

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Informing Sciences Institute Presents

Informing Faculty:

An International Journal of Higher Education Discussion Cases

Mission: To serve as the premier source of refereed discussion cases that address the challenges faced by faculty members participating in higher education across the globe.

Informing Faculty is currently inviting faculty members in higher education to submit case studies relating to situations that they or their colleagues have faced or are facing. These case studies should be designed to encourage thoughtful discussions of the issues involved, in a classroom, workshop or online setting. At the present time, our principle focus is on publishing cases addressing challenges stemming from:

- Implementation of innovative technologies for teaching
- Adoption of new pedagogies or procedures in a course setting
- Developing new courses or curricula to accommodate the increasing diversity of the student body and to address regulatory issues
- Balancing teaching and other career demands in an increasingly demanding academic environment

Cases that fall outside of these areas, but are nonetheless consistent with the mission of *Informing Faculty*, will also be considered.

The journal is published in both printed form and online. Printed versions are prepared annually, while online versions of cases are posted upon acceptance.

For more information, visit the *Informing Faculty* web site, at:

<http://informingfaculty.org/>

You are also strongly encouraged to contact the Editor-In-Chief:

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The Challenge

Over the past two decades, higher education has been transformed by the forces of globalization, technology and increasingly diverse student populations. Collectively, these forces are propelling a surge in the demand for higher education that will rival the impact of the baby boom going to college in the 1960s and 1970s. Unlike that earlier period, however, we in academia—particularly in the U.S—are looking at a world in which an aging professoriate is rapidly moving towards retirement (e.g., the percentage of business professors 55 and older has grown from 20 to 30% in the past decade [1]) and where doctoral program enrollments are either stagnant or declining, particularly in the disciplines that constitute the informing sciences. Concrete evidence of these predicted faculty shortages and increasing demand for education is everywhere. Salary compression exists at a national level in many disciplines and actual inversions in some (e.g., finance [2]), stemming from the scarcity of new, terminally qualified, faculty. From the same root cause, reliance on adjuncts and part-time faculty has been growing rapidly at all types of universities [3]. The ever-increasing demand for higher education has also sustained spiraling higher education costs, which have increased as a percentage of the U.S. GDP by a factor of 5 over the past 75 years, and have doubled since the early 1960s [4]—outpaced only by medical costs. All of which leads to the critical question: how will we be able to educate the next generation of students?

[1] AACSB International. *Management Education at Risk*. August 2002. p. 13.

[2] AACSB International. "AACSB 2004-2005 Salary Survey Executive Summary." Accessed on 10 October 2005 at: <http://www.aacsb.edu/knowledgeservices/home/SS-04ExecutiveSummary.pdf>

[3] AAUP. "Statement from the Conference on the Growing Use of Part-Time and Adjunct Faculty." Accessed on 10 October 2005 at: <http://www.aaup.org/Issues/part-time/PTCONF.HTM>

[4] National Center for Educational Statistics. "Table 29: Total expenditures of educational institutions related to the gross domestic product, by level of institution: Selected years, 1929-30 to 2003-04." Accessed on 10 October 2005 at: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d04/tables/dt04_029.asp

Role of Informing Faculty

One element that is certain to play a crucial role in addressing the challenge we face is providing professional development opportunities for faculty members. If we can help existing faculty become more proficient and creative in their use of technology, we can look forward to enhancements not only in the productivity of their teaching, but also in the quality. If we can introduce faculty to new approaches to teaching, we may be able inspire new faculty to make teaching an important focus in their professional lives and to re-energize more experienced faculty by daring them to depart from long-used (and over-used) scripts in which the lecturer is the center of the student's universe. By sharing experiences across national borders, cultures and disciplines, we can gain access to ideas and techniques that we would have never conceived on our own.

How to go about achieving such laudable professional development is, by no means, obvious. One approach is to examine how such development takes place in other professions and then adapt those techniques to our own needs. For three of the most successful professions—business, law and medicine—the use of case studies to stimulate discussion and critical thinking figures prominently among the repertoire of educational techniques employed. Indeed, reliance on the case method is particularly prevalent at the most prestigious schools in each discipline. Could case discussions play an important role in the academic profession as well?

