Meeting faculty development needs in a newly established college of pharmacy via inclusion processes

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OBJECTIVES

• Development of the academic environments of faculty members is essential in establishing the skills necessary to become both leaders in education and research as well as effective role models for students.
• Since its inception in 2008, our college faced the realization that substantial changes were necessary to strengthen the curriculum in an ultimate effort to improve teaching and learning.
• At the same time, many new faculty members needed to be hired and integrated into the program.

METHODS

In the last quarter of 2013, the college appointed a new chair of the faculty development committee (FDC).

Soon after, a needs assessment survey was drafted and circulated amongst the faculty members requesting prioritization of several key focus areas that were lacking and required immediate attention.

Within the last 18 months, the committee has updated and solidified many fundamental college policies and procedures surrounding the academic plan, performance appraisals and contract renewal processes.

A peer evaluation procedure and tool were created to provide non-punitive feedback to faculty in an attempt to identify strengths and weaknesses.

For new hires, the FDC created a new orientation program to be implemented by department chairs and a mentoring plan was developed to identify and address obstacles in challenges early in their roles as professors.

Numerous workshops were offered to assist in personal and professional development.

Administration is currently devising a plan to alleviate teaching loads in order to give faculty additional time to pursue scholarship.

FACULTY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

RESULTS

• The most recent ACPE survey in 2014 rated the FDC’s effectiveness very highly (97% strongly agreed or agreed); a significant improvement compared to past scores where the majority of faculty disagreed, strongly disagreed or were unable to comment (62.3%) on the statements asked under this category.

Faculty Survey Responses (October 2014)

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

• Meeting the individual developmental needs of academicians is a systematic comprehensive well-resourced effort.

• It is essential to the growth of any institution to make a concerted effort to incorporate inclusive processes amongst faculty for successful decision making strategies.

• To remain at the forefront, faculty development programs will need to broaden their focus, consider diverse training methods and formats, conduct more rigorous program evaluations, and foster new partnerships and collaborations.

• Academic vitality is dependent upon faculty members’ interest and expertise; faculty development has a critical role to play in promoting academic excellence and innovation.

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