

# Engaging the Faculty in Top 25: Challenges and Potential Solutions

## *How can the campus support better communications?*

- Chancellor and Provost “road shows” to departments and colleges = faculty and staff.
- Keep messages simple
- Stress how faculty will benefit and constituents will be better served
- Communicate the rewards of being proactive
- Plan 1-2 “State of the Campus” meetings each year
- Need to have mechanisms for bottom up feedback on the plan
- Don’t use email – it is overused.
- Think about different types/segments of faculty and what they need to hear.
  - E.g., non-believers, torchbearers, etc.
- Name new faculty pub “Bottom(s) Up”
- Video the Chancellor’s presentation for use at multiple times and locations.

## *How might departments/colleges support Top 25 communications?*

- Need to make Top 25 a bottom-up initiative.
  - Individual units strategic plans need to reflect the campus goals

- Dept. heads need to be leaders as well as managers. Will need to push the faculty more.
- During annual evaluation process (individual faculty meetings) have a conversation about link between success of individual and the success of community.
- Identify some talented communicators throughout the campus to leverage Jimmy's time.
- It is not too late to get faculty buy in, but it needs to happen soon.
- Need to separate this initiative from all the previous "strategic planning" efforts.
- Get faculty to feel a part of the system via implementation teams (Action Teams). Faculty don't know about these teams.
- Share rough drafts for critique and discussion along the way v. revealing "completed" plans, metrics, etc.
- Continue the integrated message re: Vol Vision and Top 25.
- DDDH's must carry the message from the Chancellor and develop their own strategic plans with goals and metrics.
- Inform faculty about RFP's.
- Organize departmental discussions about Jimmy's presentation.
- Departments need to get out "success stories" of how they are already contributing to Top 25 ala "Quest Scholar of the Week" model.

- Use faculty annual reviews to challenge faculty on how they can contribute.
- Build discussions/expectations into new faculty hires.

### ***How can the campus better address faculty fears and concerns?***

- Be aware of faculty concerns:
  - Over-extended workloads, challenging their career work, differential rewards, program closures, lack of resources, inadequate skills, skepticism, loss of control, lack of clarity of goals, sustainability of Top 25 over time, diversion from “core work” that faculty do, lack of clarity about how Top 25 metrics relate to their department, moving targets.
- Offer fee waivers for Ph.D. students if department/college can cover the stipends.
- Need more financial flexibility in addressing Top 25 initiatives, e.g., faculty rewards, student travel, etc.
- Support for advance training for more mature faculty.
- More flexibility, e.g., tuition waivers, usage of E v. R accounts, carryover policies.
- Clear communication of goals and how the faculty benefits.
- Consistent communication from campus leadership.
- Provide staff support for benchmarking at the unit level, data gathering and analysis.
- Communicate why this time it is different and how resources will be brought to bear.

- Match technology to policy and reporting needs. Don't let IT drive the policies. Embrace the technology that makes sense for our reporting needs.
- Make sure we are considering these issues for NTT faculty and staff as well as TT faculty.
- How can we use Top 25 to embrace what departments want to do?

***How can departments/colleges better address faculty fears and concerns?***

- Eliminate burden of new degree programs.
- Mesh Top 25 with departmental plans and ID which areas relate most strongly to each unit.
- Invest in sponsored programs office (at the college level) to help faculty with grants and contracts, proposal development, etc.
- Where can we use alumni to support departmental initiatives?
- During annual review process, make sure that workloads are distributed fairly among faculty.
- Department head communications, expectations and evaluations are key.
- ID where skills improvement will occur at dept. level.
- Allow departments/colleges to tailor their approach to Top 25.

***What must be done at the campus level to better align rewards with Top 25 initiatives?***

- Create a culture of appreciation. Starts with good communication in a timely and positive fashion.
- Use time to reward faculty. “Borrow time” from a pool. A campus level pool?
- Continue to match financial rewards with productivity via merit.
- “Please” “Thank You.” “I am sorry.”
- Investigate a true sabbatical program.
- Strategic plans must match Vol Vision/Top 25, and so must faculty expectations. Tie these larger goals to faculty goals and responsibilities.
- Flexibility, e.g., we need to know more about and have input into the faculty compensation plan being developed by the system.
- Set expectations high and make sure faculty, staff, and students know what they are.
- Assist in providing resources, e.g., access to development support, especially disciplines that can’t easily generate their own revenues.
- Reward great teaching by talking more about what we value and placing resources behind that. How do we reward great teaching? Consider tying peer reviews to a reward system, esp. for tenure-seeking faculty.
- How do you financially reward faculty receiving federally funded grants?

- Reward community engagement and community engagement research.
- Create a librarian supported graduate research award.
- Need resources to support travel (especially international) related to research data collection, analysis, and collaboration.

***What must be done at the department/college level to better align rewards with Top 25 initiatives?***

- Awards ceremonies and celebrations.
- Create rubrics to underlie the annual review performance scale on teaching, research, and service.
- Tie resources to faculty evaluations – space, time, discretionary money.
- Consider different permutations of the teaching/research balance across the faculty.
- Consider how to best measure “excellent teaching.”