Psychological Consultation in Higher Education: Lessons From a University Faculty Development Center

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Although psychological and organizational consultation have long been in use in corporate and school settings, there have been few efforts to evaluate these processes in higher education. This article reports on the use of consultation to assist university academic departments in engaging in instructional change efforts. The consultation was provided by the staff of a faculty development center. Four case studies are reported. Overall, faculty in 3 of the 4 departments gave positive evaluations to the consultation experience and the process was well received by upper level campus administrators. In 1 department consultation produced a dramatic reduction in conflict and an increase in creative instructional experimentation. In 2 others, consultation led to more modest, but significant change. In a final case, consultation had little instructional impact. The case studies point to 3 factors likely to improve the odds for effective intervention: (a) selection of departments with appropriate leadership and motivational characteristics; (b) use of consultation proce-
dures that heighten positive faculty engagement, particularly with potentially negative information; and (c) closer links with the campus managerial leadership.

There has been growing pressure on higher education institutions to demonstrate a commitment to excellence in teaching. Teaching quality has become a significant concern among a variety of higher education constituencies. Parents and students who are paying tuition bills, the general taxpaying public, the business community, and state and federal government officials have become increasingly concerned that students experience quality in their education, that the resources of higher education are efficiently used to support teaching, and that the educational experience prepares students for success in their future lives.

In response to these pressures, faculty development centers have become increasingly common in higher education institutions. The purpose of these centers typically is to improve teaching and the curriculum by developing instructional skills of faculty members. Most faculty development centers attempt to accomplish this goal through a variety of programs and services in which individual faculty members may participate. These include seminars and workshops on effective and innovative teaching methods; teaching evaluation services for faculty members; and consultation with individual faculty members on how to improve teaching.

The effectiveness of many of these centers has been limited. In general, a relatively small percentage of faculty members at an institution participate in these programs, which typically are voluntary. Moreover, in large institutions it is usually beyond the resources of the faculty development center to work individually with the number of faculty members who need to be reached to effect widespread instructional improvement. Experience in faculty development also suggests that systematic ongoing efforts are needed to effect change and that one-shot training sessions are typically ineffective (DeZure, 1994). These types of efforts may increase knowledge, but rarely change attitudes or behavior. Literature on organizational functioning in educational settings shows that many efforts at reform fail because the focus has been on the individual only, and the importance of organizational factors in influencing individual behaviors within the organizational context has been largely ignored (Sarason, 1971; Schmuck & Runkel, 1994).

This article describes the use of an organizational consultation approach by a faculty development center for the improvement of instruction. This approach was designed to address issues related to the importance of the group and organizational context in organizational im-
improvement efforts in higher education. In addition to the literature on organizational change, literature specific to the functioning of higher education institutions lends support to this approach. The crucial role that departmental climate plays on the productivity and well-being of faculty members and the importance of disciplinary context on faculty attitudes have been recognized (DeZure, 1994; DiLorenzo & Heppner, 1994; Swain, 1994). The organizational consultation approach focuses on conducting a needs assessment of the instructional programs of academic departments and using needs-assessment information to work with departments to implement instructional change.

We describe our experiences with four departments, using a case study format. Because systematic evaluation of organizational consultation with faculty groups is in its infancy (Gardiner, 1994; Kells, 1995),¹ we use the case studies to identify the factors that appeared to either facilitate or impede the consultation process and to reflect on modifications in our consultation procedures that might better address the challenges we encountered.

**THE DEPARTMENTAL SELF-STUDY MODEL**

**Background and Overview**

Our experiment with organizational consultation was conducted at a major state university in the northeastern United States. The campus is home to an undergraduate liberal arts college, undergraduate schools of business and nursing, a law school, a graduate school of business, a graduate school of criminal justice, and PhD and Masters programs in a variety of disciplines. For purposes of tenure and promotion, faculty are evaluated on research, teaching, and service with a tacit understanding that research attainment is the preeminent criteria.

The campus faculty development center, referred to as the Teaching Excellence Center (TEC), was established in 1992. At its inception, TEC, like most faculty development centers nationwide, emphasized outreach to the individual faculty member via teaching workshops, seminars, a newsletter, and teaching consultation. After 3 years of operation in this mode, TEC had attracted some strong adherents but the majority of the campus faculty remained untouched by its activities. In this climate a decision was made to augment the individual faculty outreach approach with a number

¹There is very little consistent evidence on the actual affects of these kinds of interventions even in organizational and business settings where such procedures have long been in use (Wallace & Hall, 1996).
of experimental initiatives targeted to the academic department or program. The most important of these was the
departmental self-study process.\(^2\)

In conceptual terms, the departmental self-study process has its closest affinities with an "expert" model of consultation (Schein, 1987; Schmuck & Runkel, 1994). In such a model, the consultee "contracts" with the consultant for a specific service—in this case a needs assessment and accompanying recommendations. Although the expert model is a good formal description of our initial contract with the departments, the unfolding of the consulting relationship was a far more heterogeneous activity with many of the broad characteristics and assumptions of process facilitation, conflict resolution, and organizational development. Such heterogeneity appears common in psychological consultation in educational settings (Alpert & Associates, 1982; Kurpius, 1978). Our approach rested on several fundamental assumptions:

1. The academic department is a key vehicle for promoting instructional change. This assumption is supported by 5 decades of research in social psychology on the power of group influence (Asch, 1952; Lewin, 1951; Ross & Nisbett, 1991; Sheriff, 1937) as well as the importance of the disciplinary context on faculty instructional goals, morale, and attitudes toward efforts to influence their classroom behavior (Cross, 1983; DeZure, 1994; DiLorenzo & Heppner, 1994; Swain, 1994). The academic discipline is also the most meaningful point of contact between the faculty member and the wider institutional context. We also assumed that an adverse departmental climate could negatively impact those instructional activities that depend heavily on collaboration within a department (e.g., curriculum development, student advising) and might even hamper the instructional performance of individual faculty members by lowering their morale.

Despite the logical arguments in its favor, few department-based approaches for promoting instructional change have actually been tried—and those that have typically do not emphasize ongoing consultation, but are relatively noninteractive at the group level (e.g., departmental awards for teaching excellence, workshops for departmental chairs, department-based teaching portfolio projects; cf. Cox, 1996, for a summary)
2. The need for a sustained engagement of psychological skills and concepts. In the early stages of the faculty development movement, psychologists made some promising contributions (Bardon, 1982; Sandoval & Love, 1977), but in recent years there has been a notable lack of psychologists in faculty development programs (Heppner & Johnston, 1994). As psychologists our working assumption was that to leverage the potential of the department to produce meaningful change would require the sustained use of a wide range of psychological competencies, including data collection (especially the face-to-face interview) and interpersonal facilitation and process consultation (Schein, 1987; Schwarz, 1994).

