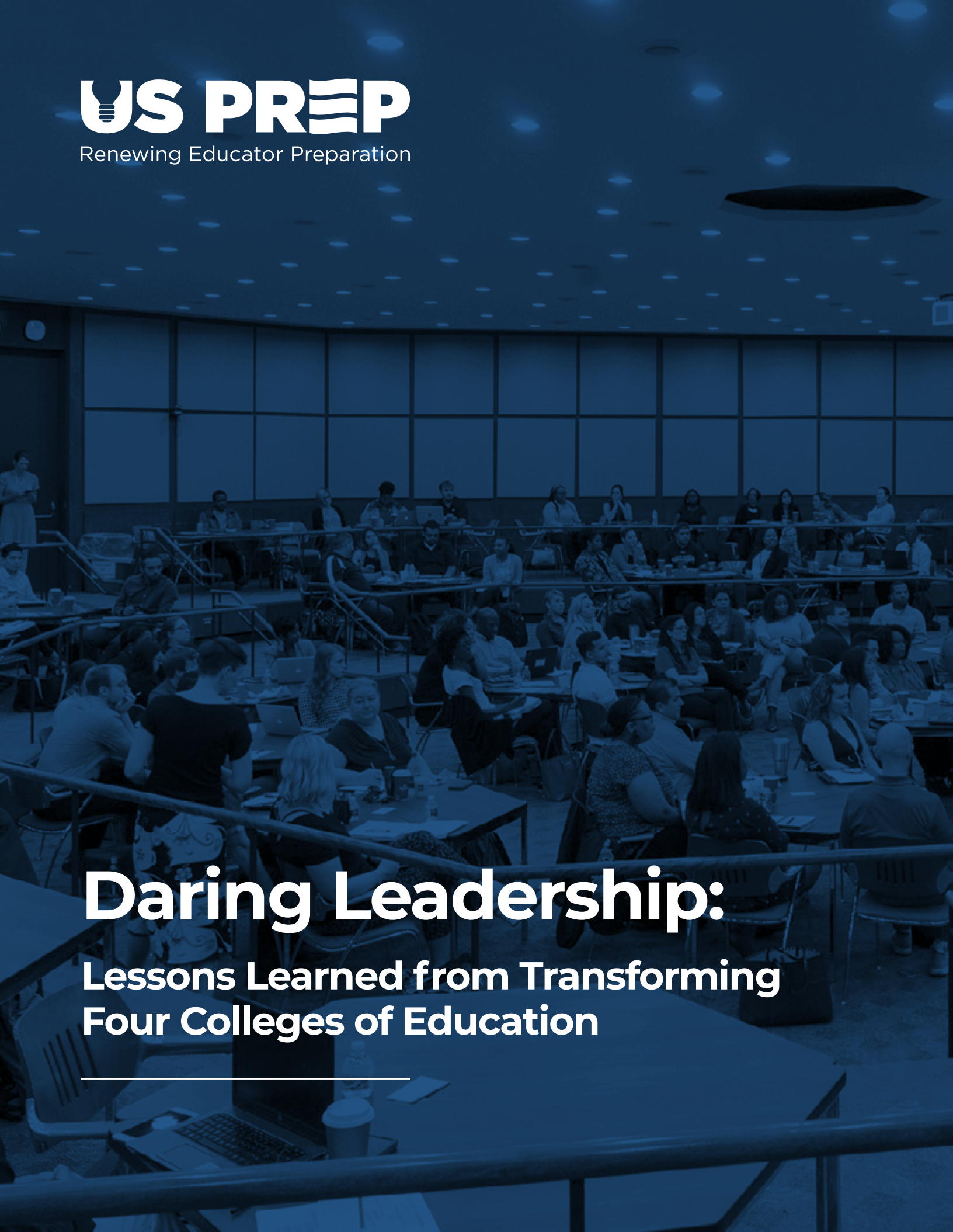
US PREP
Renewing Educator Preparation



Daring Leadership:

Lessons Learned from Transforming Four Colleges of Education

Contents

By sharing their institutional context and exploring the issues these deans have already grappled with, we hope to support other institutions to find the inspiration and insight they need to embark on their own process of transformation.

INTRODUCTION:

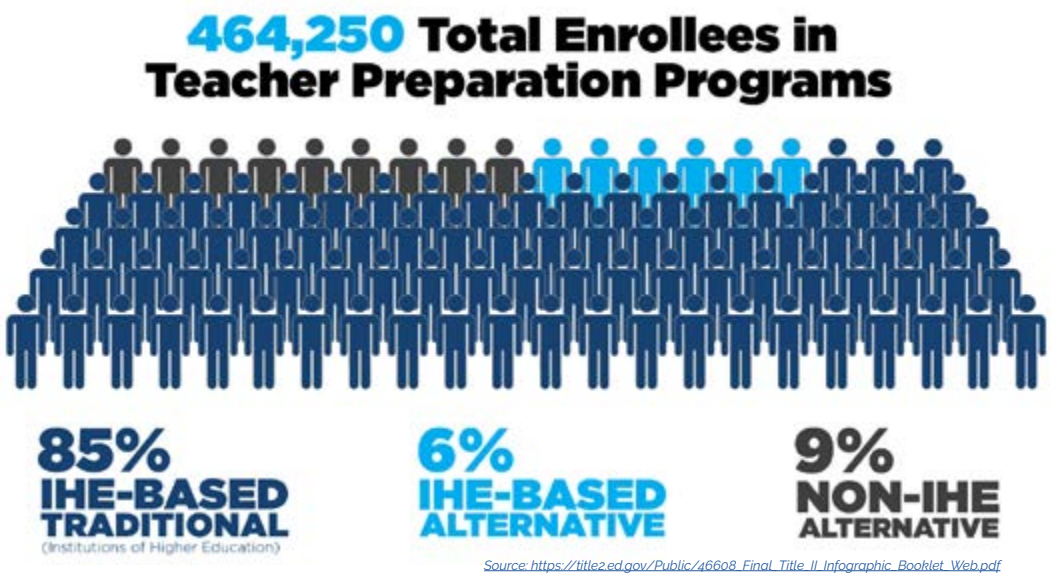
Universities in the United States prepare the vast majority of America's teachers.

However, as the needs of our students, schools, and teachers themselves have changed, so too is the way that we organize our schools of education.

