

Reimagining Faculty Development with an Entrepreneurial Approach Using the Harvard Business Review Framework and a Corporate Brand Identity Matrix

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Introduction

Faculty development programs, particularly in engineering, are essential tools for disseminating proven educational and pedagogical innovations through training, mentoring, and ongoing support or coaching [1]. These programs play a crucial role in providing the tools and information to newly recruited faculty, which contributes to faculty retention and fosters an environment that encourages continuous learning and skill development [2]. However, faculty development can be defined differently depending on faculty responsibilities. Faculty professional development is a high-impact lever for promoting student-centered practices [3]. Nevertheless, it can be broader than instructional practices, as faculty roles are multifaceted and include realms beyond teaching, such as research, service, mentoring, grant funding, and dissemination. Therefore, the programs must not only be holistic and inclusive [4] but also strategically designed to meet the needs of faculty at research-focused institutions, where the focus should be on innovation, not necessarily remediation of what faculty are lacking [5].

Due to the growing needs at universities, especially in engineering colleges, faculty development offices and roles have been established at the university level to deliver faculty development in a variety of ways. These mechanisms also serve different purposes, such as supporting faculty instruction, considering their well-being, promotion and tenure, as well as acclimating them to the university environment. A dedicated faculty development office serves as a central hub for promoting best practices and providing guidance to support faculty through professional development programs, workshops, and mentoring initiatives [6]. These offices also help create a sense of community and belonging among faculty members by providing opportunities for networking, collaboration, and sharing these best practices.

A major question is how one creates such an organization, particularly in academia. Academia is quite unique in its function compared to public or private corporations. There is limited documentation on establishing an organization that supports faculty in an environment mimicking consulting or a client service-driven model. Additionally, faculty development has changed due to the evolving requirements of faculty since the pandemic. Changes in higher education, such as the rise of online teaching, expanded responsibilities, and increased external caregiving demands, have reshaped expectations for faculty. These challenges are also highlighted in the 2024 National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Mathematics report, “Supporting Family Caregiving in STEMM” [7]. At NC State University, the Engineering Office of Faculty Development and Success (OFDS) reimagined how faculty development is offered to a growing and diverse engineering college. We recognized that the complexity of our stakeholders, including university and external partners, students, and faculty, necessitates a distinct approach to delivering effective professional development.

Consequently, OFDS used an entrepreneurial approach called the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (CBIM) as presented by the Harvard Business Review [8,9] to deliver enhanced

professional development. This framework helps executive teams focus on one element of an organization's identity by posing a structured set of questions, which cover both internally and externally oriented elements. With an adapted approach, OFDS considered this managerial approach with a data-driven pilot needs assessment to develop our office's identity, including its name, mission, vision, values, goals, objectives, and evaluation processes.

In this paper, we share our process of using the CBIM to generate these elements within the OFDS identity, including retreats, faculty feedback sessions, and a pilot needs assessment. These activities were conducted both internally and externally, as well as through a combination of both, to create our brand identity. This identity communicates our support services, resource facilitation, and necessary tools for success and satisfaction. The result will include our mission statement, vision, goals, performance measures, objectives, and indicators to demonstrate our effectiveness.

Faculty Development Office Evolution

In the spring of 2008, leadership within NC State's College of Engineering (COE) recognized the need for a dedicated office to support faculty members in their personal and professional growth. To address this gap, the office was established to connect faculty with resources and opportunities that can contribute to their success. Initially, the office expanded on earlier efforts, particularly the work related to supporting underrepresented minority engineering faculty. The newly formed unit created an Associate Dean of Faculty Development role, and the first initiative was the launch of a New Faculty Orientation Workshop (NFOW), a four-day event held annually in August [10]. The NFOW quickly became the office's flagship program, bringing together experts to provide crucial information, resources, and best practices to new faculty in class management, teaching techniques, and enhancing student engagement.

In 2022, the office underwent many changes, including a leadership transition with the appointment of a new Associate Dean, staff transitions, and the broadening of its support systems. COE also had many different contextual factors, such as new leadership and a notable goal increase in student enrollment of 40% over the next five years. OFDS recognized the need to evolve with the establishment of the American Society for Engineering Education's faculty development division and with "faculty development" being increasingly recognized as an emerging discipline.

Moreover, it was clear that faculty development services were not exclusive to assistant professors or junior faculty, as interpreted in the college; it was broader in scope. As a result, the office understood the need to develop a holistic identity that served the entire faculty career and professional life cycle.

