Faculty Development

Overview

The key to the success of any college is its faculty. While the importance of quality staff and administrative personnel is in no way diminished, the faculty has the most direct contact with the students and, hence, the greatest chance of impacting them. At LBC, the primary change agents are the faculty as they strive to educate Christian men and women to live according to a biblical worldview and to serve through professional Christian ministries. Therefore, this chapter of the self-study report will examine faculty development issues. After assuring that overall compliance with the following MSA and ABHE standards is well documented and supported, this self-study group focused on the greatest perceived needs of the faculty. The identified issues relate to the number of faculty and the quality of assistance for their selection and professional growth.

Standards

MSA Standard 10

The institution's instructional, research, and service programs are devised, developed, monitored, and supported by qualified professionals.

ABHE Standard 9

The institution maintains a faculty committed to its mission and qualified academically and spiritually to facilitate student learning within their disciplines and to contribute to the development of a biblical worldview. The institution fosters an academic climate that stimulates the exchange of ideas, encourages professional development, and promotes the well being of faculty.

Compliance Documented

It is the finding of this self-study process that LBC is in compliance with the stated standard and subsequent elements. Data sources demonstrating this compliance include: the 1997 self-study document and related material, the 2002 periodic review report and related material, the LBC comprehensive outcomes assessment plan, institutional data, LBC planning document, academic catalogs, the faculty handbook, the professional development grant program, external agency reports, the computer database, Faculty Development Committee minutes, faculty meeting minutes, the 2005 faculty meeting survey.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this section:

1. With the continued growth of existing programs and the plans for additional new programs, how will LBC formulate and implement an appropriate ratio of full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty adequate for the needs of each department and program?

2. How effective are the selection, orientation, mentoring, and evaluation procedures for full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty in meeting the needs of each department and program?

Analysis of Key Issues

The Faculty Development Committee served as the self-study group for this chapter. A review of the minutes from this particular committee over the past several years will show that great strides have been made in the area of faculty development. This committee spent the better portion of a full academic year developing a portfolio assessment process. It then spent a couple of academic years reviewing the faculty handbook and making suggestions for significant revisions. The faculty handbook is now in the hands of the administration for review and approval.

While progress has been made in these two areas of faculty evaluation and the faculty handbook, it is as a result of these two major projects that the committee was able to identify two broad issues that still need to be addressed. The first issue identified was the ratio of full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty being utilized in each department and division. During the self-study process, this topic was addressed through a survey of department, division, and program heads, as well as through a statistical analysis. The second identified area was the selection, orientation, mentoring, and assessment of all faculty members. This issue was addressed during this self-study process through a survey of administrators and faculty members.

Faculty Ratios

In a survey conducted in the spring of 2006 (Appendix 3.1, Faculty Ratios Survey), the ten heads of the departments, divisions, and programs at LBC were asked to describe their impressions of the appropriateness of the current faculty ratios, as well as needs for the future. Two types of faculty ratios were examined: faculty-to-section ratios and the ratios of full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty. Nine responded, with one department chair unable to participate due to illness.

Forty-four percent of participants reported that the current faculty-to-section ratios were not reasonable. Respondents identified several non-budgetary factors that influence these ratios. Variables included faculty availability, class/section size, course content, student needs, schedule constraints, beneficial use of adjuncts as current practitioners, and ongoing searches. This study group recommends that faculty-to-section ratios should be reviewed to establish benchmark minimum ratios for faculty-to-section percentages and section size and to adjust individual course loads.

According to the current faculty study by the Office of Academic Affairs (Appendix 3.2), which covers the fall semesters from 1999 through 2005, the percentage of sections taught by full-time faculty in their division or department has consistently hovered around 64%, with a low of 63% in 2000 and a high of 66% in 2001. Over the past three years, the percentage of sections taught by adjuncts has risen from 20% (fall 2003) to 25% (fall 2005), with an accompanying decrease in sections taught by full-time faculty not in their division or department (6% in 2003 to 3% in 2005), administrative staff (7% in 2003 to 6% in 2005), and part-time faculty (3% in 2003 to 2% in 2005). While the overall average may seem

adequate, some departments and divisions are much lower than others. The percentage of sections taught by full-time faculty within their division or department in undergraduate education in the fall 2005 semester varied by department and division from a low of 17% in Biblical Counseling to a high of 90% in Church and Ministry Leadership. Above the average were Church and Ministry Leadership (90%), Music (88%), Health and Physical Education (88%), Teacher Education (84%), and Office Administration (67%). Below average were the Biblical Division (51%), Intercultural Studies (50%), Arts and Sciences (35%), and Biblical Counseling (17%).

