Faculty & staff development Guide

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Advisory Services

When employees enter a position or career, the best situation is not for them to settle in and become stagnant. Instead, it is important to continue to learn and grow within the position, the company and the career path overall. Employees need to cultivate their strengths and address their weaknesses, continuing to develop skills and knowledge that better serves their roles and careers.

Employers can help with this process through employee development. This guide covers employee development in depth, including what it is, its importance and how to develop it. While professional development is important for employees in all fields, this guide focuses on the educational industry and furthering the development of faculty and staff members at all levels of education.

What Is Employee Development?

Employee development refers to training and education that employees go through to gain additional skills and knowledge related to a professional role and career. Generally, employers provide or promote employee development, which is also called professional or staff development.

Continuing education can happen internally through the employer and externally through a third-party educational opportunity. Employees can develop their career skills and knowledge on their own, yet it is beneficial for employer and employee when the organization provides opportunities for professional development.

Organizations aim to develop the current skills and competencies of employees, in addition to adding new ones, toward the end of benefiting the organization and its mission. Nonetheless, continuing education should also be a benefit for employees themselves, helping them in their individual career paths and goals.

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Employee Development

Professional development is not just about performance reviews that share strengths and weaknesses or about basic mandatory training. It should go beyond that to truly develop a person into a better employee and better professional in that role and career path. Overall, the right development turns a person into a better asset for the organization.

Human Resource (HR) and Learning & Development (L&D) professionals interview and hire the right candidates to fit a role and organization, carrying out evaluations and assessments to choose the right person. The process does not stop there. A person who seems like the right fit for a role and company culture still needs shaping and growth to become their best professional self and to fully serve the organization and its goals.

HR and L&D specialists understand that employees are assets to an organization and that the goal is to develop them. It may seem simple, with the easy solution of providing more training. But, in reality, employee development is much more complex and needs to be carried out strategically to maximize company resources and remain competitive in the industry. It's essential not just to train employees but to train them the right way.

Strategic Goals of Training and Development

Effective training and development for faculty and staff members should have certain elements. Employees should fully understand and be immersed in the organization and its culture, which means connecting with the mission and goals. They should also understand their own place within the organization and how they contribute to the goals and initiatives. This helps them feel connected and an integral part of the organization, wanting to better it as well as themselves and wanting to work toward the collective goals.

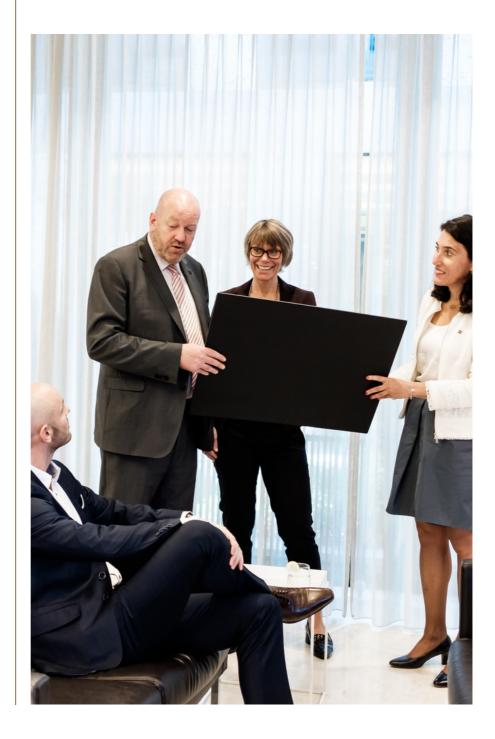When developing a training program, organizations should focus on:

- Building a group of faculty and staff members that can adapt to changes over time in the organization, industry and world.
- Creating training and development that can shift as needed along with strategic goals.
- Implementing a way to track and measure how effective training programs are and identifying ways to improve.

In addition to measuring training effectiveness, organizations need a good method for reviewing and managing the performance of faculty and staff members. This should be a competency-based system that is connected to training programs and provides concrete ways to improve as needed.

Benefits and Importance of Employee Development

A well-planned and effective staff development process provides many benefits to everyone, including the organization, the HR team and the employees themselves. In education, students and parents also benefit greatly from staff members who are well trained and continue to improve their skills and knowledge.

