

ROLE AND DEFINITION OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Improving the climate for professional growth has been an issue of special concern to me ever since I came to Cal Poly in 1979. A modern university needs a faculty that is up-to-date in its field. I am, therefore, committed to doing whatever is necessary to ensure that end.

To do so, we have already taken several steps. The first of these has been to define the role of research. Previously, research had been viewed by many as a questionable activity, unrelated, perhaps even inimical, to the aims of the institution. In the fall of 1981, I issued Administrative Bulletin 81-2 with the intention of dispelling that notion. That bulletin identified research as an important and valid form of professional development, appropriate to the purpose of the institution. It also asserted that professional development is essential to maintaining a viable educational program, and is second in importance only to instruction.

The Academic Senate saw the need for a fuller statement on professional growth and development to provide a context for the role of research. In the Fall of 1981, it appointed an ad hoc committee to draft a policy on professional development. That committee met during academic year 1981-82, drafted a statement, and forwarded its recommendations to the Senate in May of 1982. The Senate approved the report in February of 1983 and forwarded it to me with a recommendation for adoption. An Administrative Bulletin was drafted based on that report and shared with other members of the academic community in the Fall of 1983. Further suggestions for improvement were received, evaluated, and, as appropriate, used to refine this version of the bulletin, which is attached.

Parallel with these developments, the Academic Planning Committee was seeking to define more clearly Cal Poly's overall mission. A final statement, originated by this Committee, was issued in September of 1983 after much consultation. Once again, the importance of intellectual and professional growth to the campus was asserted, as follows:

Cal Poly is committed to establishing and maintaining an environment that fosters the complete growth of the individual--student and faculty member alike. Commitment to inquiry and the search for truth is a foundation for intellectual and personal growth. Cal Poly strives to instill among its students intellectual maturity, an appreciation of learning, and a dynamic professionalism. To foster professional development among faculty, it strives to stimulate faculty members to challenge themselves--to develop professionally through organizations, creative activity, consultation, professional leaves in business and industry, or applied or basic research.

Supporting a strong program of professional growth is a costly enterprise, and financial support for faculty development is scarce. The University is aware of the history of deficiency in this vital area and recognizes its responsibility to continue to take action to help alleviate these resource constraints. Clearly it is in the State's best interest to protect its investment in students by insuring the continued development of its teachers.

But the State has not always recognized these responsibilities and their potential benefits. In recent years it has turned down requests for augmented funding with distressing regularity. Consequently, problems that were once nuisances have accumulated and been compounded until quick remedies are no longer possible.

Fortunately, that era seems to be turning around in California as in other states. Although attempts to reduce the teaching load have failed, Cal Poly's FTE faculty allocations have been augmented recently, giving us a student/faculty ratio considerably lower than it was four years ago, making some assigned time appointments possible. Faculty allocations should continue to grow, at least into the near future,

with no accompanying growth in student numbers.

Our teaching laboratories are not ideally suited for some advanced forms of professional development, but the outlook for funds to replace equipment and purchase new equipment is considerably improved. In addition, plans are being considered for conversion of facilities being replaced by new construction to space which could be made available for faculty development and research efforts. Private faculty offices are also being added as each new building is completed. Approved capital improvement projects could add 150 private offices to the campus by the fall of 1987.

Our technical and clerical support staff is still not adequately funded to assure the most productive use of faculty time, and travel to attend professional meetings has never been sufficient to meet realistic needs.

However, a recent program change proposal increased state support for technical staff in some disciplines and the Governor's budget this year formally recognizes faculty professional development in a program change proposal although the funding level is still quite small. The annual giving program along with other private support programs established by the Development Office continue to improve each year to help ameliorate our shortage of resources for faculty professional development.

These changes are happening now, and further initiatives are underway, undertaken at many different levels by various constituencies. I have personally informed key legislators, the Department of Finance, the Governor's Office and, of course, the Chancellor of our need for help, and of the State's responsibility to remedy these problems. In addition, I am redoubling our efforts to gain private support. With the appointment of the new Vice President, University Relations, we have made another major commitment to finding support from the private sector.

In the meantime, this Administrative Bulletin is intended to define professional development, to assert its importance, describe various avenues of professional development, and outline its role in faculty personnel actions.

Clearly, if we were provided adequate funding for professional development, we could do much. Even though we are not, we cannot choose to do nothing at all. As an institution of higher education, we have an obligation to ourselves, our colleagues, our profession, and our students to do the best we can with what we have. Within that context, this bulletin defines the unique role professional development plays on our campus. I encourage each of you to do your best to preserve and enhance the vitality of teaching at Cal Poly.

Warren J. Baker

Date

Note: This Administrative Bulletin should be filed in the Appendix of the Campus Administrative Manual and an entry made in the CAM Index and the title added to the Administrative Bulletin's title page.

ROLE AND DEFINITION OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The vitality of Cal Poly as a university depends on an intellectually active and professionally vigorous faculty. Those who continue to grow professionally also continue to grow as teachers. Indeed, scholarship, professionalism, and teaching are so interdependent that scholarship can become enervated without the stimulation of a professional commitment, and teaching can become irrelevant without the revitalization of scholarship or the touchstone of the marketplace.

