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## The Case for an Institutional Perspective on Faculty Development

In recent higher education literature, faculty members have been described as in need of help [see, for example, 8, 17]. Faculty are characterized as demoralized and immobilized, and it is reported that their productivity is diminished and their futures are constricted. The ready “solutions” that are often offered consist of voluntary faculty development programs, of which varied types have evolved [13, 18, 31]. However, the reality of the above described conditions and the effectiveness of the development programs have been difficult to establish and, perhaps more importantly, faculty participation has tended to be limited and diffident [12]. Moreover, almost all such programs have been focused on voluntary individual development with attention primarily to instructional skills.

In this article we propose an approach that addresses the institutional environment and the responsibilities of the institution for development of its faculty in the full range of dimensions — including scholarship — with which it is concerned. Drawing on data from an institutional study in a major research university, this article indicates that, although many of the concerns about current faculty vitality may be exaggerated, needs for institutional response still exist. We show that although faculty vitality in the main is currently quite high, a significant proportion of faculty are still experiencing problems of morale, job satisfaction, and professional productivity. In addressing the continuing needs of faculty who vary on vitality indicators, we argue for both an expanded

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and differentiated institutional or corporate perspective<sup>1</sup> on human resource development.

We present first the notion that “faculty” and “institutional vitality” and “institutional mission” are interrelated concepts. Second, we give an overview of the current conditions of faculty development and argue our case for an institutional perspective on human resource development. Third, drawing from a study of faculty career vitality at a major research university, we demonstrate that policy recommendations to enhance faculty and institutional vitality must recognize the diverse organizational and individual circumstances of faculty even within the same institution. Finally, we schematize differential institutional strategies for assuring or improving the vitality of both the institution and faculty in light of the expanded institutional or corporate framework.

#### *Faculty and Institutional Vitality as a Shared Responsibility*

While commentators, scholars, and faculty developers work toward agreement about the concepts of “faculty” and “institutional vitality,” several guidelines can serve to enhance policy-making and personnel management for increased institutional effectiveness and productivity. First and foremost, it must be recognized that individual and institutional vitality are interrelated. The individual pursues a career that is structured by academic organizations. Individual career vitality is affected by academic organizational structure and professional socialization processes as well as by personal variables such as intelligence and personality. Organizational and professional opportunities and rewards structure career paths. However, as the professoriate becomes immobilized, greater attention needs to be paid to the provision of opportunities for continued career development, to recognition and rewards for performance in the full range of domains, and to growth and renewal including possible resocialization or respecialization options.

<sup>1</sup>The term “corporate” rather than “institutional” is appearing in the literature more frequently than in the past. We did not adopt it for use in this paper because there is a lack of consensus on its meaning. Nelson’s usage, for example, refers to those “activities that give faculty members an opportunity to work closely with colleagues and take broad institutional and curricular goals into account” [24, p. 71] as corporate faculty development programming. Our article, on the other hand, takes a larger view of institutional responsibility including but not limited to the group activities of faculty members. There is also some dislike of the term corporate in connection with higher education. Toombs, for example, criticizes the “corporate tradition—the image of the college or university as a managed enterprise not altogether unlike a business organization” [33, p. 90].

Second, ideal types of faculty and faculty performance emphases will differ according to institutional type and mission [2]. Institutions that emphasize teaching and/or service will need to focus more on faculty development policies that revitalize routine teaching and retrain faculty for shifting curricular emphases, whereas institutions that emphasize the research and scholarly orientation will need to consider more attentively the adequacy of sponsorship and resources to sustain scholarly productivity. In addition, as Cameron and Whetten's [10] work on organizational life cycle stages suggests, an institutional age/development stage may affect faculty productivity, morale, and commitment differentially. The point is that situational and contextual aspects must be given special attention in the tailoring of faculty vitality policies and programs to institutional concerns.

Third, productivity and efficiency are inherent in the idea of vitality, but they are not the whole of it. Measures of effectiveness as well as efficiency must be developed. Moving beyond quantitative estimates of faculty output in publications or student credit hours, we raise the question of quality and effectiveness. How well are faculty performing? How well is the institution functioning in its mission? What obstacles or conditions either help or hinder the productive efforts of faculty?

