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Work Satisfaction and Stress in the First and Third Year of Academic Appointment

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# Work Satisfaction and Stress in the First and Third Year of Academic Appointment

*Careers, like lives, have a shape, and different aspirations, needs, possibilities, and constraints shape them at different times.*

[38, p. 24]

## *Introduction*

Organizations within and outside of academe have become increasingly interested in the training and socialization of successful professionals. Interest has been fueled by growing evidence that the socialization process exercises important effects on a host of work-related variables, for example, work commitment, motivation, performance, productivity, stress, satisfaction, and turnover [for example, 11, 15, 16, 23, 24, 26]. Schein and others have identified a “success spiral syndrome,” according to which early career successes generate both the opportunities and the desire for later success [34]. Work on organizational demography has suggested that early socialization experiences are important because of the heightened receptivity of the individual to the norms and values of the organization and profession and the lasting effects of socialization over the course of a career (cohort effects) [31]. Various arguments for the importance of early adaptation and achieve-

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ment can be found in the literature on higher education as well [for example, 3, 4, 10]. Moreover, scholarly arguments appear to be buttressed by the first-hand impressions of both faculty and administrators who perceive faculty's ability to "hit the ground running" as critical to later success and satisfaction within academe [36, 39].

The faculty development literature shows that the early years of a faculty appointment, in particular, the first three years, are a period of intense socialization [4, 18]. Retrospectively, faculty report the early years to be the most difficult period of an academic career, a time of high stress and low satisfaction [3]. Yet, it remains unclear precisely what lessons faculty learn during their first years, what professional hurdles remain, and what issues pose the most significant threat to future satisfaction and success [4, 18]. We know a fair amount about the kinds of satisfactions, dissatisfactions and stresses faculty experience overall, but have little understanding of the specific sources of stress and satisfaction that shape faculty development at different career stages or how these stresses and satisfactions interact. Given evidence in the literature of a "perceptibly weakened morale" among faculty and a declining pool of faculty applicants, the question of how junior faculty successfully adapt and even manage to excel in the first years of appointment would seem to be particularly critical at the present time [6].

#### *Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards of a Faculty Career*

The intrinsic rewards of an academic career have traditionally been viewed as central to faculty satisfaction [1, 5, 6, 18, 30]. Intrinsic rewards have been variously defined but, in general, pertain to the nature of the work itself [1]. Hackman and Lawler cite as examples of intrinsic rewards, the opportunity for independent thought and action, feelings of worthwhile accomplishment, opportunities for personal growth and development, and job-related self-esteem [20]. Internal rewards are particularly salient for professionals, like academics, who

experience higher order need satisfaction (e.g., needs for personal growth and development or for feelings of worthwhile accomplishment) on a continuing basis without the strength of desire for additional satisfaction of these needs diminishing. Indeed, it may be that additional satisfaction of higher order needs actually increases their strength (Alderfer, 1969). This is an important possibility since it suggests that the opportunity for the development of continuing (and even increasing) motivation is much more a reality when higher order needs are engaged than is the case for more easily satisfied lower order needs [20, p. 262].

Empirical work indicates that "new recruits" to a profession may actually experience substantial dissatisfaction and higher rates of turnover

when their work fails to provide them with a sense of opportunity, challenge, and accomplishment [14].

By and large, extrinsic factors or the “conditions under which work is done” have been seen as sources of dissatisfaction for faculty [1, 5, 18]. Winkler found faculty to be dissatisfied with lack of university support, salary, and the university structure and reward system [40]. Salary has become a more significant issue, because academic incomes have failed to keep pace with increases in the cost of living and levels of compensation in other professional domains [8, 33]. Issues of governance and participation in decision-making have similarly intensified as institutions of higher education have begun to adopt more centralized management structures [1, 33].

### *Work Stress*

In general, stress implies a physiological or psychological response to some aspect of the environment which an individual perceives as exceeding personal resources [19, 21, 35]. Recent work suggests that it is the strains and conflicts of daily life (rather than major, discrete life events) that are most stressful [for example, 13]. These findings are particularly relevant to faculty who must perennially deal with “excessive demands to perform too many discrete tasks,” poorly defined work-role boundaries, and perpetual time pressures as part of their worklife [1, 2, 19, 20, 40]. In fact, faculty in a national study of work stress [19] identified the lack of time, work overload, and high self-expectations to be among the most stressful aspects of their careers. While issues of time and balance may remain relatively constant over the course of a career, however, they may prove most stressful for new faculty who face the complex task of allocating limited time and energy among an almost unlimited number of work demands for the first time. That is, if it is transactions with the routine work environment that are most stressful, then work stress should vary over time as the context of daily life changes with familiarity, advancement, and so on.

