

CRITERION 1: TEACHING AND OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

PART 2: EEC DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON

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This section includes discussion of evidence related to my assignment as department chairperson for AY07 and AY08. Specific documents for evidence were included in a separate collection of materials submitted with my annual Professional Development Reports. The first part of this section includes a list of my professional activities that relate to work as department chairperson. The last part of this section includes a reflection about the experience and meaning behind some of the most significant among those professional activities.

Activities and Documentation

My assignments for AY 2007-2008 included approximately quarter-time teaching and $\frac{3}{4}$ -time with responsibilities as ES:EEC department chairperson and ECE coordinator. Teaching took a second place in my schedule because of my position as department chairperson. This was not very satisfying for me, because I am, at heart, a teacher. I approach even an administrative or organizational position (such as chairperson) as if it were an opportunity to teach and lead.

During this year, I successfully completed my leadership assignment as department chairperson. I organized the department's response to questions from the Board of Teaching reviewers about our material submitted for the PEPER review.

According to the IFO contract, activities in this assignment included:

1. Developed department budget and administer it according to university, college, and department policies. (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)
2. Directed student advising program, including improvements in procedures and assignments. (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)
3. Coordinated department interactions with student organizations, including the Early Childhood and Elementary Education Club. (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)
4. Coordinated department student recruitment activities, including establishing articulation agreements with South Central College. (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)
5. Ensured that student concerns and complaints are properly addressed, including use of the College procedure to record concerns and issues. (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)
6. Developed proposed department class schedule and long-term schedule for course offerings, during Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)
7. Coordinated handling of curricular proposals and new program planning, including program revisions for the undergraduate program in Early Childhood Education and program planning for the new graduate program in Early Childhood Special Education. (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)
8. Chaired department meetings and coordinated department committee activity through strategies of shared leadership that included rotating assignments for facilitating meetings, recording minutes, keeping time, and providing snacks. (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)

9. Facilitated department planning activities, including goal-setting and integration with institutional goals and objectives, through a strategy of “program coordinators” who lead colleagues in areas of Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education/Middle School, Graduate Programs, and programming at Normandale Community College. (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)
10. Prepared reports and other information for college and university administrative officers, including the annual University Assessment Report and the College of Education (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)
11. Prepared department correspondence, including information for the Office of the Registrar and acknowledgements to donors to the Foundation. (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)
12. Coordinated department grant and other externally supported activities, including grants from the International Programs Office and from the Faculty Improvement Grants program. (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)
13. Developed a proposed hiring plan for departmental action and recommended to Dean, such as position requests for Elementary Education/Middle School and for Reading. (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)
14. Coordinated department hiring activities, through the department’s Personnel-Search Committee. (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)
15. Oriented new faculty to department and assisted faculty with professional development planning, including one first-year tenure-track faculty member (ECSE), one first-year fixed-term faculty member (literacy), two second-year fixed-term faculty members, one fourth-year tenure-track faculty member, as well as more than one dozen adjunct faculty members. (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)
16. Directed non-unit employees (including one administrative assistant) and student workers (two or three each semester). (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)
17. Supported department members in the conduct of other duties such as scholarly activity and community service, including guests at department meetings about research procedures and about publications possibilities. (see PDRs AY07 and AY08)

Reflection on Significant Activities

Enhanced Quality of Undergraduate Programs

During AY2006-07, I personally contributed to the increase in the quality of the undergraduate programs, including new or revised courses and improved internal and external articulation among ES:EEC department programs. File documentation shows the following activities:

1. Maintained and clarified the Elementary Education program articulation agreement with Normandale Community College, Bloomington, Minnesota.
2. Completed the Early Childhood Education program articulation agreement with South Central College, North Mankato, Minnesota.

During my time as department chairperson, the EEC department discussed, drafted, and approved revised policies and procedures for the process of applying and admission of students to professional education. The intent was to coach students in their professional development

and academic studies such that they were prepared and successful at entrance to COE Professional Education.

Enhancing Faculty Quality

As chairperson, I worked to enhance the quality of faculty through adding graduate and undergraduate research assistants, fostering faculty development, and mentoring adjunct faculty members.

