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Focusing Faculty Development: Targeting

JOHN SHARPHAM and LANNY MORREAU

Faculty development programs usually provide a variety of services for interested faculty. Much of what is provided is stressed as a service, available on a walk-in, voluntary basis, and tends to be focused on the university faculty as a whole. This approach requires the faculty to be initiators, asking them to avail themselves of the services available, and therefore supports active, self-motivated teachers. Centra's findings on faculty development practices underlined this when he identified ". . . teachers who wanted to get better" as the group "most involved, while those needed improvement were seen as least involved" (1976, p. 29).

Also, the delivery of available services has a random quality to it. Services are offered at the general level—such as workshops that cross departmental lines on lecturecraft, small group instruction or uses of media, or a counseling service for teachers seeking assistance on a voluntary basis. Little has been done that addresses specific developmental needs of departments or of individuals in a department.

As an alternative to the random, general approach, the activities of an instructional development program can be concentrated, i.e., moved from the general workshop and individual counseling model aimed at the whole faculty to a focused set of activities dealing with issues and concerns identified in conjunction with the faculty involved; "to tailor programs to faculty needs and interests" (Centra, 1976, p. 60). In seeking areas of need that involve groups of faculty, the development program might focus on the departmental structure of a university.

In most universities and colleges, faculty members identify with a department. Their general teaching and research activities, their physical location and their reward system are contained within the

structure of the department. The department functions as an organizational unit making decisions about teaching, curriculum offerings, personnel, and the students identified as its majors. Every department has developmental concerns, many of which relate directly to the faculty member. Therefore, focusing university developmental resources on departments provides an opportunity to deliver services that are specifically selected to meet the needs of individuals in the department and the program itself.

Program Transition

The history of the development program at Illinois State University provides a clear example of the move from a general to a focused program. Targeting of departments at Illinois State University began after two years of operating a faculty development program that provided workshops and individual counseling for the improvement of teaching.

University-wide services were originally provided by the Teaching-Learning Center (Sharpham, 1979), which developed and supported workshops in specific instructional problem areas. Included in these workshops were such topics as small group discussion leadership, teaching the nontraditional student, production of instructional materials through media, evaluating students by essay tests, teaching large groups, a textbook selection process, and the library as a teaching resource. The Center also provided individual faculty with assistance on instructional problems, financial assistance to attend off-campus workshops on teaching, and support for retreats and off-campus speakers.

The original objectives of the program specified that at least ten workshops would be given over a four-year period with 200 participants. After two years the program had more than satisfied these objectives through the presentation of 45 workshops involving over 600 participants. At the same time, the program stressed the availability of counseling and support for individuals seeking assistance to improve their teaching. Yet, only 16 faculty out of a possible 1,200 used this service on an ongoing basis. Although the support given received high ratings from all the participants, the overall number served was extremely limited.

By the end of the two years, a pattern of activities had been established. The Center had more than met its obligations in sponsoring

workshops and meetings on teaching and learning. It had not demonstrated a large involvement in specific problem areas of teaching and learning, particularly with individual faculty members. As well, the Center had become more of a facilitator for meetings and retreats—a type of general booking agency for groups of faculty. More time was being spent arranging for meetings than in dealing with concerns related to teaching and learning. For these reasons, the program was shifted to a targeting mode (Sharpham, 1979).

Targeting Procedures

Simply stated, targeting refers to the concentration of the Center's resources in a few selected departments for at least one year. The process entails a conjoint relationship between the selected department and the Center to work together on development and change. Given the limited resources of the Center, such targeting could only involve a small number of departments at any given time.

The concept of targeting was explained to the deans and then to chairpersons who indicated interest. In the first year three departments were selected: the departments of English; Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; and Geography/Geology. After some months of establishing a needs assessment, the department of English withdrew, leaving two departments that were working closely with the Center. In the second year, departments in the Fine Arts and the departments of Industrial Technology and Sociology/Anthropology/Social Work were added to the list of targeted departments.

A wide array of resources were offered to the targeted departments:

1. Financial support for engaging consultants, for faculty travel, and for registration fees to attend off-campus workshops on teaching.
2. The time and skills of the director and his staff.
3. A .25 released-time appointment to a Center staff position for one faculty member from each of the targeted departments to serve as a liaison between the Center and the department.
4. The administration of a formal needs assessment for the department to determine developmental needs; and
5. The delivery of services to the department based on the data derived from the assessment.

