Assessing and Addressing Faculty Morale: Cultivating Consciousness, Empathy, and Empowerment

Marie Norman, Susan A. Ambrose, and Therese A. Huston

Academic freedom and First Amendment rights are perennial topics of discussion on college campuses (Bollag, 2004; Fish, 2004; Hollingsworth, 2000; Howard, 2004), yet it is clear from even casual conversation that individual faculty members often feel constrained when discussing their own professional experiences with colleagues. Junior faculty may worry that honestly voicing difficult experiences or negative impressions will be interpreted as unprofessional or that their comments will offend senior colleagues who are positioned to influence their future success (Bullough, 2000; Gubitosi, 1996; Guilfoyle, 1995; Newman, 1999). Even established,

MARIE NORMAN is a Teaching Consultant and Research Associate at the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and an Adjunct Professor of Anthropology at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. SUSAN A. AMBROSE is the Associate Provost for Education, Director of the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, and Teaching Professor in the Department of History at Carnegie Mellon University. THERESE A. HUSTON is Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and Adjunct Professor in the Department of Psychology at Seattle University. This paper represents part of a two-year study on faculty satisfaction and retention that is described at greater length in their article, "A Qualitative Method for Assessing Faculty Satisfaction," *Research in Higher Education, 46(7)*. Address queries to Susan A. Ambrose at the Office of the Associate Provost for Education, Carnegie Mellon University, 5000 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213; telephone: (412) 268-2896; fax: (412) 268-5701; email: sa0n@andrew.cmu.edu.

tenured faculty may be reluctant to make waves or risk alienating powerful colleagues. In recent years, as the number of tenure-track faculty appointments has declined nationally and new hires are held to increasingly higher standards of productivity (Finkelstein, 2003; Graubard, 2001), the sense of vulnerability on the part of faculty has only intensified. As Howard Bowen and Jack Schuster (1986) observe:

> Over the years since 1970, faculty members in most institutions have had a sense of increasing anxiety about the continuity of their appointments. Today, this anxiety ranges from slight in the case of well-established professors with tenured positions in strong institutions, to acute for non-tenured persons in unstable institutions. . . . We have heard from several sources that faculty members who are fearful for their jobs—particularly younger faculty members hopeful of tenure—feel constrained in their utterances and in their writings. (p. 126)

In this increasingly cautious—even fearful—environment, how can faculty members at a given institution engage in meaningful discussion about issues that affect their professional lives? Likewise, how can they learn about and understand the range of experiences their colleagues encounter? Finally, how can faculty become involved in generating solutions for problematic environments, behaviors, practices, or policies when—for understandable reasons—they are reluctant to publicly acknowledge many of their own pivotal professional experiences?

We suggest a strategy employed by one Research I university to address these questions. The approach was an outgrowth of a two-year research project on faculty satisfaction and retention. We used the narrative data generated by this larger study to craft a set of fictional scenarios that portrayed issues affecting a wide range of faculty at the institution. Facilitators then used these scenarios as the basis for discussions with groups of faculty at the same university. Because each scenario drew on the experiences of multiple people, these discussions allowed faculty to explore institutionally relevant experiences without exposing the identifiable stories of particular individuals. Capitalizing on the evocative power of narratives, these discussions have allowed faculty to engage in fruitful—even transformative—dialogue about issues that impact them.

In this paper, we (a) outline the methods and results of the original research project, (b) explain the purpose of scenario-based discussions and the process used to create the scenarios, (c) describe the outcomes of discussions with various faculty groups, and (d) discuss how this method can be adapted to other institutions and used to inform faculty development efforts. First, however, we situate our approach theoretically within the emerging literature on narrative.

NARRATIVE THEORY: THE POWER OF STORIES

Much of the literature on faculty satisfaction relies heavily on quantitative data, enumerating and weighting the various factors affecting faculty morale and retention (Barnes, Agago, & Coombs, 1998; Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Boyer, Altbach, & Whitelaw, 1995; Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002; Manger & Eikeland, 1990; Matier, 1990; Olsen, Maple, & Stage, 1995; Smart, 1990). Although such data reveal general patterns and facilitate comparisons among institutions, they are considerably less useful for illuminating the complex experiences of faculty in specific contexts. As D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly (2000) point out, in quantifying experience we strip it of its richness and expression; narrative, they argue, retains much of this richness. Because our intention in this research was to better understand the experiences of faculty at this university, we drew on narrative theory to inform both our approach to data collection and our use of these data as part of the institutional response.

Narrative theory has attracted scholars in a range of disciplines that assist people in analyzing and interpreting choices and decisions made within particular contexts. The emerging field of narrative medicine, for example, uses the stories that patients and doctors tell about illness and treatment to help patients find meaning and coherence in their experience of suffering and to help doctors become more reflective, conscious, and empathetic (Brody, 1987; Hunter, 1991; Kleinman, 1988). In bioethics, narratives (often fictional) are used to explore the moral dimensions of health care (Charon & Montello, 2002; Frank, 1995), and in psychology, researchers employ a narrative approach to understanding significant turning points in the lives of individuals (McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2001). It is our belief that the narrative approach provides an equally valuable tool for understanding faculty experiences, articulating alternatives, and building stronger university communities.

Narrative approaches begin with the premise that we understand the world through the stories we tell and the stories we hear (Charon & Montello, 2002; McAdams, Josselson & Lieblich, 2001). Personal narratives situate thought and behavior within the complexly interwoven fabric of real lives, establishing a context in which actions and perceptions can be interpreted and understood. Reflecting on these narratives helps to foster greater consciousness, increased empathy, and more creative approaches to problem solving.

The project we describe has several layers of narrative. First, the participants in our study told their own stories in confidential interviews. In doing so, they fit the events and experiences of their professional lives into a coherent narrative structure, creating meaning in the telling of their stories. As Dan McAdams, Ruthellen Josselson, and Amia Lieblich (2001) note:

Meaning is generated by the linkages the participant makes between aspects of the life he or she is living and his or her understanding of these aspects. The role of the researcher is then to connect this understanding with some form of conceptual interpretation, which is then meaning constructed at another level of analysis. (p. xii)

We used the interview data to generate composite narratives that constituted a second kind of narrative, fictional yet firmly rooted in real experience. Finally, we asked groups of faculty to read these scenarios and discuss them with trained facilitators. Out of these scenario-based discussions came a third set of narratives: the responses of real faculty to their colleagues' collective experiences. The specific methodology is explained below.

We believe that these scenario-based discussions accomplish an important goal, not only by raising awareness of issues affecting faculty on campus, but also by fostering greater empathy on the part of senior faculty and a sense of empowerment among junior faculty. As a number of researchers in higher education have observed, senior faculty often entered their field and their institution under very different circumstances than those of their younger colleagues (Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Finkelstein, 1984; Graubard, 2001). These differences include changes in the student body, new financial realities, rapidly changing educational technologies, and greater numbers of part-time faculty. Thus, while scenario-based discussions foster empathy among all faculty members, they are particularly useful in helping senior faculty understand the experiences of junior colleagues.

By the same token, scenario-based discussions encourage a proactive attitude on the part of junior faculty by allowing them to collectively brainstorm effective ways to respond to various situations they may encounter. For example, discussing a scenario in which the protagonist is suddenly denied tenure may prompt junior faculty to consider what sorts of feedback they need from their department heads and senior colleagues to avoid the same fate. It might even mobilize a group of junior faculty to push for more clearly established promotion criteria.

THE LARGER STUDY

The larger study in which this particular project was situated was conducted at a small Research I university over a period of two years (2002–2003). It was designed to provide a richer understanding of the ways in which events shape faculty satisfaction and dissatisfaction and, in turn, influence individual decisions to remain at or to leave the university (Ambrose, Huston, & Norman, in press). To accomplish these goals, we needed both institution-specific and detailed, narrative data.

Institution-specific data were important to obtain because academic institutions differ in important ways, with consequences for faculty experiences and morale (Bluedorn, 1982; Clark, Corcoran, & Lewis, 1986; Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002). The university targeted in this research has a very distinctive institutional culture, emphasizing interdisciplinary collaboration, entrepreneurship, and innovation. It also has a specific set of financial constraints and opportunities—a relatively low endowment but an excellent track record at attracting research grants. Additionally, the university's exceptionally decentralized administrative structure concentrates power in the hands of individual department heads. Finally, the university is in a medium-sized city with a low cost of living but also a somewhat stagnant job market, which has implications for faculty spouses/partners. These factors, among others, were significant in shaping faculty experiences and merited close examination. A high level of specificity was also critical for creating scenarios that were faithful to the circumstances at this particular institution.

