Morale and Faculty Development in Agricultural Economics

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Abstract

Morale and faculty development are closely related. The agricultural economics profession must decide what it is about. There is room to practice the principle of comparative advantage and allow a degree of specialization in teaching, extension, and research. To continue in the role of an applied discipline, there must also be an opportunity for the young professional to establish rapport with, and understanding of, the private sector and the policy-making arena. If that is to happen, there must be encouragement in the institutional setting and by faculty colleagues who respect the importance of investment in building rapport and in establishing credibility. If that environment is present, morale should be good and faculty development will occur.

Key Words: morale, faculty development, comparative advantage, research, extension, teaching, balance

Introduction

The issues being discussed in today's session are not new. They have been visited by this profession in past decades, and they will assuredly be visited again in the future. A discussion of what it is that agricultural economists do and what they ought to do can be healthy for the profession. The environment in which we offer our services changes, the needs of our various publics change, and it behooves us to recognize that what we do might also need to be changed over time.

There is, then, a long-term dimension to these discussions. But, having said that, there is still the immediate issue that confronts all faculty, and especially the younger faculty, in 1993. In an era of downsizing and reduced budgets, in an era that offers differences of opinion as to what constitutes value in our profession and in what it is we should be about, faculty morale is important. The issue of faculty development is closely related. It is hard to get excited about developing one's abilities to be a credible and productive professional when morale is low. What is it, then, that we need to do as a profession to help the young faculty member to develop into a truly important public servant and professional agricultural economist? What are the constraints in the current environment, and to what extent do the constraints and the rules of the game need changing? How do individual young faculty members maintain a high level of morale and enthusiasm if they are constantly worried about whether they will be promoted, tenured, and rewarded professionally? In developing observations on these issues, it is important to place them in a proper context.

In a much-discussed article in the February issue of the 1965 *Journal of Farm Economics*, Kelso challenged the profession to think about what agricultural economics is and what it is not as a disciplinary area. He talked about whether or not agricultural economics is a science and whether or

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not we are allowing our inclination to develop and use analytical tools to get in the way of a more substantive role of dealing with economic problems. Kelso's article prompted a great deal of discussion. One of those discussions was carried on at Michigan State University as the faculty tried to discern precisely what Kelso was saying, what message he might have, and what value his critique might have for the profession. The faculty came together and discussed the issue, and graduate students were involved. One question that was raised during the discussion probably ought to be written down, examined, and thought about periodically. The question was, "Where does the comparative advantage of agricultural economists lie?" Houck dealt specifically with this issue in his 1992 AAEA presidential address. He warned against a narrow perspective and against developing a generation of what he called unimaginative methodological technicians. We need to keep this issue of comparative advantage in mind as we deal with the issues of faculty morale and faculty development during this decade of the 1990s.

In setting the stage for still further discussion, it is important that some rules of the game be established. Debate over what is and is not important, debate over whether or not our primary function is research, teaching, or extension and public education, or debate over whether or not the agricultural economist who has filled the national journals with articles is a more deserving professional than the agricultural economist who has focused on interaction with private sector groups and policy makers and tried to serve the needs of those groups is not extremely productive in this setting. That type of debate goes on directly or indirectly in the halls of every agricultural economics department in the United States, and it probably has no single correct answer. There are more substantive dimensions of the issues that need to be addressed.

The Setting and the Issues

Out front, it is useful to acknowledge that the typical, young agricultural economist in the United States today believes that the most important thing to do to be promoted and tenured is to publish in the journals. There are fledgling signs that if the pendulum had swung too far toward emphasis on journal-level publication and away from teaching at the graduate and undergraduate levels and extension education and public service, the pendulum might be swinging back again. But debating whether or not that is, in fact, occurring is not extremely useful for the young faculty member seeking direction in 1993 nor is it going to help the administrator or the senior agricultural economist who is trying to help. It simplifies, clarifies, and dramatizes what is being discussed in this session if we adopt the posture that there is presently some imbalance in the system in terms of what is recognized as important in the promotion and tenure process. Building on that assertion, it is then useful to examine the area along three somewhat related dimensions.

