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Teaching Excellence: How Faculty Guided Change at a Research University

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Critics argue that the emphasis top U.S. universities place on research productivity distracts faculty from instructing and advising students. As these concerns have intensified, many universities have sought to rehabilitate the status of teaching by appointing faculty committees, conducting internal evaluation, or hiring consultants to improve teaching quality. Although these efforts have resulted in new courses and majors or in revised incentives for faculty, they have not produced fundamental change in the way research universities value teaching (Boyer Commission, 1998).

Instead, most efforts have dissipated before permanent improvement could take hold. Many of these efforts have focused on changing the structures that support teaching rather than helping goals and ideas mature. This article evaluates one research university's work in the latter realm. Based on

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the assumption that lasting change requires cultural transformation, the project began by involving faculty in a systematic discussion about teaching and using the resulting feedback to alter policy. The study had three purposes: first, to gather the opinions of faculty about the university's plan to achieve excellence in teaching while simultaneously solidifying its position as a top research institution; second, to extract meaning from the body of faculty opinions and organize that meaning to inform decision making; and third, to structure the extracted meaning into a general framework for teaching excellence. Faculty reactions, as captured in this case study, could be useful in guiding instructional reforms at other research universities. Before describing the study and its results, we review efforts to improve teaching at research universities in general, and at the university we investigated in particular.

Balancing Teaching and Research at Research Universities

The work of Ernest Boyer and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1987, 1990) helped stimulate debates about the status of undergraduate teaching at research universities. Finding that teaching is undervalued on college campuses, Boyer stressed the need to expand the definition of scholarship to include four components: discovery of knowledge, integration of knowledge, application of knowledge, and teaching. He called for aggressive teaching support in research universities and graduate schools and maintained that the standards used to evaluate research should also be used for teaching and service if these types of work are to influence decisions about promotion and tenure.

To follow Boyer's recommendations and also address increasing accountability pressures in the last decade, faculty and academic leaders at research universities have sought various ways to improve teaching and reward it more appropriately. For example, since 1989 Syracuse University has sponsored several projects to open the debate over balancing teaching and research at other research institutions (Mooney, 1992). One of their projects was a national survey that examined how faculty, department heads, and deans view the relative importance of teaching and research (Gray, Froh, & Diammond, 1992). Although each group claims to favor a balance, each sees the others as favoring research. Following this work, other universities—including Emory, Northwestern, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Michigan—joined in the debate on the balance between teaching and research. Consequently, some institutions have increased the emphasis on teaching on their campuses.

Few universities, however, have based their actions on the systematic investigation of faculty views. Most strategies seem linked to the notion that the individual's motivation can lead to campus-wide change. For example,

some institutions now use merit raises, promotions, public recognition, or prizes to reward excellence in teaching. Others establish teaching centers to award grants for innovative instruction or employ experts who give workshops to stimulate interest. These strategies, more focused on individual behavior or response than on some shared ideas about requirements for excellence, rarely consider what faculty believe about effective teaching support.

Blackburn and Lawrence (1995), on the other hand, are an exception. Studying faculty perceptions of the teaching environment, they gathered faculty views about the support for teaching, the degrees to which their colleagues seem committed to teaching, and the portion of work effort administrators believe should be devoted to instructional matters. In more recent work, Serow, Brawner, and Demery (1999) offer insights into the motives that underlie faculty role performance at research universities. Finally, in a study of six regional state universities in Tennessee, Tang and Chamberlain (1997) examined the differences between administrator and faculty attitudes toward research and teaching. They found a mismatch of perceptions between the two groups with administrators believing that research and teaching are mutually supportive while faculty view them as conflicting activities.

These studies suggest a common theme as the essential component of change in the teaching-research balance: the active involvement of faculty. Understanding faculty goals and views may be key to effective strategies for teaching improvement (Eleser & Chauvin, 1998). It is clear that neither resources nor rewards for teaching nor faculty participation in workshops or seminars is sufficient to bring systematic and permanent change for the status of teaching at a research university. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) addressed these issues in an analysis of intrinsic motivation and effective teaching. As he noted, administratively driven requirements about the frequency of talking with students, for example, may destroy the motivation to teach, leading to outcomes contradictory to the intended requirements. Consequently, some instructional reforms might have failed to recognize that a university is a social system defined in part by the degree to which it is collegial, collaborative, and supportive. This case study reports on the experiences of an institution that acknowledged the power of collegiality and faculty collaboration in crafting instructional improvement.