Detailed, narrative data were also essential for revealing the complex chronology of events and interaction of experiences that shaped faculty perceptions (Chilcott, 1987; Merriam, 1998; Merriam & Associates, 2002). Focusing on faculty narratives allowed us to draw on the principal strengths of qualitative research, as identified by Joseph Maxwell (1996): its capacity to examine (a) the *meaning* for participants (in this case, faculty members) of the events, situations, and actions in which they are involved, (b) the particular *context* within which participants act and the influence this context has on their actions, (c) *unanticipated* phenomena and influences, which emerge spontaneously in open-ended interviews as they cannot in structured surveys, (d) the *process* by which events and actions take place, and (5) complex *causal* relationships, in this case the varying and interacting causes of faculty satisfaction (pp. 17–20).

In this study, we conducted 123 telephone interviews with 61 former faculty members and a cohort of 62 current faculty members, matched by department and year of appointment. The interviewers were an anthropologist and a social historian, neither of whom had extensive prior contact with the institution and who thus did not bring biases about the institutional culture. The semi-structured interviews employed several open-ended questions in which respondents were asked to describe their experience at the institution and any significant factors or critical incidents that had impacted their experience. They were encouraged to tell their stories in their own way, thereby illuminating the experiences and issues that were most relevant to them.

Two other researchers (not the interviewers) independently coded the completed interviews to identify common issues. Unlike coding in quantitative research, the goal of our coding was "not to produce counts of

things, but to fracture the data and rearrange it [sic] into categories that facilitate the comparison of data within and between categories and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 78). In other words, the coding system was solidly grounded in the data and did not reflect preexisting categories or expectations.

The narrative data provided information on a variety of issues. The coded data revealed university-wide patterns: broad issues that spanned departments and years and related to features of institutional organization and culture. The narratives themselves clarified the particularities of the issues raised; for example, we could see exactly what various faculty members perceived as fair or unfair behavior on the part of department heads, how they defined "lack of collegiality," what sorts of mentoring had proven useful in specific circumstances, etc. Faculty stories also revealed the interaction of events in a faculty member's personal and professional life and how faculty interpreted these events. This level of detail proved invaluable in guiding the production of fictional scenarios that were complex, nuanced, and sufficiently "real" to prompt meaningful discussion.

We discuss the results of our larger study at length in another article (Ambrose, Huston & Norman, in press), but to illuminate the issues presented in the scenario discussions, we briefly summarize the four central satisfaction issues that emerged in this study: collegiality, leadership, mentoring and reappointment, and promotion and tenure.

The issue most frequently mentioned by faculty in relation to job dissatisfaction—an issue raised in the literature on faculty satisfaction at large—was *lack of collegiality* (Barnes, Agago, & Coombs, 1998; Manger & Eikeland, 1990; Olsen & Sorcinelli, 1992; Smart, 1990; Turner & Boice, 1987; Walvoord et al., 2000). They also identified many features of departmental life that they felt negatively impacted collegiality, some of which are:

- Incivility within departments: i.e., "factionalism," "balkanization," "backstabbing," etc., sometimes involving struggles over limited resources (e.g., funding, graduate students, lab space) and conflicts between faculty in traditional and emerging fields.

- Lack of intellectual community: i.e., little exchange of ideas among colleagues, and a lack of interest in one another's work or in collaboration.

- Preoccupied or disinterested senior faculty: i.e., senior faculty who are too busy to provide advice, feedback or recognition to junior colleagues, or are simply not interested in their work.

Although we had expected that departmental politics would negatively affect faculty satisfaction, one finding we did not entirely anticipate was the subtler erosion of faculty morale that occurred when senior colleagues lacked

the time, energy, or will to notice and discuss their colleagues' work, to collaborate on projects, or simply to socialize. The effect on junior faculty of senior faculty disengagement is a complex issue in itself and will be addressed at length in a forthcoming paper (Huston, Norman, & Ambrose, 2005).

A second issue that significantly contributed to faculty dissatisfaction was *ineffective leadership*, in this case from department heads. As mentioned previously, a peculiarity of this particular university is its highly decentralized administrative structure, which concentrates decision-making power in the hands of department heads. The considerable influence of department heads was obvious in faculty narratives, which were often organized chronologically by department head (for example, "I was happy under the previous head for the following reasons, but when the current head came in, everything changed"). The centrality of department heads in almost every narrative pointed to the significant weight that faculty assigned to such leaders in creating a particular environment—whether positive or negative. This finding echoes that of other researchers who have noted that the role of the department head or chair is vital to the success and satisfaction of junior faculty (Creswell et al., 1990; Tucker, 1984; Wheeler, 1992). Faculty who complained about ineffective leadership often pointed to the department head's

- Inability to manage conflict: e.g., failure to control factionalism, to unify the department, or to settle disputes effectively.

- A tendency to play favorites: e.g., a pattern of distributing assignments and departmental resources inequitably, etc.

- Failure to communicate effectively: e.g., failure to provide junior faculty with meaningful and timely feedback and to communicate expectations clearly.

In fact, the need for department heads or chairs to balance multiple roles successfully is so universally pressing that a recent issue of *New Directions in Higher Education* was dedicated to articulating these roles and their relevant stakeholders (Gmelch & Schuh, 2004).

The third issue to emerge was a perceived *lack of appropriate and meaningful mentoring*, an issue receiving a lot of press in the last decade (Boice, 1992; Boyle & Boice, 1998; Philip & Hendry, 2000). It became clear from interviews with faculty who had received effective mentoring, as well as with faculty who had not, that junior faculty benefited tremendously from having strong mentoring relationships. Our research indicated that a significant source of faculty dissatisfaction was the sense that necessary help and advice were not available at key points in the professional trajectory. Faculty noted, moreover, that a diverse range of mentoring was necessary: they needed advice not only in intellectual and professional matters, but

also help in navigating departmental politics and balancing the demands of work and family. They identified these areas where mentoring had been or would have been helpful:

• Guidance on different aspects of work: e.g., feedback on proposals, papers, and courses.

• Help in setting priorities: e.g., advice on where to put time and energy (committee work, outreach, establishing professional connections, teaching, etc.) and help in determining when to say no.

• Help in navigating departmental politics: e.g., assistance in identifying and negotiating sensitive political issues within the department and advice on how to deal with factionalism.

Finally, faculty interviews revealed the perception of a *flawed reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) process*, an experience that is anxiety-producing for junior faculty in general (Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Finkelstein & LaCelle-Peterson, 1992; Li, 1998; Sibley-Fries, 1986). Interestingly, RPT was identified as problematic not only by former faculty (which one might expect) but by an even greater number of current *tenured* faculty. In fact, a full 50% of current tenured faculty interviewed lacked faith in the integrity of the RPT process, compared to only 28% of former faculty. Faculty described the following sorts of flaws with the RPT process:

• Lack of feedback on progress: e.g., candidates are not told about shortcomings in their work until it is too late; in some cases, the candidate gets no indication that anything is wrong until a negative promotion decision has been reached, whereupon she or he feels blindsided.

• Poorly defined or inconsistently applied promotion criteria: e.g., it is unclear which aspect of a candidate's work (research, teaching, service) will "count" in promotion decisions, or criteria are applied so inconsistently that decisions appear based on politics, not merit.

• Overly "opaque" RPT processes: e.g., candidates cannot defend themselves from misinformation and lack of due process because RPT decisions are made in secret; furthermore, because RPT decisions are not discussed openly, the outcomes can seem capricious and political.

Faculty interviews also revealed many positive experiences of collegiality, leadership, mentoring, and RPT. These positive accounts helped to clarify features of university life that enhance faculty satisfaction: what collegial departments do for their members, what effective leadership entails, what positive mentoring involves, and what happens when the RPT process works as it should. Understanding satisfaction along with dissatisfaction was not only necessary for assessing the experiences of faculty, but also for designing scenarios that reflected the complexity of faculty lives which, after all,

typically involve experiences with both effective *and* ineffective leadership, both positive *and* negative perceptions of the RPT process, etc.

Collegiality, leadership, mentoring, and RPT are, of course, important issues to faculty in all institutions; they are not institution specific. However, a number of institutional features have a direct bearing on how issues like collegiality, leadership, mentoring, and RPT are experienced and perceived. Among them are the values of the institution, its size and location, its administrative structure, financial situation, tenure system, reputation, etc. (Bluedorn, 1982; Clark, Corcoran, & Lewis, 1986; Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002; Wimsatt, 2003). While it is unnecessary to detail them all here, particular institutional features create a unique set of circumstances affecting faculty satisfaction, as suggested in the following example.