Finally, systematic consideration must be given to the dimension of vitality variously termed enthusiasm, energy, or esprit that embodies the spirit of an institution that energizes people to work productively and creatively. Kanter [22] asserts that people who conceive of themselves as among the "moving" rather than the "stuck" in the career structure of the organization will be likely to keep their aspirations high, have positive self-esteem, work hard, take appropriate risks, remain engaged in their interests, remain involved with their students and their colleagues, and advocate constructive organizational change. To keep faculty among the "moving" will require the development and maintenance of an opportunity and power structure that opens career paths, provides developmental activities, facilitates lateral movement across fields if vertical movement is impossible, involves people in goal-setting, planning, and governance, deliberately builds sponsorship ("old hand/newcomer") relationships within the institution, and recognizes good performance in a variety of ways.

Thus we argue for a concept of vitality that is true to the specific context of higher education institutions; one that includes but goes beyond concerns with efficiency to those of productivity, effectiveness, and quality; one that recognizes the broad-scale concerns with quality of work life in post-industrial societies. Measures of vitality that this

argument would support should include value-added, quality-associated concerns with careers over the long-term in organizations; skill-development at different career stages; internal opportunities for both vertical and lateral mobility; relationships that promote both the psychological sense of community or collegium and sponsor-mentor generative activity; and participation in shaping the direction of one's unit or the institution at large. Policies that acknowledge this value-added approach are necessary to prevent the demoralization of today's and tomorrow's faculty members and to enhance long-term institutional productivity.

*The Case for an Institutional Perspective  
of Human Resource Development*

It was mainly in the 1970s that faculty development programs and practices expanded significantly in academe in response to the arrival of steady-state conditions and often with the financial support of federal agencies and private foundations. Centra [33] reported that by 1976 more than 60 percent of higher education institutions in the country had established some type of faculty development program or activity. However, as noted recently by Blackburn, faculty development programs "are being scuttled at an accelerating rate" [6, p. 1]. Gustafson and Bratton [20], for example, estimated that 28 percent of these programs had been terminated and more would surely fall to the budget ax.

As Brookes and German observed, "although faculty development program multiplied, basic questions about their focus and purpose often went unanswered" [8, p. 29]. This focus and purpose more often than not was teaching improvement and sometimes personal development of individual faculty. Models of development programs have been defined by Berquist and Phillips [5] and by Gaff [18]. Berquist and Phillips described three components of faculty development: instructional, personal, and organizational (these related to teaching improvements and environmental support, or to personal growth). Gaff included instructional and organizational components as well as a faculty development component consisting of teaching improvement and affective development of the faculty member. Although consideration was given to organizational components, the primary emphasis was on the individual faculty member's activity, not on the institution's responsibilities for providing opportunities for career development.

The faculty development movement also suffered from a unidimen-

sional conception of the faculty role, according to Toombs [32] and Mathis [25], who call attention to the paucity of data about faculty members' careers as professionals in an institutional context. In Mathis' view, "the extensive research base about one element of practice within the academic profession — teaching — has provided the major research base for our understanding of faculty careers" [25, p. 21]. Unlike the more traditional faculty development practices, the new programs did not support the research dimension of the faculty role. Furthermore, the "developers" often were not faculty members themselves. Thus, the new faculty development programs did not emerge from the faculty on the basis of felt needs and attended only to part of the faculty role (and in many institutions not to the most rewarded dimension of that role). Participation in these programs was voluntary rather than directed to those who most needed improvement and change. The Centra analysis produced the non-surprising, though disappointing, finding that "the least actively involved faculty members in development activities were those who really needed to improve" [12, p. 200]. In sum, the faculty development movement of the 1970s followed a strategy of offering individually based solutions to institutionally based vitality problems on a rather discriminate basis.

As the realities of the new economic circumstances of higher education became clearer, the solution tended to shift away from "more faculty development" to the needs of institutions and the nature and structure of faculty careers [17]. On behalf of the American Association for Higher Education, Baldwin [3] searched for campus-based projects that were explicitly addressed to generating new career options for faculty. He identified four major types of projects: career assessment and planning projects, respecialization and retraining projects, exchanges and internships, and comprehensive/multidimensional projects. In addition, there were projects with the explicit function of outplacement of faculty members into careers in the business, industrial, or public service sectors.

