

Perceptions of Pakistani University Students about Roles of Academics Engaged in Imparting Development Skills: Implications for Faculty Development

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Abstract

The roles of teachers in higher education are measured in terms of skills imparted to students for getting job. These roles could be strengthened through faculty development. The current study investigated perceptions of students about roles of teachers engaged in imparting development skills and discussed implications of their perceptions for faculty development. Data were collected from 1,100 students of six public and five private universities located in Punjab through a 30-item survey scale which was found reliable at 0.9481 Cronbach's alpha. Principal component factor analysis generated four factors namely intellectual development skills, personal development skills, professional development skills, and social development skills for which mean scores and correlations were calculated. One-sample t-test, independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were employed for significance and variance analysis. The study highlighted students' disagreement on the rating scale regarding faculty roles in imparting development skills. Social and personal development skills were in little bit better condition followed by professional development skills, whereas intellectual development skills appeared at the bottom. There is a high degree of need for faculty development at Pakistani universities to help teachers play their instructional, professional and organizational roles in imparting development skills to students as an implication of the study.

Key terms: Students' perceptions; Generic skills; Intellectual development skills; Personal development skills; Professional development skills; Social development skills; and Faculty development.

Introduction

Students are changing their perceptions about teaching and learning in higher education as a reflection of job market conditions (Lawrence & Sharma, 2002). Consequently, institutions of higher education are also experiencing a paradigm shift through emphasizing student-centered, problem-based, and process-oriented teaching (Sahu, 2002; Sohail & Daud, 2006) and reshaping the role of academics as those to facilitate learning rather than as experts of the specific field (Government of Pakistan, 2001; Nagy, 2006).

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One possible reason for this shift could be the commodification of higher education i.e. taking it as commodity (Lawrence & Sharma, 2002) and students as fee-paying customers (Gursoy & Umbreit, 2005; Henderson-King & Smith, 2006), buy education and select their courses like selecting commodities from the market (Lawrence & Sharma, 2002). This is what Levin (1993) reported students not as just passive recipients; rather key factors in shaping school outcomes as demanding customers (Dearing, 1997; Sun Microsystems Inc., 1998) causing a direct relationship between faculty rewards and the number of students who opt to attend their classes (Franz, 1998). This situation has led universities to honor students' perceptions about their teaching-learning process and give them right to evaluate the performance of their teachers (Lawrence & Sharma, 2002).

Another important basis for student-centered approach could be the growing number of working class students entering in higher education and they take university degree as a road to job security and financial self-sufficiency necessary for economic development (Henderson-King & Smith 2006). Therefore, universities are focusing on providing students what they need in job-market i.e. the generic skills or "range of qualities and capacities" (Hager, Holland, & Backett, 2002: 2) necessary for employability.

Huge literature on employability skills generated in almost two decades i.e. from Paul, Binker, Jensen, and Kreklau (1990) to Formo and Reed (2008), provides piles of these skills which can be grouped into intellectual development skills, personal development skills, professional development skills and social development skills.

In order to impart these skills to students, universities have no other options but to launch extensive programs for faculty development programs to fulfill this demand (Formo and Reed, 2008). Faculty development is a continuous process that leads to the personal growth and self-actualization (Shroyer, 1990) of faculty for improving their technical, human, and conceptual skills (Sisodia, 2000) to perform effectively at different positions within the university. This entire process is divided into three types of activities namely instructional, professional, and organizational development (Bell & Gilbert, 2004; California State University, 2007) of the faculty.

Keeping in view the value of development skills and students' opinion about roles of their teachers in terms of imparting these skills, the current study was designed to investigate perceptions of students of Pakistani universities about roles of their teachers engaged in imparting development skills; compare these perceptions of students in terms of factors of the survey scale to be identified through factor analysis; compare these perceptions of students in terms of gender, degree program, discipline, university, and sector as independent variables; and discuss implications of these perceptions of university students for faculty development. To pursue

these objectives, the study answered these questions:

1. What are the perceptions of students of Pakistani universities about roles of their teachers engaged in imparting development skills?
2. Is there any difference in the perceptions of students of Pakistani universities about roles of their teachers engaged in imparting development skills in terms of factors of the survey scale to be identified through factor analysis?
3. Is there any difference in the perceptions of students of Pakistani universities about roles of their teachers engaged in imparting development skills in terms of gender, degree program, discipline, university, and sector as independent variables?
4. What are the implications of perceptions of students of Pakistani universities about roles of their teachers engaged in imparting development skills for faculty development?

