an institution to set up a special appeal procedure for position description disagreements, but in most cases it would probably be best to work within existing structures. In practice, it is not in the interest of administrators to force a change on a resistant faculty member since it is not likely to result in a very satisfactory performance.



**Post-tenure review:** The much debated issue of post-tenure review reflects a concern that some faculty members may not perform satisfactorily, but be protected from dismissal or even from criticism by tenure. Critics of post-tenure review fear that it will interfere with academic freedom and otherwise undermine professional autonomy. The Action Team has not joined in this debate, but it does suggest that flexible position descriptions offer a creative and humane way of rethinking the assignment of faculty members who are not performing well under their present one-size-fits-all position descriptions. For example, at a research university it is inevitable that a few otherwise talented faculty members will become less successful in the research portion of their assignment. One possible way of not making this the occasion for a post-tenure review would be to adjust the person's position description and assignment to reflect the contributions he or she does make. Depending on the mission of the institution, the faculty member still could be expected to demonstrate a scholarly or creative component to his or her work for purposes of promotion or merit pay raises.

The purpose of post-tenure review is presumably to improve the performance of an institution, not simply to punish wayward individuals. There is some question whether the negative effect of an adversarial post-tenure review process on faculty morale (and the cost in time that the review process requires) will, in practice, be offset by improved institutional performance brought about by some faculty working better and others being dismissed. Weak performance in any organization is a complex phenomenon that needs to be approached in a variety of ways, with the threat of dismissal being a last resort. An expanded definition of scholarship and flexible position descriptions are positive ways of re-engaging individuals whose career paths have departed from traditional institutional norms.

## Chapter 6

### Evaluating Scholarship and Creativity

**Rethinking scholarship:** The effort to rethink scholarship was given impetus by the Carnegie Foundation report, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (1990) by Ernest L. Boyer and others. This report provoked wide discussion and it has had a lasting effect on higher education. For example, it is the basis of the policy on "The Relationship of Teaching, Research, and Service" (RP 2.1.6) issued by the University of Nebraska Board of Regents in 1995.

The Boyer report argued for four forms of scholarship 1) Discovery, 2) Integration, 3) Application and 4) Teaching which he felt should replace the traditional definition of scholarship as published research. Boyer was primarily interested in what he saw as a neglect of undergraduate teaching, although he also was concerned that new forms of research and outreach activity were neglected by the reward system.

**Scholarship of discovery:** This term is closely linked to traditional concepts of original research an important part of the mission of any institution of higher education and one of the defining characteristics of research universities. While critics of higher education often assail research as receiving too much emphasis, faculty members themselves often feel that their research is misunderstood, badly supported and inadequately rewarded. This apparent paradox is, in part, the result of weak communications within institutions and of the increasing complexity of the scholarship of discovery, which has generated so many subdisciplines and interdisciplinary areas that even experienced academics have trouble understanding the full range of research activities. It is, therefore, not surprising that external critics of the research mission of universities often have a very limited understanding of what research is and of its value. The fact that some research is not of enduring importance (and that some of it can sound silly) does not mean that the overall research mission is not essential to higher education and to society. Research is both important in itself because of the value of what is discovered and important to the institution because it is the foundation of teaching and outreach.

As the pace and sheer amount of research have increased, the importance of faculty being participants in research has become greater than ever. The half life of knowledge in some technical areas is down to a few years, and it has grown shorter even in the traditional liberal arts. Institutions need faculty who are active participants in scholarship if they want them to teach students the most up-to-date knowledge and to make use of such knowledge in their service and outreach activities. How much of an academic's time will be assigned to scholarship will vary in different institutions and for individuals at different points in their careers. But the Action Team feels that scholarship broadly defined and the "scholarship of discovery," in particular, are not a luxury, but an essential part of higher education.

**Scholarship of integration:** This kind of research, which is not always very distinct from the scholarship of discovery, represents the effect of the Boyer report to encourage interdisciplinary research and the kind of secondary research that leads to synthesizing monographs and textbooks. The comparative lack of good quality work of this kind is a reflection of its difficulty as much as it is of limited conceptions of scholarship. Often such work falls between disciplines and sometimes at the interstices of disciplines, so it runs the risk of not being prized by any one discipline as essential. It is a sad comment on higher education that innovative practitioners of the "scholarship of integration" can often find themselves with no comfortable academic home and without recognition within the institution. An expanded definition of scholarship will help legitimize this important form of academic work. Often important original scholarship of discovery emerges from the interdisciplinary boundaries explored by the scholarship of integration.

**Scholarship of application:** The debate on Boyer's report and related publications has increasingly focused on the third of his categories, "the scholarship of application" or engagement. There has been an exponential growth in applied research from two directions: persons traditionally assigned to doing the research of discovery or integration are drawn into applied research projects and persons traditionally assigned to teaching and outreach roles are drawn into research-based work. This is true for professional staff as well as

tenure-line faculty. Because these projects are often collaborative and may entail new technologies or outreach components, they are often not easily understood or even recognized by faculty evaluation systems. Moreover, they often require new forms of assessment that are incongruent with traditional evaluation methods. Applied research is often system rather than discipline based and it often involves a team effort. It is often in high demand within public and private organizations. Chapter 8 on "Evaluating Service and Outreach" will return to these issues.

