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LEADING FACULTY WITH PURPOSE AND VISION

FACULTY RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Non-Discriminatory Faculty Searches

By Eric Lyerly

Faculty searches are one of the most important responsibilities of faculty leaders. Department chairs and deans have the difficult task of identifying candidates who will advance their institution's scholarship goals, encourage student intellectual and professional development, and be a good, overall fit within the department. Often, institutions have well-developed processes for search committees. However, these processes do not always adequately explain how to conduct a lawful faculty search that keeps a department and university out of the crosshairs of discrimination lawsuits.

This article will explain the primary discrimination laws that faculty leaders should be aware of when conducting faculty searches. It will also highlight best practices for avoiding discrimination in hiring.

Follow the same review process for each applicant to avoid suggestions of impropriety or discrimination in the candidate review process.

Anti-discrimination laws and faculty searches

There are several civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in hiring at colleges and universities. In the faculty context, these laws generally preclude hiring—or not hiring—a professor or instructor based solely on a fixed characteristic.

Faculty leaders should be aware of the following laws when performing faculty searches:

The Americans with Disabilities Act/ Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits institutions that receive federal funding from discriminating based on disability in hiring. *See* 34 C.F.R. § 104. The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits public entities from discrimination in hiring based on disability—regardless of whether they receive federal funding. *See* 29 C.F.R. § 1630.

Disabilities are physical or mental impairments that substantially limit a major life activity. Some disabilities are visible—especially physical disabilities. However, other disabilities, such as cognitive and mental health disabilities, may be less obvious.

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President:
William Haight
(**whaight@magnapubs.com**)

Publisher:
David Burns
(**dburns@magnapubs.com**)

Editorial Director:
Becky Peck
(**becky.peck@magnapubs.com**)

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Communicating through Conflict: Dos and Don'ts

By Domenick J. Pinto

In academia as in every other aspect of life, effective communication is a key skill. And we must never minimize the importance of having this skill. Communication can either make or break a negotiation and resolve or escalate conflict. It can also make the difference between success and failure and in many cases raises one's profile considerably.

Let's consider two scenarios: one that was effective and one that was not. Strangely enough, the effective example did not actually produce the desired outcome but raised the credibility of the communicator considerably. The second, "poorly worded" case caused a great deal of embarrassment to the communicator but ultimately resolved the problem at hand.

Case 1

You are being extremely generous in offering me an orchard full of apple trees. There are a lot of advantages to apple orchards . . . think of all the pies and applesauce and baked apples you can have!

But I really want ONE ORANGE TREE because I need to have orange juice . . . I need that tree. I would happily agree that you can give me fewer apple trees in exchange for that one orange tree.

You see . . . you cannot get orange juice from an apple tree!

Case 1 highlights a request that I personally made several years ago for a particular type of hire for what was then a school of computing of which I was director. The request was denied, but the powers that be were so impressed by my creative request that they ultimately gave me more than I expected.

Case 2

You have alienated the rest of the department with your meddling and destructive behaviors.

It has become so difficult to work with you.

I will continue to work with you when needed but want no further contact with you unless absolutely necessary.

Case 2 is an example a colleague provided of a poor way of communicating. A chair sent it in an email to a faculty member after growing frustrated with that person's behavior. The dean needed to get involved, and the situation escalated much more than it needed to. Ultimately, the meddling did stop, and collegiality was restored, but it took a great deal of time.

Although the dean understood why this message was sent as an email, the dean pointed out that a chair needed to stick with facts and not editorialize. Oddly enough, even though this was a very poor example of self-expression, the situation did eventually improve considerably and has remained on neutral ground.

Here are some strategies that I have found useful for effective communication:

- Be willing to listen and hear what the person is saying.

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- Think before responding.
- Do not let emotions take over—for you or the person you are communicating with.
- Where possible, meet in person to discuss. Try not to use email if the situation is tentative or your responses are likely to be misconstrued. I have found meeting over coffee or lunch to be most effective.
- Be as calm as possible.
- Be willing to compromise but not to the point of backing down every time.
- Offer a follow-up meeting.
- Avoid the use of the word you and use we instead.
- Make certain that the faculty member understands the "department's" position and that you understand their position on the issue . . . LISTEN!
- Be firm and strong if you need to, but without showing anger.
- Do not make it personal.
- Be concise and to the point.
- Remain as objective as possible.
- Maintain transparency.
- Keep to the situation; don't wander around or waver.
- If emotions do take over, suggest that you end the meeting and discuss again soon.

