

From the desk of
Matthew Farber

TO: Edward Chayo

FROM: Matthew Farber

DATE: August 16, 2013

SUBJECT: EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT STIPEND RECOMMENDATION

Findings

Lecturers in the Communication Arts Department at the University at Bangkok were hired to share their expertise from their professional disciplines. Lecturers with a Master's Degree, one year of University experience, and positive teaching evaluations were offered financial assistance to pursue further training. The Teaching Effectiveness Questionnaire was used to assess student feedback.

The analyzed results from lecturers should fall in line with the job's expectations. Mr. Kwanta's evaluations, for instance, show that he is a knowledge expert who exhibited strong organizational skills. Data implies that care and time were taken to draft his syllabus and to prepare the delivery of the instructional content. As an expert lecturer, Mr. Kwanta was able to present engaging lectures and provide feedback on a timely basis. A majority of his students reported that they would recommend his class.

It is not clear if lecturers, such as Mr. Kwanta, understood that students expected their professional duties to transcend direct instruction. Academic rankings at the university level include a variety of titles, such as professor, instructor, and lecturer. Each title implies certain expectations and limitations. For example, an adjunct professor's responsibilities can include the "teaching and advising of students but do not include service on departmental committees" ("Classification of Ranks and Titles," 2007). Mr. Kwanta's inaccessibility to meet one-on-one with students may be in line with his expectations of his role. It is not reasonable to expect a lecturer to exceed the group mean for the three questions that pertain to student interactions.

The findings also suggest further shortcomings in the questionnaire's utility as a universal survey tool. For instance, the student's current academic year was not assessed. University freshman may be more accustomed to direct teacher involvement that is typical in high school settings. Furthermore, the language fluency of the lecturer was not gauged. Recently hired lecturers were both of Thai origin and from international backgrounds. A lecturer may have been comfortable speaking and writing in Thai only when there was the opportunity to prepare in advance of class meetings.

Conclusions

Hiring lecturers to supplement the Communication Arts Department staff came at a cost to the quality of instruction expected from the student population. The students expect that all teaching staff, regardless of title, should have the same instructional capabilities and language fluencies as other faculty. The University can satisfy this need by training all lecturers to mentor students on a more individualized basis. Furthermore, the current Teaching Effectiveness Questionnaire is showing its limitations as a universal student feedback survey tool. It was not designed to assess varying ranks and tiers of teaching faculty who have varying roles, responsibilities, expectations, and backgrounds.

Recommendations

The University can meet student expectations by making adjustments to accommodate the new and different ranks of teaching faculty. To grow as an institution, the University should:

1. Deliver a consistent learning experience for all students. This recommendation can be accommodated by:
 - Defining the specific roles and duties of a lecturer, compared to other instructional staff (e.g., professors, adjuncts).
 - Informing the student population what to expect from a lecturer's stated role.
 - Providing the financial benefit to all qualified lecturers to improve their teaching abilities beyond direct instruction.
2. Create role-specific teacher effectiveness questionnaires. This can be accomplished by:
 - Creating different survey questions that pertain to the variety of instructional roles.
 - Inquiring the academic year of the surveyed students.
 - Assessing the language fluency of the lecturer, compared to the students.
3. Reward Mr. Kwanta the financial assistance for advanced professional training. Mr. Kwanta should not have been expected to have the same teaching expertise as other faculty members who were hired for their mentoring abilities. Furthermore, he met all of the qualifications to win the benefit.

References

Classification of Ranks and Titles. (2007, April 18). Retrieved August 13, 2013 from

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Kuiper, S. (2010). *Contemporary business report writing* (4th ed.). Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning.