

# *Memo*

To: Scott Turner, Executive Chair of Faculty Governance  
From: M. Elen Deming  
Date: 22 April, 2003  
Re: Report of the *Ad-Hoc* Committee on Faculty Development

## **OVERVIEW**

Formed during the winter of AY 2002-2003, the *Ad-Hoc* Committee was charged by the Executive Committee of Faculty Governance to review faculty development and reward policies and ‘best practices’ currently in place at SUNY ESF. In addition, this Committee was asked to consider the questions of whether, and possibly how, a permanent standing committee within Faculty Governance might be helpful in facilitating faculty development strategies and initiatives for the future. Eight ESF faculty members, representing a range of disciplines, roles, and experience, contributed towards the completion of this report. The group met several times during the Spring 2003 semester to discuss initial charges, to set limits on the scope of our inquiry, to design an instrument for fact-finding and to discuss the results. Part of our effort was to interview department heads and a few academic administrators at ESF, via a short survey on a range of topics relating to faculty growth and development (Appendix A). Our findings were then matched by a set of recommendations, presented below.

## **COMMITTEE FINDINGS**

As a result of our inquiries, members of this committee learned that:

- I. *Diversity of principles & practices*
  - a. The range of faculty development practices at ESF is just as diverse as the range of disciplines. A dozen of the most typical practices currently being implemented (at some level) include:
    1. modest baseline departmental funding may be given to faculty to attend professional and scientific conferences (single to multiple faculty; single to multiple occasions, etc.)
    2. modest departmental support may be provided for faculty/staff to acquire specialized training or skill development (computers to field techniques; continuing education courses and short workshops for updates/renewal; leave programs for degree completion, etc.)
    3. modest seed money may be provided for new scholarly pursuits and research initiatives (large and small-scale initiatives; both competitive and evenly distributed awards)
    4. distribution of indirect-cost returns is usually offered (for both large-and small-scale initiatives; sometimes there is an RFP process to apply)

5. some teaching load reductions may be effected for faculty with particularly/temporarily heavy service or research responsibilities (more part-time and visiting hires; it is unlikely that graduate assistants are used for this purpose; alternatively, it may be necessary to cancel course offerings during a sabbatical year)
  6. staff and colleague time is rarely dedicated to support/prepare nominations for professional awards and recognition; though some organized annual efforts do occur; more often, award nominations are occasional, ad hoc impulses
  7. staff time is rarely used to assist faculty in specific scholarship, editing, clerical, management tasks
  8. mentoring occurs mainly for junior faculty; mid-career mentoring is based largely on personal association, affinity and behavior modeling
  9. opportunities for intra-departmental leadership/growth may occur in curriculum development, or in establishing research councils and centers; decentralization of administrative tasks is common in some departments while not in others; participation in faculty governance may offer some opportunities for leadership/growth
  10. modest summer salary may be used to encourage/compensate extra service and growth in some departments
  11. interdisciplinary team-building and partnerships may form around research grants and inter-institutional programs
  12. content and extent of annual reporting on faculty growth varies widely by department
- b. Not all of these practices are implemented, nor are they implemented at the same level in every department;
  - c. Within certain parameters established by the Provost and the Dean of Research Programs, faculty development practices are initiated and monitored entirely by departmental chairs acting in concert with the needs of individual faculty, within the context of their own professional and disciplinary standards;
  - d. Union-sponsored faculty development initiatives seem to go unmonitored by department chairs and administrators;
  - e. Taken by themselves, the conditions described in "a, b, c and d" do not necessarily pose a problem.

