



OBSERVING THE PULSE OF THE FACULTY: NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR THE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

Higher education is not immune to the challenges posed by a society that is changing quickly. These problems strongly encourage universities to prioritize the caliber of their professors and provide adequate chances for professional growth. However, addressing the unique requirements, expertise, and objectives stated by the faculty actually boosts the effectiveness of any institutional faculty development program. Instruction, research, and extension form the triad of academic responsibilities that define the role of faculty in higher education institutions along with the faculty professional growth. Reputable and highly competent academic members are crucial to a university's goals. This descriptive study was conducted to assess the faculty development needs and priorities of the faculty at the West Visayas State University – Lambunao Campus. It includes the faculty needs in terms of instruction, research, extension, and professional development. A random sampling was employed involving 78 faculty members representing the respective department in the campus assessing the competency in instruction, engagement in research, and extension, and support for professional development. An adopted and researchers-made questionnaires, duly validated, were used as instruments. Frequency, mean, and standard deviation were used as statistical tools. The result of the study revealed that the faculty have a very high level of competence in terms of instruction but they have a low engagement in research and extension activities. Furthermore, the result showed that the faculty had a low level of support for professional development. Based on the results, a need for faculty development program should be crafted focusing in the needs for research and extension engagements as well as the program towards professional development.

Keywords: Faculty Development, Needs Assessment, Professional Development, Development Priorities

1. Introduction

Higher education is not immune to the challenges posed by a society that is changing quickly. These problems strongly encourage universities to prioritize the caliber of their professors and provide adequate chances for professional growth. However, addressing the unique requirements, expertise, and objectives stated by the faculty actually boosts the effectiveness of any institutional faculty development program.

The modern universities emphasize the need for well-trained faculty and implicitly, for a culture of quality teaching. Educators continue to believe that professional development for faculty can impact their colleges. Faculty has perceived a connection with faculty development programs and the ability to be effective (Fugate & Amey, 2000). Zahorski (2002) sees the faculty developer as change agent, able to affect an institution wide culture that nurtures scholarship. Rouseff-Baker (2002) sees faculty development program as a “major piece in the recruitment and retention of quality faculty”. In studying faculty vitality in the community college, Petterson (2003) concludes that despite budget constraints that are impacting most community colleges it is imperative that community colleges continue to support faculty training and staff development initiatives.

In contemporary higher education, faculty members are tasked with balancing three critical functions: instruction, research, and extension. These roles are essential to the mission of universities and vital for the professional development of faculty and the academic success of students (Boyer, 1990) and to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations, 2023). Nevertheless, the burden of meeting these obligations might sometimes be too much to handle, which causes differences in how time and resources are spent. Understanding the unique needs and objectives of the faculty becomes crucial as institutions work to attain excellence in all three areas.

Instruction, research, and extension form the triad of academic responsibilities that define the role of faculty in higher education institutions along with the faculty professional growth. Instruction involves the direct engagement of faculty with students through teaching, mentoring, and curriculum development (Bain, 2004). Research encompasses the pursuit of new knowledge, innovation, and scholarly contributions that advance various fields of study (Boyer, 1990). Extension, often referred to as community engagement, involves the application of academic expertise to address societal needs through outreach programs, partnerships, and service initiatives (Fitzgerald et al., 2012).

Despite the clear delineation of these roles, faculty members often encounter challenges in managing them effectively. The increasing expectations for high-quality teaching, prolific research output, and impactful community engagement create a complex professional landscape (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013). Moreover, the priorities assigned to each role can vary significantly among institutions and individual faculty members, influenced by institutional policies, available resources, and personal motivations (O'Meara, 2002).

Faculty development programs are more likely to be embraced by the faculty they serve if the programs are perceived as meeting instructors' needs (Behar-Horenstein et al., 2014; C.E. Cook & Meizlish, 2011; Matthias, 2019; Sorcinelli et al., 2006) rather than being seen as coming from administrators or only meeting the institution's needs.

