

Incentivizing, Acknowledging, and Rewarding Faculty Excellence



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2024 Institute for Chief Academic Officers and Their Teams // November 1–4, 2024
Hilton Portland Downtown // Portland, Oregon

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Presenters

John Kolander, Provost, Wisconsin Lutheran College

Chris Spicer, Provost, Morningside University (IA)

Alden Stout, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Newman University (KS)

Chair

David Slade, Provost, Berry College (GA)



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Why...

Incentivize, acknowledge, and reward
faculty excellence in teaching?



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What...

Do our mission statements say about
who we are?



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Culture of Instructional Improvement

Culture reflected by:

- What is celebrated
- What is rewarded
- Where the heroes live



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Audience Poll

What is celebrated and rewarded at your institution?



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Award for Faculty Excellence in Teaching

- Meaningful and competitive process
- Impartial selection committee
- Timelines
 - Nomination
 - Application
 - Selection of finalists
 - Interview and observation
 - Celebration event - announcement



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Generating Enthusiasm for Faculty Excellence

(Alden Stout, Newman University)



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The Cultural Challenge

“Of all the important constituencies within higher education, the one with the least incentive to change in ways beyond the incremental comprises full-time permanent faculty: those on the tenure track and—especially—those that are tenured. This is not because they are temperamentally or constitutionally or politically opposed to change or because they are stubborn; it is because there is little for them to gain and much to lose.”

- Brian Rosenberg. *Whatever It Is I'm Against It: Resistance to Change in Higher Education*



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The Financial Challenge

- \$10,000 honorarium for each award winner
- \$12,000 stipend and travel for three award evaluators
- \$4,000 honoraria for each runner-up (\$2,000 each)
- \$8,000 banquet
- Total: \$34,000 – \$54,000 (depending on # of winners)



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The Persuasive Challenge: The CFO

- A tendency to accept that market forces lead to results
- Attempt (partial) reallocation of budget dollars, if possible.
- Appeal to market-based incentives for improving the quality of the product.
- Appeal to KPIs like recruitment in faculty visits and retention results.
- Play the long game - long term sustainable results - “This is a strategy.”



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The Persuasive Challenge: The President

- A tendency to seek distinctive culture and board recognition
- Appeal to innovation and creativity.
- Appeal social scientific research on pay for performance and perceptions of equity.
- Appeal to potential board enthusiasm.
- Appeal to faculty quality faculty governance.
- Play the short game - Immediate board excitement and faculty appreciation - “This is a win.”



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The Enthusiasm Challenge: The Board

- A tendency to support faculty and believe in the excellence of the institution
- Appeal to incentives for business minded board members.
- Appeal to rewarding the faculty members that impacted them.
- Appeal to seeking excellence in all things.
- Appeal to their direct role in faculty support. (Make a big deal of the board's support.)
- Appeal to culture change - "Creating a new standard of excellence."



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The Motivation Challenge: The Faculty

- A tendency to seek equity and a desire for recognition
- Appeal to the work that happens “behind the scenes.”
- Appeal to opportunities to learn from one another.
- Appeal to recognizing all faculty: that’s the purpose of the banquet.
- Appeal to faculty evaluators: all think it is a great idea.
- Respond to equity-based objections: distributing this award would result in \$416 per person.
- Respond to fear of eliminating raises: emphasize the independence of this program.



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Results at Newman University

- Board members enthusiastically embraced it.
- The President championed it.
- The CFO allocated resources to it.
- The Advancement Office is helping to fundraise for it.
- The Faculty (mostly) are excited about it.



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Q&A



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20 Years of Faculty Excellence Awards

(Chris Spicer, Morningside
University)



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Sharon Walker Faculty Excellence Awards: History

- Launched in 2003: tough time in history of the college
- Difficult prioritization process, years of stagnant salaries
- New president and major Board member wanted to do something to highlight the crucial role faculty play on campus.



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Sharon Walker Faculty Excellence Awards: Goals

- Reward teaching excellence.
- Recognize the importance of advising.
- Inspire faculty to strive for greater teaching excellence.
- Provide faculty development opportunities.
- Attract new faculty to Morningside.



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Award Selection Process

- Portfolio of application materials based on **teaching excellence, effective advising, scholarship, and service**
- Faculty submit the names of up to 3 students, 3 faculty and staff, and 2 external colleagues for recommendations.
- **3** External Evaluators review all application materials and narrow down to **5** finalists.
- Evaluators conduct interviews with each finalist and teaching observations.



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Award Presentation

- Evaluators identify up to three award winners.
- A Faculty Banquet is held.
- Awardees receive: \$10,000 honorarium, \$2,000 in professional development funds.
- 2 remaining finalists each receive \$2,000 in professional development funds.



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Impact on Faculty Culture

- Elevation of faculty role:
 - Increased service and scholarship now required
 - Healthy mix of “new faculty” and “senior faculty”
- Celebration of faculty colleagues:
 - Increased caring about one another
 - Increased pride
 - Increased understanding of excellence and creativity in different disciplines
 - Significant differentiator for faculty recruitment

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Best Practices: Rigorous Application

- Include Faculty Senate in application development to generate faculty buy-in.
- Bring in external evaluators:
 - Engage donors.
 - Address concerns of undue influence by administration.
 - Include classroom visits AND interviewing of finalists.
 - Create benefits for the evaluators!
 - Raise broader awareness of Morningside.



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Best Practices: Awarding

- Award amount has to be “transformational.”
- Include awards for finalists to encourage future participation.
- Host a banquet where academic excellence is celebrated.
- Create ways to learn from winners.
- Set up an expectation of excellence: the award is not just passed around the faculty.



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Thank you for attending
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