**Creativity:** The literature on the expanded definition of scholarship is careful not to neglect creative work, which is usually assumed to be a fundamental feature of scholarship, but often the ensuing discussion shows that the reality of artists, musicians and other academics who do creative work has been forgotten. The Action Team believes creativity meaning innovative and original work perhaps should be the governing term, since creativity is what is prized in scholarship (and teaching and administration as well as many other kinds of academic work). The frequent complaint that publications are simply counted is a way of saying that quality is neglected and a large part of that quality is likely to be the creativity of the research itself.

Scholarship and creativity (broadly conceived) are so essential to the quality of academic work that they should be at the center of the evaluation of the performance of faculty. This extended use of the word creativity can be used to draw much of what is regarded as quality in teaching into the model. Focusing rewards on areas where faculty, staff or administrators show originality makes sense, particularly for tenure and promotion, although the large amount of more routine work that must be done should not be excluded from consideration. Every faculty member should demonstrate evidence of scholarly and creative accomplishments if they are to participate fully in an institution's reward systems. Scholarly and creative work also should be prized in staff when it is part of their assignment, both when it directly enhances performance and when it is an indirect sign of ability.

## Chapter 7

### Evaluating Teaching

**Scholarship of teaching:** Debate about Boyer's proposed category "the scholarship of teaching" can confuse a simple issue: teaching is central to the assignment of almost all faculty since all are educators. It also depends on scholarship and creativity, and it needs to be evaluated fairly and effectively. The term "scholarship of teaching" is salutary because it emphasizes that teaching and learning need to be seriously studied. It is also a reminder that the scholarly content of teaching is important; teaching should not be reduced to the pedagogical approach of the teacher or the affective responses of students. As important as teaching methods and student reactions are, they are finally secondary to the content of a course the value of what is learned. While the concept of scholarship should not be trivialized by applying it to every teaching stratagem, there is a scholarly

and creative component of unquestionable merit in the design and content of a course or other learning activity.

**Teaching and learning:** The quality of teaching is a function of the effectiveness of student learning, which is not the same as student satisfaction or teacher performance. The colorful teacher who is popular and the substantive teacher who impresses colleagues are both wide of the mark if their students learn poorly. Assessing learning is even more difficult than assessing teaching, but explorations into doing this for classes and programs are underway. They hold great promise, particularly as they range beyond the classroom performance of the teacher and consider the increasing number of new ways faculty influence student learning (as, for example, through digital technologies).

The shift in emphasis from teaching to learning also expands the conception of teaching, which is often overly segregated from research and outreach. Traditional scholarship is a form of learning, and its publication is a way of teaching peers in a field. Almost all outreach activities and many internal service assignments can also be seen as forms of teaching or learning. The Boyer approach was to say that teaching is a form of scholarship, but it also makes sense to say that scholarship (and outreach) are simply forms of learning.

**Controversies over the evaluation of teaching:** Often discussions of the evaluation of teaching are held hostage to the debate over the degree to which student evaluations of teachers should count in the overall assessment of teaching effectiveness. Discussions also can run afoul of disagreement over how much teaching should weigh in the overall evaluation of faculty. Because of these two issues, the literature on the evaluation of teaching is vast and contentious, and the debate about it within colleges and departments can be quite heated. Boyer's call for teaching to be seen as a form of scholarship has added fuel to the arguments rather than resolving them. These debates are often tired and petty: teaching is essential and it can be evaluated as accurately as published research.

**Peer evaluation of teaching:** A consensus has emerged in support of the peer review of teaching, often accomplished through faculty review of a teaching portfolio made up of an assortment of materials. This is appealing, in part, because of its analogy to the peer review of research records and because it shifts the emphasis away from excessive dependence on student evaluations. The present view is that student evaluations of teaching are limited by themselves, but important primary data as reactions to teaching when subject to review by appropriate faculty peers. This approach has been resisted, in part, because it does entail more work, both for the faculty member assembling a portfolio and those assigned to evaluate the result. The Action Team sees no way to avoid this extra work, but takes comfort in the fact that the process often has a beneficial formative effect in improving performance. Many faculty have made the systematic monitoring of their own teaching performance a part of their teaching approach rather than an extra set of tasks that kick in when it is time to assemble their evaluation files.

**Teaching outside the classroom:** The evolution of teaching evaluation out of student responses to particular classes has distorted understanding of what learning includes. Classroom instruction will remain a central part of higher education, but it is already be-

ing supplemented by other forms of student learning. The biggest impact of digital technologies on education may not be distance learning, but the supplemental, asynchronous learning of on-campus students. Some of these will be complex developments of self-paced courses like the Keller plan courses already present at UNL and similar institutions. All of them will require different ways of evaluating faculty performance.

