DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 292 394 HE 021 258

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TITLE Defining "Good Faculty Leadership;" Interpretations of Professors and Presidents. ASHE Annual Meeting Paper.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Nov 87
NOTE 28p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (Baltimore, MD, November 21-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Attitudes; *College Faculty; College Governing Councils; *College Presidents; Higher Education; *Leadership Responsibility; *Role Perception; Teacher Administrator Relationship; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Responsibility
IDENTIFIERS *ASHE Annual Meeting

ABSTRACT

The views of 31 college presidents and 29 faculty officers concerning good faculty leadership were studied with a national sample of respondents during 1986-1987. The analysis was part of interviews with persons holding formal leadership positions in a sample of 32 institutions, 8 each of major research/doctoral institutions, state colleges and universities, private colleges, and community colleges. The faculty officer was usually the head of the faculty senate or faculty union. Attention was directed to differences in responses by presidents and faculty leaders, as well as differences by type of institution. Presidents and faculty officers who focused on the campus as a whole seemed to agree with each other, but they differed dramatically when they considered the professional substance of faculty leadership. The research suggests that faculty leaders fill ill-defined roles. Since the views of faculty leaders about good faculty leadership may greatly differ from those of their presidents, administrators and faculty leaders will also differ in what they expect a faculty leader to do, and not to do. The possible outcomes of inconsistent expectations are addressed. (SW)

Defining "Good Faculty Leadership": Interpretations of Professors and Presidents

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This document was prepared pursuant to a grant from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement/Department of Education (OERI/ED). However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the OERI/ED and no official endorsement by the OERI/ED should be inferred.

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This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held at the Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland, November 21-24, 1987. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

> [Good faculty leadership means] Creating forums for open communication. Discernment of shared concerns. Working to coordinate the educational program. Identifying shared faculty goals. Setting standards. Promoting friendly interaction.
>
> -- Faculty Officer at College A

> [Good faculty leadership] is hard to come by. It is almost impossible. The really good faculty are not leaders and they are alive and well in their own teaching and research, and they resent their time away from students and labs. They do serve on the senate and such but they itch to go back to the classroom. These are the real faculty. Their own peers say they are good. They are memorable to students. But they make terrible leaders. They have no inclination to lead. Typically, those people known as leaders lust after the trappings of power. They are followed by the faculty but not revered by them ... Faculty leadership is almost a contradiction in terms.
>
> -- President at College B

During 1986-7, a national sample of college and university presidents and faculty officers[1] were asked to describe "good faculty leadership." Although most had ready answers, they varied in what they said about it. For example, the faculty officer at College A saw good faculty leadership as creating a sense of community in the college, and especially among the faculty; the president of College B focused only on teaching and research responsibilities, clearly separating the faculty's academic work from leadership.[2]

Even on individual campuses, the meaning of good faculty leadership was uneven: For example, at College A, while the faculty officer saw good faculty leadership as creating a sense of college community, the president defined it as giving attention to the curriculum and to faculty recruitment and evaluation. And at College B, while the president asserted the primacy of teaching and research at the same time that he excluded faculty from college leadership, the faculty officer spoke more hesitantly about faculty leaders who need to "communicate both up and down the college."

The purpose of this study was to begin to untangle this mixture of ideas and beliefs by examining what presidents and faculty officers see as the focus, or object, of good faculty leadership.

Prior studies of faculty leadership

The literature on faculty leadership includes numerous normative and prescriptive statements that espouse ideals and principles for college and university governance (e.g., AAUP, ACE, and AGB, 1966; Carnegie..., 1983; Corson, 1975), or that call on the faculty to take leadership in renewing college teaching and learning (e.g., Association of American Colleges, 1985; Study Group..., 1984). It also includes studies that describe

or analyze faculty participation in college and university governance, including the organizational roles and effects of senates, unions, and other groups (e.g., Baldridge and Kemerer, 1977; Birnbaum, in press; Clark 1971, 1983; Floyd, 1985). The literature also contains evaluations and critiques that comment on the failure of shared governance, the diminishing power of the faculty, and the ineffectual workings of most faculty senates (e.g., Baldridge, 1982; Baldridge and associates, 1978; Keller, 1983; Lieberman, 1971).