Anderson and Olsen (2006) found that faculty' perspectives on their needs and their own professional development stage in the career cycle, the external institutional framework, their concern for accessing collaboration opportunities, and their willingness to assume new responsibilities. The development needs change according to the career level attained by the faculty (Wilkerson and Irby, 1998): junior academic, pre-tenure, and post-tenure. Related to these findings, the instructional development programs implemented within universities address the whole range of the teaching staff, both the early career academic members (Romano, Hoelsing, O'Donovan, Boice, 1992), and the most experienced faculty (Romano, Hoelsing, O'Donovan, and Weinsheimer, 2004). In addition, for a certain academic title, the development needs might also vary, for example, when the teaching staff attains a leadership position (Wilkerson and Irby, 1998).

In order to determine educational needs of the faculty of West Visayas State University-Lambunao Campus and to identify the priority areas of faculty members' educational knowledge, we conducted a benchmarking study. This data will help us not only to plan the faculty development program of the campus based on the needs, priorities and educational mission but also support the educational reform within the school.

Faculty development helps ensure that the educational reforms and initiatives are worthy and implemented properly. Professional organizations and experts advocate greater awareness and acquisition of knowledge in teaching and learning through comprehensive faculty development. Faculty development is a reflective process that includes deliberate introspection, determination of one's own needs and demands of the work, identification of the gaps, and taking actions. The realization of the gap, the difference between required knowledge and current knowledge, is frequently the primary motivating factor towards pursuing further training in pedagogy. From an institutional perspective, realizing the gap is essential for better planning and more efficient resource allocation.

Faculty improve the quality of academic programs and to respond to emerging faculty student program and industry needs. This study is beneficial in filling up the gap on faculty profile improvement of West Visayas State University-Lambunao Campus. Generated results are important towards the realization of a proactive faculty development program.

The university has a faculty development program implemented throughout the whole West Visayas State University system. However, sustainability of its implementation is not ascertained, there is no pieces of evidence to prove that the faculty development program is based on identified needs and priorities. Hence, benchmarking study to identify these needs and priorities is suggested to be undertaken.

The objectives of this study were to determine the current profile of the faculty, identify the competencies of faculty in instruction, monitor the involvement of faculty in research and extension

activities, determine the professional development of the faculty and develop a faculty development program to address the needs and priorities of the faculty.

2. Literature Review

Research on faculty development in higher education has shown that most academic departments lack the knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching. Most graduates who train at doctorate-granting colleges typically understand their function as academicians in conducting research, but they frequently do not receive enough instruction or preparation for their position as faculty members in instructing others (Gardner, 2005). This misunderstanding may result in subpar work or more stress for faculty members. Low self-efficacy might result from faculty members' negative teaching experiences.

According to Kwan et al. (2009), faculty development encompasses a variety of endeavors aimed at assisting academicians in enhancing their professional competencies, which are essential for executing their duties in teaching, research, and administration. Due to their preconceived notions about how they were taught and their topic expertise, medical professors who fit certain stereotypes were historically thought to be capable of instructing students (Cate et al., 2014; Lim and Choy, 2014).

Faculty development encompasses a broad range of actions that academic institutions implement to support the functions of their faculty members. Programs aimed at enhancing organizational capacities and culture as well as faculty members' performance in teaching, research, and administration were included in this.

Effective faculty development initiatives can improve the caliber of instruction and evaluation procedures (Cillers & Herman, 2010). According to one study, which involved over ten thousand full-time, tenure-track faculty members, early career faculty members had a higher chance of success and job satisfaction if the university fostered a culture of community, collegiality, and collaboration and provided resources for professional development (Trower & Gallagher, 2010). According to a different study, the factors that most account for the variation in the overall job satisfaction score are personal growth and job satisfaction (Foor & Cano, 2011). According to a different study, the factors that most account for the variation in the overall job satisfaction score are personal growth and job satisfaction (Foor & Cano, 2011). According to their research, department chairs and administrators should concentrate faculty development efforts on aspects that contribute to each person's satisfaction and personal growth. The support for faculty development is often overlooked by administration but research clearly demonstrates its importance to faculty.

When considering faculty development from the standpoint of adult learners, we must take into account their attributes, the environment in which they are learning, and the method by which we intend to provide them with instruction and training (Lawler 2003). But the majority of faculty development strategies are meant to be one size fits all. Few development models take into account the existing knowledge, experiences, and individuality of faculty members, who are often viewed as adult learners

(Layne et al., 2004). In this literature analysis, two models of faculty development were examined, including the Professional Development Model for Faculty Development (Lawler, 2003).