Such consideration of both institutional and individual situations and needs argues for an institutional perspective of human resource development. Toombs [33], for example, suggested that whereas in the past institutions needed faculty development programs (and other personnel policies) to achieve stability in times of institutional growth and consolidation, what was needed today was recognition that the "one life, one career" imperative might be downright dysfunctional under certain conditions.

Increasingly, an institutional perspective arises out of the social, eco-

conomic, and political conditions which have prompted nearly all institutions to assess or reassess their effectiveness. Although organizational performance and effectiveness have been studied over several decades, according to Kanter and Brinkerhoff [23] and Cameron and Whetten [11] there has been little agreement over what to measure and how to measure it.

Furthermore, when researchers have attempted to measure effectiveness in higher education organizations, they have had to grapple with formidable problems of selecting and assessing effectiveness criteria relevant to the unique characteristics of higher education institutions. Efforts along these lines have been made by Cameron, who has identified nine dimensions of effectiveness. The criteria for one of these, labelled "professional development and quality of the faculty," are "the extent of professional attainment and development of the faculty and the amount of stimulation toward professional development provided by the institution" [9, p. 614]. These very criteria support the interactive aspect of individual and institutional vitality, for despite traditions of individual responsibility and autonomy for faculty careers, institutions that proactively pursue personnel policies and practices consonant with human resource development are likely to be more effective than those that do not.

In the following sections of this article, we address the two principal questions that relate to this broadened individual/institutional perspective: (1) what is the reality of faculty career development in specific institutional contexts?, and (2) what alternatives exist for institutional response?

### *An Institutional Study<sup>2</sup>*

The previous discussion argues that conceptualizations of both faculty and institutional vitality and an institutional perspective of human resource development can be particularly useful as frameworks within which to study the processes of faculty career development. In this context and with these perspectives, Clark and Corcoran [15, 16] conducted an institutional study of faculty careers at the University of Minnesota. As part of their study, Clark and Corcoran conducted in-depth interviews with 147 faculty members from four field areas in two phases during 1980-82. Initially a sample of 63 tenured faculty members who met criteria for inclusion into a "highly active" ideal

<sup>2</sup>Support for this research was provided by the Graduate School and by the College of Education of the University of Minnesota.

type (i.e., they continually publish, teach, and perform administrative and/or professional services at highly productive levels) were selected by a reputational method from four field areas: biological sciences, physical sciences and mathematics, social sciences, and humanities. Clark and Corcoran also obtained comparative data from a “representative” faculty sample of 66 persons drawn from the same sample sites by using stratified random procedures. As part of the second phase process, 18 “promotion delayed” individuals who had served at the rank of associate professor for nine years or longer were similarly selected and added to those 14 “promotion delayed” persons who turned up in the “representative” faculty group, thus constituting a third group for analysis. All of the faculty respondents were tenured associate or full professors whose median age was in the forties; eleven percent of them were women.

All of the interviews used an interview guide consisting of more than fifty, mostly open-ended questions. Question areas included: (1) the decision to pursue an academic career; (2) graduate school dimensions of career socialization; (3) career stages and socialization as a faculty member; (4) work interests and preference orientations; (5) dimensions of productivity and success; (6) morale, satisfaction, and perceptions of change; and (7) appraisals and future considerations. The study, of course, is limited in generalizability by virtue of attention to only one case of tenured faculty in a specific institutional type (research-oriented multiversity) and four field areas (biological sciences, physical sciences and mathematics, social sciences, and humanities).

#### *Assessment of Vitality Level of Faculty in Minnesota Study*

The first assessment of the general level of vitality in the faculty groups surveyed was that, in the main, they tended to consider themselves to be among the “moving” rather than the “stuck,” to borrow Kanter’s terms [22]. They had high self-esteem, valued their competence and accomplishment, and saw their work as a centralized interest which demanded energy and engagement. In short, they ranked above average in opportunity, inasmuch as mobility and growth are structured in complex organizations. Although the characteristic pattern was thus of vital faculty, clearly there were some in each group who gave one or more indications of possibly declining vitality. This was more typical for the delayed promotion group than for the representative group and least frequent among the highly active group.