Solving problems . . . sooner rather than later

- Do not allow bad feelings to fester; make every attempt to address problems early.
- If the problem involves several faculty members meet with each one separately as soon as possible before bringing them together.
- Let people know you are willing to talk as soon as you perceive a problem.
- Do not prejudge.
- Ask the faculty why they think this problem arose and if there is anything that they or you could have done to prevent it or make it less toxic.
- Try to handle the problem without bringing in senior administration if possible BUT if it is necessary to do so let the other party know why.

Handing complaints from faculty or staff

- Listen carefully and speak with a positive attitude while ascertaining the extent of the problem.
- Avoid personal issues if possible.
- Promise to investigate any problem areas but do NOT promise that the situation will be resolved.
- Assess the seriousness of the situation.

Handling complaints from students

- Decide whether is more prudent to meet with students individually or as a group (if more than one student is involved in the complaint).
- Ascertain how well or poorly the students are doing in the course.
- Give the students a timeline as to when you will respond to their comments.
- Tactfully approach the faculty member for their input on the situation.

Consider the following scenario:

Three of the best students in the program come to you separately with complaints about one of your faculty's classes. All three are hard-working, high-achieving students whom you know personally from classes you have taught them in.

They complain that the professor plays favorites, seeming to favor those from a certain ethnic group, and considers these three individuals disruptive and inconsiderate and tells them so. You speak with the professor, tactfully asking whether there any issues with the class. The professor responds that he enjoys the class, the differences in viewpoints in it, and composition of it. He commends the three students who came to you. You have a positive relationship with the professor and have not encountered these types of problems before in dealing with said professor.

What do you do next? Do you do anything?

Having used this scenario in many of my workshops, most attendees have indicated that they would keep an eye on the situation but not step in just yet. Some suggested that the chair discreetly speak with some other students in the class to get their perspective (maybe not a good idea!).

Summary

As leaders, we all make errors in judgement and sometimes feel the need to backtrack. It is perfectly acceptable to admit this both to yourself and others involved in the communication (whether to someone who reports to you or someone you report to). We are human, have bad days, and sometimes also need to reflect on a situation before we act and communicate. It may be best to acknowledge a problem immediately but also take a bit of time before offering a response or suggestion. Listening is an extremely vital component in the process of resolving conflict and it is often the missing piece in any communication effort.

Further reading

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Search committees should not refuse to hire a candidate because of their disability—or any trait or characteristic that could be related to a disability. Faculty leaders may be concerned that candidates with disabilities won't be able to produce adequate scholarship or take on a sufficient course load. They may be tempted to ask probing questions to determine a candidate's fitness for a position. However, there are certain questions search committees should not ask.

Specifically, faculty leaders should avoid asking a candidate the following questions under the ADA/Section 504:

- Whether they have a disability
- What medications they are taking
- Whether they have ever filed workers' compensation or taken medical leave

Faculty leaders may ask whether the candidate can perform the essential functions of the job with or without accommodation. Section 504 and Title II require postsecondary institutions to provide *reasonable* accommodations to enable faculty to perform the essential functions of their role.

Faculty leaders/institutions of higher ed are also required to provide an applicant with disability-related accommodations during the interview and application process. Examples of reasonable accommodations that may be necessary during the hiring process include:

- Providing application/interview materials in accessible formats
- Holding interviews and other parts of the hiring process in accessible locations
- Providing screen readers
- Modifying application procedures and policies

Colleges and universities do not have to provide accommodations that would cause undue hardship on the institution (i.e., accommodations would be too expensive or difficult to provide).

Title VI and Title VII

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits colleges and universities from discriminating based on race, color, or national origin in programs and activities that receive federal funding. Title VI covers employment/hiring discrimination if colleges and universities utilize federal funding in the provision of employment (**23 C.F.R. § 200**). Title VII precludes employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin for employers with 15 or more employees (**29 C.F.R. § 1606**). Title VII is the primary law prohibiting employment discrimination in the U.S.

Faculty leaders should not refuse to hire a professor, instructor, or researcher based on a protected characteristic. However, an institution may be able to hire an individual based on one of these characteristics if it is a legitimate occupational qualification (such as a candidate's religious affiliation for a faculty role at a faith-based college).

There are certain application/interview questions faculty leaders should not ask under Title VII, including questions about:

- The race of the applicant
- The religion of the applicant/what place of worship they attend
- The applicant's sex, gender, or sexual orientation
- Where an applicant grew up or where their family is from (possible national origin issues)
- The languages the applicant speaks at home
- Whether an applicant is pregnant or plans to start a family (also violates the Pregnancy Discrimination Act)

Faculty leaders should also avoid what the law calls "disparate treatment," that is treating applicants/candidates differently because of their membership in a protected class. Many Title VII lawsuits arise when applicants in a protected class believe they were qualified for a position but were passed over in favor of a person who did not belong to a protected class. In such cases, faculty leaders should have a legitimate, nondiscriminatory reason for selecting the candidate who was hired for the position and not selecting the candidate belonging to the protected class.