While there are extenuating circumstances for some of the low numbers (Biblical Counseling had an adjunct teaching a full load who is now on full-time), and some departments are difficult to evaluate by the percentages (one- or two-person departments), some departments clearly need more full-time faculty. In formulating ideal faculty-to-section ratios, LBC department, division, and program heads need to work closely with the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) to periodically review identified needs and propose realistic and timely means to address deficits. The VPAA suggests that benchmarks for full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty ratios, as well as benchmarks for section size, should be established to automatically trigger hiring procedures. The heads of divisions, departments, and programs need to collaborate with the Academic Administrative Leadership Team to establish those benchmark ratios and section sizes.

Faculty Selection, Orientation, Mentoring, and Evaluation

With additional programs being added at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and with the growth in existing programs, LBC finds itself hiring additional faculty members on a regular basis. From 2005 to 2006, LBC hired 13 new faculty members, nine of whom filled newly created positions in the budget. That's a 23% increase in faculty. Therefore, while this rate of growth in new faculty may not be an on-going norm, it is evident that LBC needs to have effective, efficient, and consistent procedures for the selection, orientation, mentoring, and evaluation of its faculty.

The four categories of selection, orientation, mentoring, and evaluation were each examined separately. Administrators in particular were targeted for questioning, and additional surveys were distributed to faculty regarding their experience in their portfolio evaluations. Twelve administrators at various levels responded to surveys regarding the selection and evaluation of faculty (Appendix 3.3). One administrator suggested that "these are the biggest decisions an institution ever makes." Another agreed that "Faculty hire is the most important thing a college does….When the product is less than the best, we only have ourselves to blame." While all agree that this is a crucial priority for the college, it was clear that not all agree on or understand the procedures in place, the effectiveness of those procedures, or the changes necessary for the process to be more effective.

Faculty Selection

Over the past five years, LBC has made an effort to make the faculty selection process more consistent. The current faculty handbook includes a section on faculty recruitment, and a document outlining procedures was established several years ago. Current procedures set forth that each department should give evidence of need for a full-time hire to the dean.

Identified needs are then evaluated, prioritized, and approved as needed. Search committees formed now generally represent all divisions. The actual process of interviews and campus visits does vary somewhat, with each department getting a chance for interviews and voting, with a possibility of a full-faculty interview if it is deemed necessary by the divisions. Individual and corporate input is invited, and then the president makes the final decision whether to offer a contract.

The variation in the interviewing process over the past 10 years has occasioned some confusion, with some appreciating the simplicity while others citing misunderstanding, lack of communication, and ineffectiveness. The department and division chairs seemed to feel the lack of communication and uncertainness of process most acutely. Most respondents recognized the need for some flexibility depending on the level and type of hire proposed, and all parties saw benefits in the process as it is evolving.

The essential ingredients of the process and necessary priorities encouraged by the respondents include the need for full-faculty input, observation of professional teaching experience, preliminary visit if possible, personal interviews (particularly by the president), and representation of all divisions on the search committee. Regarding the prospective faculty considered, areas of necessary concern include adherence to the doctrinal statement, salary ranges, divorce policy, and lifestyle standards. The flexibility is helpful in avoiding unnecessary redundancy of process, and the ability to avoid a full-faculty interview has helped the timing on occasion.

The administrative interviews surfaced a concern regarding the full-faculty interview. While there are times that a full-faculty interview would be helpful for all parties to work through significant issues with a potential candidate, the need for a full interview may not be recognized soon enough, or it may be awkward to hold if only one division has concerns. On the other hand, perhaps the inappropriateness of a particular candidate could be exposed sooner (perhaps by a campus visit before the actual interview), so that extended time is not wasted on fruitless interviews. Communication is key in the whole process and necessary between divisions as well as between administration and faculty.