Methodology

The study is based on primary data collected from the students studying at graduate to PhD level in 36 (20 public and 16 private) universities of the province of Punjab, Pakistan, affiliated with Higher Education Commission (HEC). A multistage sampling technique was employed. At first, 30% stratified random sampling was used to select six out of twenty public universities and five out of sixteen private universities to ensure the same proportion of sample as it was in the population. At the next stage, one-third (20) faculties were randomly selected from (60) available faculties of sample universities. Then, one-third (44) departments were randomly selected from (117) available departments of sample faculties of the sample universities. At the end, a spectrum of 1,100 students, 25 from each sample department, constituted the sample as given in table 1. The public-private split was 900 and 200 students.

The first investigator explored, from literature review for his doctoral study, an inventory of 38 generic skills most demanded of the graduates in the job market and which successful universities (University of Canberra, 2003; University of Sydney, 2004; Truckee Meadows Community College, 2007) are imparting to their graduates. A focus group (Henderson-King & Smith, 2006) of three corporate HR managers, three university teachers and investigators of this study was conducted at the Department of Business Education, University of the Punjab, for content validity of the survey scale. After pilot testing, 30 items were selected for survey. The second and third investigators administered the survey during August-September 2008.

Table 1
University-wise Students' Sample

Sector	Universities	Faculties		Departments		Students	
		Total	Taken	Total	Taken		
P U B L I C	University of the Punjab (PU)	13	4	27	9	225	
	Lahore College for Women University (LCWU)	4	1	17	6	150	
	Govt. College University (GCU)	3	1	15	5	125	
	King Edward Medical University (KEMU)	5	2	18	6	150	
	Bahauddin Zakaria University (BZU)	7	2	13	4	100	
	University of Agriculture (AU)	6	2	17	6	150	
	Total public sector contribution						900
	P R I V A T E	Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS)	3	1	3	1	25
		University of Central Punjab (UCP)	5	2	2	2*	50
		University of Management and Technology (UMT)	3	1	1	1*	25
Superior University (SU)		5	2	2	2*	50	
GIFT University (GU)		6	2	2	2*	50	
Total private sector contribution						200	
Grand Total						1,100	

*Faculties based on single department

The responses were quantified as 5 for strongly agree; 4 for agree; 3 for not decided; 2 for disagree; and 1 for strongly disagree over faculty roles in imparting development skills in graduates by university faculty. Taking mean score 3.0 (Aksu, 2003) as the cut point, mean scores above 3.0 were taken as representing students' agreement over faculty roles in imparting development skills. Whereas mean scores 3.0 and below were taken as representing students' disagreement over faculty roles in imparting development skills. The higher the level of this agreement of students, the less would be the need for faculty development and vice versa as perceived by the researchers in figure 1 below.

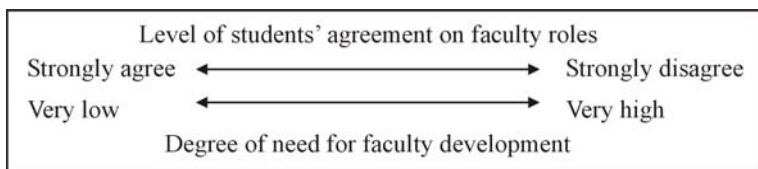


Figure 1: Faculty Roles Vs Need for Faculty Development

Principal component factor analysis was employed to explore the factors for development skills and mean scores and correlations were calculated for these factors. One-sample t-test, independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were employed for significance and variance analysis.

Results

The respondents included 437 males and 663 females. The degree program distribution revealed 522 respondents from graduate; 558 from Master; 17 from MPhil; and 3 from PhD. The discipline distribution revealed 500 respondents from social sciences; 225 from business; 150 from medical; 100 from IT; 75 from agriculture; and 50 from languages.

The principal component factor analysis generated four factors namely intellectual development skills, personal development skills, professional development skills, and social development skills as indicated in table 2 below.

Table 2
Principal Component Factor Analysis of Development Skills rotated by Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Factors with constituent variables	Factor Loading	Alpha	%age of Variance explained
Intellectual development skills (IDS)		0.944	29.007
Analytical ability	0.918		
Evaluation	0.914		
Knowledge development	0.910		
Diversity management	0.909		
Problem solving	0.906		
Critical thinking	0.906		
Assessment	0.903		
Knowledge management	0.901		
Learning	0.899		
Decision-making	0.889		
Personal development skills (PERDS)		0.783	21.671
Communication	0.912		
Teamwork	0.904		
Confidence	0.814		
Interpersonal affairs	0.809		
Information literacy	0.806		
Compare and contrast ability	0.791		
Workplace behavior	0.791		
Personality development	0.787		
Information and communication technology	0.645		
Professional development skills (PRDS)		0.765	20.534
Forecasting	0.914		
Conflict management	0.901		
Customer-service	0.887		
Fairness	0.648		
Leadership	0.629		
Job preparedness	0.566		
Professionalism	0.549		
Subject knowledge	0.545		
Social development skills (SDS)		0.745	19.987
Ethics	0.806		
Socialization	0.792		
Citizenship	0.576		

The factor loadings, alpha values and percentages of variance explained as given in table 2 indicate that these four factors namely intellectual development skills, personal development skills, professional development skills, and social development skills are significant.

Table 3 indicates that correlations intellectual development skills (IDS), personal development skills (PERDS), professional development skills (PRDS), and social development skills (SDS) are weak indicating that these factors are different from each other whereas the correlations of these factors with the whole scale for development skills (DS) are strong describing these factors as good components of the scale.

Table 3
Correlation of Factors with the Whole Scale for Development Skills

	IDS	PERDS	PRDS	SDS
DS (Development Skills)	0.895*	0.823*	0.826*	0.802*
IDS		0.442*	0.321*	0.248*
PERDS			0.309*	0.395*
PRDS				0.375*

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

A significant students' disagreement over faculty roles in imparting development skills is evident from mean scores for all the four factors as shown in table 4 where all the means are almost equal to 2.

Table 4
One-Sample Statistics for Development Skills Factors

Development Skills Factors	N	Mean	SD	<i>t-values</i>
Intellectual Development Skills	1100	2.26	1.05	-23.50*
Personal Development Skills	1100	2.42	0.69	-28.08*
Professional Development Skills	1100	2.39	0.78	-26.09*
Social Development Skills	1100	2.45	0.88	-20.84*

* $p < 0.05$

The intellectual development skills (2.26) factor was at the lowest position whereas social development skills (2.45) got a slight advantage over other factors.

A significant difference of opinion among male and female respondents over social development skills was observed (table 5) where males have expressed slightly higher intensity of disagreement over faculty roles in imparting development skills as compared with females.

Table 5 indicates that there was no difference of opinion among respondents over the poor state of affairs regarding other three categories of development skills.

Table 5

Independent Samples t-test against Gender for Development Skills Factors

Development Skills Factors	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-values
Intellectual Development Skills	Male	437	2.27	1.06	0.315
	Female	663	2.25	1.05	
Personal Development Skills	Male	437	2.41	0.70	-0.228
	Female	663	2.42	0.67	
Professional Development Skills	Male	437	2.37	0.80	-0.429
	Female	663	2.39	0.77	
Social Development Skills	Male	437	2.36	0.84	-2.657*
	Female	663	2.51	0.89	

* $p < 0.05$

There was a significant difference of opinion found among the respondents from different degree programs over their perceptions about roles of university faculty in imparting these development skills (table 6).

Table 6

One way ANOVA against Degree Programs for Development Skills Factors

Development Skills Factors		SS	MS	df	F
Intellectual Development Skills	BG	15.73	5.24	3	4.80*
	WG	1197.49	1.09	1096	
Personal Development Skills	BG	6.51	2.17	3	4.67*
	WG	509.45	0.47	1096	
Professional Development Skills	BG	8.38	2.79	3	4.63*
	WG	662.19	0.60	1096	
Social Development Skills	BG	5.71	1.90	3	2.49*
	WG	836.55	0.76	1096	

* $p < 0.05$

The Tukey's HSD post hoc test revealed that respondents from both Graduate and MPhil degree programs have expressed their significant higher intensity of disagreement over faculty roles in imparting intellectual development skills as compared with Master degree programs. Respondents from Graduate degree program have also shown similar concern regarding personal development skills, professional development skills and social development skills as compared with Master degree program.