**II. *Faculty mentoring, development and rewards***

- a. At a general level within ESF, the Office of the Provost and the Office of Outreach and Instructional Development have been trying to encourage and facilitate faculty mentoring, development and growth--particularly in the arena of teaching excellence--for more than a decade;

- b. There is a widely-shared sense by many faculty--esp. those who would benefit most--that they can not even *begin* to take advantage of development and growth opportunities because of a severe lack of time, support, energy, and/or money.
- c. The effectiveness of using faculty salaries as a form of recognition, or a performance reward, hinges entirely on the limitations of periodic negotiations between the faculty/staff union and SUNY central administration; as such, the committee felt that salary alone does not represent an adequate or reliable reward system;
- d. There are no overarching standards or policies for equalizing or leveling out faculty development, growth and/or reward practices between departments;
- e. Beyond the administration and union contributions, there appear to be virtually no governance mechanisms for sharing resources or ideas about changing faculty development needs, paradigms, difficulties or successes;
- f. As a corollary to this, there also does not appear to be any structure *outside the departments* for reconciling faculty growth needs with the ESF 2020 Vision Plan.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Consideration and discussion of these findings led the committee to make the following recommendations to Faculty colleagues and College administrators. Each recommendation directly addresses one or more of the findings above, in the order they appear:

### I. *Diversity of principles & practices*

(a) Disciplinary diversity is a hallmark of ESF culture; considerable flexibility should therefore continue to be extended for department chairs to allow for faculty development as appropriate to their discipline and curriculum.

(b-c-d-e) Department chairs should ensure that union-sponsored programs and other dimensions of faculty development (that may be supported outside the teaching contract, or take place outside the department) are included in both individual faculty and departmental annual reporting procedures; the College administration should actively review these annual reports to ensure that faculty needs are being met and that development practices are fair.

### II. Faculty mentoring, development and rewards

(a) The Offices of the Provost and Research Programs should continue to maintain a strong ethos of faculty development within the College, but should also recognize that many faculty are simply unaware of existing opportunities and/or are unable to pursue them--either for a lack of information on how to proceed, or for a variety of other reasons. For ESF to establish a higher faculty development profile within SUNY, and to facilitate fairer and better practices across the disciplines, we recommend that the Offices of the Provost and Research Programs, in coordination with the Office of Outreach and Instructional Development, should **develop and maintain an online handbook/website of “current strategies and best practices for faculty development.”**

- In particular, this handbook/website should collect ideas not only from ESF but also from other comparable academic settings, and should organize specific information on resources, protocols, logistics and deadlines that can foster a climate for optimum faculty development and growth. The handbook should describe departmental and College practices for faculty growth that do not neglect mentoring and development for the mid-career academic. It should be interactive to allow the presentation of new ideas and models for faculty development as well as feedback on the effectiveness of other, existing programs. Finally, this handbook/website should be supplemented by comprehensive, annual or quarterly announcements of opportunities available to faculty, similar to those provided by the UUP for union-sponsored initiatives.

(b) Faculty members have continued to “do more with less” at considerable (and growing) cost to their own well-being--both in terms of personal sacrifice and professional tradeoffs. Yet,

academic competitiveness is expected to steadily strengthen, new markets are to be developed and programs are to be initiated, enrollments are to rise, faculty are to produce and apply more and more new knowledge and techniques, teaching quality and learning outcomes are to improve, students are to continually 'raise the bar', service and entrepreneurship are to advance, and research dollars are to increase--all while vital support, space, time and resources have been steadily eroding. The committee has several specific recommendations to mitigate this situation:

- In lieu of other forms of support, ***additional student assistantships should be secured to facilitate an expanded ESF faculty presence in professional and disciplinary service positions, and in emerging areas of research***; moreover, dedicated GA or staff positions should *not* be subtracted from existing departmental allocations. For instance, in recognition of ESF's more than two dozen editors of national and international journals, it may be observed that there are virtually no clerical or editorial support staff, copy editors, graphic layout or manuscript management specialists dedicated by the College to support them, as is common with other institutions. More graduate assistants could help ameliorate this situation.
- Other strategies for maximizing faculty efficiency should concentrate on ***increased cooperation and collaboration with departmental and administrative staff assistants***. An overstretched faculty's diminished capacity for recruiting and advising--particularly the considerable task of general education advising associated with the recent SUNY mandate--might be buttressed very well by qualified staff assistants.
- Also, ***dedicated staff assistance should be provided to help faculty prepare and package the results of scholarly research***. This assistance might include copyediting and proofreading, layout and graphic design, seeking copyright permissions, and style formatting of manuscripts.
- The Office of the Provost should be encouraged to work directly with Faculty Governance to review strategies and policies that can promote the ***wise use of faculty time through more efficient paradigms in academic scheduling***, such as the new course scheduling paradigm recently proposed by Syracuse University. In concert with other SUNY units, we should also consider the optimum length of the standard academic semester, and/or whether ESF might also offer a ***regular summer session***.
- One of the best ways for the administration to foster a spirit of faculty development is through ***staff and faculty renewal***. ESF should commit to renewing faculty lines in order to maintain the excellence of our academic programs, our currency and energy, and thus to

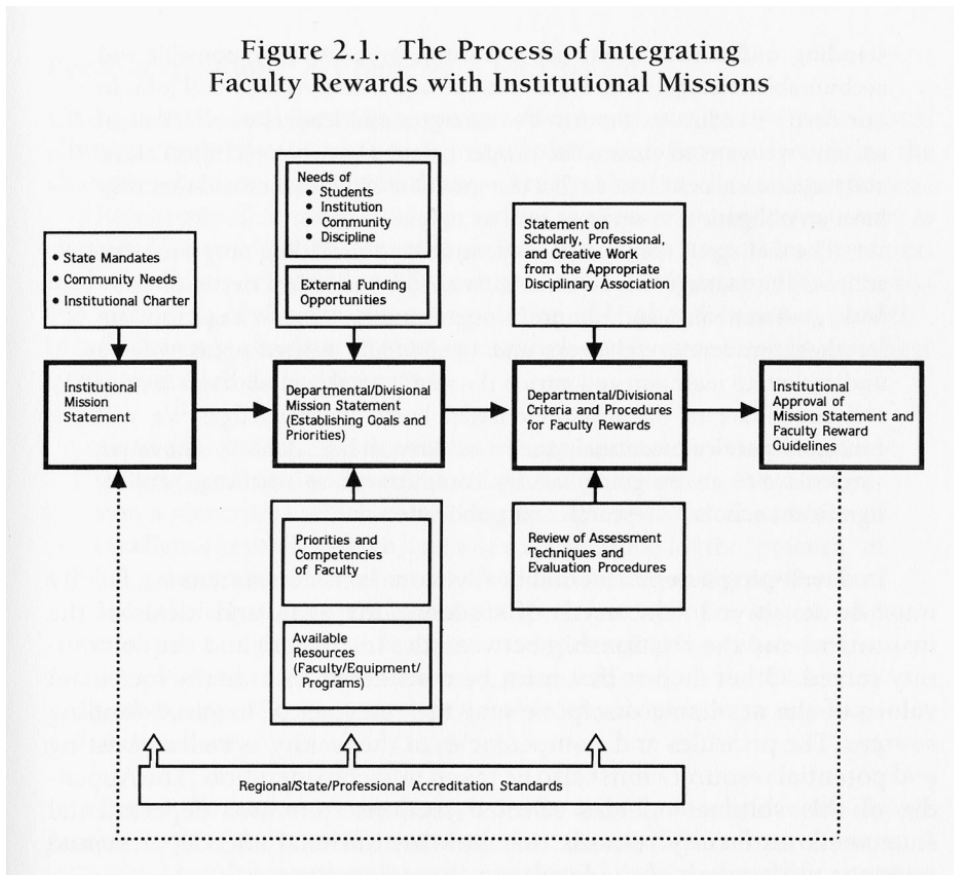
advance our respective disciplines in future. Keeping staff positions filled is essential for delivering professional, academic and research programs.

(c) The importance of salary as an effective reward for service and performance is fundamental and it should be augmented whenever possible, either via conventional raises or through alternate income streams. Given current teaching loads, as well as service, research and administrative responsibilities however, much, if not most faculty development takes place during the summer, i.e. during faculty's own personal time. This problem is endemic for faculty on nine-month appointments.

