FACULTY POINT OF VIEW ON FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

ÖĞRETİM ÜYELERİNİN AKADEMİK PERSONELİN GELİŞİMİNE YÖNELİK GÖRÜŞLERİ

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ABSTRACT: This study was carried out to find out how faculty viewed the faculty development and what their choices and recommendations in a faculty development would be. The findings revealed that the faculty found the most important component of a faculty development should be effective teaching skills and technology use. As for an efficient faculty development, the faculty preferred subject experts to give courses in such a program and stated that any kind of monetary reward or certification would not effect their interest. The choice of the faculty about the delivery of the courses in such a program was stated as workshops.Faculty chose the faculty development activities to cover all faculty regardless of academic rank; and the activities to take place during the term not in the holiday periods. As for the recommendations, faculty suggested that all faculty development activities should be organized through a faculty development centre.

Keywords: faculty, faculty development, teaching skills.

ÖZET: Bu çalışma Anadolu Üniversitesi'nde çalışan öğretim üyelerinin akademik personeli geliştirmeye yönelik çalışmalara ilişkin görüş ve önerilerini almak amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Sonuçlar, öğretim üyelerinin ait oldukları gruptan bağımsız olarak en önemli geliştirme faaliyetini öğretmenlik becerileri ve teknoloji kullanımı olarak belirlediklerini göstermiştir. Öğretim üyeleri, akademik personeli geliştirme etkinliklerinin başarı olması için alan uzmanlarınca hazırlanan programların gerekli olduğunu, maddi ödül ya da sertifikanın bu tür etkinliklere katılmada kendilerince önemsiz olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Etkinliklerin öğretim süreci olarak çalışma grupları tarzında yapılması ve kendi üniversitelerinden alan uzmanlarınca yürütülmesi de öğretim üyelerinin görüşleri arasındadır. Öğretim üyeleri etkinliklerin dönem içerisinde, akademik ünvana bakılmaksızın tüm öğretim üyelerini kapsamasını ve akademik personeli geliştirme çalışmalarının bir merkez çatısı altında örgütlenmesini önermişlerdir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: öğretim üyeleri, akademik personeli geliştirme etkinlikleri, öğretim becerileri.

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1.BACKGROUND

Higher education institutions have a responsibility to evaluate and re-evaluate their services as they face the changes in a society. The future holds a premise for education, and higher education institutions will be the organizations to meet this premise. On the other side, developments in education reveal that so much as the knowledge reflected, the higher educations should be learning organizations themselves, as well (Latchem and Lockwood, 1998). Faculty development is one of the new concepts that higher education institutions handle to overcome both professional and institutional obsolescence. There are many definitions to the term faculty development. It has been mentioned under organizational development (Gaff, 1975), or under instructional innovation (Abedor and Sachs, 1978) or under developing teaching skills. However, the current study handles the faculty development as described by AECT in 1987, so as, activities that are planned to develop general teaching skills of the faculty is the approach to the faculty development, within the framework of this study.

There is a direct relation between the efficient production in an organization and human resources, that is, the more qualified human resources become, the more productive and efficient an organization is (Özer, 1998). Faculty are the main human resource of a higher

education institution and they play a critical role in the organization. Faculty development can be seen as a tool to develop the human resources thus, the total quality of the institution. However the first step in a faculty development should be to make the faculty aware of what they are going to be faced with. It is known that, for any activity to be effective, it is vital to consider the opinions, attitudes and recommendations of the participants and that this is possible through research (Hızal, 1989). This has been the aim of the current study.

Faculty development is a novel issue in Turkey. The ivory tower structure of the universities makes it rather difficult to offer a kind of "in-service training" to academicians, however on the other side of coin there is the reality that most of the faculty, except the the ones from Faculty of Education departments, has never taken any courses on teaching skills. There is no reason that any faculty would refuse the opportunity to be trained in teaching skills, if the way to offer it is appropriate. This study, thus, has been conducted with a dual purpose;

- to make the faculty aware of what faculty development is,
- to get the opinions of the faculty for a future faculty development program.

2. THE PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in Anadolu University, Turkey. The population of the study consisted of 427 full time faculty members as professors, associate professors and assistant professors. Since 32 of the faculty could not be reached for different reasons such as military service or studies abroad, that left the population to 395. After the second mailing of the survey the populaton was 202.

The survey used in the study was formed by the researcher herself after a review of literature on faculty development and a study of several surveys on faculty development on the Internet. After a questionnaire of 30 items was set up, a

panel of experts reviewed it for content validity. Having the necessary revisions done, the questionnaire was then submitted for a pilot study to six professors, three associate professors and eleven asistant professors from another university in Eskişehir, thus forming a body of 1/10 of the study population. "Correlation Coefficiency for Ungrouped Raw Data Formula " (Arıcı,1975) was used for the reliability of the survey and the inner consistency was found to be 0.95 after the second submisson of the survey to the same pilot group.

The survey had eight major parts. Section one asked for respondent's rank, length of service, gender and field of study. Section two tried to identify the opinions about the faculty development activities. The third section sought the factors that would effect the participation in faculty development activities. Section four and five asked how and who the lessons should be delivered by. Section six sought to identify which faculty members should participate in a faculty development program. Section seven asked for the timing of the program and the last section, eight, asked for the recommendations of the faculty for a possible program. Altogether there were 28 items on the survey. The survey also included a covering letter explaining what faculty development was and how it would help the faculty to determine their own training via this survey. The purpose of the study was to learn the opinions of the faculty about a possible faculty development program and therefore investigate:

- Faculty's choices on the activities to take place,
- Faculty's considerations about the factors that would effect a program,
- Faculty's choices on how, by whom, who and when the program courses should be presented
- Faculty's recommendations for a possible program.

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3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Although the differences and correlations for rank, length of service, gender and academic field are sought, since there were no significant differences between the groups, the results will be given considering the whole body.

3.1. Choices on the activities within a faculty development program

Out of the nine activities (as classroom management, research methods and statistics etc.) offered, the participants indicated that they would mainly be interested in an activity which would donate them with effective teaching skills (84.4%). The next activity following is the effective use of technology resources (61.7%). This finding is relevant with Odabasi's (2000) and Centra's (1976) finding that the faculty appreciates training and help with the use of tecnology resources.

3.2. Considerations about the factors that would effect a faculty development program

When asked how effective the given factors would be in joining to a faculty development program, faculty rated the factor of the lecturers to be experts in the field as the most important factor (55%). The next important factor for the faculty to follow a program was the enrichment of the academic life (45.4%), that is, the belief that a program will enrich their academic life is conceived very important for the academicians. The least important factor rated was monetary rewards and certification (19.4%). This finding is consistent with Odabasi's (2000) finding, but inconsistent with Centra's (1976).

3.3. Chocies on the presentation of the courses in a faculty development program

As for the choices on the presentation of courses, the participants indicated workshops as their first choice (77.4%), seminars as their second choice (68.5%), and conferences as their third choice (51.7%). These findings are in accordance with Beaty's (1998) discussion of essential processes and structures for professional development of teachers in higher education and Stephen's research (1992) on faculty development.

3.4. Choices on the trainers who will take place in a faculty development program

Faculty indicated that subject expert teachers from their university was their first choice (49.9%). The second choice was subject expert teachers from other universities (40.1%) and the last choice was subject expert teachers from places other than universities (32.3%), like private enterprises.

3.5. Choices on the participants who will attend a faculty development program

As far as the participants to a faculty development program were concerned, the faculty rated academician body altogether as their first choice (54.1%), that is, they believed that all the faculty should be included in such a program. The second choice was again all of the academicians, but this time seperated into their ranks (41.8%) and the third choice was only research assistants (37.3%), that is the junior faculty.

3.6. Choices on the timing of a faculty development

Choices on the timing of a program revealed that the faculty wanted the activities to be within the academic term, as the first choice (77.1%). The second choice was that the activities should be in the half-term holiday (70.8%) and third choice was that the activities should be in the summer holiday (53.1%).

3.7. Recommendations for a future program

The most freguent recommendations for a possible future faculty development program were as follows;

- Faculty development programs should be run by a Faculty Development Center
- Faculty development programs should be realized on the basis of needs of the

faculty and the needs should be determined with regular needs analysis.

● The programs should be repeated on regular basis for all the faculty to catch up with the activities.

● Scholarships abroad should be encouraged

● The clerical work on the faculty, like grading or material preparing should be removed to give the faculty more time for training needs.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the study revealed the profile of a faculty development program that the faculty at Anadolu University would like to attend. The results are interesting in the way that they are in accordance with studies carried abroad and consistent with characteristics of a faculty development program, identified by the experts. This might be a clue that faculty development can be accepted as a universal issue. There is, however, one issue that is contrary to what is said before and that is the monetary reward. Although monetary reward is determined as an important issue in the studies carried abroad, Turkish academicians do not find it a necessity. However, this result is consistent within it's frame since the same body indicated that monetary reward was not an important factor in the use of technology as well (Odabasi, 2000).

The results of this study brought light for a new application in Anadolu University. Since the administration was interested in the research, a faculty development activity started within the university's faculty of education. A group of assistant professors were given a course of 21 days on teaching skills. The results of that application will consist a future study. For this study, however, it is possible to say that faculty development will gain an acceleration in Turkey.

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