Additional issues were raised in the process of evaluating the selection procedures. While LBC ranks number one among ABHE colleges in percentage of faculty with terminal degrees (2005 ABHE annual report), it appears that this is due to many LBC faculty members earning their terminal degrees after being hired. Whether this is a good situation or bad needs to be evaluated. Another issue of concern is that the criteria or job descriptions have sometimes changed in mid-process, causing confusion and misunderstanding on priorities and outcomes. Overall the growth of strategic planning has strengthened the process, and the organization of the process is clearly improving.

The process for part-time and adjunct hires does not seem to be as clearly defined or communicated and needs to be clarified in the next version of the faculty handbook. Different departments reported using differing procedures and either described different processes or did not recognize any formal process in place. In general, the division chairs and the dean largely control the process for part-time faculty hires**.** At times, both part-time and adjunct hiring are less formal, simply including the pre-employment questionnaire and a limited interview process with just the chair, dean, and the president. (Visiting professors in the Graduate School are often exempt from many procedures based upon their reputation and

standing in their field.) Other departments follow a more standardized procedure with resumes accompanying the pre-employment questionnaire, answers provided to job-specific questions, a full set of interviews, administrative approvals, and interviews with the president. All agree that this process requires greater flexibility than the full-time counterpart due to the nature of the adjunct and part-time position, short notice for adjunct teaching needs, and the possibility of very limited use. However, the appropriate process does need to be clearly defined. Again, communication of both the process as well as the expectations needs to be clear and consistent.

One final issue raised concerning the selection process relates to the establishing of need for part-time or adjunct faculty. The need does not seem to be consistently evaluated by the Academic Administrative Leadership Team, but is rather left in the hands of the department or division chair. This allows greater flexibility, but may need some total load analysis to minimize overloading some faculty members.

Faculty Orientation

Once faculty members are selected and hired, LBC is recognizing the need to more thoroughly orient the new faculty to the culture and climate of LBC as an institution. Survey results revealed that currently there appear to be no uniform standards for orienting faculty to the department, division, or program. Two departments and one program described formal orientation processes involving all faculty, along with evaluative procedures for successful completion of this process. In contrast, one had an informal process, while five reported that they had no processes in place for orienting new faculty.

In the Degree Completion Program (DCP), new adjuncts are given a 90-minute orientation to the program and to andragogical principles. This orientation is geared around the 57-page DCP faculty handbook. Due to the limited number of faculty hired for this program, these sessions are usually one-on-one times with the program director. Depending on the adjunct's experience in teaching, he or she may be directed to complete one or more of several online training exercises that are available on the DCP faculty resources website.

In the fall of 2004, LBC added a half-day orientation for all new adjunct faculty members. This workshop is conducted separately from the already existing orientation for new full-time faculty. Both orientations are conducted by the Academic Administrative Leadership Team and cover much of the same content only from the different perspectives of full-time versus adjunct faculty. The topics covered in both orientations are: 1) academic community overview, including a brief history of the Bible college movement, LBC's mission/goals, educational enterprises, and academic administrative structure; 2) division/department overview; 3) library tour; and 4) academic computing orientation. While this half-day orientation is a start, it is recommended that LBC needs to task the Faculty Development Committee or a separate task force to establish a formal orientation process that will be uniformly observed by all divisions, departments, and programs. The same task force will create instruments/mechanisms for evaluating the success of the faculty orientation process.

Faculty Mentoring

The next step in the development of a quality faculty is the mentoring of newly acquired faculty. Of the nine respondents to this questionnaire (Appendix 3.4), four indicated that they

have some elements of a mentoring process in place. The balance indicated they have no process. It is apparent LBC does not presently mandate mentoring for all faculty.

In the past, several attempts at short-term peer mentoring have been tried. A previous dean encouraged faculty to observe each other in the classroom and give feedback. A few years later, faculty reading groups were formed for the academic year. More recently, faculty paired up to become "plate partners" to be accountable to one another for that year in the four areas that "fill our plates": personal, spiritual, professional, and institutional. The success of any of these attempts depended upon the ongoing emphasis given to them by the administrator. None of them were meant to be long-term endeavors. Some did, however, give a taste of what some of the benefits of peer mentoring could provide.

