

Administrative Faculty Leadership Development Initiative: An Assessment of
Administrative Faculty Management and Leadership Preparedness and
Recommendations for Professional Development

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Project Overview

Tennessee State University (TSU) has always maintained a commitment to excellence in educating and preparing students to “Think. Work. Serve.” in their communities. In doing so, however, very little formal instruction or training has been offered to administrative faculty to assist them in managing the rigors of research, teaching and leading the faculty members in their charge. Many times, administrative faculty arrive in their positions by chance; and while they are very capable of researching and teaching in their particular disciplines, they are ill-equipped to manage and lead faculty and staff. Often, despite the best of intentions, unprepared administrative faculty can run afoul of TSU policies and procedures when dealing with issues as small as scheduling travel to issues as big as evaluating, coaching and managing faculty performance.

To more fully understand the day to day challenges that administrative faculty face here at TSU, this project was developed. The goal of this project was to ask administrative faculty about which aspects of their jobs are most difficult to manage; and if TSU were to offer a training program to assist them in their leadership roles, what it would look like. As a result, all 62 administrative faculty members were surveyed with 43 or 69% responding. This report summarizes the responses to the survey, briefly examines training programs offered at other universities and proposes recommendations for training based on best practices in training leaders in higher education.

I. SURVEY & FINDINGS

“Before anything else, preparation is the key to success.” -- Alexander Graham Bell

There is an age old debate about whether leaders are born or made. Unfortunately, the answer to that question is not contained in this paper. However, what this paper will present is an overview of the current methods of preparing faculty administrators to lead their departments/colleges at fellow TBR institutions as well as the best practices that are in use at other universities across the United States. Finally, this paper will contain recommendations for an administrative faculty development initiative at TSU.

In order to gain a better understanding of the level of preparedness administrative faculty enter their positions with, it was necessary to survey the University’s administrative faculty. This project was discussed with Dr. Mark Hardy, Vice President of Academic Affairs, who expressed great interest in learning how the University could better serve faculty leaders. With his permission, sixty-two administrative faculty were sent an email under his name requesting that they complete an online survey composed of fifteen multiple choice and open ended questions. Of the sixty-two surveys sent, forty-seven surveys were begun but only forty-three were completed; this translates into a sixty-nine percent response rate.

The faculty administrators surveyed consisted of the following positions:

1. What is your official working title?	Number of survey respondents.	Percentage of survey respondents.
Assoc./Asst. Vice President	4	9
Dean	5	12
Assoc./Asst. Dean	4	9
Department Head	21	49
Director	9	21
Total	43	100%

On average, the faculty administrators surveyed had been employed at TSU between ten and twenty years, and 28% of respondents had been at TSU for more than twenty years. With respect to the length of time in their current positions, the majority of the administrative faculty surveyed fell into two groups: four to six years (26%) and ten or more years (26%).

