A Pilot Program Featuring Formative Peer Review of Faculty at a College of Pharmacy

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Introduction

- Student ratings are the most common method of faculty evaluation in the classroom.
- Concern for the validity of students’ course evaluations as the primary source of feedback as part of the promotion and tenure process.
- The peer evaluation process can be utilized as a method to provide adequate feedback for improvement.
- The authors created a structured peer review program within the College of Pharmacy, at an institution that has historically relied solely on student evaluation.
- The goal was to have peer evaluations used as part of the faculty evaluation and development (FED) process and the promotion/tenure process.
- This study is in press with Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning.

Methods

- Pilot implemented in the Department of Clinical Pharmacy (n=40) for faculty members at the ranks of Clinical Assistant or Assistant Professor (n=13); participation was voluntary. Faculty at other ranks could participate, if interested.
- Faculty at or above the rank of Associate/ Clinical Associate Professors served as peer reviewers.
- Each faculty member under review was assigned 1-2 peer reviewers, based on availability and experience.
- A brief training session was conducted for faculty members to discuss the background/purpose of the pilot, outline the process, and introduce the review materials.
- Faculty under review scheduled a pre-observation meeting with the faculty reviewers 1-2 weeks before the classroom observation.
- On the day of the classroom observation, faculty peer reviewer(s) attended a class taught at a date and time preferred by the faculty member in review.
- During the observation, the peer reviewer(s) completed rubrics with formative feedback.
- Rubrics were adapted from Vanderbilt University’s Center for Teaching and the Peer Observation and Evaluation Tool (POET).
- Following the classroom observation, reviewers were asked to meet with faculty in review within one month of the observation to discuss written feedback.

Results

- Reviewers consisted of 12 associate/clinical associates or professor/clinical professors, and 2 assistant/ clinical assistants (one course coordinator and one fellowship director).
- Faculty in review included 9 academic/clinical assistant professors, 2 clinical associate professors, 2 adjunct faculty, and 1 fellow.
- Evaluation Process:
  - The review process was thoroughly explained in the training materials and session.
  - The rubric was easy to follow and use.
  - The rubric was a good representation of qualities the College of Pharmacy looks for in faculty.
  - The scale of the rubric was meaningful when determining the quality of teaching.
  - The time commitment for the entire review process was appropriate.
- Faculty under review agreed the time commitment for the review agreed the time commitment for the entire review process was appropriate.

- Reference:

References


Limitations and Future Directions

- There was a relatively small sample size for faculty who completed the post evaluation survey.
- Though faculty members seemed to find the rubrics easy to use and useful tools for evaluation, these tools were not validated.
- The lack of performance descriptors in the rubrics may have impacted the consistency at which the faculty under review were evaluated.

Conclusions

- Participants found value in the pilot program as means to effectively communicate useful teaching methods to improve their students’ education.
- Majority of faculty members under review agreed the time commitment for the entire review process was appropriate.
- Many saw value in expanding peer evaluation to all departments at the College of Pharmacy.
- We believe peer evaluation should be done for new faculty within or after their first year of teaching, if recommended by their department chairs, or in faculty going up for promotion.