As mentioned previously, the university in question places a high premium on interdisciplinary collaboration. Although many of the faculty members we interviewed found this emphasis on interdisciplinarity exciting, many also cited problems. One relatively common complaint was that, while the university encouraged interdisciplinary work, specific departments often lacked reliable mechanisms for evaluating its merit. A faculty member who published outside his discipline's traditional journals, for example, might find his scholarship questioned at promotion time simply because his senior colleagues continued to use traditional, discipline-based performance criteria. Such evaluations, in turn, fed the larger perception (discussed previously) that the RPT process was unfair and arbitrary.

Another effect of the university's interdisciplinary emphasis was that, in some cases, explicitly interdisciplinary departments, a faculty member was sometimes the sole representative of her particular discipline or subdiscipline, without colleagues who knew or understood her work. This situation often contributed to a feeling of intellectual isolation, which consequently exacerbated some faculty's feeling of little departmental collegiality.

The example above—of this university's interdisciplinary emphasis and its impact on faculty—points to the fact that the experiences of university faculty are not generic. Rather, they are shaped by specific conditions at their particular institutions. Understanding how these specific features colored the experience of the faculty in our study proved critical for creating scenarios that faithfully captured the texture, depth, and complexity of faculty stories and portrayed the university culture in authentic terms.

CREATING THE SCENARIOS

Ultimately, our goal in gathering the data described briefly above was to spark constructive dialogue on campus about issues that were impacting faculty morale and retention. We wanted to draw on the real-life experiences revealed in interviews with individual faculty without exposing any

particular individual's stories or placing blame. Consequently, we contracted with a playwright from outside the institution to create a series of four scenarios—fictionalized, composite stories, based on the interviews—that would serve as triggers for discussion of difficult issues in faculty lives. The scenarios, like the stories revealed in interviews, are complex, multilayered and highly contextualized, suitably "meaty" for a substantive discussion. (See Appendices A and B for two sample scenarios.)

The process of creating the scenarios was time- and labor-intensive, yet proved to be well worth the effort. We provided the playwright with the analysis of data so that she could see the patterns and themes across individuals, departments, and years. We also provided transcriptions of the interviews themselves, with all identifying information removed, to give her a feel for the narrative qualities of the stories told. We then worked with her to sketch out potential storylines that accurately reflected common experiences, as revealed in the interviews.

After the playwright drafted the first scenario, a small group of faculty and administrators directly involved in the study critiqued it for believability. We took care, for example, to make the events and experiences in the scenario reflect the institutional culture of the university and the particular issues its faculty confront. After three iterations of the first scenario, we piloted it with a group of a dozen very senior faculty members, intentionally including many whom we believed would not find this approach appealing.

Surprisingly, most of these colleagues found the scenario so robust and complex that, after an hour, they were not ready to stop discussing it. Many in the group thought that they recognized the story (i.e., knew who the faculty member was), which indicated to us that (a) we had been successful at realistically portraying an example of the faculty experience at this university, and (b) we would need to remind participants that the stories they were discussing were *not* the experiences of particular individuals but, rather, fictional composites of many different people's experiences. As one might imagine, striking a balance in this regard was challenging: The story must be believable, yet participants must not attach a specific identity to it. We made minor changes to the scenario as a result and repeated the process with the other three scenarios.

TRAINING THE FACILITATORS

In preparation for scenario-based discussions, we trained a group of widely respected senior faculty members, including a dean and several department heads, to facilitate discussions. We discussed with facilitators their role and the role of participants. Participants were to: (a) identify the issues raised in the scenario, (b) identify the various factors that impacted the experience and perceptions of the scenario's protagonist, (c) discuss the

interpretations of events by the scenario's main characters; and (d) generate alternative responses to the situation.

We instructed facilitators to encourage a variety of perspectives, to clarify comments and synthesize remarks, to keep track of the major issues raised, and to draw attention to the combination of factors leading to faculty dissatisfaction/satisfaction (as opposed to focusing on isolated events, outside their full context).

We provided facilitators with a brief set of prompting questions (Appendix C) as well as a more robust set of specific questions for the major issues (collegiality, mentoring, leadership, RPT, etc.) raised in the scenario. (See Appendix D.) This second set of questions encouraged faculty participants to compare and contrast the issues raised in the scenario with their own professional experiences. Facilitators have used these questions when necessary, although to date the discussions have not needed much prompting, since faculty members have seemed eager to talk and quick to find connections between the scenarios and their own experiences.

Because some of our facilitators were from fields in which discussion is not a common pedagogical practice, we also reviewed with them research on conducting effective discussions. We highlighted the importance of (a) cognitive considerations (e.g., type and level of questions posed), (b) social dynamics (e.g., managing differing perspectives effectively), (c) emotional climate (e.g., diffusing anger to use it constructively), and (d) physical environment (e.g., organizing the physical space so participants can talk to one another easily).

We also examined common reasons that discussions become stifled. For example, the facilitator might ask questions that are too vague, fail to probe responses or build on responses, or fail to draw attention to the larger implications of participants' comments. Finally, we role-played an actual scenario discussion, after which we analyzed and critiqued the process.

OUTCOMES OF SCENARIO-BASED DISCUSSIONS

After training facilitators, we initiated discussions with groups of faculty in each department. Because we believed that junior faculty would be more honest and forthcoming without senior colleagues present, we held separate discussions with senior and junior faculty. So that the junior faculty perspective would inform the discussion with senior faculty in the same department, the same two facilitators ran both discussions. One of them, designated as the "speaker for the absent,"[1] was responsible for assuring that each group examined issues from other perspectives. Facilitators never led discussions

---

[1] We would like to thank a senior faculty member in the Computer Science Department for suggesting this phrase.

in their own departments or colleges, and we asked them not to repeat what they heard in the discussions to anyone except the researchers.

To date, we have conducted scenario-based discussions in a dozen departments across the university. What follows are accounts of what happened in several of the discussions conducted with groups of junior and senior faculty. One of the three authors attended every discussion as an observer but did not participate. Because of the sensitive nature of the discussions, we did not audiotape and hence did not collect and analyze data in a standard way. The researcher present took copious notes and debriefed with the two senior faculty facilitators. To ensure confidentiality, we stripped these accounts of identifying information, while retaining the integrity of what transpired. We use them here to illustrate how scenario-based discussions can help to (a) increase faculty consciousness of issues within a particular departmental culture, (b) foster empathy for colleagues in circumstances one may not have encountered personally, and (c) empower faculty to proactively address and solve problems. Fittingly, our description of these discussions and their outcomes involves still more storytelling. For each section that follows, we describe the faculty group discussing the scenario, the scenario itself and the insights revealed during the discussion.

CONSCIOUSNESS

Our first example involves a discussion among senior faculty. The scenario was one in which the protagonist navigated (not altogether successfully) a complicated field of departmental politics, family tensions, and changes in departmental leadership. The facilitator began by asking discussion participants what the scenario was about. One senior faculty member immediately and dismissively responded that it was obvious that the scenario's focus was mentoring, since "that's what everyone's talking about these days." He said that he thought so much attention to mentoring was unnecessary: *He had not needed mentoring when he was a junior faculty member,* and he believed that any faculty member hired at this university should be able to make his own way in academia without needing help. Asking for mentoring, he said, was a sign of weakness.

After a stunned silence, one of this man's colleagues disagreed, prompting a long, animated discussion about whether or not mentoring was necessary, what useful mentoring involved, etc. Eventually, the faculty member who had described mentoring as unnecessary left, and the facilitator brought the discussion to a close. As the others were leaving, one faculty member said about their colleague who had left: "Well, *that* explains a lot. We've got to keep *him* away from the junior faculty!"

Prior to this discussion, none of the participants had been aware that their senior colleague had such a contradictory interpretation of mentor-

ing. Discussion of the scenario revealed that, to some, faculty mentoring was an unmitigated good; to others, it was a sign of weakness. Participants were able to address these different interpretations directly and assess their potential impact on junior faculty seeking help. The facilitators, who had heard the same scenario discussed by junior faculty from the same department, tactfully introduced the junior faculty perspective and hence added another valuable dimension to the discussion. Ultimately, senior faculty participants had to think seriously about how attitudes toward mentoring affected junior faculty morale and performance.