While it is possible that most new faculty may not require extensive mentorship, it is likely that those in need of such guidance are currently not being served. To that end, it seems reasonable that the Faculty Development Committee propose a mentorship program for review and approval by the full faculty and the administration. It is reasonable to expect that such a process of mentorship will, of necessity, be modified to reflect the specific needs of each department, division, or program as well as the status of each faculty member, i.e., full-time, part-time, or adjunct.

In the past, due to its heavy reliance upon adjuncts, the DCP proposed the establishment of adjunct faculty ranks based upon completion of additional training options and teaching of a specific number of courses over a specific number of years. This recommendation was considered but not acted upon. Adjunct faculty ranking should be reconsidered as part of a larger mentoring program for all part-time and adjunct faculty.

Faculty Assessment

The continuing quality of LBC education depends largely on the quality of the faculty. The final piece in this quality control is faculty assessment. In years past, as was the case with faculty selection, the process of faculty assessment varied considerably. The current portfolio process for faculty evaluation was implemented in the fall of 2003. By examining the first two years of the portfolio's existence (2003-2004 and 2004-2005), this self-study group sought to determine its effectiveness, efficiency, strengths, and weaknesses, with the goal of determining if there are needed adjustments or refinement. Eleven faculty, faculty leaders, and administrators were interviewed by the committee members as a means of collecting the data used in this review. In addition, surveys were sent to all full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty members, of which 23 were returned (see faculty evaluation section of Appendix 3.3).

The guidelines for the portfolio state it is to be submitted for review to the individual's immediate supervisor at the conclusion of each academic year. A rubric is available for the supervisor to use in providing feedback about the contents and changes occurring as a result of the previous review. The survey of faculty indicated that a large majority believed they understood the objectives of the portfolio process. With 19 out of 23 answering "agree" or "strongly agree," the mean was 4.3 on a scale of 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). However, the personal interviews (Appendix 3.3) seemed to indicate otherwise. In addition, the faculty who responded felt very noncommittal to the process. The questions regarding the effectiveness (accomplishing objectives, timely review, and positively shaping performance) received a mean score of 3.07 (3.0, 3.0, and 3.2 respectively). Significantly,

none of the 23 respondents strongly agreed that it accomplished its objectives and only eight agreed, while nine were neutral. The other two questions had evenly divided responses.

Overall, the interviews suggested that there are pockets of faculty in certain departments or divisions where the process is running smoothly and accomplishing its purpose, whereas in others it is weak and ineffective. The unevenness of implementation may be part of the reason for this disparity and the faculty perceptions of ineffectiveness. Due to the turnover in the Dean of Undergraduate Studies office, accurate records on implementation are not available. It appears, however, that since its implementation, of those faculty who were teaching both of the two years under consideration, portfolios were completed by just 16 full-time faculty (38%), one part-time faculty (33%), and one adjunct (3%). Reasons for this low completion rate may include uneven record keeping, uncertainty in the appropriate process of reporting compliance, and the changeover of the undergraduate dean.

The reasons offered by the administrators for the ineffectiveness of the process include: unclear purpose; lack of training and structure for those reviewing the portfolios; minimal substantive changes occurring as a result of the review; no clear distinctions for those teaching at the graduate or undergraduate levels; lack of ownership by faculty for the process; inconsistent expectations for full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty; and unclear directives for non-teaching and non-ranked faculty. In addition, the respondents to the faculty questionnaire suggested that the portfolio system allowed faculty to avoid their weaknesses, may not be worth the faculty effort due to lack of perceived long-term benefit and uneven use by department and division chairs, and may lead to a lack of real accountability. A more consistent and purposeful use of the portfolios may help alleviate some of these concerns.

