

COMBINING TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION: Faculty Evaluate the Practice

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Abstract

This pilot project assesses the practice of having school administrators routinely teach courses as part of their workload. It identifies the reactions concerning the practice, from both faculty and administrators, in the Purdue School of Engineering and Technology at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). How this practice relates to the perceived effectiveness of the teaching administrator is evaluated in detail. The assessment questionnaire (see Appendix A) can be adopted by any school and used to assess perceptions of the practice. Schools, who require their administrators to teach courses, or those considering it, have much to gain from the information collected in this assessment project.

Introduction

There has been a great deal of assessment activity in higher education in response to recent pressures exerted from external and internal sources. Assessment is occurring at every level at IUPUI and probably occurring at every level at your institution. If you are not already personally involved in assessment you will be. Likened to the "...build it and they will come" line from the *Field of Dreams* movie, higher education's line could be, "...build it and they will come and assess it." In IUPUI's particular case, "they" are accrediting agencies such as, The North Central Association Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NCA Commission), the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), and the assessment experts at IUPUI's Office for Planning and Institutional Improvement. The faculty in our school, during the fall of 1996, adopted an assessment plan that involves assessment at all levels. The plan requires assessing goals, objectives, and outcomes for courses, programs and school wide initiatives for the purposes of instructional, administrative, and programmatic improvements.

Rationale for Project

There are many rationales for this emphasis on assessment. They vary across departments and schools, but essentially, institutions of higher education are attempting to demonstrate accountability to their constituencies. They wish to prove or at least provide evidence that they "add value" to their stakeholders (i.e. taxpayers, employers) through quality teaching, research, and service. The proof or evidence likely lies, in part, in the faculties' and administrators' abilities to focus on outcomes. Outcomes are those things "produced" from their inputs. To this end, many institutions of higher education have begun the process of implementing some form of Total Quality Management (TQM) into their practices as a framework for improving their institutional practices. Why TQM you ask? The experts' answers vary but in general go something like this:

Industries throughout the world have benefited directly from the implementation of total quality management (TQM). In many TQM manufacturing plants the ability to produce nearly perfect products with greater productivity and reduced costs have been realized. “TQM upped” processes lead to the production of products or the rendering of services that meet or exceed customer needs and expectations – in superb cases even before the customer is aware of what she or he needs, or expects. If, through TQM, manufacturing and service organizations can realize greater efficiency, enhanced effectiveness, improved customer satisfaction, and of course higher profits, then why not institutions of higher education?

Tomovic, et. al.¹ in a recent research publication pointed out that Congress and many business leaders believe that the Baldrige Criteria embodies the principles of TQM and support the Baldrige Criteria in the public sector. In fact, “current activities in the Baldrige Office suggest that the development of additional award categories for the public sector are being seriously considered. An announcement of a new award category for education is anticipated in the near future.”

Whatever one may think of the TQM aficionados’ place in higher education, if their models can lead us to greater accountability, lower costs and higher quality, they will indeed come and assess, or expect us to assess, what we have built. Assessment’s entry into your arena will be by legislation, if not by invitation, some warn. If the data generated from the process of assessment provides the impetus to change and improve, it is hard to deny.

America’s great management theorist, Peter Drucker², and the renowned leader in the quality movement, W. Edwards Deming³, have been teaching for many years that feedback on performance is essential to growth, productivity and quality. Peter Senge, director of the Systems Thinking and Organizational Learning Program at MIT’s Sloan School of Management and author of the hugely successful best seller, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, sends the message loud and clear that assessment is essential to learning,

Leadership in a learning organization starts with the principle of creative tension and that creative tension comes from seeing clearly where we want to be, our vision, and telling the truth about where we are, our current reality.... Vision without an understanding of current reality will more likely foster cynicism than creativity.... The principle of creative tension teaches that an accurate picture of current reality is just as important as a compelling picture of a desired future.⁴

A journey of a thousand miles may not begin with the first step after all. One may do so many preliminaries that they never get around to accomplishing anything! It begins with the assessment of the characteristics of where one is and what one is doing before taking that first step. Before one can use a map to help him journey to another place, say, to Seattle, Washington, he must first know his current location; otherwise, the map’s information is meaningless. To go somewhere else we must first know where we are. Ken Blanchard states simply that the difference between the actual state and desired state is the definition of a problem.⁵ A vision statement helps to define the desired state, assessment defines the actual. Thus, with identification of the actual

state and improvement as our goals, we enthusiastically assessed one of our school's routine practices, and share with you the fruits of our labor.