What is the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (CBIM)?

Faculty development, like entrepreneurship, is also a difficult concept to define. Professor Howard Stevenson, from the Harvard Business School, defined it as the pursuit of opportunity beyond resources controlled [11]. Barot [12, 13] describes it as a practice beginning with action

and the creation of a new organization. As OFDS was offering professional development services to faculty, our office needed to think of itself as a corporation.

Similarly, OFDS had parallels to a consulting corporation's role within the college. Even though we are part of a larger academic institution, each systematic structure (office, unit, department) functions with a distinct mission, goals, and identity. In addition to resource constraints, such as a small team, OFDS could not address every issue simultaneously, demonstrating the need to work collaboratively with other groups to leverage limited resources. This is where we conducted our own research on how to create our strategic plan, which led us to the Harvard Business Review's introduction to the CBIM [9] for guidance [8].

While several entrepreneurial frameworks were considered, such as the Business Model Canvas, Lean Startup, and Design Thinking, these approaches primarily focus on customer orientation, iterative feedback, and rapid prototyping to meet market needs [14]. These models are widely used by entrepreneurs to identify value propositions, respond to consumer demand, and innovate in uncertain conditions. However, they did not fully address our internal identity and stakeholder alignment challenges as an academic office. We were not just designing for external value creation, we also needed to make sense of our role within a large, R1 university ecosystem. CBIM was uniquely suited to our needs because it integrates market- and brand-oriented perspectives. This dual lens allowed us to align our internal values and competencies with the expectations of various stakeholders across the college. As a result, we were able to position ourselves as a strategic, service-oriented partner, rather than solely an office for training and workshops.

Figure 1. Harvard Business Review's Depiction of the CBIM [9]

	VALUE PROPOSITION	RELATIONSHIPS	POSITION
External	What are our key offerings, and how do we want them to appeal to customers and other stakeholders?	What should be the nature of our relationships with key customers and other stakeholders?	What is our intended position in the market and in the hearts and minds of key customers and other stakeholders?
External/ Internal	EXPRESSION What is distinctive about the way we communicate and express ourselves and makes it possible to recognize us at a distance?	BRAND CORE What do we promise, and what are the core values that sum up what our brand stands for?	PERSONALITY What combination of human characteristics or qualities forms our corporate character?
Internal	MISSION AND VISION What engages us (mission)? What is our direction and inspiration (vision)?	CULTURE What are our attitudes, and how do we work and behave?	COMPETENCES What are we particularly good at, and what makes us better than the competition?

CBIM incorporates two primary approaches to brand development. The first is the market-oriented approach, which defines brand identity from the outside, focusing on the perspectives

and needs of external stakeholders. The second is the brand-oriented approach, which defines it from the inside out, emphasizing internal values, strengths, and capabilities. These orientations provide a comprehensive view of brand identity, ensuring alignment between external expectations and internal realities [9]. The matrix resonated with our office because we serve a diverse faculty with varying needs, operate with a small team, and must strategically leverage limited resources within a large academic institution. This framework helped us define and focus our brand identity to address these challenges more effectively.

Figure 1 shows that the matrix focuses on mission, vision, and target audiences. Mission and vision define our core purpose and goals, while target audiences identify key stakeholders. Additionally, the matrix emphasizes differentiation and positioning, helping organizations understand what sets them apart from others and how their stakeholders can perceive them [8].

By applying these principles, we aim to clearly define our office's role within the broader academic context, ensuring that our identity is aligned with our internal capabilities and the needs of our faculty and students. While the challenges in academia differ from those in the corporate world, the CBIM framework provides a valuable structure for aligning our work with the academic mission and fostering an environment that supports faculty development, entrepreneurial thinking, and academic success.

Methods

Over 18 months, OFDS participated in a series of retreats, activities, exercises, and discussions to define key components that would effectively communicate our work. Below is an outline of the activities and experiences that helped shape these foundational aspects in five parts: (1) Team Retreat #1, (2) Faculty Feedback, (3) Needs Assessment, (4) Team Retreat #2, and (5) Creating an Evaluation Process

1. Team Retreat #1: Mission and Vision (Internal)

When our team transitioned with leadership and new staff in early 2023, our office was known as Engineering Faculty Advancement. At this time, we began discussing the identity developed by our predecessors. This identity was formed before COVID-19 and under previous leadership in the college. We realized that faculty development had expanded, now encompassing well-being and that our identity needed to be more prominently integrated into what we do and value.