On all of the indicator items tabulated—excepting those assessing



energy level—the proportions of the highly active group responding in the more vital direction exceeded that of the delayed promotion group, suggesting that self-ratings, career blockage experience, and changes in morale and productivity are all potentially useful indicators of vitality.

Reported decline in energy level was highest (59 percent) for the representative group, which may be related to the higher percentage of the faculty over fifty years of age in that group (43 percent) compared to that in the other groups. Respondents did express some age-associated explanations when they made these assessments, coupled sometimes with the comment that they had learned how the system worked and how to use work-time and energies better than in earlier years, thus becoming more efficient.

Changes in morale were more often reported by faculty in the delayed promotion group (64 percent). Less than half of respondents in the highly active and the representative groups felt that their morale had declined.

Productivity declines, reported by 23 percent, and “uneven” productivity, reported by 30 percent of the representative group, were most often attributed to changes in the nature of responsibilities (e.g., added administrative work) or to personal factors (energy, organization), whereas both productivity increases and uneven productivity were more often attributed to timing factors, such as “my field of research takes time,” “my research is just now blossoming.”

The highly active group was differentiated primarily in their self-ratings of success and in the energy items; the latter may be related to the younger age of the highly active group. This group overlapped considerably in vitality with the representative group, and the typical tenured faculty member in the fields surveyed stood relatively high on the vitality indicators. In other words, the representative group included many individuals who would correspond in type to the highly active group, as well as a lesser number who overlapped with the delayed promotion group.

Career blocks were not unusual. Two out of five (38 percent) of the representative faculty group reported having had such an experience, and so did the same proportion of the highly active group. Not surprisingly, the proportion of the delayed promotion group reporting career blocks was higher—three out of five, or 57 percent. Given the fact that at least a third of the members of all three groups interviewed had not yet reached their mid-forties—often the critical period for career assessment—it might be that most faculty members will at some

time in their careers feel that they are in some sense “stuck” or blocked from moving ahead in their work. How they view the experience, to what they attribute it, and how they address it now seem to be what is significant for understanding faculty vitality.

*Faculty Work Characteristics and Values  
in Minnesota Study*

The Minnesota study also examined how the faculty members described their work, what they liked and disliked about it, and what their underlying priorities were. This examination was made as a foundation for interpreting appraisals of the institutional environment as either supporting or hindering success.

*Work behavior.* In examining estimates of how much time was spent on career-related work and how it was distributed, most of the faculty believed that they worked hard, generally reporting work weeks of fifty hours or more. A large number, especially in the highly active group, reported working sixty hours a week or more. Not surprisingly, 69 percent of the highly active group said that they worked harder than their colleagues. Some differentiation of teaching load relative to research productivity was present; the highly active group tended to allocate a lesser proportion of time to teaching, but not necessarily less actual time.

Not only were teaching loads seen as restraints on research, but so were administrative and service activities, especially those service activities within the University (including department, college, and all-University responsibilities), which were seen as a “significant drain” on research time by many faculty. This was particularly true for the highly active group, who were, of course, selected especially because of their strong contribution to all three University functions.

*Work preferences.* The tensions expressed in the time reports on work behavior with respect to drains on research time were later reflected in faculty attitudes toward career satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Such tensions were also evident in the priorities given to research versus teaching. The responses of the highly active faculty group showed a stronger bias toward the research end of the continuum than either the other two Minnesota groups or a national group studied by Trow [34] for the Carnegie Commission, with 31 percent of the highly active group claiming that they were very heavily oriented to research. Whereas very few faculty in the entire Minnesota study gave their highest interest preference to teaching, some faculty among the delayed promotion group did.

