Shared governance in higher education is at a critical point in history. Although there are surges in the collective activity of faculty members, their actions have continued to have little meaningful impact on college campus decision making. Events such as faculty protests of the new presidential appointment at Iowa, for example, yielded little change in trustee behavior. Similarly, it took the California Faculty Association nearly a year of negotiation and the threat of a system-wide strike before agreeing to a modest faculty pay raise agreement that was a fraction of the administrative salary increases over the same period of time.

There are at least three prominent perspectives as to why faculty are not able to gain the respect and prominence that many believe is a right and cornerstone of higher education. The first is that the ideal of shared governance has never actually been in full practice in the academy, and that depictions of it truly working have been exaggerated (Baldridge, 1982). The second is that the professionalism and technological advances inherent in the contemporary university restrict and limit what faculty and truly contribute to institutional operations (Miller & Smith, 2017). And the third, is that professional administrators fail to see the value of professorial ranks contributing to making difficult decisions on campus.

Part of the administrative perspective of faculty inability to contribute to decision-making is grounded in the thinking that the faculty members who are the least equipped to be successful are drawn to service activities, such as shared governance. Some of these arguments are based on the notion of a cycle of academic careers, where those in the final years of their professorial career give back

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**FILLED WITH WHAT?**

**LEADERSHIP AND HOPE IN THE FACULTY SENATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

The current study explored the theory of hope as a characteristic of individuals who engage in shared faculty governance, specifically addressing the question: What are the characteristics of faculty governance leaders, specifically their predispositions to have hopeful attitudes about their college campuses and administration? A survey was constructed around the Trait Hope Scale and administered to faculty governance units in 25 college campuses in the United States. A total of 325 respondents completed the survey. The majority of faculty members serving in representative senates had been involved for a moderate period of time (2-5 years), were faculty members in the liberal arts, an almost half intended to return to their faculty roles upon completion of their terms. All senators identified that they had high levels of Hope for the work they accomplish in their institutions.
Participation and service by faculty members has been noted to be deficient in terms of teaching preparation, but does impact how a faculty member learns to appreciate the importance of different activities. This can be quantified as the positive solution and decision-making (Evans, 1999). Aside from money as a potential earning advantage (p. 890). Aside from money as a motivating factor, there is a growing body of research on pursuit of a life or outlook as a variable that impacts quality of life (Leider, 2016). This means that those with a positive outlook have different perspectives on what to do, how to do it, and the value of different activities. This can be quantified as the positive psychology base trait theory of hope. Hope is a goal-directed pathway that derives from optimism in that it is a trait that is learned and is an established part of an individual’s character (Dieffenderfer, 2015). Hope is part of the positive organizational scholarship movement that identifies psychological capital as critical to an individual’s work and workplace success. When an individual has a high hope trait in the workplace, the individual is more likely to be collaborative, supportive, and contribute positively to the organization’s success. The current study was designed to identify the characteristics of faculty members who have assumed faculty senate leadership positions, hypothesizing that those faculty members who engage in collaborative decision making and ownership of determining outcomes (Evans, 1999) feelings of responsibility, ownership of problems or situations, are initially classified based on age, concern for governance issues, and confidence in the faculty member’s governance role. The choice of hope as a variable for inclusion in the study provides leadership exposure and opportunities to learn about collaborative decision making, and that these experiences can serve as enablers to future leadership positions on campus. Additionally, there are significant differences in leadership positions and the number of different activities. This can be quantified as the positive solution and decision-making (Evans, 1999). These are general human resource theory driven concepts that have been linked to faculty governance activities, suggesting that faculty role identity is indeed “cognitive and emotional” (Fitzmaurice, 2013, p. 613). This means that self-esteem and a desire to perform well are critical components of the faculty member’s life and professional world, and that involvement to serve can be attributed many different variables. Although there are few national studies that report the characteristics of who assumes leadership roles in faculty governance units, at least one study identified an approximate even distribution of men and women in these leadership roles, the majority of leaders coming from disciplines in the liberal arts, and that over 60% of these leaders were tenured associate (28%) or full professors (36%) (Miller, 2003). Another study (Pope & Miller, 2005) situated in the community college context identified differences in how institutional leaders and faculty senate leaders viewed issues on campus, and that ultimately “faculty senate is a mixed bag of faculty participation that provide important institutional learning and leadership–skill development opportunities” (p. 756). This finding was consistent with Trow’s (1990) earlier argument that faculty governance provides leadership exposure and opportunities to learn about collaborative decision making, and that these experiences can serve as enablers to future leadership positions on campus. Aside from possible future administrative ambitions, faculty members tend to see involvement in governance as a secondary role to other professional responsibilities (Williams, Gore, Brookes, & Lostonki, 2013). The few studies available profiling motivation for involvement, a study by the National Data Base on Faculty Involvement in Governance (Miller, 2003) surveyed 100 community colleges that were classified as comprehensive or had a more even distribution of men and women in these leadership roles. The assumption of leadership roles by faculty members can be attributed to mentoring and acculturation by department or teaching. Although there are few national studies that report the characteristics of who assumes leadership roles in faculty governance units, the majority of leaders coming from disciplines in the liberal arts, and that over 60% of these leaders were tenured associate (28%) or full professors (36%) (Miller, 2003). Another study (Pope & Miller, 2005) situated in the community college context identified differences in how institutional leaders and faculty senate leaders viewed issues on campus, and that ultimately “faculty senate is a mixed bag of faculty participation that provide important institutional learning and leadership–skill development opportunities” (p. 756). This finding was consistent with Trow’s (1990) earlier argument that faculty governance provides leadership exposure and opportunities to learn about collaborative decision making, and that these experiences can serve as enablers to future leadership positions on campus.
as a result, the population of senate leaders was unknown, but would be at minimum, 25.

