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## **Hospitality Faculty Member Perceptions of the Role of Faculty Development for Their Teaching**

Rachel C. Plews<sup>a\*</sup> and Laura Zizka<sup>b</sup>

*<sup>a</sup>Centre de soutien à l'enseignement, Haute école pédagogique Vaud, Lausanne,  
Switzerland*

*<sup>b</sup>Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne HES-SO // University of Applied Sciences and  
Arts Western Switzerland*

\*Avenue de Cour 33  
1014 Lausanne  
+41 21 316 92 87  
rachel.plews@hepl.ch

## **Hospitality Faculty Member Perceptions of the Role of Faculty Development for Their Teaching**

This research note aims to explore hospitality faculty member perceptions on the purpose of faculty development while bringing increased awareness to the overall significance of educational development to the hospitality education discipline. The study examines the three dimensions of faculty development – faculty development, instructional development, and organizational development, in the context of data collected from a survey of hospitality management faculty members at one international hospitality management school in Switzerland. Analysis of the initial findings indicates that these faculty members view faculty development in the more traditional sense as a resource for supporting their teaching activities opposed to a strategic change agent within the institution. Areas for future research include expansion of the study to multiple institutions, the consideration of the needs of industry-centric and traditional academic faculty members, and shifting perspectives of stakeholders within the three dimensions of faculty development.

Keywords: hospitality faculty, educational development, faculty development, hospitality education

# **Hospitality Faculty Member Perceptions of the Role of Faculty Development for Their Teaching**

## **Introduction**

“Good teaching can be taught” (Bell, 1977, p.15). This statement itself grounds the significance and purpose of faculty development, or educational development, in higher education. Faculty development in higher education takes on various forms – a centralized center, an individual faculty member, a committee, a clearinghouse for programs and offerings, or a system-wide structure (Lee, 2010). The most common offerings are directly related to instructional support and consist of workshops, individual consultations, and classroom observations. Other activities include orientations, grants for teaching development, faculty fellows, teaching circles, learning communities, and engagement in national and international projects (Honan, Westmoreland, & Tew, 2013).

The hospitality education discipline brings in a layer of complexity that is not seen in more traditional academic subjects, mainly the industry work experience factor. Studies about faculty in hospitality education have focused on demographics (Woods, Youn, & Johanson, 2008), the impact of industry experience (Millar, Mao, & Moreno, 2010; Kalargyrou & Wood, 2012; Phelan, Mejia, & Hertzman, 2013; Phelan & Mejia, 2015), job satisfaction (Beck, La Lopa, & Hu, 2003; Chatfield, Meyer, & Fried, 2013), and issues related to program characteristics and quality (Assante, Huffman, & Harp, 2010; Lee, Dopson, & Ko, 2017; Pearlman, Ryu, & Schaffer, 2010; Schoffstall, 2015; Van Hoof, Wu, Zhang, & Mattila, 2013). With the focus more on the faculty member profiles and what this could mean for student learning, little has been written on the teaching development of current faculty members, and, more specifically, on their perceptions on what this means. The gap must be addressed in order to understand the developmental needs of hospitality faculty members, to plan for their ongoing professional development, and to ensure that

these initiatives align with the institutional teaching and learning strategy. This research note aims to share a small cohort of hospitality faculty member perceptions on the purpose of faculty development, while bringing increased awareness to the overall significance and the complexity of educational development to the hospitality education discipline.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Definitions of Faculty Development***

Definitions of faculty development reflect the nature of the definition of development itself – changes in individuals over time (Feldman, 1997). McKee, Johnson, Ritchie, and Tew (2013) defined faculty development as “...many forms of organized support to help faculty members mature as teachers, scholars, and citizens of their campuses, professions, and broader communities, especially as these processes pertain to enhancing student learning outcomes” (p.1). This integrates earlier definitions, which include three central paradigms – development of the individual faculty member, instructional development, and organizational development (Sherer & Kristensen, 2003).

As the definition of faculty development has expanded over time to recognize the different dimensions of the faculty role, it is critical to emphasize that faculty development is not a training function. Training is often tied to institutional compliance and is imposed, opposed to development which focuses on providing knowledge to encourage a more productive faculty, who actively participate in the development activities (Stabile & Ritchie, 2013). A step beyond development activities, one that reflects the intended visionary nature (Camblin & Steger, 2000) of faculty development, is faculty enrichment – an interdisciplinary mindset focused on the idea of creation instead of production at the center of academic work incorporating reflective practice to promote continuous improvement in one’s teaching practice (Stabile & Ritchie, 2013).

