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Morale and Productivity

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Source: *Change*, Vol. 10, No. 11 (Dec., 1978 - Jan., 1979), p. 68

Published by: [Taylor & Francis, Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40163206>

Accessed: 23/09/2014 13:59

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Some colleges are experimenting with linking faculty merit raises to enrollment increases. Do you believe this is an effective way of involving faculty in student recruitment efforts?

CRITERION OF TIME SPENT

Mary-Anne Vetterling, Northeastern University

An enrollment increase is not a sufficiently objective criterion by which to gauge salary increases. Many outside factors, such as new courses in other departments, can influence departmental enrollments from one year to the next. Often professors become popular among students because of good looks, personality, acting ability, or inflated grading procedures. This may also swell enrollment numbers.

A much better way to measure effective teaching is through student evaluations. Our department has found that a combination of quantitative measurement ("Rate your instructor on a scale of 1-10

on fairness," etc.) and qualitative measurement ("What do you like best about your instructor?") yields representative results. We take into account other factors such as the professor's daily preparation—especially for upper-level courses where the enrollment is small—and the number of students taught—especially in basic language courses where enrollment is usually high. Thus, faculty are rewarded on the basis of actual time spent and are given overtime pay when they have earned it. The fact that upper-level courses with lower enrollments often yield better evaluations—and at the same time take more preparation, which is re-

warded in our system—is sufficient incentive to keep faculty from fighting over lower-level courses at the hours that yield the highest enrollments. Professionalism, not crass salesmanship, is the result.

Still, I do think that if a university wishes to encourage professors to work to increase enrollments, it ought to reward those who spend time advertising their courses—whether through pamphlets, mini-lectures in colleagues' courses, or announcements at registration. Again, the criterion should be time spent. The number of students can be taken into account, but that should not be the sole deciding factor in the actual raise given.

MORALE AND PRODUCTIVITY

William E. Spellman, Coe College

Enrollment statistics should be used to determine faculty salaries only in the most drastic circumstances. If a faculty is completely insensitive to the survival needs of their institution, such a course may be useful. But this is the exception rather than the rule; and it indicates a failure on the part of the administration to motivate faculty to contribute to the admissions process. The "two by four to the forehead" strategy is negative reinforcement by punishment, rather than a positive motivator.

Besides, if money is the motivator for faculty, then a bonus for exceptional or exemplary recruiting efforts would serve the institution and the faculty far more effectively, since it would prove that pay and perfor-

mance actually are related. If all faculty salaries are simply prorated according to enrollment, those who have contributed to the admissions process are not specially compensated. Consciousness of recruitment will be raised, but this won't motivate faculty to recruit.

On the other hand, attaching a weighted index for performance in recruiting—in addition to the advising, teaching, research, administrative duties, and community contributions criteria in the salary and promotion process—establishes a more efficient and equitable system of motivation. It also allows the faculty to specialize in those areas in which they are the most productive, without punishment. Faculty morale and productivity can only be severely under-

cut by the uncertainty of a conditional salary; and this ultimately will reduce cooperation between faculty and the admissions office and exert a dynamic, depressing influence on enrollment.

The admissions office, and ultimately the top administration of the college, must bear the responsibility for enrollment. To shift this responsibility to the faculty and make them accountable for plans, policies, and personnel beyond their control has little merit academically or administratively. If faculty are forced to spend time recruiting when they are not enthusiastic about doing so, they will not perform their other professional activities as well and the result, again, could be higher attrition and lower enrollment.