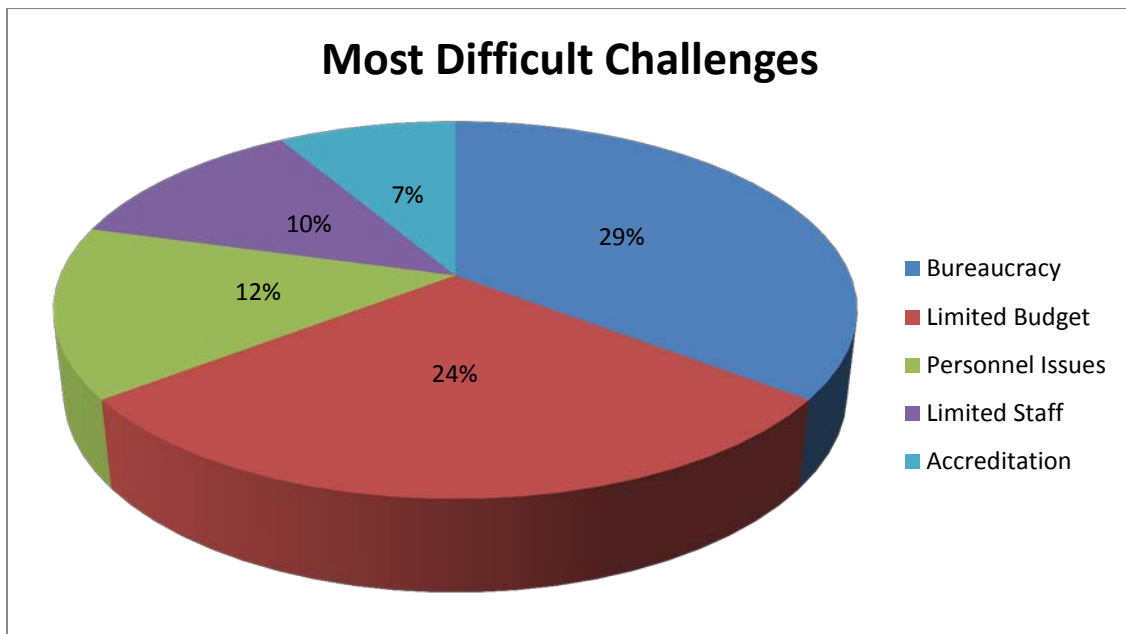
2. How long have you held this position?		Response	%
Less than one year		4	9%
1-3 years		9	21%
4-6 years		11	26%
7-9 years		8	19%
10 or more years		11	26%
Total		43	100%

In terms of how administrative faculty at TSU are chosen, most (60%) actively pursued their positions, with 48% being external candidates for the positions in which they currently serve and 12% being internal candidates for promotion. The remaining 40% of respondents were chosen for their positions after being requested to serve by another administrator.

Sixty-nine percent of the respondents reported receiving some manner of training that prepared them to serve in their current positions. However, of the 69% who received training, only 38% reported attending a formal, structured training program such as those provided by the American Council of Education (ACE) or the Regents Academy Leadership Institute (RALI), the leadership program previously offered by the Tennessee Board of Regents. The remaining 31% who reported receiving training described some combination of informal, piecemeal preparation such as continuing education workshops, graduate coursework, mentoring in preparation for or during the course of their service as administrative faculty, or on the job training. Thirty-one percent of respondents reported receiving no training at all.

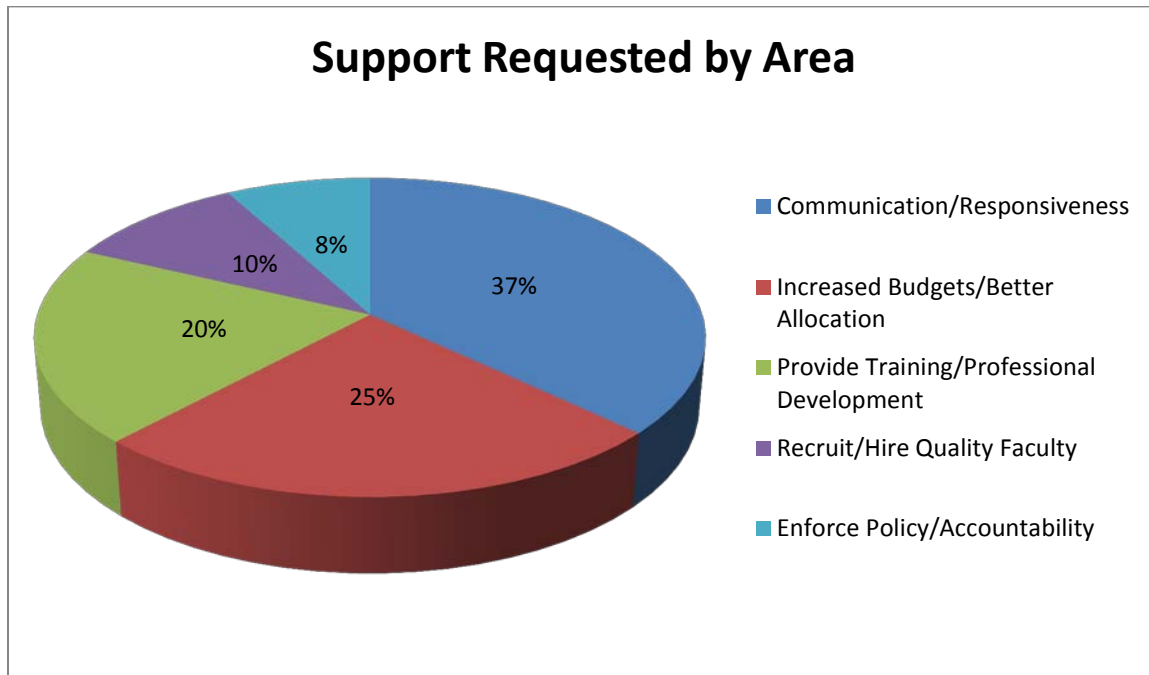
After determining the level of preparedness with which administrative faculty entered their positions, we surveyed them to determine what their biggest day-to-day challenges are. Respondents were allowed to give text responses to answer this question and their answers fell into five basic categories: bureaucracy, limited budget, personnel issues, limited staff and accreditation. By far, bureaucracy and limited budgets were the two most difficult challenges that faculty administrators encounter. The other top three challenges reported by faculty in order of difficulty included personnel issues, understaffing, and accreditation respectively.