ADEA

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) prohibits discrimination in hiring against individuals who are 40 years of age and older. This law restricts colleges and universities from making a hiring decision based on an applicant's age. Instead, the ADEA encourages a hiring manager to focus on an applicant's abilities.

Under this law, faculty leaders should avoid asking an applicant's age or questions that indirectly age the candidate (the ages of the applicant's children, the years they attended high school/college, etc.).

Other laws that may impact the selection process

There are many other discrimination laws that faculty leaders need to know to conduct a fair, lawful selection process. These laws include but are not limited to:

- The Pregnancy Discrimination Act —Prohibits discrimination in hiring based on pregnancy.
- Title IX—Overlaps with Title VII in prohibiting employment/hiring discrimination based on sex. This law also prohibits discrimination in hiring based on pregnancy and related conditions.
- Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act—Prohibits discrimination in hiring based on military or veteran status.
- Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act—Prohibits employers from asking certain questions about a candidate's genetic information and medical history.

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- State laws restricting discrimination in hiring—Institutions may also be subject to state law protections against employment discrimination.

For more information on the laws that impact the hiring process, consult your institution's human resources or general counsel's office.

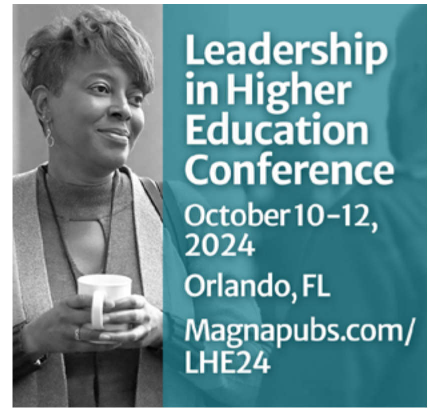
Best practices for keeping a search lawful and equitable

Most faculty leaders value diversity in their departments. Accordingly, discrimination in the hiring process is rarely direct or intentional.

Deans and department chairs can keep their faculty searches lawful and non-discriminatory by implementing the following best practices:

1. **Familiarize yourself with your institution's policies and procedures for faculty searches.** Many colleges and universities already have policies and procedures that apply to faculty searches. These policies can help you understand how to conduct the review and interview process.
2. **Remember the protected classes.** Colleges and universities cannot discriminate in hiring on the basis of age, race, sex, national origin, religion, or disability. Additionally, postsecondary institutions must avoid discrimination based on ancestry, ethnicity, pregnancy, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, and veteran status.
3. **Follow a consistent process for reviewing applicants.** Follow the same review process for each applicant to avoid suggestions of impropriety or discrimination in the candidate review process. If any discrimination lawsuits arise, an institution needs to be able to show they followed the same process for evaluating/interviewing each candidate.
4. **Have a consistent process for interviewing candidates.** Additionally, faculty leaders and search committees should follow the same process for interviewing candidates, asking the same general types of questions of each applicant (while allowing for personalized questions based on the candidate's experience). Faculty leaders should also "grade" interviews using the same criteria for each applicant.
5. **Make notes about applications and interviews.** It's important to make notes when reviewing applicants and conducting interviews. Make notes about the candidates' experience, how they conducted themselves during the interview, and their responses to interview questions.
6. **Document the hiring process.** Document your process for reviewing applicants. Document your process for interviewing applicants. Document the reasons you selected the candidate who is ultimately hired for the position. Your documentation may later serve as evidence of a legitimate, non-discriminatory reason for hiring one candidate over another.

Lastly, faculty leaders should use their judgment when selecting a candidate for a faculty role. Of course, faculty leaders should strive to conduct hiring processes that are lawful and equitable. However, they should also use their instincts and experience to identify colleagues who will be an asset to their departments. Faculty leaders should not be so concerned with the law that they forget to exercise their best judgment. There is no one better positioned to hire professors and instructors who will elevate departments and advance scholarship and student learning outcomes than the faculty leader.



Faculty Mentoring: Using a Faculty-Led Peer Review Process to Improve Performance

By Christine Turner

This article describes a faculty-led peer review of teaching (PROT) program at Bon Secours Memorial College of Nursing (BSMCON). This program is proven to be an effective formative tool for faculty to improve their teaching. Faculty who teach in higher education are summatively evaluated using several methods, with administrators placing much focus on student evaluations of courses and faculty members (Klopper & Drew, 2015). Relying on students' end-of-course assessments to gauge faculty members' teaching can be challenging due to low response rates, extreme responses, and survey fatigue. Research recognizes the need for PROT as integral for higher education faculty (Blauvelt et al., 2012; Sullivan et al., 2012; Teoh et al., 2016). Peer review can provide valuable information regarding teaching competencies for novice faculty members and supervisory academic leaders.