The first activity for our five-person team was to create a story titled, “What does it look like when our office is doing its best work?” Next, we underwent an analysis process where we examined each story by highlighting key elements such as places, people, and discussions of our work, as well as underlining moments of positive change, which contributed to developing our mission statement. Next, we moved on to crafting our vision statement. Using a template from OnStrategy [15], a strategic planning consulting firm, we followed a set of criteria: the vision should represent at least five years into the future, provide a clear direction, be bold and ambitious, and include high-reaching, descriptive assertions. We also remembered that the mission and vision must align and work together seamlessly. This structured, reflective process was intended to lead us to the first draft of our mission and vision statements that would guide

the next phase of discussion and iteration as we continued to define the identity and direction of our office.

2. Faculty Feedback (External)

After our retreat and preliminary outline of our office, we put together two sessions to seek feedback. In the first session, we hosted a lunch with engineering faculty leaders who had previously participated in the “Faculty Roundtable,” as seen in Figure 2. The second session, “Faculty Exchange,” included mid-career faculty and recently promoted faculty members. In this active session, we introduced our new team and led five activities:

- **Defining Faculty Development:** Introduced the new team, shared the office’s history, and discussed diverse interpretations of “faculty development,” including a scope beyond promotion and tenure or early-career faculty.
- **Gallery Walk (Mission Statement Feedback)** Participants reviewed the proposed mission statement, providing input on its clarity, resonance, and appeal through a structured gallery walk activity.
- **Two Stars and a Wish (Vision Statement Feedback):** Faculty identified two strengths and one improvement area for the vision statement to facilitate constructive dialogue about its alignment with their needs.
- **Goal Prioritization Survey:** Faculty ranked seven proposed goals to identify their priorities and areas of interest for future initiatives.
- **Office Name Feedback Discussion:** There was an open conversation within small groups to share impressions and suggestions for the office’s proposed name.



Figure 2. Faculty participating in the gallery walk activity during the Faculty Roundtable session.

The two sessions were able to provide a mix of feedback and different perspectives that helped to refine our identity as an office. These sessions would allow us to refine and finalize our vision, mission, and strategic goals.

3. Needs Assessment: Data Collection (External)

In our nine-department college, with three satellite engineering programs in three other colleges, we conducted a pilot needs assessment within one of the largest departments, consisting of 50 faculty members. The purpose of the needs assessment was to provide a comprehensive understanding of faculty members' experiences by considering their development needs and participation in other initiatives, current job-related well-being, and personal commitments. Unlike a traditional needs assessment that focused solely on faculty development, this approach

recognized that these additional factors can significantly impact faculty work and engagement in development opportunities. Data was collected through surveys and focus groups to capture a holistic view of faculty needs and experiences. The intention was to use the data to design programs and initiatives within OFDS that would influence the faculty's success and goals.

The methods used in this assessment began with our attendance at a department meeting, where we explained that the term "faculty development" encompasses both career success and personal fulfillment in faculty work. A survey was distributed to 50 faculty members, followed by focus groups six weeks later to explore faculty experiences within the department and discipline. The survey collected demographic data and asked about faculty satisfaction, past development experiences, and the perceived importance of development opportunities in research, mentoring, teaching, and overall professional growth. A semi-structured focus group protocol, comprising 14 questions, provided a deeper insight into faculty experiences, departmental culture, and the challenges they face.

4. Team Retreat #2: Goals and Values (Internal)

The second office retreat, titled "Shaping Engineering Faculty Development for Meaningful Moments that Mirror Our Values and Goals," was intended to revisit and refine our goals based on feedback from the faculty roundtable, our needs assessment, and emerging programming shaped by faculty opportunities and needs. The retreat allowed the office to align our goals, products, and assessment practices with Olin College's GAPA Framework, a model that supports program and organization development within academia [16].

Drawing inspiration from the Harvard Business Review [8] and *The Power of Moments* [17], the office analyzed organizational identities through the lens of successful companies. Using the Mural collaborative tool, we revisited the goals developed in the first retreat, integrating insights from the faculty roundtables, needs assessment data, and current initiatives. This process allowed us to assess how each goal connected with our university's strategic plan. During these discussions, we identified how we had addressed each goal and, in some cases, determined that certain goals were no longer relevant, leading to their removal.