- Mechanisms that not only encourage, but also **support and reward faculty development during the summer** should be examined; these might include conversions from nine-month to twelve-month appointments for certain individuals, or the provision of two weeks of summer support for extra service that is specifically geared towards the development of new teaching and research initiatives, or the provision of some professional or scholarly service.

(d-e-f) Faculty governance should establish a standing committee that promotes developmental opportunities as well as takes measures to alleviate departmental inconsistencies. Members of such a committee, comprising approximately 5 to 7 individuals, should be appointed for a working term of no more than two years to take up new charges on behalf of the governance body. In cooperation with the Offices of the Provost, Research Programs and Outreach and Instructional development, the Faculty Development Committee should monitor and advise College staff and administrators on programs, policies and initiatives pertinent to individual faculty growth and development needs. It should also monitor any long-range planning concepts and strategies to ensure that faculty growth and development needs are accounted for.

Figure 2.1. The Process of Integrating Faculty Rewards with Institutional Missions



## CONCLUSIONS

This Committee believes that the ongoing articulation of the ESF 2020 vision plan might offer the College an opportunity for the design of policies or mechanisms that better integrate Faculty Development matters into the larger ESF campus identity and its orientation to the future. To generally understand how this process might work, we refer you to Robert Diamond's diagram (above) entitled "The Process of Integrating Faculty Rewards with Institutional Missions."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps there is a similar, simpler, or better model that could be developed to fit the academic culture and vision process at ESF.

It is certainly apparent that faculty development is a complex topic of wide concern right now both to faculty and administrators. For instance, a general questionnaire prepared by Provost's Advisory Task Force on Faculty Development (comprised of the members of the University Faculty Senate, the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, and the Office of the Provost), was circulated in early March 2003 to academic administrators in all the SUNY schools. This survey should result in a broad baseline survey of "best practices" for faculty development across the state.

Analogously, this Committee has sought to understand "best practices" across the departments at ESF. The salient observation about faculty development practices at ESF is that it is clearly governed by departmental culture and leadership styles, as well as widely divergent standards of professional and academic research, teaching and service. The Committee is concerned that, in an era of increasing dependence on resources outside the College, such clearly observable differences in departmental practices will be amplified--both by external funding structures and changing professional missions--faster than local College administrators and policies can rebalance them.

Respectfully submitted,

The Ad-Hoc Committee on Faculty Development

**Committee Chair:** M. Elen Deming (Associate Professor--LSA)

**Committee Members:**

Tom Amidon (Professor & Chair--PSE)

Greg Boyer (Professor--CHM)

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## Appendix A. Discussion of the Committee's Charges

The first task of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Faculty Development was to weigh and consider the following draft charges presented by the Executive Chair of Faculty Governance.<sup>i</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> During the last decade or so, a number of excellent studies concerning faculty development and renewal have been prepared. Among others see Robert Diamond and Bronwyn E. Adam, eds. *Rewarding Faculty Work: Reward System for the Year 2000*, in *New Directions for Higher Education* 81 (Spring 1993); ser. ed. Martin Kramer (Jossey-Bass: San Francisco). The Committee Chair is indebted to Robert Malmshheimer for bringing this work to our attention.

Draft Charge No. 1--Rewards: The Committee was asked “to critically examine [common] practices of fostering professional, academic and scholarly excellence at ESF, including salary structure and its relationship to measures of professional, academic and scholarly achievement.” Further, we were asked “to recommend to the administration and faculty any new mechanisms... for promoting the ongoing development of our faculty to its maximum potential.” The Committee felt the basis of this charge expresses a real and ongoing concern for enhancing motivation, recognition, and rewards, in order to spur and facilitate faculty excellence and to build and sustain faculty morale.