We also subscribed to a number of assumptions, identified by Schmuck and Runkel (1994), about the interconnection between individuals and groups in educational settings:

1. A group has a character that is more than the sum of the individual personalities in the group. "An education organization's potentiality is greater than the sum, but its performance can be less than the sum" (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994, p. 8).

2. The goals, motives, and feelings of members have relevance for action. Any efforts at harnessing the power of the group and coordinating its activities must pay as much attention to how the members of the group feel and what their goals are, as to their knowledge, skills, or other capabilities.

3. Untapped resources have relevance for action. Individuals and groups usually have knowledge, skills, and abilities beyond those that are typically expected of them or used by the organization.

4. Change is made from within. People within often possess much of the knowledge and skill needed to create and implement new programs. An important goal of intervention is to enable a group to develop a sustained capacity for solving its own problems.

3. Needs assessment is a necessary first step in the change process. The first task of any change process is to establish credibility and a working alliance with the target of change. Helping identify perceived "needs" is a classic and obvious place to begin establishing such connections (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994). Beginning the consultative relationship with needs assessment also has the advantage of being a familiar and increasingly important activity in higher education (Gardiner, 1994; Kells, 1995), not only for academic programs but for the administrative hierarchy on whom faculty development centers ultimately depend.
Faculty development centers have made efforts to assess faculty need, but, as with the efforts to engage departments, these have been largely noninteractive and noncollaborative, relying primarily on the survey questionnaire (Travis, Hursh, Lankewicz, & Tang, 1996). By contrast, the TEC approach to needs assessment was designed to encourage dialogue—a feature of needs assessment in higher education that has often been conspicuous by its absence (Kells, 1995).

Procedures

The self-study process was built around a series of confidential interviews with each departmental faculty member. These interviews, along with ancillary data gathered from students and others, formed the basis for an in-depth confidential TEC report to the department, summarizing the major areas of faculty satisfaction and concern and concluding with recommendations on how the most important instructional concerns of the department might be addressed. This extensive needs-assessment phase set the stage for an optional consultation phase involving a TEC department collaboration on an instructional project identified during the needs assessment. Two consultants (Kressel and Bailey) worked with each department during the needs-assessment stage; in the consultation stage, one consultant (Kressel) was involved.

Selecting the departments. The first step in the self-study process was a meeting between the director of TEC and the appropriate dean to identify departments that might benefit from a consulting relationship with TEC. These meetings took place at the beginning of each semester. The deans' primary nominees were always departments facing an impending external review as part of the normal review cycle of the university or in connection with the requirements of an accrediting organization. For several of the departments, a secondary nominating criteria of deans appeared to be perceived departmental "distress" (e.g., departmental turmoil, demoralization, or state of impending "crisis"). The implicit logic behind the deans' nominating criteria was that departments facing external review would be motivated to accept TEC assistance (because some form of self-study was a mandated part of the external review process) and that departmental ten-

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3 A notable exception is Nyquist (1986), whose approach emphasized interviewing departmental chairs about the instructional needs of the department, but did not extend the interview process beyond the chair nor attempt to engage the department in a collective activity to consider departmental instructional needs.
sions could be expected to affect negatively the instructional performance of a department. (In one case, a dean expressed concern that departmental conflicts were impeding necessary curricular reforms.)

The chairperson of a department nominated in this fashion was then contacted by the director of TEC. The consultation process, as well as the meeting with the dean, were described. It is difficult to gauge with certainty the significance to the chairpersons of being nominated by their dean, but there were no signs of resentment or wariness. On the contrary, chairpersons extended a self-study invitation agreed to participate with degrees of enthusiasm that ranged from mild to considerable, and the deans’ nominations appeared to be accepted by chairpersons as reflecting a desire to assist the department with its acknowledged problems or to help it prepare for the external review.

The departments selected by these means represented a cross-section of academic disciplines and included one department from the social sciences, one from the sciences, one from the humanities, and one from a professional discipline. Each department consisted of between 8 and 15 full-time faculty, putting them among the small to midsized departments on campus. The science and social science departments had undergraduate and graduate programs, whereas the humanities department offered only undergraduate courses and the professional department only graduate training (although some of its faculty taught courses in undergraduate departments). For the three departments with undergraduate programs, the number of majors was relatively small (4–12 per year), but all the undergraduate departments had responsibility for staffing heavily enrolled service courses.

The initial meeting with the department. The self-study proper began with a meeting with all full-time members of the department. The presentation stressed the confidential nature of the process; the goal of identifying faculty concerns about the instructional services of the department through confidential, individual in-depth interviews with each faculty member; and the freedom of the department to end the consulting relationship after the assessment stage was completed. The faculty were also told that their views on the experience would be solicited at the end of the needs assessment to help TEC decide how the process might be improved.

Because confidentiality and privacy guarantees were central to the entire process and to the open and trusting climate we wished to establish, a good deal of emphasis was given at the first meeting to the importance we attached of not sharing any information obtained in the self-study with
persons outside the department, particularly deans or other high-ranking administrators. Our efforts to secure privacy guarantees from the campus administrative hierarchy were described as well as the readiness of deans and the campus provost's office to extend them. The establishment of faculty trust was also fostered by the established record of TEC for maintaining confidentiality in its work with individual faculty members. Every department with which we worked had some prior experience with TEC services of that kind.

The faculty interview schedule was then briefly described, and the faculty were given the opportunity to add additional questions to it. At the meeting and in subsequent private discussions with the chair, the department was also given an opportunity to nominate additional persons to be interviewed and to have TEC survey current students and recent graduates of the department for their opinions about the instructional services of the department.

**The faculty interviews.** Faculty interviews were conducted by the director of TEC (Kressel) and assistant director (Bailey) and lasted on average between 1 and 1 ½ hr. A total of 40 full-time faculty were interviewed with a range per department of 7 to 15. At departmental request, six part-time faculty were interviewed in the social science department and three in the professional department. The chair of the professional department also requested that interviews be conducted with a faculty member who had left the department for administrative responsibilities elsewhere in the university and with the administrative assistant of the department.