Realizations such as these have already prompted behavioral changes among some senior faculty members. For example, after a discussion that touched on poor collegial relations within another department, one senior faculty member told the researchers that he had begun making a point of stopping by each junior colleague's office once a week simply to say hello. Although this gesture is a small one, it is the kind of behavioral shift that can potentially alter the departmental environment and perceptions of collegiality.

It is important to note that what prompted the first discussion was one faculty member's dismissive comments about the scenario and the "lesson" he thought it was designed to teach. This experience points to the fact that scenario-based discussions can be highly productive even—perhaps especially—when individual faculty members approach these discussions with some reluctance or hostility. For the most part, however, we found that, because of the depth, complexity, and relevance of the scenarios, most faculty participants entered into these discussions with gusto.

Empathy

A different group of senior faculty was discussing another scenario in which the protagonist laments the lack of departmental support for family responsibilities. In the discussion that ensued, one participant remarked that, in contrast to the department described in the scenario, *theirs* was very family friendly. After a short pause, a colleague responded that he disagreed. He explained that, before he had received tenure, he had spent years concealing the fact that he could not attend early morning departmental meetings because he had to get his children ready for school and on the bus. The man explained to his colleagues that he had never been comfortable telling them this, assuming that it would somehow damage his professional credibility to acknowledge that his family commitments sometimes interfered with his work life.

His colleagues were flabbergasted that this particular person—a well-respected and quite senior faculty member—had felt the need to hide this information. Suddenly, they had to reevaluate how family-friendly their department truly was. Had the departmental environment changed since

this colleague was tenured, or was it currently less family-friendly than some of them believed? What sorts of messages about work and family were communicated, explicitly or implicitly, that would make someone feel compelled to hide his family responsibilities from his colleagues? A discussion followed about how faculty within the department balanced home and professional life, and what the department could do to support both.

This discussion had several striking aspects. First, it was only in the context of discussing a fictional narrative that the faculty member in question was able to "confess" the truth of his own situation. Second, the discussion revealed (once again) that faculty perceptions, even within one department, can differ widely. Third, this realization prompted a reevaluation of the current departmental environment and its significance for faculty members with children. By cultivating greater awareness of different colleagues' experiences within the department, this discussion and others like it help to foster a higher level of empathy among faculty who are often too busy or too focused on their own work to appreciate how their colleagues' experiences might differ from their own.

Empowerment

Scenario discussions not only prompt reflection but often stimulate action. This section includes two examples of discussions that motivated junior faculty to take collective action to address common problems.

The first example involved a discussion of the following scenario: The protagonist, a junior faculty member, had a department head whom he greatly esteemed. He made sure that he kept his head informed about the work he was doing and his various achievements. However, that head eventually left the department, and the protagonist found himself in a situation in which none of his senior colleagues knew his work, nor could they speak for its merit when he came up for promotion or tenure. Immediately after this scenario was offered for discussion, one faculty member spoke up, saying that he recognized his own situation in that of the protagonist. He said that reading the scenario made him realize that he would be equally vulnerable if his head left the department. A discussion followed in which several other participants said they had the same concern. It emerged that, because the head of their department was an especially thoughtful and committed mentor, many of the junior faculty relied exclusively on him to read their work and monitor their progress; as a result, none of the other senior faculty knew their research well enough to support them if that became necessary. The group agreed that it was important to them that the situation be corrected and began to brainstorm how this might best be accomplished.

Another example illustrates a similar outcome. The scenario involved a faculty member in an interdisciplinary program. Because this fictional faculty member's work did not fall within traditional disciplinary lines, her

colleagues did not know how to evaluate it and, in fact, were very critical in her third-year review because she had not published in journals they considered rigorous. The junior faculty members discussing this scenario were also in an interdisciplinary program within a relatively traditional department and thus recognized the problem right away. They used the scenario as a springboard for discussing their concerns about how their own work would be evaluated. They all had joint appointments with other departments and had received conflicting information from each department about criteria for promotion. On several occasions, individuals within the discussion group had gone to the department head for clarification but still found the criteria uncomfortably vague. In the course of the discussion, the participants realized that they shared the same confusion and apprehension about RPT and for similar reasons. The group decided that they would go to the department head together to present a unified case for more clearly articulated promotion criteria.

Summary of Outcomes

The sorts of discussion described above could, theoretically, have taken place without a scenario to spark them. However, it is important to note that such discussions had *not* occurred previously. It is our sense that, by focusing first on the experiences of *fictional* protagonists, discussion participants experience less anxiety and fewer inhibitions than they might if they were asked to begin by sharing and analyzing their own experiences. In what is at first a purely hypothetical exercise, they are free to assess a narrative's validity, consider the perspectives of various characters and think creatively about the course of action those characters could or should pursue. These fictional stories naturally serve to generate comparisons with real life as participants bring their own experiences and perceptions to bear on the situations described in each scenario. Ultimately, as the examples above illustrate, participants leave the fictional realm behind, identifying issues that impact them, focusing on common concerns, and proactively seeking solutions to problems in their own professional lives.

An unanticipated result of scenario discussions was the extent to which they helped to make the findings of the larger research relevant and credible to individual departments. Department heads had seen the data from the larger research project, yet several insisted that the problems identified—while possibly true of other schools or departments in the university—were not applicable to their own departments. Scenario-based discussions helped to point out the near-universality of certain problems identified in the larger study. For example, complaints about lack of mentoring came up repeatedly in discussions involving faculty in a wide range of departments. So, too, did the perception that RPT criteria were unclear or inconsistently applied.

More importantly, scenario-based discussions helped to clarify *which* results of the larger study were most applicable to a given department. For

example, faculty might learn through these discussions which particular aspects of mentoring (e.g., feedback on one's progress, advice on departmental politics, suggestions on balancing personal and professional responsibilities) junior faculty found lacking, or (conversely) what the department's strengths were in this area.

Another unanticipated outcome of scenario-based discussions was their effect on facilitators. Facilitators often reported being surprised and disturbed by the perceptions reported by faculty in discussions. One example was the extreme degree to which junior faculty felt overwhelmed by competing demands and anxious about tenure and promotion. Some facilitators said that the insights they gained from these discussions made them more effective in their own professional roles. One department head, after facilitating discussions with junior faculty in two departments, told the researchers that he was becoming a better department head as a result of what he had learned.

Facilitators also proved to be valuable interlocutors with the larger university community. Following several of the discussions, for instance, facilitators reported being shocked by the complete mismatch between junior and senior faculty perceptions of the same department. Senior faculty in some departments, for example, described themselves as being very accessible to junior colleagues, while their junior colleagues described just the opposite: Their senior colleagues seemed too absorbed in their own work to discuss ideas or provide feedback. These radical disparities in junior and senior faculty perceptions have emerged with remarkable consistency in scenario-based discussions and clearly bear closer examination. It was helpful to the researchers that the facilitators—who were particularly well-respected figures in the university community—saw this pattern for themselves and could help communicate the need to further explore similar phenomena to other members of the university community.

INSTITUTIONAL APPLICATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The knowledge gained from faculty interviews and scenario-based discussions is already helping to guide university policy. The university teaching center, for example, used insights gained from this research to design a booklet on mentoring that provides concrete, institution-specific recommendations on mentoring for both junior and senior faculty. The booklet is now distributed at incoming faculty orientation, in the junior faculty seminar series, in the department head development series, and at faculty workshops. The teaching center is also in the process of completing an accompanying guide for department heads. This publication will help department heads foster a mentoring culture by offering (among other things) advice on helping junior faculty develop mentoring relationships

in and outside their department, suggestions on how to help senior faculty provide effective mentoring, and recommendations on recognizing and addressing problems that can undermine the mentoring process.

This booklet is one of several interventions that have been developed to cultivate strong departmental leadership, a topic that was clearly identified as important in faculty interviews. A number of faculty complained that their department heads did not communicate clear expectations to junior faculty, provide effective feedback on the work of junior colleagues, or manage conflict well, particularly in highly factionalized departments. Interestingly, when this finding was presented to department heads, many of them concurred, confessing that they lacked confidence in these areas of their job. In response, the monthly department head series facilitated by the campus teaching center was expanded to include sessions on effective communication and conflict management, with each session facilitated by senior faculty colleagues with expertise in the area and knowledge of the institutional culture.