### *Faculty Career Development: Tasks and Rewards*

The more general literature on career development and, in particular, the work of Feldman suggest that the first three years of faculty appointment constitute a developmental stage called “encounter” (the period immediately following completion of formal professional training or “anticipatory socialization”) [16]. At the encounter stage, faculty see what their chosen profession is truly like. There is some initial shifting of skills and attitudes as individuals are initiated into the tasks, norms,

and values of the institution. Feldman posits “role definition” as critical at this stage, including under this rubric learning what tasks must be done, establishing realistic priorities among tasks, and allocating time effectively. In addition, Feldman suggests that future career development requires adept negotiation of the interpersonal work environment, that is, establishing relationships that will contribute to professional role development and minimizing the impact of conflicts that will distract or detract.

The few studies that have examined the problems of new faculty have produced findings that are fairly consistent with one another and with Feldman’s developmental scheme. Not surprisingly, junior faculty experience substantial role anxiety and struggle to define their role as faculty members. This struggle takes two primary forms: (1) deciphering institutional expectations for performance and (2) learning to prioritize time and effort appropriately across academic tasks [4, 29, 39]. Beginning faculty also appear to feel a lack of collegiality, both with junior colleagues and with more senior faculty [17, 36]. Recent evidence suggests that the decline in collegiality, like issues of compensation and governance, is becoming more acute nation-wide, a trend that may have particular implications for faculty who have yet to integrate themselves into the fabric of a department [8].

In sum, although intrinsic rewards seem overall to be most closely related to faculty satisfaction, newly appointed faculty may be preoccupied with defining and meeting institutional expectations, establishing collegial bonds, and negotiating multiple role demands. Meeting these demands may be more central to satisfaction in the early years of appointment than the more traditional rewards of autonomy, opportunity, and accomplishment.<sup>1</sup> It is also possible that failure to surmount these tasks creates dissatisfaction or even job stress that diminishes satisfaction derived from other sources. Existing research also suggests that a number of countervailing pressures may be becoming more prominent in faculty lives, for example, inadequate compensation, a lesser voice in decision making, and deteriorating collegial relations. Given developmental and larger socioeconomic trends, the question is to what extent the intellectual and personal satisfactions of the academic enterprise remain stable over time for a recently hired cohort of junior faculty and to what extent external factors reinforce, redefine, or diminish satisfaction. In other words, is faculty’s sense of personal autonomy and their intellectual engagement in their work a sufficient ongoing basis for continued high levels of satisfaction with work, or do issues such as salary and review increasingly contribute to a sense of dissatisfaction?

### *Summary of Purpose*

The work reported here examines faculty development over the first three years of appointment and, in contrast to previous work on the topic, provides longitudinal data. The following questions constituted the focus of the research: (1) What change, if any, is demonstrated in global work satisfaction and work stress from year one to year three of appointment? (2) Which characteristics of an academic career become less satisfying over time? Which become more satisfying? (3) Do the same characteristics of a faculty career predict overall job satisfaction in both the first and third year? (4) What job characteristics are associated with a high level of stress in year one and year three? Finally, given the possibility that faculty satisfactions and stresses change significantly over time, (5) Do faculty themselves define their career needs differently after several years in a tenure-track position, that is, at least insofar as they seek different kinds of institutional support?

### *Methodology*

The entire cohort of newly hired, tenure-track faculty from a large, public research university was administered an open-ended interview and a questionnaire at the end of the first ( $N = 52$ ) and third ( $N = 47$ ) year of their academic appointment. All were hired at the assistant rank,<sup>2</sup> with a three-year renewable contract; all anticipated a five year period prior to completion of tenure review.<sup>3</sup>

Longitudinal research offers a significant advantage over cross-sectional designs which may confound differences in subsample membership with temporal/developmental change. Although longitudinal data provide a better measure of over-time effects, threats to validity remain — for example, the effect of selection factors (bias due to sampling error or attrition), intervening historical events, and test-retest effects [9].

Attrition in the present study was less than 10 percent, with the overall profile of the sample remaining stable across the two years. Seventy-five percent of the sample was male at both points.<sup>4</sup> Approximately 70 percent of the subjects were married, and 46 percent had children. Twenty-three to 26 percent of the sample was from the physical sciences, 36 percent to 37 percent from the humanities, and 38 to 40 percent from the social-behavioral sciences and professional schools. Statistical comparison of means suggested that disciplinary differences had little effect on the work attitudes assessed here.