Strengthening Teaching Excellence at Emory

This case study concerns Emory, a private research university in the southeastern United States. A member of the Association of American Universities, Emory is composed of an undergraduate college, a graduate school of arts and sciences, and professional programs in business, law, theology,

medicine, nursing, and public health. In 1999, Emory enrolled 11,294 students, about half in undergraduate programs and half in graduate or professional programs. The faculty numbered 2,365, with three-quarters holding full-time, permanent positions. What distinguishes Emory from other research institutions is its recent rapid growth. A $105 million gift received in 1979, at the time the largest single donation to a U.S. university, transformed Emory from a regional school to a major research university. In terms of sponsored-research funds, Emory has grown from $118,325,542 in 1994 to $205,688,750 in 1999, which represents an increase of 74 percent. One possible limitation to the degree to which Emory's experience is generalizable to other institutions concerns its financial health. With the sixth largest endowment among American universities, Emory could be perceived as affording any initiative it chooses to fund. However, its funds are committed with few resources available for new initiatives. Like other universities, Emory must make choices about what to develop and what to suspend.

Since 1993, Emory University has conducted a series of discussions among faculty about the shape of its future and the nature of its community. Each year about 10% of the full-time faculty are chosen at random from employment rolls and invited to participate in one of 15 discussions. From year to year, the discussion topics have become increasingly focused on specific strategies to improve the university (Frost, 1998).

In 1993, the scope of the first discussion series was relatively broad. Conversations were designed to gauge faculty opinion about the strengths and weaknesses of the university. Based on a manual analysis of summaries of each discussion, five areas emerged as the topics that faculty members raised most frequently: the balance between teaching and research, building a stronger community, encouraging interdisciplinary scholarship, keeping pace with the infrastructure needs, and assessing the university's external relationships (Office of the Provost, 1994). These topics constituted the main themes for the 1994 discussion series; faculty who participated in that discussion series chose one of the five topics when they confirmed attendance at a focus group meeting.

In 1994, approximately half of all faculty who participated in the focus group discussion series chose to discuss the balance between teaching and research. Accordingly, both the president of the university and the provost recognized the importance of this issue and created a faculty commission on teaching to address Emory's particular challenges and needs. They charged the commission to examine the most critical issues concerning the support and improvement of teaching and to make specific recommendations for improvement. To inform their work in 1996, commission members conducted the annual series of faculty focus group discussions about various aspects of teaching quality and improvement. After 18 months of work, the commission produced a report, *Teaching at Emory* (Commission

on Teaching, 1997). Based in part on the results of the 1996 discussion series, the report put forward recommendations for future action, suggested a number of new structures to support teaching, and also advocated a change in the collective thinking.

In 1997, the discussion series emphasized faculty reaction to the commission's recommendations. Using a sample stratified by discipline and rank, the provost invited 485 of the 1,772 faculty members to participate in the series. Of these, 254 full-time faculty attended and took part in 24 discussion groups. Notes from each discussion, written by commission members serving as faculty facilitators, provide the data for this study. Before 1997, summaries of the discussions were analyzed manually, resulting in a less systematic and thorough approach. In 1997, qualitative data analysis software was used for the first time to examine faculty views.

Because the faculty identified the balance between teaching and research as a critical issue, significant new initiatives to support teaching had been implemented. In 1996, the provost, in consultation with the commission, established a new teaching fund that was parallel to an existing research fund. The advisory teaching council, which grew out of the *Teaching at Emory* project, has sponsored a number of seminars and lectures on developing teaching portfolios and other teaching-related issues.

METHOD

The data in this study are the summaries of 24 faculty group discussions on the issue of balancing teaching and research at Emory. The majority of discussions lasted approximately 90 minutes, each involving 10 full-time faculty members. The faculty facilitator of each discussion wrote a summary. These summaries range in length from 2 to 6 double-spaced pages.