1. Better Use of Resources

Organizations that have high turnover of staff end up wasting resources and creating a poor culture. Instead, it is worth investing the time and money into developing existing staff members and retaining them. This is a better use of resources than constantly training new employees and failing to develop them properly. Even retraining tends to be more cost-effective than new hires.

It still takes time and money to train new employees, and these resources are better spent on developing employees. High turnover results in wasted costs and time from sunk capital that was invested in the person and the cost of hiring and training a new candidate.

Instead, putting resources into staff development provides a good return on investment. It is more efficient and effective to develop an employee who already went through the hiring and initial training process. Rather than starting at the beginning, HR and L&D specialists are able to take the current knowledge, skills and company culture of that employee and build on it.

2. Keeping Up With Industry Changes

An important part of training and development is adapting as the industry changes. In education, faculty and staff need to keep up with the latest societal changes, teaching styles and other patterns and trends that impact the industry. They also may need refreshers on the basics of teaching and the subject(s) in which they teach.

Continuing to learn ensures that staff retain the same level of knowledge they started with and then adapt as times change. They can learn new methods and follow strategic goals to always provide the best service to students possible. Continued education helps staff follow best practices at any given point in time.

In addition, organizations always need to adapt and shift in a myriad of ways to continue to stay competitive and meet their audience's needs. Training helps organizations become market leaders who are always at the forefront and have the skills needed for new directions.

In addition to being ready for positive new directions, well-developed employees are also ready to handle challenges and unexpected situations. When these situations are handled well, they can lead to new opportunities. If handled poorly, they can negatively impact the organization's success, reputation and way forward.

3. Organizational Reputation

Being an organization that provides stellar career development contributes to a positive reputation. This helps organizations stay competitive in the field and creates a good name for the organization within the industry. Even when an employee leaves for another opportunity, it only reflects well on an organization when that person displays good skills, knowledge and training wherever they go.

In addition, professional development is a perk that can draw the best candidates to an organization and its roles. People with the most potential are drawn to environments where they can shine and continue to grow. In addition to attracting these candidates, a good professional development system can retain them and make the absolute most of their potential. These employees can become more loyal and reflect well on the organization when they interact with the world. Having methods like personalized development plans and a learning culture help make an environment that the brightest want to be a part of.

4. Business Growth and Success

Good employees that are trained well in the company culture and goals help an organization succeed and grow. Employees that are only moderately trained may maintain the status quo or even hold back an organization. When an organization wants to expand or move forward into the future, it needs staff who can grow along with the organization. Training helps the entire vessel move forward, improving chances of success for everyone.

Continuing education and training supports employees to be their best selves and the most productive, which helps create an elite organization. Students and parents want organizations that have the best educators, and it is one sign of success or failure to them whether an organization is able to retain its staff members.

Another way training can help the organization is by developing employees with potential into successful leaders. Good organizations that last and thrive need effective leaders, and the development of skills is often what's needed to turn someone with potential into a great leader who can move the organization forward. In many cases, leaders need skills targeted to that particular organization and industry, so further training is needed to build the right skills.

These kinds of things can have a direct impact on profits and other success measures. Various kinds of training make a difference. Research found that soft skills training created about a 250 percent return on investment within an eight-month period. Another example is the expectation that upskilling could increase GDP by $6.5 trillion by the year 2030. Further, strong leadership in an organization contributes to a +9 percent gross profit margin and +37% increase in revenue per employee.

5. Improved Performance

Organizations need to perform better than competitors to stand out in the industry and niche. Investing in employee skills and knowledge is an important way to have high performance. A report on employee development's effect on performance found that development investment improved measures like win rates and quota attainment. Smaller investments of $500 led to a win rate improvement of 46.1 percent, while larger investments of $5,000 led to 51.4 percent.

Overall, professional development brings a host of benefits to an organization, its employees and its mission. It is well worth the investment because of the many rewards, including better performance, productivity, profits, reputation and flexibility.

Faculty Development

While much of the previous discussion can be focused on faculty or the broader spectrum of all employees, there are some aspects of professional development that are more specific to educational faculty.

A faculty development program (FDP) is an essential component of educational institutions at any level. It not only benefits the faculty and organization, but also leads to more effective, learner-centered teaching. Therefore, faculty development plays a direct role in best serving the students, which is the ultimate mission of the organization.

In addition to the well-known idea of the stool of academic life, which includes the three legs of teaching, research and service, it makes sense to add a leg to that idea. This leg could represent faculty development. In essence, this additional leg would support the other three and make the entire stool stronger. Professional development for faculty should be an integral part of this idea, rather than having a faculty development program stand on its own, as is normally the case.

An essential element of professional education and competence is faculty vitality. Creating a dynamic faculty environment (for example, in teaching, administration, research, professionalism and assessment) can greatly improve the educational reputation and the academic performance of students.

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Benefits and Importance of Faculty Development

Again, while faculty realize many of the same benefits as any type of employee, there are also benefits specific to this profession. Faculty development is of particular importance for these reasons:

- Professional development creates better understanding of teaching best practices and the concepts being taught, allowing educators to provide the best quality of education to students.
- Teaching well requires ongoing work regardless of innate personality and/or degrees. It is essential for educators to continue to reflect, learn and be open to new ideas to provide the best service possible.
- Faculty development is not only beneficial for educators who are struggling but also for all teachers to become more effective at what they do.
- While professional development has often been seen as supplementary or secondary to other considerations in education, it needs to be viewed as a more critical component equal to other aspects of teaching.
- Continuing education supports faculty vitality and motivation. It supports educators and helps them have longer, better careers in the field. They continue to grow and develop skills through training, research and other effective methods instead of becoming frustrated or letting down students through trial and error.
- Educators are exposed to the latest pedagogical methods that they may not have been aware of.
- Training opportunities bring together faculty across disciplines and levels of teaching, which creates a supportive community.
- Development opportunities create a more well-rounded professional experience that is not just intellectual but also social and affective.

Keys to a Faculty Development Program

Faculty development programs (FDPs) are very important for helping educators keep up with trends, changes and best practices in the industry. Not only do these programs give them better skills for their profession, they also help them understand the latest curriculum that students and parents are seeking. This creates a learning environment that can exceed competitor's performance.

The key to FDPs is upskilling. This term refers to adding new skills to the repertoire. Newer faculty is freshly trained in the latest curriculum, yet may have room for improvement in other areas. Experienced educators may need refreshing and also to upskill in the latest curriculum and techniques. Upskilling can benefit both types and create consistency among faculty.

Upskilling can occur through numerous development activities. These include continuing education through the organization, external training programs and conferences, research projects, online training and certification, and through well-planned FDPs.

A Focus on Learner-Centered Teaching

Education is taking a shift from theoretical to experiential learning, which brings about the need for more learner-centered teaching. Rather than simply lecturing students, learner-centered teaching puts added focus on two-way discussions, feedback and improvisation to adapt to the needs of each class. Educators who are used to other styles need to gain the skills and knowledge to emphasize this type of learning and teaching. In order to be learner-centered educators, faculty members need to continue to learn. Every educational institution should put a large focus on ensuring that faculty can and should continue to learn.

A New World of Teaching Through Technology

Many educational opportunities are offered online today, whether solely through technology or within a hybrid approach that includes both in-person and online learning. While this type of learning and teaching was already happening and spreading, the COVID-19 pandemic made it much more abundant and created new online opportunities.

Online teaching brings about the need for an understanding of relevant technology and skills adapted to teaching through a screen. Even many in-person classrooms include technology through computers or tablets, further encouraging the need for faculty to be tech-savvy.

There are many areas for educators to learn, including soft skills, the latest curriculum and technology. There are also many ways for them to learn, including through self-learning programs, activities and full development programs. This guide will go into these subjects further in the sections below.

Employee Development Areas

It's essential to come up with specific areas to focus on for continuing training. Educators need a combination of skills that include soft and hard skills. Top areas of improvement to focus on include:

- Conflict resolution and management
- Relationship building
- Communication skills
- Leadership skills
- Organizational skills
- Adaptability
- Stress management
- Creativity skills
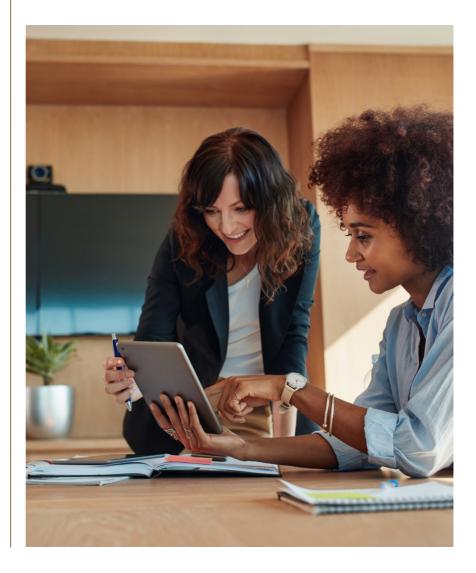
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Most Effective Employee Development Methods

Training can come in various ways, shapes and forms. The best method may vary by the type of skill or subject area being taught. When creating a training program for faculty and staff members, it's important to consider the ideal training methods for each situation.

Resources and other practical considerations may shape the method of professional development, but it could be worth the extra investment for a more effective training approach. Also, training should not be reduced or removed due to budget constraints, as it should be an essential part of teaching.

Many training methods are effective. Some of the best options include:

- In-class training
- On-the-job training or rotations
- Workshops and groups
- Simulations
- Self-study
- Coaching or mentoring
- Conferences
- Expert shadowing

How to Create an Effective Faculty Development Program

When an organization creates its own FDP, it should be well-planned with strategic objectives and methods. Administrators and even educators who fight for their own educational needs should think about what type of training and subject matter would be beneficial. It will vary by the organization and factors like the current educational status of its faculty and its resources. The level of education, the teaching concepts and the methods of education also play a role.

The following questions and answers can guide the development of a FDP.

What Is the Purpose of the Proposed Program?

Rather than having a vague training program, it's important to determine the specific guiding purpose. To determine the answer, it's helpful to study other similar programs, even if it means putting in the time and effort to go see them or ask others questions about their programs. Another way to determine the guiding purpose is to consider the mission of the organization and how training should fit into that. Once the guiding purpose is decided upon, it must be communicated clearly and effectively to administration and faculty. Part of this process is communicating expectations regarding faculty evaluations.

Who Are the Key Players?

When creating a FDP, there are people who will plan the training program and those who will take part in it. Are these groups necessarily separate? Who are the key players in each group?

Who Should Be Involved in Program Planning?

There are various people who may present the idea of starting a FDP and who want to adopt it, but who is in charge of planning its creation and development? While it may initially seem as though administration should develop this type of program, this set-up hasn't always succeeded as administrator-created programs have not always addressed true faculty needs. Of course, various members can take part in the creation. One faculty development program that succeeded at the university level was created by a 10-member committee made up of people appointed by deans. It makes sense to include faculty members even if the committee includes administrators as well.

Who Should Participate?

When creating a FDP, an important component to keep in mind is the intended audience. This may vary by the institution and education level it provides. In addition, the audience will differ depending on whether the program is voluntary or mandatory. Also, some components may be designed for different audiences. For instance, perhaps one component is for new educators, while another is for seasoned educators. They may have differing needs in certain areas while they take some of the same training that applies to both groups as well. Some training may be for faculty alone, while other training is designed to include other staff members, administrators and even student leaders.

What Type of Staff Does the Program Require?

There should be a staff member to run the facilitation of the program. This can be a part-time person and should be separate from decision makers. The best person for this role has skills like communication skills, flexibility, planning skills and creative skills. The best fit is a generalist who has varied interests. While it may be helpful for the person to already be proficient in these skills, whether innately or through previous training, they could also go through professional development to gain them. For example, there is relevant training offered by groups like the Professional and Organization Development Network, the National Training Laboratory and the American Society of Training and Development. The person may benefit from additional training in certain areas like psychology, adult learning, curriculum design and program evaluation.

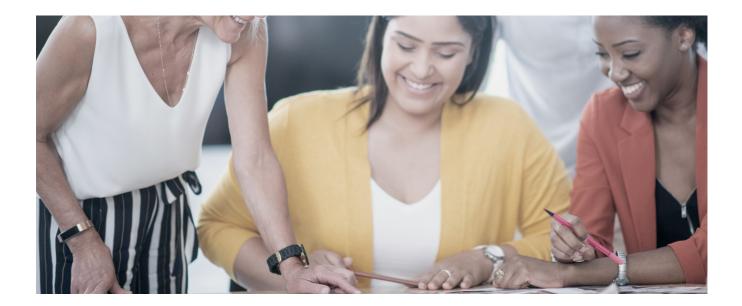## How Do We Determine the Needs of Our Constituency?

As previously mentioned, training needs to consider the audience and its needs. How do you figure out what those needs are for each audience? The place to start is with a needs assessment. It may be effective to first carry out an assessment suggested by Case, Buhl and Lindquist (1978) that helps determine institutional and faculty readiness for development. Questions to consider for this assessment are as follows:

- Will a FDP be approved and who will have decision-making say over it?
- Are there resources already available for faculty development, and what are those?
- Who is in charge of the budget for a FDP?
- Are there norms and guidelines that would influence acceptance and participation?

- Are there key players with influence over faculty who could encourage program acceptance?
- What faculty development activities are already instituted or have taken place, and how have those been accepted?
- What is the stage of development of the organization?
- Do all faculty and staff fully know, understand and act upon the institutional mission and goals?

In addition, the needs and interests of faculty should be assessed. This can be done through formal surveys, asking faculty and deducing based on a comparison of the current situation and the ideal situation. Further, it can be left open for faculty to express the needs and interests they have, also allowing them to share self-designed projects. Collecting these needs and interests can help create a program that is helpful and is adopted and accepted, while this list is incorporated into broader plans of the institution and student needs.

How Will the Proposed Program Affect Desired Changes?

The initial planning stages should also consider what the desired changes are and measures that can track whether the program is effective at bringing about these changes. In addition, the team in charge of planning can develop a model for the change process. It is effective to consider these questions from Lance Buhl at this stage:

- What are the conditions the FDP will aim to produce?
- How does the team think the changes can occur?
- What assumptions are present in the program purposes?

The planning group can consider whether training activities will support various stages of a cycle of change, which include:

- A need expressed or felt by faculty.
- Data collection that provides proof of the need or problem.
- Consideration of solutions.
- Picking a solution and implementing it.
- Assessing whether the solution was successful.

While this cycle is helpful, it is also good to stay flexible.

What Goals and Objectives Should We Pursue?

When the planning group has considered various data, such as survey results and faculty interviews, it can fully determine the goals and objectives for the program content. It should come up with goal statements that clearly follow and convey concerns at various levels, including individual, departmental and institutional levels. These statements can also consider ideas and best practices gathered from industry research and conferences. Finally, the objectives should also lay out measures that can be used to track success of the program.

What Institutional Structure Will Best Encourage Success?

While considering other factors of the program, the team making decisions should also consider the location for the program to be carried out. They can discuss whether it will take place in one area or department, parts of the institution or the entire institution.

Further, the program needs to have legitimate structure to it, so a director of programming should be chosen. This position, which can be a part-time one, needs to create a formal program that has proper coordination, sequence and follow through. The program needs to have high placement in the administrative structure so it has support and funding, and is seen as a legitimate and important part of the organization.

The audience should have a large sense of ownership over the program, which helps create adoption and success. In addition, the functioning of the program needs to rest in hands outside decision makers so that the audience has confidentiality and trust.

How Should We Finance These Lofty Schemes?

It may be helpful and even necessary to have a well-planned faculty development program, yet having the budget for it may be a different story. This may be true because a FDP requires funding for a staff member to run it and the costs of training and activities. Nonetheless, this guide makes the case that the investment is well worth it due to the value gained in return, which can include increased profits and success of the organization.

There may already be a budget in place for faculty development activities, so this is a place to start. The planning committee can see what is already in place, if anything, and whether this can be expanded. There are many places to look for faculty training funding. Often, there are institutional general funds that can be used, which can be partially made up of government or foundation funds.

At that point, the institution itself needs to come up with additional funding to make the program a success, which is when many programs fail. This is where it is worth making the case for the program based on the return on investments.

What Activities Shall the Program Provide?

Other parts of the planning process help to guide the actual programs that are included in the FDP. It's helpful to make the other decisions first because they make it simple to determine the activities. For instance, first deciding the goals and needs makes it easy to figure out the programs that would support them.
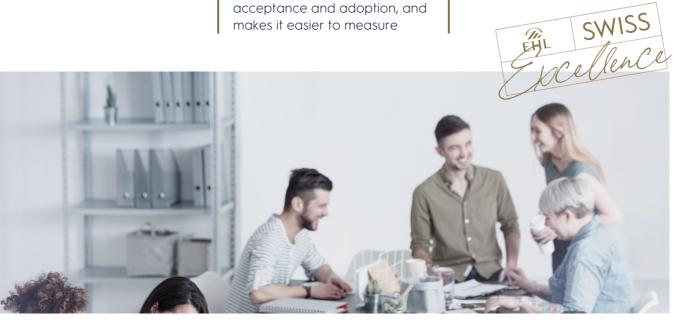
It can be helpful for many organizations to start small. They can determine the most effective and high-priority activities based on important needs and goals. Nonetheless, it's also helpful to balance these critical programs with simple ones that are focused more on interests.