Interviews were conducted in a private setting, usually the respondent's faculty office, but occasionally in their homes or at TEC. Interviews began within 1 week of the initial meeting with the department and were completed within 1 ½ to 2 months on average.

After a brief review of the respondent's teaching and administrative experience in the department, the interview elicited the respondent's views on the instructional services of the department. All interview questions were open-ended and respondents were given ample time and encouragement to expand on their views. *Instructional services* were broadly defined to include courses and curriculum (e.g., who, what, and how things are taught), the "conditions" for teaching in the department (e.g., course assignments and teaching loads, class size and composition, the availability of computers), student characteristics and management (e.g., their ability and motivation, advisement and grading policies and procedures), and the support structure for teaching (e.g., the process by which teaching loads
and assignments were made, procedures for evaluating and improving teaching, and rewards for instructional activities). In each of these areas respondents were asked to discuss their major satisfactions and concerns. For each concern they were also asked for their thoughts on how the problem might be addressed. Faculty were also given an opportunity to describe other aspects of departmental functioning that were a source of satisfaction or worry.

The final section of the interview was devoted to eliciting the respondent’s opinion on questions the department had added to the interview schedule. Each of the four departments nominated from three to six such questions. They included queries on such things as feelings about the capstone experience of the department for majors, greatest fears about the future of the department, and the degree to which computers and other aspects of modern technology should be infused into the curriculum.

The interview closed with two open-ended questions designed to give the respondent the widest possible latitude for expressing their views: “If you could do one thing to make the department a more enjoyable or better place to teach, what would that be?” and “If the department had its own instructional services consultant (with substantive as well as pedagogical expertise in the content area of the department), what would you want that consultant to do, either for you or the department as a whole”?

**Student views.** All of the departments except humanities requested that TEC solicit the views of former or current students about the instructional services of the department. Student respondents represent a convenience sample and were obtained in a variety of practical ways. These ranged from identifying a course containing a large number of majors and obtaining the instructor’s permission to obtain student views during class time, to securing respondents through a mailing inviting majors to a focus group and luncheon at TEC.

For the social science department, TEC collected data from 6 undergraduate majors and 7 departmental alumni; for the science department from 24 undergraduate majors. In these two cases, practical obstacles made it difficult to obtain a high student response rate, and the student views obtained are best viewed as suggestive. From the professional department, however, we spoke with a sufficiently large proportion of the students (n = 51) to regard student opinion as representative. The group instructional feedback technique (Angelo & Cross, 1993), a modified form of the focus group, was used to solicit student views. Students were asked three primary questions: (a) “What do (did) you like about the major?” (b)
"What don’t (didn’t) you like about the major?” and (c) “What suggestions for improving the major do you have?”

The feedback memorandum. At the completion of data gathering, TEC prepared a confidential feedback memorandum, which was circulated to all full-time members of the department. Feedback memoranda averaged 25 to 30 single-spaced pages in length. Administrative persons with whom the department had a direct reporting relationship received a copy of the cover letter that accompanied the feedback memorandum, but not the memorandum itself.

The most common positive themes described in the memoranda were faculty pleasure with the freedom to teach what and how they wished and their admiration for student perseverance. On balance, however, complaints and dissatisfaction predominated. There were five areas in which significant numbers of respondents (typically ≥50% of departmental faculty) expressed themselves: resources, students, teaching, curriculum, and departmental climate. Each department had significant concerns in at least three of these areas.

Between 25 to 40% of the feedback memoranda were devoted to TEC recommendations. The recommendations included suggestions for things the department could do on its own as well as collaborative projects involving TEC. The recommendations fell into five broad categories: course revisions, curriculum, teaching, strategic planning, and interpersonal climate. Recommendations in at least three of these areas were made to every department.

The feedback round table. Within approximately 2 weeks of delivery of the feedback memorandum, the director and assistant director of TEC met with the full-time faculty of the department to consider the feedback memorandum. These meetings were 1½ to 2 hr in length. The director of TEC began the meeting with a 15-min summary of the faculty satisfactions and dissatisfaction described in the memorandum and then summarized TEC recommendations. The remainder of the meeting was spent discussing faculty feelings about the report—its accuracy, fairness, and possible utility—as well as faculty views about the assessment process and ways it might be improved. The meeting concluded with faculty reactions to TEC recommendations and possible next steps. The consulting orientation during the feedback round-table meetings is perhaps best characterized as a combination of process facilitation (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994) and conflict mediation (Kressel &
Pruitt, 1985; Moore, 1996). Illustrations of specific consultant behaviors during the roundtable meetings are found in the case study section of this article (see especially, the professional and science departments).

The facilitation stage. The optional facilitation stage of the consultation process occurred with three of the four departments. This contact varied considerably in purpose and intensity. At its most extensive it involved the same combination of process facilitation and conflict mediation that characterized the feedback round-table interventions but on a greatly amplified scale (see The Professional Department, later, for an illustration).

CASE STUDIES: THE EFFICACY AND IMPACT OF CONSULTATION

To varying degrees, three of our four cases represent departments that had successful responses to consultation; in one case the departmental response was disappointing. We shall present the cases in descending order of effectiveness.

Evidence about the effectiveness of our efforts come from a postconsultation faculty questionnaire and from a variety of qualitative and anecdotal evidence systematically recorded throughout the project. The faculty questionnaire was sent to full-time faculty shortly after the feedback round table. Using a 5-point Likert scale, respondents were asked a series of questions about their expectations prior to the beginning of the faculty interviews (5 items), their reactions to the interview (8 items), impressions of the feedback memorandum (9 items), and the anticipated impact of the needs-assessment process (5 items). Respondents were also asked if they would recommend the self-study process to other departments, what they liked best and least about the self-study process and the feedback memorandum, and what they would do to improve either. A total of 34 faculty returned completed questionnaires for an 85% response rate. Table 1 presents the closed-ended questionnaire items, Table 2 the response to each item by department.