Assessing the Teaching Responsibilities for Deans

We chose to assess our school's practice of requiring administrative deans to teach courses within an academic department in the school. In the past decade, university faculty workload efforts have come under close scrutiny by state legislators, university trustees or regents, and the general public. In 1995, to comply with a request from the Board of Trustees of Indiana University, capacity models for faculty teaching loads were developed by and for all academic units at Indiana University campuses including Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). These capacity models are continuously being updated and fine-tuned by each academic unit. IUPUI decided to allow each school to adopt their own policy for the teaching requirements of deans. As a part of the capacity models, the teaching requirements of all faculty, including chairs and deans, are included in the model.

The School of Engineering and Technology's current workload policy requires the dean, associate deans, and assistant deans in the school to teach one, three-credit-hour course per academic year, subject to the dean's approval. At IUPUI, the Schools of Nursing, Public and Environmental Affairs, and Education also require all deans to teach one course per year. In the Schools of Liberal Arts, Journalism, Physical Education, and Art, the school dean has full release time from teaching, while associate and assistant deans are required to teach from one to two courses per year. In the Schools of Science, Dentistry, Social Work, and University College, all deans including the associate and assistant deans are released from all teaching responsibilities. Workload policies for the Schools of Business, Medicine, Allied Health and Continuing Studies are either not available or unclear.

Methodology

A questionnaire seen in Appendix A was designed by the authors of this paper and distributed to the faculty in the school's faculty senate and to deans who teach within an academic department in the school. Participation in the research was voluntary. This was done in the latter part of the fall semester 1997 during a regular session of the school's senate. It was distributed to the deans at a later time. Both groups were asked to participate in order to compare their answers. The questionnaires contained a total of 12 questions. Both groups completed identical questionnaires except for one question. The deans' questionnaire differed only on Question #4. It asked the deans, "Do you consider faculty to be your peers?" The faculty questionnaire asked, "Do you consider deans to be your peers?" After each question, the respondents were asked to provide a reason(s) for their answer. This added narrative provided us with a richer set of data of faculty and dean perceptions.

The Sample

The comments and analyses that follow are based on answers from members of the faculty senate in the Purdue School of Engineering and Technology at IUPUI and from deans who teach classes within the school. A total of 16 (out of 55) faculty and four (out of 4) deans completed the questionnaire. The faculty members were selected because they represent faculty leadership by virtue of their membership on the school's faculty senate. The criterion for selecting deans was based on their teaching a class as part of their job description. While these numbers are small, and any generalizations are questionable, we feel the results accurately portray the general perceptions held by the faculty and deans in our school.

Results

The results reveal an interesting conceptualization of the perceptions and opinions from faculty and deans about having deans teach within an academic unit. The questions, in an abbreviated form, are listed in the *Results Table* presented below. The table provides median answers on selected questions from both groups. The median scores on Questions #2-#8, #10, and #11 were calculated on a scale ranging from "5" to "1", where "5" was, "Definitely Yes", "3" was "No Opinion", and "1" was "Definitely No". For Questions #1, #9, and #12, a median score could not be applied.

RESULTS TABLE
Faculty and Dean's Questionnaire Results

Item #	Topic	Median Faculty Scores	Median Dean Scores
1.	School policy requiring deans to teach?	N/A	N/A
2.	Deans qualified to teach?	4	5
3.	Deans teach for promotion?	4	5
4a.	Faculty your peers?	N/A	5
4b.	Deans your peers?	4	N/A
5.	Teaching deans add value?	4	5
6.	Teaching deans enhance effectiveness?	4	5
7.	Dean teaching is good use of time and talent?	4	4
8.	E&T should require all deans to teach?	4	4
9.	Minimum course load for teaching deans?	N/A	N/A
10.	Deans required to hold academic rank?	4	4
11.	Should teaching deans receive	2	2

Item #	Topic	Median Faculty Scores	Median Dean Scores
	added monetary compensation?		
12.	Why do deans teach? (Circle all that apply)	N/A	N/A

Discussion

For questions 2 through 8, and question 10, we consider median scores greater than 3.0 to be positive; for the same question set, we consider median scores of 4.0 or greater to be very positive. Faculty and deans both indicate positive opinions to most of these questions with only a few differences between the dean and faculty groups.