In the present study, the two-year time lapse between data collections and the comprehensive nature of the measures help mitigate against test-

retest effects. The influence of historical factors is always difficult to evaluate, and it is probable that the contingencies of the job market (for example, fewer faculty, salary compression), organizational change (for example, a new department chair), and other factors, such as more general economic conditions and events (for example, a cutback in national grant funds), affected faculty responses over time — although not in a systematic and uniform way across the sample.

### *Measures*

Construction of measures was guided by Locke's well-known work on job satisfaction, which defines satisfaction as the positive emotional state resulting from attaining what one wants or values from a job [26, 27]. A central tenet of the theory states the more important a "job value" (for example, autonomy, decision making) is to an individual, the more it will influence satisfaction and attitudes towards the job. Locke's theory thus suggests the utility of knowing what satisfactions are of the greatest value to the individual, because they are most predictive of overall job satisfaction.

To capture the relationship between specific job values and global job satisfaction two types of job satisfaction measures were included in the study. One measure examined faculty satisfaction with specific aspects or "facets" of the work, a second measure assessed global job satisfaction. Inclusion of both types of measure made it possible to determine not only specific sources of faculty satisfaction but also the relative contribution of job characteristics to global satisfaction over time. Recent research has argued strongly for the unique contribution global and facet-specific measures make to our understanding of job satisfaction and for the importance of employing multiple measures in a single study [22].

To assess global satisfaction, subjects were asked to rate on a four-point scale (4 = very satisfied), "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your position?" Faculty were also asked to rate the stressfulness of their worklife during the past academic year on a four-point scale (re-coded so that 4 = very stressful).<sup>5</sup> Questions were developed through intensive validation studies at the University of Michigan [32].

Items on the facet-specific measure of job satisfaction were also modeled after a scale developed by Quinn and Staines [32] but were expanded and modified to better suit the realities of an academic career. Using Likert scales, faculty were asked to rate satisfaction with eighteen different aspects of their work. Items covered a range of areas previous research had shown to be significantly related to faculty work satisfaction/dissatisfaction (listed in table 1) [1, 5, 27, 30, 36, 40].

Given the relatively large number of items and the relatively small size of the sample, it was necessary to reduce data to fewer, more inclusive dimensions. Specific facets of faculty worklife were combined into four broader subscales or categories: (1) inner rewards, (2) conflict and balance, (3) recognition and support, and (4) compensation and security. The subscales were consistent with the intrinsic/extrinsic dimensions widely recognized in the faculty literature but distinguish more fully among groups of items sometimes classified within these very general dimensions. All four subscales closely resembled factors identified by Locke and his colleagues in research on faculty at a public research university and with more heterogeneous populations of workers [26, 27]. The "inner rewards" subscale approximates the kinds of intrinsic satisfactions found elsewhere in the literature (for example, autonomy, opportunity to use skills and abilities, sense of accomplishment), and the "compensation/security" subscale corresponds to factors routinely described as extrinsic (salary, job security, review/evaluative feedback). Other items in other subscales, however, appeared to fit less well into a simple intrinsic/extrinsic dichotomy. In their work on faculty, for instance, Austin and Gamson [1] noted the critical impact that role conflict and issues of time and balance have on faculty lives. Because such conflicts do not seem to be accurately described as intrinsic or extrinsic, a separate subscale was established [see also 26]. Empirical work also suggested that items reflecting faculty satisfaction with the support and recognition they receive from their university and discipline constitute a separate category [27]. The separation of "support/recognition" variables from other extrinsic factors is analogous to findings in the motivational literature that distinguish rewards and punishments associated with money and prizes from more interpersonal forms of recognition and criticism [7, 12, 25].

Alpha coefficients were calculated for each subscale each year (1986, 1988) to confirm internal reliability. Subscale 1, "inner rewards" consisted of the items: sense of accomplishment, opportunity to use skills and abilities, opportunity for continued learning, opportunity to have a significant impact on others, sense of personal autonomy, participation in decision making, support of colleagues. For 1986 and 1988, reliability coefficients for the "inner rewards" subscale were 0.70 and 0.81, respectively. Subscale 2 revolved around issues of conflict and balance and included two items: enough time to do work and balance between teaching, scholarship, and service responsibilities. Alphas ranged from 0.84 in 1986 to 0.66 in 1988. The third subscale reflected satisfaction with recognition and support: recognition for your work within the discipline, recognition for your work within the university, support for scholarship, sup-

port for teaching/advising, support from administration. Nineteen eighty-six and 1988 alpha coefficients for the "recognition and support" subscale were 0.70 and 0.73. The final subscale, "compensation and security," included the items assessing satisfaction with salary, fringe benefits, job security, and feedback about work. The alpha for both years was 0.63. Overall, the subscales identified here resembled constructs found elsewhere in the literature and demonstrated satisfactory levels of internal reliability.