First, and very importantly, there is the issue of credibility. Individual faculty members are going to have to address the issue of where they want that credibility to be established and evaluated. What is the public or the audience that should be involved in determining the value of the individual's program? It is admittedly an oversimplification, but it makes the point to suggest that there are two broad publics. One is the community of professional agricultural economists. The second is the private sector and/or public policy-making community that looks to our profession for assistance in solving economic problems and in setting policy. It could be debated as to whether there are, in fact, conflicts in serving both of these publics, but I assert that there are important potential tradeoffs. The manuscript written in journal-level jargon is seldom appropriate for the decision maker in the private firm, the professional staff person who seeks to give direction to commodity group programs in a changing economic world, or the aide to a senator or congressman who will be involved in establishing legislation and influencing policy. Those publics need the information in a different form, and it is a tautology to suggest that time and energy are involved in writing for both publics and for both audiences.

Second, and related, there is the issue of one's own assessment of self-worth and perception of what is important. It is very difficult if faculty members allow themselves to be caught trying to span the chasm between the two publics and meet all demands of both "masters." What happens is some diminishing of perceptions of self-worth when there is, for example, a comparing of publication records in the promotion and tenure process. There

is a tendency to react negatively to the realization that one is behind a faculty colleague in terms of numbers of publications in the journal outlets, behind because attention and energy has been focused in other directions. Those agricultural economists who identify with tailoring their work toward contributions to the individual decision maker, to the actions of collective groups or trade associations, and to the formulation of policy can get caught up in a diminishing of the value of their programs in their own minds when they start drawing the comparisons. A dissonant relationship evolves, and all this can be negative in terms of maintaining a high level of morale if one allows him or herself to get caught trying to serve both publics, both masters, at the same time. There are not enough available hours in the day and there is not enough energy to maximize the possible contributions to both.

The third and related issue becomes one of seeking ways to effectively and reasonably serve both needs at the same time. Some balancing will be required. This is perhaps the dimension along which the individual, the department, the university, and the profession all have joint responsibilities. What is required is an effective melding or integrating of two somewhat different objective functions, and that is not always easy. The primary thrust of this paper is to deal with this third dimension and offer suggestions as to what can be done to facilitate development of the individual faculty member when that individual wants to be effective in the private sectors and in the policy-making arena but also aspires to be visible in the professional arena via journal publications. It is an artificial distinction, but it is convenient to reflect on these issues for the research, extension, and teaching functions separately. Most agricultural economists have joint appointments, but for convenience of exposition, we often make this type of separation.

Towards Getting It Done

In research, it boils down to doing the type of work that is more than occasionally publishable in the journals but also provides the necessary end products, in terms of orientation, to meet the private sector or public policy-making needs. In a very simplistic sense, what this involves is a synthesis of the cutting edge methodology and the analytical technique that many would argue is a necessary condition for national journal publication with the economic problem that is firmly rooted in the private sector or in the policy arena. This is a much more substantive task than it appears on the surface. Everyone who has reviewed journal articles in recent years knows that manuscripts are submitted, reviewed, and occasionally published where the primary orientation is clearly application of a technique as opposed to any attempt to contribute to the solving of an economic problem. This emphasis on technique is not without its value. Contributions at the margin in analytical technique are significant in and of themselves in advancing the sub-disciplinary area of econometrics, and they feed into many of the things we are trying to do as a profession. But the other possibility, the other possible contribution, is also there. It involves using the methodology and the competency in analytical technique in recognizing and defining the private sector problem or in framing the policy issue.

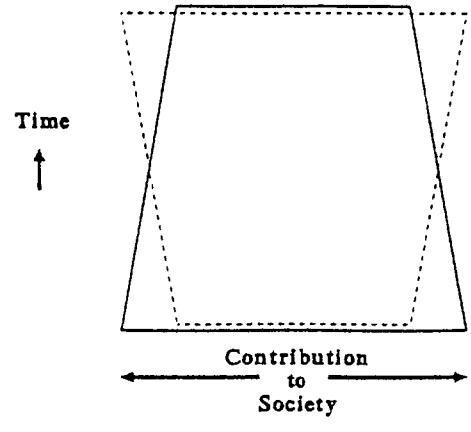
This is an obvious point. The critic might argue that it contributes little or nothing to what we need to hear about faculty development, but it is important. Its importance goes beyond the recognition that it is possible to apply technique to real world economic problems just as it is possible to look for almost any set of data that will allow exploitation of analytical technique. What we need to recognize is that it is often going to be very difficult for individual faculty members, especially the young faculty, to do this on their own. Being able to synthesize and span the gap between the technique and the workable formulation of the real world problem is a necessary condition for the faculty member to be effective. If one's agenda involves reading, closing the door, exploiting data sets, and trying to write journal articles, the capacity to accomplish this type of synthesis is not likely to develop. To establish credibility and insight in the private sector and in the policy arena, one has to be active in the private sector and the policy arena and to interact with decision makers and professionals in those domains. This means travel money and encouragement at the department and college levels to get involved in professional groups, to get involved in attending private sector conferences and conventions, and to establish a presence and a rapport. It is hard work, it does not come easy, and it carries the cost of time that could be used in

