

---

### 3d. Organizing Longitudinal Faculty (Community Preceptor) Development Programs to Meet Your Institutional Needs

*Deborah E. Simpson, Ph.D. and Mark E. Quirk, Ed.D.*

*Transcript from Models That Work Conference.*

Faculty development “refers to those activities and programs that are intended to facilitate faculty members’ commitment to and ability to achieve both their own career goals and their institution’s goals.”<sup>9</sup> For faculty development programs to be successful, they must be cognizant of the organizational context within which their program runs. This is particularly true for local faculty development programs for if the key opinion leaders within the department/school are not supportive, your success and longevity will be limited. How can you gain and maintain the support of key opinion leaders and establish credibility within the organization? Our strategy has been to ask a series of questions based on the 4-frame organizational analysis model developed by Bolman and Deal.

Bolman and Deal’s<sup>10</sup> model emerged from a systematic review of the organizational literature. They determined that all of the organizational theories can be categorized as attending to one or more “frames”. These frames are like windows through which people observe and participate in the organization: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. The highlights distinguishing each frame are presented in the PowerPoint slide hand-out accompanying this introduction.

We have used this four-frame model to analyze our program with surprising findings. For example, we focus heavily on the human resources frame, providing faculty participants with the knowledge and skills identified through the literature as essential for success in academic medicine. We also attend to the symbolic frame seeking to create rituals, ceremonies, and lore about the program that are parallel to those for other esteemed activities.

For example, we present each graduate with a professionally designed fellowship certificate, complete with our own logo, at the annual department awards ceremony. We also have a tradition for each faculty development group of doing something unusual including going to baseball game to apply principles of instructional design and a field trip to a cybercafe to learn how to do simultaneous editing of manuscripts. Each of these trips has yielded their own “stories” that are passed throughout the department and build the esprit de corp of the group.

But what about organizational and political frames? As is typical, faculty developers tend to focus on the human resource frame and we had not explicitly thought about our program from these two frames. What we found, upon analysis, was that organizationally we needed to make explicit and increase our presence within the department’s structural hierarchy (e.g. title, reporting lines, presence of key standing and ad hoc committees). For example, while we had federal funding, we did not have a separate department supported budget line. When we examined ourselves from the political frame, we also found opportunities to strengthen our program. For example, we involved key department leaders in some of the programmatic decisions including participant recruitment, allocation of in-kind time for program staff and participants, and inclusion of faculty development program director or designee in the key decision-making coalitions within the department.

Based on our experience, analyzing your program from each of Bolman and Deal’s frames challenges you to think about your faculty development activities in powerful and productive ways. Not surprisingly, these ways of thinking are consistent with the characteristics of successful faculty develop-

---

ment programs outlined by Bland and Stritter.<sup>11</sup> For example, they argued that successful programs are lead by senior faculty (political frame) with appropriate titles/positions (organizational). Furthermore, programs must be designed based on the needs of the participants (human resource frame) and celebrate success (symbolic frame). So while thinking about characteristics of successful programs is not new, Bolman and Deal remind us to think about and address these characteristics from a multi-frame organizational perspective.



The organizational context of the Community Faculty Development Center (CFDC) at UMass is both regional and institutional. From a regional perspective, the Center addresses needs of, and receives direction from, 15 medical schools in the Northeast. Within UMass, the CFDC is a collaborative project involving the Departments of Family Medicine and Community Health, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, and the Office of Medical Education..

Botman and Deal's four frame model helps us understand the organizational features of the CFDC. The structural frame helps us focus on our strong short and long- term goal orientation and emphasis on representation of key stakeholders in the Institution and region. The political frame offers insight into our aim to influence policy at a regional and national level through our work with organizations (e.g., STFM, APA, HRSA). From the symbolic frame we can see the importance of the GNOME and teaching styles as anchor point concepts and our 'demonstration role-plays'

and 'interactive plenary' as signature teaching methods. Finally, the human resources frame is most helpful in understanding how our organization works. We rely on cooperative decision-making, power sharing, and equality at both the regional and institutional (interdepartmental) level.

The CFDC at LTMass represents a truly interdisciplinary, inter-institutional, regional approach to developing primary care preceptors in the Northeast.