Although the move to targeting constituted a distinct shift from the original conceptual model, the Center did not move from its prime goal of serving the teaching-learning needs of the faculty. Targeting was a strategy designed to more effectively meet these needs. Instead of spreading the Center's resources across a wide area, targeting focused them in a few, precise areas.

While the present description of the process is based on experiences with large departments in a large university, targeting procedures could be directed toward smaller faculty units. The size of the group is not crucial; the intent is to meet the concerns and needs of specific faculty units within the constraints of available resources. For example, a targeted approach is being implemented, based on an interest survey, to assist a limited number of faculty within a non-targeted department. The resources in this case include only organizational and leadership skills, a meeting site and available presentors.

The concept and implementation of targeting can be further exemplified by review of a case study of one of the departments involved. The relationship between the Center and the department of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance provides a model of what has been possible.

Case Study

Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance is a department of some sixty-seven faculty members teaching in four distinct undergraduate areas and an active graduate program. The administrative structure consists of the Chairperson, the Assistant Chairperson, and five Program Directors representing the major areas of the Department. The Department has a very high proportion of tenured faculty in the physical education area, which has experienced an enrollment decline in the last few years. In the growth areas of health education and recreation and park administration, there is a low tenure situation and increasing enrollments. The dance area has also experienced a slight increase in student enrollments. At the same time, a number of physical education faculty are returning to the Department from various outside positions, such as advising, the laboratory schools, and the intercollegiate athletics program. As tenured generalists, they are returning to a program that has suffi-

cient faculty in it, and their return means "bumping" untenured faculty in the growth areas. It was in response to these concerns that the Chairperson sought the assistance of the Teaching-Learning Center.

The Department worked with the Teaching-Learning Center for one year as a targeted department. A number of activities were involved, including close consultation between the Center staff and the Department Chairperson. The full cooperation of the Chairperson enabled a great deal to be accomplished.

Several long-range planning meetings were held with the Chairperson, his Program Directors, and Center staff to determine and confront major decisions in the areas of personnel, curriculum, and organization for the next five years. An outcome of these meetings was an all-day retreat attended by all departmental faculty to consider the information from earlier planning sessions and discuss the implications for the next five years.

Close consultation and cooperation occurred among the Chairperson and the project leaders in appointing faculty members for the Educational Leave Program and the Center staff member position. The staff surveyed the faculty members for suggestions on concern areas and workshop topics. The Chairperson developed a Public Relations Advisory Committee for the Department, modified the faculty participation in registration procedures, and improved communication links within the Department.

A needs assessment instrument was created around four developmental alternatives derived from faculty requests, the advisory committee, and potential needs identified through departmental planning: certification, direct instruction, travel support to attend off-campus meetings related to teaching, and personal improvement activities. Each of these major themes was reduced into specific options which could realistically be made available to faculty members. The instrument was distributed to all faculty members. Thus, perceived needs were indicated by the options selected by individuals.

In response to the needs assessment, a wide variety of developmental activities were arranged: 6 individuals participated in certification workshops; 24 individuals participated in direct instruction workshops; 6 participated in media workshops; 6 individuals visited public schools for observation purposes; 2 individuals received in-

class videotaping for observation and self-improvement; 5 individuals requested and obtained support to visit the Midwest College of Sports Medicine; 4 individuals received transportation assistance to attend a field-relevant convention; 2 individuals received educational leaves; and, finally, the Teaching-Learning Center assisted the faculty in the development of a two-day workshop for field experience supervisors for the Recreation and Park Administration Program attended by 25 supervisors from the State of Illinois.

The Teaching-Learning staff facilitated the reorganization of the structure and operation of the graduate program in the Department, presented a major workshop on the uses of media in teaching, arranged for and analyzed videotapes of faculty members' teaching, and maintained continuing contact with the Chairperson. Other support involved helping the faculty members in preparing articles on teaching, providing the financial support for groups of faculty to attend meetings on teaching and to study specific areas for development, presenting workshops on time management and running meetings, and providing resources for printing, department brochures, and travel.