Mentoring is an important form of teaching outside the classroom that is usually neglected by evaluation systems. It is particularly important to graduate education and is often the "creative" element in student advising. Its neglect in the evaluation system is mirrored by its neglect as a topic in the formal and informal processes that initiate new faculty into a program. If the shift in emphasis from "teaching" to "learning" continues and if computer-assisted instruction becomes a significant component in on-campus education, then mentoring will become more and more important in the educational system.

**Difficulties in evaluating learning:** The Action Team urges exploration and experimentation in assessing teaching as it contributes to learning, but the Team is not making specific recommendations on how to do this. For one thing, effective learning is not going to be the same for different academic disciplines and different student populations. A serious problem is the amount of time and energy that a learning evaluation system would entail if it were thought of as the constant monitoring of the activities of each faculty member. Badly designed and massive teaching portfolios serve no one's interests. Tough decisions need to be made about the appropriate balance between the evaluation of learning and the demands it makes on the time of the teachers themselves and their colleagues.

**Recommendations about the evaluation of teaching:** The role of teaching needs to be rethought both from the perspective of the institution and of the individual faculty career. Teaching is a central task for almost all professors and that teaching almost always requires a strong scholarly and creative component, particularly at the graduate level and at the level where one "teaches" one's peers. Outreach activities are frequently a form of teaching as well. Teaching has suffered at some institutions not because it is less important than research, but because academics cannot document its quality very well. The Action Team believes that if teaching is to receive the attention and reward it deserves, it must in fact be scholarly and creative and institutions must take the time to evaluate it accurately and to support its continuous improvement through faculty development and other forms of assistance. This does not mean that all courses and other teaching activities need full scale evaluations every semester. It often makes better sense to do in-depth teaching reviews and learning assessments on a less frequent cycle.

The Team also recommends that institutions and their subdivisions explicitly take the long view on occasion and rethink what kinds of teaching and learning activities are underway and whether the allocation and level of support for these activities are appropriate. In particular, the use of computers in teaching and the advent of asynchronous education call for understanding, evaluation and rewards. Teaching that requires extensive use of technology will inevitably require new kinds of support and evaluation. The faculty involved in such projects will deploy considerable expertise and time that should be recognized and rewarded.

## Chapter 8

### Evaluating Service and Outreach

**Increased importance of service and outreach:** This report uses the traditional categories of research, teaching, and service, but recent changes in service and outreach underline the difficulty of maintaining this tripartite division of academic work. Many forms of outreach include original research and many are primarily forms of teaching. This area of academic work is growing exponentially, but is the least well understood, evaluated and rewarded. Some work, like consulting, presents special problems when it is compensated directly, although often consulting is valuable to the institution as well.

At a land-grant university like UNL, extension faculty and traditional disciplinary faculty are converging. The extension faculty interact with the public in ways that include teaching and research of a high level; meanwhile, the traditional campus faculty are drawn into quite complex service and outreach projects. This is reflected in the complex joint or combined appointments in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources and, increasingly, in other areas as well. In traditional academic units, service used to be the weak sibling of research and teaching; now it is an independent force that stretches the limits of both.

**Service and outreach as catalysts for change:** The relative merits of research and teaching are a perennial issue, but the demands for service and outreach have become a new force that threatens to destabilize institutional priorities and governance. Some traditional academic departments may be able to resist these changes, but most units will find service and outreach radically changing the nature of faculty and staff assignments. Service and outreach are the cuckoo that threatens to take over the nest. They are the source of much faculty stress since they are likely to be the portion of a person's assignment that has grown most in recent years. The demand made on universities and colleges for more service and outreach activities is likely to continue as more and more people become part of the information economy. This was the dominant note in the Nebraska Network 21 visioning exercises that elicited the views of the "external partners" who use higher education services.

**Evaluation of service and outreach:** The evaluation of service is in its infancy in many units and is very difficult given the complexity and diversity of service and outreach activities. Much of the discontent of faculty about their assignments can be traced to their sense that service and outreach demand an increasing share of their time, but that their efforts here are not recognized, supported or rewarded. When this work is evaluated within such units, the focus is often on the time expended rather than the value of the results. It is as if research and teaching were evaluated by the time expended rather than the articles published or the students taught. Some professional units, such as UNL's IANR and its Teachers College, have for historical reasons taken the lead in addressing these issues.

Even more than in research and teaching, it is important to distinguish between routine everyday service like serving on a department committee and major service and outreach assignments, much like what is done within IANR's extension appointments. Some tasks are appropriately seen as good academic citizenship or ordinary professional obligations. Even when a service assignment is significant, it may not be worth the effort to evaluate it in proportion to the benefit of the evaluation. Giving a speech at a local school is an important activity that deserves recognition, but not all such activities need be formally assessed or specifically rewarded (unless giving such speeches becomes a major portion of a person's assignment). Like everything else, service has grown in complexity and in the time it demands. For example, the pace of committee work has become more hectic with shorter deadlines and more frequent meetings.

