The Meta-Profession Project
An international survey of faculty and administrator skills and skill needs.

AERA: New York
March 25, 2008
Michael Theall, Ruoul Arreola, Jennifer Franklin, Bonnie Mullinix, Marilla Svinicki, & Nancy Chism

The Meta-Profession Concept
Origins...
- Emerged from faculty evaluation/faculty development experiences
  - Scope of faculty performances to be evaluated
  - Scope of faculty development programs

- Basic concept developed in faculty evaluation workshops to help faculty and academic administrators move beyond defining teaching solely in terms of content expertise.
  (1995 - Arreola & Aleamoni)

The Meta-Profession Project
- Project organized in 2000 by Arreola, Theall & Aleamoni to -
  - Facilitate the Development of Comprehensive Faculty Evaluation Systems
  - Provide a Guide for Designing Faculty Development Programs
  - Provide an Operational Context for Academic Policy Development
  - Promote & Facilitate Interdisciplinary Educational Research

The Meta-Profession Concept
Origins...
- Basic concept developed in faculty evaluation workshops to help faculty and academic administrators move beyond defining teaching solely in terms of content expertise.
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Early Workshop Slide
College Teaching Professional

Base Profession
(Artist, Architect, Biologist, Dentist, Musician, etc.)

Additional Meta-Profession Skill Sets

SKILL SETS Faculty Roles

- Communication Skills
- Conflict Management
- Group Process/Team Building
- Leadership
- Management
- Policy Analysis & Development
- Research
- Scholarship
- Teaching
The Meta-Profession Project

- Presented at AERA 2003
- Evaluative Definition of Scholarship presented at AERA 2004 - facilitated application of meta-profession model to SoTL.
  - Proficiency
  - Discovery/Creativity
  - Dissemination
  - Translation

2004 - Survey of Faculty Development officers (POD Conference)
- Preliminary confirmation of utility of Meta-Profession model among faculty development officers
- 2005 - Project receives AERA’s “Interpretive Scholarship Award” (Arreola & Theall)

2006 - 2007 Featured in
- “Thriving in Academe” (Theall & Arreola).

2008 - Meta-Profession Project: International Survey


A study of faculty meta-professional skill proficiency and perceived skill needs.

Michael Theall, Raoul Arreola, Jennifer Franklin, Bonnie Mullinix, Marilla Scinichi, & Nancy Chism

AIMS of the Study

To obtain information from a broad spectrum of faculty and academic administrators in order to:

- Establish the self-assessed skill level of faculty for each meta-profession skill set:
  - Advanced
  - Moderate
  - Basic
  - Minimal/None

AIMS of the Study

To obtain information from a broad spectrum of faculty and academic administrators in order to:

- Establish administrator perceptions of their faculty’s skill level for each meta-profession skill set:
  - Advanced
  - Moderate
  - Basic
  - Minimal/None
AIMS of the Study
To obtain information from a broad spectrum of faculty and academic administrators in order to:

- Establish faculty’s perceived frequency of need for each meta-profession skill set in Teaching, Scholarly/Creative Activities, Service, and Administration:
  - Almost Always
  - Frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Almost Never

- Examine the effects of individual and institutional demographics on self-assessed skill levels and perceived skill needs.

METHOD
- Sponsorship by AERA SIG Faculty Teaching, Evaluation, & Development (SIGFTED); & Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD Network)
- Dissemination of invitation to participate to faculty and administrators via professional organizations (AERA, POD, NEA, ASEE, etc.)
- On-line survey soliciting self-assessed (meta-profession) skill levels and the perceived frequency of need for those skills in the roles of Teaching, Scholarly/Creative Activities, Service, and Academic Administration.

SAMPLE: (preliminary data set)
- 479 Respondents
- 293 Fully Completed (usable)
- 210 USA
- 83 Non-USA
- Data collection ongoing

DEPENDENT VARIABLES
- Expertise ratings: self-assessed level of skill in each meta-profession skill set.
- Frequency of Need Ratings: perceived need for each skill in four roles (teaching, scholarly/creative activities, service, & administration)
CONTROL VARIABLES

- Role
- Gender
- Years in Higher Education
- Faculty/Administrative Appointment
- Faculty Appointment Type
- Rank
- Administrative Position
- Institutional Location
- Carnegie Classification

Sample Characteristics

- Role:
  - Faculty 54%
  - Administrator 23.3%
  - Staff 22.2%

- Gender:
  - Male 36.4%
  - Female 63.6%

- Years in Higher Education
  (continuous through 20; + above 20)
  - 1-5 yrs. (16.1%)
  - 6-10 yrs. (14%)
  - 11-15 yrs. (18.1)
  - 16-20 yrs. (12.7%)
  - > 20 yrs. (39%)

- Faculty appointment:
  - YES (81%)
  - NO (19%)

- Appointment type:
  - Full-Time (91.3%)
  - Part-Time (8.7%)
Sample Characteristics

- **Rank:**
  - Lecturer (5.4%)
  - Instructor (6.5%)
  - Assistant Professor (24.9%)
  - Associate Professor (27.6%)
  - Professor (32.4%)
  - Emeritus (1.1%)
  - None (2.2%)

Sample Characteristics

- **Administrative Position:**
  - Director - Teaching/Learning Center (37.6%)
  - Director - Other (10.6%)
  - Department Chair 24.7%
  - Division Head (1.2%)
  - Dean (16.5%)
  - Provost (3.6%)
  - Vice President (6%)

Sample Characteristics

- **Discipline:**
  - STEM (29.6%)
  - Arts/Humanities (12.9%)
  - Sociology/Education (39.7%)
  - Medical/Psychological (13.8%)
  - Professional (3.8%)

Sample Characteristics

- **Location:**
  - USA (88.2%)
  - Non-USA (11.8%)

Sample Characteristics

- **Carnegie Classification:**
  - Associates Degree (13.6%)
  - Baccalaureate Degree (33.5%)
  - Masters Degree (18.8%)
  - Doctoral Degree (34%)
### Preliminary findings

1. **Differences (statistical & practical) exist across:**
   - Levels of expertise within skill sets
   - Frequency of need in roles for many skill sets
   - Institutional types
   - US – Non-US institutions

2. **Greatest need for skills exists in:**
   - **Teaching**
   - **Administration**

3. **Evaluation implications**
   - More rigorous examination of teaching & administrative performance
   - More precise definition of performance criteria

4. **Professional enrichment implications**
   - Focus on areas of greatest need
   - Match with areas of lowest expertise

5. **Survey data are useful but greatest benefit comes from institutional/local use**
### INSTITUTIONAL COMPARISONS

#### Skill Sets

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<th>Base Professional Administration</th>
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### Meta-Professional Skills & SoTL

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### Teaching Environment & Meta-Skills

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### Status of the Professoriate

- **Public recognition of the full complexity of the profession of College Teaching.**
- **Emphasize to decision-makers (Board Members, Legislators, etc) the superordinate professional nature of the professoriate.**
- **Make the case for inclusion of meta-professional skills preparation in the graduate programs of all disciplines.**