Answers associated with the bureaucracy category included difficulty navigating the hiring process, difficulty using the various electronic applications such as PeopleAdmin and Sciquest, and encountering too many layers of and delays in getting approval for various administrative tasks. Answers associated with the limited budget category included struggling with diminishing budgets while being assigned increasing responsibilities and not enough funding to recruit the best faculty and/or students. Respondents cited that departmental politics, training deficiencies and lack of accountability are challenges associated with personnel issues while not having enough faculty and staff to carry out the varied number of tasks required of certain programs fell in the limited staff category. Finally, survey results showed that some faculty administrators experience difficulty with finding the time to prepare for accreditation and finding the resources to maintain compliance with accreditation standards.





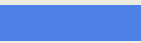

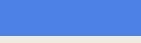
After asking faculty administrators to share the most challenging issues they deal with, they were surveyed to determine what types of assistance they would like for the University to provide in order for them to be supported in their positions. Their responses to this survey question fell into five main categories: 1) Provide better communication and responsiveness; 2)

Increase budgets and allocate funding more effectively; 3) Provide training and professional development opportunities; 4) Recruit and hire high quality faculty; and 5) Enforce existing policies and ensure accountability.



Respondents' answers to the question of how the University could best support them were very candid and relatively consistent across all respondents with 91% of the responses falling into the five categories above.

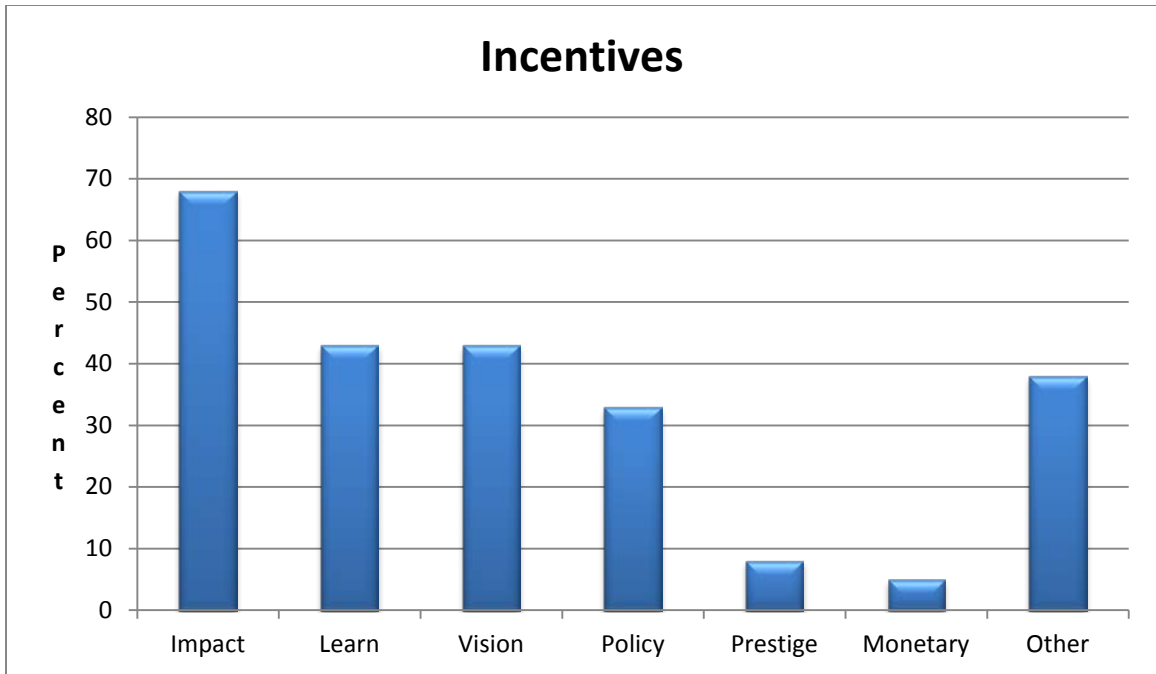
Of course, even the most effective leadership development program is useless if it is not offered in a manner in which the faculty administrators find useful; therefore, the survey also sought to determine what methods of delivery would be preferred by our respondents and how much time they would have to dedicate toward a professional development program. Respondents were asked to choose between five different types of delivery methods: self directed online modules, online webinars facilitated by a host, in person workshops, in person lecture series or a hybrid.

