Development Plan

Now that You've Got a Development Goal, Make a Development Plan

It only makes sense: You're more likely to achieve your goal if you have a plan for how you'll do so. Taking the time to create and actually document this plan will not only help you to see a clear path toward achievement, but creates accountability for you once you share it with your manager. (Don't worry, plans can change –and should change–if obstacles or opportunities arise that warrant adjustments.)

What does a development plan entail? At minimum, it includes specific action steps you'll take toward reaching your development goal, any resources you might use to take those steps (e.g., books, trainings, coaching), and when you'll take those steps and use those resources. Basically, it outlines what, exactly, will you do and when will you do it. Let's take a look back at the development goals from the last issue of the Learning Log:

> **Staff development goal**
> *By March, I want to learn to use more of the functions of Excel that allow for data analysis and presentation so that I can start helping our department better understand and present its impact on students' academic success.*
> **Faculty development goal**
> *By next November, I want to have enhanced my ability to engage students in online courses through learning how to use embedded assessments as evidenced by improved student performance and/or student feedback.*

The big question these leave us with is, *how will you learn what you want to learn and start to implement it in your job?*

> **For the staff goal, you might make a development plan like this:**
> *Each week between now and January, I will complete one LinkedIn Learning course on Excel. The ones I'm specifically interested in include - Excel 2016: Advanced Formulas and Functions, Excel Data Visualization: Mastering 20+ Charts and Graphs, and Excel 2016: Pivot Tables in Depth. Along the way, I will have regular check-ins (every 5-6 weeks) with my manager to discuss what I've learned and ask for projects wherein I can begin to apply what I'm learning.*
> **For the faculty goal, you might make a development plan like this:**
> *During the Spring semester, I will be attending two Learning Academy sessions to learn about technologies I can use to embed assessments in slides and video lectures. Afterwards, if I need more support, I plan to request a consultation with the Learning Academy or with one of my colleagues who I know uses embedded assessment to strategize for how to best implement them. Then, in the Fall, I plan to try out one of these technologies to use embedded assessments in my general education courses. I'll compare student performance on exams from the Spring semester to the Fall semester to see if embedded assessment improved scores, and I'll also seek feedback from students at the end of the Fall to learn whether they found the embedded assessments engaging and helpful for their learning.*

It's important to note that a development plan does not have to stop at your annual goal, but can address longer-term goals and a broader view of your professional development. In addition to panning how you'll achieve your annual development goal, you might want to create a plan for reaching a bigger 3-5 year goal. For example, if in 3-5 years, you'd like to be in a leadership position, you should consider and document:

- Your long-term aspirations as specifically as possible
- Your relevant skills, abilities, and strengths
- Your development opportunities, or things you need to learn or improve in order to prepare yourself to reach your goals

Then, you can chart a course for how you might use your strengths and shore up your weaknesses to best position yourself to achieve what you'd like to achieve in 3-5 years. Remember, your supervisor should be your partner in the planning and achieving of your goals, so make sure to ask for feedback on your strengths, areas for improvement, goals, and how you can work toward reaching your goals.