INTRODUCTION

Universities are designed to impart knowledge to students. As such, all Universities are, at least hypothetically, teaching institutions. However, a recent article that appeared in the Chicago Tribune conveyed what are now oft-heard criticisms of colleges and universities: students attend classes in large lecture halls, students and professors don’t have meaningful interactions, students are taught by adjunct instructors and/or TAs, the cost of attending college steadily rises while the quality of instruction steadily declines, universities focus on research rather than instruction, etc. (Grossman 2016). This article is consistent with other articles found in the popular press such as an article reporting that in an effort to cut labor, costs universities and colleges are making extensive use of adjunct faculty as instructors at the undergraduate level (Elejalde-Ruiz 2015). This article states (on page 2) that according to the American Association of University Professors “the share of faculty appointments held by tenured and tenure track faculty in the US fell to 30 percent in 2011 from 57 percent in 1975... and the share of “contingent “faculty which includes part-time and full-time without tenure grew to 70 percent from 43 percent in the same period”. These concerns that appear in the popular press are echoed by critiques arising from within the academy as evidenced by a professor who recently characterized universities as institutions where the super star professors, whose pictures and biographical summaries are featured in the institution’s brochures and on its web site, devote the greater part of their time to pursuing research grants and honors, publishing the results of their work in books and prestigious scholarly journals with time out for the occasional op-ed or interview with the popular press and,

CHARACTERISTICS OF A “TEACHING INSTITUTION”:
ADMINISTRATIVE OBJECTIVES, ACTIONS, ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

All institutions of higher learning offer courses. In that sense all institutions of higher learning can designate themselves as teaching institutions. In this article we point out that, while stated objectives may be similar or even identical, there are differences in the level of commitment to teaching that characterizes institutions of higher learning. We present an outline of actions and activities derived from those objectives that we believe distinguish the level of both human and financial resources that institutions of higher learning should commit to be recognized as a “Teaching Institution” as compared to a teaching institution.

The actions and activities we discuss are drawn from the literature on teaching. Objectives and examples of required actions that proceed from the objectives and the activities that proceed from these actions are drawn from the authors’ institution and exemplified by the authors’ record of publication regarding objectives, actions, and activities.

INTRODUCTION

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by doing so, avoiding, as much as possible, any contact with undergraduate students (Collier 2013).

Concern about the state of teaching at colleges and universities is not a new issue. A quarter of a century ago, Boyer (1990) wrote about a framework for building a community of learning focused on the centrality of an intellectual life and the relationship between the educator and the student. These concerns paralleled increasing concerns about the importance of assessment on college campuses (Kemp & O’Keefe 1993, 1994). The concerns expressed by Boyer may have been relatively new at the time, but his work has been a catalyst for stimulating concern with the importance of teaching. Since his work, and perhaps from before his work, the concern about teaching on campus has been heightened by pressure from many external sources.

Recently, O’Keefe, Lopez, Xu, and Lall (2014) drew attention to external pressures emanating from ‘Governments’ agencies that offer grants and from individual and corporate donors who support existing programs are demanding that institutions requesting funding or donations present evidence of assessment outcomes indicating that the goals and objectives made explicit in their mission statements are being met’. The authors also noted that, more recently, accrediting bodies at the college and university level have been increasing the presentation of evidence regarding the institutions’ approaches to accountability but that the interactions between teachers and students are equivalent across all institutions that offer similar or identical degrees. Ulrich’s third definition of a teaching institution is “institutions that offer a full range of baccalaureate programs and are committed to graduate education through the master’s degree” while Baccalaureate/Liberal Arts are defined as those that “are primarily undergraduate colleges with major emphasis on baccalaureate degree programs.” This definition seems problematic because it defines a teaching institution by the degrees awarded by that institution rather than by the activities that take place within the institution. In other words, this definition would seem to assume that the interactions between teachers and students are equivalent across all institutions that offer similar or identical degrees. Ulrich’s third definition of a teaching institution is “institutions that are not a research institution.” This third definition defines a teaching institution by what it is not rather than by what it is and so fails to clarify those characteristics that define a “research institution.”