Once the refined goals were identified, the office continued the work in weekly staff meetings, dedicating time to develop specific objectives and establish clear metrics for measuring success. This process maintained the responsiveness of our faculty development initiatives, aligning them with our values and grounding them in data-driven decisions to support ongoing efforts.

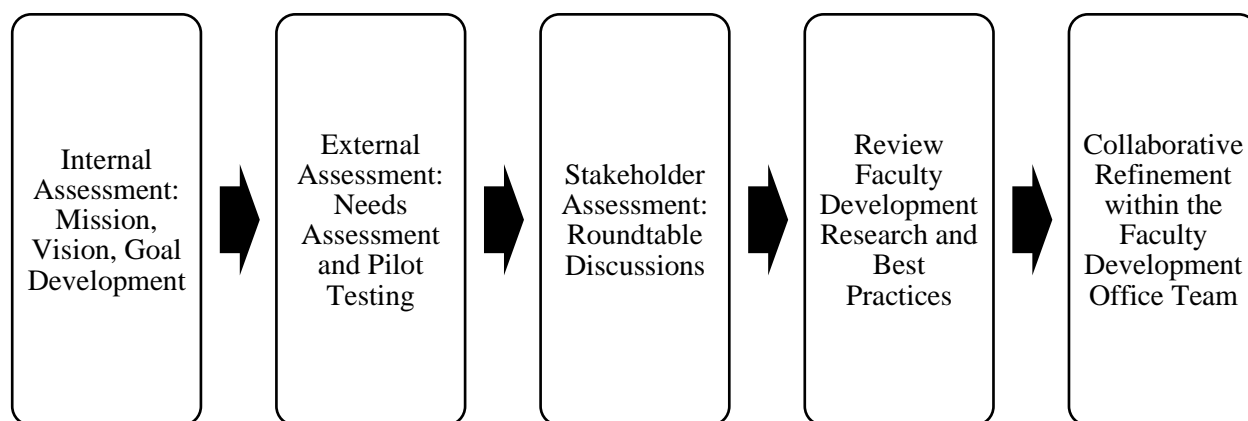
5. Creating an Evaluation Approach (Internal/External)

Due to the small size of our team, we decided to collaborate with an assessment group on campus to develop an evaluation plan that aligns with our entrepreneurial approach. After ongoing meetings since the early stages of this process, the assessment group and our team determined that we needed to adopt a developmental evaluation approach. Evaluative thinking, techniques, practices, and disciplines can be used to systematically collect data and align users with goals and strategies, while maintaining flexibility in highly complex settings. The underlying purpose of this method is to promote social change, though it is only effective when

tailored to the unique context of each social innovation [18]. In our work, this framework allowed us to address diverse faculty needs while fostering innovation within the broader social environment.

OFDS needed three areas of evaluation to be developed: a logic model, metrics, and the development and deployment of instruments (including Qualtrics surveys and qualitative protocols such as interviews and focus groups), along with an overview evaluation process. Instead of using a traditional logic model, we applied an enterprise model [19, 20] because of the entrepreneurial approach to our work, which is less commonly documented in academic settings. This type of process aims to improve the client relationship, incorporating both an inside-out perspective and a cross-functional approach that provides an end-to-end view of the client experience. Given our internal and external approach to faculty development, the enterprise model was well-suited to our work, as faculty could be considered our “clients.”

Figure 3. Overview of the Evaluation Process for Creating the Enterprise Model



Although the process itself was nonlinear and iterative, the steps presented in Figure 3 reflect the structure that emerged through our work. We developed the foundational elements of our identity by integrating internal assessment, external assessment, and stakeholder engagement. At the same time, we reviewed faculty development research and best practices from organizations, such as the American Society for Engineering Education and the Kern Entrepreneurial Engineering Network’s Engineering Unleashed Professional Development [20], as well as the direction and trends in faculty development. We then mapped all potential partnerships on our campus that work with faculty, including our university-level faculty development office, university libraries, and other university-level offices.

With that in mind, we started piloting different programs that included new workshops (i.e., "Navigating Your Professional Odyssey," "A Call to Action: Forum for STEM Leaders to Reform the Norms for Academic Caregivers") and revisited how we facilitated previous workshops, such as the NFOW and the NSF CAREER Award Workshop Series. Taking these considerations into account, the assessment team began defining metrics and the evaluation framework to draft an enterprise model. This table captures the structured steps taken to evaluate and refine the OFDS initiatives, ensuring alignment with the office’s mission and the evolving needs of the faculty.