*Satisfactions/dissatisfactions.* Faculty members named considerably more satisfactions than dissatisfactions. Work with students, especially graduate students, was mentioned as satisfying by almost half of the faculty. The opportunity to work with ideas and — this was particularly important to the highly active group — work freedom (e.g., freedom to set one's own schedule, to select one's own focus of interest, and to be one's own boss) were all frequently mentioned. Other satisfactions concerned aspects of academic life, such as relationships with colleagues and teaching experiences. The major source of dissatisfaction was the time required for routine bureaucratic tasks (e.g., paperwork) and committees.

#### *Institutional Environment Appraisals*

The ways in which the institutional environment supported or hindered faculty work were a major topic of the interviews and significantly relate to our case for an institutional perspective on faculty development.

*Supporting conditions.* The importance of being part of a stimulating university environment and one that was seen as supportive of scholarly interests was evident in over half of the interviews. Faculty, especially in the highly active and the representative groups, spoke particularly of how important it was that administrative attitudes and behavior reflect scholarly concerns. A biologist expressed this as a concern for a sharpening of purposes: "It would be a tremendous morale booster for the whole faculty if we could define our purposes better, let people know where they are going and give some direction to programs." A mathematician observed that environmental pressures were adversely affecting academic leadership: "The main concern is that the universities are getting more and more administrative in nature and less educational. . . it's happening all over the country. . . part of it is the accountability and part of it is the federal government." Similarly, the importance of having institutional funds available to support research and teaching programs was evident in the responses of almost half of the members of all three groups. More members of the highly active faculty group (29 percent) than of the representative (15 percent) and delayed promotion (16 percent) groups considered work freedom to be a more important supportive condition. The representative and delayed promotion groups, at 32 and 34 percent respectively, seemed more concerned with availability of single-quarter and sabbatical leaves than did the highly active faculty (16 percent).

*Hindering conditions.* All three faculty groups remarked on similar

conditions as interfering with faculty research activity. Time required for work that interfered with research, particularly heavy teaching loads and administrative or service responsibilities, were most often noted. Other problematic conditions were a non-supportive environment, less than adequate research funding, and problems with the quality and adequacy of research facilities such as "clean" laboratories, specialized libraries, and the computer system.

Surprisingly, few references were made to matters of or concerns for instructional development by faculty respondents when they related supporting or hindering conditions. This was true even though much publicity and many thousands of dollars have been allocated to centers and programs at Minnesota for these purposes. Even when faculty development was mentioned with regard to single-quarter leaves, sabbaticals, and summer grants, it was almost always in terms of need for strengthening scholarships and research skills.

#### *Policy Implications from the Minnesota Study*

Researchers have only recently begun to use organizational variables to explain changes in work attitudes, morale, and job satisfaction. A number of authors [e.g., 1] have identified new directions for inquiry into the interrelationships between organizational climate and characteristics of individuals and their productivity. A fuller discussion and the detailed results of the application of a socialization framework to the experiences and career development of faculty members in the Minnesota study have been reported elsewhere by Clark and Corcoran [15]. The potential within higher education for further inquiry of this type seems especially promising, but it will require studies of a larger scope than the institutional study conducted by Clark and Corcoran.

Nevertheless, on the basis of the Minnesota study we can make a number of generalizations about our concerns for faculty vitality and development and for organizational effectiveness. It is clear, for example, that whereas certain organizational conditions affect all faculty more or less equally, other conditions do not, because they are perceived as more critical by certain groups, such as the highly active "blue-chip" faculty or those who are "stuck" in their careers. A scholarly environment can be regarded as a fundamental and continuing essential condition for a university faculty. Faculty members in general are deeply affected by the support that the environment provides for academic values and an academic way of life. They look to administrative attitudes and behavior for evidence of support for their scholarly concerns. They look for recognition of the importance of freedom to

organize and conduct their work lives without excessive demands for needless paperwork and seemingly arbitrary reporting requirements. They seek conditions that permit them to do their work well, particularly adequate time for scholarship and the necessary resources for research. Any perceived decline in quality of working conditions indicates a need for prompt corrective action as well as for a continuing concern on the part of administrators for the quality of the work life of the faculty.