Both groups report a very positive opinion (faculty = 4.0, deans = 5.0) on deans' qualifications to teach (question #2). Written reasons for answers demonstrate that both groups think that deans should hold an academic appointment as a requirement to hold the administrative position.

However, deans consider faculty to be their colleagues more positively than the faculty do of deans (question #4). Examining raw scores reveals that, deans, regardless of rank, consider faculty to be their peers. Faculty opinions were split, with nearly half of the faculty reporting that deans are not their peers. Putting deans in the classroom may change that image over time and improve the team relationship when faculty and deans serve together on committees.

As support for one response, a faculty member wrote that "...assistant and associate deans are staff ... the dean is the school leader..." This sentiment may be changed over time if all deans are in the classroom, if faculty are aware of their teaching contribution, and deans are not simply viewed as detached, support staff. In fact, other faculty responses indicating that administrative effectiveness should be improved by deans teaching supports that view. Another faculty member wrote that teaching should keep deans, "in touch with the problems of teaching". The faculties' very positive opinion toward the idea that teaching enhances administrative effectiveness (Question #6) also supports this view. The mean scores on whether all deans, regardless of classification, should be required to hold academic rank (question #10) were positive and very similar between the groups.

Nine out of sixteen faculty members were either undecided about or did not know of any policy that requires deans to teach while all four deans knew that the school had such a policy (question #1). It would probably be a good idea for the school to communicate the policy in a more effective manner to faculty. If faculty do not know of this policy, they may misinterpret the reasons a dean chooses to teach or they may not even be aware that deans are teaching. It may also be symptomatic of a systemic problem within the school. If faculty are not aware of this policy, then of what other policies might they not be aware?

Opinions on requiring deans to teach as part of their workload (questions #8) revealed that both groups had very positive opinions (4.0). Related to workload (Question #9), all four deans and 15 of the 16 faculty responded that the load should be one course per year.

The median scores from both groups on whether deans should receive additional monetary compensation for teaching (question #11) were the only ones that fell below 3.0 (dean = 2.0, faculty = 2.0). Three out of four deans said no, and 13 out of 16 faculty said no, or definitely no. In written comments, the deans mentioned that teaching is an extra load to their schedule but point out that if they were paid extra it might be misinterpreted by faculty. The answers to question #12 reveal an interesting insight into the deans' motivation to teach. All four deans stated that they knew that teaching was a work load policy (question #1). However, none of them mentioned it as a reason they chose to teach. The most often cited reason given by both groups, (deans = 4, faculty = 13) was, "it is their desire to remain in touch with students."

As with any administrative policy, it is important to evaluate whether the desired results of a policy have been achieved. The work load policy states that it serves two purposes: to provide data for the university capacity model as well as providing a workload goal for the school. Specifically, the guideline calls for the Dean, Associate Deans, and Assistant Deans in the School to teach approximately one, three-credit-hour course per academic year. While the policy does satisfy its stated purposes of providing capacity data and workload guidance, no specific school improvements or measurable objectives are stated. This initial assessment can be used by the school to move in that direction.

Conclusion

Faculty and deans have positive attitudes toward the practice of deans teaching as part of their workload. Both groups believe that the practice adds value to the school by allowing the deans to stay in touch with the needs and challenges of the students and faculty. Neither group thinks that deans should receive additional monetary compensation.

The questionnaire that we designed, and the information that followed, helped us learn about what we do, and to a degree what we are, as a school. Focusing inward to assess our own behavior has provided us with a richer view of our current reality. We need to continue to assess other practices so we can begin to sketch our vision of the kind of school we wish to be.

Feedback on the results of this assessment project is a piece of a larger assessment project being conducted to assess practices carried out at a school-wide level. The results will be communicated to the entire school and become part of our school-wide level assessment document. Decisions as to the efficacy of having deans teach can be measured against the goals of the policy. In this way, with continuous improvement as a goal, policy changes in the practice or policy can be deliberated.

Assessment done well can lead an organization to an intimate knowledge of its current reality, to locate itself in the world, to identify the nature of the gap between actual and desired states of being. The assessment process serves as the map for the organization as it journeys from its actual state to its desired state, from where it is to where it wants to be. The goal of the assessment process is to provide a point of departure. Locating, describing, analyzing its actual state informs us of the direction to go in taking our first step. This is the dawning of the age of

assessment for higher education, and with it comes the requirements of responsibility and accountability.

We discovered that our survey needs some modification. In the future we would use a Likert scale so that we could report mean scores and increase our number of responses, and thereby, generalize our results.

Other schools can benefit from the information contained in this pilot project. They might be motivated to ask or require deans to teach since it has been assessed here, at the Purdue School of Engineering and Technology at IUPUI, to be a positive activity.

Appendix A

**Dean & Faculty Questionnaires
Purdue School of Engineering and Technology
IUPUI**

Fall, 1997

INTRODUCTION: Patricia L. Fox, Cliff Goodwin, and R. Andy Schaffer are conducting an assessment of the practice of having our school's Dean, Associate, and Assistant Deans teach within an academic department. The results will become part of a research paper to be presented at the 1998 ASEE conference in Seattle, Washington. The findings will also become a part of our school's assessment documentation.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please **circle** the answer that best represents your opinion to the following questions. Where applicable, please provide reasons for your answers.

1. Our school (ET) has a policy that requires all deans to teach within an academic department?

yes undecided no

2. Do you think that, in general, deans are qualified to teach?

Definitely yes	yes	no opinion	no	definitely no
5	4	3	2	1

Reasons for your answer:

3. Should deans have to teach to get promoted?

Definitely yes	yes	no opinion	no	definitely no
5	4	3	2	1

Reasons for your answer:

(Dean & Faculty Questionnaire cont.)

4a. Do you consider deans to be your peers?

Definitely yes	yes	no opinion	no	definitely no
5	4	3	2	1

Reasons for your answer:

4b. Do you consider faculty to be your peers?

Definitely yes	yes	no opinion	no	definitely no
5	4	3	2	1

Reasons for your answer:

5. Does teaching by deans add value to the school?

Definitely yes	yes	no opinion	no	definitely no
5	4	3	2	1

Reasons for your answer:

6. Does teaching by deans enhance their administrative effectiveness?

Definitely yes	yes	no opinion	no	definitely no
5	4	3	2	1

Reasons for your answer:

(Dean & Faculty Questionnaire cont.)

7. Is teaching a good use of a dean's time and talent?

Definitely yes	yes	no opinion	no	definitely no
5	4	3	2	1

Reasons for your answer:

8. Do you believe that our school (ET) should require all classifications of deans to teach as part of their work load?

Definitely yes	yes	no opinion	no	definitely no
5	4	3	2	1

Reasons for your answer:

9. What should be the minimum course load for deans who teach?

- a. zero, deans should not teach
- b. 1 class/semester
- c. 1 class/year
- d. 2 classes/semester
- e. other _____

10. All classifications of deans should be required to hold academic rank within one of our school's academic departments?

Definitely yes	yes	no opinion	no	definitely no
5	4	3	2	1

Reasons for your answer:

(Dean & Faculty Questionnaire cont.)

11. Do you believe that deans, who teach, should receive added monetary compensation to their salary?

Definitely yes	yes	no opinion	no	definitely no
5	4	3	2	1

Reasons for your answer:

12. Why do you think deans teach? **Circle all that apply**

- a. it is mandated by school policy
- b. It is their personal desire to remain in touch with students
- c. desire to remain current in their field
- d. looks good for promotion
- e. their love of teaching
- f. other _____

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