As chairperson, I advocated and was awarded two positions for full-time graduate assistants. This was the first time since AY 2004-2005 that the department has a graduate assistant. One of these was designated for an ECE major and the other was designated for an international student, in this case, from Magadan, Russia, the region where MSU has an international partnership with North-Eastern State University. These two students brought a unique focus to several courses that they helped teach and also to several student events (such as student attendance at NAEYC conference in Chicago, IL). (See PDR section with Criterion 1 documentation)

Also, as chairperson, I advocated and was awarded financial support from the College of Graduate Studies and Research for an undergraduate research assistant for 60 hours during Fall semester. The URA did research work for me and for Dr. Lillian Duran.

During the academic year, I encouraged new faculty, adjunct faculty, and new graduate assistants to attend the seminars provided by the CETL. I also observed one adjunct faculty member as requested and provided feedback directly to the faculty member.

As part of this effort, I met with each adjunct faculty member at least once to discuss the department's plan and resources for the courses they were teaching. I facilitated two meetings for instructors of EEC 201, 200 and 222, so they could be oriented to using Criterion ® by Education Testing Service for doing writing assessment labs and grading written assignments. I also collected a box of materials for each Early Childhood Education course so that adjunct faculty would have a start when they were recruited to teach. The materials included course textbook, course syllabus, sample student assignments, and teaching materials.

Improving Department Climate

At the beginning of Fall semester, 2007, I surveyed ES:EEC department faculty members to learn what they thought about elements of the department climate. The survey was based on material from the Academy for Leadership training and Development.¹ There were three elements that were ranked lowest on a list of 18 elements (where 1 = needs improvement; 3 = great). Based on their responses, they agreed that, together, we should work on these three elements of climate.

1. documenting team efforts (mean score 1.36)
2. evaluating team effectiveness (mean score 1.33)
3. rewarding accomplishments (mean score 1.25)

¹ Academy for Leadership Training and Development. (2000). Assessing team effectiveness. Leadership Development Program Participant Handbook, 7 – 16.

The first semester, I worked on documenting team efforts by generating two “Good News Reports” each month. The Good News was documented in department emails and in the College of Education newsletter (see Fall 2006 issue).

The second semester, I worked on evaluating our team effectiveness by generating summaries and reports once each month. The reports were included in the ES:EEC department’s assessment and data reports (see department notebooks).

The desired outcome of rewards and recognition programs is to improve performance. As department chairperson, I did not control resources that may be seen as incentives to motivate some colleagues. Throughout the year, I worked on rewarding accomplishments with non-monetary rewards.

An American Society for Training and Development (ASTD)² report on employee retention research identified consistent employee recognition as a key factor in retaining top-performing workers. Research shows that some employees may see motivating others with money as vulgar, and are actually not incited by such offers. This group of employees is more likely to be motivated to improve their performance through the use of non-monetary rewards such as being thanked publicly at a departmental function or by having lunch with the head of the organization. Non-monetary recognition can be very motivating, helping to build feelings of confidence and satisfaction. In fact, 78% of employees indicated that it was very or extremely important to be recognized by their managers when they do good work (Nelson 2004).³ The number one choice for recognition is sincere praise given in a timely manner with specific examples. Allen and Helms' (2002)⁴ research confirmed the importance of regular expressions of appreciation by managers and leaders to encourage behavior of employees to reach strategic goals; and this was true for each of the strategies they examined.

Throughout the year, I used these ideas to recognize collegial efforts:

1. an increased role in decision-making at department meetings and through the program coordinator strategy of sharing release time for department chairperson duties
2. informal acknowledgement through announcements at department meetings, especially about activities that related to AY2006-2007 departmental goals
3. assignment of more enjoyable job duties, specifically as program coordinator and as course coordinators for multiple sections of the same course (both for enhanced empowerment for program improvement)
4. mention in monthly Good News Reports
5. encouragement to take advantage of opportunities for training
6. department-wide pizza-party to celebrate submission of PEPER materials
7. department-wide Christmas party at the chairperson’s home

² Trierweiler, C. & Rivera, R. (September, 2005). Online higher education and corporate learning. Training + Development.

³ Nelson, B. (January 2004). Everything you thought you knew about recognition is wrong. Workplace Management. Retrieved February 16, 2004 from <http://www.workforce.com>.

⁴ Allen, R. & Helms, M. (Fall 2002). Employee perceptions of relationships between strategy rewards and organizational performance. *Journal of Business Strategies*, 19 (2). 115-139.

At the conclusion of Spring semester, 2007, I surveyed ES:EEC department faculty members to learn what they thought about improvements in the elements of the department climate. Their responses indicated a positive change in:

1. documenting team efforts
2. evaluating team effectiveness
3. rewarding accomplishments