Draft charge No. 2--Organization: The Committee was asked to “critically examine the current organization of the ESF faculty, and recommend changes... to promote academic, professional and scholarly excellence across campus, including increased levels of interdisciplinarity, creative teaching and research, and so forth.” The basis of this charge expresses a concern that, while the “discipline-centricity” of many faculties is sometimes necessary for focused instruction and research, it may also stunt faculty growth and development in several important ways, including seeking and testing new models for teaching, service-learning initiatives, research, and funding in an increasingly multidisciplinary academic climate.

Draft Charge No. 3: The Committee was asked to “examine its potential as a standing committee of [Faculty Governance], with roles that may include faculty mentoring and other forms of development, evaluation of academic administrators, development of new positions... [etc.] as they see fit.” We understand the basis of this charge as a concern for establishing better frameworks for faculty-initiated feedback and evaluation of administrators, as well as for evaluating the impact of faculty development and renewal on both College-level focal areas [such as the 2020 vision plan] and departmental curricula.

Some charges, as initially described, raised questions that were simply too broad and provocative to be addressed effectively by the Committee at this time. However, while the Committee found it necessary to narrow, re-frame and prioritize our charges, this decision should *not* indicate that we felt the charges were unimportant or inappropriate--quite to the contrary. What it does signal is the very broad scope and complexity of the charges that a standing committee might take up in future, and the depth of background research that would be needed to address such matters. In lieu of that, the Committee decided that our objective for the initial stage should be to describe a framework of specific, workable, faculty development initiatives that are feasible, beneficial and/or may be implemented effectively and consistently College-wide.

## Discussion

The discussion below summarizes our initial discussion of the draft charges (appended), along with some of our reasoning for revising the scope of our charge.

### *Motivation, Recognition and Rewards:*

Related to the first charge, the Committee declined to examine the implications of establishing positive, direct links between salary structure and scholarly and professional achievement. Currently, discretionary funds awarded by the College and department chairs, established in negotiation with the Union of University Professionals, amount to 1% of the payroll. Prerogatives for awarding merit-based raises are controlled by chairs in negotiation with the Provost. Moreover, since the limits on starting salaries offered during faculty recruitment are set by upper-level SUNY administrators and are tied to industry standards, and subsequent across-the-board cost-of-living increases are monitored by the UUP, challenging the system of regular salary compensation does not appear to be an issue that ESF Faculty Governance can influence without considerably more clarity and effort. For instance, such a challenge would demand an accurate measurement the effect of merit-based compensatory measures, augmenting regular salary, as in the case of other discretionary or summer funding, and/or supplementary grant moneys. Without clearer understanding of impact and perception, such measures might be seen as potentially divisive and impossible to administer fairly and consistently across all disciplines of the College.

This Committee perceived that monetary rewards *should* not be viewed as the only available award mechanism. At least to this group, *time* seems to be our most precious resource. For many academics, having more free or flexible time might prove to be the most powerful motivator and reward for excellence.

Accordingly, this group will consider ideas and may advance recommendations related to forms of *temporal compensation* such as: paid leaves, teaching load reductions and buyouts, as well as *non-salary monetary and material compensation* such as: seed money and research grants, equipment upgrades, and other arrangements that might be awarded on a competitive or meritorious basis. A third category aims at *recognition compensation*--rewards that stroke the academic ego, including: fellowships, honors, chairs, lectures, medals, prizes, and other such public recognition.

### *Faculty Growth and Development:*

Pursuant to Draft Charge no. 1, we will also survey any and all existing programs for faculty growth and development opportunities, including: various training programs, skill improvement, effective

teaching and learning, pursuit of certification and advanced degrees, conference and research travel, as appropriate—to gauge whether or not they are effectively administered or equally accessible across the College. At present, there seem to be a great many fine initiatives already implemented, including the Learning Action Forum [LAF], various symposia on Teaching and Learning sponsored by the IDEaS group, the annual Mentoring colloquium sponsored by Provost Tully, as well as departmental initiatives at every level (e.g. Computer Graphics forum, sponsored lectures and Capstone seminars, etc.)