Increasing demands on teachers and focus on the quality of their preparation -- combined with declining enrollment in many teacher preparation programs -- have come to a head in colleges of education. **"The question is not whether educator preparation programs should adapt but how and when they will,"** note researchers at Education First, highlighting forces such as extended clinical practice requirements, deeper partnerships with K-12 schools, evaluations of teacher performance and impact on student achievement. **"Many states are beginning to align educator program requirements to [new] standards, and increasing numbers of preparation programs are engaged in the process of redesign."**

While there is some literature on change management in higher education and some on how teaching in K-12 is changing, there is comparatively little about the intersection of these fields in our schools of education. However, focused attention on leading change in teacher education is especially critical today, as it overlaps with and impacts both the K-12 and higher education systems.

This paper is an attempt to bridge that gap, by addressing the leadership challenges and experiences of four universities that are undergoing transformation of their teacher education programs: Jackson State University in Mississippi, Southeastern Louisiana University in Louisiana, and the University of Houston and Texas Tech University in Texas. They are among the universities that University-School Partnership for the Renewal of Educator Preparation (US PREP) has been working alongside since 2015 to better attract, train, and retain high-quality, racially diverse teachers for underserved communities across the country -- and to ensure their candidates are ready to teach effectively on day one.



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Support from US PREP -- and from other universities in the coalition -- has helped these institutions continue their progress forward; nevertheless, the change process has been challenging. The deans of these programs have identified five primary problems of practice around which they have learned lessons and have insights to share:

1. **Building Capacity**
2. **Building Support**
3. **Building Productive Partnerships with K-12 Schools**
4. **Making Change Last by Changing University Policies**
5. **Leveraging External Forces**

By sharing their institutional context and exploring the issues these deans have already grappled with, we hope to support other institutions to find the inspiration and insight they need to embark on their own process of transformation.

> When assessing your personal disposition and stamina, keep in mind that ambitious change of a college or department is a multi-year marathon and not a one-semester sprint.

Robert McPherson
University of Houston

FIELD CONTEXT:
A Brief Review of the Literature

Although many teacher preparation programs are redesigning their coursework and clinical practice to address the needs of today's teachers -- and of students in our K-12 schools -- there is relatively little research on how these leaders are grappling with this change.

For example, scholars of change in higher education urge attention to the institutional context and balancing that with strategic leadership that motivates staff toward change. According to Boyce (2003), **"Those in higher education committed to successful institutional change should be rigorous in inquiry, skillful in dialogue, utilize action learning, and fearless in examining the institution in the context of its environment to embed changes in institutional structures, systems, and cultures."**[1] Likewise, Ong (2012) found **"the need for university leaders to acknowledge the human dimension in the process of achieving their corporate goals"** including managing and motivating staff, ensuring academic freedom, and responding to competing tensions while also maintaining institutional quality and providing effective leadership.[2]

A few research studies have delved into this issue within the context of teacher education. For example, Sloan (2013) found that the implementation of a new teacher performance assessment at University of California Santa Barbara required creating or managing structures to support greater collaboration across faculty, increased articulation between program courses and fieldwork, and the importance of a culture of inquiry with conversations grounded in evidence.[3] Tanguay et al. (2019) also emphasized the importance of collegiality, shared decision-making, and clear and open communication within the institution in a similar examination of implementing teacher performance assessment in the state of Georgia.[4]

In addition, several scholars have explored how teacher preparation programs use data to drive programmatic improvement. For example, Dolle (2018) examined how "improvement science" is enhancing new teacher preparation in the California State University System; because **"research often presents a mixed and incomplete picture, missing the knowledge necessary for replication of quality outcomes across diverse contexts"** and accountability focuses too much on incentives rather than knowledge. Improvement science operates on the theory **"that substantial, sustained improvement is most likely to result from sustained inquiry into the way a program produces its current outcomes, inquiry that includes 'testing' specific changes that could lead to better outcomes."**[5] Toon and Jensen (2017) highlight what a "community of practice" of teacher preparation programs and their K-12 district partners learned about creating partnerships to reform teacher preparation, including how to form those partnerships, the roles of districts and preparation providers in creating these partnerships, their use of K-12 curriculum, and their use of data and improvement cycles to improve how they train prospective teachers.[6]

Several scholars have examined these issues within individual programs. Sloan (2015) examined the organizational structures that facilitated faculty learning and change at University of California Santa Barbara, including regular collaborative retreats for data analysis, bringing private and small group work into the public space by leadership, a distributed leadership approach to the implementation work, and attention to new policies and assessment tools as they make their way into teacher education.[7] McDiarmid (2019) found that shared leadership of leaders and faculty in examining data, measuring teacher candidate quality, and improving preparation programs were all vital at University of North Carolina:

> ***Faculty require data at the program component or experience level to know what needs to be changed, In the absence of such finer-grained data, faculty are far less likely to take individual responsibility for the results. Seeing their fingerprints on the evidence engages their moral commitment to their students and to the mission of preparing teachers ready for the challenges of the classroom."***[8]

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1 Boyce, M. E. (2003). Organizational Learning Is Essential to Achieving and Sustaining Change in Higher Education. Innovative Higher Education, 28(2), 119–136.
2 Ong, V. Y. S. (2012). Complexities of multiple paradigms in higher education leadership today. *Journal of Global Management*, 4(1), 91-100
3 Sloan, T. (2013). Distributed Leadership and Organizational Change: Implementation of a Teaching Performance Measure. *The New Educator*, 9(1), 29–53.
4 Tanguay, C. L., Many, J. E., Ariail, M., Bhatnagar, R., & Emerson, J. (2019). An Organic Model for edTPA Exploration and Implementation. In K. Winter, H. Pinter, & M. Watson (Eds.), *Performance-Based Assessment in 21st Century Teacher Education* (pp. 42-80). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
5 Dolle, Jonathan, et al. "Improvement Science in Teacher Preparation at California State University." (2018). Retrieved from https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/resource-improvement-science-in-teacher-preparation-at-california-state-university.pdf
6 Toon, D., Jensen, B, & Cooper, S. (2017). Teaching our teachers: A better way. Retrieved from http://learningfirst.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2columnsPaper4.pdf
7 Sloan, T.F. Data and learning that affords program improvement: a response to the U.S. accountability movement in teacher education. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice* 14, 259–271 (2015).
8 McDiarmid, G. W. (2019). Competing Theories for Improving Teacher Preparation Programs: The Case of North Carolina. *ECNU Review of Education*, 2(2), 117–136.

