The New Norm of Faculty Flexibility: Transforming the Culture in Science & Engineering, Panel #3

Moving an institution forward to create cultural change around work-life issues requires:
- Good programmatic and policy strategies
- On-going assessment of progress and impact of strategies

My comments are based on:
- Experience with evaluation studies
- ADVANCE, CIRTL
- Institutional Evaluations
- Program Evaluations for Foundations


The Importance of Measurement and Assessment of Cultural Change

- Academe values systematic analysis
- Assessment is a catalyst for change
- Data encourage shared understanding about changes necessary
- Assessment provides benchmarks
- Assessment findings aid in decision-making
- On-going periodic assessment fosters continued progress

Strategies for Assessing Cultural Change

- Many useful strategies
  - Quantitative and qualitative
  - Each evaluation approach has advantages and limitations
- Determine strategies on basis of questions/goals
- Decide assessment strategies based on these questions
  - Goals: What are we trying to achieve?
  - Evidence: What will tell us if we are successful or making progress?
  - Process: How can we best gather data?
  - Who to ask: Who can provide the most useful data?
  - Who to involve: Who can best gather/ask for data?

Qualitative Assessment Strategies: Examples

- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Program Documents
- Committee Notes
- Organizational Map
- Exit Interviews

Quantitative Assessment Strategies: Examples

- Regular collection of specified indicators
  - (e.g., salary, # women, # appointment types)
- Routine benchmarking with peer institutions
- Salary regressions
Examples of Assessment Approaches that can Use Both Qualitative and Quantitative Data

- Climate Studies
  - What is current status? What is extent of change?
- Teaching and Promotion Studies
  - Trend data, experiences
- Career Pathway Studies
  - # women at various ranks and in appointments
  - Experiences in negotiating career paths
- Network Analysis
  - Who associates with whom?
- Studies of:
  - Use and impact of policies
  - Personnel decisions
  - Grievances filed
  - Levels of faculty satisfaction

Examples of Useful Questions to Guide Assessment Planning

- Different questions are useful at different points in a change process
  - To assess the current situation
  - To guide implementation of strategies, programs, and policies to monitor progress
  - To help the institution continue to move forward in changing the culture

To Assess the Current Situation

- What is the pulse of the institution?
- What do faculty perceive as positive features of the culture or environment in regard to flexibility and work-life issues?
- What concerns do faculty have?
- What supports, challenges, and barriers confront faculty in specific fields in regard to flexibility?
- What changes in the institutional environment (including policies and practices) may be needed to more fully support faculty in regard to flexibility?

To Guide Implementation and Monitor Progress

- Are new policies and programs working as intended?
- How well do faculty and administrators understand new policies?
- Are there differences in implementation of policies across units? What is the effect on various groups?
- How is a policy having impact on particular groups of individuals? On the institution as a whole?
- To what extent and in what ways has the institution changed over the past 2 years (5 years) in regard to flexibility and work-life issues?
- What concerns are faculty or administrators reporting in regard to the past 2 years (5 years) in regard to flexibility and work-life issues? Who has what concerns?

To Help an Institution Continue to Move Forward

- What are the next steps for improving the academic workplace in regard to flexibility? Which are “easy”? Which are more challenging?
- What interventions, programs, or policies need to be improved? Why? How?
- To what extent are effective policies and programs becoming institutionalized?
- What would deepen institutionalization of effective programs and policies?

Using Assessment to Strengthen Cultural Change

- Issues to Consider:
  - Who to involve in evaluation decisions
  - Logistics
  - Dissemination
### Using Assessment to Strengthen Cultural Change: Who to Consider Involving

- **Senior leaders**
  - They can help establish priorities
  - Their involvement can encourage their interest

- **Department Chairs**
  - They may have specific questions and can use data in decision making

- **Faculty members**
  - Inviting their involvement conveys respect and commitment to flexibility
  - Faculty have useful contributions

- **Internal Evaluators**
  - They know the institution well

- **External Evaluators**
  - They can get access to some data not accessible to internal evaluators
  - Objectivity and comparative perspective

### Logistics

- Establish common terminology and standardized reporting
- Consider ease to participants
- Consider appropriate timing
- Consider confidentiality and professionalism
- Consider who can best collect data

### Dissemination Considerations

- **Share evaluation data and findings openly**
  - Provide data routinely, publicly
  - Newsletter, web sites, meetings
  - Encourage sense of ownership

- **Accuracy and accessibility of reports**
  - Explain how to interpret data

- **Timeliness of dissemination**

- **Develop conversations around findings**

- **Model ways to use data reports and findings**

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