The Professional Department

Initial climate. The chair of the department was extremely eager to begin the consulting relationship with TEC. Her unit was facing an impor-
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<th>Question</th>
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<td>Prior expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. I was excited about the prospect of the Departmental Self-Study (DSS).</td>
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<td>2. I felt there was little the DSS or the TEC could do to address the teaching problems in my department.</td>
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<td>3. I suspected that the DSS process would be a waste of time.</td>
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<td>4. I felt that there was nothing the DSS could uncover or suggest that we didn’t already know.</td>
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<td>5. I welcomed the opportunity to discuss instructional deliver with a person outside of the department.</td>
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<td>Reactions to interview</td>
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<td>6. I found the interview process to be tedious.</td>
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<td>7. I felt more at liberty to discuss instruction delivery with an outsider than I would have with a member of my department.</td>
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<td>8. The interview was structured in a way that facilitated my thinking about these issues.</td>
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<td>9. The interviewer was non-judgmental.</td>
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<td>10. The process of answering questions led me to think about issues related to instructional delivery in a new way.</td>
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<td>11. Responding to the questions helped me to understand the department’s teaching priorities.</td>
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<td>12. The interview provided a forum to openly express my concerns.</td>
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<td>13. The interview helped to “frame” certain teaching problems.</td>
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<td>Impressions of feedback memorandum (FBM)</td>
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<td>14. The FBM simply stated the obvious.</td>
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<td>15. The FBM reported instructional deliver problems of which I was not aware.</td>
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<td>16. The FBM accurately reflected my opinion of my department’s teaching problems.</td>
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<td>17. The FBM accurately reflected my prioritization of my department’s teaching problems.</td>
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<td>18. The FBM helped to bring out issues that had previously been unacknowledged or avoided or of which the department was unaware.</td>
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<td>19. The FBM phrased my department’s problems in a constructive, non-threatening manner.</td>
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<td>20. The FBM provided a useful encapsulation of the teaching strengths and weaknesses or my department.</td>
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<td>21. The recommendations put forth in the FBM had already been considered (i.e., “old news”).</td>
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<td>22. The recommendations put forth in the FBM were useless.</td>
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<td>Anticipated changes</td>
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<td>23. The DSS will have a positive impact on teaching in my department.</td>
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<td>24. Nothing will change as a result of the DSS.</td>
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<td>25. The DSS was useful to my own appreciation of instructional deliver, even if it does not ultimately result in change.</td>
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<td>26. The DSS provided an impetus to improve teaching in my department.</td>
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<td>27. The source of most problems in my department are beyond the reach of the TEC to address.</td>
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*Note.* TEC = Teaching Excellence Center.
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Note. Responses ranged from 1 (very much disagree) to 5 (very much agree).
tant accreditation review, and the chair felt that the assistance of TEC might be helpful in addressing curriculum and teaching issues on which accreditation would hinge. In addition, she had just succeeded a powerful and successful former chair, and there was palpable faculty tension about the leadership transition and the future of the department with which she wanted help.

The needs-assessment findings. The faculty interviews revealed that the chair's concerns about teaching and curriculum were shared by many others. The majority of the faculty wished the department could find more systematic and creative ways to assess teaching beyond reliance on student evaluations. There were also complaints about the same course being taught entirely differently by different instructors and the absence of a rationale for how courses in the master's program were linked to one another. There was also divided opinion between faculty who felt the doctoral program should have more of an applied orientation and those who preferred a more theoretical focus. There was also significant faculty concern about departmental overcommitment to too many nondegree programs and a general lack of instructional focus.

Student opinion regarding teaching was consistent with that of the faculty. Students in the master's program deplored an overemphasis on "coverage" of material at the expense of genuine understanding and indifferent faculty attitudes toward instruction (e.g., the timely return of exams, following a coherent logic in course design). Students were also clear about their wish for a more pragmatic curriculum (e.g., greater use of case study materials, more opportunities for internships).

The tense departmental climate was a final major theme. The department was split into a number of factions, and the departmental leaders distrusted each other and were in frequent open conflict. Things had become so bad that at least one member of the department had sought individual help from the university counseling service. Many faculty felt that changing this climate into one of collaboration and team work was a crucial issue. (Tensions among the faculty were a source of concern for nearly half of the graduate students in the department, who complained of being drawn into faculty conflicts.)

Recommendations. The memorandum urged a serious review of the core curriculum and made clear the willingness of TEC to assist in that process. Implicit in this recommendation was the notion that curriculum re-
view would be unsuccessful without an intermediary to help manage the interpersonal conflict, but no direct recommendations for dealing with the interpersonal tensions were made. This was the first department in which we encountered high levels of internal discord, and we were wary that making a direct recommendation for addressing the departmental conflict might raise faculty anxiety and lead to a rejection of TEC assistance. The faculty and student concerns with teaching were addressed in recommendations to establish a departmental seminar under TEC auspices, to provide individual faculty teaching consultations with TEC, and to establish a program for formative and summative teaching evaluations.

**Outcomes.** The questionnaire data were the most positive of all four departments. The faculty had the most sanguine prior expectations about what consultation with TEC might do for the department (Items 1–4), had quite favorable reactions to the interview (especially Items 6, 9, & 12), and were strongly enthusiastic about nearly every aspect of the feedback memorandum (see especially Items 18, 19, & 20). The faculty were also highly enthusiastic that teaching and instructional matters would improve as a result of the self-study (Items 23, 26) and strongly rejected the idea that nothing would change (Item 24). On the open-ended questions, all the faculty said they would recommend the consultation process to other departments, and there were numerous appreciative comments about the constructive and professional manner with which the consultation was handled.

At the feedback round table, the TEC director first summarized the findings of the needs assessment and invited faculty reactions regarding its accuracy. The interpersonal tensions in the department were openly acknowledged and several of the faculty spoke only half-jokingly of being a "dysfunctional family." Faculty queried the TEC director about whether some form of "therapeutic" work to resolve the interpersonal tensions was indicated as a preliminary to any content-oriented consultation. The response was that interpersonal issues might best be addressed in a content-based activity. Toward this end, the TEC director suggested that a steering committee be formed to develop a plan by which the department might prepare for its accreditation review. The consultation process could then begin around helping this group work effectively. This idea was readily accepted, but disagreement arose over the composition of the steering committee. The remainder of the feedback round table was spent with the TEC consultant helping to keep the discussion focused, modeling active listening, clarifying what was being said, and assisting the group
reach closure. With this assistance, it was finally agreed that four senior people should comprise the steering committee and begin regular meetings with the TEC director.

The facilitation stage that followed focused on curricular issues as well as on the interpersonal tensions and disruptive communication patterns within the department. Although occasional meetings with the entire department occurred, most of the consultation activities were with the steering committee alone. Space does not permit a full account of this complex intervention, but it passed through four distinctive stages, strongly reminiscent of the "forming, storming, norming, and performing" model of group development (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977).