writing the journal manuscript. What is needed, therefore, is a recognition at the individual, department, college, university, and, arguably, the professional level that it is important that young researchers invest in establishing the coalitions and the networks that are going to allow them to do the necessary job of synthesis between technique, methodology, and economic problems. Put more bluntly, it may be that we have to drop those counts of journal articles for promotion and tenure from 10, 12, or whatever it is, down to 6 or 7, and then give the candidate for promotion and tenure credit for being able to demonstrate that contacts and rapport have been established and that the opportunity to participate in identified program areas in a problem-solving capacity will be there in the future. It should go without saying, of course, that this is also one way individual faculty members are going to move to a level of visibility and to a professional posture that should allow them to be highly effective in grantsmanship and in financing their own program of research insofar as those grants come from the policy agencies or the private sector.

The benefits in terms of credibility in the various publics are obvious. The benefits in terms of the boost in self-worth may be less obvious. It can be extremely gratifying to be involved in rigorous research, rigorous in both conceptual and quantitative contexts, that you know is going to make a significant contribution either today or tomorrow to decision processes in the private sector or to the formation of an enlightened policy at the national or state level. There is no question that if they felt they had the choice and fully understood how they would be involved, many young professionals would choose this more nearly balanced route as compared to trying to maximize journal publications. There also seems to be little question as to who is going to be the most effective professional longer term if our role as a profession is, in fact, one of being applied economists and contributing to problem solving and policy making.

Figure 1 attempts to capture the essence of this discussion. There will obviously be exceptions, but the intent is to picture two possible "development paths." One approach is to push the journal publications to the maximum early. This swells the measure of professional contribution, but the early "productivity" may come at an significant opportunity cost 10 to 15 years later. The development path that maximizes publication early (solid lines) suggests the contribution in mid-career might shrink as the individual loses some capacity to stay at the cutting edge in terms of analytical technique and the early base of rapport and credibility in the private sector and/or policy arena was not nurtured. A second development path that invests in the development of insight, rapport, and credibility (dashed lines) suggests the individual sacrifices some status as a professional contributor early, primarily through fewer journal articles, but may flourish later in mid-career in terms of written output, grantsmanship, and contribution to economic issues and policy formulation. The young professional who follows this second path makes an early investment in establishing the networks, contacts, and credibility that can have a later payoff. Which path gets followed will depend on the individual's preference function and, perhaps more importantly, the level of encouragement and support present in the operating environment at the departmental, college, and university levels.

Figure 1. Two possible development paths.



It is easy to find examples of what happens when we don't pay sufficient attention to the need for balance and credibility over time. As a marketing economist, I have watched the massive volume of work across the years in research on price, pricing, price discovery, marketing efficiency, pricing efficiency, etc. I have done a lot of that

work. We have filled the journals with articles and even prompted new journals to be started. Some of the articles have been good, some have been decent, and some have been worthless. But what we haven't done is be able to recognize sufficiently well, it appears, what is happening in the real world and to be able to make a truly meaningful contribution along some dimensions that are starting to dominate the marketplace in 1993.