Finally, Mandinach & Gummer (2018) examined **"the increasing pressures and emphases to improve institutional functioning to produce quality graduates ready to enter the teaching profession"** and found that **"programs function amid complex systems with structures and organizations such as accreditation agencies and standard-setting bodies on one end of a continuum of drives for improvement and schools and districts as the recipients of their graduates at the other end."**[9] Indeed, the lessons and stories shared in this paper will cover many of the same themes, but explore them in greater depth within the context of four very different university-based teacher preparation programs that have all been in the process of significant redesign to ensure that every single one of the teachers they graduate is ready for the classroom on day one.

ABOUT US PREP

University-School Partnerships for the Renewal of Educator Preparation (US PREP) is a national collaborative of more than 20 teacher preparation institutions.

The mission of the collaborative is to attract, train and retain high-quality, racially diverse teachers for underserved communities across the country and ensure they are ready to teach effectively on day one. These preparation programs are transforming their approaches to ensure teacher candidates can meet ALL students where they are and advance their learning by giving them what they need —especially historically underserved students.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS INCLUDE:

- Shared expectations for teacher candidates across the faculty, which are reinforced through practice-based coursework and clinical fieldwork
- Strong district partnerships with historically underserved schools that include shared decision-making, aligned expectations for candidate preparation, regular sharing of data, and coordinated recruitment, placement, and hiring processes that reflect the needs of the district
- Site coordinators that help bridge the university (faculty/instructor coursework) and the district (selecting/coaching mentors, selecting sites, placing students)
- A year-long clinical experience that allows teacher candidates to experience a complete school year, including strong supervision, regular feedback from trained mentor teachers, coaching, and professional development
- Consistent use of a teacher candidate evaluation instrument to measure teacher candidates' competencies and implementation of standards-aligned instruction
- Commitment to using data for continuous improvement

9. Mandinach, E. B., & Gummer, E. (Eds.). (2018). Data for Continuous Programmatic Improvement: Steps Colleges of Education Must Take to Become a Data Culture. Routledge.

PROGRAM CONTEXT:

About the Institutions Highlighted in This Publication

Jackson State University, Southeastern Louisiana University, University of Houston, and Texas Tech University are part of the inaugural cohort of university-based teacher preparation programs in the US PREP coalition. Though they are all located in the southern part of the country, that is in some ways where their similarities end. Each program entered the process of transforming their teacher preparation programs in 2015 after a long history of preparing teachers, with some, such as Jackson State University, even playing a key role on campus as one of their university's flagship programs.

University	Year Founded	Location	Total Enrollment (College of Education)	# of Teacher Graduates/Year (College of Education)
Jackson State University (JSU)	1877	Jackson, MS	998	45
Southeastern Louisiana University	1925	Hammond, LA	416	147
Texas Tech University (TTU)	1923	Lubbock, TX	1,001	376
University of Houston (UH)	1927	Houston, TX	930	358

In that time, of course, these programs had continually evolved, with many changes and successes that required adding or removing courses. For example, just a few decades earlier, the federal No Child Left Behind act required that teacher preparation programs concentrate more on content than pedagogy. However, as noted above, recent shifts seemed to be swinging the pendulum back again toward more clinical practice with instruction, including longer apprenticeships and demonstrations of teaching effectiveness for teacher candidates prior to earning their degrees and credentials.

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Increasingly, these teacher preparation programs have struggled with declining enrollment due to a range of factors, including increased competition with other organizations. **"Recruiting students into undergraduate teacher education programs has become more difficult in recent years. School shootings, low pay, too much testing, and canned curricula have become turnoffs, and students are finding other careers,"** explains Paula Calderon, Dean of the College of Education at Southeastern Louisiana University. **"Universities are competing with private providers offering alternative certification programs to on-the-job uncertified teachers. These teacher candidates are employed full time and receiving a paycheck while undergraduates are not."**

Likewise, Jackson State University (JSU) had noticed not only a decline in enrollment but that prospective teacher candidates were struggling to pass the Praxis I CORE exam required for initial admission to JSU's Teacher Preparation Program. This is a national challenge: the National Council on Teacher Quality recently found that more candidates fail than pass on their first attempt, and a quarter are never able to earn a passing score, with even greater challenges among candidates of color. **"The dean and other key leaders and faculty recognized the need to not only address the reduction in enrollment of highly qualified candidates, but also to provide greater support to students pre- and post-admission to the teacher preparation program,"** says Dr. Chandar Lewis, Director of the Center for Teacher Quality at JSU. **"Were we effectively preparing them for the 'real world' of teaching? When doing a true program reflection, we had to be completely transparent with ourselves and honestly answer: there was room for improvement."**

Other teacher preparation programs were affected by broader university shifts, such as the pursuit of the Research One designation (a Carnegie definition) at Texas Tech University (TTU) and University of Houston (UH). **"Twenty-five years ago, there was much less of an emphasis on doing research. The culture has really changed,"** explains Robin Lock, former interim Dean at TTU and a longtime professor of special education there. **"There's been a much greater emphasis on the need for everyone to be conducting research and dissemination, and that's being rewarded through merit pay and other types of recognition."** This focus on external funding and recognition extended to the hiring of faculty with narrower expertise, communicated to new faculty right from the start through offer letters specifying an expected level of federal research funding, and at some universities was structurally supported by offices that provided boilerplate language and tools to make it easier for faculty to apply for grants.

Despite these shifts, faculty at many of these programs generally felt that things were fine, with little impetus to change much. **"Our teacher education program has historically been well above average relative to other programs in the state,"** says Robert McPherson, Dean of the College of Education at UH, with a teacher shortage in the university's fast-growing metropolitan area making it relatively easy for students to find teaching jobs after graduation. **"Area superintendents and their personnel directors report that they are positively biased towards our graduates because they come well-prepared to teach in their first year and are most likely to remain in the classroom some seven years after graduation."** As a result, notes McPherson, **"faculty were generally content to do business as usual."**

Still, other leaders often disagreed. For example, at around the time McPherson became dean, the Texas legislature had recently mandated that some of its universities (including UH) pursue top-tier research designations in order to access critical state funds; UH was asked to participate in an inspectorate visit through the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) and TPI-US, which revealed a number of areas for improvement. **"We are not as bad as some would have us to believe, but we are not nearly as good as some of us would like to believe,"** the newly appointed dean told his faculty at an early meeting.