Although the literature on the faculty's role in college governance covers many different topics in a variety of ways, it considers formal faculty groupings, or collectivities, as the primary units of analysis (e.g., academic departments, senates, unions, faculty committees, the faculty as a body). Leadership by department chairs has been studied (e.g., Groner, 1978; Knight and Holen, 1985; Tucker, 1981), but the roles of other faculty leaders, such as the heads of faculty senates and unions, or respected faculty who act as informal leaders, have seldom been examined. Among the very few scholarly and professional works that refer to faculty leaders, three research-based studies define them as political agents (Baldridge, 1971; Baldridge, et al, 1978) or activists (Mortimer and McConnell, 1978), while a special issue of a

popular professional magazine portrays them as leaders in instruction (Change, 1986).

Although the current literature provides extensive coverage at the level of the faculty collectivity, it generally fails to consider faculty leadership at the operating level. This study departs from past research by identifying and comparing presidents and faculty officers' beliefs about "good faculty leadership" at this more specific level, assessing the extent to which individuals on the same campus agree on the meaning of the phrase, and considering the implications for college governance.

Method

The data for this paper consist of presidents and faculty officers' responses to the following interview question:

> There has been a lot of talk lately about the need for good faculty leadership on college campuses. How would you describe "good faculty leadership"?

This question was part of intensive, semi-structured interviews with persons holding formal leadership positions in a national sample of 32 institutions (8 each of major research/doctoral granting institutions, state colleges and universities, independent colleges, and community colleges). Interviews, which lasted from one to

three hours per individual, were conducted during three-day site visits to campuses during 1986-7. The interviews were private and one-to-one so that interviewees were unaware of each others' responses.

The data for this paper consist of 31 presidents' responses to the "good faculty leadership" question, and the responses of 29 selected faculty officers. In this study, the faculty officer was usually the head of the faculty senate (21). If a senate head was not available, another faculty leader was included-- for example, the former head of the faculty senate (2), the head of the faculty union (3), or an informal faculty leader (3).

Presidents and faculty officers' discussions and depictions of good faculty leadership were searched for patterns of consistency and contrast, with special attention to what they see as the focus, or object, of good faculty leadership.[3] The data yielded a number of specific response categories that were eventually combined into two conceptually related categories (called perspectives), each consisting of two domains.[4] The respondents' definitions were then content-analyzed and coded according to this scheme, or as "not clear." Responses coded as "not clear" may reflect true lack of clarity, or they may be an artifact of the open-ended design of the interview question.

The analysis was conducted in two parts. First, the presidents and faculty officers' responses were assessed separately to determine how a person's position in a college (as president or faculty officer) affects how he or she conceives of good faculty leadership. Second, for each institution, the president and faculty officer's descriptions of good faculty leadership were checked for intra-campus consistency: this analysis also searched for campus conditions that might relate to consistency or inconsistency (e.g., institutional type, control, other). This exploratory study reports patterns of commonality and difference in a small, purposive sample (Selltiz, et al, 1976), and as such, the results should be treated as hypotheses grounded in limited, but intensive and systematic observation.

Results

In describing good faculty leadership, most respondents stated their beliefs about the things to which faculty leaders should give attention. These beliefs are presented in two sections: The first section summarizes the responses by role (responses of presidents and faculty officers separately). The second section looks inside individual colleges to determine whether presidents and their own campus' faculty officer are likely to conceive

of faculty leadership in the same way, or if they tend to differ. It also assesses whether the ability to achieve a consistent understanding of faculty leadership on campus is related to institutional type, control, presidential tenure, and other organizational factors.

Responses by role

Table 1 shows that when presidents and faculty officers describe good faculty leadership, they tend to use one of two perspectives: They may focus on the organization or its parts (institutional perspective), or on the activities of a faculty leader (professional perspective). The institutional perspective consists of two organizational domains: the total campus, and the academic unit (e.g., academic department or college division). The professional perspective consists of two activity domains: concern for the faculty's welfare or its rights, or involvement in traditional academic activities (e.g., teaching, conducting research, engaging in creative activity, working with students). The first step in data analysis was to assess how the sample's presidents and faculty officers depicted faculty leadership from institutional and professional points of view.

TABLE 1

Presidents and Faculty Officers' Depictions of "Good Faculty Leadership"

	Expectations of: Presidents (n=31)	Faculty Officers (n=29)
Institutional perspective:		
-- Campus	14 (45%)	9 (31%)
-- Academic Unit	2 (6%)	1 (3%)
Total	15 (48%)	10 (34%)
Professional perspective:		
-- Faculty Welfare or Rights	4 (13%)	15 (52%)
-- Academic Activities	17 (55%)	6 (21%)
Total	19 (61%)	18 (62%)

3 presidents and 5 faculty officers' were not clear.
1 president mentioned both institutional domains; 2 presidents and 3 faculty officers mentioned both professional domains.
2 presidents and 3 faculty officers used both perspectives.