Finally, junior faculty's own perceptions of their career needs were assessed in both the first and third year. Faculty rated on a series of five-point scales the contribution that various university programs and policies would make to their professional development. (See table 4 for a complete listing of policies and programs rated.)

## *Results*

### *Global Job Satisfaction and Work Stress*

Findings indicated a fairly high level of job satisfaction and work stress in both years of the study. Nevertheless, paired *t*-tests showed a significant decline in mean ratings of faculty job satisfaction (3.47 to 3.15  $t_{1,44} = 2.98 p < 0.005$ ) and a borderline increase in mean ratings of work stress (3.26 to 3.43  $t_{1,45} = 1.94 p < 0.07$ ) over the course of the three-year period. Frequency data for these two variables indicated a sharp drop in the proportion of faculty reporting themselves as "very satisfied" (49 percent versus 34 percent) and a corresponding increase in the percentage rating their worklife as "very stressful" (33 percent versus 49 percent). The correlation between global job satisfaction and work stress was  $-0.49 (p < 0.000)$  in 1986 and  $-0.40 (p < 0.003)$  in 1988, indicating a significant but moderate association between the two.

### *Facet-Specific Job Satisfaction*

Mean ratings (5 = very satisfied) of the 18 facet-specific items for each year (1986 and 1988) indicated that sense of autonomy, the opportunity to use skills and abilities, and a sense of accomplishment were consistently among the most satisfying aspects of faculty's professional life. Salary, recognition by the university, conflict among work commitments, and time pressures were among the least satisfying (table 1). Of the 18 facet-specific ratings of work satisfaction, salary and support of colleagues demonstrated the greatest declines from 1986 to 1988 (table 1).

Ratings of satisfaction with job security and support of the administra-

TABLE 1  
 Mean Satisfaction Ratings of Specific Job Facets Rank Ordered by Size of Over Time Decline

|  | 1986 Mean | SD   | 1988 Mean | SD   | Difference <sup>a</sup> |
|--|-----------|------|-----------|------|-------------------------|
| 1. Autonomy                                      | 4.23      | 0.92 | 4.25      | 0.85 | + 0.02                  |
| 2. Impact on others                              | 3.78      | 0.86 | 3.73      | 0.86 | - 0.05                  |
| 3. Sense of accomplishment                       | 3.86      | 0.94 | 3.77      | 1.07 | - 0.09                  |
| 4. Fringe benefits                               | 3.31      | 1.05 | 3.21      | 0.93 | - 0.10                  |
| 5. Continued learning                            | 3.76      | 0.98 | 3.64      | 1.13 | - 0.12                  |
| 6. Recognition by university                     | 3.00      | 0.84 | 2.87      | 1.15 | - 0.13                  |
| 7. Support for scholarship                       | 3.78      | 1.00 | 3.63      | 1.04 | - 0.15                  |
| 8. Recognition in discipline                     | 3.46      | 0.94 | 3.30      | 0.96 | - 0.16                  |
| 9. Feedback                                      | 3.40      | 0.93 | 3.21      | 1.06 | - 0.19                  |
| 10. Support for teaching                         | 3.69      | 0.88 | 3.49      | 1.04 | - 0.20                  |
| 11. Balance among research, teaching and service | 2.87      | 1.12 | 2.64      | 1.03 | - 0.23                  |
| 12. Participation in decision-making             | 3.57      | 1.10 | 3.26      | 1.00 | - 0.31                  |
| 13. Opportunity to use skills                    | 4.02      | 0.85 | 3.70      | 1.06 | - 0.32                  |
| 14. Enough time to do work                       | 2.69      | 1.27 | 2.32      | 1.00 | - 0.37                  |
| 15. Job security                                 | 3.38      | 1.03 | 3.00      | 1.18 | - 0.38                  |
| 16. Support of administration                    | 3.38      | 0.95 | 2.98      | 1.05 | - 0.40                  |
| 17. Salary                                       | 3.04      | 1.03 | 2.60      | 1.14 | - 0.44*                 |
| 18. Support of colleagues                        | 4.06      | 1.07 | 3.47      | 1.10 | - 0.59*                 |

<sup>a</sup>Statistical differences in mean ratings were calculated using paired *t*-tests. To correct for multiple tests an alpha level of  $p < 0.003$  is required.