### ***The Evolution of Faculty Development***

The scope of faculty development has evolved over the decades, from an isolationist view in the 1970's to a more integrative view of the faculty role and development activities that is intentional and continuous (Cafferella & Zinn, 1999; Stabile & Ritchie, 2013). This subsequent era emerged out of various challenges facing the landscape of higher education, including changes in student population, advances in technologies, and emerging demands for accountability in demonstrating teaching effectiveness (Hibbert & Selmer, 2016). The current era expands to a paradigm of faculty development as not only an educational enhancement tool but as a visionary change agent (McKee & Tew, 2013). For this to occur, faculty development must be embedded into the strategic vision and the organizational culture of the institution, addressing the issues that affect all areas of faculty work. Table 1 illustrates the evolution of the models of faculty development capturing these three eras.

INSERT TABLE 1 – Models of Faculty Development

### ***Faculty Member Perceptions on Faculty Development***

The body of literature on the purpose and goals of faculty development relies on data collected from educational administrators and educational developers (McKee et al., 2013). With 54% percent of the 300 institutions in the POD Network study reporting faculty development as a centralized unit with dedicated staff, there are certainly other structures of institutional faculty development initiatives with individuals working in faculty development as part of their professional role. The perceptions of faculty members in the position to benefit from the programming may be different than those responsible from designing, delivering, and evaluating the program.

## **Research Purpose and Rationale**

As previously discussed, faculty members who teach in hospitality programs do not necessarily come from traditional academic backgrounds thus creating the possibility of an increased need for teaching support. While faculty members with Ph.D. qualifications are required for accreditation purposes and to acquire research funding (Ladkin & Weber, 2009), a gap exists relating to hospitality industry experience if those candidates are consistently hired over individuals without advanced degrees who come with years of real-world work experience.

In the sample population for this study, during the 2016-2017 academic year, the faculty at one international hospitality management school in Switzerland consisted of two full professors, four associate professors, 24 assistant professors, 36 senior lecturers, nine lecturers, 12 senior lecturers – Practical Arts, 17 lecturers – Practical Arts, and approximately 14 visiting faculty members. There were 27 research faculty members representing 22.5% of the total faculty population. The diverse makeup of this population is representative of many higher education hospitality programs. This study aims to gain insight into the following question –*What do hospitality management faculty members perceive as the purpose of faculty development?*

## **Methodology**

A survey on the goals and purpose of faculty development, adapted from a study conducted with members of the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education (Sorcinelli et al., 2006) was sent electronically to the faculty members teaching undergraduate level courses at the school. This instrument was selected as its design evolved from earlier surveys on faculty development focusing on structure and goals, adaptations of *Faculty Development Practices in U.S. Colleges and*

*Universities* (Centra, 1976). The POD Network study survey was sent to 999 POD members, with a response rate of 494 completed surveys, representing 300 institutions. The longitudinal similarities among these studies speak to the validity and reliability of the instrument (McKee et al., 2013). The survey method was selected to have a "numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population" (Creswell, 2009, p.145). The results were analyzed by pre-determined themes – results as a collective group, results differentiated by years of service, and responses to open-ended prompts.

## **Findings**

The survey response rate was 23.33% with 28 completed surveys submitted. Table 1 illustrates a summary of the results. The faculty members ranked the following prompts as most significantly related to the goals and purpose of faculty development:

- Create or sustain a culture of teaching excellence – 82.76% to a great extent
- Advance new initiatives in teaching and learning – 75.86% to a great extent
- Provide support for faculty members experiencing difficulties in their teaching – 86.21% to a great extent

The prompts with the lowest scores were to act as a change agent within the institution (32.41% to a great extent) and to foster collegiality within and among faculty members and disciplines (31.03% to a great extent).

The results were then further broken down into perceptions by years of service within the school. For faculty members with one to three years of service, the significant prompts were to create or sustain a culture of teaching excellence (100% to a great extent) and to provide support for faculty members who are experiencing difficulties with their teaching (100% to a great extent). For faculty members with four to seven years of service, the most significant prompt was to provide support for faculty members who are experiencing

difficulties with their teaching (76.92% to a great extent). For faculty members with over seven years of service, the most significant prompts were to respond to and support individual faculty members' goals for professional development (100%), to create or sustain a culture of teaching excellence (100%), to advance new initiatives in teaching and learning (100%), to provide support for faculty members who are experiencing difficulties with their teaching (100%) and to support discipline goals, planning, and development (83.33%).

Table 2 illustrates a summary of the findings.

