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THE EXAMINATION OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING FACULTY CLIMATE AT A NORTHWEST REGION UNIVERSITY: A CASE STUDY

ABSTRACT: The extent of tenure of higher education administrators may seem to be the topic of discussion at many universities in American society. The corporatized structure of universities across America has turned their institutions' focus. This business-like approach has transformed university presidents into CEOs, threatening the integrity of key educational and research functions of faculty and staff. This redirection of instruction and reorienting of curriculum affects the climate on many campuses. This study is important because it seeks to understand the elements that ensure a healthy faculty relationship with administrators. A qualitative case study method was utilized to interview 5 faculty within one college within a university in the Northwest region of the United States. The question sought in this study is: What are the things that build trust between faculty and administrators that create a healthy collegial academic environment? It is the goal of this project to identify the elements of a positive faculty climate. The study results will be helpful to administrators and faculty who have an interest in faculty-administrator relations.

The climate of a university's campus has and will always be the topic of conversation for prospective college students. These discussions evaluate aspects of college life such as greek life, athletics, race relations, and community engagement. The factors that influence decisions of enrollment affect the university holistically, impacting staff and faculty employment as well as the marketability of the university academically and economically. Furthermore, these factors do not reflect the environment not transparently displayed to prospective college students or potential faculty members of a university. Beyond the expectations of presenting a safe and nurturing atmosphere, the purpose of the university is to prepare its students to contribute to society. With the focus on the students on university campuses around the world, the individuals who are direct representatives of the universities are placed in a retrospective realm.

In this prestigious academic setting, faculty face unique challenges presented by organizational expectations for productivity in teaching, research, and service. Faculty are obligated to be excellent teachers, to engage in significant research, and to engage in academic and community service activities. These diverse expectations contribute to perceptions of role ambiguity and role conflict and influence faculty commitment to the organization and the perceptions of the organizational climate. Understanding how faculty achieves autonomy and confidence in their work role balance while creating and sustaining organizational commitment is vital to the organizational success in recruiting and retaining faculty. Though the growth of the student body, literally and figuratively, is important to the institution, one may believe that the success of the student could mirror the quality of faculty.

Purpose and Questions

The extent of tenure of higher education administrators may seem to be the topic of discussion at many universities in American society. The corporatized structure of universities across America has turned their institutions' focus.

This business-like approach has transformed university presidents into CEOs, threatening the integrity of key educational and research functions of faculty and staff. This redirection of instruction and reorienting of curriculum affects the climate on many campuses. This study is important because it seeks to understand the elements that ensure a healthy faculty relationship with administrators. This study used a series of questions used to retrieve data that will provide an insight on the concepts of faculty governance and its affects on faculty climate. The study would like to discover the aspects, which build trust between faculty, and administrators, which in turn will create a healthy collegial academic environment.

Literature Review

Circumstantial knowledge of faculty organizational commitment and satisfaction with the work of educating students, conducting research, and disseminating research findings is important to recruiting and retaining faculty successfully. It is essential for all universities to develop and maintain an effective program of total quality managements in a climate that promotes work satisfaction and faculty support in an effort to increase the retention of those faculty members who are committed to the organization (Chan, 2002). The hierarchical structure of the university system often depicts the type and level of organizational commitment. The type and level of organizational commitment may also vary as faculty attempt to achieve tenure status at their perspective institutions. According to Meyer & Allen (1997), organizational commitment is defined as a multidimensional psychological state that characterizes the person's relationship with the organization in question. Though the societal culture places much importance on financial compensation for services and often influences decisions of commitment to institutions on the behalf of faculty, organizational commitment is influenced by many factors. According to Shaw and Gupta (2001), work-related variables such as job autonomy, workload, and pay have been found to be positively related to organizational commitment. Contrary to belief, salaries and benefits will not ease the tensions associated with an unhealthy faculty climate.

Organizational commitment consists of three interactive dimensions, affective, continuance and normative dimensions. These dimensions of organizational commitment reflect differing interpretations of the personal meaning of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Affective, continuance, and normative dimensions of organizational commitment have distinct effects on predicted outcomes (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The faculty member's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization refers to affective commitment. Affective commitment explains faculty retention in terms of desire to remain within the institution. On the other hand, continuance commitment refers to an awareness of the personal costs associated with leaving the institution. Furthermore, the faculty member's sense of obligation to continue employment and a feeling of responsibility to the institution suggests normative commitment. This feeling of responsibility results in a feeling that one ought to stay within the organization maintaining their current capacity.