Efforts to understand and address sources of faculty dissatisfaction at this university are continuing. We have recently finished administering a survey to all faculty, focusing on sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. We believed that it was important for this quantitative phase of data-gathering to grow naturally out of the qualitative research that preceded it so that the survey design reflected categories and issues that were meaningful to faculty in this particular institutional culture. The survey response rate, which at 72% is quite high, suggests that this approach was successful. Where the narrative data provided depth, the survey results (currently being analyzed) will supply breadth, generating both a more complete picture of the faculty as a whole and more focused information on issues affecting faculty in particular departments.

RELEVANCE TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS

We began this research with the premise that institutions possess distinctive cultures with different resources and constraints that affect faculty satisfaction. As Ester Bensimon and her colleagues (2004) observe:

Colleges and universities cannot be treated as if they are all identical. They differ in mission, structures, student bodies, funding sources, resources, etc. They also change over time so that what was true of an institution in the past may not necessarily be so in the present. (p. 124).

Although the main problems identified in this study (lack of collegiality, lack of mentoring, ineffective leadership, and a flawed RPT process) are not unique to this institution but are rather common problems at colleges and universities nationally, the specific features of these issues differ in nature

and degree on different campuses. Thus, we believe that it is important for institutions to conduct their own research to determine the issues influencing satisfaction and retention among their own faculty. Data that are specific to a given institution can be used both to identify patterns that reflect the distinctive circumstances of faculty at a given institution and to generate scenarios for discussion that realistically depict those patterns. As Bensimon et al. (2004) observe, "The knowledge about a particular institution developed by its own members is usually more relevant than knowledge about higher education in general, developed by experts" (p. 124).

However, if the resources to carry out such an approach are not available, we invite other institutions to use the scenarios generated in our study (Appendices A and B) or adapt them for their own purposes. Even if the circumstances described in these scenarios are not applicable to faculty at other institutions, the broader themes in these scenarios certainly are and can serve as a relevant springboard for discussions concerning the issues that are critical to faculty satisfaction on most campuses. Ultimately, these opportunities for discussion generate a different sort of "academic freedom" by encouraging faculty at all stages of their careers to share their own experiences, learn from the experiences of others and assert themselves within their institutions.

APPENDIX A

Scenario 1: Richard Pierce, Professor, Department of Aerospace Engineering

Written by Dr. Lynn Conner, Playwright and Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts, University of Pittsburgh

Richard lifts his head slightly off the pillow and looks at the clock on the nightstand. 3:14.

Now he wishes he hadn't had that second Scotch with Gordon. It felt good at 9 p.m. but it sure isn't helping him get to sleep. He knows the insomnia book warns not to just lie awake in the darkness. He thinks about going downstairs and working at the kitchen table. He imagines himself turning on the laptop. He sees himself e-mailing an enthusiastic acceptance note and then beginning his resignation letter.

But he can't move from the bed. And he can't turn off his brain, either—can't stop the endless replaying of this morning's faculty meeting or of this evening's conversation with Gordon.

What a thing for Gordon to say to him—telling him he was making his family miserable. As if Gordon has any idea about the emotional toll the tenure process took on him. As if Gordon—blessed with the support of one good-guy chair for the duration of his own tenure process—has a clue

what it's like to work in the war zone his department has become under Frank Hardesty.

He and Gordon met at the new faculty orientation eight years ago. They hit it off right away, even though they're not in the same field. It occurs to Richard now, though, that maybe their friendship is possible only *because* they're not in the same college or department. Certainly nobody in his department seems to be on friendly terms.

The thought makes Richard laugh out loud in the dark. His colleagues don't even pretend to be collegial—hell, some of them won't even talk to each other anymore. This morning's meeting is a perfect illustration.

Hardesty called them together for an end-of-year meeting to address some concerns before the summer break. Richard knew what to expect—another turf battle playing out in the conference room while Hardesty sat by, saying and doing nothing to help resolve it.

And sure enough, that's how it began this morning. Hardesty brought up the controversy over graduate student assignments for the fall. Morley claimed that his current grant guaranteed him three full-time assignments. Then Kaiserman, clearly furious, claimed that Hardesty had assured him if he got *his* grant he could move two of those students over to his new project. "You promised me this, Frank," Kaiserman exploded. "It's part of the funding strategy for the goddamn grant proposal. And you signed off on it."

Morley responded in kind, itemizing all the terms of his own grants. Pretty soon no one was listening and the discussion devolved into the (same old) argument over the relative value of their differing approaches. Nothing Richard hadn't heard a hundred times before in meetings or in the hallway or behind closed office doors.

What *was* different this morning was that Richard had finally decided, after eight years of polite silence on the more controversial matters within the department, to speak his mind. He had tenure now; he could weigh in with some new ideas, couldn't he?

So he suggested to Hardesty that they draft a written policy on making graduate student assignments. "A procedural document," Richard had offered. "You know, something we could refer to if and when disagreements arise in the future. It would help the department run more efficiently, don't you think?"

Morley made a crack about the "brilliant schemes of the newly tenured" to another senior faculty member. They both laughed at the joke. Then Kaiserman got up and left the meeting without saying a word.

Hardesty never even acknowledged Richard's statement, as if he hadn't spoken at all. Instead, he tabled the problem by announcing he would meet individually with "those concerned"; and with an impatient gesture of his hand, he dismissed the meeting.

And then, as Richard was getting up to leave, Morley sidled up to him. "Let me give you some advice about 'efficiency,' Rich," he'd said. "Don't try to change us old dogs. Just learn to deal with it."

* * *

What makes Rich's departmental atmosphere especially hard to stomach is that he knows it doesn't have to be this way. Gordon talks about *his* department as if it's some kind of paradise; he uses words like "collegial" and "intellectually stimulating" and tells Richard he has a great relationship with several of his colleagues and that the whole faculty is supportive. People have their differences, of course, but Gordon says they keep them in perspective.

Gordon's experience is so good, in fact, that he seems not to quite believe Richard's tales of screaming matches during faculty meetings or of the various whisper campaigns designed to drive undesirables away. But Richard knows all too well how real it is; he's watched during the eight years as the three other junior faculty either didn't get promoted or left out of frustration.

But it wasn't always this way, was it? There was a time when Richard was happy here. It had certainly felt satisfying to be invited to join a world-class faculty right out of grad school. Okay, it had felt *fantastic*. He was immensely proud of himself for landing such a plum position. And in those first few years, the junior faculty really supported each other, sharing ideas and offering advice. In his second year, with the help of two other junior faculty members, he designed a new undergraduate course for the department that quickly became very popular. Teaching that course made Richard feel as if he was part of building something important for the department and the university.

And his first chair, Barry Willson, was a real mentor to him. They weren't friends—Richard could count their social interactions on one hand—but Barry made it clear from the start that he had hired Richard with the intention of keeping him; he'd told him proudly that he considered it another star on his record every time one of his junior faculty was promoted.

His research was well funded from the start. Barry had taken the time to share the ins and outs of proposal writing, helping him with style and language—even alerting him to the internal politics of the differing agencies. In those years, the department assured all new tenure-track faculty a reasonably light teaching load during the first year. Barry also made sure that Richard had one of the top grad students with him on his first grant.

He and Beth had even liked the city (unlike some of the other junior faculty). They found a great old house and made some good friends, too, like Gordon and his wife Suzanne. And eventually, though it took awhile,

Beth had also found a good job. It wasn't a faculty position, but she liked her company and she really liked that she didn't feel she had to work all the time in order to succeed.

The way Richard did.

Well, so maybe there *were* some tensions during his first term. He remembers one fight in particular—the night Beth announced she wanted to go to Chicago to visit her sister for a week and didn't plan on taking the baby.

It was the middle of a particularly stressful semester. How was he supposed to leave his office at 5:45 to pick up Maddie at day care? And besides, he had to go back in the evenings or he'd never get his grant proposals out in time. . . .

"You have a child, Richard," she had finally shouted, interrupting his litany.

The argument then escalated into a yelling match—a rarity for them at the time. Finally he admitted to her that, since nobody else in his department ever talked about their family obligations, he didn't think he could afford to either. The kudos were not reserved for the family guys.

"No one wants to hear about how I have to baby-sit my kid, Beth," he told her.

"You know, Richard," she laughed dismissively, "your department is as macho as a construction yard."

He didn't respond, wanting the argument to be over. But even back then, even when things were relatively new and exciting, he knew her analogy was dead-on. If his male colleagues with families were experiencing the same kind of pressure at home, they sure weren't talking about it at work. And they sure weren't admitting it to him.