This increase in the amount of service/outreach is a particular problem for an evaluation system when the amount of work involved becomes a significant portion of a person's assignment. Traditionally about 10% of a faculty member's time was assumed to be spent in service, but even assignments that used to be routine can now take significantly more than 10% of a person's time. Chairing a major committee or task force or participating in a complex external outreach project may take 20-30% of a faculty member's time (with or without a corresponding course reduction). It is common practice within IANR to specifically evaluate the outcomes of such efforts when the 25% level is achieved. Service/outreach assignments of this magnitude need to be evaluated both for formative and summative purposes and the faculty members and staff rewarded for effective participation.

**Collaborative outreach projects:** The evaluation of service and outreach often has to take into account collaborative work, so it brings to the fore difficulties already noted in the evaluation of research and teaching. Models that try to focus on individual performance are not likely to be efficient or meet the expectation that an evaluation procedure should have more benefit than cost. The best approach is often to assess the overall effectiveness of an outreach activity, then evaluate the contributions of individuals to that outcome. When the contributions cannot be differentiated, then the individuals share credit (when people are truly collaborating it is not always possible to reconstruct individual contributions). This directly challenges deeply felt beliefs that rewards should always be tied to individual effort, but the alternative is, in effect, to punish faculty for participating in collaborative projects and discourage their formation.

## Chapter 9

### Faculty and Staff Development

**Need for development and support:** The evaluation and reward of scholarship will be more effective at improving performance if faculty and staff are given help with their careers as well as support for specific tasks. Faculty development programs are inadequate, in part, because traditional collegial approaches to individual development have broken

down and, in tight financial times, institutions are reluctant to allocate resources to internal development activities. A case in point would be the introduction of digital technologies where faculty are often expected to climb the learning curves on their own or rely on the informal help of colleagues. Often there are technicians to install programs but little support for learning how to use them. This is just one example of how institutions of higher education download development responsibilities onto individual faculty members. Faculty members also are made responsible for planning and managing their own careers without much guidance, and often they are expected to stage their careers in terms of an evaluation system they do not understand very well.

Academic work does not merely seem more demanding, it has actually become so for a variety of reasons. The advent of digital technologies has increased the amount of work one person can do, but at the price of diverting energy into learning new systems and into the actual application of the new technologies to research, teaching and outreach. Many faculty members field several dozen e-mail messages a day and spend several hours a week tending web sites or working with complex data bases. At the same time, the sheer amount of knowledge in academic fields has increased exponentially in the past 30 years keeping up in one's specialty takes more time than ever. New forms of teaching take considerable time and outreach activities have become more complex. In addition, there is the time demanded by evaluation and assessment activities that were minimal a generation ago. On a day-to-day basis, there is not only an increase in the amount of basic work that must be done before a faculty or staff member is ready to face major projects, but an increase in "multi-tasking" demands that fragment concentration. In response, faculty and staff adopt a "reactive" mode where they simply respond to work as it comes at them rather than planning their work in any meaningful way. Development activities cannot reduce most of these pressures, but they can teach ways of coping with the pressures in a more organized and less stressful manner.

**Orientation of new faculty:** In roundtable discussions, the Action Team found that new faculty are not well informed about the evaluation procedures of their departments and colleges and are excessively insecure as a result. Because of their respect for faculty autonomy, institutions are reluctant to provide much systematic orientation for new faculty beyond a few general sessions. Mentoring helps considerably, but it is informal and often not effective for particular faculty. Faculty with a good mentor regard themselves as lucky. Some chairs and heads also provide effective guidance, but this is also hit or miss.

It is not possible to offer new faculty specific assurances about the exact performance that will ensure their tenure and promotions, but the present minimal orientation systems are inefficient and often counterproductive. It would help if graduate programs included a course or other activities that prepared new doctorates for their professional careers this has been called for in a number of recent books and reports. Until that is done, institutions will have to provide both education and guidance to new faculty on professional and institutional issues. By not doing this, institutions are missing an opportunity to incorporate the abilities and knowledge of new faculty into their institutional and unit operations more effectively.



**Faculty professional development:** Faculty are often not prepared by their graduate educations or encouraged by their institutions to develop the full range of practical abilities necessary for functioning well at modern institutions of higher education. They order these things somewhat better in the private sector and large public organizations like the military (but often in ways and language that are not congenial for academics). There are workshops for staff on issues like time management and the effective use of technology, but few such programs for faculty (in part, because faculty are often unable to find the time to learn how to make better use of their time). The organization and management of both a career and one's daily work should be part of graduate education, the orientation of new faculty and the professional development of all faculty.

Raising this issue of "efficiency" is not intended to shift the blame for overwork and stress onto the faculty; the problem is not that faculty need to work harder and "smarter." The way the institution organizes work and its support of faculty are larger questions than how individuals perform their daily tasks. Nevertheless, many faculty would benefit from more institutional assistance in improving their personal performance.