Another approach to defining a teaching institution was suggested by the work of Harvey and Green (1993). They defined three types of quality: (1) Quality as value for the money (this definition of quality leads to concerns about accountability), (2) quality as fit for the purpose (this definition of quality leads to concerns about assessment), (3) quality as transforming (this definition of quality leads to consideration of institutions’ abilities to shape their students’ perceptions of their world as well as teachers’ perceptions of their roles as teachers). Accepting the premise that the field of quality speaks to the mission of teaching institutions could lead to the following definition of a teaching institution:

“A Teaching Institution is a university or college whose culture places primary importance on education as a transformative, formative experience for learners and instructors.” (Harvey and Green, 1993; Biggs 2001).

WHAT ACTIVITIES DIFFERENTIATE A TEACHING INSTITUTION

William James once wrote: “The ultimate test of what a man really stands for is the extent to which he is willing to sacrifice for the good” (James, 1907). In brief and less elegant language the common phrase is that actions speak louder than words. As an example of extensive words without paired actions, in their recent review of Boyer’s (1990) work, Moser & Bryant (2014) reported that many institutions of higher learning have given no more than “lip-service” to the suggestions regarding the value of teaching as scholarship that Boyer’s work had suggested be considered. On a higher level, the work of Kemp and O’Keefe (1993 and 1994) suggests that any activities that define a “teaching institution” arise from an institutional culture that is supportive of teaching. These researchers provide a number of factors that characterize this supportive teaching culture (see Table 1).
report outlining the actions it will put in place in order to corporations. The expectation is that each division of the to the “objectives down plans up practices” found in many short and long-term objectives. The procedure is similar and boards of directors traditionally set the institution’s University administrations in cooperation with trustees that really matters. innovation and continual improvement of the innovation championed by one or a group of faculty members. It is practice by administrative policies or, if an administra- such policies and actions in support of these policies do are agreed to be important but one must recognize that the major conclusion of the study was that the presentation of teaching evaluations by faculty was inconsistent, confusing and, especially when faculty members were ranked, frequently statistically mis- interpreted. Rather than a confusing array of averages, the researchers’ suggested that the units agree on expected performance levels, scale these levels as unsatisfactory to outstanding and report the outcome of the evaluations by reference to the scale. This method has become policy. tute. We realized the benefits gained by the exchange of information and formally proposed a program aimed at increasing faculty participation. Our experience with leading the AACE workshops (Kemp & O’Keefe, 1994; O’Keefe, 1995) was the stimulus for establishing the Program for the Enhancement of Teaching. The program was discussed at several local conferences and a broader account of the program’s activities was published in College Teaching (Kemp & O’Keefe 2003). A listing of the program’s activities is presented in Table 3. While initially a program within our college of business, the University administration expanded the reach of the program by instituting an Office of Teaching and Learning that con- ducts presentations such as those listed in Table 3. Bearing this in mind, we will now examine and describe the actions that are being taken to support the development of teaching skills or recognize skilled faculty. Action 1.3: Establish a program for the enhancement of Action 1.4: Pursue grants focused on dimensions of teaching. Most institutions of higher education have an office de- voted to grants and contracts. This action requires that this office search out sources of funds that support the de- velopment of teaching skills or recognize skilled teachers. Action 1.5: Participate in conferences focused on teach- ing in higher education. There are conferences devoted solely to this topic. In ad- dition a number of conferences with multi tracks devote sections and tracks to educational issues. The confer- ences bring faculty members from different institutions and so result in the exchange of information on issues of relevance to the elements of quality teaching. Action 1.6: Nominate faculty members for national or regional teaching awards. Some conferences include invited presentations of inno- vative approaches to teaching. The participating faculty members are nominated for entry and the prize winners are chosen by vote of a committee composed of represen- tatives chosen by the sponsor. Again these contexts may vary in the details of the nominating and vetting processes but they all represent an opportunity for an institution to showcase its outstanding teachers. National awards call attention to the institution and are evidence for its claim of being a “Teaching Institution”. For example, see O’Keefe, Kelly & Kemp (1996 2006(1) and 2006). Action 1.7: Institute a teaching mentor system. characteristics of a “Teaching Institution” Choose from the following:
- Bright Ideas Lunch
- Student Case Method Seminar (3 days)
- Case Teaching Discussion Group
- Classroom Management: What Do I Do Now?
- New Faculty Discussion Group
- Classroom Management: How Students Learn
- Classroom Management: The Effective Use of Technology
- Classroom Management: Master Teacher Seminar (3 days)
- Classroom Management: What is the Most Ef- fective Delivery Method for You?”
- Classroom Management: Use of Course Man- agement Tools (e.g., Blackboard)
Action 1.1:  Acquire recognition by publication in func- tional disciplines’ educational journals. Every business discipline has one or more journals de- voted to publishing articles centered on teaching methods and the results of research into the effectiveness of those methods. All units of the institution keep faculty mem- bers apprised of these and of other journals that welcome such articles. Journal publication provides tangible evi- dence of an institution’s interest in and support of quality teaching. Lists of these journals opinions regarding their ranking are readily available online.