As a special institution of higher learning, Cal Poly can profit from a wide range of professional development modes. This Administrative Bulletin is intended to guide faculty into those directions of professional growth most useful to Cal Poly and to define the role professional growth and development plays in the instructional program of the University.

Definition of Professional Development

Professional development is defined as the generation of knowledge or the acquisition of experience, skill, and information that enables one to perform at a higher level of proficiency in his or her profession.

Role of Professional Development

Excellence in teaching is the primary purpose of the University. Professional growth and development is essential to meeting this goal.

Avenues of Professional Development

The instructional programs at Cal Poly range from the basic to the applied. In turn, any of a number of professional development activities can fit Cal Poly's spectrum of disciplines and professions.

The campus has a faculty of diverse interests as well, whose professional pursuits cannot be neatly categorized. Typical activities can be listed, however. They fall into two major modes: generation of knowledge concerning teaching or the discipline; and acquisition of further knowledge in, or professional contributions to, one's own or related fields.

1. The generation of knowledge concerning teaching or the discipline

A. Contributions to the teaching profession. Examples of this type of professional development include studies of pedagogic technique, papers on pedagogy presented at professional meetings or submitted to professional journals; presentations on pedagogy given in invited talks, seminars, and workshops; development and marketing of audio-visual aids; and development and publication of textbooks or manuals.

B. Contributions to the general body of knowledge in an academic discipline. Generation of knowledge in a discipline may involve basic and applied research or creative productions. The various forms of research have already been defined in AB 81-2, "Role of Research." In the visual, performing, or literary arts, creative contributions in the discipline involve the production of art works and techniques that become part of the general body of literature of an artistic discipline. Contributions to knowledge may also include creative works protected by copyright or patents.

Dissemination of new knowledge occurs through papers presented at meetings or published by professional journals, and through contributions to colloquia or seminars. Dissemination of works of art and new modes of artistic expression occurs through publication, gallery shows, public performances, and presentations at meetings seminars.

2. The acquisition of further knowledge in one's field or a related field.

Examples include service to or study in a different but related academic discipline; classes, seminars or conferences attended to enrich or update professional knowledge or skills; international development and education appointments; professional experience in industry or government; challenging consultancies; internships or residencies at appropriate institutions or organizations; participation in national and international professional programs; projects undertaken to improve teaching skills; the completion of advanced degrees, professional licenses, or additional advanced studies; participation in appropriate institutes, seminars, and workshops; active participation in professional organizations; and service on advisory boards or committees in relevant fields.

The above examples, although not exhaustive, suggest the variety of professional development activities in which faculty could engage.

Appraisal of Professional Development

Each discipline or department at Cal Poly must decide on the combination of professional development activities best suited to its individual character. It is the responsibility of each academic department to ensure that the professional activities of individual faculty members are an asset to the university and are supportive of its educational mission. This responsibility should be carried out in a manner consistent with established departmental criteria.

The direction of research, scholarship--indeed, of any professional development activity--is often uncertain and can take unexpected turns. Recognizing that specificity is often not possible, it is helpful nonetheless to have a plan for guidance. It is important, therefore, that each faculty member carefully consider and document general plans for professional development, and modify these plans as necessary.

Departments can help orient new faculty by clarifying what modes of professional development are most consistent with departmental goals, and by endorsing general plans. The faculty member's immediate colleagues are usually the people best suited to evaluate the quality of the work done. The department head, in consultation with the tenured and senior faculty, is responsible for informing individual department members about how well their professional activities are meeting these criteria, both in plan and performance.

Because of the crucial relationship between teaching and professional development, it is campus policy that evidence of professional development is and continues to be an important requirement for all faculty for retention, promotion, and tenure. Cal Poly's health as a university depends on the vitality of its faculty. Teaching can continue to be invigorating only if it is energized by regular involvement in the recreative activities of professional development. This bulletin is intended to clarify and assert the importance of encouraging and nurturing this most vital element in Cal Poly's continued success.

Resources for Professional Development

In order to create an atmosphere in which faculty can strive for excellence both in the classroom and professionally, a university must provide an academic environment that encourages pride in one's work, and an opportunity to do that work well. The university must strive to provide faculty sufficient time and resources to pursue both professional growth and teaching excellence, so that these two types of endeavors may be mutually supportive rather than competitive.

The present teaching load is such that faculty often compromise the quality of their teaching because of inadequate time to develop new approaches and new material. Finding time for professional development is extremely difficult and can further compromise and limit improvements in quality. Efforts should be made to bring the teaching load into line with the expectations for continual improvement and professional development.

Facilities need to be improved and expanded for basic teaching activities. Furthermore, the current facilities utilization formulas do not recognize the need for facilities to support the teaching effort through faculty development. Adequate recognition must be given to provide facilities for both teaching and professional development.

The working environment should be sufficiently attractive to acquire and retain faculty dedicated to teaching excellence fostered by continual professional development activities. This means that adequate support should be sought for salaries, sabbaticals, professional travel, publication, private offices, library and computing facilities, and technical, clerical, and student assistant help.

Professional growth and development is extremely important for the competence of our faculty and for the vitality of our academic programs. Both the faculty and the university must cooperate in this effort of mutual benefit. The faculty bear the responsibility of engaging in appropriate professional activities, and the university bears the responsibility of providing appropriate time and resources for these activities.