4:01 a.m. He tells himself to get up, go downstairs, do something constructive. Instead he continues to look at the ceiling as he relives his earlier conversation with Gordon at a neighborhood bar. It was a real heart-to-heart, prompted by Gordon (and Beth, he wonders?).

"I'm going to be totally straight with you, Richard," Gordon said as soon as their drinks had arrived. "For a guy who was just granted tenure, you're about the most miserable person I've ever met. What's going on?"

So Richard had told him his news—that under Hardesty he'd been sure he wouldn't get tenure, had sent his c.v. around, now had a good offer from Michigan, and had to make a decision soon.

"Why didn't you tell me about this before?," Gordon had asked, clearly offended to be finding this news out so late in the game.

But it was hard for Richard to put the reason for his secrecy into words. He'd just grown used to keeping everything close to the vest over the last three years. It was the modus operandi of his department and now it had become the m.o. of his life: work hard, and don't think about or worry about feelings—his own or (lately) anybody else's.

Richard looked across the table at his friend and took a long sip of his Scotch. "I *am* miserable," he'd agreed. "That much is clear."

Then he began, slowly, to talk. "You know that my department was never as transparent as yours," he said. Gordon nodded, acknowledging that, among other problems, Richard's field was less inclined to collaborate on research projects. It tended to create a sense of isolation among the faculty. Isolation and competition.

"But I was okay with my situation while Barry was in charge, because I felt from the start that I could trust him," Richard added.

And he could. When asked, Barry offered him specific, practical advice. As a result, Richard's first review went very well, as did his promotion to associate professor three years later. He'd published a fair amount, and Barry told him that, if he continued to get national attention for his research, he would be a shoo-in for tenure.

Gordon interrupted, laughing. "But then the other shoe fell, didn't it?" Richard felt his stomach tighten, remembering the day that Barry had told him he was leaving the university to take an endowed chair.

The dean hired Frank Hardesty from outside the university. Hardesty's style was a problem from the start. He was the kind of manager who didn't manage; instead he took care of only those issues that interested him and ignored everything else. And he didn't know how to manage disputes between the departmental factions (as this morning's end-of-year meeting proved, yet again). In a department where a certain kind of isolation among the senior faculty had existed for a long time, Hardesty's generally clueless managerial style had had a disastrous effect.

At least, it had seemed that way to Richard. He suddenly felt totally abandoned and began to wonder about his future—to worry that the old rules (Barry's rules) for tenure might change now. During one of Hardesty's first faculty meetings, for example, the new chair had spent a good chunk of the meeting praising one of the department's stars and then had ended by stating that he "couldn't help but wish that other members of the faculty would make similar contributions." Richard felt certain that Hardesty was looking at him while he said it.

He worried about it for months, though he kept it to himself. (How many times could he complain to Beth about his work problems? He felt like a broken record.)

But when the insomnia started—waking him up at 3:00 a.m. night after night—he decided to be proactive.

He set up a meeting with Hardesty to ask advice about his progress toward tenure. Hardesty agreed to the meeting; but when the day came, he was impatient and distracted. Furthermore, Hardesty seemed not to know anything about the advice Richard had been given during his first and second promotion reviews. When Richard gave him a copy of the email exchanges

he'd had with Barry, Hardesty barely glanced at them before dropping the papers on his disheveled desktop. He did not appear to be impressed with Richard's publications or even the national award for which he had just been nominated.

"I got the impression," Richard confided to Gordon now, "that Hardesty wanted me out—that maybe he had his own guy he wanted to bring in or something."

"I wish you had told me," Gordon responded.

Richard finished his Scotch, then shook the ice around the bottom of the glass and thought about ordering another one.

"I told Beth," he replied, remembering how defeated he had felt that night at dinner. "But all that did was make things more stressful at home."

"Is that what the fighting has been about this past year?" Gordon asked.

"Beth told Suzanne you've been fighting a lot."

Richard paused again. He put the glass down on the table, remembering a blur of arguments over the last nine months. He thought about how his job stress was affecting everything, including his marriage.

Richard's solution at the time was to put out feelers for a new position. He sent out some emails, made a few phone calls. And, after he received the award (which Hardesty never even acknowledged), he started to get some interest from other universities.

Then this spring, against all his expectations, his tenure was granted. He knew it was a huge achievement, yet he found it hard to be happy. What's so wonderful about a lifetime guarantee of going to work in an environment where people are either indifferent or vindictive toward each other? What kind of security is that?

"It does sound like a war zone, Richard," Gordon acknowledged over their second round.

Richard looked up at him, grateful for the sympathy. "The stress is really getting to me, especially with this new job offer. It's an enormous decision."

"What does Beth think?" asked Gordon.

"She says she's willing to consider a move. But how can I ask her to leave her job now that she's a vice president?" Richard wondered aloud. "How can I move Maddie when she's set to start kindergarten in the fall?"

"And how can I start over again at this stage of my career?" he thought.

"And why should I?" He was a success by all measures: he had prestigious grants and publications, he had devoted grad students and a popular undergrad course, and his research was nationally recognized. Besides, leaving now would jeopardize his progress. His current research was designed around the department's excellent facilities, not to mention its top-rate grad students. How could he go?

Then again, how can he stay?

But Gordon didn't offer much more in the way of sympathy. Instead he simply replied, calmly but with no hesitancy in his voice, "I can't make the decision for you, Richard. All I can tell you is, you're making your family miserable."

APPENDIX B

Scenario 2: Helene Lenderer, Former Professor, Film Studies

Written by Dr. Lynn Conner, Playwright and Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts, University of Pittsburgh

The applause is robust and energizing—signaling approval from a room full of people with similar interests and a shared sense of community. As Helene walks across the dais with the two other speakers she feels a deep satisfaction spreading through her. "I finally feel at home," she thinks as she straightens her skirt and gets settled into her seat. She smiles to herself at the idea of it. "It's only taken forty-five years, but what the heck."

"You look happy, Helene," whispers Jack Leonard as he sits down next to her and pulls out his notecards.

"Well, this is happy moment," she replies, gesturing around the stage and the auditorium. "I think the conference went very well, don't you?"

Jack nods, smiling now also. "Yes, I do. I've got to hand it to you, Helene. You put together a first-rate event. Everyone's in agreement on it . . . for once. The seminar sessions were interesting and well-focused, the plenary papers were smart, and the food was good too."

Helene smiles. "Thanks, Jack, it means a lot to me to hear you say that."

Jack leans in. "And I meant every word, except about the food, of course." They both laugh. They've known each other for twenty-five years now, at first just as acquaintances bumping into each other at the various film studies conferences each year, and then as colleagues. Two years ago Jack convinced her to join the faculty here at Iowa as a full professor and Director of Graduate Studies.

"When you two are finished laughing, we can get started," Ted Merkus announces in a fake stage whisper as he passes by on his way to the podium. He grabs the microphone in the polished manner of an experienced speaker. "Good afternoon, everyone. As Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities here at the University of Iowa, I want to thank you again for joining us for this year's annual Film Studies Association conference. It's been a great three days, hasn't it?"

Again the applause is sincere. Helene joins in this time, as does Jack. The third speaker is Evelyn Valesio, who is sitting on the other side of her.

Evelyn is busy shuffling her notecards, head down in concentration. She looks quite nervous. "Oh well," thinks Helene. "She's young. She's supposed to be scared."

"It's my pleasure to introduce the first speaker on this year's State of the Profession panel," continues Ted. "Evelyn Valesio is an Assistant Professor at Indiana University, where she specializes in film history and feminist theory. She is currently working on a book focusing on women filmmakers of the avant garde. Dr. Valesio will present the junior faculty perspective."

Helene watches the audience while Evelyn takes the podium and awkwardly adjusts the microphone, causing it to screech. She spends a few seconds rearranging her notecards, clears her throat several times, then launches into her speech at a rapid clip. Helene listens attentively; she doesn't know that much about the younger scholar's perspective on academic life, since they met for the first time only a few days ago.

Helene is a little bit surprised, then, at the content of Evelyn's talk. Apparently she's done an informal email survey of other junior faculty from around the country working in humanities departments. Her questions have to do with job satisfaction at its most basic: Do you feel secure and supported in your research? Are you intellectually satisfied? Are your relationships with your students and the classroom satisfying? Does the senior faculty support you? Do you have good mentoring? Do you feel your institution's tenure process is fair and attainable? Is the administration in touch with the faculty and within your reach? Do you feel a part of a community?