Results

Drafted the foundation of the Faculty Development Office strategic plan

Based on the feedback from the first retreat and faculty, our office established the foundation of our strategic plan by formulating our mission, vision, and initial goals, marking the beginning of our office's evolution in faculty development. Following the two faculty feedback sessions (roundtable and exchange), we drafted our mission, vision, and main topics for our goals, or focus areas, as described in Figure 4. At Retreat #2, we reflected on both our professional and personal values to identify the values that individually and collectively drive our approach to day-to-day operations.

Figure 4. OFDS Mission, Vision, and Focus Areas



We recognize that this work is fluid and continually changing. Still, it allowed us to draft and begin communicating what our work would be, with the intent of continuing to evolve our identity, both internally and externally.

Faculty Development Needs Assessment Pilot

The needs assessment invited 50 faculty members to participate, of whom 26 responded, predominantly representing full-ranked, white male faculty with over 36 years of experience within a single department. Data from the survey was analyzed descriptively to identify trends, while focus group discussions were inductively coded for emerging themes.

These analyses were instrumental in shaping the direction of the faculty development office, informing workshop topics, community group initiatives, and setting priorities for the upcoming semester. The results helped refine instruments and protocols, guiding the office in addressing future key faculty development needs that considered the diverse identities of our faculty

members. Survey data were analyzed descriptively to identify broad patterns in faculty development interests. These results were used to inform upcoming workshops, guide new community-based programming, and help set semester priorities. See Figure 5 for the top ten faculty development topics of interest reported in the survey.

Figure 5. Top ten faculty development topics of interest from preliminary survey results

1. Overall: Leadership development ($M=4.08$)	6. Mentorship: Graduate student advising and mentorship ($M=3.68$)
2. Overall: Promoting long-term career satisfaction ($M=3.84$)	7. Research: Translating research into real-world impact ($M=3.64$)
3. Student engagement: Enhancing engineering student motivation and interest ($M=3.84$)	8. Student engagement: Promoting student accessibility and belonging in engineering ($M=3.6$)
4. Overall: Reducing burnout and stress in your work ($M=3.84$)	9. Overall: Mental health and work-life balance ($M=3.56$)
5. Mentorship: Building effective mentor-mentee relationships ($M=3.72$)	10. Mentorship: Faculty mentoring best practices ($M=3.52$)