\*  $p \leq 0.003$

tion showed the next largest declines (although differences failed to reach significance using the more stringent alpha level required for multiple tests). No significant increases in satisfaction were found. Overall, the findings appear to show a fairly high, consistent level of satisfaction with the autonomous, intellectually challenging nature of the academic enterprise, and a lower, steadily eroding level of satisfaction with compensation and governance. Although the pattern of greater dissatisfaction with salary, job security, participation in decision making, and support from the administration reflects at least in part the greater immediacy of tenure in year three, longitudinal data will be needed to determine whether satisfaction with these factors continues to decline or improves post-tenure. More significant perhaps, is the drop in satisfaction with "support of colleagues." Insofar as a "community of scholars" is an essential element of academic professional life, dissolution of collegial bonds could signal a particularly important change in faculty's attitude toward their work. Interpretation of the changes in facet-specific satisfactions becomes more meaningful in the context of the next set of analyses, in which their importance to overall job satisfaction is determined.

*The Relationship of Facet-Specific to Global  
Job Satisfaction over Time*

A central question examined here was whether specific job-related satisfactions changed over time, that is not only in level but in their relative relation to global satisfaction. To determine which facet-specific satisfactions were most important in determining overall work satisfaction and the extent to which the same set of satisfactions were or were not predictive over time, two simultaneous regression analyses were carried out, one for each of the two years included in the study (1986, 1988), regressing global job satisfaction on the four facet-specific subscales. Models for both 1986 and 1988 were highly significant (1986:  $F_{4, 48} = 10.96, p < 0.0000$ ; 1988  $F_{4, 48} = 9.10, p < 0.0000$ ), though different sets of variables were predictive of overall job satisfaction at the two points in time (table 2).

Standardized regression coefficients indicated that in the first year of an academic appointment, faculty satisfaction was associated with the ability to balance a complex and often conflicting set of work demands (beta = 0.35  $p < 0.006$ ) and with institutional recognition and support (beta = 0.34  $p < 0.009$ ). By year three, neither of these sets of factors exercised a significant impact on global work satisfaction. Instead, faculty's feelings about their job appeared to stem primarily from the sense of autonomy, challenge, and accomplishment derived from their academic work (beta = 0.48  $p < 0.003$ ). Interestingly, factors like salary, benefits, and job security exercised only a borderline effect on work satisfaction regardless of year (1986 beta = 0.24  $p < 0.07$ ; 1988 beta = 0.23  $p < 0.10$ ).

*Work Stress and Facets of an Academic Career*

In the next set of analyses, simultaneous regression equations were conducted for each year (1986, 1988) to determine what facet-specific satisfactions were associated with a high level of stress in year one and three. Work stress was regressed on the same four facet-specific satisfaction subscales as above. Models were again highly significant (1986:  $F_{4, 48} = 4.24, p < 0.005$ ; 1988:  $F_{4, 48} = 7.13, p < 0.0001$ ), though adjusted  $R^2$ s indicated that subscale models explained less of the variance in work stress than in job satisfaction (table 3). Moreover, different subscales appeared to be most predictive of work stress and work satisfaction.

Standardized regression coefficients for the two years suggested that issues of compensation/security (1986 beta = -0.33  $p < 0.04$ ; 1988 beta = -0.39  $p < 0.008$ ) and time/balance conflicts (1986 beta = -0.25  $p < 0.09$ ; 1988 beta = -0.30  $p < 0.04$ ) were most consistently associated

TABLE 2  
Regressions Predicting Global Job Satisfaction from Facet-Specific Subscales in First and Third Year of Appointment

| %86 Subscales         | 1986  |          |             |            |              |
|-----------------------|-------|----------|-------------|------------|--------------|
|                       | beta  | <i>t</i> | signif      | adj. $R^2$ | model signif |
| Compensation/security | 0.24  | 1.90     | $p < 0.07$  | 0.43       | $p < 0.0000$ |
| Recognition           | 0.34  | 2.75     | $p < 0.009$ |            |              |
| Conflict              | 0.35  | 2.89     | $p < 0.006$ |            |              |
| Inner rewards         | -0.06 | -0.45    |             |            |              |
| %88 Subscales         | 1988  |          |             |            |              |
|                       | beta  | <i>t</i> | signif      | adj. $R^2$ | model signif |
| Compensation/security | 0.23  | 1.73     | $p < 0.10$  | 0.38       | $p < 0.0000$ |
| Recognition           | -0.14 | -0.97    |             |            |              |
| Conflict              | 0.19  | 1.48     |             |            |              |
| Inner rewards         | 0.48  | 3.26     | $p < 0.003$ |            |              |