The perception of faculty and administrators may vary independently. However, the current culture of the postsecondary institutional system may have unintentionally created a negative consensus in regards to organizational commitment. Despite the overwhelming atmosphere of the university system, faculty may have other incentives that may influence their organizational commitment. These factors are not bound contractually; therefore organizational commitment may be influenced by factors such as geographical location, proximity to family, or employment opportunities for spouses. With these factors affecting faculty commitment, administrators must understand the importance of having committed faculty members and that the degree of commitment varies. However according to Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982), the degree of employee organizational commitment has implications for the employee and organization.

To truly understand the impact committed faculty can have on the university, administrators may evaluate the benefits of having committed faculty. Both employee and organization derive benefits from committed employees (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Committed employees often have greater perceived rewards leading to increased job satisfaction and improved retention. According to Mathieu and Zajec (1990), committed employees are more likely to engage in creative and innovative work that could help sustain an organization's competitive advantage. Despite the murmurs amongst university administrators, the university system has created a very competitive atmosphere between universities. As a result, universities are continuously looking for marketable opportunities; beyond athletics, some going to the length of physically recruiting students to their campuses. Rather attempting to coerce students to attend, focus placed on organizational commitment would greatly assist the struggle of faculty governance.

Though organizational commitment can greatly influence the climate of a university campus, a healthy organizational climate must cultivate organizational commitment. Organizational climate is defined by four core elements that represent working relationships, social relationships, fractionalization among faculty, and behaviors that maintain organizational welfare. As stated by Borrevik (1972), consideration, intimacy, disengagement, and product emphasis are the elements that can dramatically affect an academic work environment. These elements then have the ability to influence faculty perceptions of work role, and relationships among faculty and key administrators within the college and institution. Academic institutions influence various patterns of behavior that are developed through design of structure, standard setting, job definition, and setting work role expectations.

Organizational climate can be influenced by autonomy, work pressure, and control. Administrators may design academic environments that support positive faculty relationships, participative approaches, and foster enhanced role clarity by learning more about faculty perceptions of organizational climate. Research has found that work environments that encourage inclusiveness in decision making and administrative processes are more likely perceived by faculty as positive and are associated with higher job satisfaction and enhanced work performance (Neumann, 1990). Work environments involving inclusiveness allow faculty the opportunity to harvest trust in the administrators and their decision-making. Organizational climate developed on trust can alleviate the pressures of being a faculty member attempting to juggle the many responsibilities associated with being a faculty member.

Work expectations are high for individuals selecting academic careers. This category of individuals can be narrowed down to the faculty. The current direction of postsecondary institutional education has removed academic administrators who were previously serving as full-time faculty from the front lines of teaching and interacting with students on a daily basis, therefore placing the spotlight on the faculty. Faculty must be strongly committed to teaching, research, and service and possess a willingness to effectively balance these three roles. Though this spotlight may present role ambiguity and role conflict, it is the institution's administrator's obligation to counteract the ambiguity and conflict. Despite the belief of many administrators, the institution will always need faculty. Institutions need faculty to provide a product, continuously evolve the product, and ensure that institution is involved with the evolution. Neumann and Finaly-Neumann (1990) clearly states, "Universities need dedicated faculty members who not only join their university, but continue to remain actively involved in innovative research activities; prepare new materials and approaches for teaching; build, assess, and reform academic programs; maintain high levels of academic standards; participate in academic decision making; and work closely and actively with their students."

Faculty work role demands are expected to grow as the national pool of available qualified faculty continues to decrease. Perhaps an altered work role demand should be proposed. An alternate work role could be reshaped to be more consistent with realistically achievable work priorities. Not all faculty members have the capabilities of achieving the standards put forward by the administrators for the faculty as a whole. Faculty members may specialize in research, teaching, service, or all three. For this reason, an alternate work role design should support the strengths of its faculty. For example, faculty with high research or high teaching role components would by role design have less time available to dedicate to the service work role. Such a work role design would allow for faculty to pursue a primary work role rather than being expected to continuously balance a multidimensional role like that experienced by faculty on current college and university campuses.