Posing this question presents an immediate practical problem. Where will the cases to be discussed come from? In our review of many academic fields, we found any number of publications willing to publish research cases on teaching techniques in the respective disciplines. We also found publications and repositories specializing in teaching cases intended for professionals in the discipline—for example, cases in business, law, medicine, and K-12 education. What we could not find was any source for multidisciplinary cases suitable for generating productive faculty discussions of teaching and career issues.

Informing Faculty has been established to act as a source for high quality teaching cases that are specifically intended to serve as the basis for discussions between faculty members (including doctoral students). The principal setting of these cases will be teaching situations, particularly those where innovative technologies or changes in pedagogy are involved. We will, however, consider cases on virtually any topic whose discussion would be relevant to our audience and consistent with our mission. Because case studies are novel to many disciplines, we will also intend to take a leading role in introducing faculty to the case method and organizing actual discussions of our cases, both electronically and at selected conferences.

Submissions

Consistent with its mission, the nature of submissions that *Informing Faculty* will consider is very narrow. The principal type of submission is a case study detailing an actual situation encountered by a faculty member or group of faculty members. In preparing a submission, the author(s) should be continually cognizant of two things:

- Only case studies relating to situations being faced by faculty members in higher education will be considered. Case studies relating to non-faculty situations, such as business cases, will be returned. There are other excellent outlets for such case studies, including conferences and journals.
- The case study must be presented in the form of a discussion case, meaning that its central focus will usually be one or more decisions that need to be made. Case studies that are presented as research cases will be returned. Many fine publications enthusiastically embrace research cases, so we will not.

Detailed instructions on formatting and possible structures for discussion cases are available on the extensive *Informing Faculty* community web site. While creativity in both content and narrative style are strongly encouraged, any manuscript that fails to conform to formatting requirements or the "inviolable guidelines" specified for writing a case study suitable for *Informing Faculty* will be returned without review.

Because the use of cases to stimulate faculty discussions is relatively new to most institutions, manuscripts relating to case writing, discussion facilitation and venues for employing *Informing Faculty* cases will also be considered. Before making such a submission, a short proposal should be submitted to the editor for feedback.

The Review Process

Only reviewers with successful case writing experience will be used. Since, as a general rule, cases studies of faculty situations are nearly impossible to construct anonymously (although authors may choose to disguise the names of individuals) reviewers will generally know the identity of the author(s).

The review process of *Informing Faculty* is intended to be highly supportive of contributors. While we will not publish any case study that we would not use enthusiastically in our own teaching efforts, we will also do our best to ensure that promising case situations are given the chance to develop into excellent case studies. The review cycle begins as follows. When a case is first submitted to the journal, a member of the editorial board will immediately read it and classify it into one of three categories: 1) not appropriate, 2) promising situation but needs substantial rework before review, or 3) ready for review. Manuscripts in categories (1) and (2) will be immediately returned to the author(s) with suggestions. For some manuscripts, particularly when submitted by authors new to the case writing process, the editor may encourage that a collaborating co-author be obtained. The journal will maintain a list of faculty members who have volunteered to collaborate, and may suggest possible collaborators to contributors.

It is anticipated that most initial submissions will fall into categories (1) and (2). Once a submission is sent out for review, reviewers will be aware that the editor has already screened it and, by virtue of sending it out for review, indicated that it seems to have considerable merit. It is therefore anticipated that the acceptance rate of category (3) manuscripts will be very high, and that the reviewer's principal role will be to make suggestions for enhancements to the case. Once reviewer comments have been addressed, the case will undergo final proofing and will be posted to the web site. Printed versions of the journal will be produced annually.

It will also be assumed that any author of an accepted submission is automatically volunteering to join the pool of available reviewers (unless that author specifically contacts the editor and requests otherwise).