We selected the qualitative data analysis software HyperRESEARCH to conduct the content analysis for this study. HyperRESEARCH makes possible a thorough and systematic investigation of a large volume of text within the time constraints that real-world decision making imposes. This software and other third-generation qualitative data analysis tools allow for more complex retrieval strategies and hypothesis testing than manual coding can support.

We used the code-and-retrieve method to manage codes (Richards & Richards, 1991). This approach produces a coding framework that can expand as researchers discover new themes. The method allows researchers to relabel data that is already processed whenever they find a more meaningful or comprehensive label. Fortunately, HyperRESEARCH makes the expansion of themes relatively easy; as new codes are needed, old codes can be deleted, renamed, or collapsed; and the researcher can apply new codes to text already processed.

We tested the findings' trustworthiness in two ways. First, three researchers coded the data to limit the possibility of individual bias. Second, we presented the results at a meeting of facilitators, inviting comments about the extent to which the findings reflect the general ideas presented across discussion groups.

FINDINGS

Eleven themes seem to characterize discussions across the 24 groups: improving teaching evaluation, making teaching a priority, supporting faculty development activities, improving the physical infrastructure, providing effective rewards for teaching, understanding the student responsibility, implementing change at multiple levels, recognizing teaching as a multifaceted activity, supporting intellectual community, promoting interdisciplinary teaching, and clarifying the institutional mission and educational goals. We discuss each theme below.

1. Improving Teaching Evaluation

Faculty generally seemed to view the evaluation of teaching as either a "mission impossible" or an activity with questionable potential for teaching improvement. One participant commented: "I have been teaching for twenty-two years and know good teaching when I see it. However, I am not sure it can be properly evaluated." By and large, faculty expressed the view that effective professional development opportunities should precede the adoption of a new evaluation system. The reluctance many faculty expressed toward a more systematic evaluation of teaching might relate to a perception—commonly held among discussion group participants—that the "real" purpose of such evaluation would be to judge performance rather than guide development or define support.

Reluctance to embrace teaching evaluation might also relate to the perception that evaluation would require faculty to devote more time to assembling documents and less time to teaching. One participant remarked: "I am concerned that the development of portfolios might become a 'bureaucratic exercise' and that more time would be devoted to the 'meta-work' of evaluating and analyzing actual work than improving teaching."

Such perceptions support the findings of Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997) that evaluation requires too much time from the peers who review the candidate's portfolio and from colleagues on evaluation committees who must sort through the materials to reach their decision. One third of the groups also expressed concerns that, in most departments, promotion and evaluation guidelines clarify neither the role of teaching nor its evaluation. While the comments discussed above capture the faculty reactions to teaching evaluation in general, more insightful information emerges through

opinions related to specific evaluation tools as they were proposed at Emory (e.g., student evaluations, peer evaluations, teaching portfolios, exit interviews).

Student Evaluations. Both anecdotal accounts and empirical research literature (Aleamoni, 1987; Ryan, Anderson, & Birchler, 1980; Seldin, 1983) suggest widespread faculty resistance to student ratings. Faculty tend to question the quality and the legitimacy of the information collected through these ratings. It should not come as surprise, then, that half of the discussions in this case study identified problems in using such tools. Concerns included the inherently low validity and reliability of these instruments as well as the appropriateness of some items. One participant noted an apparent correlation "between grades given to students and the students' evaluation of the faculty member." Others remarked that the numbers generated in the evaluation reports should be accompanied by more explanation. Concerned about the validity of this type of evaluation, one faculty member commented that student evaluations tend to measure "how good an entertainer a teacher is rather than how good his/her teaching skills are." Another discussant concerned with the reliability of the evaluations remarked that "scores would be quite different between an 8:00 a.m. and an 11:00 a.m. course, or between a 100 level and a 400 level course." According to one participant, even wearing a tie would affect the score of the same course, taught by the same professor. Those who supported student evaluations recommended improvement. One participant, for instance, suggested that evaluations assess the qualities that students associate with good teaching.

Peer Evaluations. Overall, this type of evaluation emerged as a necessary tool to "reconcile the benefits of keeping the evaluation of teaching among faculty." Discussants who supported peer evaluation did so expecting it to be systematic and outside one's department. One discussant recommended: "Peer evaluations should be conducted by Emory faculty members from a school or unit different than the one in which the person being evaluated resides. This approach might also help build a sense of community."