In a brief "honeymoon" period, the steering committee worked enthusiastically and well and TEC facilitation consisted of little more than representing and reinforcing cooperative norms and assisting the group in keeping on track. In the more extended "crisis and conflict" phase that soon followed, the interpersonal tensions so amply documented in the needs assessment, threatened to rend the steering committee. Much of this tension reflected a pattern that had recently become established. With the former chair's departure, senior members of the department had begun to align with junior colleagues disaffected with the new chairperson, rather than working cohesively with the new chair to reconstitute the leadership function.

Facilitation efforts during this stage were aimed at building cohesion within the steering committee and establishing "ground rules" that would allow its members to work productively without being undone by the divisive and covert attacks on the chairperson. Thus, with the help of the TEC director, it was agreed that no member of the steering committee would be drawn into private discussions with other members of the department regarding the work of the committee, or the chairperson, but would instruct others to address complaints or concerns to the committee as a whole. It was also agreed that although steering committee members were encouraged to disagree with each other at meetings of the group, they would not discuss their differences publicly.

There was also some informal mediation aimed at helping the members of the steering committee be more supportive of the new chairperson. The major thrust of these interventions was pointing out that it was situational forces, rather than poor leadership, that were largely responsible for the tensions in the department. These included a recent decline in revenue and the transition to a shared form of departmental governance after a long period of highly centralized leadership. After one notable intervention of this kind, the chair left the following telephone message:
I thought today’s meeting was very helpful. Your presence as a mediator was very important and helped [another member of the steering committee] and I identify some problems and you added a tone that kept the meeting more reasonable—so I called to say ‘thanks.’

A “working though” stage followed, during which the primary accomplishment was the further strengthening of the steering committee over a series of task-oriented sessions. With the emotional discord largely resolved, the consultant role was primarily to help maintain an orderly agenda, make occasional substantive suggestions (e.g., how to use explicit course objectives as a tool for redesigning the curriculum), and continue to reinforce norms of cooperation. The success of this stage was indicated by spontaneous comments from other department members and administrators, as well as from the dean’s and provost’s offices, about a decrease in departmental conflict and an increase in effective problem solving.

In a final “mopping up” stage, the steering committee no longer felt in need of intense TEC facilitation and addressed on its own the final preparation for the accreditation review. TEC involvement in this stage consisted of an occasional informal discussion with the chair or steering committee members, obtaining some last-minute feedback from student groups, and beginning plans with the departmental leadership for a semester-long faculty teaching and learning seminar that would make palpable the commitment of the department to instructional and curricular change.

The teaching seminar was implemented and regularly attended by approximately half the departmental faculty and several of its teaching assistants (TAs). The seminar received an extremely enthusiastic evaluation from those who attended, and there was sentiment that it should be “force fed” to other departments on campus. In their summary report, the professional accreditation team singled out the relationship of the department with TEC for special praise and cited the positive impact on “ongoing teaching and collegial relationships.”

The Social Science Department

Initial climate. The department chair was receptive to the notion of a departmental self-study, particularly because it might be helpful for the impending external review. However, unlike the chair of the professional department, he was highly satisfied with the teaching of the department and its unusually congenial and conflict free climate.
**Needs assessment.** A decline in faculty lines over an extended period of time was the major source of faculty dismay. The loss of faculty lines was blamed for the inability to offer needed courses in the major and for an overreliance on part-time instructors. Respondents also spoke of a lack of scholarly dialogue because of an inadequate "critical mass" of colleagues. There was a felt need for more departmental discussion on grading, discipline (for cheating), and the level of effort expected of students. Younger faculty in the department were particularly eager for opportunities to hear about the work of senior colleagues, talk about their own research, and get information on the departmental norms for teaching and scholarship. These views were shared by the TAs of the department.

Faculty were also distressed about a statistics course that one third of students failed and that many avoided until late in their academic career. Because so much of the discipline depended on mastery of basic concepts from this course, this pattern had negative consequences for other courses in the major. The faculty also had doubts that their master's program was still viable, given the loss of faculty able to teach important courses and the questionable value of the degree in the job market.

Although the faculty as a whole appeared satisfied with the quality of instruction, four of the recent graduates of the department complained of too many "dry" lectures and inadequate "teaching style," and the six current majors with whom we spoke complained of an overreliance on the lecture method without sufficient room for classroom "interaction." Both the recent graduates and the current students felt that the decline in majors could be reversed with more attention to improving the quality of instruction.

**Recommendations.** To address the issue of intellectual isolation and the need for more advanced course offerings in the major, TEC offered to provide assistance in the development of an upper-level undergraduate colloquium. The colloquium would also be attended by the faculty and graduate students and would include faculty presentations about their research as well as about issues of pedagogy. TEC also recommended the establishment of a faculty task force to review and revise the problematic statistic course.

Recommendations were also made to establish a departmental teaching seminar (with TEC assistance), and faculty were encouraged to seek out TEC help in developing teaching portfolios and in getting confidential assistance with their teaching. In light of the faculty dissatisfaction, the department was also encouraged to review the viability of its master's program while simultaneously considering possible strategic alliances for
graduate education with units on campus with which it had overlapping interests.

**Outcomes.** The questionnaire assessment by the department of the self-study process, like that of the professional department, was very positive. Initial expectations were generally enthusiastic (especially Item 5), and faculty gave the self-study interview the highest marks of all the departments for being nonjudgmental (Item 9) and promoting thinking about teaching issues (Items 8 & 13). The feedback memorandum was judged favorably (Items 19 & 20), and items characterizing the memorandum as "useless" (Item 22) or stating the obvious (Item 14) were rejected. Expectations for change as a result of the self-study were more modest than those in the professional department but generally positive (Items 25 & 26). As with the professional department, all the faculty said they would recommend the consultation process to other departments, and several respondents wrote that the interaction with TEC had been enjoyable and had stimulated a renewed departmental dialogue about teaching. The few useful comments were that TEC might lack the resources and influences with the administration that were needed for significant change to occur.

The facilitation phase was less intensive than with the professional department, involving two or three joint meetings with the chair and several faculty to help clarify TEC recommendations and provide guidance about possible areas of TEC support. Despite the relative brevity of this assistance, several useful things were accomplished. In its report to the external reviewers, the department favorably acknowledged the assistance of TEC and adopted the suggestion of TEC for a departmental teaching colloquium and the reassessment of its graduate offerings. The provost's office likewise expressed its pleasure with the assistance of TEC to the department. After the site visit, the campus administration and the department agreed to suspend the master's program and pursue involvement in doctoral programs with other schools on campus. Although the intervention of TEC was not directly responsible for these actions, the needs-assessment process appeared to have clarified departmental sentiment about its graduate mission.

The department also had a number of postassessment consultations with TEC. As a result of these discussions, the department secured a number of campus and university grants to make greater instructional use of computers. The faculty member with primary responsibility for the statistical courses also consulted with TEC. These consultations included classroom observation and the preparation of a teaching portfolio. These efforts
contributed to his successful promotion review as well as the revamping of the statistic course.

The Humanities Department

Initial climate. The chair had recently assumed his position and was eager for assistance from TEC. In initial discussions he characterized the department as having reached a critical juncture because of serious declines in resources, faculty lines, and morale. The faculty’s receptivity to consultation with TEC was more difficult to gauge, but there were signs of resistance. Thus, only 6 of the 11 full-time members were present at the initial meeting, and it subsequently proved impossible to schedule interviews with 2 senior people.

Needs assessment. The faculty interviews revealed a high level of collective pride in teaching and a strong identification with students. However, faculty doubts about the future of the department were also strong. There were complaints about inadequate teaching facilities, excessive administrative and advisement demands, and neglect from the dean’s office.

Signs of interpersonal tension were also evident. One group of respondents spoke feelingly of their frustration with a small number of colleagues whom they perceived as failing to make appropriate contributions to the work of the department. Another group spoke with equal feeling of being marginalized at the same time that other groups in the department had seemed to prosper. A fractionated departmental structure seemed to feed these tensions in addition to complicating the search for solutions. The semi-autonomous units had competing interests and what amounted to de facto veto power over concerted departmental initiative.

Recommendations. The recommendations of TEC focused on steps to address the decline in resources and morale. Thus, the feedback memorandum urged the department to actively pursue strategic alliances with other units that might lead to economies of scale and an infusion of new energy, to explore imaginative continuing education programs that could replenish departmental coffers and would fit well with recently announced university plans in the area of distance learning, and to consider outsourcing an area of basic instruction as a means of freeing faculty time for research and the teaching of more advanced courses. The feedback memorandum also advocated empowering the chairperson to exercise
more authority over the semi-autonomous units via clear norms of accountability. The memorandum also outlined several possible approaches for dealing with the interpersonal tensions, including seeking an outside facilitator.

Outcomes. The questionnaire evaluation of the needs-assessment experience were modestly favorable, but clearly less positive than those of the professional and social science departments. Respondents remembered welcoming the opportunity to discuss instructional delivery with somebody outside the department (Item 5) and rejecting the idea that consultation would be a waste of time. The strongest endorsements were that the interview provided a forum to openly express concerns (Item 12) and that the feedback memorandum was an accurate reflection of their own opinion of the teaching problems of the department and was phrased in a constructive, nonthreatening manner (Items 16 & 19). The faculty was inclined to the idea that the source of most of the problems of the department were beyond the reach of TEC (Item 27), even while tending to reject the notion that nothing would change as a result of TEC consultation (Item 24). All but one respondent said they would recommend the consultation process to other departments, and there were several written comments to the effect that the process had opened issues that had been long avoided.

Despite these generally positive questionnaire sentiments, the feedback round table was something of a disappointment. As with the initial meeting, significant numbers of faculty were absent and two senior faculty expressed disagreement with the conclusion of the report that the department had significant, if largely undiscussed, internal tensions. There was also indirect evidence that three others had been angered by the emphasis of the report on the need for the department to be more vigorous in addressing its problems.

No consultation occurred between TEC and the department after the feedback round table, and there was little immediate sign of any tangible movement toward change. (The department did apply for and receive two TEC grants to revise aspect of its curriculum that had been identified in the needs assessment as areas of faculty concern.) One year later, however, the chair credited the needs assessment with having broken through a wall of silence that had been immobilizing the department for years. In the chair's view, the TEC report had set in motion a new energy among the committed faculty, who came to realize that their concerns were widely shared, and convinced others to become less oppositional. As one tangible result of the new climate, he
cited the formation of a four-person faculty work group that was close to finalizing a new course sequence with business applications. (According to the chair, a dean’s task force, appointed at about the same time TEC began its needs assessment, had a negligible impact on departmental morale. The chair accounted for the difference on the grounds that, unlike TEC, the task force had neither consulted with the faculty nor reported to them.)

The Science Department

Initial climate. The chair was receptive to consultation with TEC, but the initial meeting with the department to describe the self-study process generated considerable disagreement. The arguments were ostensibly about which questions to add to the interview schedule, but it was apparent that more general antipathies were involved. The chair’s own suggested questions were among those that came under attack. Shortly after this meeting a new chair was elected. He wished to continue the relationship with TEC, but his investment in the process was difficult to gauge.

Needs assessment. A lack of basic mathematical skill among students was an important source of faculty discontent. The instructional problems caused by the student skill deficit was worsened, in the view of many respondents, by the poor student advisement procedures and a lack of agreement on standards in the department. Excessively large classes were also indicted as an additional obstacle to helping the under prepared student. More than three quarters of the faculty also complained that teaching was not treated with the respect it deserved and was often done poorly.

Curriculum matters were another major concern. Nearly all the faculty complained about an introductory course with a notorious failure rate, as well as about an important midlevel course that was designed to aid students to make the transition to higher order scientific reasoning but that was viewed as defective in a variety of ways. Half of the respondents also expressed significant concerns about one track in the major that was very much in demand among students and on which the department was economically dependent, but to which many of the faculty had little desire to contribute. There was also concern about a new doctoral program, including the noninvolvement of key senior people, the ill-defined relationship with another contributing department, and the possible negative impact on undergraduate teaching.
Finally, more than half of those interviewed described a departmental climate of intense distrust and alienation. There were reports of hallway confrontations, acts of intimidation, and genuine fear. A number of key individuals had withdrawn (or felt excluded) from a meaningful involvement in the life of the department. The ostensible leaders of the department were the associate professors, among whom the chairmanship rotated and who tended to see the chair’s role as an administrative chore. The full professors had little use for their leadership efforts, which they tended to characterize as poorly conceived or executed. The exact causes of the turmoil of the department could not, of course, be ascertained, but the failure over the last decade to tenure or promote people as the department transformed itself from a sleepy intellectual backwater to a serious scholarly unit, appeared implicated. Although there was a nearly universal wish that steps be taken to improve the departmental climate, there was considerable doubt that anything constructive could be done.

