

Number 9

Vacant Budgeted and Lost Faculty Positions – Academic Year 2007-08

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 to 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 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 2007-08 academic year marks the 7th 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 2008. Submission of data was requested by January 23, 2009. A response rate of 84.5 percent (93 of 110 colleges and schools) was achieved, down from 96.9 percent in 2006-07, but still greater than the 83.5 response rate in 2005-06.

Data Highlights:

Ninety-three (93) colleges and schools of pharmacy reported a total of 425 vacant and/or lost positions in 2007-08, down from 595 in 2006-07 (a 28.6 percent decrease). Eighty of the 93 schools reported 375 vacant non-shared positions (down from 529), 20 schools reported 39 vacant shared positions (down from 53), and 9 schools reported 11 lost positions. The total number of lost positions (n=11) represents a 15.4 percent decrease from the number lost in 2006-07 (n=13).

Of the 425 vacant and lost positions, the most were in clinical science/pharmacy practice (53.2 percent), followed by pharmaceutical science (26.4 percent), social and administrative science (9.2 percent), administrative positions (5.9 percent), and research/non-instructional (5.4 percent).

Positions in pharmaceutical sciences accounted for 28.3 percent of all vacant, non-shared positions, down from 31.7 percent in 2006-07 and from 35.5 percent in 2005-06. Positions in clinical science/pharmacy practice accounted for 50.9 percent of all vacant, non-shared positions; 79.5 percent of all vacant, shared positions; and 36.4 percent of all lost positions.

Administrative positions accounted for 5.9 percent of all vacant, non-shared positions; 2.6 percent of all vacant, shared positions; and 18.2 percent of all lost positions.

Positions in social and administrative sciences accounted for 9.3 percent of all vacant, non-shared positions, an increase from 7.4 percent in 2006-07.

Of 414 shared and non-shared vacant positions, 46.3 percent were new positions and 53.6 percent were existing positions. These percentages are similar when comparing only vacant shared positions (the vast majority of which are in clinical science/pharmacy practice), 46.2 percent are new positions and 53.8 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 (17.8 percent); individual moved to a practice position in the health care private sector (17.4 percent); and individual in the position retired (16.1 percent).

The top reason for vacant, shared positions in 2007-08 was: individual moved to a practice position in the health care private sector (37.5 percent).

The total number of positions lost decreased for the second consecutive year. The percent of positions lost in 2007-08 due to budget cuts significantly increased from 23.0 percent to 53.8 percent. However, this percentage is still less than the 61.9 percent reported in 2005-06.

Over 47 percent (47.4 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 significant increase from 37.4 percent in 2006-07. Over 16 percent (16.2) remained vacant because of budget limitations that affected the ability to offer a competitive salary, an increase from 13.3 percent in 2006-07 and 10.5 percent in 2005-06. The percentage of vacant positions that remained vacant due to geographic location was 3.4 percent in 2006-07, 8.1 percent in 2006-07 and 11.7 in 2005-06.