Teaching Portfolios. Surprisingly, discussants expressed more concern about the idea of teaching portfolios than about student evaluations. The main arguments, especially from health sciences discussants, referred to additional drains on faculty members' time. Others pointed out that obtaining direct and honest feedback would be difficult to achieve. "It could also involve a huge time commitment to review it," noted one participant. Another discussant remarked: "Portfolios run the risk of being too generalized and standardized. The individuality of teaching must be acknowledged and respected." Those who supported the idea of teaching portfolios also had useful suggestions for implementing them based on what the portfolio should include. They suggested that a teaching center would help faculty learn how to prepare and use the portfolio more effectively.

Exit Interviews and Alumni Surveys. Discussants in all of the groups regarded highly both exit interviews of graduating seniors and periodic surveys of alumni.

More Elaborate Tools/Multiple Measures. The general sense emerging from these discussions was the need to use multiple mechanisms to evaluate teaching and avoid reliance on a single source of data. Such opinions support findings from national studies. In the first international survey of college and university faculty conducted by the Carnegie Foundation, for example, two thirds of the American professors agreed that their institutions needed better ways of evaluating teaching performance (Boyer, Altbach, & Whitelaw, 1994).

2. Making Teaching a Priority

One characteristic that universities with recently intensified research missions may share is a tendency for faculty and administrative leaders to charge each other with a failure to adequately value teaching. Gray, Froh, and Diammond (1992), for example, found that faculty and administrators at research universities each viewed themselves as assigning more relative importance to teaching than others ascribed to them. Our results also reinforce that conclusion. In one third of the discussions, faculty called on the administration to increase its commitment to teaching. Some called for a stronger leadership to change existing incentive systems, improve the physical infrastructure, and craft more effective faculty development programs. As one discussant noted, administrators and faculty should share the burden of change equally: "Not only [do] faculty need to provide portfolios that document how they are excellent teachers [but] administrators of each academic unit must also prepare portfolios that would show how they support excellence in teaching."

A much-desired change concerned greater commitment to protecting faculty time. As some participants suggested, this result could be achieved either by increasing the size of the faculty or by decreasing course loads for each faculty member.

One of our most encouraging findings is that faculty deem past conversations about teaching worth continuing. Many participants urged the university to facilitate future public discussion about teaching and to bring faculty together informally to share ideas and solutions. Ultimately such discussion should communicate to all faculty that teaching is perceived as important at Emory. A discussant from the professional fields noted:

> The best result of the report is these discussions. They allow faculty of the different schools to meet and become acquainted with the university and each other. The resulting dialogue about teaching is healthy. It makes those of us in the professional schools feel like educators, not doctors or lawyers. The university needs to foster this type of interaction.

However, in one third of the conversations, participants raised the possibility that the university administration focused on the perception that teaching is undervalued merely to stimulate conversation. According to these participants, teaching has always been excellent at Emory and therefore change is not necessary. According to others, the report used to generate discussions either underemphasized the role research plays in achieving excellence or treated teaching and research as separate, rather than related, activities. Still others objected to the report's description of teaching as a vocation. One discussant remarked:

> Referring to teaching as a calling de-professionalizes it, similar to the devaluation of nursing and K-12 teaching. Teaching as a vocation serves as an uncomfortable ideological hook that has negative consequences. If teachers love teaching so much, why then should they expect any kind of reward or recognition? This characterization also serves to downplay the possibility of improvement. If only those who feel teaching as a calling have the right stuff, then what about the others? Why try to improve their teaching?

3. Supporting Faculty Development Activities

Some faculty responded with skepticism to the university's call for a university-wide teaching center. Faculty appear to support such initiatives only if resources are organized, not from the top down, but rather at the local levels of the schools and departments. Reflecting on the roles of a future teaching center, one participant suggested that "it should be strictly supportive—a place to go, meet, and seek assistance." Another discussant viewed the creation of a teaching center as a way to "institutionalize networks of teaching." The most frequently requested types of assistance were instruction for faculty on how to use the newly proposed evaluation methods, particularly in preparing teaching portfolios, and the use of release time or sabbaticals for teaching improvement. Some saw mentoring as an effective faculty development initiative.