*Interdisciplinarity and Collaboration:*

The nature of the College means that, unavoidably perhaps, due to the fact that both faculty needs and initiatives are represented to the Provost almost exclusively by their Chairs, a type of institutional castration *{I don't know what you mean by this, it implies that the current system is not working. For some – it is}* occurs. This Committee will examine ways in which interdisciplinary initiatives and growth are, and might occur, to present a digest of successful cases and examples with our final report.

*Faculty Identity, Vision and Mission:*

This part of the charge resonated with several members of the Committee. If “excellence” is our goal, what form should/does it take? How do we measure it? How does College culture really and effectively change and express itself over time—is our sense of mission and direction established from the administration “down”, from the faculty and staff “up”, or from contemporary culture filtering “in”? Beyond departmental faculty meetings, aside from the recent 2020 vision plan, and despite occasional faculty retreats (last one in 1996?), (Biotechnology had one in 2002, EFB may have them yearly also) there seem to be no “normal” or permanently-established mechanisms through which faculty may positively, continuously and effectively express their aspirations, ethos or vision. This committee will try to take up this question more thoroughly.

*Career-long Mentoring:*

Another area that charge no. 3 addresses is mentoring. A great deal of effort has been placed upon faculty mentoring by the College during the past decade, evidenced by Provost Tully's serial seminars, as well as the work of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Promotion and Tenure (Fall 2002). Nevertheless, this Committee felt that mentoring remains much weaker at the level of the mid-career academic or professional than for junior-level faculty. After tenure, then what? Pursuant to this, the Committee will investigate mechanisms, programs or mentoring opportunities—whether formal or informal—that exist for tenured faculty wishing to move into leadership roles in the College, or once there, how they learn to balance concurrent teaching, research and administrative demands.

*Faculty Renewal:*

A glance at College demographics shows that in an era of cutbacks and consolidation of resources, an aging faculty has legitimate concerns about department renewal. Development of new positions is crucial to the success of any department, and is followed by the continuing growth of its mature faculty members. Logically, this charge should be closely linked to Faculty Growth and Development. The committee will examine the role faculty typically play in defining new positions, securing funding, running searches, and hiring new faculty. Any measures found to augment faculty ability to contribute to departmental renewal will be considered and reported by this Committee.

### **Appendix B--Background Survey & Fact-finding Process**

During the meeting held Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2003, the Committee further articulated and prioritized our objectives as a group. Our chief concern was to identify practices and policies that might be administered fairly and consistently across all disciplines of the College. However, the salient fact is that the differences in teaching and research culture between academic departments at ESF have more differences than similarities. Therefore, we concluded that such a framework could only be descriptive, rather than prescriptive.

In order to eventually present a useful framework of faculty development initiatives we needed a more accurate sense of what faculty-development resources and practices are/have been implemented around the College. Because the lion's share of faculty development practices is currently coordinated within departments, we began by contacting department Chairs. The survey described in Appendix I was administered by Committee members and the results were discussed early in March.

**Appendix C:  
Draft charge for Committee on Professional Development  
26 November 2002**

- This committee will critically examine current and historical practices of fostering professional, academic and scholarly excellence at ESF, including salary structure and its relationship to measures of scholarly, academic and professional achievement. The committee will recommend to the administration and faculty any new mechanisms they see fit for promoting the ongoing development of our faculty to its maximum potential.
- The committee will critically examine the current organization of the ESF faculty, and recommend changes as they see fit to promote academic, professional and scholarly excellence across campus, including increased levels of interdisciplinarity, creative teaching and research and so forth.
- The committee will examine its potential as a standing committee of the faculty, with roles that may include faculty mentoring and other forms of development; evaluation of academic administrators; development of new positions, and so forth, and make recommendations to the faculty as they see fit.

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<sup>i</sup> Scott Turner, "Draft Charge for Committee on Professional Development," 26 November, 2002.