**Staff development:** While the Action Team did not examine the orientation or professional development of professional staff in any detail, it recommends this also should be an area reviewed regularly by institutions. In particular, institutions need to think creatively about the relationship of professional staff doing academic work with traditional faculty often working in cognate areas. Institutions are neglecting an important resource by not better developing the expertise of professional staff. Moreover, colleges and universities ought to be model "learning institutions" for their employees rather than lagging behind the private sector in their attention to staff development.

**Dual role of faculty:** Scholars of higher education have long noted a distinction between faculty whose primary identity is with their discipline and those whose identity is with their institution. However false this dichotomy is philosophically, it is a very real force in the life of colleges and universities. While there is a place for these extremes in a complex organization, the ideal is faculty who are loyal to both their professions and the particular institution where they are employed. For this to work, the institution needs to make reasonable demands on faculty while respecting their dedication to a discipline. The problem is that institutional demands threaten to overwhelm the faculty's professionalism and at times the demands of keeping up in a discipline can swamp institutional obligations. A generation ago most faculty taught classes, did research in their area and served on a few committees, but now the demands have become so complex that many individuals find themselves spread too thin to do any of their activities as well as they would like.

**Faculty stress:** Stress has become a major problem as witnessed by the spread of very busy employee assistance programs and the anecdotal evidence of individuals who malfunction in dramatic ways. To some extent, stress is an unavoidable fact of modern life in complex and demanding organizations. Up to a point it is useful, but not when stress becomes distress and interferes with performance or causes personal anguish. Stress can be made worse by evaluation systems that confuse faculty about their unit's priorities and the

priorities of their own work. The evaluation system may seem a remote cause of stress, but some newer faculty members feel torn apart by uncertainty about their institution's priorities and a resulting sense of conflicting responsibilities. Clearer information on faculty priorities and on evaluation systems would help, as would a more aggressive faculty development program.

Extra demands on women and minority faculty can subject them to special stress: for example, they are often asked to take on more mentoring and service work than other faculty, and some minority and women faculty can suffer from narrow definitions of scholarship that do not fully recognize their contributions. The commendable desire to hire more women and minority faculty should be balanced with corresponding efforts to provide the support that would retain them at an institution. In some areas this is a matter of common sense adjustments, but in others it will require a more basic rethinking of the evaluation and support of the kinds of academic work done by women and minorities.

## Chapter 10

### Governance and Leadership

**Evaluation and the setting of priorities:** The systems for evaluating and rewarding academic work depend on how priorities are set and work is identified, assigned and supported within an institution. "Without an effective strategic plan, the goals and objectives of individual administrators or cliques within the faculty may be substituted for institutional goals. Arbitrary and capricious behavior occasionally results, making the planning process more political than scholarly. To the extent that the standard of evaluation must reflect institutional goals, strategic planning is a prerequisite activity to establishing evaluation policies and criteria consistent with those goals" (David A. Dilts, Lawrence J. Haber, and Donna Bialik, *Assessing What Professors Do: An Introduction to Academic Performance Appraisal in Higher Education*, Westport, Conn. Greenwood, 1994, p. 33).

Evaluation systems should not try to set priorities themselves but be reflective of priorities set through sound governance procedures, including active participation by faculty, and effective leadership. An evaluation system cannot decide which tasks a department or an individual should undertake, rather it should ensure that a task is assessed fairly once it is undertaken, and that new tasks are undertaken as change is needed. If the priorities of a program are trusted, then assignment of tasks will not be a matter of major contention. Evaluation may still be difficult, but the difficulties will be practical.

When evaluation systems are made the locus of arguments about priorities, people are used as pawns in policy disagreements. It may or may not be wise for a science department at a research university to hire someone who is an expert in the pedagogy of the field, but once a decision has been made for such a hire, it is only fair that the faculty member be evaluated in terms of the job description. Evaluation should be subsidiary or even subservient to the programs and individuals being evaluated. Evaluation should help

units and individuals recognize the need for change and encourage it, but generally changes in larger institutional priorities should be addressed directly through governance procedures.

**Evaluation as an impediment to change:** The Action Team does not see itself as changing institutional priorities in proposing revisions in the conceptions of academic work and the procedures for evaluating and rewarding it. However, existing systems can deter change, so freeing up the system will allow changes that might otherwise be blocked, in part, by giving new status to work that is marginal under systems with narrow definitions of scholarship. In that sense, a new evaluation system can mean a change in an institution's priorities. Unwise changes ought to be opposed through governance structures, not subverted by evaluation procedures that are at odds with an institution's stated priorities. Some faculty believe they ought to resist certain contested changes by holding the line on traditional definitions of scholarship and existing evaluation procedures. This is not a sound approach, partly because it does not discriminate between desirable and undesirable change. It can also lead to "special case" exceptions for faculty who do not fit the standard profiles, but this *ad hoc* approach can be confusing and unfair.