Answer		Response	%
Self Directed Online Module (i.e. Power Point)		4	10%
Online Webinar (i.e. Facilitated by a host)		8	20%
In Person Workshops		12	30%
In Person Lecture Series		4	10%
Hybrid (Please explain)		12	30%
Total		40	100%

Those respondents who selected the hybrid option were also asked to describe, in their own words, what the ideal hybrid program would look like. Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they would prefer a mix of in person workshops and online webinars and/or self-directed training.

The time frames that most respondents would be able to commit to a leadership development program in order of preference are: 1 day course offered periodically (53%); 1 – 3 hour course offered periodically (25%); 2 – 4 hour course offered periodically (20%); and 2 day course offered periodically (3%).

Lastly, an important part of determining how to best serve the faculty administrators at TSU included determining what aspects of their jobs they perceived as being the most and least positive. Information gained from this question is essential in developing processes and structures that will incentivize faculty administrators to continue performing despite the challenges they face on a regular basis.



Those faculty administrators who selected “other” for this question followed up by naming additional aspects of their jobs from which they derived positive feelings. Some of those answers included: helping students, contributing to the legacy of TSU, impacting the community, and career satisfaction.

II. BENCHMARKING

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.” – John F. Kennedy

This project also included research to determine what, if any, leadership development programs other institutions of higher learning provided for their administrative faculty. The following information was gathered by conducting online research as well as telephone interviews with training personnel at three TBR institutions:

Telephone Interviews

Austin Peay State University
East Tennessee State University
University of Memphis

Other Institutions

University of Wisconsin, Madison
University of Virginia

Summaries of the approaches that each of these institutions take toward developing their faculty administrators are included below. Although the non-TBR institutions referenced in this project may not be considered “peer institutions” either due to their size or the resources they have available, they were selected because they have comprehensive programs in place that represent best practices in higher education faculty development.

Peer Institutions

Austin Peay State University

Austin Peay State University does not have a faculty administrator development program. However, through a combination of programming, including lunch and learn workshops, on demand, on line training, and weekly webinars they are able to provide basic educational resources for their faculty and staff. The programs that have specific relevance to faculty administrators are:

- FMLA- What Supervisors Need to Know

- Understanding COBRA/HIPPA for Supervisors
- FLSA- What Supervisors Need to Know
- Job Descriptions- How to Write them Effectively
- Americans with Disabilities Act- What Supervisors Need to Know
- Diversity- Legal Basics for Supervisors
- How to Prevent and Respond to Bullying at Work
- Preventing Sexual Harassment- A Guide for Supervisors

All of the above listed courses are offered on-line and on demand (Training Today- On Demand Training, n.d.)

