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Professional Development in the Academy

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When Harriet Sheridan established in 1987 the Center for the Advancement of College Teaching (CACT, now the Sheridan Center) her goal was to provide professional development support in pedagogy for Brown graduate students. At that time, there were well-established centers for faculty development at Harvard, Stanford and Michigan, but little for graduate students. Over the past seventeen years, the Sheridan Center has evolved to serve the needs of both faculty and graduate students at Brown with a variety of programs, services and publications. The Center's new location provides a central meeting place for instructors across the disciplines. In addition, it has attracted the interest of faculty and graduate students from the nearby Rhode Island School of Design.

If faculty (and their graduate students) are to feel that investments of precious time and energy in faculty/professional development are worthwhile, then the following three questions might be considered: *How is faculty/professional development defined in the Academy today? What value does the academy place on professional development? How should the Sheridan Center support faculty/professional development at Brown?*

The University is currently embarked upon a strategic plan of academic improvement, the *Academic Enrichment Initiatives* (AEI). A large number of new faculty have arrived at Brown to conduct their research and to communicate the results of their research both in the classroom and beyond. Brown faculty must teach their discipline in a variety of modalities to reach students with diverse educational preparation, and they need more appropriate language to describe the effectiveness of their performance as instructors. The Brown curriculum requires faculty to provide sophisticated academic advising of depth and breadth. The involvement of undergraduates in basic research necessitates careful preparation of graduate students to serve as effective mentors, in

addition to their apprenticeship as teaching assistants. Many graduate students need assistance in preparing to teach their disciplines in educational environments other than research universities such as Brown. Undergraduates need to develop their ability to be as critical of their educational experience at Brown as of the knowledge they seek to acquire here.

Many faculty find the rhetoric of "faculty/professional development" awkward in the context of academia, but appreciate its fundamental value to their work. This discomfort lies in the derivation of such terminology from business concepts. After World War II many American businesses expanded dramatically from local and regional operations into large, often multi-national, corporations. New methodologies were needed to manage such businesses effectively and to account for both productivity and quality. Non-profit organizations were also subject to growth and change from small institutions to benefit the local community into large, costly, organizations whose mission was often drowned in red ink and by inept governance. As the University adapts to meet the challenges of the AEI, what will be the role of faculty/professional development in that process?

1) *How is faculty/professional development defined in the Academy today?*

The Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD) is a major professional development organization in higher education today.¹ POD has developed two definitions for faculty/professional development similar to what is available at Brown²:

- a) *Faculty Development*: "Faculty development generally refers to those programs which focus on the individual faculty member. The most common focus for programs of this type is the faculty member as a teacher. Faculty development specialists provide consultation on teaching, including class organization, evaluation of students, in-class presentation skills, questioning and all aspects of design and presentation. They also advise faculty on other aspects of teacher/student interaction, such as advising, tutoring, discipline policies and administration."
- b) *Professional Development*: "A second frequent focus of such programs is the faculty member as a scholar and professional. These programs offer assistance in career planning, professional development in scholarly skills such as grant writing, publishing, committee work, administrative work, supervisory skills, and a wide range of other activities expected of faculty."

Just as each discipline has its professional organization, so it is with professional development. The American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) is "an independent, membership-based, nonprofit organization dedicated to building human capital for higher

education. AAHE is the source of choice for information about higher education on issues that matter in a democratic multi-racial society; and AAHE promotes and disseminates examples of effective educational practice to address those issues."³ Published since 1969, AAHE's magazine *Change* predates the *Chronicle of Higher Education* as the major forum for the exchange of ideas about trends and issues in higher education. As a result, the AAHE has had an impact on developments in teaching and learning, curricular reform and educational outcome assessment among other major issues over the past thirty years.⁴

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching was founded in 1905 by Andrew Carnegie as an independent policy and research center whose charge is "to do and perform all things necessary to encourage, uphold, and dignify the profession of the teacher and the cause of higher education."⁵ Among its thoughtful programs developed to nurture this mission is the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL). CASTL's aim is to "develop a scholarship of teaching that will improve student learning, enhance the practice and profession of teaching, and bring to teaching the recognition and reward afforded to other forms of scholarly work." Initiated in 1998 by President Lee S. Shulman, the program builds on a conception of teaching as scholarly work first proposed in the 1990 report, *Scholarship Reconsidered*, by former Carnegie Foundation President Ernest Boyer, and on the 1997 publication, *Scholarship Assessed*, by Charles Glassick, Mary Taylor Huber, and Gene Maeroff. In 1997 Lee Shulman came to Brown to deliver the keynote address at the dedication of the Sheridan Center "Towards a Scholarship of Teaching", to attend the Center's Conference on Reflective Teaching in Higher Education, and to present Brown Prof. Thomas Banchoff (*Mathematics*) with the Carnegie Foundation's 1997 Rhode Island Professor of the Year Award. Shulman advocated making teaching public, subject to critical evaluation and usable by others in both the scholarly and the general community.⁶

The Carnegie publishes a variety of monographs and pamphlets to assist institutions and individuals in higher education foster more effective organizational educational environments. Jointly published with the AAHE, *Balancing Acts: The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Academic Careers* by Mary Taylor Huber (2004) addresses the question of how can faculty integrate the scholarship of teaching and learning into their academic careers.

The Carnegie Scholars Program was established to bring together outstanding faculty committed to investigating and documenting significant issues in the teaching and learning of their fields. Serving for one-year terms, the Carnegie Scholars participate in two two-week residencies in consecutive summers and spend shorter periods together during the academic year. Amongst the first faculty selected to be Carnegie Scholars were Thomas Banchoff (1999-2000) and Randall Bass (1998-99). Bass, Prof. of English and Director of

the Center for New Designs in Learning & Scholarship at Georgetown, was one of the first Graduate Teaching Fellows appointed by Harriet Sheridan to help develop programs for graduate students.

The Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD)'s mission "encourages the advocacy of the on-going enhancement of teaching and learning through faculty and organizational development." Its membership includes faculty and instructional development center staff, department chairs, deans, student services staff, chief academic officers, and educational consultants from a variety of post-secondary settings: public and private institutions, two-year colleges and graduate universities, small colleges and multiversities, and educational services organizations across the United States and Canada. POD sponsors conferences and publishes an annual monograph, *To Improve the Academy*.

Divisional and discipline-specific professional organizations are also devoting publication space and time to teaching and learning within the field as well as research. Project Kaleidoscope (PKAL) advocates the building and sustaining of strong undergraduate programs in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). PKAL focuses on building learning environments that attract and sustain undergraduate students to the study of STEM fields and motivate them to consider careers in related fields. It is, in part, supported by the National Science Foundation, the ExxonMobil Foundation, FIPSE (U.S. Department of Education) and the W.M. Keck Foundation.⁷ Its online forum, such as the recent PKAL Volume IV which examines the body of literature on STEM leadership, is presented in the postings for July 2004. The work of disciplinary professional societies in identifying and nurturing faculty leaders is the theme of postings for the 23rd of July: highlighting programs within the mathematics community, the community of sociologists, and the community of geologists to strengthen leadership at the departmental level in undergraduate STEM settings. Project NeXT (for early career mathematics faculty) will also be featured. Professional Divisions in fields such as history have encouraged such recent publications as Noralee Frankel and Peter Stearns on "The Development of Benchmarks for Professional Development in the Teaching of History as a Discipline", in the American Historical Association's *Perspectives*.⁸

There is a considerable, and growing, body of research and publication on faculty/professional development in the academy. Major foundations, such as the Lilly Endowment, the National Science Foundation, FIPSE, and the Pew Charitable Trusts sponsor much of it. Recent articles in professional journals address issues of peer support amongst faculty, curricular transformation and strategic academic planning as aspects of professional development in the academy. For example, the recent series of articles edited by Milton D. Cox and Laurie Richlin, in "Building Faculty Learning Communities", explores

the desire of many faculty for "community, transdisciplinarity, and support for investigation and implementation of new teaching and learning approaches and opportunities."⁹ Historian R. Eugene Rice investigated "The Future of the American Faculty", in *Change*, March/April 2004.¹⁰ Peter Smith, President of California State at Monterey, considered how higher education should respond to the changing needs of students and society in his essay "Curricular Transformation: Why We Need It/ How to Support It", in *Change*, Jan/Feb 2004. A team of University of New Hampshire faculty and administrators discussed how they integrated academic planning and faculty development in a research university.¹¹

On the research front, major studies, such as the forthcoming "The Study of New Scholars Project" by Harvard Graduate School of Education faculty Richard Chait and Cathy Trower, investigate how institutions such as Brown and its peers support new and junior faculty to develop into the new generation of faculty leaders in research and teaching. This type of research builds on previous investigations such as the 1974 Lilly Endowment study of junior faculty development.

Harriet Sheridan's involvement in the creation and implementation of a FIPSE-funded grant project orchestrated by the AAHE/AAC between 1989 and 1992 was crucial in the transformation of CACT into the Sheridan Center. The purpose was to prepare graduate students to teach effectively outside a research university. The project paired graduate students and faculty at a research university, such as Brown, with faculty mentors at a nearby liberal arts college, such as Connecticut College, for a pilot of two years. The success of this program extended far beyond Brown and Duke, the original pilots. It led to subsequent support from the Pew Charitable Trusts and the NSF for the Council of Graduate Schools and Association of American Colleges & Universities project: *Preparing Future Faculty (PFF)*. The new Brown/Wheaton Teaching Laboratory in the Liberal Arts is a part of that national initiative.¹²

2. What value does the academy place on professional development?

As any reader of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* knows "the academy" is a diverse and fragmented collection of institutions of higher (post-secondary) education, nationally and internationally. Standards and criteria for research scholarship, teaching, tenure/promotion, etc. vary even within such categories as Research One institutions. As a result, national faculty/professional development initiatives, such as CASTL, have been received differently across the educational community. For examples, issues of accreditation and educational outcomes are perceived differently in publicly -funded institutions than in private ones. A cursory web browsing through the professional

development centers, such as the Sheridan Center, at several different sorts of institutions suggests the value placed on such activity in each one.

As a result of this diversity of institutional structure and needs, the POD website notes "most [faculty development programs] have as their philosophy the faculty member as the driving force behind the institution; therefore, assisting that person to be as productive as possible will make the entire institution more productive." As a result, the focus of most programs has been on *instructional development* by individual faculty. However, organizations like POD and the Carnegie/ AAHE and foundations such as Lilly and Pew, have devoted resources toward *administrative development* for department chairs, deans and other decision makers. Such faculty/administrators "make the policies which affect how courses are taught, how faculty are hired and promoted, how students are admitted and graduated. [In theory] If those policies allow for growth and flexibility while maintaining standards, the amount of learning which occurs will increase." A further area of professional investigation is *institutional development* which deals with personnel issues involving faculty. How are faculty evaluated and rewarded? How are they prepared for changes in the institution, including their own retirement? Where do faculty fit into the overall governance structure of the institution? What is the effect of unionization, departmentalization, professionalization?¹³

This past May the Sheridan Center hosted the third annual Ivy Plus Conference of Centers of Teaching and Learning. Originally inspired by a Carnegie/AAHE conference on Teaching and Learning at Research Universities held in Ann Arbor and led by Lee Shulman in November 1999, the Ivy Plus group has developed into a useful consortium for the fruitful exchange of ideas relevant to the specific needs of such institutions. Consortium members include Brown, Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Duke, Harvard, Michigan, MIT, Oxford, Pennsylvania, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale. Even though our institutions share similar faculty/professional development, everything from programs and services to staffing, funding and reporting lines differs across the group. One constant, however, is that all regular staff members have Ph.D.-level academic qualifications, which reflects the fundamental value placed on peer-generated faculty/professional development in Research One institutions.

3. *How should the Sheridan Center support faculty/professional development at Brown?*

Over the past seventeen years the Sheridan Center has developed slowly in direct response to faculty and graduate student needs. Programs, such as the three Teaching Certificate programs (I, II and III), support graduate students in their preparation as the future professoriate. Services, such as Presentation and/or Grant Consultations, provide faculty and graduate student with support for teaching and for communicating their

research, whether in classrooms, at conferences, or beyond the academy. The Mission Statement of the Center was drafted in 1992-1993 by the Center's faculty Advisory Board as follows: *The mission of the Center is to improve the quality of teaching at Brown University. The Center builds upon the unique and historic commitment of the University to excellence in teaching by recognizing the diversity of learning styles and exploring the richness of teaching approaches. In order to encourage the exchange of ideas about teaching and learning, both within and across disciplines, it consults and collaborates with the faculty, administration, graduate and undergraduate students. The Center offers a broad range of programs, lectures and publications that address interdisciplinary pedagogical issues; in addition, it assists departments and programs to realize the specific needs and potential of their disciplines. Thus the Center supports the ongoing improvement of teaching for the benefit of the University and the community-at-large.*

As the academic community at Brown develops individual, departmental and institutional strategies to support the AEI, the following are some areas in which Brown faculty might seek further faculty/professional development:

1. Documentation of the scholarship of teaching for tenure and promotion
2. The development of explicit departmental standards and criteria to:
 - a) assist faculty with tenure and promotion, b) make teaching evaluations reflective of these standards and criteria; c) make assessment of educational outcomes consistent with these standards and criteria.
3. Work with undergraduates to ensure their ability to be reflective learners
4. Consultation in the use of technology as a teaching tool, including the development of assessment tools to measure student learning with technology, and the documentation of these efforts, whether as scholarship or for tenure and promotion

The choices as to what professional activities will best serve the mission of the University will, as always, remain with the Brown faculty and graduate students. We look forward to the challenges ahead.

¹ <http://www.podnetwork.org>

² <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~ckfgill/facd/definit.html> [POD]

³ <http://www.aahe.org/>

⁴ See, for example, Deborah DeZure, *Learning from Change: Landmarks in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education from Change Magazine (1969–1999)* (AAHE, 2000).

⁵ <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org>

⁶ See the *Teaching Exchange*, January 1998, for a fuller account of the dedication of the Center, the conference and Shulman's speech. The issue is available online on the Center web site:

http://www.brown.edu/sheridan_center.

⁷ <http://www.pkal.org/>

⁸ Noralee Frankel and Peter Stearns, "The Development of Benchmarks for Professional Development in the Teaching of History as a Discipline", American Historical Association, *Perspectives*, vol. 42, #4, April 2004: 41-47.

⁹ *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, #97, Spring 2004.

¹⁰ R. Eugene Rice, "The Future of the American Faculty", *Change*, March/April 2004, vol. 36, 2: 26-36.

¹¹ Peter Smith, "Curricular Transformation: Why we need it/ How to Support it", in *Change*, Jan/Feb 2004, vol. 36, 1: 28-35. "Integrated Planning and Change Management at a Research University", *Change*, Jan/Feb 2004, vol. 36, 1: 28-35.

¹² See page 5 in this issue.

¹³ <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~ckfgill/facd/definit.html> [POD]