The Minnesota study highlighted two groups of faculty with distinctive concerns. The faculty of the first group were identified as highly successful in teaching and research and also in their service roles. The second group was less sharply defined but included a larger proportion of those who might be "stuck" in their careers. The highly successful faculty had an excellent "track record" for managing their careers. They could be helped most if given the best opportunity to do their work. Members of the Minnesota highly active group, unlike some other so-called "stars" who may give little attention to the institution but rather focus primarily on their own scholarly careers, were academic citizens whose responsible service was critical to the quality of the institution. Unfortunately, however, many of them have been unduly pressed by demands on their time. They are the first to note that they have difficulty in saying no to requests for service on major committees, task forces, and the like. Solutions do not come easily at a time when faculty participation is needed in major planning decisions. Perhaps this highly active group would be helped the most if it believed that faculty interests were fully protected by the normal processes of governance and by administrative attitudes and behavior.

By no means were all faculty who experienced delayed promotion "stuck" in their careers, but for those who were, the conventional system of academic work assignments and rewards was often not helpful. An opportunity to consider an alternative career without great risk ought to be clearly available and under conditions that would make it psychologically acceptable. Although some faculty might be able to find their own solutions, at least some faculty might profit from a thoughtfully planned and executed program for career change.

Other groups in the Minnesota study can also be singled out. The women faculty studied by Clark and Corcoran [14], for example, were identified as having had distinctive problems in their career socialization that often added up to a case of accumulative disadvantage. The same may well be true of other minority groups. There were also differences in the career situations in different fields. Obviously career prospects

in engineering and business (groups that were not interviewed), and in other areas of faculty growth have little in common with the humanities, whose faculty are currently experiencing problems of declining enrollment and general loss of perceived societal regard. Equally obvious is the fact that institutional efforts focused only on short-term market demands may do severe damage to the university's character if pressures to respond to the market are not tempered with concern for institutional balance. Within fields, particularly in the sciences, certain lines of research do run dry, and individual faculty must find ways to shift their efforts in new directions. Some faculty succeed at this and in fact report that observing the success of their colleagues in accomplishing such changes in direction has been helpful in suggesting how it can be done. Nonetheless, this kind of learning might be made more generally available. The sciences in general, including the social sciences, are particularly affected by the quality of the graduate students with whom their work is often closely connected. Concern for the maintenance of quality in graduate students is therefore particularly critical in these areas as well as a general university concern.

Finally, all of these generalizations deal primarily with categories and groups, but in the end institutional practices affect individual faculty. The faculty members, when interviewed, told personal stories about the evolvment of their careers and of the satisfactions and dissatisfactions experienced. Clearly, unless institutional policies and practices have enough flexibility to accommodate the unique needs of individuals, they may well be inappropriate, inefficient, and even counterproductive.

### *Alternatives for Institutional Response*

In order to respond to the various problematic conditions and career circumstances identified above, a wide range of both new and old ideas has been put forth about what might be done regarding faculty and institutional vitality. Nevertheless, very little of a systematic nature has been developed to assist policy development and personnel management in these matters. Instead, most institutional responses have tended to be more idiosyncratic to the short-term interests of selected faculty or administrators than to the focused long-term interests of the institution and its vitality. In reviewing the faculty development literature, it is clear that focus must be given to institutional strategies that go beyond single-shot solutions and quick cures. As noted earlier in this article, many of these quick cures come from lack of attention to the

full range of institutional needs and from too narrow perspectives on faculty careers.

The general condition of academe in terms of projected institutional and faculty vitality is mixed, and long-term solutions to problems appear to be few in number. Colleges and universities, of course, can attempt to alter the rate and composition of any new faculty entering their institutions or alter the rate and composition of faculty leaving academe, and much has been written about these strategies [7, 12, 27, 29]. Nevertheless, institutions must attempt to assure or improve the vitality of their existing faculty under present and near-future conditions.

#### *Strategies for Enhancing the Vitality of Existing Faculty*

Although various strategies can be directed toward changes in faculty demography which may result in at least a modest degree of success in the near future, it is a certainty that the majority of faculty members now in regular positions in colleges and universities will remain in the same institutions for the rest of their careers. Thus the question remains: what might be done to enhance the vitality of existing faculty in whom resources have been invested and to whom institutional commitments have been made?