TABLE 3  
Regressions Predicting Work Stress from Facet-Specific Subscales in First and Third Year of Appointment

| %86 Subscales         | 1986  |          |             |            |              |
|-----------------------|-------|----------|-------------|------------|--------------|
|                       | beta  | <i>t</i> | signif      | adj. $R^2$ | model signif |
| Compensation/security | -0.33 | -2.16    | $p < 0.04$  | 0.20       | $p < 0.005$  |
| Recognition           | -0.10 | -0.70    |             |            |              |
| Conflict              | -0.25 | -1.75    | $p < 0.09$  |            |              |
| Inner rewards         | 0.06  | 0.38     |             |            |              |
| %88 Subscales         | 1988  |          |             |            |              |
|                       | beta  | <i>t</i> | signif      | adj. $R^2$ | model signif |
| Compensation/security | -0.39 | -2.79    | $p < 0.008$ | 0.32       | $p < 0.0001$ |
| Recognition           | 0.49  | 3.14     | $p < 0.003$ |            |              |
| Conflict              | -0.30 | -2.23    | $p < 0.04$  |            |              |
| Inner rewards         | -0.27 | -1.76    | $p < 0.09$  |            |              |

with stress. Results thus replicate the general findings of the literature on faculty stress. Regression data also indicated that more aspects of faculty life become stressful over time, all four subscales being significantly predictive of stress in 1988 versus only two subscales in 1986. Interview comments suggest that increased levels of stress reflect the greater immediacy of tenure review in year three. Consistent with this inference, issues of compensation, job security, feedback, and recogni-

tion/support were most closely associated with year-three work stress. Although the positive relationship between work stress and recognition/support was unexpected, further inspection of the data suggested that it was the support variables, in particular, that drive the relationship. One possible interpretation is that faculty expect more of themselves and assume that others expect more of them upon receipt of institutional resources and monetary support. Heightened expectations could, in turn, lead to greater pressure to perform.

#### *Institutional Programs Contributing to Faculty Development*

Table 4 lists the mean five-point ratings faculty assigned seventeen different types of institutional support. Programs were evaluated on the basis of their contribution to professional development. Greater flexibility (release time for teaching overloads, flexible tenure schedules, and flexible leaves), better resources, and travel funds all garnered substantial support. In general, seminars and other programs offering advice and guidance were seen as less valuable than those offering funds and time. Inspection of mean ratings indicated that faculty perceptions of programs' usefulness were fairly stable over the three-year period. The greatest differences were in the ratings of grant writing seminars, which showed some decline, and in the ratings of mentoring programs, which increased significantly ( $t_{1,35} = -3.20$   $p < 0.004$ ).

#### *Discussion and Recommendations*

The present study begins to shed some light on the early and intense socialization process that junior faculty experience. Of course, the small, select sample and lack of control for possible intervening historical influences argue strongly for replication of results at other colleges and universities. Nevertheless, important consistencies between present findings, career development theory, and other research on junior faculty suggest that patterns found may well prove more generalizable.

Findings indicate a downward turn in faculty work satisfaction over the first several years of appointment and an increased incidence of job-related stress. Work stress was most consistently related to time and balance conflicts and issues of compensation, feedback, and job security. Findings thus confirm the pattern of stress-related variables found elsewhere [for example, 19] and support the notion that role definition and, in particular, prioritizing and allocating time and energy appropriately and effectively are key developmental tasks at this career stage [16].