FINDINGS

As shown in Table 1, of the 325 respondents who identified themselves as elected senators, nearly half reported serving 2-5 years on the senate (n=138; 42%), with a near equal distribution of new senators (under two years, n=101; 31%) and over five years (n=86; 26.4%). The distribution for senate leaders was substantially different, with over 80% having served more than five years (n=59; 81.9%), suggesting that there is a process of senators learning the protocol and behavior of the senate prior to being elected into these leadership positions. Yet, nearly 10% of the leaders had served less than two years, and might be a reflection of new faculty moving to an institution and being seen immediately as a leader, or conversely, a faculty senate that has trouble finding someone to assume a leadership position.

Also shown in Table 1 was the distribution of academic disciplines represented on the senate. Nearly half of all senators and senate leaders (combined in the table) held academic appointments in the humanities or liberal arts (n=188; 47.3%), with one-quarter of those elected from disciplines in education or the social sciences (n=99; 24.9%).

Under half of the faculty senators surveyed clearly intended to return to their faculty roles upon completion of their terms in the senate (44.6%), and nearly one-fifth (18.1%) indicated that they would consider moving into an administrative position on a full-time basis. The responses for senate leaders were somewhat similar, with 34.7% of responding senate leaders intending to remain as full-time faculty members following the completion of their senate terms and 15.6% clearly indicating that they would consider a full-time administrative position.

The last section of the survey included the Trait Hope Scale. The 12-item section of the survey included items referred to as The Future Scale, and reflect an individual’s outlook on the future, e.g., the person’s sense of hopeful-ness. The survey had a hypothetical range score of 8 (low) to 64 (high). The current administration resulted in a range for the entire group of respondents as 32 for a low to 64 (high). The overall group mean was 52.6, with a mean of 57 for senators and 50.3 for senate leaders.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study suggested that faculty who are involved in faculty senate, generally, are hopeful about their involvement in faculty leadership activities and the system of shared governance. A culture for thoughtful problem solving and inclusion may exist in many of the faculty senate included in the study. This includes the encouragement of professional transition to and from the faculty senate, either returning to a role as professor or succeeding to a leadership role in college and university administration may also be a part of the culture. The results of the study support the notion that hope as a trait reinforces the emotive component of motivation to hold a service role in faculty governance groups. Where hope as a trait is recognizable among respondents, it may not be as apparent in those faculty senators’ and leaders’ home colleges and academic departments.

Service situates faculty members to have clearer pathways to pursue professional administrative roles, but does much less for individuals who are seeking to earn tenure at their institution or similar institutions. Unlike developing a research agenda or preparing for classes for the academic year, service and the opportunity to become involved in the shared governance process is not as incremental. Faculty can volunteer to serve on committees, organize research talks for students and faculty, serve in their respective professional association, and depending on rank, lobby for administrative positions even with only having a small amount of managerial or leadership experience. The process for publishing and teaching is less straightforward. Faculty, at times, have to advocate to a certain class, or may be pressured to teach classes that do not align with their expertise. Also, depending on the academic discipline, the rigor of publishing can vary. Participating in the publication process can be a year-long process, or more. These examples are noticeably different from the opportunity to serve in more streamlined or contrivance, cumbersome governance systems.

Developing inter-institutional policies that enable productive and a shared effort to protect pre-tenured faculty, and faculty who are in the middle of the tenure process, is critical for the long and more effective faculty gov-ernance structures. The culture for support of this type of approach including to prepare faculty for leadership, in many instances, will depend on senior faculty members taking the time to encourage involvement but dissuade, and even prevent, an overload of service-oriented tasks. Developing policies that prevent junior and mid-tenure track faculty from taking on more assignments or responsi-bilities than reasonably manageable is important for the success of the professional, but also is a mechanism for establishing or continuing a culture of hope.

The process for maintaining consensus for positive work experiences, problem solving, and anticipation for success in a faculty member’s professional career. Hope as a mechanism could be used for support and influence of faculty less engaged in decision making process that typically most professionals strive to experience.

Creating cultural norms around hope creates an environment for positive work experiences, problem solving, and anticipation for success in a faculty member’s professional career. Hope as a mechanism could be used for support and influence of faculty less engaged in decision making process that typically most professionals strive to experience.
processes, and could benefit the faculty member in their own professional efforts, especially as it relates to negative experiences that may come along with academic politics, bureaucracy, and other challenges. A space for further research to determine whether emotive traits can translate into positive experiences for faculty continues to exist.

REFERENCES


Dieffenderfer, V. (2015, November 18). Validation of the workplace learning hope scale. Presentation at the 64th Annual Convention of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, Oklahoma City, OK.