INSERT TABLE 2

The last two items in the survey were open-ended prompts, the first about the respondent perception of the essential components of faculty development, and the second an open space to write additional comments. Fourteen of the responses to the first question wrote about support for teaching as an essential function for faculty development, using words and phrases including *general teaching support*, *coaching*, *help with teaching methods*, and to support *teaching excellence*. Three of the faculty members with over seven years of service extended this support to include more proactive strategies to learning about pedagogy, as opposed to more general support. These comments were shared as follows: “a platform to exchange ideas,” “inform about the latest trends in education and help implement them,” and “give new insights on pedagogy and inform faculty about new ideas and trends.”

### **Analysis**

The prompts in the POD survey are representative of the three paradigms of educational development. The findings were analyzed at three levels – as one large faculty community, by years of service, and general perceptions by faculty member rank. Table 3 summarizes the survey prompts and the paradigm alignment. Most of the prompts are aligned with



faculty development or organizational development, with only one prompt aligning to instructional development. This can be a reflection on the broadening of the definition of faculty development from a supportive function that is more focused on individual teaching activities (Stabile & Ritchie, 2013) to that of an organizational change agent, supporting the different dimensions and roles of faculty life (McKee & Tew, 2013).

### INSERT TABLE 3

The POD survey results found the top three goals, reported by faculty developers, were (1) creating or sustaining a culture of teaching excellence – 55%, (2) responding to individual faculty members' needs – 56%, and (3) advancing new initiatives in teaching and learning – 49%. These first two goals align with the school's faculty member responses, which are classified as faculty development activities. The third goal – advancing new initiatives, lends itself more to organizational development tasks. Advancing new initiatives can take on many forms and this could reflect the more progressive institutional change agent function of faculty development, particularly as new initiatives can result from examining the impact of teaching strategies and the promotion of collaborative opportunities (Honan et al., 2013).

In addition to creating or sustaining a culture of teaching excellence, the faculty members reported that providing support for faculty members who are experiencing difficulty in their teaching is also perceived as one of the primary purposes of educational development. This compliments the nature of faculty development as individualized support directly linked to excellence in teaching and learning (Gaff & Simpson, 1994). While faculty members acknowledge that this is important, further investigation needs to be done to discover how exactly one becomes aware of personal teaching challenges – is it the result of self-diagnosis, feedback from students, or through other means? Promoting

faculty development activities that encourage reflective practice and exchange (Stabile & Ritchie, 2013) can lead to an increase in the awareness of this function of support.

While some perceptions of the purpose of faculty development seem to remain static over the faculty career stages, there is evidence of expanding ideas as the individual gains more professional teaching experience. The faculty members with over seven years of service view faculty development as a more comprehensive part of the overall institution, paralleling the discussion of its organizational development role. The mid- or late-career faculty member still recognizes the need for teaching support for early-career faculty members, but now has different needs and expectations. This aligns with the findings where faculty members with over seven years of experience view faculty development as a supportive function, as opposed to an evaluative function. It is also representative of the more recent era of faculty development, which assumes the visionary change agent position (Camblin & Steger, 2000). The prompt with the lowest significance ranking with faculty at all career stages is to foster collegiality within and among faculty members and disciplines. It is possible that this is related to the isolationist view on the nature of faculty work (Persellin & Goodrick, 2012; Stabile & Ritchie, 2013) and the focus on ones' discipline-based expertise (Gaff & Simpson, 1994). However, the lack of understanding of what this term means within disciplines and across an institution might have impacted this rating.

In hospitality education, there is a broader categorization of faculty members, mainly to differentiate the traditional academics from the industry veterans who have moved into academia. It was anticipated that these two groups might have different perceptions on the purpose of faculty development. No substantial differences were observed, with 96% of the sample reporting their perception of faculty development as either entirely supportive or

some combination of both supportive and evaluative. Further data (qualitative) must be collected and analyzed in order to obtain more detailed data for analysis.

### **Limitations**

The main limitation of this study was that it was conducted with a sample from one institution, with a response rate of 23.33%. Next, the survey instrument used was written to be used by those working in an educational development role, so the terminology used might not represent standard language used by faculty members on a regular basis. There is little evidence to support the validity and reliability of this instrument aside from its longitudinal use. Also, the survey was only distributed in English. The faculty members in the sample population are quite diverse regarding nationality, with many speaking a native language other than English, which also could have impacted the response rate.

### **Future Research**

This study was designed to explore faculty member perceptions on the purpose of faculty development in one context. In the future, additional studies could include work in the areas of the differences of expectations and perspectives between industry-experienced faculty members and traditional academic faculty (cultural aspects and across the career stages), the role of faculty development to encourage collaboration between these and other categories of hospitality faculty members, and, more broadly, the role of faculty development in faculty tenure and promotion in hospitality education.

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