Perhaps more surprisingly, different sets of factors were related to

TABLE 4  
 Ranked Mean Ratings of Contribution to Professional Development

|  | 1986     |      |                | 1988     |      |                |
|--|----------|------|----------------|----------|------|----------------|
|  | <i>N</i> | MEAN | (± <i>SD</i> ) | <i>N</i> | MEAN | (± <i>SD</i> ) |
| Funds for release time                                       | 52       | 4.54 | (0.80)         | 47       | 4.59 | (0.72)         |
| Resources (library, lab, computer, studio)                   | 51       | 4.29 | (0.85)         | 47       | 4.13 | (0.81)         |
| Funds for professional meetings                              | 52       | 4.26 | (0.88)         | 47       | 4.30 | (0.84)         |
| Flexible time limit-tenure                                   | 47       | 4.09 | (1.04)         | 46       | 3.57 | (1.07)         |
| Staff support (research assistants, clerical)                | 52       | 3.94 | (1.21)         | 45       | 3.59 | (1.15)         |
| Flexible leaves  | 50       | 3.63 | (1.24)         | 44       | 3.57 | (1.04)         |
| Improved lab facilities                                      | 31       | 3.46 | (1.78)         | 32       | 3.20 | (1.66)         |
| Improved classroom facilities                                | 48       | 3.43 | (1.54)         | 44       | 3.32 | (1.44)         |
| Grant-writing support/seminars                               | 52       | 3.33 | (1.27)         | 46       | 2.96 | (1.24)         |
| Improved office facilities                                   | 45       | 3.15 | (1.44)         | 44       | 3.02 | (1.50)         |
| Funds for teaching development                               | 52       | 3.11 | (1.19)         | 46       | 3.31 | (1.18)         |
| Classroom visits by senior colleagues or teaching consultant | 49       | 2.95 | (1.31)         | 47       | 2.91 | (1.10)         |
| Advising seminars on promotion and tenure                    | 50       | 2.78 | (1.30)         | 47       | 2.87 | (1.12)         |
| Seminars on teaching and learning                            | 49       | 2.75 | (1.22)         | 47       | 2.72 | (1.23)         |
| Funds for multi-disciplinary, team teaching                  | 49       | 2.61 | (1.16)         | 46       | 2.80 | (1.19)         |
| Mentoring programs   | 48       | 2.57 | (1.27)         | 45       | 3.29 | (1.13)         |
| Administrative skills/opportunities                          | 44       | 2.24 | (1.22)         | 43       | 2.29 | (1.06)         |

NOTE: 5 = contributes a great deal

work satisfaction in year one and year three with external support and recognition predominating in the first year, and the intrinsic rewards of scholarly productivity predominating in the third. Again, findings seem to validate Feldman’s notion that values and goals undergo a slight shift during the “encounter” stage of a career, with more time spent early on trying to discern what tasks must be done and how to do them [16]. Newly appointed faculty’s struggle to define expectations can be seen in their high need for recognition and support — a need which gives way over time to the more lasting and profession-specific needs for autonomy, challenge and accomplishment.

Concretely, results suggest that providing first-year faculty with social, intellectual and physical support is critical to professional satisfaction within academe. Although such a recommendation seems commonplace, heavy first-year teaching loads, lack of response to requests for equipment or personnel, and the interpersonal indifference of senior faculty

members were all frequently cited phenomena in our study. One first-year faculty reported, "I have five courses instead of four. Everyone else has tenure so what can I say? There are lots of pressures on me to build up the department and that is stressful. I was manipulated into promising to offer new courses before I could get written feedback on my first year." And at a later point in his career another faculty notes, "I've had a new course almost every semester since I've been here. Next year three out of the four courses I will teach are new . . . the courses have been shoved on me." Other faculty report not having enough computer support to carry out their work or even an adequate office, "My position was new and there was no allocation of funds to provide me with an office — no desk, chair, file cabinet, bookcase. I got this desk because the people from the law school vacated these offices. Both of the legs were broken off the desk so they abandoned it in the office next door. So I pulled it in here. I went to True Value Hardware and bought screws, hammers, screwdrivers, and so on and repaired it myself."

In addition to recognition and support, any guidance that can be given to first-year faculty through consultation with the chair, mentorship programs, or new faculty seminars that helps them define their role and facilitates better organization of their time should quicken and enhance productivity. Deans, chairs, and senior faculty all need to perceive support of new faculty as an investment in the success of a faculty career and ultimately of a department and an institution.

The longitudinal nature of the data also made it possible to interpret over-time changes in level of satisfaction with specific facets of the job in terms of their importance to overall job satisfaction. Results suggest, for example, that greater dissatisfaction with salary over the three-year period may be less important to faculty's professional values and self-worth than factors like "sense of autonomy," "support of colleagues," or "opportunities to use skills and abilities" that contribute to professional satisfaction more directly. In fact, data on work stress and work satisfaction suggest that concern over work conflicts, job security, compensation, and even the review process tends to impact faculty careers negatively, that is, increasing the level of stress, but has only a borderline effect on overall satisfaction with the career. What is remarkable about the present set of findings is the level of commitment faculty demonstrate to the personal and intellectual rewards of their profession — even in the face of tenure and rigorous review. When asked if she would still choose an academic career, one faculty member said, "I consider it a great privilege to be an academic. You have so much independence. You are able to pursue the work you want to do. I can't imagine doing anything else."

The fact that faculty satisfaction reflects a total package of resources, opportunity, and compensation rather than any one of these factors singly is important and should be considered by administrators in establishing budgetary priorities.