Action 1.9: Nominate faculty members for university level teaching awards. For nearly forty years our college has presented teach- ing awards to selected faculty members. The awards are described in the section that immediately follows. The recipients of these awards are decided on the basis of un- dergraduate or graduate student votes. The university also presents Excellence in Teaching awards to faculty mem- bers from the several colleges that comprise the univer- sity. Faculty members are nominated for the award and submit documentation in support of receiving the award. Members of a faculty committee known as the Quality of Instruction Committee discuss the documentation, and decide on the recipients. The award is presented to faculty members at the university convocation.

Action 1.10: Recognize nominees for college level teach- ing awards.

As mentioned above our college has three teaching ex- cellence awards. There is an undergraduate and graduate award and, a recently added award for an adjunct faculty member. These awards are presented at the college’s com- mencement ceremony. We’ve noted that several times only one or two votes decided the recipient. Our, as yet unreal- ized objective, is to recognize the top five vote getters. The faculty member receiving the most votes would be award- ed the plaque while the other four would receive an Excel- lence in Teaching certificate. This suggestion is based on Hollywood’s Academy Awards. Nominees for the Oscar receive certificates of nomination. These certificates attest to their talent and are cherished items for display.

As an addition to actions stated above we wish note the importance of cooperation between academic units, de- partments and programs and the institution’s public rel- ations and enrollment management divisions. Public re- lations representatives have contacts with the traditional and contemporary media and so are in a position to trans- mit messages about the institution’s position as a “Teach- ing Institution” to audiences beyond our open admissions and recruiting events. The PR representatives are also involved in filling requests from the media for interviews with facul- ty members.

Objective 2: Be Responsive To Our Market Through Innovative Teaching.

The actions and activities relevant to our second ob- jective represent, for the most part, approaches to estab- lishing and maintaining continuous improvement in the interests of supporting high level teaching and encourag- ing learning.

Action 2.1:  Increase the number of technologically equipped classrooms.

Action 2.2: Increase participation in technology in- strucional sessions for faculty members.

This is an activity that the Program for Excellence in Teaching (PET) found that senior faculty considered to be especially useful. Textbooks and supplementary text materials assume familiarity with contemporary technol- ogy.

Action 2.3:  Expand Instructional support systems.

Institutions of higher education usually have a centralized Information Technology or Classroom Technology direc- tions. These sections oversee the equipment used to aug- ment teaching. Our college has put in place its own Tech- nology Services office. The office conducts instructional sessions related to the use of technology. These services are offered to groups of faculty members and, frequently, as independent, instructional sessions arranged to assist in- dividual faculty members who are not familiar with the systems in use within the college and the university.

Action 2.4: Institute a course leader system.

This activity is especially critical for multi-section re- quired courses. Because these courses represent a founda- tion for the more advanced courses, course sections should have the same course teaching and learning activities and incorporate the same set of topics. A extended discussion of these expectations is presented by O’Keefe & Hamer (2013) and O’Keefe, Lopez, Xu and Lall (2014). Without a course leader who continually monitors the content and the assessment methods multi-section courses can revert to conditions that approach anarchy. Inconsis- tency means that assessment or assurance of learning re- sults cannot be considered valid.

Action 2.5: Institute a continuous curricula improve- ment policy.

As we pointed out earlier in this paper there will always be incremental changes and sometimes even radical changes in a curriculum. The important point is to have a set pol- icy and procedure for adding, combining, replacing and deleting current courses. These issues and applicable poli- cy matters are discussed in Chadrab & O’Keefe (2007): O’Keefe & Hamer (2011, 2011) and O’Keefe (2013). The policy we report on has been in place since 1992.