Recommendations. The feedback memorandum highlighted the importance of addressing the interpersonal tensions in the department. This was done under the heading of the need for building a “leadership” team. In light of the high levels of distrust that prevailed, it was suggested that facilitation be provided to the leadership effort either by TEC or an outside source. It was also recommended that the team-building effort be focused around one or two concrete tasks important enough to be worth doing, but sufficiently limited in scope that the chances for success were reasonable. Finally, the department was advised to defer the process of team building for a few months until the external review was completed, at which time the department might have a better idea of its priorities.

Outcomes. Relative to the other three departments, the science faculty gave the most negative questionnaire responses. Thus, their initial enthusiasm for TEC intervention was the lowest (especially Items 1 & 5), they had the most negative reactions to the interview (Items 8, 10, 12, & 13) and the feedback memorandum (all except Item 18), and were the least optimistic that any changes would result from the intervention. Only three of the nine respondents said they would recommend the process to other departments.

The focus of much of the negative reaction was the recommendation of TEC that an effort be made to deal with the internal conflicts through the coalescing of a leadership group. The four-member executive committee
and a former chairperson agreed that there were interpersonal difficulties in the department but disagreed with the analysis that leadership was in any way the issue.

Immediately prior to the feedback round table, a number of other faculty independently contacted the TEC director to express their disagreements with the TEC report and a few days prior to the round table the chairperson called to express anxiety that there would be an "explosion" at the round-table meeting, pitting the senior faculty against the junior members of the department executive committee. These disclosures generated significant concern among the consultant team, but it was decided that at the round-table meeting, the director of TEC should adopt a nondefensive and inquiring stance in the face of any criticisms.

The round table itself was something of an anticlimax. The TEC director began with a summary of the needs-assessment findings, emphasizing the strengths and potential of the department, acknowledging the unhappiness and disagreement that the TEC report had generated, but reiterating the concern about the departmental tensions disclosed during the faculty interviews. These opening comments also emphasized the goals of using the round-table meeting to help the department clarify its collective sentiments about the TEC assessment as well as helping the consultant team learn how the needs-assessment process might be improved.

The discussion that followed was polite but negative in tone. With one or two exceptions no enthusiasm for the recommendations of TEC were expressed. Two people felt that TEC lacked competence to comment on curriculum or instructional matters in science, and there were demurs about the leadership diagnosis. In a spontaneous, informal discussion immediately after the round table had adjourned, members of the executive committee questioned the director of TEC about the prospects for mediating the departmental conflicts. The general nature of mediation and some possible mediation formats were described. This information was received politely, but strong doubt was expressed that mediation would work, given the "irrational" behavior of others in the department.

Immediately after the feedback round table, the chair also had several discussions with the director of TEC about managing the internal discord of the department. By his own account, he was motivated by the belief that others expected him to act after the TEC report, rather than by any conviction that such assistance would help. He E-mailed an invitation to "mediate" to one of the disaffected senior faculty and when this was rejected (also by E-mail), he ceased his efforts. The department did seek and receive
TEC funding for the revision of the course sequence about which the faculty expressed concern.

Several months after the TEC relationship with the department had ended, the external review team independently echoed the concerns of TEC that the interpersonal conflicts of the department were a serious threat to its future. The reviewers also expressed an interest in seeing the TEC report. The provost's office endorsed this request, but the chair decided not to authorize its release on the grounds that it was a confidential document about which the faculty was strongly divided. At the time of this writing, the chair had tendered his resignation, and the dean had concluded that the time was not propitious for attempting to mediate the interpersonal discord.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSULTATION WITH THE ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT: IMPROVING THE ODDS FOR EFFECTUATING INSTRUCTIONAL CHANGE

In important regards the results of our exploratory efforts at psychological consultation in academia are highly encouraging. Faculty in three of the four departments gave positive evaluations to the needs-assessment process and the effort was well-received by deans, high-level campus administrators, and at least one team of external evaluators. In the professional department, consultation reduced disruptive conflict, increased collaboration among the departmental leaders, and led to significant instructional experimentation. In the social science department consultation led to more modest but useful instructional changes, and in humanities a new and more hopeful departmental climate emerged for the chairperson to harness.

As our experience with the science department indicates, however, the consultation model was not a magic bullet. This observation will come as no surprise to those with firsthand experience in higher education and with university academic departments in particular. These are domains in which obstacles to change are notorious and where the challenges to consultation, although formally little studied, are known to be significant (Bardon, 1982; Sarason, 1971; Wallace & Hall, 1996).

We are also aware that our study provides no data on the impact of consultation on the teaching attitudes and behavior of faculty or on student learning. Given the little that is known about consultation with academic departments in university settings, our primary objective was to define and implement a consultation model and gauge its utility. It is obvious,
however, that future studies should use more powerful evaluation designs that systematically measure the relation between consultation and instructional performance. Because our consultation model appeared capable of greatly improving departmental climate, a variable that presumably conditions all faculty work, such designs might also include measures of faculty performance in noninstructional areas (e.g., scholarly productivity).

The exploratory case study design did serve as a useful vehicle for charting the vicissitudes of the consultation process. The case studies point to three key factors likely to produce effective intervention in this difficult setting: (a) selection of departments with appropriate leadership and motivational characteristics; (b) use of consultation procedures that heighten faculty engagement and curiosity, particularly in regard to negative information; and (c) closer links with the campus managerial leadership.

Selection of Departments With Appropriate Leadership and Motivational Characteristics

Leadership climate refers to the degree to which the formal and informal leaders of a department possess the skills to engage in meaningful change efforts. Although all three of our successful departments had strong chairpersons, the case of the professional department was particularly instructive on the importance of department-wide leadership for a robust response to consultation. The chairperson was energetic, possessed of interesting and reasonable ideas about where the department should be headed, and tenacious in pursuit of her goals. She was also able to acknowledge her mistakes and was receptive to input from the consultant. She could not have succeeded alone, however. Despite their differences with her and each other, senior department figures also took their own leadership obligations seriously and, like the chair, were receptive to information about their roles in the interpersonal patterns that were blocking effective collaboration in the leadership group.

Motivation to change was a second important factor affecting the success of consultation. In the professional department this motivation was high, principally because of the impending accreditation review. A failure to be accredited would have been a serious blow to recruiting graduate students and to the collective aspirations of the faculty. This context helped the faculty become invested in the relationship with TEC despite the initially severe group conflicts. Receptivity to the role of TEC was also abetted by the faculty’s firsthand knowledge of the potential bene-
fits of third-party assistance because of their own professional experience as consultants.