**Framework for evaluation:** To say the success of the evaluation system is dependent on the ways work is prioritized and assigned is another way to say that it is dependent on sound governance structures and effective leadership. If faculty members do not feel that a project was formulated in an appropriate way, they are unlikely to respect any evaluation procedures established or believe much in the rewards they generate. When there is agreement about a goal, then the evaluation and reward system can work effectively. This is often the case for the research mission of a unit: there is agreement about what constitutes research success (often publication in appropriate journals), and considerable acceptance of the ensuing rewards, even by those who receive lesser rewards. In some units this is also true for teaching: student evaluations are tabulated, course materials reviewed, and a rating established that leads to appropriate rewards. Both these examples can be questioned the agreement about research or teaching standards within a unit can be too limited but in practice they work because of the consensus within a unit. Such consensus is harder to achieve for an institution overall or for the newer forms of academic work that are emerging, particularly in areas of service and outreach.

**Polarization of faculty and administration:** Governance tensions and distrust of leadership are often experienced in higher education as a split between the priorities of the faculty and the priorities of the administration. This can be manifested in *ad hominem* aspersions on the good intentions and common sense of the people who occupy faculty and administrative roles (professional staff are a third force that often doubts the wisdom of both faculty and administration). Polarization can force faculty into intransigent and extreme positions that do not represent the actual generosity of faculty effort; administrators also are often forced into positions that contradict their belief in shared governance. These internal divisions look even uglier than they are to external constituencies and have contributed to the public distrust of higher education.

**Collegial ideal updated:** Some administrative tensions are inherent in any complex organization, but in the past most colleges and universities adhered to a collegial model of governance in which decision making was shared between the faculty and administration. Administrators came from the faculty and often returned to faculty status after their time as chair, head or dean. Now, administration above the level of chair has become a separate career path for academic professionals whose faculty days may be remote. This professionalization of administration has an internal dynamic, but it is also an inevitable response to the increased complexity of administrative work. Perhaps it is a desirable development overall, but it has distorted the former collegial model because administrators are now so much more expert at managerial functions than faculty. Shared governance is a remote ideal for most faculty and a constant struggle for those faculty assigned to accomplish it through faculty senates and other governance structures.

As difficult as it is in practice, shared governance is an ideal that must be restored if faculty evaluation and rewards are not to become meaninglessly bureaucratic. One issue is the confidence of faculty and staff in the priorities set by the institution, but this is linked to a more fundamental issue: the wisdom and prudence of the priorities themselves. Faculty not only need to feel included in decision making, they need to participate actively if the decisions are going to be workable. This is not easy for administrators, who need to develop new approaches to including faculty in decision making, nor for faculty, who must find the time to do the work involved in shared governance. Faculty cannot have it both ways as they do when they relinquish the responsibility for decisions to administrators, then complain about the results.

**Collaborative decision making:** The word "collegial" is too evocative of "old boys" in a common room. This approach is no longer possible given the diversity of faculty, conflicting external demands and the complexity of an institution's missions. The old model often assumed that the participants in collegial decision making already shared most of their basic assumptions, whereas decision making now requires tougher negotiation among individuals and groups with different agendas and different sets of expertise. The process can be contentious, but it is essential that all the participants be able to contribute their expertise if the projects undertaken are to be feasible. The newer varieties of academic work and increasingly the older varieties as well require a much wider range of expertise than any one person is likely to command.

Women and minority faculty and faculty with interdisciplinary interests epitomize the difficulty of the collegial approach to decision making. The older consensual model often excluded women and minorities from decision making and devalued the career paths they followed, which often differed from those of traditional academics. Interdisciplinary faculty (the integrators) experience similar difficulties at fitting into the preexisting values of a traditional disciplinary unit. One approach to this problem is to develop new models of administration that bypass disciplinary departments, so that minority faculty members have their administrative homes in ethnic studies programs or integrative scholars report to newly created interdisciplinary units. Such adaptations of the administrative structure to new faculty constituencies generate problems of their own; for example, they contribute to the confusion of roles and reporting lines that interfere with collaborative govern-

ance. While some new units perhaps should be created, a better approach is to open up all units to the diversity of faculty roles through the flexible position descriptions and adaptable evaluation procedures described in this report.

**Setting priorities:** In a nutshell, the problem is that higher education institutions in an information age are being asked to do more work than their resources will support. Choices have to be made and the choices need to be both wise, in that the tasks undertaken must be worthy and prudent, in that resources must be sufficient to accomplish the tasks effectively. Decisions about which projects are more worthy and which can be done with the resources available require the active participation of those faculty and staff who understand the problem being addressed and who are the human resources that will be deployed. All of this requires committees and task forces, but it also requires administrative structures that know what resources are available and allow for effective communication among units. Right now institutions are often too opaque and too politicized for this to happen.