East Tennessee State University

Like Austin Peay, East Tennessee State University (ETSU) does not offer a training program specifically for administrative faculty and provides an array of on-line, on demand courses for all employees and some specifically for supervisors. However, ETSU has developed two programs in addition to their regularly offered training that is designed to develop leadership skills and improve supervisory effectiveness. The first program, Leadership: Excellence and Achievement through Development or LEAD, is available to all employees and is designed to help with leadership skills development. Employees must take the Supervisor Survival Skills course along with four other courses of their choice in order to complete the program. The LEAD program is exclusively on-line (LEAD Certification, n.d.).

The second program, Supervisor Development Program or SDP, is a collaboration between the Human Resources Department, the Office of Equity and Diversity, Payroll and the University Counsel's Office. The SDP is designed to improve the effectiveness of supervisors through a combination of on-line and in person courses totaling approximately thirty (30) hours of training and graduates of the SDP must take an annual refresher course. One incentive built

into the SDP is that participation in the program is taken into account when supervisors seek promotions or upward mobility within the institution (Supervisor Development, n.d.).

University of Memphis

The University of Memphis (U of M) offers three certificate programs in business skills achievement, business writing and professional development, as well as numerous courses on change management, communication, compliance, customer service, diversity and leadership which are open to all employees; however, there is no administrative faculty training program. These courses are offered on-line as well as in person utilizing trainers from inside the university as well as experts from the greater Memphis community.

Additionally, the U of M provides an Online Leadership Resources Library which is targeted to supervisors, managers, team leaders and department chairs to assist them in understanding the university's policies, procedures and programs. The Online Leadership Resources Library is effective at centralizing important information for leaders in one place, identifying resources available to staff and providing a resources manual that assists in answering frequently asked questions.

Peer Institution Summary

The training offered by APSU, ETSU and the U of M is overwhelmingly on-line and on demand. Representatives from each of the peer institutions cite the lack of funding and staff as the main reasons for moving more toward the on-line training format. There are some benefits to providing training in an on-line, on demand setting such as the programming is always available to the employee to use at their convenience, from any location and this type of training is typically less expensive to produce than hiring a staff member or independent contractor to provide the training. However, the disadvantage to on-line on demand training is that it is not interactive. There are no opportunities for employees to ask questions and receive answers in real time and there is no way for employees to hear their peers' experiences and learn from

each other. Based on the survey results of TSU administrative faculty, the interactive aspect of training is highly desired and considered most conducive to learning.

Other Institutions

In addition to surveying peer institutions within the TBR system, information was also collected from two additional institutions: University of Wisconsin, Madison and University of Virginia. These two universities were chosen because they have training programs specifically designed for administrative faculty and their programs demonstrate a wide range of content and formatting while still being effective.

The University of Wisconsin at Madison

The Office of Human Resource Development at the University of Wisconsin at Madison (UWM) cites its mission as, “to support UW-Madison in its pursuit of excellence in teaching, research and service by providing learning events and services to meet individual, group, and organizational needs and to promote professional development efforts within the University.” (About OHRD, 2010).

In furtherance of UWM’s Office of Human Resource Development’s mission, there are a wide variety of administrative faculty training options:

Program Type	Sponsoring Unit	Audience	Frequency & Format
Chair & Director Workshops	Provost & HR	Department/Program Chairs, Asst./Assoc. Deans	One 2 ½ hour workshop per month
Department Chair Chats	Provost, HR & Office of Quality Improvement	Department Chairs	Recurring Sessions on “How to Thrive & Survive as a Department Chair”
New Chair & Director Orientation	Provost & HR	New Chairs & Directors	2 Sessions, 3 months apart
Climate Workshop	Women in Science & Engineering Institute	Department Chairs	One time
Department Chair Toolkit	Provost	Department Chairs	On Demand

Department Admin. Certificate Program	HR	Department Administrators nominated by Deans	One Time
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(About OHRD, 2010). In contrast to the types and format of training offered by the TBR institutions previously discussed, most of UWM's training for administrative faculty is offered in person. The only program that is offered specifically on-line and on demand is the Department Chair Toolkit which is a repository for campus policies, programs and resources for chairs of academic departments. All other programs offer a face to face experience in which university leaders have the opportunity to hear from subject matter experts and interact with their peers.