Outreach

As a complement to its role as a source of cases, *Informing Faculty* also intends to take an active role in introducing the case method to faculty and promoting its effective use. Towards this end, the journal's community web site offers interactive tutorial content on writing cases and discussions leadership. In addition, faculty will have access to a secure discussion board, where teaching notes and comments for each case will be posted. Multimedia guides to some of the technologies described in published cases will also be prepared.

Outreach activities will further include hosting discussions of selected recently-published cases. Some discussions will take place online—either asynchronously or using synchronous classroom software—and some will take place face-to-face at selected international conferences. A calendar of these events will be posted on the web site as they are scheduled.

Volume 1, Numbers 1-10

In its first volume, *Informing Faculty* features case studies that include:

1. *EMBA 2002*: A faculty member teaching an Executive MBA class discovers that his students have been sending strongly worded emails to the program director objecting to the structure of his class.
2. *Counseling Gifted Students: A Web-Based Course*: In an online course in gifted education counseling, a professor is confronted with students who strongly resist working in groups—despite clear instructions to do so.
3. *The Mystery of the Self-Paced Course*: The instructor of a hybrid programming course, taught using a self-paced format, ponders what to do when, as the semester rapidly comes to a close, nearly all of his students seem to be on the brink of failing.
4. *Classroom Response Units in Human Sexual Behavior*: A Women's Studies professor, teaching a course in human sexuality, seeks the guidance of colleagues in her attempt to implement an audience response system in her class.
5. *Getting Started With Increments and Transformations*: A recently graduated assistant professor, assigned to teach a challenging course in industrial engineering, worries that the time demands of indulging his passion for teaching may undermine his academic career.
6. *The Increments and Transformations Institute at the University of South Florida: A Case Study*: A research case study detailing the use of *Informing Faculty* case studies as part of a year long faculty development program and the assessing impact of the case method pedagogy on educational outcomes.
7. *Contemporary Issues in Art: The Online Class*: The instructor of a class in contemporary art relates her experiences in conducting a class session online using synchronous software, allowing museum curators and featured artists to participate. She then ponders whether or not the activity should be repeated.
8. *Cheater, Cheater, Pumpkin Eater: Dealing With Cheating in a Large Class*: The instructor in a large introductory MIS class describes her ongoing battle against cheating and questions how she should address various situations she is encountering.
9. *Teaching Computer Technology at a Distance*: The instructor in an introductory web programming course, taught in a distance learning format, discovers that some of his later assignments are beyond the capability of some of his students. How should he address the situation, while being fair to those who can keep up?
10. *Making Africana Studies More Engaging*: A professor teaching African History seeks ways to make his courses more engaging and hopes that technology can play a role. He wonders how he can best identify suitable projects and motivate the involvement of the university's Media Innovation Team organization.

Call for Submissions and Participation

Informing Faculty welcomes submissions from higher education faculty from all disciplines and all nations. At the present time, our particular priority is to increase the diversity of our case portfolio across two important dimensions: authorship and institutional scope. With respect to authorship, we would like the journal's portfolio to include a broad range of styles and perspectives. We are willing to work with authors who wish to share their experiences with others, but who are not used to writing cases for teaching purposes. With respect to institutional scope, we hope to dramatically increase: a) the number of institutions, b) the type of institutions, and c) the global nature of institutions that are represented in our portfolio of case studies.

Nominations and self-nominations for editorial positions are also encouraged. As the number of submissions increases, section editor positions will be added. Editorial positions responsible for maintaining the content areas of the *Informing Faculty* community web site are also available.

Editorial-In-Chief



Dr. T. Grandon Gill, *Informing Faculty's* Editor-In-Chief, received his MBA and DBA from Harvard Business School and is currently an Associate Professor of IS & DS at the University of South Florida. He has authored numerous teaching cases, as well as publishing case-study based research in prestigious journals such as *MIS Quarterly* and *Accounting, Management and Information Technologies*. He teaches doctoral seminars in the case method and instruction with technology and plays an active role as a designer and facilitator of USF's *Center for 21st Century Teaching Excellence* summer institutes.