**Leadership:** Just as academics are nostalgic for the ideal teacher/scholar who does all tasks equally well, so do they still hope for the great academic leaders before whose genius the factions of an institution will crumble. The Action Team does not believe this model of heroic leadership is any longer desirable, given the complexity of institutions. An effective leader at any level must share the actual leading of a project with the faculty and staff who contribute to it. It also will become even more necessary for faculty to work harder at collaborating with these new style leaders as well as with faculty colleagues who step forward to help the leadership process. Just as there are still some teacher/scholars who do it all, so are there a few leaders who carry it all in their own heads and accomplish complex tasks on their own. But this idealized model can be detrimental to effective leadership. Leadership in complex organizations has been collaborative for some time and will be even more so as the complexities of programs continue to grow.

Governance structures and evaluation procedures can easily interfere with leadership, often by simply gumming up the process. Both the old model of heroic leadership and the newer model of collaborative leadership require a degree of freedom to function, but it is not easy to build freedom into bylaws and formal practices. One of the Nebraska Network 21 consultants, Stephen Bosserman, argues that almost all creative changes arise outside an institution's formal structures and that they often survive through subterfuge and a stretching of the rules. To some extent this will always be the case, but the formal structures can be more or less open to change, more or less amenable to leadership.

Private corporations and other kinds of public agencies also struggle with the problem of developing structures and practices that allow for collaborative leadership that is responsive and creative. It is not easy: we have all participated in "open" meetings with facilitators and flip charts that, in fact, have quite limited preset agendas or end up with no useful results at all. However, academics should not allow their understandable suspicion of gimmicks and the latest corporate catch phrases to make them skeptical that higher education procedures can be improved in ways that are more inclusive of the expertise of

participants and more open to accepting leadership from wherever it arises. Indeed, there are many excellent examples of such procedures on any campus, often in smaller and newer programs.

**Evaluating new forms of leadership:** Other groups and entities are better suited to make specific recommendations on increasing the role of collaborative leadership on campuses. This report focuses on the evaluation system. All aspects of evaluation will work better when priorities are clear and accepted by the faculty and staff of an institution, but the conception of leadership developed here is in itself a challenge to evaluation. As this report has suggested, it is one thing to evaluate and reward an individual's own accomplishments, another to assess accomplishments that are diffused among a group of people. Part of the solution is to evaluate the individual in terms of the success of the group. Moreover, to the extent that evaluation is not just about individual rewards, but about improved outcomes, a project can be as suitable an object for evaluation as an individual. Evaluation is already too often a force that limits rather than encourages needed actions: it would be sad to let the difficulty in evaluating collaborative leadership interfere with efforts to develop such structures, given their importance to the future of higher education.

## Appendix A

### **The Action Team on Scholarship, Evaluation and Rewards**

The Action Team on Scholarship, Evaluation and Rewards is one of seven Action Teams established in 1996 as part of the second phase of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation sponsored Nebraska Network 21 project, a collaborative project to meet the learning needs of Nebraskans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. During the first phase of NN21, over 800 Nebraskans were asked about their preferred future for the year 2020. They envisioned lifelong learning, which is both accessible and affordable, for diverse communities of learners. In their discussions, traditional methods of evaluating and rewarding higher education faculty were seen as barriers to meeting their needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Action Team on Scholarship, Evaluation and Rewards concerned itself with the disconnections between the present evaluation and reward system and emerging forms of academic work, including new ways of lifelong learning. It looked at the issues broadly.

In addition to its own deliberations, the Action Team hosted a series of roundtables, sponsored speakers, participated in several local and national conferences, and hosted a conference of its own. These included:

- Sending Action Team members to conferences on "Reward Systems for the Future of Higher Education" and "Reframing Faculty Evaluation and Rewards;"
- Inviting Dr. Conrad "Bud" Weiser to discuss the process of reinventing a more inclusive scholarship that took place at Oregon State University;
- Hosting a roundtable discussion on the "Changing Nature of Academic Work" featuring guest experts on varying points of view from across campus;
- Meeting with Eugene Rice of the American Association of Higher Education to discuss his views on scholarship and higher education today;
- Organizing 10 roundtables to discuss the issues with several targeted groups: distinguished faculty, department chairs and heads, IANR faculty, Arts and Sciences faculty, untenured faculty, female faculty, minority faculty and professional staff at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; faculty in northeast Nebraska including Wayne State College, the Northeast Research and Extension Center, Northeast Community College, Little Priest Tribal College and Nebraska Indian Community College; and community members, business leaders, K-12 educators and higher education representatives in Columbus, Nebraska;
- Hosting a retreat with team members, interested faculty and members of the Academic Senate to discuss preliminary findings and future directions.

Of all of these activities, the roundtables provided the most in-depth information and reached the greatest variety of participants. The findings from the roundtables shaped the conversations at the retreat and provided direction for the Team's discussions of how to extend the life of the debate beyond the limits of the NN21 project.

A preliminary draft of this final report was distributed in the spring of 1999 and presented in a number of locations including a meeting of the UNL Academic Senate Executive Committee, a meeting of administrators of Wayne State College in Nebraska and a retreat of chairs and heads organized by the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at UNL. Comments from these discussions were incorporated in this final version of the report.