Changes to the role of the faculty member in higher education require alteration in faculty preparation (Austin, 2002). There has been a decrease in higher education budgets, which have often led to cuts in faculty development funding, decreased support for students, and increased pressure to acquire outside funding (Mitchell & Leachman, 2015). Despite these cuts to faculty development, faculty accountability for student learning has increased. The multiple roles faculty play requires skills in research, teaching, and service. This requires faculty members to: understand students, learn new technologies, deal with societal demands for accountability, balance the tripartite workload of faculty, and understand the changing job market. Ortlieb, Biddix, and Doecker (2010) have argued that support for faculty should include developing faculty communities that 1) foster positive relationships with other faculty members, 2) encourage partnerships for research, 3) provide a network of support, 4) encourage critical reflection, and 5) offer monthly support groups to help faculty members develop into their roles. Development programs play a major role in helping faculty members cultivate their roles. Faculty members who participated in a faculty development program reported improved student success and student retention (Perez, McShannon, & Hynes, 2012), as well as having a positive impact on student learning, satisfaction, and motivation (Ambrosino & Peel, 2011; Trigwell, Rodriguez, & Han, 2012). Faculty members who took pedagogical training credits reported higher self-efficacy than those who did not (Postareff, Lindblom-Ylana, & Nevgi, 2008).

Unfortunately, faculty development workshops are often viewed as just one more item on the “to-do” list and are not necessarily valued. However, well-designed faculty development programs can enhance the quality of teaching and assessment practices (Cillers & Herman, 2010). One study, conducted with over ten thousand full-time, tenure-track faculty, indicated that early career faculty members were more likely to be successful and satisfied with their jobs if resources for professional development are available and a culture of collegiality, collaboration, and community is created within the university (Trower & Gallagher, 2010). Another study indicated that satisfaction with the job and experiencing personal growth explain the greatest variance in the overall job satisfaction score (Foor & Cano, 2011). Their research suggested department chairs and administrators focus faculty development on factors related to individual personal growth and satisfaction. The support for faculty development is often overlooked by administration but research clearly demonstrates its importance to faculty

3. Research Method

The study employed descriptive method in assessing the needs and priorities of the faculty across colleges and schools relative to instruction, research, extension, and professional development at the West Visayas State University – Lambunao Campus. Descriptive research tries to clarify and explain events, resources, institutions and other fields (Selcuk, 2014). It purports to describe the respondents’ perceptions and views regarding instruction, research, extension, and professional development.

A total of 78 randomly selected faculty across colleges/schools were surveyed assessing the competency in instruction, engagement in research, and extension, and support for professional development.

The instruments used to gather data were consists of five parts. Part I of the Instrument collected the respondent's profile. Part II was used to gather data pertaining to the faculty teaching competence. The second part of the instrument was adopted from QCE NBC No. 461 Joint Circular (Instrument for Instruction/Teaching Effectiveness) while parts 3 to 5 were researchers-made questionnaire duly validated by the selected experts. Part III of the instrument was used to gather data pertaining to the engagement of faculty in research and Part IV was used to determine the engagement in extension. Part V of the instrument was used to gather data pertaining to support extended towards faculty professional development.

Upon approval to conduct the research survey instrument, the researchers distributed the said questionnaires among the respondents. The instruments were collected from the respective respondents after responses were made and data were encoded and processed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences Software (SPSS).

Frequency, Mean, and standard deviation were utilized as statistical tools.

To determine the level of instructional competence of the faculty, the following scale and descriptions were used:

Scale	Responses
4.50-5.00	Very High
3.50-4.49	High
2.50-3.49	Average
1.50-2.49	Low
1.00-1.49	Very Low

To determine the level of engagement of the faculty in research and extension, the following scale and descriptions were used:

4.50-5.00	Very High
3.50-4.49	High
2.50-3.49	Average
1.50-2.49	Low
1.00-1.49	Very Low

To determine the level of support towards professional development of the faculty, the following

scale and descriptions were used:

4.50-5.00	Very High
3.50-4.49	High
2.50-3.49	Average
1.50-2.49	Low
1.00-1.49	Very Low

4. Result and Discussion

Results

The following results show the faculty competency in instruction, involvement in research and extension, and professional development.

