

# Department Chair and School Director Professional Development Needs Assessment Survey: Executive Summary

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July, 2002

## **Background**

- Bowling Green State University (BGSU) Provost John Folkins contracted with the Institute for Psychological Research and Application to design a comprehensive training needs assessment for the positions of department chair and school director. The primary objective of the project was to identify important training needs pertaining to academic unit leadership and administration as well as training issues specific to their responsibilities as a chair/director at BGSU.

## **Development and Deployment of Survey Instrument**

- A professional development training needs assessment survey was developed based on a comprehensive literature review, department chair training programs from other universities, and in-depth structured interviews with current BGSU chairs and directors.
- All chairs, directors, deans, and associate deans were invited to complete the survey.

## **The key findings of the survey are:**

- The most important issues for performance as a chair/director are faculty issues, professional development of the chair, development within the department/program, and communication skills.
- The most critical training needs are in budgeting and resources, dealing with faculty performance and relationship issues, and understanding legal policies and procedures.
- Considering both importance to the job and perceived training need, the areas of training that might be expected to have the most impact are budgets/funding, faculty issues, legal issues, and chair professional development.
- Round-table moderated discussions are the preferred training format.
- Half-day training sessions and fall and summer semesters are the preferred training schedules.

## **Based on these findings, several recommendations are offered:**

- Training sessions should be implemented for department chairs and school directors, with an initial focus in the areas of budgets, legal issues, and personnel management related to faculty.
- A policies and procedures manual containing deadlines, key contacts, and other important information would meet several of the training needs for chairs/directors.
- Half-day training sessions involving round-table moderated discussions have been successful training format options at other universities and are preferred by BGSU chairs and directors. Hands-on experience with budget reports may also be beneficial.
- A peer mentoring network for chairs and directors should be established to discuss unfamiliar issues not addressed in training sessions or the recommended policies and procedures manual and to provide ongoing support for chairs/directors throughout the year.