4. Improving the Physical Infrastructure

Of the 24 conversations, half concerned Emory's buildings and classrooms. Some believed that existing facilities could provide more effective support to the type of informal faculty-student interaction that fosters intellectual community. Many recommended the creation of more spaces where students can continue their conversations with faculty after classes. Discussants agreed that faculty do have a responsibility for shaping the intellectual climate but argued that the physical surroundings can be a contributing factor. Discussants specifically requested more places for breakfast meetings and informal chats.

5. Providing Effective Rewards for Teaching

As one facilitator noted, the single most important factor in implementing the goals of *Teaching at Emory* is "the development of adequate rewards." Participants most frequently referred to the fact that decisions about tenure, promotion, and salary increases do not adequately account for teaching excellence. Specific recommendations included salary increases based on teaching merit; special parking spaces; teaching professorships or endowed chairs; and the incorporation of exemplary teaching into promotion and tenure decisions. One discussant proposed:

> All department chairs should inform each faculty member as to what part of the annual raise constitutes a reward for each component of their job (research/teaching/service); uniform standards should then be applied across departments and academic programs.

6. Understanding the Responsibility of Students

Two major issues concerned students who failed to recognize the intensity of university work or had unrealistic expectations about the grades they should receive. Participants proposed the following strategies: expect more of students including attendance at evening lectures and cultural events on campus; establish university-wide grade standards; and emphasize learning over teaching. Almost universally, participants noted that the report places the burden of change on faculty. Some participants noted that improvement of student learning should be as important as improvement of teaching, and that students should take responsibility for their success. For instance, one discussant noted: "With reports like this, there is a danger [of] creating a teaching utopia. One should not forget the need to emphasize student responsibility in teaching processes."

7. Implementing Change at Multiple Levels

In half of the discussions, faculty recommended decentralizing both the dialogue on teaching and the implementation of the report's recommendations. They hoped that change would take place, not only at the university level, but also in schools, departments, and programs. In one third of the conversations, faculty expressed concern that many initiatives to improve teaching recommended central implementation without specific attention to individual programs. One discussant was worried about "expanding central administration and adding a new layer of bureaucracy that would decide on matters that normally should be handled by faculty or through faculty governance."

8. Recognizing Teaching as a Multifaceted Activity

In ten conversations, faculty wished for more rigorous discussions about teaching as a multifaceted activity. Some asked for more thorough exploration of the implications of raising the priority of teaching in different schools and programs. One faculty member in the health sciences pointed to the need to examine teaching in the "soft money environment."

9. Supporting Intellectual Community

In nine conversations, faculty identified several concerns with the report's call for a stronger intellectual community. These ranged from the difficulty of measuring institutional culture to low participation in some campus events to the perception that parts of the undergraduate experience need more intense academic rigor. Recommendations included building more informal places for faculty and students to interact, and studying other universities with strong reputations for lively intellectual communities.

10. Promoting Interdisciplinary Teaching

In all of the discussion groups, faculty suggested strategies to foster interdisciplinary teaching. Considering the diversity of the campus, some participants stressed the difficulty of reaching across different schools, the wish for more incentives for collaboration, the fear that emphasis on interdisciplinarity might deprive faculty of their more organic relationships, and concerns about internal competition. One faculty member from the arts and sciences suggested that the focus of interdisciplinarity at Emory "proceeds from the premise of territoriality, not the premise of cooperation. This sets up competitive strategies from the start." Recommendations to promote interdisciplinary efforts included defining how to fund interdisciplinary programs, reserving faculty time and resources to support interdisciplinary work and conversation among teaching groups, and taxing units for interdisciplinary activity.

11. Clarifying the Institutional Mission and Educational Goals

In one fourth of conversations, faculty suggested that departments develop consensus about their own teaching goals and communicate their views clearly to various public constituencies. Junior faculty in particular called for tenure guidelines with clear expectations in the area of teaching. They also suggested that defining and disseminating the institution's mission and educational goals to prospective students and to the university community are essential to the implementation of the report. This recommendation reflects the findings of Glassick, Huber, Maeroff (1997), who found that more than half of all institutions in their study planned to clarify their goals so that they could strike a better balance between institutional mission and faculty rewards.