However, when viewed as pitting administrators and leadership against faculty, these transformation efforts have sometimes led to volatile reactions. **"Some deans were met with suspicion, some open opposition, and in the extreme case, a calculated effort to remove the dean via a faculty-inspired student and community leader letter-writing campaign addressed to the university's president and board of regents, then followed by an onslaught of anonymous but unfounded complaints submitted to the university's institutional whistle blowing website,"** says McPherson.

On many campuses, even the expectation of gathering, analyzing, and sharing data was met with hesitation. At JSU, departments collected data but rarely shared them, which led to improvement decisions based on **"flawed perceptions rather than factual needs,"** notes Lewis. As such, findings from inspection visits by TPI-US and the Individual Transformation Plans they co-developed with US PREP were met with **"attitudes ranging from reluctance to hostility initially distracted from producing a plan that could effectively move us forward,"** she recalls.

At JSU and elsewhere, the focus had begun to shift from enrolled students to the responsibility of the program. **"Before, discussions around performance always blamed the students, not the program. The perceived shift was that we started looking at the quality of instruction and what we were doing to ensure students were successful,"** says Lewis. **"The faculty interpreted this focus as an attack and a preconceived assessment that they were individually and collectively inadequate at preparing teacher candidates effectively."**

This tension provoked frustration in some places, but in general helped compel leaders to move forward with programmatic change. **"People who'd been here for a long time believed that what they were doing was right and excellent, and how dare others not accept that?"** agrees Lock of TTU. **"We asked: then why are so many schools failing? Looking at data makes it hard to continue to argue that the status quo is working."**

PROBLEMS OF PRACTICE

Problem of Practice #1: Building Capacity

Assess Capacity - Including Your Own

The first step toward any institutional change begins with the leader in charge determining who has the capacity, responsibility, authority, and skills to do the work -- in other words, managing people. **"Remind yourself often that as 'The Dean,' you are simply a middle manager in a large and complex bureaucratic enterprise,"** says Robert McPherson of UH. **"Among your many duties and responsibilities, a primary task is recruiting, developing, and retaining faculty talent. Deans who forget this responsibility are unlikely to remain in their role long, or will at least incur the long-term wrath of disgruntled faculty."**

Part of this analysis must be a self-assessment of the dean and their own leadership style and capabilities. **"When assessing your personal disposition and stamina, keep in mind that ambitious change of a college or department is a multi-year marathon and not a one-semester sprint,"** says McPherson.

On his own campus, McPherson recognized that his work would be far more effective if he empowered program leaders rather than micromanaging them. He quickly installed Dr. Amber Thompson as Associate Chair of Teacher Preparation and Dr. Shea Culpepper as Director of Teacher Education and worked to insulate them from barriers such as angry superintendents who were frustrated not to receive student teachers when the newly redesigned program began to consolidate placement sites to fewer districts and campuses.

However, sometimes such a hands-off leadership style can be a mixed blessing. While this approach allowed people to operate within their skill sets and learn how to come up with strategies, this leadership style can also result in the perception that the work was not a priority. Faculty who are engaging in the work of transformation need direct and frequent affirmation from college leaders. **"Transformation is one of those things where you can't just light a match and walk away,"** says Lewis. **"You need to actively manage the fire."**

When he entered his position as TTU Dean, the late Scott Ridley was ready to manage that fire. Based on his work at Arizona State University as a former site coordinator and Associate Dean there, he was ready to make significant changes in Texas. **"He could see that kids in impoverished neighborhoods had the most ill-equipped teachers, truly believed that we had to try some drastic measures to change teacher education to change what was happening in schools -- and was willing to take risks without concern for where it would leave him personally,"** says Lock of TTU. **"He was tremendously confident and he began to look for other deans, faculty, and partners who were like-minded and ready to take a chance to change what was going on in teacher preparation."**

Manage Up - and Sideways

Ridley's outreach included routine meetings with the Provost and the President to thoroughly describe the pitfalls he knew the plan would face: declining enrollment, decreased student credit hours (due to other work commitments and financial aid restrictions that require students to be enrolled in at least 12 hours), dissension with colleagues, and increased costs for the program. Indeed, senior university leaders need to fully understand the purpose for the change, support the anticipated expenses associated with any proposed changes, and be prepared for the vocal faculty opposition. **"Ideally, the provost and/or the president will formally endorse your efforts to initiate a process for improving your college and then communicate their support to your faculty and students,"** says McPherson.

It is worth the work involved to gain this senior-level support, agrees Lewis of JSU. **"Having the opportunity to host the inaugural kickoff event of the US PREP Coalition in the early spring of 2016 was a daunting undertaking, but having both the president and the provost -- along with other key cabinet members -- attend the event and pledge support for the work ahead of us was pivotal,"** she says. This support helped JSU's education program to quickly create the roles necessary -- including program coordinator, site coordinator, data specialist, and a design-based research team -- which **"could have taken a couple of months but took only a couple of weeks"** thanks to this senior-level support.

McPherson also suggests that deans inform other departments about the forthcoming change as a way to garner support and insight. **"There is often a long-standing unspoken implicit bias against colleges of education by other disciplines,"** he says. **"Noting you are launching a process to create a 'new and improved' teacher preparation program begins to change the negative narrative that some may hold about your college. You may also find it of considerable value to learn from your colleagues' experiences in undertaking significant change efforts in their colleges. At the very least, you will have a support system in place with the only group on campus who fully understand that sitting atop a college is like climbing a mountain alone - it can be a cold and lonely journey to the summit."**

Manage Down: Examining Faculty Capacity

The most important roles to establish in the transformation process are associate dean, department chair, and director of education, says McPherson of UH. The people in these positions must be capable of initiating and sustaining a wide-ranging, multi-year design and implementation process. **"Finding the 'right person for the right seat' should be your top priority,"** he says. **"Your specific aim is to determine the resilience and leadership capacity of your existing leadership team. You may find an opportunity to allow your weaker or non-supportive members of your team to exit with grace. Persons being reassigned from these college leadership positions should be publicly thanked for their contributions and celebrated for their much-valued return to full-time faculty status."**

This also means deans must be constantly grooming the next generation of college leaders with a steady eye on possible replacements for current leaders. At UH, the Provost has established a "Chairs' Academy," a year-long facilitated group that exposes faculty from various colleges and departments to leadership assessment and training, as well as a "behind the curtain" look at the University's fiscal and administrative operations. This program affirms and strengthens some faculty members' interest in administrative roles, and helps others see that the role is not for them.