After itemizing her questions, Evelyn provides the results in the form of direct quotes from the survey respondents. The verbatim remarks (which, not surprisingly, are anonymous) are at once brutally honest and heart-breakingly intimate. The respondents share a great passion for academia—there's plenty of positive testimony about the satisfactions of the scholarly life. Still, there is also plenty of negative testimony. Like everyone else in the audience, Helene is fascinated by the quotations.

Except Jack, apparently, who leans over and whispers, "Geez. This is a bit of a downer for the wrap-up session, don't you think?"

Helene doesn't respond. An eerie sense of recognition settles over her. The list of complaints is utterly familiar, but that's not what's so disquieting about the comments. Maybe it's simply how intimate and uncensored the responses are. It feels almost like listening in on a colleague's inner monologue.

Evelyn finishes reading the verbatim responses and moves on to an historical analysis of job satisfaction in academia. Helene finds it hard to focus, however, and instead lets herself ponder one particular comment from the survey. The respondent—identified as a White woman at the mid-point in her tenure process—said that she had become generally exhausted by the "sum of minor irritations" she kept encountering at her institution. The

phrase makes Helene smile ruefully. She's heard it before, of course. It's often included in the literature surrounding rates of female faculty retention, etc., that most academics are familiar with. Yet somehow in this context it resonates differently.

Truth is, Helene thinks, it's exactly that "sum of minor irritations" that finally led her to leave her old university two years ago. Her decision had been very hard to make because the consequences were enormous. She was asking her husband to quit his job, uprooting her preteen daughters, and leaving a city she had grown to love, a house she had labored over for many years, and some very close friends she'd come to rely on.

But, in the end, when Jack made the offer to come to Iowa, she knew she had to take it. The various irritations had mounted so steadily over time that she was, well, exhausted by them. That's the right word, isn't it? That's why the comment from the survey was hitting so hard. After awhile the little inequities—all of them manageable in isolation—had melded together in a way that became unmanageable.

Like the fact that there had been no support for family responsibilities. Helene learned very early on not to discuss her daughters or her childcare responsibilities with her colleagues or with her graduate students. Either they didn't care (many were single or childless), or they had strong opinions about the total separation of work and home responsibilities. Helene didn't expect (nor want) to spend her days telling stories about her toddlers' adorable behavior. But she also didn't want to feel that her children were a liability in her bid for success within the university. Yet often she *had* felt that way—the whole workaholic syndrome being a case in point. In her department, being completely overbooked and overworked was a real badge of honor. But Helene simply could not be at work 18 hours a day—she had to be at home. (She still worked very long hours, but she did it at home, after her children were asleep.) Each time Helene missed a last-minute meeting, or left a scheduled meeting that was running overtime, or passed on an impromptu gathering in a local restaurant because she had to pick up her kids, she felt marginalized. Not anybody's fault, of course, and yet. . . .

The funny thing, though, is she now realizes that working all of the time does not necessarily equal good job performance. One of her stipulations for taking the job at Iowa was the understanding that she would be leaving her office every day at 6 p.m. (This was part of her "deal" with her husband. He'd make the move if she'd make some changes in her own behavior.) It turned out to be a very good decision, a gift to herself. She knows now, after two years, that she's just as productive with a 9:00 to 6:00 schedule as she was during all those years when her workday never really ended—just as productive in her research and teaching, and so much calmer and happier in every aspect of her life. She also realizes, though it's painful to admit even

to herself, that she's a much better role model now for younger women. At her former institution, she had simply been too frazzled.

Other "irritations" during her fifteen-year tenure there were equally significant in her decision to leave. During her tenure process, she had been unsure of exactly who was keeping score, so to speak, in film studies, since the department had gone through three different chairs, none of whom was friendly. In fact, they were barely on speaking terms. It was stressful enough to worry about her publication output without having to worry whether the new chair would value her research approach and interests.

Even after she had received her promotion to full professor, the tenure procedure had continued to bother her. When she began serving on the tenure review committee, she heard many cases where the problems were rooted in unethical, childish, and even vindictive behavior on the part of faculty. One case in particular ate away at her: A friendly colleague in another department had confided in her that he had literally "bought" his tenure by sharing a grant with a burned-out (but politically entrenched) senior colleague. She knew his case was a true aberration, but still it nagged at her. Was she being overly idealistic or even just plain unrealistic? Perhaps. . . .

And yet, during what turned out to be her last year Helene had become convinced that, as a senior faculty member, it was her responsibility to do something about the ongoing abuses within the tenure system. She decided to write a letter to the dean—a man she respected and with whom she had a good relationship. In the letter she outlined her concerns and made some suggestions for how the tenure process might be overhauled; she also offered to sit on a committee. The dean never responded to her letter. He acted, when they met, as if she had never written it (although she was able to verify that he had received it.) Helene found the episode so humiliating that she never mentioned it to anyone, including her husband. It was as if she'd done some silly out-of-turn thing and everyone had decided it was in her best interest to ignore her indiscretion.

The memory of it makes Helene so tense that she crumples her own notecards. Taking a deep breath, she loosens her grip and looks out at the audience in front of her. She tries again to focus on Evelyn, who appears to be ending her presentation with a discussion of what she's labeling "junior faculty hopes for the future."

"What would my hopes have sounded like when I was a junior faculty member?" Helen wonders to herself. She would have wanted a chair who was rigorously fair (and not autocratic, as hers had routinely been). She would have wanted more respect for her teaching skills and for the considerable time she had invested in her class preparations. She would have wanted more acknowledgment for the literally scores of committees she had served on through the years, including many intended to effect positive change for the whole university community.

Community. That concept was key to her sense of dissatisfaction at her former institution, wasn't it? She realizes that, more than anything else, she would have wanted a better sense of community—both in film studies and in the wider university culture. It seemed to Helene that everyone there was so busy advancing their careers and guarding their own piece of intellectual turf that nobody had the time or the interest in building a real community of peers—one that included younger scholars as well as senior faculty.

Helene joins the applause as Evelyn leaves the podium, but her mind is still at her old institution. All those years she had longed for a sense of community. She had longed for the sense that she fit in, that she was part of an effort.

But she never felt it.

APPENDIX C

General Questions to Prompt Scenario Discussion

* What are the main issues in the scenario?
* Are these issues legitimate? Why or why not?
* What is the appropriate role of the department head in the scenario? Of the senior faculty?
* What should the role of the college and university be in situations like this?
* If you were the department head, what would you have done?
* If you were a colleague in the department, how would you have advised this faculty member?

APPENDIX D

Specific Questions to Relate Scenarios
to Faculty Members' Own Experiences

Departmental Culture/Environment

* Is the nature of "acceptable research" discussed explicitly in your department? How broad or narrow is the definition of acceptable research?
* Does everyone find an intellectual community within the department? If not, why not? How problematic is this? How might a junior person deal with this situation?
* Do senior faculty collaborate with junior faculty? Give them feedback on proposals and publications?
* How should junior faculty members respond to factionalism within the department?
* How does a department deal with shifting departmental goals?

* How does your department initiate new research directions? How are new people for such efforts hired (e.g., at what level)? How are such decisions made?
* How can departments best deal with change (e.g., of leadership, of departmental make-up, of emerging fields)?
* How do you deal with faculty members with different sets of values (e.g., research should influence professional practice, engagement in activism related to research, "I don't want to work 100 hours a week")?
* How "family-friendly" is the department (e.g., is workaholism the norm, and time with family perceived as a hindrance to success)?
* How do members of a department that is undervalued by the institution deal with that situation?
* How does a department deal with junior faculty in their first year to assure they "get off to a good start"?
* How might being the most/only junior person in the department impact the experience of a junior faculty member?
* How might being the only "underrepresented" person in the department impact the experience of a junior faculty member?

Collegiality

* How do you define it? Are there different definitions? What might determine these different definitions?
* Do you think the same definition would hold for new and veteran faculty?
* What type of collegiality is important to junior faculty's success? Satisfaction?
* How important is collegiality to junior faculty's success? Satisfaction?
* How do a department, college and/or university create an atmosphere that promotes collegiality at all levels?

Mentoring

* Please recall the most effective mentoring situation you have been in. Were you being mentored or were you mentoring? What were the characteristics of this experience?
* What is effective mentoring? What are the roles and responsibilities of both parties?
* Does the mentor have to be from the same discipline/department? Same subdiscipline?
* How does mentoring differ from routine performance reviews and advice from senior faculty or a department head?
* What happens when junior faculty don't get effective mentoring?