DISCUSSION

One traditional approach to observing organizational phenomena—examining the individual behavior, the structure for that behavior, and the culture that both influences behavior and structure and is influenced by them—is useful in this analysis. We cluster the themes of the study here as they relate to behavioral change, cultural change, and structural change. These three categories have guided discussions about policy making at Emory as it works to alter the balance between research and teaching.

Teaching Improvement as a Behavioral Change

As Bess (1992) observed, both the structures and values of an organization influence the behavior of the individuals within it. The organization's structures and values, in turn, reflect and reinforce the influences of the culture. In this study, we are concerned with two types of behavior: organizational and individual. Although there is inevitable overlap, the data we coded "supporting faculty development activities" and "providing effective rewards for teaching" seem to concern organizational behavior. The data we coded "improving teaching evaluation" seem to concern individual behavior.

As noted earlier, many universities support faculty development workshops or seminars with the expectation that these offerings will help improve teaching by increasing the effectiveness of individual instructors. We found strong interest in such efforts, especially when faculty shape them and they are located at the local level of the school or department as well as at the university level. Perhaps a balance can be achieved between the degree to which faculty development advances the mission of the university and the degree to which it meets the needs of individuals.

The conversations in this case study also affirm the importance of rewarding excellent teaching. In all 24 conversation summaries, participants recommended both extrinsic rewards such as salary increases, promotions, and chaired professorships, and such intrinsic rewards as differentiated roles for faculty. Some participants suggested, for example, that departments name certain faculty primarily to teach and others to conduct research. Other participants worried that specifically assigning responsibility for teaching might diminish its status in a community already characterized by the primacy of research. To create a "teaching track" might relegate teaching to a lower status officially and exacerbate the problem instead of easing it. While the intrinsic rewards of teaching appear to motivate faculty, sustaining teaching excellence will require both intrinsic rewards and tangible incentives (Serow, Brawner, & Demery, 1999).

Closely linked to recommendations about rewards are suggestions about evaluation. Although many participants favored a broadly based system of

evaluation, some questioned the degree to which valid evaluation is possible. The commission recommended using two distinct forms: the teaching dossier and the teaching portfolio. A teaching dossier may consist of statements of self-evaluation, comments from students, written evaluations by one's peers, syllabi, course-development proposals, and a written philosophy of teaching. A teaching portfolio contains those elements from the dossier that candidates for promotion or tenure submit for evaluation by peers and administrators. Typically, the teaching dossier is used in a formative process to identify teaching strengths and weaknesses for one's continued improvement in teaching; the teaching portfolio should provide a means of evaluation for hiring, tenure, promotion, and remuneration.

Our data suggest that the process of developing a more broadly based evaluation system should include opportunities for faculty to debate both the contents and application of a new system. Before linking portfolios to promotion and tenure, for example, data sources and requirements should be discussed, debated, and shared with the community. Requirements should be applied evenly across schools and departments.

Like the evaluation system, faculty development programs should help faculty protect time and energy for research and teaching and help faculty grow in ways that enhance intellectual excitement, accomplishment, and esteem (Menges, 1997). Such programs should evolve from existing aspects of faculty culture and use existing structures rather than duplicate them.

Teaching Improvement as a Cultural Change

To understand faculty views of the research-teaching balance and translate these views into useful change, one must consider the influence of culture. As individuals, faculty derive both meaning and motivation for teaching from the institutional cultures to which they belong. In the research university, permanently enhancing the value of teaching requires a cultural change. *Teaching at Emory* describes this change: "We want to get beyond the notion that excellence in research must preclude excellence in teaching and that universities cannot support, evaluate, and reward teaching and research in equivalent ways" (p. 5). Our findings reveal five themes related to cultural change: "clarifying the institutional mission and educational goals," "making teaching a priority," "supporting intellectual community," "recognizing teaching as a multifaceted activity," and "understanding the responsibility of students."

A university's mission is the public statement of its values. If a university is unclear about the value it places on teaching, then it will be difficult to build a culture of enduring support. For example, participants in this study noted a strong link between the mission of a university and the values each school or department affirms. They cautioned that a university cannot

strengthen teaching excellence if its schools and departments do not reward the practices that define this form of excellence.