We publish analyses involving the cointegration of prices, sometimes in different geographical locations, sometimes at different levels in the system, and sometimes using series that one would have to search to find any economic reason to argue that the prices ought to be related in any way, manner, or form. In the meantime, the price mechanism that has been so much researched and so much written about is disappearing in many of our sub-sector areas. This disappearance has interesting ramifications. At the national level, for example, there are federal agencies involved in setting and administering grades in livestock and meats. At the university level, there are judging teams and various educational efforts designed to help grade cattle, hogs, and sheep. But if you look at the pork industry in 1993, you have to conclude that within a few years, there will be few pricing points with significant volume involved that are still visible to the public. In spite of all of our analyses, we were never able to help prompt an industry that was capable of, and willing to, transmit value from the final point of consumption back down to the producer in the form of price signals that are recognizable. The result has been a continued barrage of problems associated with variable quantities of livestock, as raw material, moving into processing facilities and a highly variable quality of those livestock. In recent years and continuing in 1993, the processors are grabbing control. By ownership or by contractual arrangements, they are eliminating the price mechanism as a means of coordinating the economic activities between the pork producer and the final consumer.

It would be interesting to look at the journals across the past 10 years and catalog how many articles dealt with what is going to be the single most important issue in the pork sector in the decade of the 1990s. There are journal articles that deal with prices, but few of those articles deal with the environment in which those prices are being discovered, the problems surrounding the transmission of price signals and value differentials through our production-marketing systems, the inconsistent goals at each successive level of economic activity from producer to consumer, the implications to the fabric of the rural community when the swine producer is no longer an independent producer, and the list could go on. From a vantage point of early 1993, I suspect the researcher in this area of activity who has the highest level of self-esteem and the highest perception of self-worth is the researcher who has understood these developing issues and tried to contribute to them across the past decade rather than the researcher who has been able to accumulate a larger number of journal articles by focusing on manipulation of price data.

Before leaving the point, it is important to reiterate that it doesn't have to be one way or the other. A regular writer in the journals about livestock pricing could well have been dealing with the economic issues that are starting to develop because he or she had established a rapport with the private sector, understood what was going on, knew about the policy decisions in Washington in the 1980s on mergers and acquisitions that allowed or even encouraged some of these changes to occur, and had become a credible source of advice and counsel for the industry leader, the individual decision maker, and the policy maker. It is also important to reiterate that individuals are not going to be in a position to be effective contributors to the information base as the industry changes if they are not getting encouragement from their fellow faculty members, the department, the college, and the university to spend time and to make an effort to establish the contacts, establish the rapport, and to understand what is happening. It is absolutely critical to the morale and to the development of faculty members who are involved in research that they believe their fellow colleagues see what they are doing as important.

In turning to extension, it is useful to view extension in the context of the discussion of the research function. In a sense, one can visualize a continuum that spans from the conceptualizing of the research idea through the completing of that research, the compiling of the information, the extension and public service programs that grow out of that research, and the eventual incorporation into

the material taught in the undergraduate or graduate class. If we adopt that mental image of the issues and the relationships between research, extension, and teaching as a frame of reference, it is then easy to suggest that the extension program is another version of what has been discussed in research but, in terms of orientation, falls at a different point on the continuum. The modern extension professional is an applied researcher. If there was ever a time that one person did the research and then another person picked up the thesis, dissertation, or research publication and came up with a set of information that needed to be extended to a user, that time is gone. It didn't work very well when it was tried. All to often, there was a gap, real or perceived, between the researcher and the extension specialist.

What is being suggested, then, is that the extension agent also has to establish a dual credibility, but the program will be different. One would not necessarily expect a high count of national-level journal articles for the extension specialist. Publications are more likely to be found in the regional journals and more likely to involve the development of extension education programs and their process of enactment. The importance of credibility with a private sector decision maker or the policy maker, often at the state level, is even more important for the extension specialist. The pure researcher might sometimes be promoted on a mere count of journal articles without any visible evidence that a program of research has been integrated into a real world setting, but the extension specialist is not going to be able to follow that route. In examining the extension specialist's record, there will be a searching for evidence of a consistent programmatic thrust that is based on solid economic analysis, on solid economic information, and is having an impact. There will be, in most settings, a keen search for evidence of obvious integration of the scholarly work into a real world decision-making and policy-making setting. If there is a leaning toward emphasizing research for the researcher and then doing an adequate job of establishing the rapport and the networking with the economic world, it is reasonably argued that the weights are reversed for the extension professional. A necessary condition for success for promotion and tenure and for faculty development for the extension specialist is to have a programmatic thrust that does, in fact, reach and influence the real world user.