This reconfiguring of work role expectations to be consistent with a single, primary work role can potentially foster positive perceptions of the organization and higher levels of organizational commitment while adding the role clarity needed to reduce role ambiguity and role conflict. The targeted result would be a faculty focused on achieving clearly designated role outcomes that complement the organization's mission and vision while contributing to the achievement of administrator led strategic outcomes. The synergistic affect that can be generated when role and strategic outcomes are linked may transform the organizational climate into a climate that will attract and retain faculty.

Perhaps in order to truly foster an organizational climate that will attract and retain faculty, the university should re-evaluate the authoritative approach of administrators on the university campus. In such a formal environment, the natural disposition of the human species is to adopt a formal authority within an organization. According to McConnell and Mortimer (1971), formal authority is based mainly on hierarchal position and sanctions inherent in a particular office, on a grant or ascription of power. Formal authority has the ability to evoke compliance from subordinates because of formal position in a bureaucratic hierarchy (Etzioni, 1964). The construction of many universities' hierarchal design creates a process of decision making throughout the institution. Due to this hierarchal design, administrators of many universities implement formal authority or hierarchal authority when making critical decisions. However, the implementation of this type of authority is increasingly difficult in colleges and universities

because of the difficulty to establish a correlation between formal position or rank and ability (Caplow & McGee, 1965).

As a result of this inability to correlate rank with ability, the organizational climate universities are often filled with frustration and mistrust on the behalf of faculty as subordinates. The distance between administrators and faculty has seemed to grow in recent years due to the manner in which faculty are governed associated with the power of authority on the behalf of administrators along with the visual transition to commercialization in what seems to be every aspect of American society. To minimize this void, administrators could implement their authoritative power in a more efficient many, disregarding rank while assessing ability. To oppose formal authority, functional authority is based on competence, experience, human relationships, skill in leadership, and personal persuasiveness (Peabody, 1964).

The dynamics between administrators, trustees, faculty, and students naturally rely on all characteristics associated with functional authority. In all relationships within the hierarchal structure of the university, these characteristics are vital. Faculty must be competent, experienced, and persuasive to develop the relationships with their students needed to skillfully lead their students to success. On the upper level of the hierarchal structure, administrators must directly reflect the exact personal abilities needed to inspire faculty as faculty must display to educate their students. Furthermore, this understanding could greatly assist in faculty governance and the overall organizational climate. Therefore, despite the ever changing work demands of all constituents in the institution, organizational climate and commitment could ultimately be influenced by the authoritative approach of the individuals at the top of the hierarchal structure.

Theoretical Framework and Background

Faculty roles have evolved over time as societal demands have placed importance on education. This evolvement has presented in new roles and different role expectations. The advancing academic environment has changed the role of faculty. Faculty no longer cannot always specialize in the roles of their preference. As colleges and universities become more complex, the role of faculty also becomes more complex. Postsecondary institutional policies varied significantly with instructional responsibilities performed in some cases by nonfaculty, and some faculty were not assigned teaching duties (Zimbler, 1994). Carnegie classifications were revised in the late 1990s, contributing to the development of new paradigms and expanded areas of faculty role emphasis. Though the revisions were intended to increase the contributions of faculty, the apparent increase in workload has created in a role conflict. Role conflict is more likely among faculty due to multiple role expectations and loss of role clarity and as research role and external funding expectations increased (Zimbler, 1994).

While faculty members seek balance in their roles, their struggle has not gone unnoticed. Administrators continue to struggle to create a work environment that supports excellence in academic scholarship. The statistical focus of the commercialized university system has forced administrators to attempt to place a quantitative value on the roles of faculty. However, the emphasis on performance evaluations of faculty has placed strain on the role ambiguity of faculty. The lack of distinctness in the role of faculty may translate to an unhealthy organizational climate, ultimately leading to a lack of organizational commitment. Though many constituents believe that the changing dynamic of postsecondary institutional education will find its equilibrium as the societal demand stabilizes, clarity in the roles of faculty may assist in the faculty climate on many university campuses in America. A better understanding the relationships between faculty work role balance, role ambiguity, role conflict, and organizational commitment is needed to foster an academic climate that maximizes faculty effectiveness and retention.