Participants also recognized the connection between teaching excellence and the strength of the intellectual community. The intellectual community provides the stimulation that allows teaching to take place not only in the classroom but also at discussions over coffee, musical performances, and evening lectures. This type of environment in turn demonstrates the values on which all teaching excellence must rest: trust, honesty, free inquiry, open debate, tolerance for difference, and respect for others' convictions. If a university lacks the aspiration or the habits that support such a community, some necessary aspects of teaching excellence are missing.

In our view, participants who spoke about the multifaceted nature of teaching recognized the interaction of teaching excellence and intellectual community. For example, some wished to move from the conventional image of teaching—with the lecturer "holding forth" in front of the class—to a more complex and multidimensional dynamic. As they noted, "teaching happens in all interactions between faculty and students—in offices, hallways, laboratories, patient rooms, and clinic offices; at seminars and during internships; over Internet and telephone lines, and via e-mail." Increasing both the intensity and frequency of these interactions can contribute to a vibrant and rich intellectual community.

A cultural shift toward valuing teaching appropriately involves not only improving teaching but also improving student learning. As the conversations indicate, strategies usually include enrolling students with high intellectual expectations and a willingness to view learning as a goal worthy of pursuit for its own sake. Commission members, however, rejected the idea that teaching quality should depend on the students the university admits. Rather, the university and the faculty are responsible for teaching excellence, and students have an equivalent responsibility for learning. Participants upheld these views. They recommended fostering a culture that not only values research and teaching equivalently but which also values teaching and learning equivalently.

These findings suggest that both teaching excellence and intellectual community can benefit from efforts to connect the values and activities of all parts of the university and put forth a clear and consistent message about ways to extend the values and participate in campus activities.

Teaching Improvement as a Structural Change

Because organizational theory suggests strong links between structure and behavior, it is important to note that organizational structures can have a subtle but pervasive effect on faculty motivation to teach (Bess, 1992; Hall & Bazerman, 1997). In most conversations, participants called for new structures to support teaching. We coded these structures (a) promoting inter-

disciplinary teaching, (b) implementing change at multiple levels, and (c) improving the physical infrastructure.

Although they recognized that the balance between school/department and central resources for teaching improvement is a delicate one, many participants wanted to extend to schools and departments the university-initiated conversations about teaching. We found that faculty seem to view departmental workshops related to teaching in the discipline as more useful than the more general, university-wide workshops. This observation corroborates the findings of LaCelle-Peterson and Finkelstein (1996). Perhaps excellent teaching requires both local and central support. If so, that support should be integrative and complementary, not duplicative or competing. Change should reduce redundancy and promote connected pieces that are more than the sum of parts.

Another structural impediment that emerged in these conversations concerns guidelines that regulate collaborative teaching and interdisciplinary course offerings. Although both seem to enhance learning and intellectual ferment, participants named several structural impediments to these activities. For example, at Emory and other private universities, most incentives reside in the hiring department, where disciplinary standards are measures of productivity. To seek collaborative teaching with members of other departments or schools, faculty must be motivated intrinsically or be eligible for resources and compensation that are assigned specifically to interdisciplinary initiatives. Few interdisciplinary courses seem to evolve and flourish in the face of these customs.

If a university intends to increase interdisciplinarity, then departmental customs and rules may need to change. Perhaps notions of balance could enter the debate, allowing change to be understood as a natural evolutionary process rather than an abrupt departure from customary practice and norms.

Of the categories of change we have discussed—structural, cultural, and behavioral—which pose the greatest challenges to implementation? Of course, answers will vary from one institution to another, based on the institutional culture and the degree of integration among schools and departments, resources, governance structures, leadership styles, and many other characteristics. At Emory, as the commission noted, "the greatest impediments to valuing teaching appropriately lie not with the intentions of individual faculty but with institutional structures and cultural forms that frustrate, prohibit, render invisible, or even penalize teaching excellence and effectiveness" (Commission on Teaching, 1997, p. 5). At this university, past success in emphasizing teaching seems to begin with structural change, then proceed to behavioral and cultural changes—not linearly but by integrating or enlarging existing components of the community.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Recalling the real-world activity that this study was designed in part to inform, it is appropriate to ask: *What did we learn from the analysis of faculty opinions that can inform the university's work to strengthen teaching excellence?* And *How could this case study help guide useful change at other universities?* We address these questions by articulating three implications for Emory and linking them to improvements that other universities are likely to value.