When academic institutions use peer review of teaching, they are able to provide continual development of teachers' pedagogical skills, ensure the teaching effectiveness of faculty at all levels, and show accreditors that they are committed to professional development and continual improvement. The literature identifies several significant barriers to using a peer-review process to assess teaching. These include potential bias in the evaluation, faculty feeling that a single review provides insufficient information on which to base a change in their teaching, and fear that administrators may use the peer review as a summative evaluation—especially troublesome if the evaluation evinces bias (Blauvelt et al., 2012). An additional barrier to using PROT involves an organizational culture that does not value the peer-review process (Blauvelt et al., 2012). A higher education organization that applies a formative and informal, yet collegial approach to the PROT process can support faculty members' professional growth as teachers, thus improving students' educational experiences.

The peer review of teaching program at BSMCON

The PROT program structures the peer-review process, encourages faculty to incorporate evidence-based teaching strategies, advances professionalism and collegiality, demonstrates faculty core competencies associated with accrediting bodies, shows students that faculty are committed to improving their teaching, and aligns with the faculty promotion process. The PROT program at BSMCON was developed by the faculty development committee. Other than providing initial direction, the dean did not have input into the strategic plan, process, or implementation of the program. This was important to the faculty because we wanted a faculty-led effort that focused on peer mentoring and collegiality.

Conceptual and theoretical framework

The complexities of the academic setting are challenging to novice faculty members, who should be given the fundamental tools to enhance their teaching ability and advance pedagogical competency. The PROT program provides guidance and support for these novice educators so they can build their skills. The program also challenges seasoned faculty to continue to learn and grow as teachers.

Kanter's theory of organizational empowerment (1977) formed the conceptual and theoretical basis for the PROT program. For Kanter, when people perceive that their work environment gives them the opportunity for growth and access to the power they need to carry out their professional activities, they are empowered. We felt that Kanter's theory provided a structure for our PROT program that cultivates a workplace environment where peers support each other collaboratively and in a way that respectfully empowers all faculty members.

Program structure and processes

The PROT program is a collaborative process, intended for professional growth and development through shared learning. To solicit peer reviewers, a faculty member sends an email to all faculty to see who might be interested in and available for a review. The peer reviewer does not necessarily need to have content expertise in the course subject matter to provide a peer review. In fact, it is often better if the reviewer is not a content expert. That way, they can assume the student's viewpoint as a learner during the observation period, which can lead to profound insights for the faculty member being reviewed.

There are three phases to the process: prereview meeting, observation of teaching, and follow-up meeting. During the prereview meeting, the faculty member

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being reviewed completes a preobservation form that addresses the following:

- Student learning objectives and evaluation methods (if appropriate) for the class being observed
- What teaching and learning activities will take place
- What students need to do to prepare for class
- What the faculty member wants the peer to focus on (e.g., a new teaching strategy or learning activity or student-student or student-faculty interactions)
- Logistics during class time, such as where the reviewer should sit, whether they should interact with the students, and how long they should stay in the class
- Reviewer access, if possible, to the student's view of the course in the learning management system so they can be aware of readings and other preparatory material, if the faculty member wants the reviewer to be involved with the students (e.g., if small groups of students are working on a case study)

During the observation, the reviewer takes notes that address the teacher's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Guidelines during the review include the following categories:

- Communication with students (e.g., greeted students at beginning of class, used appropriate tone, eye contact, body language, and humor, treated students with respect and answered questions, and asked questions that promotes critical thinking
- Classroom management (created an environment conducive to learning, maintained balance in the discussion, started and ended class on time, and observed break times, if appropriate)
- Pedagogy and instructional skills(e.g., balanced lecture with other interactive learning activities, expected students to be prepared for class by using the preparatory readings as a base for learning activities, used appropriate technology tools)
- Content (reviewed objectives, kept discussions on target, presented content in an organized manner, used up-to-date resources)

The follow-up meeting to discuss the findings takes place within a week after the observation. This conversation and review findings are confidential; however, if they wish, the reviewee can use this information to show performance improvement in their official summative evaluation with administrators.

Program implementation

Interested faculty may consider implementing a pilot PROT program to identify and craft solutions to any challenges. We used a volunteer group of six faculty members who paired up and observed each other's classes. This group then revised the preobservation and observation forms to ensure the elements they wanted to address were captured. To maximize a PROT program's effectiveness, each faculty member should be expected to serve as a peer reviewer as well as be reviewed at least once each academic year. Although the review process is confidential, participation should be expected and made a part of faculty performance expectations.