In the science department the motivational circumstances were far less favorable. The department had been led for some time by associate professors who adopted a largely administrative interpretation of the chairperson’s role. They were also frustrated and distracted by the overtly hostile stance of the full professors of the department.

Effective consultation does not require the ideal department (as the case of the professional department illustrates), but a modicum of leadership energy and collective will to make changes appear to be important prerequisites in selecting departmental clients. It is beyond the scope of this article to describe how these variables might be assessed, but some obvious means of collecting useful information include discussions with the dean and others knowledgeable about the dynamics of the department, direct observations of departmental interactions, and informal discussions with the chairperson and one or two other departmental opinion leaders. Such assessment efforts may serve not only to select appropriate departments, but, in some cases at least, help produce the requisite conditions by stimulating awareness of how much the success of consultation depends on leadership and receptivity to change.

Consultation Procedures That Foster Faculty Engagement

Like all models of consultation aimed at producing change, ours was premised on the importance of active client involvement. The confidential interviews, feedback round table, and buffering of the process from the campus administrative hierarchy were all designed with this goal in mind. In cases where the departmental circumstances were favorable these mechanisms worked well enough; when departmental leadership and motivation to change were less optimal, they appear to have caused problems.

One such procedure appears to have been the manner in which we provided feedback about strained departmental climates. Recent reports confirm the widespread problems that many academic departments have in dealing constructively with interpersonal conflict (Massy, Wilger, & Colbeck, 1994; Swain, 1994; Tucker, 1993). We had not conjured, however, with the challenges that such conflicts would pose to our consultation efforts.

In the science and the humanities departments the feedback memorandum described the interpersonal problems bluntly, on the grounds that a detailed account would mobilize a desire to act. Although there were fac-
ulty in both departments who accepted our accounts as accurate (and in the case of science, our diagnosis was similar to the one subsequently made by the external review team), the prevailing initial response was dismay and disagreement. We fared much better when, as with the professional department, the interpersonal problems were noted, but not made the subject of specific recommendations.

Indeed, the making of formal TEC recommendations of any kind appears to have been a liability for the science and the humanities departments. Thus, in the science department the recommendations provoked charges from some that TEC was unqualified to make any substantive recommendations; in humanities, a good deal of faculty time was spent at the feedback session arguing that departmental relationships were really quite cordial and no increased pressure for accountability from the chair was needed. Reactance of this type is a well-known hazard of the expert–client relationship (Alpert & Associates, 1982; Schein, 1987). A feedback memorandum that summarized faculty and student opinion but omitted recommendations might have reduced this kind of reaction.

Perhaps the most important defect in our assessment procedures was the failure to provide more extended opportunities for group reflection. A departmental retreat, perhaps at some off-campus site, might have been a more suitable instrument for brainstorming, fostering group cohesion, and establishing collective responsibility than the single, relatively brief feedback session we provided. Templates for this type of activity exist (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994), but, to our knowledge, they have not been used for fostering instructional change in higher education.4

Involvement of Campus Leadership in the Consultation Process

By design, the consultation process was exclusively between TEC and the department. There was no mechanism for involving the managerial leadership of the campus. When the department leadership was eager to address important issues, as with the professional department, or when the interpersonal climate was unusually good, as with social science, the privacy of the consulting relationship worked as intended; under the problematic internal circumstances of the science and the humanities departments, however, we frequently found ourselves thinking that our in-

4There is an irony here, because we have experimented with reflective procedures in helping individual instructors make use of student feedback (Bailey, Saparito, Kressel, Christensen, & Hooisberg, 1997).
vestment in "privacy" had hamstrung the change process unduly. Involvement from a dean's or provost's office might have been able to provide the constructive pressure for change, the wider perspective, and the tangible or intangible incentives that TEC alone could not provide. The centrality of the direct involvement of academic leadership in effectuating instructional change on a university wide level has been documented (Diamond, 1991).

The culture of academia does not make administrative–departmental collaboration easy, however. Departments in a research university are typically viewed as quasi-autonomous units, and there is a good deal of wariness on both sides of the administrator–faculty divide. When administrators attempt to be of assistance, their efforts may flounder for want of training in the management of interpersonal and organizational conflict and the absence of familiar and useful procedures for working collaboratively with departmental leadership (Holton & Phillips, 1995). This seems to have happened with the humanities and the science departments. Thus, in the case of humanities, the dean had appointed an outside task force to make recommendations about the future of the department; in the case of the science department, the dean had been aware for some time of the serious internal discord and had some preliminary discussions with the chairperson about getting help with them. Little of significance seemed to have resulted from either of these efforts, however, and, of course, neither was connected with the TEC consultations that were occurring more or less simultaneously.

In hindsight, we now believe that the consultation model should have more explicit links to the dean's office and that the entire consultation process, in addition to maintaining the confidentiality of the needs-assessment stage, should be framed from the outset as an aid to collaboration across the departmental–administrative dividing line. In such a process, the dean's office would become involved once the department had formulated its reaction to the needs assessment, with the faculty development center playing an intermediary role to assist both sides in either agreeing that no instructional projects should be undertaken or (preferably) going forward to a stage of implementation and evaluation. Indeed, a reasonable case can be made that the self-study process has not reached full closure until a departmental–administrative dialogue of this kind has occurred.5

5Kells (1995) recommended that when self-study is undertaken in conjunction with external review, the review process should be linked to decision making, planning, and budget processes, and he cites examples where this collaboration took the form of a "negotiated memorandum of commitment" between the administration and the unit under review.
CONCLUSION

There is both good and bad news to be derived from our intensive foray into the use of psychological consultation with the academic department. The bad news is that organizational consultation is no cure all. The use of consultative models of the kind we tried here has a very limited history in higher education. In some respects, we flew by the seat of our pants and inevitably made our share of mistakes. Our approach also required attitudes and behaviors that were unfamiliar to many faculty and were in some regards alien to strands in the culture of higher education, which emphasize the autonomy of the individual faculty member and the academic department, and in which norms and procedures for collaboration are notoriously weak (Weick, 1976).

The good news is equally clear. The results suggest that organizational consultation and facilitation can help foster departmental receptivity to instructional change and can assist in the constructive surfacing of conflicts that would otherwise block the change effort. It remains to be seen if modifying our model in the directions we have sketched can overcome the kinds of obstacles to instructional innovation we have identified. In our favor, there appears to be a growing recognition that there is a need to develop more collaborative approaches to handling the pressures for change now bearing down on academic departments and the academic administrators who work with them.

REFERENCES


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