In discipline category too, a significant difference of opinion among the respondents from different disciplines was found over their perceptions about the roles of university faculty in imparting development skills (table 7).

Table 7
One way ANOVA against Discipline for Development Skills Factors

Development Skills Factors		SS	MS	df	<i>F</i>
Intellectual Development Skills	BG	32.676	6.535	5	6.056*
	WG	1180.541	1.079	1094	
Personal Development Skills	BG	26.116	5.223	5	11.666*
	WG	489.844	0.448	1094	
Professional Development Skills	BG	27.226	5.445	5	9.26*
	WG	643.341	0.588	1094	
Social Development Skills	BG	34.294	6.859	5	9.287*
	WG	807.956	0.739	1094	

* $p < 0.05$

The Tukey's HSD post hoc test revealed that respondents from medical, agriculture and IT disciplines for intellectual development skills; from all other disciplines for personal and professional development skills; and from business, medical and IT disciplines for social development skills have expressed their significant higher intensity of disagreement over faculty roles in imparting these development skills as compared with respondents from social sciences.

The university analysis also revealed a significant difference of opinion among the respondents from different universities over their perceptions about roles of university faculty in imparting development skills (table 8).

Table 8
One way ANOVA against University for Development Skills Factors

Development Skills Factors		SS	MS	df	<i>F</i>
Intellectual Development Skills	BG	148.247	14.825	10	15.159*
	WG	1064.97	0.978	1089	
Personal Development Skills	BG	99.974	9.997	10	26.172*
	WG	415.986	0.382	1089	
Professional Development Skills	BG	118.349	11.835	10	23.339*
	WG	552.219	0.507	1089	
Social Development Skills	BG	112.869	11.287	10	16.852*
	WG	729.381	0.67	1089	

* $p < 0.05$

The Tukey's HSD post hoc test highlighted that respondents from all other universities have expressed their significant higher intensity of disagreement over roles of faculty in imparting intellectual development skills, personal development skills, professional development skills, and social development skills as compared with respondents from BZ University Multan.

Similarly, respondents from PU, KEMU and AU have expressed a similar concern for intellectual development skills; respondents from PU,

KEMU, SU, UCP, GU and AU for personal development skills; respondents from KEMU, GU and AU for professional development skills; and respondents from KEMU, UMT, GU and AU for social development skills as compared with respondents from LCWU. Respondents from KEMU and GU also have expressed such concern for social development skills as compared with respondents from GCU.

The sector analysis too, indicated a significant difference of opinion among respondents from public and private sectors over their perceptions about roles of university faculty in imparting development skills (table 9).

Table 9
Independent Samples t-Test against Sector for Development Skills Factors

Development Skills Factors	Sector	N	Mean	SD	t-values
Intellectual Development Skills	Public	900	2.30	1.06	2.99*
	Private	200	2.06	0.99	
Personal Development Skills	Public	900	2.46	0.70	4.25*
	Private	200	2.24	0.58	
Professional Development Skills	Public	900	2.43	0.80	3.63*
	Private	200	2.21	0.67	
Social Development Skills	Public	900	2.50	0.89	4.14*
	Private	200	2.22	0.79	

* $p < 0.05$

The respondents from private sector universities have expressed their significant higher intensity of disagreement over faculty roles in imparting intellectual development skills, personal development skills, professional development skills, and social development skills as compared with respondents from public sector universities.

Discussion

The first research question of the current study was, “What are perceptions of students of Pakistani universities about roles of their teachers engaged in imparting development skills?” The findings of the study have revealed a range of mean scores for all the 30 items of the scale between 2.98 and 2.14. All of these means fall in rejection region. It means that students perceived the roles of their teachers in terms of imparting development skills as unsatisfactory and university education fails to prepare them for job markets. These findings are consistent with Lawrence and Sharma (2002), Sultana (2004) and Khan (2005). These findings provide answer to the first question that leads to the achievement of first objective of the study.