On the other hand, the administrators surveyed presented many of the positive aspects of the process. Portfolios are a "cutting edge" means for faculty evaluation. Current research and other published materials were read and used by the committee in the process of developing this system. It is viewed as a non-threatening system and one that can encourage growth and change, rather than demand it. Because of its open nature, individuals have found it to paint a broader picture of their efforts and success. It has been identified as "an avenue to affirm faculty" and help individuals see how they are beneficial to the college. The portfolio has offered a consistent and formal means for any considered promotions or rank changes. Faculty surveys added many positive observations, as well, revolving around the greater potential for accountability and goal setting, the ability to represent one's own accomplishments and strengths, the standardization and flexibility inherent within the same instrument, and the necessary self-reflection in the process.

In examining the strengths and weaknesses of the process, it is recommended that some adjustments or additions to the process of faculty evaluation be made. The purpose and use of the portfolio should be clarified and reiterated by the new deans. The changeover in administrative leadership, particularly in the Dean of Undergraduate Studies office, will require the new dean's understanding of and vision for the process. Although he has begun the process of understanding the portfolio, it will be necessary for him to express his vision and purpose to the undergraduate faculty. The Dean of Graduate Education will also need to participate in the review of the portfolios of the directors of the graduate programs. In addition, training will need to be offered and required for all supervisors reviewing

portfolios, offering instruction on the use of the rubric, the level of expectations, and the style of communication for the review conference.

The contents of the portfolio should also be reconsidered. There is currently a great deal of flexibility with differing options available to faculty members. The comments received on the surveys suggest that this could be tighter and have a list of required elements. It was also suggested that more of the contents be replaced more often than the current plan requires, with perhaps a specific cycle determined for each type of artifact. One example of additional input in the portfolios was a component of dean and department chair input through direct evaluation and supervision. On the other hand, it was suggested that outstanding faculty with solid evaluations could wait more than one year for another full evaluation.

One final concern regarding evaluations of full-time faculty had to do with the issue of termination. The portfolio evaluation system should help with the communication of significant issues and concerns, but it does not spell out the process if those concerns are not adequately addressed. There needs to be a clear multi-year process before eventual termination, in which the issues are spelled out with a comprehensive action plan to address them, including explicit documentation. Clear expectations and goals must be developed with unmistakable consequences at each step, including an unambiguous final contract. The only exceptions to the clear multi-year process would be for egregious sin or misconduct.

For part-time and adjunct faculty, the portfolio process must be more consistent and formal. The current portfolio plan requires adjunct faculty to have a portfolio with two to three items and part-time faculty to have four to five items plus a plan. The survey results indicated that use of the portfolios and evaluation of adjunct faculty is quite formal in programs such as DCP, while very flexible and informal in the traditional undergraduate and graduate programs. In the traditional undergraduate programs, the SUMMA evaluation is relied upon very heavily, rather than observation or other artifacts and measures of a faculty member's performance. There needs to be a review of the process of evaluation for teaching members of the faculty who are not full-time. Both the appropriateness of the level of evaluation or portfolio required and the consistency of the implementation need to be examined and addressed.

Non-teaching and non-ranked faculty have experienced a variety of evaluation means. A few have used a modified portfolio, while others have used the form designed for the performance review of the professional staff of the college. Non-teaching and non-ranked faculty are required by the portfolio system to select items from sections two, three, four, and five, in agreement with their immediate supervisor. This use of the portfolio needs to be reviewed, and a consistent plan should be developed for these two groups of faculty whose responsibilities are different than those of full-time teaching faculty.

Helping faculty and administration gain a clearer understanding of the purpose of the portfolios will also improve the process of promotion and termination of a faculty member. These processes still tend to be less formal and direct than is expedient.
To accomplish these suggestions, the Faculty Development Committee, with the Academic Administrative Leadership Team, should review the process as originally suggested for two years after its original implementation. Following the training and review, the process should be reexamined two years later to determine if the adjustments and additions have improved the current program.

A Comprehensive Approach for DCP Adjuncts

Due to DCP's heavy reliance on adjunct faculty (approximately 60% of instructors in DCP are adjuncts); there is an even greater need to formalize the selection, orientation, mentoring, assessment, and development processes. Appendix 3.5 includes a description of DCP's comprehensive approach to adjunct selection, orientation, mentoring, assessment, and development. This approach could serve as an example for other departments on campus to follow.