University of Virginia

The Leadership Development Center at the University of Virginia (U of V) is responsible for providing opportunities for professional development for all staff at the university. While they do not have programming specifically set aside for administrative faculty, they do have programming designed to assist high level administrative and faculty develop their leadership skills. The leadership development courses are categorized based upon the increasing level of responsibility each participant has. The U of V also offers executive coaching for their high level faculty and staff who will be taking on new or expanded responsibilities, developing or presenting a vision or strategy for the organization, or who may be in need of tools to assist in the improvement of others' performance. While the service is not offered in-house, the U of V facilitates the process, screens coaches and negotiates reduced fees for the service.

The Leadership Development Center is also available to provide customized plans of action to assist leaders in managing change, implementing new processes, teambuilding, managing conflict and planning for the future.

Program Type	Sponsoring Unit	Audience	Frequency & Format
Executive Leadership Program	Leadership Development Center	Administrative Faculty & High Level Staff	5 ½ days of sessions over 4 months with 5 hours independent work between

			sessions
Executive Coaching	Leadership Development Center	Senior Academic & Administrative Leaders	As Needed
Customized Programs and Services	Leadership Development Center	Faculty & Staff	One time or On going

Summary of Other Institutions

Both the University of Wisconsin at Madison and the University of Virginia are large institutions, with UWM having over 42,000 students enrolled and over 21,000 full time employees and U of V having over 21,000 students enrolled with 12,000 full time employees (Employee Development, 2010). It goes without saying that their monetary resources far outweigh that of TSU and most TBR institutions. However, the models that they have in place can be adopted on a smaller scale to fit the monetary and human resources available at TSU. The takeaway from both institutions is that there is an intentional plan to develop their administrative leaders.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the feedback that TSU administrative faculty provided through the survey developed for this project, these are my recommendations:

1. Develop and provide training for new department heads. The largest segment of respondents in the survey was department heads (49%). Sixty-two percent of respondents had no formal preparation for assuming their positions as administrative faculty. Department heads are the link between the faculty and the administration; as such, an effective department head can be a valuable facilitator. By providing training for new department heads to assist them in the transition from faculty member to administrator, TSU could reduce the amount of difficulty administrative faculty experience when trying to teach, research, balance budgets, staff departments and comply with university policy. Preferably, this training and development would be done in advance of the faculty member being appointed chair by identifying potential leaders and developing succession planning.

Much like the University of Wisconsin at Madison, TSU could develop a new chair orientation through a collaboration with Academic Affairs, Human Resources, Business and Finance and compliance units such as the University Counsel and Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. Since the orientation would be conducted by TSU faculty and staff there would be minimal monetary cost.

2. Provide a regular method of communication between faculty administrators and the central administration and actually address concerns and issues raised during the communication. When asked the question of how the university can support faculty administrators in their jobs, 37% of respondents answered to increase communication and responsiveness. Whether through quarterly forums or administrative faculty led work groups, faculty administrators should be heard, supported and encouraged to provide solutions to the problems that they identify thereby leading to more engaged and satisfied faculty leaders.

3. Provide regularly offered policy and procedure training as well as leadership skills development training to all faculty administrators. Any knowledge untapped or skill unused will erode. It will be essential to allow for periodic refresher courses for all administrative faculty. These courses should address not only policy and procedure refreshers or updates but also provide opportunities to develop leadership skills. In keeping with the feedback offered by respondents to the survey, these courses should be offered in person to allow for question and answer as well as interaction with peers and should last no longer than one day. Training opportunities should be supplemented with self directed, on-line modules to allow for easy reference and accessibility.

CONCLUSION

While the dilemmas faced by institutions of higher learning surrounding the effective leadership of administrative faculty may seem insurmountable, the issue can actually be narrowed down to one simple concept: you don't know what you don't know. Educators are excellent researchers, teachers and thinkers but they are not trained in managing or leading. These are skills that must be taught and used regularly in order to be successful. By communicating with faculty and faculty administrators to understand their needs and then providing them with the tools and resources they need to accomplish their goals, TSU can become a better institution at which to think, work and serve.

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