Methods Statement

A qualitative case study method was utilized. This method incorporated an interview process collecting face-to-face or over-the-phone data from five faculty members within one college within a university in the Northwest region of the United States. The study used five research questions to collect the data in the interviews. The data was collected using two recording devices to ensure that responses are clearly recorded. Once the data was collected, all data was transcribed and destroyed upon completion of analysis.

The methodology of this study was chosen for various reasons. The most important aspect of a university is the educational product presented throughout its community. Furthermore, many individuals on a university campus have a role in the educational product, however the consideration of the perspectives of the faculty members should

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be prioritized. As the only individuals who interact with students on a daily basis, faculty members' roles are the most vital. Despite the glaring commercialization of the higher education community, faculty members continue to chase the passion of education while developing curriculum, implementing the curriculum directly to students, and expanding the research in their respective academic fields. In addition to the established workload of faculty members, the commercialization of higher education has placed a burden on faculty members, forcing faculty to produce a statistical product of their work in the form of evaluations. While evaluations appear to be a form of assessment that is necessary, the evaluation process can be a strenuous and insensitive. Furthermore, this process can strain the interpersonal relationships within an institution.

In the terms of a higher education institution, the evaluation process is a mechanism used to govern the faculty. This sort of faculty governance produced by the commercialization, or perhaps the commodification of the educational system has placed a strain between administrators and faculty. As a result, the faculty climate can be negatively influenced, which can ultimately result in an educational product that does not nurture the student. Though administrators are vital in the operation of the university, faculty members are the individuals that represent the university and serve as the central cog of the university. It is essential to gain and maintain the trust and respect of the faculty as an administrator. Like many other fields, there seems to be an inconsistency in the retention of non-tenured and tenure faculty in the higher education system. Therefore, this study was administered to gain insight on the perspectives of faculty members on their beliefs regarding factors that could reflect their ideal faculty climate.

Limitations

This study presents few limitations, due to its qualitative nature. Geographical location of faculty members forced many of the interviews to be completed over telephone. As a result, the quality of the responses may have varied because of the inability to control the faculty member's environment. In addition to the lack of environmental control, time restraints could have affected the quality of data collected. Participants were given an overview of requested time needed to complete the interview. However, the strenuous and dynamic culture of being a faculty member at such a commercialized institution could affect scheduled interviews with interruptions and distractions by way of students and emails. This too could affect the value of data collected.

The sample population consists solely of faculty members. However, faculty as a whole consists of individuals at different ranks. Associated with these ranks are various roles within the respective college, which also can affect the amount of insight a faculty member can provide. The hierarchal structure of faculty often allows many faculty members to be involved in the governance of the faculty, while others are considered clinical which allows restricted access to any decision-making process. Due to these limitations, the data collected may represent a portion of the sample population.

Findings and Discussion

Background: The extensive and precise process involved with attempting to gain insight on the perspectives of faculty members at a Northwest region university resulted in very interesting data on what factors faculty believe positively influence the faculty climate of their respective university. The study wanted to assess the factors in which can improve the organizational relationship between administrators and faculty. The glaring transition of university education from pure academia to commercialized academia has forced faculty to adapt to the demands of their job description. Though the demand of their job has appeared to increase the workload of the faculty, the adaptation of the university executive make-up has also given faculty some authority and influence in the decision making process of the university. A study of faculty decision making concluded that formal binding power may lie with the administration and trustees, but a great deal of policy is initiated, formed, and suggested or more generally influenced by the faculty (Platt & Parsons, 1970).

Due to the commercialization of university education, faculty attained their influence by developing a strong sense of professionalism and by averring and protecting academic values. To support this dynamic change in faculty professionalism, Jencks and Riesman (1969) concluded that a great number of faculty holding PhD's now consider themselves almost as independent professionals, responsible primarily to themselves and their peers rather than to their institutions. Furthermore, the responsibility to themselves and their peers has seemed to unintentionally isolated faculty within colleges or disciplines. As a result of the sectoring of faculty into colleges, compliance in institutions has been a focus of administrators on the university level. Compliance in institutions committed to high standards of

scholarship and investigation is the product of reciprocal relationships depending on collegial associations, on the sharing of information, and on discussion and persuasion (Platt & Parsons, 1970).