The second research question was, “Is there any difference in the perceptions of students of Pakistani universities about roles of their teachers

engaged in imparting development skills in terms of factors of the survey scale to be identified through factor analysis?" The factor analysis generated four factors namely intellectual development skills, personal development skills, professional development skills, and social development skills. Intellectual development skills involve generating new knowledge and understanding through research, and using it for problem solving and transmitting the same with confidence. Personal development skills include thinking for change, challenging the status quo, continuous self-growth, and confidence in all above. Professional development skills include demonstrating entrepreneurial skills, innovation and creativity, and performance in a diverse culture. Social development means working for improvement of society, understanding prevalent social systems in international scenarios, recognizing obligation to social justice, exhibiting approved mannerism, and community service as the basic philosophy of profession. This elaboration of these factors is in line with the philosophy given by UC (2003), USyd (2004) and TMCC (2007).

These factors or sub-scales (Aksu, 2003) have been found significant with factor loadings ranging from (0.918) to (0.545), alpha values (0.944), (0.783), (0.765), and (0.745) respectively and percentages of variance explained i.e. (29.007), (21.671), (20.534), and (19.987) respectively (Gursoy & Umbreit, 2005). The correlations within these factors were weak and correlations of these factors with overall scale is strong that further enhance their significance.

The findings of the study showed students pointing out teachers of universities not playing their satisfactory roles in imparting development skills as mean scores for all the four factors are nearly equal to 2 and fall in rejection region. In this adverse situation, social development skills (2.45) have shown little bit better position as compared with personal development skills (2.42), professional development skills (2.39), and intellectual development skills (2.26) that stood at the lowest position. This could be the reason that Pakistani university graduates are facing problems in entering the job market. One possible reason of this situation might be the inability of faculty of universities (Sultana, 2004; Khan, 2005; Zieber, 2006; Tierney, 2008) to understand and play their mandatory roles in imparting these development skills. These findings provide answer to the second question leading to the achievement of second objective.

The third question of the study was, "Is there any difference in the perceptions of students of Pakistani universities about roles of their teachers engaged in imparting development skills in terms of gender, degree program, discipline, university, and sector as independent variables?" Male and female respondents have shown significant difference of opinion among over social development skills only where males have expressed higher intensity of disagreement over faculty roles in imparting development skills

as compared with females. One possible reason of this tendency could be the fact that male graduates are more concerned with their ability to enter and survive in the job market as they have no other option but to be the source of economic protection for their families. Both male and female graduates have consensus over the poor state of affairs regarding other factors of development skills.

After that, in the analysis of the degree programs, respondents from Graduate and MPhil degree programs have expressed their significant higher intensity of disagreement over faculty roles in imparting intellectual development skills as compared with respondents from Master degree programs. Respondents from Graduate degree program have also shown similar concern regarding personal development skills, professional development skills and social development skills as compared with Master degree program. One possible cause of this tendency may be the higher intensity of emphasis of faculty on the Master degree program being their main obligation hence compromising with other programs.

Then the analysis of the discipline has revealed respondents from medical, agriculture and IT disciplines expressing their higher intensity of disagreement over faculty roles in imparting intellectual development skills as compared with respondents from social sciences. Respondents from business, medical, IT, agriculture, and languages have expressed their higher intensity of disagreement over faculty roles in imparting personal and professional development skills against social sciences. Similarly, respondents from business, medical and IT disciplines have expressed higher intensity of disagreement over faculty roles in imparting social development skills as compared with respondents from social sciences. This tendency may reflect the higher level of consciousness and professionalism of students of business, medical, IT, agriculture, and languages disciplines against those from social sciences.

Similarly, university analysis has revealed that respondents from all other universities have expressed their higher intensity of disagreement over faculty roles in imparting intellectual development skills, personal development skills, professional development skills, and social development skills in students by university faculty as compared with respondents from BZU. This tendency may reflect the relative responsiveness of the faculty of BZU for imparting development skills in students as compared with the faculty of other universities. Similarly, respondents from PU, KEMU and AU have expressed a similar concern for intellectual development skills; respondents from PU, KEMU, SU, UCP, GU and AU for personal development skills; respondents from KEMU, GU and AU for professional development skills; and respondents from KEMU, UMT, GU and AU also have expressed their similar concern for social development skills as compared with respondents from LCWU. This tendency too may reflect the

relative responsiveness of the faculty of LCWU for imparting development skills in students as compared with the faculty of other universities. Respondents from KEMU and GU also have expressed such concern for social development skills as compared with respondents from GCU. This trend may also reflect the same previous cause.