Having made that argument, it then behooves the extension specialist to find a way to establish that rapport and build a credibility without spending infinite amounts of time on the road and in one-on-one contacts. It is imperative, in my opinion, that personal contact be established, nurtured, and maintained for the extension specialist. But it may be that maintaining that contact with group leaders, opinion leaders, key decision makers, and policy makers in the state will suffice. It may not be the case that we any longer need to worry about keeping count of how many people attended meetings that were conducted in the state, how many phone calls were answered, or how many response letters were written. Rather, we might be able to think about electronic dissemination, stressing the written forms of communication, and a proper mix of personal interaction and contact in broader regional or state-level forums as the most appropriate approach.

Again, an important parallel is present. It will not be sufficient for the individual extension specialist to work out a combination of scholarly writing, publication, programs involving rapport with the real world setting, and programs designed to disseminate important economic information to the extension specialist's publics and clients unless the department, college, and university recognize as appropriate this blend of activities. Perhaps the best advice would be to avoid extremes in either direction. It is not going to work, in most settings, to close the door and focus entirely on written publications. On the other hand, it is not going to be sufficient in the 1990s to be able to document how many letters were answered, how many phone calls were made, and how many small, county-level meetings were attended as evidence of an effective extension program. It requires a blend and a mix, and one would suspect that the emphasis in that mix is going to gradually move toward more written output, including some refereed articles, in the future. With electronic dissemination and electronic networks now available, the astute extension specialist will find a way to serve the needs of publics without having to tie up immense amounts of time in small group sessions, one-on-one visitations, or on the telephone. If we can find the right mix and have it properly recognized, then the individual is going to feel good about the program, feel good about the department, feel as if he or she has respect and credibility among faculty colleagues

who more nearly emphasize research and teaching, and the result will be a progressive, innovative, and creative overall agricultural economics program.

This latter point speaks directly to the criticism that Ed Schuh offered in his 1986 article in *Choices* when he said that we have an attitude in the land-grant universities that implies that applied work is not important and that publishing for professional peers and perhaps consulting for high-paying firms or government agencies are the priority tasks. It is simply not the case that individual extension specialists are going to be feel good about their programs, feel good about their futures, and feel good about their development as important faculty members if Schuh's perceptions of what is deemed important in agricultural economics departments do, in fact, surround those individuals. It behooves us, then, to look for relevancy, to look for evidence of productivity, and to look for indicators that there is a program in place that is doing something about important economic issues and to give credit where credit is due regardless of whether the emphasis is research, extension, or teaching.

In the 1990s, it is the teaching function that appears to be the lightening rod around which discussions of what the agricultural economists are about and what they should be doing is revolving. There are few land-grant universities that are not facing criticisms for spending too much time in research and too little time in teaching. Some states have established quotas or formulas that drive the decision about how much the individual faculty member is expected to teach. Such extreme positions are, of course, improper and incorrect. There is the notion of comparative advantage that we teach in the classrooms but do not follow very well that says not every faculty member should be required to teach a certain amount nor should we be precluded from stressing teaching and from rewarding the individual who does an outstanding job in teaching. There are immense implications to the effectiveness and efficiency of our undergraduate programs in particular if we could, at least within broad limits, follow the principle of comparative advantage and allow some degree of specialization in teaching.[1]

It is interesting to reflect on the fact that this criticism is also not new. Nearly 30 years ago in the May 1964 issue of the *Journal of Farm Economics*, Kohls wrote an article, "A Proposal for Improving Extension and Collegiate Teaching." One of the early paragraphs in that article is very interesting. It reads as follows:

> "This aversion to tending the education fires is not a secret known only to college administrators. Increasingly, the public is beginning to note that the distinguished professor advertised in the catalogs may seldom appear before the class. The outstanding scholar that the student sees often turns out to be a graduate assistant." (pp. 341-342)

These observations sound much like the ones that we are hearing today as higher education in general and the land-grant universities in particular come under attack. In an environment where promotion is driven by publications, it is especially difficult for the young faculty members, whose primary love in their professional field is teaching, to give the time, energy, and attention to the teaching function that most of us would argue it so richly deserves. Earlier, I noted that it may well be that the pendulum is swinging back toward giving more credit to teaching in the promotion and tenure process and in professional recognition by our peers, but that is not going to be of much solace to the young faculty member in 1993 who knows that in his or her particular institution it is the journal articles that are being counted. Thus, it is imperative that we deal with the issue that many face in 1993, and talk about what can be done to keep the morale high and to allow for effective and orderly faculty development.

