

Number 11

Vacant Budgeted and Lost Faculty Positions – Academic Year 2009-10

Introduction:

Faculty recruitment and retention has been identified as one of the top issues and challenges of colleges and schools of pharmacy. Anecdotal reports point to increased difficulty in filling available, budgeted positions and increased recruiting of faculty by the pharmaceutical industry as exacerbating the pharmacy faculty shortage. Following the Association of Academic Health Centers (AHC) Congress for Health Professions Educators in June 2002, it became clear that comprehensive data on faculty vacancies and the reasons associated with faculty turnover and loss of positions is lacking in pharmacy compared to other health professions disciplines.

The AACP Institutional Research Assessment Committee discussed the issue and concluded that having clear evidence is important in making the case for increased support for pharmaceutical education at the federal level and in planning AACP programs and initiatives to address the problem. Additionally, Robert M. Bachman, President of the American Foundation for Pharmaceutical Education (AFPE), indicated a need for these data in making the case to industry that their increased support for graduate education in the pharmaceutical sciences at U.S. colleges and schools of pharmacy is essential to effectively address both the pharmacy faculty shortage and the pharmacist shortage. In 2002, AACP introduced the Survey of Vacant Budgeted and Lost Faculty Positions to its Institutional Research activities. Data from this survey were reported in several forums at the 2003 AACP Annual Meeting and were used by AFPE in launching its \$12 million scholarship campaign to address the national pharmacy faculty and licensed pharmacist shortage. In July 2003, it was requested that the Association distribute this survey annually in order to track the number and type of new faculty positions and vacancies in existing positions. The 2009-10 academic year marks the 9th year in which AACP has collected faculty vacancy data.

Methods:

The Survey of Vacant Budgeted and Lost Faculty Positions collects information on the total number of vacant shared and non-shared faculty and administrative positions, as well as lost positions. These data were requested through the dean at each of the schools and colleges of pharmacy in the U.S. and Puerto Rico in December 2010. Submission of data was requested by January 28, 2011. A response rate of 84.9 percent (101 of 119 colleges and schools) was achieved, down from 88.6 percent in 2008-09.

Data Highlights:

One hundred and one (101) colleges and schools of pharmacy reported a total of 374 vacant and/or lost positions in 2009-10, down from 396 in 2008-09 (a 5.6 percent decrease). Eighty-four of the 101 schools reported 332 vacant non-shared positions (up from 327), 14 schools reported 21 vacant shared positions (down from 36), and 11 schools reported 21 lost positions. The total number of lost positions (n=21) represents a 36.4% percent decrease from the number lost in 2008-09 (n=33).

Of the 374 vacant and lost positions, the most were in clinical science/pharmacy practice (48.7 percent), followed by pharmaceutical science (32.9 percent), social and administrative science (8.8 percent), administrative positions (6.7 percent), and research/non-instructional (2.9 percent).

Positions in pharmaceutical sciences accounted for 33.7 percent of all vacant, non-shared positions, up slightly from 33.3 percent in 2008-09 and from 28.3 percent in 2007-08. Positions in clinical science/pharmacy practice accounted for 47.0 percent of all vacant, non-shared positions; 76.2 percent of all vacant, shared positions; and 47.6 percent of all lost positions.

Administrative positions accounted for 6.9 percent of all vacant, non-shared positions; 0.0 percent of all vacant, shared positions; and 9.5 percent of all lost positions.

Positions in social and administrative sciences accounted for 9.0 percent of all vacant, non-shared positions, a slight increase from 8.6 percent in 2008-09.

Of 353 shared and non-shared vacant positions, 47.9 percent were new positions and 52.1 percent were existing positions. However, when comparing only vacant shared position (the vast majority of which are in clinical science/pharmacy practice), 57.2 percent are new positions and 42.9 percent are existing positions.

The top three reported reasons for all vacancies included: individual in position moved to a faculty position at another pharmacy college or school (18.3 percent); individual in the position retired (16.2 percent); and individual moved to a practice position in the health care private sector (9.9 percent).

The top reason for vacant, shared positions in 2009-10 was: individual moved to a practice position in the health care private sector (30.0 percent). This has been the top reason for vacant, shared positions in all but two years since data collection began in 2001-02.

The total number of positions lost decreased in 2009-10 after increasing in 2008-09 for the first time in three years. The percent of positions lost in 2009-10 due to budget cuts decreased to 57.1 percent from 84.8 percent in 2008-09. Nineteen percent (19.0 percent) of lost positions were part-time appointments. Nearly sixty-two percent (61.9 percent) of lost positions were professors. In 2008-09, the largest percentage of lost positions was at the assistant professor/clinical assistant professor rank (42.5 percent).

Over 80 percent (80.2 percent) of vacant positions had an active search underway to fill the position. The majority of positions (54.1 percent) had been vacant for six months or less. Over 23 percent (23.2 percent) of vacant positions have been vacant for thirteen months or longer.

Nearly 33 percent (32.7 percent) of the vacant positions remained vacant because there were not enough qualified candidates in the pool (i.e., candidates judged unable to meet the institution's expectations/requirements for the position, inadequate number of qualified candidates in the discipline, lack of response to position announcement), a decrease from 48.1 percent in 2008-09. Nearly 17 percent (16.7 percent) remained vacant because of budget limitations that affected the ability to offer a competitive salary, a decrease from 24.5 percent in 2008-09. The percentage of vacant positions that remained vacant due to geographic location was 9.1 percent in 2009-10, up from 6.1 percent in 2008-09.

Twenty-five (25) colleges and schools of pharmacy reported a total of 37 interim appointments in 2009-10. Thirty-six (97.3 percent) were non-shared appointments. Fifty percent (50.0 percent) of non-shared, interim appointments were at the department chair level.