Results

Upon completion of the conducted interviews, the recordings were transcribed into individual transcription documents. The transcriptions were analyzed for common themes and terms within the responses of the study's participants. The analysis presented three main themes regarding factors that will positively influence faculty climate. The three themes are (i) mutual trust, (ii) camaraderie, (iii) and transparency. To truly understand these themes, we must examine the themes from the perspective of a faculty member. Therefore, it is extremely important to be reminded that faculty are the individuals that produce and present the product of the university.

Mutual Trust: The first theme identified, mutual trust, presents a topic that was a glaring issue throughout the study. Mutual trust can be simply put in any working field, however the organizational environment on the university level involves much more than simply trust. Beyond the fact that there are various factors incorporated with mutual trust in the organizational environment of universities, qualitative evidence states that mutual trust is very important.

Participant 1, constructively highlights the aspects in which mutual trust affects faculty climate and interpersonal relationships between faculty and administration:

> "….*trust is important because no organization can function without trust. So trust has to be bi-directional. Faculty has to trust administration to do what administration must do, management leadership. And administration should trust that the faculty is doing what they are supposed to be doing- researching, writing, and teaching. So if there is no trust, there is no relationship.*"

Participant 2, who serves in a role that administers faculty duties as well as administrator duties, provides perspective of the revolving door of an organization that relies on mutual trust:

> "*If I am not trusting the people either above or below me, if I have to get the whole story before agreeing with the decision, then were not going anywhere. I've got a job to do they got a job to do.*"

Participant 4, blatantly illustrates the product of an organization's mission. Typically, success on all levels is a by product of the individuals within the organization's will to continue to seek progress with confidence. In order to seek progress with confidence, one cannot of failure which often times can reflect in one's hierarchical position within the organization. Participant 4 states:

> "*With the trust, umm, the faculty members are willing to take risk.*"

Mutual trust not only assists in creating a comfortable and nurturing organizational climate, but mutual trust also allows all constituents to be as efficient as possible. Knowing that administrators will have policies and procedures in place to support faculty enables faculty to whole-heartedly pursue the constructs entailed in their job description-instruction, research, and outreach and engagement.

In an institution in which all faculty are actively pursuing their goals set forth by the institution and themselves while administrators are actively ensuring that the institution is operating in an efficient manner, the institution will then achieve the mission of the university. The mission of most institutions should provide clarity to the public and its employees of what role the university and the faculty play for the students and their constituents. Participant 4 expresses what many higher education constituents believe is the simple mission of the university:

> "*I think that the central mission of the university is to teach graduate and undergraduate students.*"

The overall mission of any university is to graduate undergraduate, graduate, professional students who are formally and socially prepared to achieve success in their career field. Due to the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, faculty must trust that they have the capabilities to take risks which are sometimes necessary when attempting to educate students from various backgrounds and academic profiles. The result of this trust allows faculty to be innovative in their instructional styles/methods, curriculum development, and research endeavors. Furthermore, the organizational climate created by mutual trust can increase the organizational commitment. Faculty then feel like they are a part of a team that is contributing to society in the form of expansive research and educating future educators.

Camaraderie: The second theme identified in the data collected in this study is camaraderie. The social aspect of the university environment is a huge contributing factor to the decision of choosing a university to enroll in for students. The data collected in this study has given insight on how important the social aspect of a department office is to faculty. University facilities are often constructed in a method that enables faculty to work in a space designated as their office. This structure often prohibits the sense of camaraderie due to the physical limitations of the building. Participant 5 expresses the frustration associated the office concept:

> *"The isolation of offices can be very difficult. It is hard to build a healthy environment without the camaraderie and the appreciation. And actually, taking the time to get to know each other is important."*

The many things that play a role in organizational commitment, Participant 4 places a huge emphasis on camaraderie in the workplace:

> *"...my ideal workplace there is a lot of camaraderie…"*

Due to the hierarchal structure of universities, there is often a communication void between faculty and administration. This void consists of chain emails, providing very little time, if any, for face-to-face interaction. Participant 3 expresses frustrations with the lack of ability to develop relationships with those on a higher hierarchal level:

> *"...it's a matter of sort of cultivating a relationship with them. And sometimes when you are talking about provosts and deans, as an in the trenches faculty member you don't interact with those folks very much."*

When faculty are able to cultivate those relationships with administration, they have the confidence to take the risks needed to advance the research and pedagogy in their respective fields. Participant 1 vividly illustrates the confidence produced by these types of relationships:

> *"I always say when he was in charge, if I went into battle with him, I die, he would get my body back."*

The psychosocial characteristics of human beings require the need to have human interaction. Faculty emphasized the need to have positive interactions with their peers in the workplace. The camaraderie within an organization provides comfort and motivation for all constituents. Camaraderie presents a sense of teamwork within the workplace. A sense of teamwork enables faculty to share their personal ideas with their peers without fear of rejection or exploitation. As a result, faculty are able to accumulate a conglomerate of ideas with the intention of implementing the best curriculum of instruction.

In addition to the ability to share ideas with peers, camaraderie presents faculty with a sense of comfort and joy. As a result, faculty member form a bond closer to the family spectrum which increases continuance commitment resulting in a strong organizational commitment. Though faculty receive formal benefits from the university, such as health benefits, 401k, and so forth, there are other non-tangible benefits that faculty seek. Comfort and joy are just a few of those non-tangible benefits. Participant4 expresses how a non-tangible benefit, camaraderie, can affect faculty:

> *"I mean people love coming to work. I mean there are some jobs that you could not pay me to do. You know life is too short. You need to be joyful, I believe. You're supposed to be doing good in the world and enjoying life. No amount of money can compensate for the joyful environment. The fellowship and the camaraderie, and the goodwill are good. There are tangible benefits like health benefits."*

Despite the enjoyment faculty receive from instructing and conducting research, the environment in which they instruct can affect their organizational commitment. Often overlooked, camaraderie can serve as a major influence in whether faculty choose to comply to university policy or seek tenured positions within the faculty. As found in this study, camaraderie can provide the incentive needed to ease the process to faculty governance, as well as assist in the increase in affective commitment and continuance commitment which both reflect in faculty retention.

Transparency: The lack of transparency in the governing process on the university level has created an organizational climate engulfed in a lack of trust. The increased work demands of faculty has greatly benefited administrators and trustees financially. Though the issue associated with trust does not center around finances, many decisions made by administrators and trustees evolve around money and are often made without the affirmation of faculty. Furthermore, the decisions being made do not appear to coincide with the standing values of the institution. In addition to the sparse relationships between faculty and administration, the smokescreen that is the decision-making process on the university level creates a climate engulfed in mistrust. Due to this mistrust, organizational commitment could be affected. Participant 3 presents the frustrations of faculty on university campuses:

> *"...so sometimes what you see is umm is some administrators say what seems to make sense but their actions do not always jive with what they are saying. And their actions do not always seem to reflect what is best for the students."*

Furthermore, the perceived smokescreen forces faculty to evaluate and suspect the decisions made on a daily basis on the university level. This evaluation leads to a series of questions within an individual's approach to their role in the organization. Participant 4 presents a few questions that faculty explore when evaluating decisions made by administration:

> *"Is it for the good of the individual self? Is it good for others? When the words and the actions all mesh up, they will reveal that people are working together rather than you are not being undermined or under rewarded."*

Ultimately, the need for transparency may describe the issue that harbors the dynamics of the faculty climate. When one does not understand the reasons why they are implementing policies, instructing a specific course, or is overwhelmed with their duties, frustrations build and the product presented could be affected. Participant 5 provides an example of how faculty comprehend interactions with administration:

> *"...and also transparency is important. I believe that administrators always tell you the stuff that you want to here but they need to be honest. They are not trustworthy."*

The data collected in this study provides insight to a huge concern regarding faculty governance. Faculty appear to feel as though the administrators are not holding up the end of the deal. Faculty appear to have accepted the all the different roles placed in their work descriptions, advising, researching, instructing, and outreaching. While the demands of faculty schedule keep faculty extremely busy, the decision making of administrators contradicts the academic values of the institution. Despite the apparent lack of trust in the decision making process, faculty must exercise their ability to empathize with the work demands of administrators. Understanding the work demands of administrators can provide insight on the reasons as to why the decisions are made.

