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Table of contents; DIOSDATIMAAOEA

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Guest Editorial:

DIOSDATIMAAOEA

Teaching, research and service have traditionally been viewed as a threefold obligation of Colleges of Education, most often translated into their separate realities by the activities of individual faculty members. With the recent advent of accountability within higher education, however, considerable effort has been expended to state in more precise terms the meaning of the teaching, research and service trilogy.

To appreciate the necessity of deciding once and for all the priority which should be given to teaching, research, and service, it should first be recognized that allocations of state money are based on student credit hours produced. Thus, as viewed from the legislature, teaching is the only recognized and rewarded activity of a state-supported college or university. Teaching then, or to be more precise, the enumeration of students for purposes of financial support, is the primary obligation of Colleges of Education.

Viewed in terms of local school district expectations, however, Colleges of Education are most often criticized for their overly theoretical orientation and their lack of service commitment to practical school problems. Service then, or to be more precise, the provision of assistance to local schools under circumstances of zero financial remuneration, is the primary obligation of Colleges of Education.

From the vantage point of serious academicians, of course, the priority shifts again, this time to the production of new knowledge through research and publication. Publication, it might also be added as an aside, is a major basis of survival and advancement within the academic world. Research then, or to be more precise, the accumulation of a portfolio of published work, is the primary obligation of Colleges of Education.

One can see from this cursory review that teaching, research, and service are all vital responsibilities and all three must receive first priority. In meeting this admittedly awkward obligation, Colleges of Education have devised several options of operation.

The first option usually considered is what we might call the "campus-wide diffusion" approach. In its most extreme form this approach actually involves the development of research bureaus and extension service units to assume research and service obligations, leaving teaching to persons hired to teach! This approach has not received much favorable attention within Colleges of Education, and might be considered an almost extinct species.

Another option, often not used because of its rational origin, is to have individual faculty members assume responsibility for concentrating on their own unique interests and strengths in reference to teaching, research and service. This option, of course, requires considerable overall organizational planning and is thus for the most part depreciated within Colleges of Education.

The most often employed option suggests that each individual faculty member has responsibility for all three institutional obligations. For want of a better name, this has come to be called the "all things to all people" approach. It is an easy option to install and therefore has received a great deal of attention and support in Colleges of Education around the country. However, an additional hidden complexity has only begun to surface as accountability has reared its head. In effect, each faculty member can either attempt to engage in teaching, research and service activities on an equal basis, the "mediocre total coverage approach," or the faculty member can do a little of each, yet concentrate on one to the partial exclusion of the others, the "fudge-a-little approach." Measurement-for-merit issues create headache proportion problems for administrative personnel saddled with the responsibility of coming to grips with this issue, especially within those departments of the College which house professional measurement specialists who have spent a lifetime working on comparable measurement and evaluation topics!

A relatively new variation of the "you've got to do a little of everything" approach has emerged which holds great promise because of its basic simplicity and rigorous evaluation design. It is the last word on the subject! It is called the "Detailed Identification Of Specifically Defined Activities To Increase Management Accountability And Organizational Effectiveness Approach," or DIOSDATIMAAOEA for short! Faculty members identify the teaching, research and service responsibilities they want to pursue during the coming year. Decision makers then can look for "gaps in obligation." When such gaps are identified, these same decision makers can contact faculty members with an already planned teaching, research, and service agenda for the coming year and ask that they modify their DIOSDATIMAAOEA inventory so the total waterfront will be covered. At the end of the year faculty members must provide documentation which substantiates the fact that all items on the work inventory for the year were successfully completed.

Of course, last year I was unable to cover a class for a colleague called away suddenly, because such an activity was not on my teaching activity list. Nor was I able to submit a substantial dollar figure research grant which was announced mid-year, because such an activity was not on my research activity list. And I did have to refuse to serve as keynote speaker at a regional conference of some importance, because such an activity was not on my service activity list.

We are making progress nonetheless, and within one or two more years I'm convinced we'll have this ambiguity concerning teaching, research and service well in hand.

Eddy J. Van Meter, Associate Professor
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