Failure to consider and address these concerns and their relationship to the changes at hand can stymie initial attempts to build capacity and start the work. **"Upon reflection, we should've spent more time understanding people's motivations for change,"** acknowledges Lewis of JSU. **"We had some people who perceived change as a threat. For others, they wanted to understand how their role would change and whether they were equipped to handle their new role. We didn't allow space for faculty to process change or for us to address the emotional reactions to change."** In retrospect, Lewis says she would have shared the initial US PREP RFP with faculty and conducted listening sessions to gather their input.

That said, Lewis adds, personnel may still need to shift roles throughout the course of the transformation process as needs and responsibilities change. **"Changes in key roles such as department chairs can either stall or ignite sustainable progress,"** she says. She notes that while some of JSU's leaders stepped up to the challenges -- such as Associate Dean, Dr. Tamika Bradley becoming a program coordinator and becoming certified in the TAP rubric, and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) coordinator taking on additional responsibility by cross-walking the TAP rubric with the state's teacher evaluation rubric -- other faculty resented not being given the opportunity to play an active role in the work. The opposite thing happened at Southeastern, says Calderon, who came aboard as Dean several years into the transformation process. **"Faculty who were not thrilled with the idea of leaving their comfort zones began to search for roles that did not include being a site coordinator, or they simply left the university entirely. Sometimes a little pruning is necessary for the tree to live!"** she observes.

Ultimately, deans must remember to **"lead from behind,"** says McPherson, ensuring that faculty feel a sense of ownership and leadership. **"The victory is theirs,"** he notes. **"Your job was to simply start the race and then be on hand to congratulate the winners."**

If we, as teacher educators and university faculty, are truly focusing on what's best for our students – our teacher candidates – then everyone must have a seat at the table.

Paula Calderon
Southeastern Louisiana University

PROBLEM OF PRACTICE #2: Building Support

Engaging stakeholders to cultivate support (and manage dissent) is just as critical as assessing and deploying key leadership and management capacity in a school of education.

Focus on the Why

While the Who, What, Where, When, and How of communication are all important, the most powerful may be the Why. **"The other factors are moot, if stakeholders do not understand the WHY of any process or organization change,"** explains Lewis. **"Sun Su's *The Art of War* teaches five essentials for victory. In negotiation, he advises that 'He will win whose army is animated by the same spirit.'"**

The JSU team learned this the hard way, with faculty feeling not only left out but as though they failed to understand the purpose and driving need for the transformation work. As a result, faculty later admitted to feeling resentful and actively opposing the change effort. **"We (leadership) apologized and acknowledged their feelings. Like most relationships, you need to admit that you were wrong,"** Lewis adds.

Actively Listen

Indeed, transforming teacher education cannot be done in secret or with just a few people, agrees Calderon of Southeastern, adding, **"Not only is it too much work for a handful of people, but it is also ineffective to hide the process from those who are working and teaching in the program."** When Calderon arrived on campus as dean, she began to invite a wider range of faculty members to attend US PREP meetings, teacher evaluation rubric training, and site coordinator discussions. **"If we, as teacher educators and university faculty, are truly focusing on what's best for our students – our teacher candidates – then everyone must have a seat at the table,"** she adds.

Likewise, Dean McPherson of UH encourages deans to structure deliberative discussions and even ask faculty to collectively create arguments for and against proposed change. **"This will serve to move the debate away from the individual opinion towards a shared understanding of the risks and rewards when undertaking significant change,"** he says. **"This should shift the debate from a strictly ideological platform towards a more constructive and data-driven conversation about proposed change."**

Flow Both Ways

This communication must take the form of a two-way iterative feedback loop, not simply a series of informative emails, press releases, or other briefings. **"To tell or inform is to provide information, but communication is a transaction that requires recurring strategic reminders, accountability checks, multiple opportunities for input and feedback to ensure progressive and constructive change dialogue,"** reflects Lewis of JSU.

Despite a steady flow of information up from the college to the university leaders, communication rarely flowed down to faculty -- nor did it come with opportunities for conversation or feedback -- which slowed early progress. Now, the program chair and at least one faculty member attend all meetings related to the program transformation.

Prepare for Dissent

Despite the impulse to resist dissent, McPherson advises that thoughtful faculty dissent is an essential part of academia. **"Your faculty colleagues should be expected to voice questions, concerns, objections, and perhaps opposition to proposed changes suggested by you, senior administration, or other key stakeholders,"** he says. **"It is both a fundamental right and responsibility for faculty to fiercely defend the academy from the intrusion of those from within and outside the university who might seek to curb an individual faculty member's exercise of free speech, challenge their academic freedom, or inhibit the faculty collective's ability to self-govern."**

That said, McPherson encourages leaders to consider reluctance, reservation, fears, and concerns by working to understand -- and affirm -- their logic. **"Restate what they have said often, and warmly embrace the emotions that underlie their fears and objections,"** he says, encouraging leaders to reframe or construct a new narrative that values those emotions and facts. **"As dean, you must be persuasive, flexible, tenacious, and creative in reframing new problems in a manner that invites new solutions."** For example, McPherson encouraged his faculty to help him **"find pathways to get out in front of our powerful critics and ensure that we, as a faculty collective, are continuously and relentlessly committed to improving the quality of our teacher preparation program."** This new frame did not threaten nor negate faculty dissent or concerns, but rather affirmed their value in improving the preparation of teachers.

While welcoming dissent, McPherson cautions that deans must still **"beware the anarchist"** who will oppose any and all change. **"There will likely be at least one outspoken faculty member who believes their role is to always question, challenge, and oppose the dean and the colleagues on all matters,"** he says. "**These moments are not the time to hammer your gavel loudly nor to forcefully defend your position. A better alternative is to politely interrupt them, thank them for their comment, and ask that they allow all the voices in the room to be heard. Be firm and unyielding, then reference previous comments from a constructive dissenter, or simply invite a more reasonable dissenter to offer their opinion on the topic."**

Amplify the Coalition of the Willing

Finally, building support means not just preaching to the choir but cultivating new evangelists who can speak up for and support the work. Two unlikely sources of support are former skeptics and district staff. McPherson notes that formerly skeptical faculty members carry significant credibility with their peers and can help counter their concerns. In addition, staff within partner school districts -- such as supervising teachers, principals, or even student teachers themselves -- can be equally persuasive, especially when their stories are combined with quantitative data about the need for change.