The frequency, mean, and standard deviation were utilized as the basis for interpretation.

Current Faculty Profile

As to the academic rank, the results revealed that 36 (46%) of the faculty are Instructor I, 25 (32%) are Assistant Professor, and 17 or (22%) are Associate Professor. A higher percentage of the faculty have the Academic Rank of Instructor.

As to the Highest Educational Qualification, 8 (10%) are with units for a Master's Degree, 24 (31%) are Master's Degree Holder, 20 (26%) are with units in Doctoral Degree, and 26 (33%) are Doctoral Degree Holder.

As to the field of specialization, 8 (10%) are in the field of Elementary Education, 29 (37%) in the field of Secondary Education, 3 (4%) in Technical & Vocational Teacher Education, 5 (6%) in Hospitality Management, 13 (17%) in Criminology, 9 (12%) in Information and Communications Technology, and 11 (14%) in Industrial Technology.

As to the National Certification, 57 (73%) have no National Certificates, 4 (5%) are holders of National Certificate I, 12 (15%) are holders of National Certificate II, 4 (5%) are holders of National Certificate III and while 1 (1%) are holders of certificates not under the TESDA Certifications.

As to Professional Licensing, 66 (85%) have licenses, 10 (13%) have no professional license while 2 (2%) have other licenses.

As to the status of Appointment, 72 (92%) have a permanent/regular appointment while 6 (8%) have temporary appointment.

Table 1 reflects the data.

Table 1
Current Faculty Profile

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	29	37
Female	49	63
Years in Service		

Less than 10 Years	46	59
10 Years and Above	32	41
Age		
25-40 Years Old	42	54
41-62 Years Old	36	46
Civil Status		
Single	28	36
Married	49	63
Widowed	1	1
Academic Rank		
Instructor	36	46
Assistant Professor	25	32
Associate Professor	17	22
Highest Educational Qualification		
With Units in Master's Degree	8	10
Master' Degree Holder	24	31
With Units in Doctoral Degree	20	26
Doctoral Degree Holder	26	33
Field of Specialization		
Elementary Education	8	10
Secondary Education	29	37
Technical & Vocational Teacher Education	3	4
Hospitality Management	5	6
Criminology	13	17
Information & Communications Technology	9	12
Industrial Technology	11	14
National Certificate		
None	57	73
NC I	4	5
NC II	12	15
NC III	4	5
Others	1	1
Licenses		
None	10	13
COR and/or PRC License	66	85
Others	2	2
Status of Appointment		
Permanent/ Regular	72	92
Temporary	6	8

Faculty Competence in Instruction

The results revealed that the faculty have a very high level of competence for instruction in terms of Commitment (M=4.70, SD=0.32), Knowledge of the Subject (M=4.70, SD = 0.37), Teaching for Independent Learning (M=4.68, SD=0.38), and Management of Learning (M=4.61, SD = 0.47).

Table 2 reflects the data.

Table 2. *Competencies of Faculty in Instruction*

Competencies for Instruction	SD	M	Description
Commitment	0.32	4.70	Very High
Knowledge of the Subject	0.37	4.70	Very High
Teaching for Independent Learning	0.38	4.68	Very High
Management of Learning	0.47	4.61	Very High

Note: The description was based on the following scale. 1.00-1.49 (Very Low), 1.50-2.49 (Low), 2.50-3.49 (Average), 3.50-4.49 (High), 4.50-5.00 (Very High)

Asirit, et al. (2021) emphasize that instructional competence is crucial for newly hired public school teachers, indicating that it involves the readiness and effectiveness of necessary teaching skills.

Engagement of Faculty in Research and Extension Activities

The data in Table 3 showed that the faculty has a low engagement in research (M=1.89, SD=0.49), and extension (M=2.19, SD=0.76) activities.