Starting small can help create acceptance and adoption, and makes it easier to measure

success and make adjustments as needed. It also helps fit limited resources.

Then, the program can be expanded in time. Another benefit of this method of adoption is that it gives faculty a chance to give feedback on the initial start and ideas for what activities they would like to see added to the program. This also gives the opportunity to replace an ineffective program with another one rather than trying to manage too many activities at once.

Once an institution has a few activities ranging in breadth and depth, it can roll out the program and gain traction before expanding. The goal is to introduce the program to everyone and be persistent, building adoption.

How Do We Publicize Our Programs and Reward Participants?

Once an institution has the FDP set up and is rolling out the initial stage of programs, it's time to publicize the program to the faculty members, so they are aware of what is available. In addition, there should be rewards set up for faculty who participate, and these need to be conveyed along with sharing the available programs.

These are some ideas for publicizing the program:

- Tell people by word of mouth and ask them to share the news.
- Let deans and department chairs know about the program.
- Ask opinion leaders to help spread the word.
- Create a newsletter to spread information or add the info to an established newsletter.
- Use institutional publications and forms of communication, such as email lists.
- Use posters in the break room.

While methods of mass dissemination, such as posters and emails, are helpful,

it's the person-to-person communication that often has the best results. It may also be helpful to invite one person from each department or unit, who can then report back to colleagues about the program and its benefits. It is also helpful to work with one person from the start, as this designated person can try out activities and provide feedback that can be acted upon to improve the program.

Incentives can include both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. The program can promote personal satisfaction, including by creating activities that fit expressed needs and interests. By performing their jobs better and having improved results in the classroom, faculty can feel rewarded. That said, extrinsic rewards like money or gift cards may be needed to boost

participation or encourage more widespread support of the program. The staff person running the program can also be in charge of this aspect.

Additional methods of reward include:

- Participation documentation.
- Letters of achievement.
- Growth contracting where individual staff members determine a growth project to work on.
- Acknowledgement by colleagues of the staff member.
- Acknowledgement by a superior.

The faculty development staff person can try to find out whether additional types of rewards would be necessary or appreciated.

The best ways to ensure participation and success are to have high-quality services that are satisfying to faculty and to involve the faculty development personnel in faculty life.
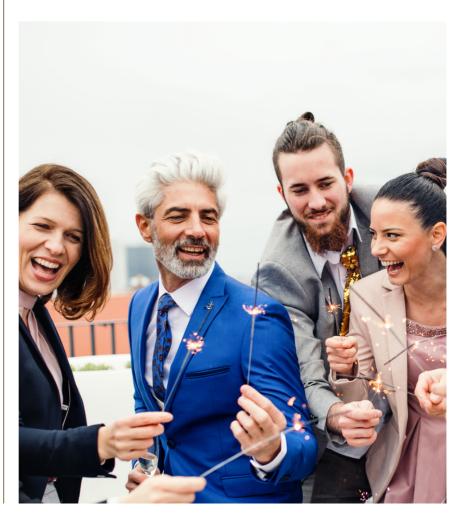
How Do We Evaluate Our Accomplishments?

The last component to include is a way to measure and evaluate accomplishments as part of the program. This area has not been studied as extensively as the creation and functioning of faculty development programs. The lack of evaluation has previously been a reason many programs did not continue, as they were unable to show results to administrators. This is why it's so important to evaluate the success of the programs.

Providing criteria to measure is one of the ways to convince decision makers to try the program from the start. In the beginning, the planning committee should determine evaluation measures, such as:

- What outcomes are expected?
- How can outcomes be measured and what evidence of success can be demonstrated?
- What data will administrators be seeking to approve funding levels?

In addition to providing proof that the program is necessary to administrators, evaluation data can be used to improve the program. It gives information on what is working and where there are areas for improvement.

Take the Next Steps to Start a FDP

Hopefully, this guide shows the importance of faculty development programs and provides clear ways to plan, implement and evaluate one in an educational institution. In addition, use this Faculty Development Programs Checklist to ensure all steps are covered.

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