Teaching well can be extremely demanding in terms of energy and time. Any strategies that can be developed and employed to make the individual more efficient and effective in trying to do the things they have to do in scholarly writing, in development of educational programs, and in teaching need to be explored and brought into the "development" effort. It is, unfortunately, the old

case of having to keep several balls in the air at the same time, and this can be frustrating and difficult for even the experienced agricultural economist.

There are some things that can be done, things that can be facilitated by faculty colleagues and by departmental and college administrators, that make this overall task more feasible and more nearly one that the individual can manage. It is very important, for example, to find ways to be efficient while maintaining excellence in the classroom. There are many examples of a young faculty member coming into a department and accepting the assignment to teach one or two undergraduate courses. Most people have a difficult time teaching effectively from a colleague's notes or by relying totally on some colleague's syllabus. What this new faculty member faces, usually without any formal training in teaching and teaching technique, is the development of courses that have to be taught within the next few months or weeks.

Often, getting ready for these classes and teaching them for the first time turns out to be a full-time job. Actually, it is probably better that the individual start with two, perhaps even three, courses because the almost innate tendency is to make it a full-time job, even if it is just one course. It is hard to establish standards and apply marginal analysis to preparation time when the new faculty member, just out of a Ph.D. program, is now involved in a program where experienced and senior faculty are setting a high standard. There is always something else that can be done to make the learning opportunity a little more effective for the student. But it is often the case that those marginal gains in the learning experience for the student become extremely small and the marginal costs to the faculty member can be very high. If spending lots of time on a new course or new courses means the other things that have to be done to establish credentials in extension or research don't get done, then there is the very real risk of a valuable human resource being wasted or its potential contributions minimized over time because the important base for future productivity is not being established.

There are ways to make the teaching function more efficient. Every teacher has to find the channel along which he/she can communicate most effectively with students and refine that channel over time. For some it may be reliance almost totally on a lecture format. For others, especially less experienced teachers, handouts and problems or case studies may be the approach that works. Whatever the particular approach, there should always be an emphasis on finding a way to communicate the content of the course more effectively and efficiently.

Virtually every educational institution will encourage faculty to make themselves accessible to students, and this often extends to a required or quasi-required open door policy. But that policy can be fraught with problems for the young faculty member, especially the teacher of the large enrollment, lower-level undergraduate course. The teacher of a beginning course can face 10, 20 or 30 students lining up outside the door seeking one-on-one assistance. This approach is simply unacceptable. It might look impressive to see a long line of students standing outside of a faculty member's office door waiting for one-on-one counseling, but it really isn't. What is in evidence is that what is going on in the classroom is not effective or that this particular teacher is allowing the course to become a full-time job. The teaching assistant has to be used, and if no teaching assistant is available, then the alternatives to the one-on-one counseling that will offer the needed assistance to the student are group help sessions at hours that any serious student can attend. They may have to be at 7:00 a.m. or 5:00 p.m., but it is relatively easy to establish the precedent where students who need help are expected to get to those sessions and to come prepared to ask questions. They benefit not only from their own questions but also by listening to the questions of fellow students.

Such an approach may be a break from precedence and is not necessarily consistent with what we are often encouraged to do, but it may be absolutely necessary. If this is the approach that is taken, then the occasional comment to the department head that says faculty member A is not available for one-on-one consultation with the student and is not responsive to student needs must be taken in a proper context. There has to be a support mechanism, again, for individual faculty members if they are going to try to offer an effective course for the students, to reach and maintain a high level of excellence, and meet all the other self-imposed or institutionally imposed requirements.