Program outcomes

You will need to determine what are appropriate outcome measures for the PROT program at your institution. BSMCON used the Gallup Employee Engagement survey as part of our measurement of success for the program outcomes. Gallup questions that focused on empowerment and organizational support for growth and development match well with the selected framework and PROT program goals. Additional metrics include the graduate exit survey questions regarding student satisfaction with instruction and learning.

Lessons learned and value to teaching

BSMCON faculty members recognize the PROT program as a positive influence in more fully developing and affirming their teaching abilities. Additionally, the college's level of professionalism and collegial atmosphere have improved, and faculty feel more empowered in their classrooms. Observers in the classroom obtain a student's perspective of the learning activities and teaching style of their peers. Sometimes this results in learning new ways to engage with students and a change of practice for the peer reviewer. Developing and using a faculty-led PROT process can be a positive addition to your department's faculty development plans and can improve faculty and student outcomes.

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This article first appeared in *Academic Leader* on April 4, 2022.

New Thinking on DEI Work Accountability

By Adrianna Kezar

Increasingly, state systems and institutions are calling on higher education institutions to monitor and demonstrate progress for student success and ameliorate equity gaps. Due to the lack of progress after years of dedicated efforts to improve student success or campus climate, external groups (e.g., policymakers and accreditors) have grown concerned and are demanding results. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) announced a standard around DEI in the accreditation process; this step, which took effect on January 1, 2022, is among the many growing efforts to hold higher education institutions accountable for their DEI efforts. Additionally, national players—such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Sloan Foundation, and the National Association of System Heads—are starting to prioritize progress on DEI, whether through their funding formulas, programs, or frameworks. And while there are attacks happening to slow DEI progress, they have not altered the expectations and dedication of these higher education stakeholders to support DEI goals.

At a time when campuses are starting to be held accountable for meeting metrics around diverse student success, research at the Pullias Center at the University of Southern California suggests that the path toward success is one paved with new forms of leadership—namely shared equity leadership (SEL). Here we want to focus on creating well-designed and appropriate systems of accountability within SEL. Pullias Center research has identified a new distributed accountability model within SEL that shifts who is accountable, to whom they are accountable, for what they are accountable, and how they hold themselves accountable. The model ensures that progress is made on DEI goals. This is extremely important as decades of DEI work have not resulted in progress—a fact that has emboldened those who want to dismantle DEI work as costly and ineffective. To ensure that DEI efforts continue, we need to demonstrate results.

Who is accountable

Traditionally, accountability for DEI has fallen to the chief diversity officer or a diversity committee. But under SEL, every member of campus has DEI goals and responsibilities, and these are built into performance systems and budgeting processes. Annual reviews for staff and promotion and tenure processes for faculty include DEI goals and expected performance outcomes. For administrators, there are not only performance benchmarks but also budgetary consequences for meeting or not meeting DEI goals.

Boards of trustees also play a prominent role in ensuring DEI progress. Campuses with SEL have boards that prioritize DEI, establish DEI subcommittees to develop working plans, become educated about DEI, and monitor DEI goals. They work closely with the president and their cabinet, sharing data regularly about progress. Boards are responsible for approving and monitoring DEI plans at each of these campuses.

To whom they are accountable

To whom the campus is accountable also shifts. Boards have typically not held campuses accountable for DEI, but under SEL, they make DEI a priority so campuses become accountable to external groups for meeting goals. Accountability also expands in campus administrators—typically the cabinet—sharing results regularly with the campus community so that everyone has a sense of the progress or lack thereof, and data sharing makes transparent different levels of progress across different schools and colleges, for example. Accountability means that every group on campus is seeing data and thinking about ways they can act to close equity gaps. Additionally, the local community is often a key stakeholder, and administrators shared data about progress with them as well. DEI efforts often involve creating partnerships with local community and government agencies, so reporting back to these groups about progress establishes mutuality and allows them to see that the partnerships are meaningful and making a difference to results.

What campuses are accountable for

What campuses are accountable for also changes. DEI goals have primarily focused on institutional metrics, such as student retention and graduation rates. But these measures are far removed from the work of the campus to create better outcomes. Also, the environment in which students learn has traditionally been ignored. Under SEL, environment assumes a central focus. This means that boards held employees, particularly administrators, accountable for campus behaviors, processes, and climate, which are regularly measured.

Administrators developed behavioral expectations for themselves and other employees that were reinforced in hiring processes and orientation, and then included as an accountability measure in performance evaluations (e.g. foster and promote in diverse teams, coaching and mentoring other on DEI). These expectations and associated review processes establish a set of norms that guide the

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type of culture and environment campuses are trying to create. Campuses are also holding themselves accountable for equity-related results in a range of operational processes ranging from admissions to hiring to promotion processes to professional development to evaluation. Leaders also describe the importance of regularly measuring the climate on campus as well as within different units and departments. Boards and administrative leaders considered it inadequate to solely look at outcomes without any concern for the quality of the experience.