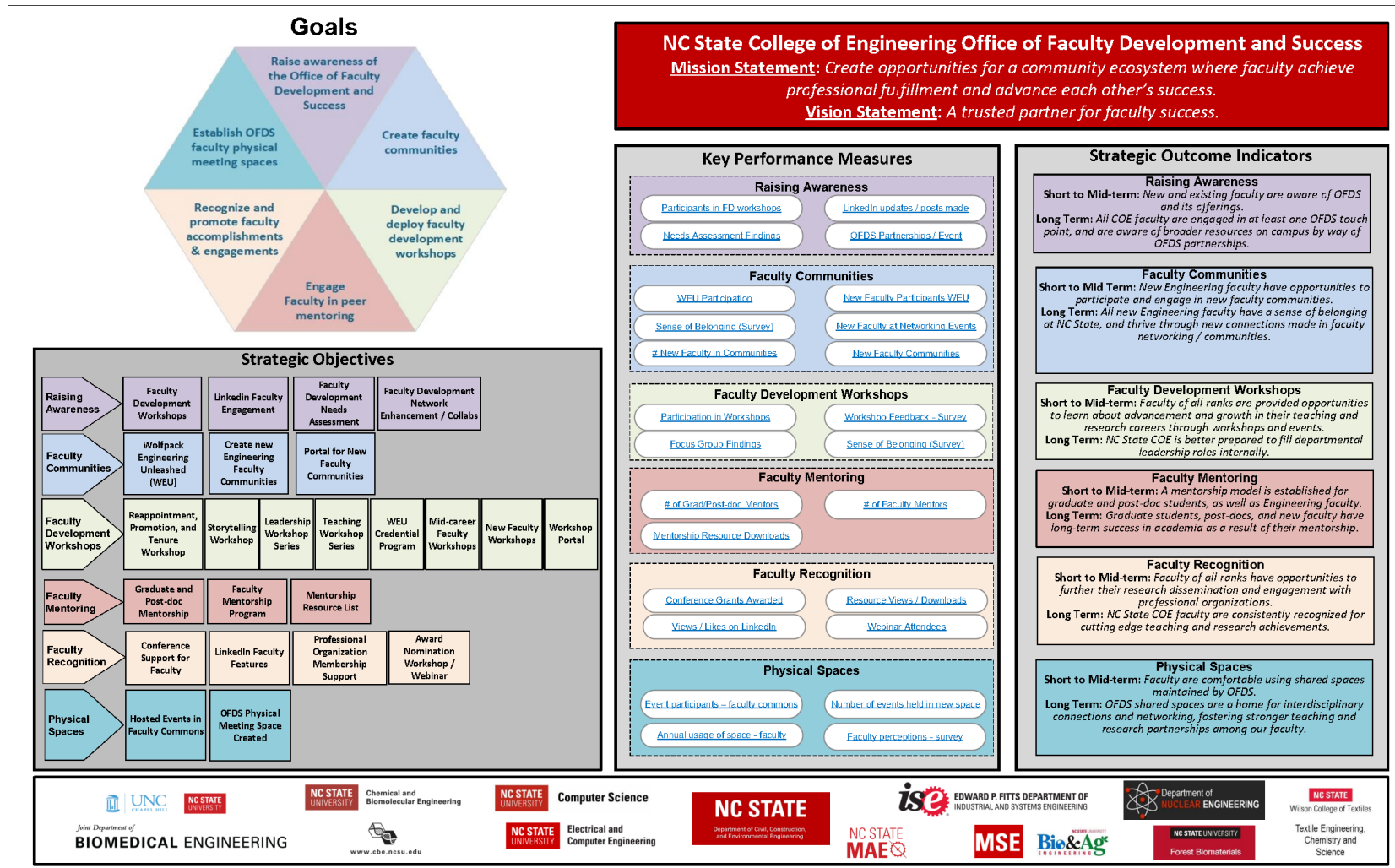
During the focus groups, three major themes emerged: (1) significant concerns regarding support for junior faculty and the promotion and tenure process; (2) appropriate methods to support student accommodations and well-being; and (3) the challenge of submitting proposals and the processes occurring between the university and college levels.

Preliminary Draft of Evaluation Enterprise Model

The results of this work have initiated the use of a developmental approach, as outlined in the first draft of the enterprise model, as shown in Figure 6. Note that these strategic outcome indicators are examples and do not directly reflect our work since it is still a work in progress and is in its early stages. However, the model demonstrates a collection of the work done over the past two years. It provides foundational approaches for OFDS and how we conduct faculty development. Ultimately, this work contributes to both the engineering college and the university.

Several faculty-led suggestions from the roundtables and feedback sessions led to direct changes. For example, the request for support in navigating non-traditional faculty roles led to the development of a new “Professional Odyssey” workshop focused on career mapping across teaching, research, and service. Suggestions for more targeted peer mentoring inspired a series of small-group, department-level mentoring pilots, which will launch in Fall 2025. Feedback on the vagueness of our initial mission statement led to clearer language emphasizing faculty success at all stages. These tangible changes reinforced the iterative nature of our approach and highlighted the value of incorporating stakeholder voice into organizational identity formation.

Figure 6. Enterprise Model of the Faculty Development Office Evaluation



Discussion and Future Work

Early findings from the pilot assessment point to a clear need for leadership development, stronger faculty mentoring, and greater attention to mental health and work-life balance. To build on this foundation and establish baseline data more broadly, OFDS will extend its needs assessment to additional departments across the COE. OFDS also implements a multi-level assessment strategy to evaluate whether programming addresses identified priorities. In the short term, participant surveys will gather feedback on satisfaction, relevance, and immediate application. The mid-term approach involves tracking engagement trends across events, departments, and faculty ranks. For long-term impact, OFDS will examine indicators such as promotion and tenure rates, faculty retention, and reported well-being.

The evaluation process will be managed through the Smartsheet system using our new evaluative approaches, and additional feedback will be gathered in Fall 2025 through roundtable discussions and faculty exchanges. Further refinements to the enterprise model will be made to continue aligning our work with the needs of faculty and the strategic direction of the college and university. The intention is to create a more responsive and sustainable faculty development model that incorporates both internal and external stakeholder perspectives, fostering a culture of continuous learning and growth.

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