LEADERSHIP STORY: UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

Robert McPherson, Dean of the College of Education, explains how his institution navigated the initial process of change.

Although our program leaders believed in the ultimate goal of the work and were optimistic about implementing the changes, they were incredibly anxious about the extent to which the program had the capacity to pull off this kind of undertaking. Then, just when we thought we had identified our first steps, we received our Individual Transformation Plan from our technical assistance center. They included enormous shifts in thinking around the role of the student-teacher supervisor as well as the required teacher education curriculum and the adoption of a common teacher candidate performance evaluation rubric. These plans were about 22 pages long, filled with lofty goals to be completed in just three short years.

Despite some hesitation, the program leadership decided the best way to get started was to simply get started. While the senior year residency continued to shape up nicely, program leaders continued to face struggles particularly in the area of teacher educator effectiveness and curriculum reform. To complicate the work, the requirements continued to feel prescriptive. **"We are feeling a lack of autonomy and agency in this process, and site coordinators engaged in the pilot are completely overwhelmed with changes,"** said one program director. **"How do we work through our own hesitations? How do we stay positive when we feel so beat down?"**

Program leadership persevered and maneuvered through the transformation process. They continued to work to introduce and infuse various ideas and changes to the teacher preparation program, including the year-long student teaching residency and curriculum work around teacher educator pedagogical practices. The transformation process has played an enormous role in establishing a rigorous and quality teacher education program at our university.

PROBLEM OF PRACTICE #3: Building Productive Partnerships with K-12 Schools

One of the most important hallmarks of the transformation underway at US PREP partner programs is the partnerships between the programs and the K-12 school districts where their student teachers apprentice. Because of how vital this clinical practice is to teachers' development, these partnerships must be developed carefully and managed such that both sides are equally involved in -- and invested in -- the outcome: teachers who are prepared from day one to meet the needs of local schools and their students.

Design an Effective Partnership Structure

Structuring the partnership effectively must begin with understanding how each partner organization works on its own, as well as clearly defined expectations and timelines for how they will work together. **"Failure to acknowledge the uniqueness of each partner's business routines will result in many wasted hours and much confusion,"** notes Lock of TTU. Lock suggests that partners provide an accurate description of how they function at the upper administrative levels, as well as at a personal level with administrators, teachers, and university faculty. Timelines are also vital, says Lock, covering such topics as, **"how long does it take to get a teacher candidate registered for courses, when do teacher candidates need to report to their local school campus, and what processes must be followed if a teacher candidate acts inappropriately in the school district's classroom?"**

These parameters ought to be set up at the outset through a memorandum of understanding that includes any non-negotiables and regular face-to-face governance meetings that allow these terms to be regularly re-examined. Governance meetings occur quarterly and involve district representatives, principals, the site coordinator, and other university faculty members. They provide university and district partners with a space to share data, shape teacher preparation programming, and problem-solve. For example, the Lubbock, Texas district intitially resisted partnering at all with Texas Tech, given their past experiences with university programs. One early sticking point was the selection of mentor teachers, which both sides wanted to control initially. The district selected mentors in the first year but after an open dialogue about their quality at the end of the year, the process became more collaborative, including the participation of TTU-based site coordinators.

That said, even developing the memorandum of understanding can be a challenge that requires patience and persistence. **"When building a K-12 and university partnership, recognize that the key players such as teachers, administrators, professors, and deans are not the only participants,"** advises Lock. **"Early on, we believed that we could execute an MOU by sending it to the contracts department, allowing the attorneys on both sides to make a few changes and then waiting for it to make its way back to us in a week. That never happened."** What was once a long period of up to a year of negotiation has become a much more streamlined process that takes less than a month, thanks to appointing a single point person responsible for getting MOUs signed and boilerplate partnership language that is familiar and acceptable to the university legal team and responsive to district partners' needs.

Balance the Voices at the Table

Successful partnerships rely on having the right people at the table and knowing what each brings to the process, along with governance meetings with shared agendas that encourage two-way conversation. **"While the principal is a tremendous contributor to a district meeting, the individual classroom teachers and professors may be better informed when discussing classroom performance,"** says Lock. **"Likewise, district or university-wide decisions require the attention of the superintendent and provost."**

However, while they have a similar structure and purpose, governance meetings with different partnering districts can vary in location, frequency, and participants. **"We surveyed our district partners to see when they wanted to meet, how often and who should attend,"** says Lock. **"That change made a big difference in our governance meetings right away. Rather than having everyone in every meeting, we moved to more targeted meetings with different audiences and agendas. We also started sharing agendas ahead of time with our partners to keep the conversation from becoming one-sided."**

Indeed, these conversations must be two-sided, with opportunities for both the university and the district to share ideas about how best to improve clinical preparation. One way to ensure that these ideas are tested carefully is to pilot new suggestions in one district before scaling to all partners. For example, when the university wanted to move toward a yearlong residency model, they found some school districts were only receptive to student teachers in the fall due to high stakes testing in the spring. TTU rolled the full year out first with student teachers who voluntarily taught longer in three of its largest partner districts. Positive feedback from student teachers -- and scholarship funding to help offset student teaching time -- helped convince smaller districts to give the full year a shot.

Prepare for Inevitable Leadership Transitions (on All Sides)

Just as leadership transitions on the university side are inevitable, so too are they on the district side. **"We have survived three different superintendents, university presidents, provosts, and deans over the course of five years,"** says Lock at TTU. **"The only thing we were sure of was that change would happen."** To survive these shifts, Lock recommends that university programs and districts build relationships between middle management, not just at the top of each institution -- which also has the benefit of connecting those who are closer to the classroom work and the instruction of student teachers.

Site coordinators employed by the university but with offices on K-12 school campuses can help tremendously. **"They hold everyone accountable for things like using the teacher candidate observation rubric, evaluations of student teachers, and keeping the focus on student learning,"** says Lock. Finally, Lock suggests that the partners announce and celebrate their accomplishments through press releases and events. **"Highlighting the front-line work and how it positively impacts children in K-12 settings not only provides good press, it informs the public about how we are seeking quality,"** says Lock. While the work of these partnerships take significant time, energy, and attention, the pay-off is tremendous -- especially for children in K-12 classrooms.

WHAT IS A SITE COORDINATOR?