Presidents and faculty officers who used an institutional perspective to define good faculty leadership largely agreed with each other. Both emphasized the campus over the academic unit; few saw the academic department or division as the locus of faculty leadership. For example, one faculty officer said that faculty leaders "need to be able to put the institution first and to understand the directions that the institution needs to take for its own good, as opposed to fighting for the good of one's own program." Another spoke of faculty leadership for "the welfare of the college," and a third described a good faculty leader as "committed to the advancement of the college." One of the sample's presidents equated good faculty leadership with "responsible institutional citizenship," and another said that good faculty leaders are committed to "the development of the institution ... [being willing] to take on important issues."

Presidents and faculty officers were much more likely to disagree when they used a professional perspective. Table 1 suggests that to a president, good faculty leadership is likely to mean giving attention to academic activities. For example, one of the sample's presidents said that it means "teaching students, scholarship, and research," and after talking about his own previous

experience as a faculty member, he added, "I resented all the rest [involvement in administrative affairs]." Another spoke of "the delivery of quality education ... staying close to the customer." Table 1 also shows that very few of the sample's presidents equated good faculty leadership with concern for the faculty's welfare or its rights. In defining good faculty leadership, most of the presidents simply did not mention this domain, but others expressed outright the belief that good faculty leadership should not confine itself to the faculty as a separate body. For example, one president referred to faculty leaders who "so many times ... can be self-serving." And another president said, "They [good faculty leaders] are not selfish ... They should avoid the need for unanimous support [from the faculty]."

In contrast, only one-fifth of the sample's faculty officers described good faculty leadership as attending to the traditional academic arenas of teaching and research. Table 1 shows that most faculty officers spoke about the faculty's welfare. For example, one faculty officer described his role as "getting some consensus among the faculty and then providing the leadership ... where there is some factionalism, to get them to work [it] out so everyone is headed in the same direction." And another said that faculty leaders "have to be conscious they are

speaking for the faculty."

In summary, college presidents and faculty officers seem to agree with each other when they speak from the less controversial institutional perspective (i.e., by focusing on the campus as a whole), but they differ dramatically when they consider the professional substance of faculty leadership. College presidents are likely to see the ideal faculty leader as an outstanding academic model or as urging others to academic excellence, while faculty officers tend to interpret the faculty leadership role in a different way: The agenda of their ideal faculty leader focuses on the needs, interests, rights, and general welfare of the faculty-- a body that is distinct from, although lodged within, the larger organization.

This analysis shows what presidents and faculty officers are likely to see as the legitimate concerns of good faculty leaders. However, it does not say anything about the "inside story" of campus leadership-- that is, the extent to which presidents are able to see eye-to-eye with their own campus' faculty officer on the meaning of good faculty leadership, and the kinds of conditions that seem to facilitate and hamper this kind of agreement.

Looking inside the colleges

This study also considered the extent to which agreement occurs on individual campuses-- that is, whether or not the typical college president and faculty officer share some conception of good faculty leadership. For this analysis, a president and faculty officer were considered to agree (be consistent) if they concurred on at least one of the four domains of faculty leadership (campus, academic unit, faculty welfare, academic activity). They were considered to differ (be inconsistent or disparate) if they concurred on no domain.

The president and faculty officer displayed at least partial agreement in 10 out of 29, or 34%, of the institutions for which complete data were available. However, their views differed in a majority of the cases (19 out of 29, or 66%).

Although the president and faculty officer were in agreement in one-third of the sample's cases, they agreed about different things: In 4 (14%) colleges, the president and faculty officer agreed that good faculty leadership means giving attention to traditional academic activity; they agreed that it means attending to the faculty's welfare in 2 (7%) cases, to the institution in 3 (10%) cases, and to the academic unit in only 1 (3%).

