

EARLY CAREER FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AT SELECTED MIDWESTERN  
LAND-GRANT COLLEGES OF AGRICULTURE AND RELATED SCIENCES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe faculty members' perceptions and experiences with early career professional development, and to examine the relationship between personal and professional characteristics and perceptions of professional development. The accepting sample consisted of 51 early career faculty members in colleges of agriculture and related sciences at Iowa State University, the University of Missouri, and the University of Nebraska – Lincoln.

Respondents participated in 0.92 hours of teaching professional development at the departmental level, 4.49 hours at the college level, and 4.70 hours at the university level. An average of 5.15 hours each week was devoted to improving their teaching and 1.07 hours discussing teaching with colleagues.

It was determined that 19% of the variance in how actively faculty seek out teaching professional development can be explained by teaching appointment percentage and sex. Further, 6% of the variance in the number of hours of teaching professional development can be explained by teaching appointment percentage. Finally, 19% of the variance in the number of hours of teaching professional development can be explained by research appointment percentage.

Faculty agree that professional development in the areas of evaluation, teaching methods, advising and working with diverse learners, and developing the teaching portion of the

promotion and tenure dossier would be helpful to their growth as a teacher. It was concluded that respondents were most confident in their ability to perform tasks related the actual act of teaching (i.e., developing learning objectives, using a variety of teaching approaches, developing effective lectures, etc.).