The traditional student teacher supervisor roles are replaced with highly specialized "Site Coordinators" who are full-time faculty. The Site Coordinator is a linchpin of the transformed teacher preparation model. He or she:

- *"Lives" in the schools where candidates are placed*
- *Coaches and mentors the teacher candidates*
- *Gets to know schools and principals deeply*
- *Teaches teacher preparation method courses*
- *Has ongoing training sessions with mentor teachers*
- *Facilitates governance meetings with the district*

> **[Site Coordinators] hold everyone accountable for things like using the teacher candidate observation rubric, evaluations of student teachers, and keeping the focus on student learning.**
>
> *Robin Lock*
> *Texas Tech University*

PROBLEM OF PRACTICE #4: Making Change Last by Changing University Policies

The education leaders in the US PREP network have found that changing their actions without changing the policies that support them is the surest way to ensure that the changes will not be upheld. These policies include both university regulations and hiring guidelines, as well as changes to program structure, personnel, course content, course catalogs, and forms.

Modify Hiring Practices to Support Change

How do we hire individuals who desire to collaborate and study teacher education improvement? The most critical need in redesigned teacher preparation programs is for faculty that can serve as site coordinators, experts in a content area who are also willing and able to supervise student teachers. Ideally these faculty will have strong instructional leadership and coaching experience in working with adult learners (mentors and student teachers). Other important qualifications include experience in K-12 teaching, along with the flexibility to work in multiple K-12 settings and on site with K-12 students. Clinical faculty must also understand the trajectory of student learning, and the fact that student teachers are starting with a very baseline understanding of how to teach. Instructional coaching experience is also extremely valuable, though difficult to find.

Site coordinators should also be willing to contribute more broadly to redesigning teacher education at their institution, says Dr. Amber Thompson, Associate Chair of Teacher Preparation at UH -- not just overseeing their own content area. **"If you're going to do transformation, you should believe in doing what's best for kids and willing to be a part of something bigger than just your own course or content area,"** she notes.

Although most of the site coordinators at UH are currently part-time adjunct professors, the goal is to have more of its site coordinators serve as full-time, non-tenured permanent faculty, with no research requirements and a lower salary scale than traditional clinical faculty. Over time, structuring more site coordinator positions in this way would help UH strike the right balance between instructional capability and institutional affordability as the program scales up to partner with more school districts. To ensure that more programs attract and retain the right hires for these site coordinator positions, it is important to recruit clinical faculty and put them in leadership positions, such as department chair, where their work on clinical practice will inform and influence the way the department operates. Some institutions, such as Southeastern, require that any clinical faculty member also serve as a site coordinator.

Change the Focus and Structure of Research

The pressures of producing research in some of these universities has caused tension in the transformation process -- tension that must be managed in order for transformation to be sustained, and for quality research to be produced. Generally, the pressure universities feel to become a top-tier research institution (as signaled by a Research One designation) shifts priorities -- and resources -- towards research over supervising student teaching and clinical work -- but can help attract faculty and students. Furthermore, the publications and types of research most likely to attract federal funding -- such as empirically validated quantitative research -- can take years and does not inform or advance university transformation efforts.

What is needed to further large-scale change in teacher preparation are more qualitative and mixed-methods research studies to identify and codify best practices. While it does cost more to compensate clinical faculty for their time (on top of a full teaching load), it can also help the faculty involved to improve their own practice by systematically studying it.

A focus on research is also difficult to balance with a collaborative culture, note Thompson and her colleague Jahnette Wilson, a site coordinator and Clinical Professor in Curriculum and Instruction at UH's College of Education. **"For change efforts to be successful and sustainable, numerous people must be involved. In the academy, this often means bringing faculty together to address common goals when they are used to working on individual, and sometimes competing, programs and research agendas,"** they say. **"It is unlikely that faculty would (or should, perhaps) abandon individual research or program interests and pivot solely towards research around transformation work."**

Instead, they recommend that universities find ways to pursue collaborative research that balances a variety of researcher skill sets and ranks (including clinical, tenured, and tenure-track faculty). For instance, UH secured funding to support a collection of collaborative self-studies, providing time and space for faculty to work together to study their own practice and coursework. Not only was this research more collaborative than competitive, say Thompson and Wilson, it also had a quicker timeline to complete and therefore a more immediate impact on the program than a typical research study.

Consider Time and Tenure

Beyond the demands of the research itself is the very real amount of work it takes for a college of education to redesign its teacher preparation program -- and often means using the time of some of a school's most productive faculty members. Not only that, the non-traditional measures used in these program improvement activities -- such as surveys, focus groups, interviews, and messy organic observations -- are often less valued in academia than statistically significant quantitative data sets from a controlled environment. To ensure that these types of work and commitments of time are worth it to faculty, Thompson and Wilson say university leaders must establish policies that reinforce what endeavors and activities are valued, recognized, and encouraged.

This is particularly true with promotion guidelines and annual reviews for faculty. Because tenure and promotions are so often tied to conducting and publishing research, universities may need to consider other ways of incentivizing transformation work as well as clinical practice fieldwork. For example, UH established a non-tenure track promotion path that honored and recognized the work in which clinical faculty engaged. Institutions may also consider creating a promotion track for clinical faculty. UH has used such a policy to attract faculty candidates that may not otherwise have considered a non-tenure track position. The promotion guidelines for non-tenure track faculty require **"strong evidence of teaching, scholarship, and/or creative achievements, and service"** for a minimum of four years to move from associate professor to full professor, as well as **"demonstration of competence in the field and interest in and capacity for teaching, evidence of ongoing scholarly and/or creative impact beyond the university."** This required significant work with the university's central administration as well as with department chairs to include appropriate promotion guidelines.

Likewise, at TTU, the faculty worked with the Tenure and Promotion Committee to include community-engaged teaching, research, and scholarship into the tenure process and voted to characterize reform activities as elements worthy of academic recognition.

> **We now understand that transformation is not a finite process, but a continuous improvement journey with defined goals, benchmarks, and outcomes that will evolve over time.**
>
> *Chandar Lewis*
> *Jackson State University*

PROBLEM OF PRACTICE #5: Leveraging External Forces

As noted in the introduction, outside forces, such a state policy, are often the catalyst for change within colleges of education. But university leaders can use these external pressures as opportunities for change.

Reframe the Issue

As noted above, university leaders can manage dissent -- from within or from outside -- by understanding opposing viewpoints and then reframing or constructing a new narrative that takes them into account. External pressures can certainly make university leaders and faculty feel defensive or worse, but placing the focus on the needs of K-12 students and schools can help balance against this reflex.