The presidents and faculty officers were equally

inconsistent in the ways they differed with each other, although their differences tended to lean in one of four ways:

(a.) a president saying that faculty leaders should attend to academic activity, linked to a faculty officer who favors attention to the faculty's welfare or rights (6 cases, 21%);

(b.) a president talking about faculty leadership's obligation to the campus as a whole, joined to a faculty leader concerned about the faculty's welfare (8, 28%);

(c.) a president favoring attention to academic activity, coupled with a faculty officer who focuses on the campus (6, 21%);

(d.) a president talking about academic activity, paired with a faculty officer who gives an unclear response (4, 14%).[5]

Within these four patterns of intra-campus disparity, only 6 colleges (21%) show a substantive professional difference between the president and faculty officer (see a. above), while 14 (48%) reflect a disparity in their perspectives (see b. and c. above where one campus respondent talks about professional activity, and the other, about the institution). This larger pattern raises the question of why the role-related differences

identified in Table 1 (i.e., presidents favor academic activity, faculty officers focus on the faculty's welfare) do not show up more clearly on the individual campuses, and why differences in perspective appear to be somewhat more prevalent. However, the smallness of this sample and the open-ended nature of the interview question preclude speculation from these data.

The study also considered whether the campus president and faculty officer are more likely to agree or differ with each other under different types of conditions. Table 2 suggests that a president and faculty officer are far more likely to have disparate views of faculty leadership in a community or state college, than in other types of institutions. In contrast, it is likely that the president and faculty officer of a university will reach some agreement. In independent colleges, presidents and their faculty officers are as likely to agree as not.

When these data were examined to see whether the presidents and faculty officers of different kinds of institutions agree or differ over the same things, one pattern was very clear: In community and state colleges, the typical difference seems to involve a president who thinks that faculty leaders should pay attention to the

TABLE 2

Intra-institutional Analysis by Institutional Type: Consistency About What "Good Faculty Leadership" Means

	Consistency between a college's president and faculty officer:		
	Full or Partial	None	Total
Universities	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	6 (100%)
State Colleges	2 (25%)	6 (75%)	8 (100%)
Independent Colleges	4 (50%)	4 (50%)	8 (100%)
Community Colleges	0	7 (100%)	7 (100%)
All Institutions	10 (34%)	19 (66%)	29 (100%)

campus or to traditional academic activity, and a faculty officer who believes that faculty leaders should attend to the faculty's welfare. Less frequently (although more commonly in state colleges than in community colleges), the faculty officer gave an unclear response. In contrast, the presidents and faculty officers of universities and independent colleges did not agree or differ in consistent directions.

Presidents and faculty officers' views of good faculty leadership were also examined for the effects of institutional control (public vs. private), institutional size (headcount enrollment), presence of collective bargaining, stage of presidential tenure (presidents in office for 0-3 years vs. 5 or more years), and gender of the president. None of these factors seem related to the ability of presidents and their faculty officers to come to agreement over the meaning of good faculty leadership.

Discussion

This research suggests that faculty leaders fill ill-defined roles. Their own beliefs about good faculty leadership may vary dramatically from those of their presidents, suggesting that administrators and faculty leaders will also differ in what they expect a faculty leader to do, and not to do. This section considers what

the inconsistent expectations might mean to college administrators and faculty leaders.

The possible effects of inconsistency. When a president and faculty leader talk about faculty leadership, they are likely to be thinking about different things, and therefore, their expectations about what good faculty leaders do are also apt to vary. If they are unaware of these differences, they may take poor readings of each other: Presidents might misinterpret or misjudge what faculty leaders do, or why they take certain actions, and faculty leaders might similarly misconstrue their presidents' positions. For example, a president who believes that good faculty leaders should promote academic excellence might see a faculty leader who is concerned with faculty rights as ineffective, self-serving, or not representing the views of the "real" faculty. The same president, if he is aware only of his own perspective on good faculty leadership, might take action or say things that seem out-of-touch or repressive to the faculty. If a campus' faculty leader and president are not aware that faculty leadership means different things to each of them, or if they deny that difference or otherwise decline to consider alternative points of view, they set the stage for misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and possibly conflict.

The major finding of this study -- that presidents and faculty officers differ in how they think about good faculty leadership -- suggests that both administrators and faculty leaders should make their beliefs and expectations about the role of the faculty leader known to each other early in their working relationships. Knowing and appreciating the differences in what they each value and expect may not avert later disagreement over what a faculty leader should or should not be doing in a particular situation, but it may provide the understanding, predictability, and tolerance necessary for open discussion and consideration of difficult issues. Furthermore, because the faculty's leadership tends to change yearly as new senate officers are elected, it may be especially important for presidents to learn, as soon as possible, about the orientations and expectations of their current faculty leaders. It would be just as important for the newly selected faculty leaders to learn about the administration's expectations.