Table 3. *Involvement of Faculty in Research and Extension Activities*

Faculty Involvement	SD	M	Description
Research	0.49	1.89	Low
Extension	0.76	2.19	Low

Note: The description was based on the following scale. 1.00-1.49 (Very Low), 1.50-2.49 (Low), 2.50-3.49 (Average), 3.50-4.49 (High), 4.50-5.00 (Very High)

Donaldson et. Al (2022) identified research method as a priority in research and practical experiences for extension activities to address the needs. On the other hand, Ghimire, N. and Martin, R. (2011) indicated a need for flexible staff development programs for extension educators as revealed in their study.

Support to Faculty Professional Development

The result in Table 4 showed that the faculty had a low support for professional development ($M=2.35$, $SD=0.80$).

Table 4. *Support to Professional Development of the Faculty*

Support to Faculty	SD	M	Description
Professional Development	0.80	2.35	Low

Note: The description was based on the following scale. 1.00-1.49 (Very Low), 1.50-2.49 (Low), 2.50-3.49 (Average), 3.50-4.49 (High), 4.50-5.00 (Very High)

Reder (2014) emphasizes the critical importance of institutional support for faculty development, stating that “colleges and universities that make claims to take teaching seriously but do not support faculty openly and intentionally, with formal programs that they can point to, are quickly becoming a thing of the past”. This highlights the necessity for higher education institutions to provide structured and visible faculty development programs to enhance teaching quality and support educators in their professional growth.

Furthermore, Benbow and Lee (2019) found that effective organizational support, including time allocation for teaching discussions and formal development initiatives, fosters beneficial social networks among faculty. These networks are essential for building social capital that enhances teaching practices and collaboration.

Discussions:

The result of the study revealed that the faculty have a very high level of competence in terms of instruction. Faculty members possess the necessary skills and knowledge to contribute meaningfully to their disciplines. This competence is essential for fostering academic excellence and innovation.

The findings revealed that the research and extension activities of the faculty had low engagement. Despite their capabilities, faculty engagement in research and extension activities remains low. This disengagement can hinder institutional growth, limit knowledge transfer, and reduce the overall impact of academic work on society. Donaldson et al., (2022) identified research method as a priority in research and practical experiences for extension activities to address the needs. On the other hand, Ghimire and Martin (2011) indicated a need for flexible staff development programs for extension educators as revealed in their study. Thus, research and extension activities for faculty should be enhanced through faculty development program. Institutional support for such program is also encouraged. Considering the result of the faculty professional development had a low support to the administration. The lack of institutional support for faculty professional development exacerbates the issue, without access to resources, training, and encouragement, faculty members may feel undervalued and less motivated to pursue research initiatives.

Addressing these challenges is crucial for harnessing faculty potential and maximizing the impact of academic institutions on broader societal issues. By fostering an environment that values research and extension engagement and professional development, institutions can transform high competence into actionable contributions that benefit both academia and the community at large.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions:

Faculty members at West Visayas State University-Lambunao Campus may have faced significant constraints due to heavy teaching loads and limited time for research, which hampers their ability to engage in extension and research activities.

Lack of institutional support for faculty members to participate in research and extension activities might be a factor.

Faculty members may not fully aware of the opportunities available for extension and research activities. Additionally, there might be a gap in training and capacity-building programs that could equip faculty with the necessary skills and knowledge.

A scarcity of collaborative initiatives between the university and external organizations, which restricts the faculty's ability to engage in impactful research and extension work may also be a reason.

Recommendations:

Organize regular workshops and training sessions to improve faculty members' research skills. This could include grant writing, project management, and collaboration techniques.

Strengthen partnerships with local, national, and international organizations to create more opportunities for collaborative research and extension projects. Establish a liaison office for each department to facilitate these partnerships and ensure effective communication and coordination.

Increase efforts to communicate the importance and benefits of engaging in extension and research activities. Use seminars, workshops, and meetings to share success stories and highlight available support mechanisms.

Increase funding for research projects and extension programs. Establish a dedicated office to assist faculty in securing grants and other financial resources.

Develop and maintain a system of rewards and recognition for faculty members who actively participate in research and extension activities. This could include financial benefits and reduced teaching loads.

Re-evaluation and potentially reduce teaching loads to allocate more time for faculty members to engage in research and extension activities.

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