For example, when the state of Louisiana began to mandate a yearlong residency for student teachers, leaders at Southeastern's college of education were initially resistant. **"It was a heavy lift to redesign our programs, and it was a big burden on students, many of whom work full-time, which made it difficult to do a yearlong residency. Trying to fit it into a 120 hour curriculum was very challenging, and finding mentors was very challenging,"** reflects Paula Calderon, the current Dean, who was previously an assistant and associate director for the LSU School of Education. But considering the issue in light of what's best for teacher candidates and for K-12 students helped shift the faculty's mindset from compliance with a mandate to more of a focus on improvement.

Find Unexpected Allies

Calderon and others found ways to engage with philanthropy -- including foundations that they had typically disdained -- to garner support for the transformation work. When Southeastern first began to consider pursuing participating in the US PREP coalition -- which is funded by multiple philanthropic organizations and state departments of education -- Calderon says there were faculty members who begged the dean not to participate. **"However, the dean knew that all teacher education programs in the state would be mandated to redesign their programs sooner or later, with or without coalition support from US PREP,"** says Calderon. **"So why not take the grant money and the external support?"**

At JSU, the opportunity to apply for this coalition came along right about the same time as a new team -- made up of department leaders, faculty, and staff -- had been formed and charged with developing a transformation proposal to address declining enrollment and other needs. While faculty were initially suspicious, the fiscal support and the US PREP National Center technical support along with programmatic improvement work eventually won them over.

Likewise, at UH, the teacher education program had just revised the teacher preparation curriculum and embraced a yearlong teacher residency when the dean was asked by the state education commissioner to consider voluntary participation in a new process for continuous quality improvement for teacher preparation programs called the "Inspectorate Review," to be funded by the National Center on Teacher Quality (NCTQ). **"Program leadership determined there was considerable state level political benefit, as well as possible feedback that would be helpful in the ongoing curriculum improvement efforts in the program,"** says McPherson. That opened the door for program leaders and faculty to consider applying for the US PREP coalition shortly thereafter.

CONCLUSION

Program transformation has called upon these deans and their teams to work together in different and more demanding ways to change structures and activities in institutions that are resistant to change -- but must do so in order to better serve aspiring teachers and their students and schools.

These programs have seen significant changes to their programs and practices, as well as to the quality of their graduates and their ability to have an impact in the classroom.

At JSU, more open lines of communication are accelerating the pace of the transformation work. At program retreats held away from the university, Lewis says program leaders, department chairs, the director of teacher education, and faculty members made significant progress in developing the junior/senior year residency block schedules and revising the curriculum. What's more, **"we now understand that transformation is not a finite process, but a continuous improvement journey with defined goals, benchmarks, and outcomes that will evolve over time,"** she adds.

Likewise, initial resistance to changing coursework by faculty at TTU shifted in response to regular conversations about outcomes data. At a data meeting, several faculty members spontaneously started talking about how specific courses weren't having an impact on teacher candidates; one even presented data to demonstrate that teacher candidates learning special education instructional strategies in tandem with the content area methods courses were scoring higher on classroom performance rubrics. **"This conversation was occurring not because they simply liked the idea but rather because the data from course performance, performance assessments in the field, and teacher candidate survey data clearly identified that candidates prepared to address the specific needs of special needs learners scored higher,"** says Lock. **"Score one for data-driven decision making actually creating a change for the better! Using the insights and skills of two specialist educators and putting them in the right place at the right time resulted in a strategic change that came from the faculty with a huge impact on children."**

At Southeastern, administrators have noticed a shift from paperwork to people. **"At first, redesigning the programs was a paperwork process: complete the forms, change courses, change the catalog, and run this through the various courses and curricula committees on campus,"** says Calderon. But now that senior methods instructors serve as site coordinators for the first semester of the residency, those instructors have a different view of what goes on in the K-12 classroom and can change their courses to reflect the real-world experiences of the residents. **"Course content began changing, texts were updated, and discussions were richer as methods instructors became more involved,"** she adds.

And at UH, administrators have been pleased to hear from K-12 schools that the transformation work has been paying dividends on the ground. A program administrator recently reported that they had been in a meeting with principals and human resource representatives to discuss teacher candidates' progress. The principals reported that they had seen an enormous difference in how prepared the university's teacher candidates were, and that it had also been valuable for the mentor teachers. **"The principals were able to talk about each teacher candidate by name, noting their strengths and areas for continued growth, and the human resource recruiter was taking notes and thinking about where each teacher candidate might be hired next year,"** reports McPherson. **"It was just such a powerful reminder of the strength of this new model. The work is worth it."**

These efforts and outcomes have resulted in these institutions and programs continuing to work with US PREP even after coalition funding and formal support has run out. In fact, although some encouraged Calderon to abandon the US PREP partnership after she became dean (in part because there would no longer be coalition funding attached). Calderon decided that Southeastern would continue as part of the coalition. **"I realized there was a lot more to the US PREP partnership than just money, such as the support we received for our site coordinators and methods instructors -- that has been well worth it,"** she says. **"We've gotten so much support from our clinical coaches and from the US PREP network."**

With support from the US PREP network, an increasing number of institutions and programs are transforming their approach to teacher preparation so that all teachers are ready for the demands of the classroom on day one.

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Amber Thompson has been at the University of Houston since 2006. Currently, she oversees the Teacher Preparation Program and is a professor in science education. Amber's work as both a Clinical Coach and Curriculum Design Coach in Science across the US PREP Coalition broadens her reach and ensures teacher educators in other programs across the nation are prepared to develop high-quality candidates for our nation's most underserved schools.

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Bob McPherson began his career as a teacher and counselor at a Title I high school located in segregated Odessa, Texas during the 1970s. He is entering his 11th year as Dean of the UH College of Education, having overseen a notable increase in the relevancy and rigor of the College's research, degree programs, and community engagement with a particular focus on diminishing the educational and health disparities among children and families living in poverty.

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Robin H. Lock served as Associate Dean, Vice Dean, and Interim Dean under the late D. Scott Ridley, Ph.D. since 2013. During this time she worked closely with Dean Ridley and TechTeach, the Teacher Education Program at Texas Tech University as the program developed. She continues to serve the College as a Professor of Special Education, as a member of the SPEDTex Statewide Region 10 Advisory Committee, and as a university representative for the Texas Education Agency Child Find and ARD Support Network Committee.

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