Discussion

In order to establish a healthy organizational climate that will create organizational commitment, administrators and trustees should re-evaluate the authoritative approach they are implementing in the faculty governing process. The current model of formal authority presents an organizational climate festering in resentment for hierarchal authorities. Faculty stressed the need to establish mutual trust in the process of faculty governance. Faculty must display trust in the administrationand have confidence in their abilities to efficiently and ethically manage the institution. Administration must display trust in the faculty and their abilities to passionately pursue and conquer the goals set forth by themselves and the institution. This approach is consistent with the governing style of functional authority. Functional authority is based on competence, experience, human relationships, skill in leadership, and personal persuasiveness (Peabody, 1964).

The use of functional authority eliminates the discussion of transparency and essentially cultivates working environment that encourages camaraderie. The established and understood strengths and weaknesses of each individual member of the faculty provides administrators and fellow faculty members the insight needed to know how to interact with one another as well as how one can learn from one another. Therefore, while faculty assist in the cultivation of future world leaders, they feel a sense of accomplishment and growth within themselves. Faculty gain the experiences and fulfillment needed to commit to the organization and encourage others to follow in their steps.

Administrators should value the enjoyment of faculty as highly as they value the overall enjoyment of their students while attending their respective institution. Despite the increased work demands, faculty enjoy everything that is incorporated in their job descriptions. As expected, many faculty members have preferences in the distribution of their workload. However, faculty embraced the overall process of being a working part of a higher education institution. Therefore, administrators should understand that their role is not to police the faculty, but to support and advocate for the faculty. Faculty are seeking advocates and are willing to understand the management aspect of the institution if faculty are provided an organizational climate in which advocates value the established mission of the institution. The transition to the functional authority approach will remind all constituents that they are on the same team, producing the sought sense of team.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Beyond providing current administrators with insight on the factors that affect the faculty climate on their respective campuses, the findings presented in this study has the capability to serve as guidelines for aspiring administrators. In positions such as president and provost must understand the work demand of faculty and staff as well as the factors that bring joy to their subordinates. In the case of presidents, the results of this study could provide a baseline in identifying categories in which can improve within their organization. In addition to identifying weaknesses in their faculty governance, the results of this study has provided the preliminary information needed to build a policy and assessment tool intended to measure faculty climate and faculty commitment.

Although this study presented insight that administrators and trustees can take advantage of while continuing or building faculty governance policies, it is important to continue to explore further research on this topic. This study assessed the factors impacting faculty climate on the campus of a public, flagship university in the northwest region of the United States of America. It would be relevant for future research to explore faculty climate across geographical regions as well as funding sectors. Due to the various ethical backgrounds of geographical regions, authoritative approaches may vary. Also, future research should consider the structures and developments of policies within faculty governance between public and private institutions. In corroboration with this study, anticipated studies could provide data that could lead to a universal policy across the nation regarding faculty governance.

Conclusion

In summary, this study sought to assess the factors that impact faculty climate, in turn, affecting faculty commitment. The growing commercialization of the higher education system has increased work demand of faculty. To the dismay of faculty, the commercial transition has created demands that seem to contradict the mission of the university. As a result, a void created my trust issues has been placed between faculty and the administrators that manage the operation of the university.

The findings of this study has discovered three main themes that affect faculty climate- mutual trust, camaraderie, and transparency. The findings present insight on the what faculty seek in an ideal workplace. The ideal workplace should incorporate mutual trust, camaraderie, and transparency between all constituents of the university. In order to truly assess these factors, administrators must evaluate their authoritative approach, for their approach could hinder and cultivate these factors. Upon evaluation of their authoritative approach, administrators will then be able to implement changes in their faculty governance policies across their university campus and within the individual colleges on the campus. Administrators must understand that faculty seek motivation and comfort just as much as students do when choosing an institution of employment.

AFFILIATIONS

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