Process of accountability

The process of accountability has also shifted dramatically. Because SEL means broader distribution of responsibility for DEI, strategic planning processes differ in that they often designate specific offices and individuals as being accountable for specific goals, and units were often encouraged to develop their own plans. Increasingly, we see a movement away from a single strategic plan for the overall institution to multiple plans with more detail and specific accountability pieces assigned to many different leaders. Staff, faculty, and administrators receive training on using data, assessment, and evaluation processes so that they were better able to work within the new accountability systems. Administrators held regular forums where the metrics were discussed and interim results shared. Different units are encouraged to revise plans on the basis interim results, and leaders indicated that plans were very active rather than sitting on a shelf which was often the tradition with previous planning efforts on campuses. Therefore, a five-year DEI plan would have a public forum where administrators share results each year as well every semester as campus stakeholders sent results into a central office and administrators provided feedback so that units are looking at their results regularly.

And importantly, groups developing accountability plans included DEI advocates to ensure that these plans include up-to date perspectives on DEI work. DEI advocates helped expand the measures used, developing new climate measures and helping revise planning processes so that more people are held accountable across campus for outcomes for example.

In the end, given the lack of progress on most campuses for DEI goals, equitable student outcomes, and the creation of an environment in which students, faculty, and staff can succeed, it is time to revamp our accountability systems and commit to doing better. **Learn more here.**

This article first appeared in *Academic Leader* on May 1, 2023.

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Seven Ways to Help Burned-Out Faculty

By Shazia Ahmed and Claire L. Sahlin

Faculty burnout was present in higher education long before the COVID-19 pandemic because of the high emotional investment teaching requires of faculty. The pandemic has further exacerbated faculty exhaustion and stress.

There's plenty of advice available for faculty about what they can do to help themselves. Helpful articles by Kerry Ann Rockquemore, president of the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, on **"radical" self-care, setting boundaries with students**, and **avoiding overinvestment in one's job** are prime examples. There's also a plethora of webinars available to faculty who seek training on how to manage their diverse responsibilities, including how to respond effectively to students with mental health issues. Unfortunately, there's no training on how to create more hours in a day.

Academic leaders, though, can offer help in various forms. While we'd love to increase compensation, our hands are usually tied, and financial concerns are increasing with the foreseeable decrease in enrollment. Here, we present seven financially reasonable actions that can help academic leaders address faculty burnout.

1. Enhance recognition.

In the absence of monetary compensation, developing new recognition and award programs can increase faculty members' feelings of being valued. These awards may be for teaching, scholarly achievements, or even contributions to diversity initiatives. While faculty always welcome monetary awards, simply the pride of recognition and the attendant sense of being valued by the institution are the principal drivers of motivation. It's also important for award programs to recognize adjunct and non-tenure-track faculty in these stressful times. Often woefully overlooked, contingent faculty enhance our institutions through their expertise and should be recognized for their good work.

2. Find ways to provide course releases and leadership training.

Developing programs for faculty advancement into leadership positions can provide faculty with encouragement and show them that you care. Participating in leadership training will not only point out potential choices for future leadership opportunities but also show that you are ready to encourage and train faculty to join administration. This provides a path of advancement even for full professors.

While faculty always welcome monetary awards, simply the pride of recognition and the attendant sense of being valued by the institution are the principal drivers of motivation.

Such programs will also encourage faculty and train them to recognize others' potential. A taste of admiration will make a trained cohort of faculty leaders more empathetic to your future decisions (hopefully), and their individual projects may help you accomplish tasks that have idled on the back burner for a while.

3. Make time in the workday to provide stress management training.

Training in stress management and related topics, like work-life balance, is common in industry but rare in academia, where faculty are focused on their fields of scholarly expertise. We must find time to make such training available for faculty within their working days, perhaps in lieu of regular meetings or as part of seminars that departments and colleges normally schedule. There are third-party professionals that can be hired to offer meaningful on-campus training sessions related to faculty and staff well-being.

4. Provide resources for mental, health, and financial wellbeing.

As universities work toward enhancing students' mental, healthy, and financial well-being, we think it is time to extend these resources to faculty as fully as possible. Academic leaders can compile the resources available to faculty into a newsletter and send it out at the beginning of each term. Leaders can also seek feedback about what resources would make the faculty feel valued, while being upfront about their inability to change workload policies and compensation. And leaders can then act on the feedback to establish sincerity with faculty and staff.