Departmental Leadership

- What do you see as the primary function of a departmental head?
- How do you (the department head) communicate your expectations to other faculty?
- How do you get an idea of other people's expectations of you, as either a department head or senior faculty member?
- Why/how does factionalism occur in a department? How do you (as a department head or senior faculty member) deal with factionalism in a department?
- How should a department head manage conflict in the department?
- How can a department head assure that effective mentoring takes place?
- What is the role of the department head in giving feedback to junior faculty?
- How should transitions between department heads be handled to minimize disruption within the department?
- How does a department head avoid favoritism or perceptions thereof?
- How does a department head or senior faculty assure that a few person(s) are not particularly overburdened (e.g., committees, advising) because they are viewed as having a unique perspective?
- How do you ensure that staff treat all faculty equally (e.g., using titles, providing support)?

Marginalization

- What makes people feel marginalized (e.g., their subfield or specialty not being heard)?
- How can a department head, senior faculty member, or mentor deal with feelings of marginalization on the part of junior faculty?

Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Process

- How does a department assure that the criteria for success are clear?
- How do you (as a department head, as a department member) communicate the expectations for RPT?
- How do you assure that a junior faculty member's expectations for himself or herself are realistic?
- How do senior faculty participate in the process?
- How does a department assure that individuals get timely and constructive feedback on their progress toward RPT?
- How does one build trust and confidence in the RPT process?

Structural Issues

- Is there a process to fairly distribute resources (e.g., space, graduate students)? How is that process communicated to junior faculty?

- Are some faculty given a disproportionate share of the work (e.g., teaching, advising, committee work)?
- How can we, as an institution, compensate for lower salaries? Inadequate infrastructure?
- How does the institution support dual-career couples?

External Environmental Issues

- How might the city impact various junior faculty members?

REFERENCES

Ambrose, S. A., Huston, T. A., & Norman, M. (in press). A qualitative method for assessing faculty satisfaction. *Research in Higher Education, 46*(7), 803–830.

Barnes, L. L. B., Agago, M. O., & Coombs, W. T. (1998). Effects of job related stress on faculty intention to leave academia. *Research in Higher Education, 39*, 457–469.

Bensimon, E. M., Polkinghorne, D. E., Bauman, G., & Vallejo, E. (2004). Doing research that makes a difference. *Journal of Higher Education, 75*(1), 104–126.

Bluedorn, A. (1982). The theories of turnover: Causes, effects, and meaning. *Research in the Sociology of Organizations, 1*, 75–128.

Boice, R. (1992). Lessons learned about mentoring. In M. D. Sorcinelli & A. E. Austin (Eds.), *Developing New and Junior Faculty*. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, No. 50 (pp. 51–61). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bollag, B. (2004, September 10). U.S. shuts out Muslim scholar, raising fears for academic freedom [Electronic version]. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, p. A8.

Bowen, H. R., & Schuster, J. H. (1986). *American professors: A national resource imperiled*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Boyer, E. L., Altbach, P. G., & Whitelaw, M. J. (1995). *The academic profession: An international perspective*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Boyle, P., & Boice, B. (1998). Systematic mentoring for new faculty teachers and graduate teaching assistants. *Innovative Higher Education, 22*(3), 157–179.

Brody, H. (1987). *Stories of sickness*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Bullough, R. V., Jr. (2000). The sounds of silence: Life in the postmodern university. *Educational Forum, 64*(4), 324–331.

Charon, R., & Montello, M. (Eds.). (2002). *Stories matter: The role of narrative in medical ethics*. New York: Routledge.

Chilcott, J. H. (1987). Where are you coming from and where are you going? The reporting of ethnographic research. *American Educational Research Journal, 24*(2), 199–218.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Clark, S. M., Corcoran, M., & Lewis, D. R. (1986). The case for institutional perspective on faculty development. *Journal of Higher Education, 57*(2), 176–195.

Creswell, J. W., Wheeler, D. W., Seagren, A. T., Egly, N. J., & Beyer, K. D. (1990). *The*

academic chairperson's handbook. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Finkelstein, M. J. (1984). *The American academic profession: A synthesis of social scientific inquiry since World War II.* Columbus: Ohio University Press.

Finkelstein, M. J. (2003). The morphing of the professoriate. *Liberal Education, 89*(4), 6–15.

Finkelstein, M. J., & LaCelle-Peterson, M. W. (1992). New and junior faculty: A review of the literature. In M. D. Sorcinelli & A. E. Austin (Eds.), *Developing new and junior faculty. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, No. 50* (pp. 5–145). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Fish, S. (2004, February 13). Intellectual diversity [Electronic version]. *Chronicle of Higher Education,* p. B13.

Frank, A. W. (1995). *The wounded storyteller: Body, illness, and ethics.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gmelch, W. H., & Schuh, J. H. (Eds.). (2004). *The life cycle of a department chair. New Directions for Higher Education, No. 126.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Graubard, S. R. (2001). *The American academic profession.* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Gubitosi, A. (1996, October). *The impact of social interaction norms and reward system norms on underrepresented faculty at a four-year public urban university: A preliminary report.* Poster session at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Memphis, TN.

Guilfoyle, K. (1995). Constructing the meaning of teacher educator: The struggle to learn the roles. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 22*(3), 11–27.

Hollingsworth, P. J. (Ed.). (2000). *Unfettered expression: Freedom in American intellectual life.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Howard, D. J. (2004, August 2). Silencing Huck Finn [Electronic version]. *Chronicle of Higher Education,* p. C1.

Hunter, K. M. (1991). *Doctor's stories: The narrative structure of medical knowledge.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Huston, T. A., Norman, M., & Ambrose, S. A. (2005). *Unexplored terrain: Productive yet disengaged senior faculty.* Manuscript submitted for publication.

Johnsrud, L. K., & Rosser, V. J. (2002). Faculty members' morale and their intention to leave. *Journal of Higher Education, 73*(4), 518–541.

Kleinman, A. (1988). *The illness narratives: Suffering, healing, and the human condition.* New York: Basic Books.

Li, J. (1998). Sources of stress among new and junior education faculty in higher education. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 59,* 4A.

Manger, T., & Eikeland, O. J. (1990). Factors predicting staff's intentions to leave the university. *Higher Education, 19,* 281–291.

Matier, M. W. (1990). Retaining faculty: A tale of two campuses. *Research in Higher Education, 31*(1), 30–60.

Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach.* Applied Social Research Methods Series (Vol. 41). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McAdams, D. P., Josselson, R., & Lieblich, A. (2001). *Turns in the road: Narrative studies of lives in transition.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B., & Associates (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Newman, K. (1999). Nice work if we can keep it: Confessions of a junior professor. *Academe, 85*(3), 28–33.

Olsen, D., Maple, S. A., & Stage, F. K. (1995). Women and minority faculty job satisfaction. *Journal of Higher Education, 66*(3), 267–293.

Olsen, D., & Sorcinelli, M. D. (1992). The pretenure years: A longitudinal perspective. In M. D. Sorcinelli & A. E. Austin (Eds.), *Developing new and junior faculty. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, No. 50* (pp. 15–25). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Philip, K., & Hendry, L. B. (2000). Making sense of mentoring or mentoring making sense? Reflections on the mentoring process by adult mentors with young people. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 10,* 211–223.

Sibley-Fries, M. (1986). Extended probation at research universities. *Academe, 72*(1), 37–40.

Smart, J. C. (1990). A causal model of faculty turnover intentions. *Research in Higher Education, 31*(5), 405–424.

Tucker, A. (1984). *Chairing the academic department.* New York: Macmillan.

Turner, J. L., & Boice, R. (1987). Starting at the beginning: The concerns and needs of new faculty. In J. Kurfiss, L. Hilsen, L. Mortensen, & R. Wadworth (Eds.), *To improve the academy: Resources for faculty, instructional, and organizational development* (Vol. 6, pp. 41–47). Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press.

Walvoord, B. E., Carey, A. K., Smith, H. L., Soled, S. W., Way, P. K., & Zorn, D. (2000). *Academic departments: How they work, how they change.* Report No. 27. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED447746)

Wheeler, D. W. (1992). The role of the chairperson in support of junior faculty. In M. D. Sorcinelli & A. E. Austin (Eds.), *Developing new and junior faculty. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, No. 50* (pp. 87–96). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wimsatt, L. A. (2003). A study of work-related satisfaction and turnover intentions of faculty in higher education. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 63,* 10A. (UMI No. 3497)