Collective bargaining. This research suggests that a president and faculty leader of a unionized college are as likely to agree -- and to differ -- about the meaning of good faculty leadership as the president and faculty leader of a non-unionized college. This conclusion intimates that collective bargaining does not necessarily

lead to differences in how administrators and faculty conceive of good faculty leadership; those differences would be there with or without the union. Collective bargaining may simply be one of several ways to express the different views and expectations identified in this research. From this angle, it seems just as important for administrators and faculty leaders in unionized colleges to inform each other about their expectations of faculty leadership, as it is in non-unionized colleges.

Faculty leadership in different types of institutions. This study proposes that a president and faculty officer in a community or state college are less likely to concur in their views and expectations of faculty leadership than in a major research university. This finding, which focuses on one-to-one interactions (micro level), is consistent with prior research on how administrative and faculty collectivities relate to each other (macro level). For example, other writers have described community and state colleges as vulnerable to environmental pressures, centralization, bureaucratization, and administrative intrusion (e.g., Baldridge, et al, 1978; Bensimon, 1984; Birnbaum, 1985; Reyes and Twombly, 1986-7), which would intensify a faculty's need to assert its rights. In contrast, university faculty, who are more in the "mainstream" of

the profession, have more professional recognition, and their work settings reflect more balance between administrative and faculty authority (e.g., see Baldridge, et al, 1978; Birnbaum, in press); therefore, they are probably less likely to be concerned about their rights or their institutional status.

It is likely, therefore, that the faculty officer of a community or state college would be concerned about protecting the faculty and asserting its professional rights, whereas a university senate head could devote attention elsewhere, making agreement with his or her president more likely. Furthermore, faculty senates are much newer to community and state colleges than they are to universities (Baldridge, et al, 1978), suggesting that presidents and faculty leaders are still in the process of negotiating an "institutional place" for faculty leadership. That "place" would be better defined, understood, and accepted in universities because they have a longer faculty senate tradition.

This research suggests that community and state college presidents, in particular, should make time to talk with their faculty leaders about what they each believe good faculty leadership means and what they think good faculty leaders should do. To do this, both the presidents and faculty officers require strong

communication skills and a willingness to understand: They should be able to state their personal understandings of what good faculty leadership means, and they should be able to listen as others talk about theirs; they should also be open to exploring and accepting points of view that differ from their own.

Faculty leadership in perspective. The literature on faculty leadership and the faculty role in college governance takes a macroscopic view in that it considers the faculty as a collectivity; it gives little attention to the operating level-- the faculty's chosen leaders, as individuals, interacting with other individuals, including college administrators. When college presidents and faculty officers talk about faculty governance or faculty leadership at the macro level, they deal with an abstract and unwieldy subject. However, if faculty leadership can be re-framed as a person-to-person working relationship (i.e., faculty leader interacting with administrator), the subject becomes more concrete and possibly, more manageable. One avenue for future research would be to look closely at the relationship between these two levels, with special attention to the contributions that faculty leadership, in its more specific and concrete form, might make to the larger question about the faculty role in college governance.

Notes

1. In this paper, "faculty officers" generally refers to interview respondents (usually heads of faculty senates), who, along with college presidents, talked about the meaning of good faculty leadership. "Faculty leadership" and "faculty leaders" refer to the topic under study.

2. To comply with pledges of confidentiality, all sample institutions are presented as "colleges" (and occasionally "institutions"), and all presidents are referred to with the masculine pronoun.

3. The approach resembles what Schatzman and Strauss (1973) call, "conceptual levering," whereby the researcher selects concepts that are fundamental to a discipline and uses them as a lens to bring preliminary order to data. In this research, the concepts of "schema" (Fiske and Taylor, 1984; Gioia and Sims, 1986; Lord and Foti, 1986) and "role expectation" (Katz and Kahn, 1978) provided leverage for an examination of the data. These concepts led the analysis, forcing the analyst to concentrate on what respondents see as the object of "good faculty leadership."

4. The "perspectives" are the final product of four layers of induction: (1) reviews at ground level guided by selected concepts (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973), (2) creating multiple, discrete response categories, (3) unifying these response categories into broader categories and identifying them as organizational or activity "domains," and (4) unifying the domains into larger conceptually related categories and identifying them as "perspectives." The method resembles inductive methods described by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

5. Percentages were computed on a base of 29 institutions with complete data. Some institutions fell into more than one of the agreement/disagreement categories reported here (e.g., a faculty officer who agrees with his/her president on "academic activity," but who also asserts "faculty" when the president does not): 20 out of the 29 institutions with usable data fit into only one agreement/disagreement category, 5 fit into two, 1 fit into three.

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