At the end, the sector analysis has shown respondents from private sector expressing higher intensity of disagreement over faculty roles in imparting development skills as compared with those from public sector. This tendency may reflect the relative responsiveness of the public sector faculty as compared with that of private sector university faculty. The university analysis also supports this argument where private sector respondents have expressed higher intensity of disagreement with the statements. Though LUMS, a brand name in private sector, is also included in this list but the number of respondents (25) from LUMS was too small in the total respondents (200) from the private sector to show any significant difference. Another possible cause of better performance of public sector could be its higher contribution in the sample size (900) as compared with that of private sector (200).

The above comparison of perceptions of students about faculty roles in imparting development skills in terms of gender, degree program, discipline, university, and sector as independent variables has clearly revealed their disagreement over the roles of faculty in this regard. These findings provide answer to the third question that leads to the fulfillment of third objective.

The fourth research question of the study was, "What are the implications of perceptions of students of Pakistani universities about roles of their teachers engaged in imparting development skills for faculty development?" The findings of the study have revealed dissatisfaction of university students studying in different degree programs launched by these universities in their different disciplines. These findings are consistent with Muirhead (2002), Knaper and Cropley (2000), Zohar and Dori, (2003), Sultana (2004), Crebert et al. (2004), and Khan (2005). It means that teachers of universities are not playing their instructional, professional, and organizational roles (DeRuntz & Meier, 2004; Clayton & Ash, 2005; Sim, 2005; Fink, (2006; Lasley, Sciedentop, & Yinger, 2006; Zieber, 2006; Doyle, 2008; Tierney, 2008) satisfactorily. This tendency may reflect lack of instructional, professional and organizational competencies of the faculty.

Faculty lacks instructional competencies failing to deliver the latest content through appropriate delivery methods using state of the art technologies and correctly evaluate their level of success. They fail to make abrupt changes in their behavior for playing instructional roles keeping themselves updated (Camblin & Steger, 2000; Clayton & Ash, 2005). Instructional deficiencies reflect the weak professionalism of the faculty of universities as the professional development may have a positive correlation

with their instructional achievements (DeRuntz & Meier, 2004). The weak professionalism of faculty in return speaks deficient organizational development necessary for a faculty member to be the effective member of university community (Al-Turki & Duffuaa, 2003).

Resultantly, students are not agreed with the statements on roles of faculty in imparting development skills. As laid down in the procedure, this was the set rule that the higher the level of this agreement of students, the less would be the need for faculty development and vice versa. The findings of the study revealed mean scores for the four factors of development skills nearly 2 that indicate a high need for faculty development at universities of Pakistan in terms of instructional, professional, and organizational development. This is the answer to the last question and here the fourth objective is achieved.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Students perceive universities unsuccessful to make faculty play their roles in imparting to them intellectual, personal, professional, and social development skills. This situation reflects lack of instructional, professional and organizational competencies of the faculty of universities. Resultantly, students are worried to cope with the tough demands of job market where they are supposed to compete with local as well as international contestants. Offshore availability of higher education is accelerating the gravity of the situation and it would become hard for local universities to attract and retain students for their economic self-sufficiency. Therefore, serious and scrupulous initiatives are needed by universities for development of faculty to improve upon this situation. Every university must have a unit that could handle the growing faculty development need to fulfill the job market demands. For this purpose, this unit should assume the charge of developing faculty in all the three components i.e. instructional, professional, and organizational development.

In instructional development, the major emphasis should be on course content; teaching strategies; presentation, evaluation, and feed-back skills. Though delivery and assessment are important features of instruction but course content is the basic of all which most development initiatives usually ignore. Novice teachers and even seniors are usually reluctant to teach new or revised courses and hence obsolete content is delivered to students. To keep the water white and fresh, refresher courses have no other substitute. Instructional development is linked with professional development that may cover academic research and career development initiatives. Therefore, faculty may be engaged in learning research, researching new trends and issues in university teaching and state of the art career development skills to strengthen the professional development component. Similarly, to make the

academics effective members of university community, a variety of activities such as mentoring, and stress management should be emphasized.

These overlapping initiatives may help faculty of universities survive and thrive through different layers of their academic career.

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