The first implication concerns how different constituencies of the academic community view the balance between teaching and research, with each group believing that the other places higher value on research than teaching. Gray, Froh, and Diammond (1992) established similar findings in a national study. Such mismatches of perceptions appear to conform to Miller and McFarland's (1991) theory of "pluralistic ignorance": a situation in which a majority holds a particular belief, but each person believes that another holds a different belief. In our case, we found that both administrators and faculty, for example, tend to favor a balance between research and teaching. However, faculty participants suggested that the university places greater emphasis on research than on teaching. We believe that such mismatches are likely to slow or block the change strategies we have discussed. Is this mismatch of perceptions an intrinsic characteristic of the academic culture at research universities? If so, can discussion specifically aimed at clarifying the goals of various groups help build a more connected community? Further investigation of how social psychology theory might apply to research university faculty and leaders could help the academy overcome some barriers to change.

The second implication, closely related to the first, concerns community building. For some faculty in the professional schools, discussing teaching with colleagues in arts and sciences resulted in a more reflective and connected faculty community. They and other participants viewed the dialogue about teaching as healthy and encouraged the university to foster more of this type of interaction. Although research universities are usually described as places of fragmented intellectual pursuit rather than of connected and integrated activity, when faculty gather to improve shared work such as teaching, they could be contributing to a stronger sense of community.

In learning to strengthen teaching excellence at Emory, the university used faculty opinions as gauged in this study to increase support for teaching. Concerning structural support, for example, participants argued for resources at the departmental or school level rather than at the more remote level of the university. Although the teaching commission had recommended that the university establish a center and the university had intended to fund it, the university replaced the center with a teaching council. In the

two years of its existence, the council has funded preliminary work of two professional schools to organize a joint center for pedagogy. In partnership with the undergraduate college, the council has hired a resource officer to help faculty who teach students with disabilities.

However, the most effective work of the council appears to be based more in Emory's culture than in the structures it authorizes. If the university had established a teaching center, for example, professional staff trained in the evaluation of teaching, uses of teaching technology, or related areas would likely have been hired. The council opted for lower-level staff to implement the ideas of faculty and nurture solutions to school-based needs. To keep resources close to Emory faculty, the council has sponsored seminars on teaching portfolios and then enlisted the attendees to teach other colleagues what they learned. One well-received project spotlighted teaching-related honors that Emory faculty receive. By convening faculty who receive various awards, for example, the council has broadened and deepened the definition of teaching excellence. While it is too early to judge the permanent effect of such work, most agree that teaching receives more attention now than before the council was formed.

Although these activities represent important steps toward increasing the value of teaching, one fact remains: Emory is a research university where faculty are judged primarily on the quality and intensity of their research. Across departments and schools, research productivity carries the most weight in decision making about tenure and promotion, and faculty find it difficult to allocate time to teaching improvement activities that could otherwise go to research. However, conversations about teaching are now increasingly welcome and expected. Rather than contributing to fragmentation, they are helping define a shared pursuit.

Although this study focuses on findings at one university, its implications seem relevant to other research institutions. Emory's unique culture and stage of development determined the design of the study. However, Emory's experience suggests that universities should consider replacing centrally located efforts to improve teaching with activities more specific to the schools and departments. Further, they should augment structural support with more culturally based efforts. If the capacity to initiate improvements in core work such as teaching resides at the center of a university and if the related activities are best based locally in schools and departments, what strategies can move support into the field? This question is especially relevant for private universities, where resources are located, not at the center of the organization, but rather in the schools where opportunities for coordinated efforts across units are less likely to occur. Just as incentives can encourage individuals to strengthen teaching excellence, so incentives could encourage departments and schools to strengthen and integrate teaching

support. Our findings suggest that faculty should influence not only the structure of this support, but its cultural forms as well.

This study is an attempt to use concepts from organizational theory to place faculty priorities into a framework a university can use to guide change. At times, accomplishing change may depend on the community's willingness to debate the questions before it, using conflicting views to expand rather than diminish the conversation. A more reflective and connected community is one anticipated outcome of faculty discussions about teaching. Emory's experience suggests that such discussions can help achieve these goals, especially when they lead to recognizable change.

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