5. Model a culture of support.

With the speed and ease of communication technologies and the blurring of work and family responsibilities, demands on faculty time have expanded. Do you expect a faculty member to immediately answer student emails at two or three in the morning? While most of

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us don't expect faculty to answer students at that hour, do we question why we sometimes receive emails from faculty members in the middle of the night or on weekends, or do we instead applaud these faculty for their strong work ethic? Academic leaders need to create a culture in which sleep, recreation, and personal time become the norm. Otherwise, faculty too often think it is shameful to slow down and worry that others will think less of them if they are not working to exhaustion.

6. Mindfully resist the urge to drain your most useful colleagues.

This suggestion for helping burned-out faculty is the trickiest. All of us have teams of people who work well with us and with everyone else. These individuals do a great job and get the work done and on time. It's a normal impulse to lean on these people more and more. As a result, these conscientious people end up working even more. We must be mindful not to exhaust these human resources, even if that means either not getting one more feather in our caps or getting it with more patience by teaming up with people who are more difficult to work with.

7. Recognize your faculty with handwritten notes.

Last but not least is this simple suggestion. Praise your faculty for a job well done by sending handwritten notes to them. Even one small phrase on the yearly contract—"Great job!" "I appreciate you!" or simply, "Thank you for your work!"—goes a long way in motivating exhausted and burned-out faculty. Remember, the higher up you are in the organizational hierarchy, the more your words weigh. Give praise generously but mindfully.

The COVID-19 pandemic years have been branded as the years of the Great Resignation, and not surprisingly, many of the resignations have come from the field of education. It is imperative for academic leaders to support, sustain, and retain our already drained faculty, despite the financial constraints. After all, productive faculty are an institution's biggest asset.

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Contributors:

Shazia Ahmed, PhD, is a clinical professor of biology at Texas Woman's University and senior fellow of Higher Education Academy.

Adrianna Kezar, PhD, is the dean's professor of Leadership and Wilbur-Keiffer Endowed chair at the University of Southern California and director of the Pullias Center for Higher Education.

Eric Lyerly is a lawyer and writer who writes frequently on the topics of higher education law. He has served as the Fellow for the Center for Higher Education Law and Policy at Stetson University College of Law, and he is currently the editor of two academic newsletters focused on postsecondary institutions: *Disability Compliance for Higher Education* and *Campus Legal Advisor.*

Laura McCullough, PhD, is a professor of physics at the University of Wisconsin–Stout.

Domenick J. Pinto has been director of the master's in computer science program at Sacred Heart University since 1998. He has been with the university for 45 years and for 31 of them served as chair of the Computer Science Department and then director of the School of Computing. He twice served as president of the UAA (the faculty governance organization) and will again serve as president in 2021–2022.

Claire L. Sahlin, PhD, is associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and professor of multicultural women's and gender studies at Texas Woman's University.

Christine Turner, PhD, RN, is a clinical professor at Randolph-Macon College. Previously she served as a professor at the Bon Secours Memorial College of Nursing. She has 18 years' experience teaching in a variety of nursing programs, including the baccalaureate and master's degree levels.

Nibbled to Death by Ducks

By Laura McCullough

"Nibbled to death by ducks." The phrase, though nearly three centuries old, is still remarkably apt for the role of the department chair today. Our jobs are filled with little nibbles taken out of our time and attention; no individual nibble may be all that significant, but the accumulation of nibbles can lead to exasperation, frustration, and burnout. In order to manage the nibbling, I have found a humorous way to highlight all those little bites out of my time, which has helped me cope with the interruptions as well as train my faculty to be more conscious of how often they come to me for help.

As department chairs, we encounter many demands on our time. Which of these should count as nibbles? I prefer not to include scheduled meetings, regular or occasional, on the list. I also have not counted emails: I choose when to look at my email, so I don't count it as an interruption; it is under my control. The items I think of as duck nibbles are the little things that disrupt your work or your train of thought: the mail carrier needing a signature for a package; the faculty member needing to know a department policy; the student needing to drop off an assignment; the secretary needing your input on a form. Whether it is 10 seconds or 10 minutes, these nibbles are a significant part of a chair's job. Yet they are often also an invisible part of the job, even to the chair. Do you know how many interruptions you deal with each day? I didn't. I just knew that during a very rough stretch one semester, I was getting very frustrated with them.

My difficult semester had started with my departmental associate needing to take family/medical leave to care for her husband. We didn't know how long the leave would be, but I thought I could manage for a few weeks by getting help from the other associates in my building. While you finish laughing, let me note that I have a small department. We have only seven tenure-line faculty and between two and four temporary teaching staff. It is also a very collegial and familial department; we like each other, tease each other, help each other out both at school and outside of school. My half-time secretary is the only support I have, and we work together very well, so I knew what she did and knew what parts of her job I could cover for a few weeks. But the weeks turned to months. I was overwhelmed, despite the assistance from my faculty and the other secretaries. And the part that was really getting to me was the incessant knocks on the door, the "have you got a minute?" talks, the never-ending nibbling away at my time.

