

Project Title: Utilizing the AAMC Faculty Forward Engagement Survey to create opportunities for improvement, learning from successful Institutions.

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Background, Challenge or Opportunity: The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Faculty Forward (FF) Engagement Survey is a tool developed to assist academic institutions to learn about faculty engagement. The University of New Mexico (UNM) participated in the FF survey administered by the AAMC in 2009, 2011 and 2014. Wherein, the UNM global satisfaction was equivalent to all FF institutions and the Peer group, we did not see significant increase in satisfaction scores in the results of the three surveys.

Purpose/Objective: To understand how institutions that participated in the AAMC FF survey attained increased satisfaction results over time. We examined the practices of some institutions in the cohort that demonstrated significant improvements in the areas surveyed. From these observations, we sought to gain insight into best practices that achieved increased satisfaction scores.

Methods: As recommended by the AAMC, Academic Affairs (AA) deans were contacted at four Faculty Forward participating institutions, two within our peer group and two outside our peer group. Informal phone interviews were conducted with each of the AA deans as well as the two UNM AA deans. Key questions asked included: 1) How many surveys they participated in 2) What areas had low scores 3) What areas were chosen for improvement 4) What processes were implemented to improve areas of interest 5) Were the processes at the department, systems and/or organization/institution level 6) Was external help engaged to make improvements, i.e., hire a consultant 7) Were there institutional changes in process created 8) What efforts did not work.

Results: Qualitative analyses of notes from the four phone interviews revealed that the major areas of concentration across the participating institutions revolved around mentoring and promotion and tenure; research and clinical practice were also highlighted.

Discussion revealed that success (defined as an improvement in satisfaction scores) was demonstrated in three major ways, when:

1. Leadership (Deans and Chairs) were engaged and promoted the process
2. Chairs were held accountable via their performance reviews that required action plans for FF tasks
3. Focus on targeted tasks and when faculty were allowed to see the results/outcomes of the projects.
4. Over communication with faculty, (messaging campaigns) providing information stating the tasks, results and closing the loop to demonstrate results.

Conclusion: Successful institutions created processes utilizing the Faculty Forward Engagement Survey information as a mechanism to create opportunities for change and measurable improvement in the areas of faculty engagement and satisfaction. Information gained from the interviews will provide our institution with strategies for creating similar systems with the ultimate goal of improving our faculty engagement and satisfaction



ACTIVATING AAMC'S FACULTY FORWARD ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

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Background

Faculty turnover can cost a medical school more than \$2 million annually. