

ACS Mellon Foundation Faculty Renewal Grants Final Report

Submitted by:

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Name of Project/Event: ACS Faculty Renewal Proposal: Department and Program Head Training, University of Richmond and Washington and Lee University

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Amount Awarded: \$8,000

Project Report:

Introduction

Washington and Lee University and the University of Richmond jointly developed a pilot program for the training and professional leadership development of academic department and program heads. The project was sponsored by the Dean of the College at W&L and the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Richmond. It involved a joint planning process to develop and deliver training workshops to faculty members in positions of academic leadership.

We developed the program because we recognized that many faculty members are ill-prepared to assume the responsibilities of academic leadership, and lack the skill set for conflict management, effective handling of sensitive personnel or legal matters, running effective meetings, mentoring younger faculty, supervising staff, and managing budgets. Furthermore, although recognized as vitally important and long on the “to-do” list of administrations at both W&L and Richmond, more systematic and professional training of department and program heads had been a neglected institutional priority. The daily and annual rhythms of our offices

afforded scarce resources, and even scarcer time, to devote to careful design and delivery of a training program.

Our goal for this project was to have this effort result in a mutually-developed, ongoing program on each campus that sustains development and support of our faculty leaders.

Project Summary

Through our year-long collaboration, we started to develop faculty leadership training through the cross-fertilization of our two different institutional cultures. Independent sessions were held as part of department and program head meetings on both of our individual campuses. We then conducted one joint session in Charlottesville, VA for the heads and a small group of invited staff leaders in the Human Resources and the Registrar's offices.

Before planning the individual and joint sessions, we surveyed our faculty leaders to determine the needed topics to emphasize on each campus. We evaluated their interests in learning more about conflict management, communication skills, community/team building, personnel reviews, being "first among peers", managing time, working with difficult people, managing up, working with deans and provosts, department advocacy, keeping active in scholarship, planning and assessment, and leading and managing change. From the initial survey results, we observed our heads had the highest level of interest for learning about personnel review and feedback, working with and managing difficult people, department advocacy, and keeping active on scholarship (see the Appendix for full results).

As part of our effort to enhance the level of department head training, each school stepped up our individual discussions. For example, Washington and Lee spent several meetings (and smaller working group meetings) discussing and defining a job description for our

department heads. We began developing evaluation procedures for heads within departments. We also worked with the heads (the Registrar's office, and others) to develop strategies to minimize their administrative burden and better manage their time. We also spent several sessions using hypothetical scenarios (generated by our Office of General Counsel) to develop our heads' skills at managing conflict/ difficult situations, and recognizing and handling potential issues of discrimination within their departments. In addition, we had sessions with our Human Resources office outlining new policies and procedures related to overseeing and evaluating staff in academic departments.

As part of the joint program, we hired a consultant to lead our 1-day culminating training session. This workshop was attended by a group of approximately 25 heads and other administrators. Our leader was Dr. Walter Gmelch, Dean of the School of Education at the University of San Francisco. Gmelch is a recognized leader and author in the field of academic administrative leadership development. He is a regular presenter for the American Council on Education at conferences and workshops on department chair training. Drawing on his own experiences as dean and chair as well as his research findings, Dr. Gmelch helps faculty leaders create habits of thought and action that lead to an honest, open and supportive institutional culture.

The topics that were addressed during the joint session included:

- 1) You and your work as an academic leader – stress management, time management and sustaining your scholarship,
- 2) Interpersonal conflict – managing difficult situations and people,
- 3) Leading your faculty and programs – working with and developing people and programs.

Evaluation and Dissemination

Before we developed the program, we conducted a pre-survey of the participating faculty leaders, establishing what they saw as their greatest training needs (as described above and in the Appendix). This information helped provide a framework for determining the particular content of the campus and joint sessions. We focused our meetings, not on the just on the particular administrative and deadlines of the position, but on key skills of conflict resolution, academic leadership, and fair and transparent decision-making. A post survey of the program was done after the joint session to evaluate the success of the training for individuals.

As seen in the Appendix, our post-survey results indicated that 20% of our participants responded that the joint workshop exceeded expectations, 66.7% that it met expectations, and 13.3% that it did not meet expectations (most citing “not enough time” and “needed several days to cover everything” as the main concerns). Respondents indicated that the workshop helped them the most in the areas of leadership, time management, and managing conflict.

On a 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) scale, half of all respondents rated the speaker, Walt Gmelch, as excellent (5) and half as good (4). 80% of respondents reported that they would attend another joint session of the 2 schools. Of topics they would be interested to learn more in additional training, most would be in areas of community building, followed by managing conflict, time management, and communication skills.

We see this effort as just the beginning of training development for both schools. The grant period was a launching point for each individual school’s programs and a very fruitful joint collaboration. The development of our faculty leaders will continue to be a priority in the

coming year and we hope that materials and resources we use and post to our websites will be a help to other ASC schools and beyond.

Lessons learned

In our work this year, we quickly realized we were setting up programs where little existed before and with that cultural shift, needed greater time than we thought for developing an ongoing and sustainable program. Both Dean's offices are now more aware of the areas of interest and concern in our current head development. We learned much about the state of training at each other's institutions and from our trials during the year. Our faculty leaders were able to make connections with their counterparts, providing collaboration potential into the future.

Until this grant period, we had not surveyed our leaders, had not developed an actual job description for our heads, had not shared common and best practices with another university, and had not had an outside professional help to guide our thinking in these areas. This ACS grant has allowed for that progress to begin and continue.

We were able to save significantly on travel costs over what we had predicted because we were able to engage Dr. Gmelch's services at a time of the year when he was already on the East coast for another training workshop. We propose to split those remain funds to purchase training materials (particularly books authored by Gmelch that were the basis for his session materials) for distribution to our department heads.

Pre-Survey

1. Please identify the topics you are most interested in learning more about to improve your effectiveness as a department chair/head or program leader.

	<i>answered question</i>				45
	<i>skipped question</i>				0
	High level of interest	Some interest	Little interest	No interest	Response Count
Conflict Management	28.9% (13)	42.2% (19)	22.2% (10)	6.7% (3)	45
Communication skills	13.6% (6)	43.2% (19)	34.1% (15)	9.1% (4)	44
Community/team building	20.5% (9)	43.2% (19)	29.5% (13)	6.8% (3)	44
Personnel review – writing reviews and giving feedback	40.0% (18)	37.8% (17)	15.6% (7)	6.7% (3)	45
Becoming/Being "first among peers"	24.4% (10)	39.0% (16)	17.1% (7)	19.5% (8)	41
Managing time	26.7% (12)	40.0% (18)	15.6% (7)	17.8% (8)	45
Working with/managing difficult people	43.2% (19)	31.8% (14)	18.2% (8)	6.8% (3)	44
Managing up/Working with deans and provosts	26.2% (11)	61.9% (26)	4.8% (2)	7.1% (3)	42
Department advocacy	48.8% (21)	37.2% (16)	7.0% (3)	7.0% (3)	43
Keeping active in scholarship	38.6% (17)	34.1% (15)	13.6% (6)	13.6% (6)	44
Planning & assessment	22.2% (10)	46.7% (21)	22.2% (10)	8.9% (4)	45
Leading and managing change	25.6% (11)	51.2% (22)	16.3% (7)	7.0% (3)	43

2. Please indicate which times are the best for a half- to full-day skill-building workshop. Rate 1 (best time) to 3 (worst time).

	<i>answered question</i>			45
	<i>skipped question</i>			0
	Response Average	Response Total	Response Count	
	2.27	100	44	
	2.16	93	43	
	1.68	74	44	

3. If you wish, please provide comments or observations.

	<i>answered question</i>	11
	<i>skipped question</i>	34
	Response Count	
		11

4. Please indicate your university.

	<i>answered question</i>		45
	<i>skipped question</i>		0
	Response Percent	Response Count	
Washington & Lee University	60.00%	27	
University of Richmond	40.00%	18	

Survey

1. Please rate the overall experience of the workshop			
	<i>answered question</i>		15
	<i>skipped question</i>		0
		Response Percent	Response Count
Exceeded Expectations		20.00%	3
Met Expectations		66.70%	10
Did Not Meet Expectations		13.30%	2

2. Did the workshop improve your understanding of or provide you with ways of better managing the following:				
	<i>answered question</i>			14
	<i>skipped question</i>			1
	Yes	Somewhat	No	Response Count
Leadership	53.8% (7)	38.5% (5)	7.7% (1)	13
Building Community	28.6% (4)	57.1% (8)	14.3% (2)	14
Time Management	46.2% (6)	30.8% (4)	23.1% (3)	13
Leading Faculty Colleagues	15.4% (2)	61.5% (8)	23.1% (3)	13
Working with Dean	15.4% ,2,	46.2% ,6,	38.5% ,5,	13
Working with Other Chairs/Heads	30.8% (4)	53.8% (7)	15.4% (2)	13
Managing Conflict	50.0% (7)	42.9% (6)	7.1% (1)	14
Managing Dual Identity as Faculty & Head/Chair	36.4% (4)	54.5% (6)	9.1% (1)	11
Keeping Active in Scholarship	27.3% (3)	63.6% (7)	9.1% (1)	11

3. Please rate the workshop speaker, Walt Gmelch.						
	<i>answered question</i>					14
	<i>skipped question</i>					1
					Rating Average	Response Count
Excellent	100.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1	7
Good	100.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1	7
Average	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0	0
Below Average	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0	0
Poor	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0	0
						9

4. Please rate workshop venue, Boar's Head Inn.						
	<i>answered question</i>					15
	<i>skipped question</i>					0
					Rating Average	Response Count
Excellent	100.0% (9)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1	9
Average	83.3% (5)	16.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.17	6
Poor	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0	0
						7

5. Would you attend other W&L-UR combined leadership workshops?			
	<i>answered question</i>		15
	<i>skipped question</i>		0
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		80.00%	12
No		20.00%	3

6. If you answered "yes" to Question 5, which of the following sessions are you most interested in learning more about?			
	<i>answered question</i>		10
	<i>skipped question</i>		5
		Response Percent	Response Count
Building Community		70.00%	7
Working with Difficult People		30.00%	3
Managing Conflict		50.00%	5
Time Management		40.00%	4
Communication Skills		40.00%	4

7. Please identify your institution			
	<i>answered question</i>		15
	<i>skipped question</i>		0
		Response Percent	Response Count
Washington & Lee		53.30%	8
University of Richmond		46.70%	7

8. Please identify status.			
	<i>answered question</i>		15
	<i>skipped question</i>		0
		Response Percent	Response Count
Faculty		80.00%	12
Staff		20.00%	3

9. Comments?		
	<i>answered question</i>	8
	<i>skipped question</i>	7
	Response Count	
		8