Action 2.6:  Expand the ISS 398 undergraduate and GSB 798 special topics courses.

The ISS 398 and GSB798 are designations applied to spe- cial interest courses which may be considered for perma- nent addition to a departmental curriculum, offered from time to time or, after one or two unsuccessful offerings, deleted Again the process for converting a proposed ISS 398 or GSB 798 as a permanent addition is detailed in O’Keefe & Hamer (2011). One experience has been that it is more efficient to test market the fit and feasibility of proposed ISS 398 and GSB 798 courses rather than sim- ply give them a departmental listing. A lack of policy in curriculum revisions leads to curriculum clutter.

Action 2.7  Experiment with team teaching.

Our research and first-hand experience has shown us that faculty members are divided in their will- ingness to consider participation in team teach- ing. We have found that some faculty members are unclear regarding how participation in team teaching will be credited toward the hours (num- ber of courses) that faculty members are expected to teach. This is another instance where there needs to be an accepted statement of policy that faculty members understand and agree to. The terms of such a policy statement have been report- ed by O’Keefe & Hamer (2012).

Action 2.8:  Experiment with “clinical” faculty.

The idea of clinical faculty seems to have originated in col- leges of medicine and law. In these colleges clinical faculty could be full time and tenured. They were charged with instructing the students with the more practical aspects of the professions. Law professors instructed students on the theories of legal practice while the clinical faculty taught them procedures such as preparing and submitting legal briefs and other matters. Our college has benefitted greatly by employing executives in residence. These have duties that go beyond those expected of adjunct or part time teachers. The executives in residence teach a full schedule of classes, have their teaching evaluated by students, counsel students, attend faculty meetings and assist in recruiting efforts. Though they are encouraged to publish, they are not expected to meet the standards set for tenure and tenure track faculty.

Action 2.9: Expand both case and problem centered coursework.

It seems that every institution of higher learning wants its students to be capable of critical thinking. Case and problem centered coursework provide a venue for assess- ing whether this very important educational outcome will be assured. To accomplish that end the institution must provide facilities that are designed to accommodate group discussion, and, especially for business programs, contacts with firms that will provide real world problems and evaluate the solutions submitted by the students. Also the institution should sponsor students that wish to take part in graduate and undergraduate case analysis competitions.(O’Keefe & Chadrab 2013)

Action 2.10: Expand teamwork and leadership exercises in classes.

Hamer & O’Keefe (2012) reported that in many instanc- es students clained that the theoretical nature of their pri- mary objections centered on their experience with unequal participation by some students in their groups. This meant additional work for the other members. The authors could empathize with the students but also un- derstood that the ability to work efficiently in groups is ex- pected in the business environment. The article referenced above describes an approach to incorporating instruction in group skills within a course that required group proj- ects.

Action 2.11: Explore or expand investment in distance learning.

There is very wide agreement in institutions of higher learning that online courses will continue to reach larger audiences. An institution that intends to include online courses as an integral part of its curriculum needs to be aware that preparation for the addition of online instruc- tion requires a significant investment of both human and technological resources. On the other hand there must be an investment in training faculty members to effectively use the online environment and on the technological side equipment that is reliable and equal to the task.

Action 2.12: Explore or expand certificate programs.

Certificate programs designed for the employees of local firms can benefit the institution by providing additional
characteristics of a teaching institution: administrative objectives, actions, and assessment

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...result in a significant strengthening of our teaching and the transformative nature of education. Further, the work that we have cited offers guidance to institutions that wish to define themselves as "Teaching Institutions" by suggesting policies, objectives, actions and related activities that can help guide such institutions as they educate their students in the face of a variety of external demands and pressures. As discussed in the body of this paper, many of these actions have been put into place at the authors' own institution, and our assessment activities have lead to a significant improvement of our teaching mission. The authors in their roles as administrators have attended and spoken to audiences of prospective students and the parents of these potential enrollies. We have over the years observed that the term "Teaching Institution" seems to resonate well with both the students and their parents.

The overall goal is not simply to have our audiences attend our recruiting open houses so can tell them that we are a "Teaching Institution". Rather we want them to attend because they have been assured that we are a "Teaching Institution" in the full sense of the designation.

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