In spite of the intensity and extent of interest in arguing the need for faculty development programs in the current literature, Centra [12] and others have concluded that institutional programs and funds for faculty development have been greatly reduced in recent years from the previous levels established in the mid-1970s. Development program staff numbers have been reduced, fewer sabbaticals are being awarded, and less money is being made available to support participation in conferences of the various professional associations. These data are assumed to be associated with a faculty malaise, sometimes called "burnout," which is described in terms that parallel Kanter's [22] concept of "stuckness," lack of opportunity, or immobilization. In discussing several definitional guidelines regarding vitality in an earlier section, we noted that keeping faculty "moving" would require the development or protection of opportunity and power structures that, among other things, involve people in goal-setting, planning, and governance, and that recognize good performance in a variety of ways. Both Kanter [22] and Becker [4] speculate that persons who feel immobilized will be vulnerable to unionization efforts. If people feel that there is little prospect for personal progress in positions which are not apt to change and that the leaders of their institutions are not responsive

to faculty concerns, unionization and perhaps devitalization are likely to occur.

A rational institutional approach to addressing such concerns is to ask first, "What is the nature of the faculty vitality problem?" What we have learned thus far indicates that in a university setting such as the one at Minnesota, the vitality problem presents itself most frequently as a problem of interrupted or declining productivity and scholarship, and only secondarily, if at all, of teaching. This news is not surprising, but it does confront the problem quite directly. It is important to note that this problem is nearly always perceived clearly by the individual faculty members and is reflected in their self-assessments of success.

On the other hand, most institutional development programs (even in research institutions like Minnesota) continually tend to target their efforts on teaching, and most administrators continue to hold the belief, often reinforced by student clamor for better teaching, that if faculty malaise is apparent, the appropriate response is a more and better instructional development effort with increased opportunity for voluntary faculty participation. The basic nature of the problem is often misdiagnosed and mistreated.

Secondly, it can be said that on the basis of Clark and Corcoran's observations of the groups they studied, and in spite of the conditions of academe, faculty vitality does not *currently* appear to be uniformly in jeopardy. Even in the group that experienced a "delay in promotion," this delay occurred by no means always because of a vitality issue; certain lines of work simply take a great deal more time than others for the significant work required for tenure decisions. But even though the problem involves a relatively small proportion of individuals, it is still a problem for them, their colleagues, and the institution. On the basis of their interview data, it was clear to Clark and Corcoran [15] that some individuals have been able to work through whatever difficulties held them up, but that others have turned or have been turned to focus primarily on instructional activity, resulting in lessened rewards in the form of salary and promotion and in lessened self-esteem and morale.

Two of the authors have explored elsewhere [15] one of the background factors that appear to underlie this situation, namely, the differences in socialization to the role of a faculty member in a research university. It is important for institutions to consider that responsibilities for socialization continue as individuals enter their careers as faculty members. Departments need to give more explicit consideration to this



process, particularly with probationary faculty, since they generally face a more rigorous tenure and promotion review than was the case over a decade ago.

But what about those already tenured? We are by no means convinced that individuals cannot find some ways of changing their work patterns, focusing their efforts, and organizing their energies in more productive ways. Some of the faculty interviewed by Clark and Corcoran pointed to the experience of locating a new field of investigation and gaining support for a new direction of inquiry. We think there could be more of this, and that universities like Minnesota need to encourage it more systematically. Some of this is encouragement now provided through seed grants to experienced faculty who need to shift fields of inquiry, as well as to investigators at earlier career stages. It may be, however, that a different kind of assistance should be provided to individuals who may need additional stimulation to consider the possibility of change and potential directions.

In the past the academic world has not had much liking for formal personnel development programs. For many faculty such programs are anathema; they regard them as intrusive and ineffective in dealing with the unique nature of their individual problems. We do see, however, that in some instances faculty colleagues and department chairs could be more constructive and supportive, drawing upon their own experience and possibly that of consultants. It might be of value for a university to find a cooperative department that would be willing to test such a development program to see whether a model could be developed for such action.