Our jobs are filled with little nibbles taken out of our time and attention; no individual nibble may be all that significant, but the accumulation of nibbles can lead to exasperation, frustration, and burnout.

I was complaining to my husband and for the umpteenth time used the phrase "I'm being nibbled to death by ducks." My helpful spouse suggested I get a rubber duck to signify the nibbles and the unrecognized work associated with them. After laughingly agreeing it was a good idea, I put it aside for a bit. But the more I thought about it, the more I liked the idea of a visible symbol of the work. In the end I went one step further and expanded the concept into something that was more useful: I ordered 100 small rubber ducks. A mixed bag of silly ducks: nurses, soldiers, beach bums, princesses. The ducks went to my office and the box sat on the floor. Another box, empty, sat next to it.

During the next day, whenever someone stopped by with a question or a piece of paper, I moved one duck from the original box to the second box. I had 25 ducks in the second box by the end of the day.

The test of concept showed that it had merit. So I brought my faculty and student workers into the experiment, telling them about the ducks as they stopped by. A key piece to keeping it light and keeping them engaged was letting each person choose which duck to move over. My faculty took it very well and joined in with the exercise in a playful spirit. One professor brought in a nice wicker basket for the ducks to live in at the start of their day. Her children decorated my "nibbled" box with pictures of ducks and the word "nibble" scribbled all over it.

We had conversations about what should count as a nibble. Phone calls probably should have counted as nibbles, but I didn't count them in this initial experiment. Needing a signature? Definitely. Asking a work-related question? Probably, depending on how long it takes. Long conversation about a problem? Oh yeah. A basic "good morning" conversation? No. One friend and colleague from another department re-

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ceives a blanket "duck exemption" since her interruptions are social in nature and usually help reduce my stress.

I found this to be a great humorous way to show my faculty just how many of these little interruptions I experience each day. I didn't tell everyone about it; sometimes a person who only stopped by occasionally would leave my office and I'd toss a duck in for them. Having a variety of silly ducks, and having a lot of them, helped prevent it from becoming a negative experience for people; my department joined in the spirit of it quickly. One faculty member teased me that his goal was to get all 100 ducks in the nibbled box by noon some day. And, indeed, when I returned from a conference trip, I found all the ducks in the nibbled box when I walked into my office in the morning. On this same trip I'd bought a special extra-large duck to represent larger nibbles taken out of my time. This one only gets used rarely, but it usually feels appropriate to my mood and the situation when that big duck gets tossed (or forcefully thrown, as has happened) into the nibbled box.

As a scientist, I was interested in seeing if this making visible the invisible work of the chair would have any effect on the number of nibbles I received. So I kept track each day of how many ducks ended up in the box. Over a three-month period, I went from a low of zero on one blissful day to a high of 28 ducks. Twenty-eight unscheduled interruptions in one workday. My faculty learned that if the nibbled box was getting full, they might want to wait until another day to interrupt me. Or they might choose to email me instead. Or ask me if I wanted to go out for a drink after work.

The average number of ducks deployed per day showed a significant decrease over the three months, despite the workload getting worse. I started with an average of about 18 ducks a day and ended the semester at only around eight to 10. My secretary was unable to work more than a few hours a week. My faculty did a great job of stepping up and helping me out, and at the same time they made a real effort to be more independent of the chair. I had lowered my overall number of interruptions by the end of the semester and had managed to do it without generating resentment from the department. Another benefit to this idea is that not only was I keeping track of the nibbles, but the number of ducks in the box is also an affirmation: every duck is a problem solved or task completed. One of my faculty members noted that the duck showed both positive and negative impacts for her: yes, it was a nibble on my time, but it was also a symbol of my fixing something for her, which is my job.

It takes a very friendly and collegial environment for this to work the way I implemented it, with the faculty as part of the experiment; in a more formal department this might work better as a private tool for a chair to keep track of the problems acquired and problems solved.

This idea also worked extremely well to demonstrate the invisible side of the chair's job: the little bits and pieces that peck away at our time and attention. In discussing my ducks with one of my mentees, she noted that this would be a valuable way to make visible a lot of the other invisible work that happens in our society, much of it "women's work." Housework is just one example: toss a duck in the box for every load of laundry folded or floor swept or sink of dishes washed. Make it visible. By using a symbol of happiness and silliness, I was able to help keep myself sane during a very stressful semester and help my faculty recognize a hidden part of the chair's workload. I am still nibbled, but less than I was, and I can handle it a lot better now in part because of the lighthearted symbol I've attached to the process.

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