

## CONTEXT- AND CAREER-STAGE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACULTY GROWTH AND RENEWAL

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As leaders and managers of their departments, academic chairpersons must help sustain the professional growth of their faculty across all stages of the academic career. They are typically knowledgeable about their institution's personnel policies and procedures and they are skilled at managing their departments' resources (Chu, 2006). But the training they are likely to receive may leave them ill-equipped to address some of the most pressing professional and personal needs of their faculty in a proactive manner.

As recent or current recipients of ACE/Sloan Faculty Career Flexibility Awards, we have developed, assessed and begun to institutionalize mechanisms to support faculty at all stages of their academic career. Our campus contexts differ – in terms of size and location, in terms of relative importance of teaching, scholarship and service, and in terms of the vision and mission of our respective universities. But *two themes run across our collective efforts: First, we envision faculty development as an on-going, reflective and intentional process, where goals are articulated and regularly revisited and adjusted. And second, we recognize that striking a healthy and often career-stage-specific work-life balance is an inextricable component of this process.*

Our work is grounded in a variety of theories of achievement (e.g., Dweck, 2006, who has identified “growth” mindsets and the contexts that nurture them). We draw on research identifying institutional and personal characteristics that promote the continued vitality of faculty or result in their becoming stagnant, disengaged and

otherwise dispirited (e.g., Baldwin, deZure, Shaw & Moretto, 2008; Clegg, 2003; and Strage, Nelson & Meyers, 2008). Finally, we draw on recent efforts to understand faculty career paths, noting themes that run throughout one's professional journey as well as issues that tend to be stage-specific (Bataille & Brown, 2006; Buller, 2010).

We will share resources we have developed:

- (1) a *career-planning tool* designed to assist faculty in identifying career-stage-specific teaching, scholarship and broader professional service goals and activities, and in considering the strengths and challenges they bring to their work.
- (2) a *faculty work-life matrix* which schematizes the typical concerns of faculty members and suggests corresponding policies and experiences that will meet those concerns. The matrix explores early career, mid career, and late career concerns in the areas of teaching, scholarship, service, and student engagement.
- (3) a *comprehensive faculty handbook and web-based tool* for working within the broader personnel policy landscape to help faculty identify best-option solutions to career-stage-specific work-life issues.
- (4) a *faculty work life advisor program* made up of volunteer faculty who are trained on the university's work life programs and policies. This model can be useful in disseminating other types of information.
- (5) a *faculty development model for new chairs and new faculty* consisting of workshops at the start of the academic year, followed by a series of monthly brown bag sessions.

We will also report on *the use and effectiveness of these resources on our respective campuses*, and we will consider how best they might be *adapted to assist chairpersons to think broadly about faculty professional and personal lives in the context of their own campuses*. We look forward to sharing some of the fruits of our efforts and to learning what others have learned as they have approached similar issues.