But there are also faculty who are indeed “stuck” and for whom there seems to be no possibility for change. As Sarason [30] has pointed out so well, academics as well as other professionals seem to have a one life—one career imperative. It is as if they had taken vows, someone has said, and a change of career represented a denial of commitment. Individuals can benefit from being made aware of possibilities for change that they may not have considered. Colleagues and institutions can find ways to facilitate mid-career change. Unfortunately at this time at most institutions like Minnesota, the only faculty eligible for outplacement, severance, or early retirement career change options are those in the curricular programs designated for termination or diminishment. Extension of these options to faculty who might benefit from them but who are not members of programs so designated may make sense and should be considered. Patton argues that “such efforts can be relatively meaningless if they are developed in isolation from

a larger plan for institutional vitality” [28, p. 54]. The design of such options should be coordinated with a reassessment of other personnel practices.

Thus far we have addressed existing problems of vitality that may involve a relatively small proportion of faculty. In our view, the greater concern is for fostering long-term vitality, particularly among those faculty who are clearly productive and who try very hard to perform well a demanding set of activities involving research, teaching, and service. In practical terms, the maintenance and enhancement of faculty vitality will be more cost-effective than subsequent remediation.

The highly active group of faculty identified by Clark and Corcoran [15], for example, clearly does not need development programs for remediation, but rather extraordinary attention for simply facilitating what they are currently doing. This means, of course, maximizing organizational freedom for their work efforts and minimizing bureaucratic procedures. In simplest terms, give the highly vital and most productive faculty the highest rewards and the greatest degrees of organizational and professional freedom, along with research and instructional resource support, and then ensure that the bureaucratic nature of the institution does not interfere with their activities. Some form of institutional screening of faculty performance coupled with a clearly articulated and implemented reward system based on merit, obviously is essential for such policies and practices to work effectively.

In summary, from an institutional perspective and for settings like Minnesota, efforts to enhance the vitality of existing faculty can be grouped in three prescriptive policy areas: (1) providing environmental support for the scholarly development of the faculty, (2) providing institutional support for faculty research and instructional development activities, and (3) providing differentiated support for individual faculty needs. The first of these policy areas speaks to the importance of reflecting scholarly concerns in administrative attitudes and behavior, of recognizing the full range of faculty accomplishments, and of encouraging development of an intellectually stimulating community of faculty. The second policy area focuses on supporting faculty in their high valuation on freedom of inquiry and their research activities, their need for adequate concentrated time for research, provision of “seed” money to initiate research and new instructional activities, and adequate facilities for both research and teaching. Since research and graduate training are bound together, concerns about quality of and support for graduate students also enters this policy domain. The third policy area focuses on providing support for individual faculty such as those

whose research interests have run dry, those whose research is not currently attractive to the programmatic emphases of external funding agencies, those whose instructional areas are weak in student and programmatic demand, those who experience discontinuities in role and performance/reward systems, and those who confront rigorous expectations as probationary faculty in a time of uncertain rewards. In most cases, the solution does not necessarily require a large programmatic response, but rather targeted assistance for individual faculty.

### *Conclusion*

In this article we have indicated that faculty vitality may not be in as great jeopardy as is commonly assumed. Nevertheless, we also have shown that institutions need to be continually and proactively attentive to vitality needs for all faculty groups. Even if all Minnesota faculty had manifested high vitality, such a case needs to be made for institutional responsibilities. It is important to note again that all of the Minnesota faculty groups indicated that institutional dimensions and proactive responsibilities were critical to their continued vitality. We cannot simply assume that menus for individual faculty (voluntary) selections will be adequate or responsive to current or continuing faculty vitality needs. We also have argued that in addition to the need for an expanded institutional response, such a response must be differentiated for different groups (or individuals) of faculty.

We have attempted to be realistic in assessing faculty and institutional vitality and in outlining strategies to affect it. As we think about options and opportunities, the agenda is not to advocate simply for more faculty development programs, although many worthwhile programs deserve full support. We must learn more about adult development, the professional socialization of faculty members, how their careers are structured, and how the academic organization affects their vitality. Above all, we must probe into the nature of individual and organizational circumstances. The contextual, situational variables may not be as generalizable from one institution to another as the rather prescriptive literature on faculty development programs has conventionally assumed.

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