It is never as easy as it sounds, however. It is the case that most young faculty members will simply be required to work very hard at their joint assignments of teaching and research or teaching and extension if they are going to succeed in the system, if they are going to be recognized professionally, and if they are going to meet their own standards of self-worth and self-image. To succeed you do have to pay the price. You have to meet the established standards of performance and excellence in the classroom, and you have to write and to publish, and you do have to develop and put in place effective educational programs if you are an extension specialist. There is no substitute for hard work. But that hard work will typically be forthcoming if it is in an environment where the individual feels that other people appreciate what they are trying to do in the classroom, appreciate and respect what they are trying to do in an extension program, or appreciate and respect what they are trying to accomplish in an applied research program that is designed to facilitate opportunities with the private sector or the policy maker. The faculty as a collective entity, the department, the college, and university administration have a responsibility and a role to play.

In particular, it is simply not acceptable that teaching, especially teaching at the undergraduate level, be viewed as of secondary importance. If that happens and that type of environment starts to develop, the morale of the faculty member who is heavily involved in teaching will be affected directly, and any reasonable likelihood that this individual will pay the price, do the hard work, and succeed along a multi-faceted front is substantially decreased. The business of agricultural economics is about research, extension and public service, and teaching. We could debate which comes first, which comes second, and which comes third, but that debate is counterproductive. They are all important, they all have to be done, and it is increasingly apparent that state legislatures and the publics within the state are going to hold our feet to the fire in terms of doing the job in the classroom and being involved in teaching. It is not going to be good enough in the future for senior faculty members to be able to solicit enough grants to always be able to buy their way out of the classroom. If that mode of operation was ever acceptable to our clientele base, it will not be acceptable in the future. There is room to practice the principle of comparative advantage, to let the people who do extremely well in the undergraduate classroom teach a great deal. There is room to allow the people who are extremely effective in graduate teaching and graduate education to spend a lot of time and energy in graduate teaching and graduate education. And there is certainly room for people who are outstanding professionals in extension education or in the scholarly writing that is required in journals to push and to specialize in those functional areas. What is important is that the overall program show balance, and that internal to that program, every faculty member understands the important contribution that their faculty peers and colleagues are making so that everybody moves the program forward together.

In an overall context, this business of morale and faculty development is closely related to one of deciding what we are about as a profession. Ed Schuh argued that in the land-grant universities, we have lost our way, lost our focus, and lost our sense of direction and that in the process, we are allowing other educational institutions and private sector firms to come in and take over our missions. There is probably some truth to Schuh's assertions. We have drifted in terms of understanding the need to offer, across a broad front, excellence in basic research, in applied research, in developing infrastructure and rapport with the private sector decision maker and private sector leader, in extension programs, and in the undergraduate and graduate classrooms. To the extent that we can feel comfortable with what we are doing, we probably establish a base on which to build self-worth accordingly. I think morale is, in many respects, related to perceptions of self-worth and to the opportunities that the young faculty member sees for success. But success is defined in terms of what we are trying to accomplish, what we believe our peer group thinks we ought to be doing, and how we are perceived by the faculty colleagues with whom we work on a day-to-day basis. So it is immensely important that we have a vision for this discipline of agricultural economics, that we decide whether or not we are, in fact, an applied discipline, and that we then get on with the job in terms of recognition that everybody has a role to play. Within that broad context, there is every reason to argue that some individuals will teach more than others, some will do more research and publish more journal articles than others, and some will be

more heavily involved in extension education programs than others. That does not mean that faculty A is a better professional than faculty B or faculty C. What that does mean is that everybody understands where the program needs to go in an overall context, that goals have been defined, and that everybody is pushing in the same direction.

In such an environment, there should not be major problems of faculty morale. There should not be major problems of departmental, college, and university administration failing to recognize when contributions to overall goals and productivity are present. The individual faculty member should then be rewarded appropriately whether it be in the promotion and tenure process or whether it be in deserved recognition in the private and public sectors and in professional circles. If we have indeed lost perspective on what is important and pertinent, we have lost it at the aggregate or collective level, and we will have to find our proper direction again as a profession at the collective level if we are to keep and enhance a vital role in the economic world of the future.

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Endnotes

1.The limits will be defined, of course, by the need to recharge the knowledge base and to be current and relevant. Studies document, and most of us would agree, that the joint appointment can be truly complementary when the extension or research program feeds into the teaching program and keeps it vital and alive. This is obviously the case at the graduate level where teaching and research become so intertwined, but it is also the case at the undergraduate level where the output of the research or extension program becomes input to a vibrant and relevant teaching program.