One of the critical subthemes to emerge from the results presented here is the diminished sense of collegiality faculty report experiencing from year one to year three. Though other research has shown a lack of colleague support to be a stressor in the first year of a faculty appointment, the present work actually documents a decline in collegiality over time [17]. As one faculty stated it, "Collegiality is more standoffish than I had anticipated. I know they are busy and we work different hours, but I'm always the one to go to their door. I know the secretaries a lot better than I know the faculty. It took me a while to get used to it but now it's not a problem. A junior faculty member and I compared notes and realized that we have all been treated the same so it ceases to bother me. I've accepted that being in this department is a solitary exercise."

Numerous faculty cited the pressures of the tenure clock and, especially, demands for research productivity as driving a wedge between themselves and colleagues. If this ethos of competition and "too little time" continues to erode collegiality, faculty may find themselves in an environment that is very different than the "community of scholars" many expect when choosing their career. Mentoring programs, multi-disciplinary and other types of faculty seminars, and topical symposia on issues of concern to faculty are ways for institutions to begin to foster a more collegial climate. Another possibility is a program of department-defined faculty development grants. These grants would be designed to encourage departments to articulate goals, remedy shortcomings, and, in particular, to build a sense of coherence and collegiality among faculty members.

When asked what sorts of programs they feel would best facilitate their professional development, faculty endorsed programs that would give them greater flexibility. Not surprisingly, faculty also felt that better physical resources (library, laboratories, studio) and more support staff would contribute greatly to their work. It was perhaps less obvious that faculty would rate funding for professional meetings as so important. As junior faculty, study participants felt they were least able to afford the financial burden of traveling to professional conferences, but most in need of attending, presenting papers, and establishing a reputation. Based on data from this study, it is recommended that universities increase travel allowances, with more generous reimbursement packages being made available to junior faculty.

Finally, faculty endorsed the same programs and policies in year one and year three with two exceptions: (1) Faculty became less interested in grant-writing seminars. Faculty in disciplines requiring regular grant applications had already gone through the process by year three and felt beyond such seminars. Thus, to be most effective, grant-writing training should target faculty very early on. (2) Interest in mentoring programs actually increased. Our interviews indicated that, for many faculty, collegial relations did not ostensibly improve over the three-year period. In addition, faculty were more concerned about tenure in year three and were actively looking for guidance about criteria and presentation. Given this "third-year perspective," faculty perceived mentoring to have benefits they did not discern earlier on. Although findings may raise some questions about when a mentorship program should be introduced, it seems clear that there is a real need for the kind of interpersonal contact and informal dissemination of information this type of program can supply.

Bounded by the limits of the tenure process, the pretenure period constitutes an unusually well-demarcated stage in the academic career. The very discreteness of the period, however, creates intense stress, combining demands for mastery of professional expectations with demonstration of a mature level of competence and productivity.

The present study indicated that faculty satisfactions and stresses vary over time in a developmentally meaningful way. The early career task of role definition and the need for recognition and support (especially collegial support) may mediate both later career development and attainment of more "intrinsic satisfactions" central to academic success. More information is needed, however, to determine specifically how individuals and institutions may work to maximize the academic potential of all new faculty. Furthermore, longitudinal data tracking faculty through tenure review will be required to know whether the downturn in work satisfaction found here, stabilizes, declines, or intensifies posttenure. Ultimately, the goal of such research is to determine the kinds of support, guidance, and resources most needed at different points in an academic career.

The costs of low faculty job satisfaction, poor productivity, high stress, and high turnover are as tangibly felt at the institutional as at the individual level. Such costs can ill be afforded as we face a diminished pool of faculty applicants and tightening budgets. There is a pressing need for more extensive and systematic examination of pretenure career development in the future.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>One reviewer aptly suggested that intrinsic rewards may be more potent after several years in a faculty position. That is, there is a cumulative dimension to such rewards which makes them more effective as motivators and stress-buffers with time and experience.

<sup>2</sup>Twelve faculty had held one- to two-year faculty positions previously (this includes tenure track and visiting appointments). The percentage of faculty with previous experience remained constant over the three-year span. Prior work experience was not sufficient to affect the time frame for tenure.

<sup>3</sup>Faculty submit tenure dossiers at the beginning of their fifth year. Review is completed at the end of the same academic year and awarded at the beginning of the seventh year. A fairly extensive third-year review is intended to inform faculty about their readiness for tenure.

<sup>4</sup>No significant gender differences in job satisfaction or work stress were found and gender is not an issue in the present article. These findings are consistent with recent research suggesting a change in women's job attitudes with greater workforce participation [37].

<sup>5</sup>A recent study of faculty carried out at the same institution included both the global measure of work stress reported here and a multi-item scale adapted from the national faculty study of Gmelch, Lovrich and Wilke [19]. The correlation between the two measures was 0.73.

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