## **Appendix B**

### **Recommendations for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln**

**Comments on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln:** Although the Action Team deliberated in terms of higher education generally, it focused mainly on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, so has specific comments and recommendations for this institution. UNL administration and faculty often feel that they are evaluated to death, but paradoxically UNL needs more and better evaluation. Often newer forms of academic work are ignored or evaluated in a perfunctory way, while the overall evaluation of faculty is repetitious, duplicative and bureaucratic. As a result, evaluation is often not respected and often not used in formative ways to improve performance. Much of it ends up as unread data filed away in the name of accountability, rather than being dynamic information that helps achieve academic goals by encouraging productive change. Rather than facilitating communication between administration and faculty, evaluation often creates unfortunate tensions. At times the demands of the various systems of evaluation and assessment interfere with the accomplishments of essential work.

**Evaluation at UNL:** For historical reasons, UNL, like many other institutions, has developed many separate assessment and evaluation procedures which have different goals so are not quite commensurable. Untenured, tenure-line faculty are subject to annual reviews to evaluate their progress toward tenure and then are subject to a full-scale tenure review. They and all other faculty are subject to annual reviews for merit pay raises even when pay raises are slight. Associate professors who are not yet promoted to full professor are reviewed every third year in a separate process. Finally, tenured faculty with two years of unsatisfactory annual evaluations are subject to a complex post-tenure review process. From another angle, programs are reviewed periodically as part of the institution's assessment program and given a full-scale academic program review every five years. Some disciplines have separate accreditation reviews, and complex interdisciplinary and outreach projects receive their own reviews. The separation of program reviews from individual reviews makes good administrative sense, but it adds to the work involved. Too much bureaucratic evaluation also undermines its own effectiveness when



faculty do not use it to improve projects or believe in its efficacy as a way of justly assigning work or distributing rewards.

**Necessity of evaluation:** In spite of the above comments and the frustrations often expressed by administrators, faculty and staff, the evaluation of academic work is essential if it is to be fully recognized, supported and rewarded. A complex research and land-grant university like UNL cannot return to a simpler time when evaluation was a minor part of academic work. Neglecting or bypassing the evaluation system can mean that essential work necessary to the well-being of the institution does not get done or is done at the expense of the faculty who undertake it. Accordingly, while the Action Team has raised questions about the burden that evaluation creates, its main thrust is that evaluation procedures need to be improved, made more inclusive and integrated into the actual work of units and of faculty members.

**Specific UNL recommendations:** For the reasons suggested above and developed in the preceding report, the Action Team makes the following recommendations for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln:

1. UNL colleges and units, in consultation with the Academic Senate and the administration, should undertake a review of assessment and evaluation procedures.
  - a. The review should have the premise that all forms of significant academic work should be acknowledged and supported (which is not to say that all need to be formally evaluated or rewarded equally).
  - b. A major goal should be simplification and greater coherence in evaluation measures and procedures (given the diversity of unit missions) across campus. Some variation of the Boyer model makes the best sense, given that it is already Regents policy.
  - c. The review should consider the cost-benefit of evaluation activities in terms of the time expended in relation to the probable benefits.
2. A system of individual position descriptions, subject to annual revision, should be instituted in units where it is not already the practice. The position descriptions should be negotiated in ways that both recognize the priorities of the institution and respect the professionalism and academic freedom of faculty. The goal is to ensure clear understanding between faculty and administration and to protect and reward faculty who undertake newer forms of academic work.
3. The importance given to research or the "scholarship of discovery" at this research university should not be undermined by promotion of newer forms of scholarship. However, all units should revisit their sense of scholarship and academic work periodically (as many have done) to make sure their evaluation systems are appropriate to their actual priorities and congruent with the priorities of their college and the land-grant institution, and that the systems recognize all types of scholarly and creative efforts.

4. Efforts to link the teaching performance of faculty to the learning outcomes and accomplishments of students should be continued, and the role of student evaluation of teaching kept in perspective as one set of data in a peer review process.
5. In units where it has not already been done, special emphasis should be given to understanding, evaluating and rewarding service and outreach activities, including the academic use of digital technologies and complex collaborative projects. Each unit should develop a taxonomy of service and outreach activities that distinguishes between ordinary academic citizenship and the demands of major service and outreach assignments.
6. Programs for the orientation of new faculty and the professional development of all faculty should be improved to prepare faculty to incorporate diverse forms of academic work into their overall assignments and to learn ways of doing complex tasks effectively.
7. Greater recognition should be given to the contributions of professional staff and adjunct faculty to academic work. Staff evaluation should be linked with faculty evaluation where appropriate. The expertise and leadership potential of adjunct faculty and professional staff should be utilized in projects where they play a major role.
8. Governance procedures should be revised to encourage the full participation and commitment of appropriate faculty, staff and administrators in decision-making processes.
9. Collaborative leadership should be encouraged and facilitated. This will entail flexible governance procedures, the development of new approaches to conducting business and evaluation systems that are inclusive of new forms of faculty work.

The Action Team members will continue to work with committees and administrative structures at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to promote consideration of these recommendations.