As a result of the targeting procedure, the department now offers cardio-pulmonary resuscitation training on a large-scale basis, has modified course content in secondary programs based on field observation to promote public school teaching which complies with Title IX requirements, and both the department and individuals have increased their visibility in the field through the presentation of papers and the offering of a major, state-wide workshop. In addition a survey of faculty indicated a higher awareness of departmental needs ($\bar{X} = 3.8$ on a 5-point scale) and revealed that the alternative developmental options were highly useful ($\bar{X} = 4.0$ on a 5-point scale).

One of the most significant outcomes was the increased awareness and use of available university resources for the improvement of teaching. In many cases the individuals electing to use these services had no previous history of involvement. For example, 5 percent of the faculty who had not developed major media presentations consulted with the program associate and initiated development of mediated instructional programs. In addition, with the support provided through targeting, an increased number of requests for instructional development grants were submitted: four proposals

were submitted by five individuals. The high quality of the proposals is supported by the fact that three of the four proposals were funded by an independent, university-representative review committee.

Significant outcomes also occurred in the area of program development and career shifts. Through the awarding of an educational leave, a staff member returning to the Department from an administrative position was able to develop skills in the area of recreation, a high need area, rather than teaching in the general area of physical education, a low need area. As part of the targeting process, the faculty member extensively studied the area of recreation, collected and arranged materials for teaching, and developed videotaped modules for instruction in the area.

A potential new field for program development was also explored through an educational leave. As part of her leave, a staff member from the Department of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance developed a model for program development in the area of gerontology, a high need area. As a result of the leave, a University Task Force on Gerontology has been established, program offerings presently available on the campus have been reviewed, an assessment to determine new program needs is currently being conducted, and it is anticipated that a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary program in gerontology, including a set of activity courses in the Department of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, will be offered.

Targeting of this department worked well. The Chairperson decided to continue the Department's involvement in the program by providing internal support for the Center staff position for the second year. The Department provided the financial support for this quarter-time position for the second year.

Conclusion

This model pinpoints a number of operations that have become an essential part of the targeting process. Departments are selected through a series of discussions with the college dean and department chairperson. A full understanding of what is entailed and a commitment of support by the chairperson is essential to the success of targeting. A needs assessment and specification of objectives for the operation is a significant aspect of such discussion and outlines the

kinds of activities the Center and the department will be involved in during the year.

The staff members working in the liaison role act as a bridge between the Center and the targeted department. They are able to examine areas of concern in a relatively objective way and to be a resource person for colleagues.

The Center's emphasis on targeting has diminished its use as a resource by the university community as a whole. Fewer general workshops have been presented and resources for faculty outside the targeted departments have been reduced. At the same time, the credibility of the targeting approach has increased, as indicated by a waiting list of departments requesting support through targeting.

A by-product of targeting is that it involves faculty who might not have used the services of the Center as individuals—those faculty Centra identified as “the faculty who need to improve” (Centra, 1976). Although targeting does not single out such faculty for individual assistance, in each of the departments so far involved in targeting, *all* faculty have been involved in at least one activity sponsored by the Center. Assuming that departments are a microcosm of the university faculty, then targeting will begin to touch faculty who need assistance with their teaching. In two years, the Center staff has worked in-depth with over 200 faculty. Although the activities are not all directly related to classroom teaching, most have been ongoing and involved follow-up. In addition, targeting has created closer contact between the Center staff and the faculty.

The concept of targeting is continuing. After four years, the Teaching-Learning Center ended its use of “soft” money provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and is now supported entirely by the university. The Professional Development Center and two other departments, a grant program for instructional development and a large media services operation have been joined with the Teaching-Learning Center to form a new Faculty and Instructional Development Program.

This consolidation of service providers strengthens the concept of targeting and broadens its possibilities. A targeted department now has access to additional resources, including individual support with mediated instruction and priority access to instructional grants including one providing \$5,000 support. The total package of sup-

port currently available to a targeted department is both substantial and attractive. With such support, a department can address major concern areas and plan meaningful change strategies.

Targeting at Illinois State has permitted a variety of different resources in faculty development to be focused on a specific need area. This has resulted in clear and tangible evidence of the success of the development activities. Targeting, as a model, clearly responds to the need to reach all faculty while providing a systematic approach to resolving program development issues in concentrated areas of the university—a focus on individual needs through a concentrated support for professional and instructional development in selected departments.

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