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## Symposium focuses on changing roles of faculty

By [Tracy Giese](#) | May 19, 2014[Share](#) [Like](#) 0

Approximately 65 faculty members and administrators gathered in early April to discuss "The Changing Roles, Perceptions and Expectations: Faculty in the American Research University" at the UGA Teaching Academy's 24th annual Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium.

Speakers at this year's event included Mark Becker, president of Georgia State University, who spoke about the challenges of transitioning from a graduate student to faculty member and then to the presidency of an urban, public research I university. Jeffrey Dorfman, a professor of agricultural economics in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, spoke about the economic impact of higher education in Georgia.

Two panel discussions were featured. The first focused on the professional development of early career faculty, including opportunities for career development through the Center for Teaching and Learning and planning a path to promotion and tenure.

The second panel addressed ideas and strategies for promoting leadership and engagement of mid-career faculty, including involvement within the department as well as on a local and global scale with community and professional organizations.

Symposium participants also split into five groups to develop strategies for enhancing the professional environment for UGA faculty. On the second day, each breakout group presented a summary of their discussions as well as recommendations that formally will be sent to the provost for consideration.

Preliminary recommendations included creating an interdisciplinary hiring initiative that would blend senior faculty and graduate students; establishing a faculty mentoring institute with a central hub of information about grants, awards and other opportunities for faculty; creating guidelines and training for faculty seeking promotion and tenure; creating a program for faculty to enhance leadership skills and initiatives through faculty learning communities and workshops; and embedding entrepreneurship within the roles of teaching, research and service through a summer entrepreneurial fellows program.

At the conclusion of the symposium, Pamela Whitten, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost, encouraged the faculty to consider what works in a complex organization to enhance the faculty experience.

"Always ask what is or should be unique about the University of Georgia. It's the novel things we do that set us apart from other universities," Whitten said. "So let's think about what's expected and what's normal. Then let's push the envelope to become the university we want to be."