Support Staff for Faculty

To free up faculty to spend time in ministering to students both in and out of the classroom, key support personnel are needed. There are five full-time faculty assistants to support approximately 25 full-time faculty members. The Ministry Formation study group sought to determine if the current number of faculty assistants is sufficient.

Two surveys were developed by a subcommittee of the Professional Division to examine the issue of adequate support staffing (Appendix 3.6). One survey was given to all faculty assistants across all three divisions and the other one was distributed to the full-time and part-time faculty in all three divisions. All five assistants returned the survey given to them. An analysis of the returned surveys yielded the following generalizations:

1. The faculty assistants are all engaged in doing a majority of the tasks listed on the survey. While there is some variation in job expectations, most are engaged in the performance of the tasks listed.
2. Sixty percent of the assistants admitted to being overwhelmed at least some of the time, with most commenting that there are times in the academic year that are more overwhelming than others.
3. There was a general consensus that student workers are helpful but do not provide adequate support because of their lack of time and knowledge of the tasks.

There were 36 faculty responses out of a total of 72 surveys distributed. The responses indicated that the tasks listed on the survey are being accomplished by the faculty assistants. Generally, faculty answered that procrastination has little to do with not giving tasks to the faculty assistants. Approximately 50% said they do not delegate tasks to the assistants because they perceive the assistants are too busy. There was a consensus that the tasks are either easier to work on at home or do personally with the use of a computer. The response was overwhelming in affirmation of the skill capabilities of the faculty assistants.

The analysis of the survey would seem to be consistent with responses from the administrative assistants indicating that additional support staff would enhance the efforts of the faculty. Based upon this self-study finding, the college took intermediate steps to better divide the workload of the faculty assistants in a more efficient manner. The three largest departments on campus now have a support person solely for their department. Nevertheless, the recommendation of the faculty assistants, and of this study group, would be for the administration to consider one or two part-time support personnel, as well as an additional full-time faculty assistant. Having adequate support will allow the faculty to feel comfortable in fully utilizing their assistants, which, in turn, will free them up to concentrate on their teaching and interaction with students.

Key Strengths Noted in This Section

1. From 2005 to 2006, LBC saw a 23% increase in faculty.
2. There are strong faculty-to-student ratios in most of the professional division programs.
3. In the 2005 ABHE annual report, LBC was ranked number one among ABHE colleges in percentage of faculty with terminal degrees.
4. LBC consistently reviews processes and functions of faculty, proactively addressing issues as they are raised, such as adding orientation for adjunct and full-time faculty.
5. LBC has been working to enhance and implement evaluation practices for faculty members, including a new portfolio assessment process, a consistent and formal means for promotions or rank changes, greater accountability, personal representation of teaching effectiveness and professional growth, and college-wide standardization.

Recommendations for Growth and Improvement

The following recommendations for consideration are being made by this study group:

1. Faculty-to-section ratios need to be reviewed collaboratively between department, division, and program heads, in conjunction with the Academic Administrative Leadership Team to identify needs, to establish benchmark minimum ratios for faculty-to-section percentages and section size, and to adjust individual course loads.
2. The college needs to continuously monitor and evaluate the percentage of terminal degrees and overall qualifications of the faculty to maintain the high standards of LBC.
3. The means of establishing need and process for hiring part-time and adjunct faculty needs to be defined and communicated to all involved so that a consistent process is followed across campus.
4. The college should charge the Faculty Development Committee or a separate task force with establishing a formal orientation process for all new faculty on all levels and a means for evaluating the success of the orientation.
5. The Faculty Development Committee should propose a mentorship program for review and approval by the full faculty and administration. Consideration should be given to establishing adjunct faculty ranks as part of this program.
6. The contents of the portfolio need to include a tighter list of required elements with a specific life cycle for each type of artifact.
7. The purpose and use of the portfolio should be clarified and reiterated by the new deans, implementing it evenly across departments, divisions, and programs.
8. The evaluation process of part-time, non-teaching, and non-ranked faculty members needs to be re-examined and clearly delineated in the faculty handbook
9. All faculty evaluation processes need to be re-examined again two years after the above changes have been implemented.
10. Consideration should be given to establishing adjunct faculty ranks based upon training and experience criteria.
11. Additional full-time and part-time faculty support personnel should be considered.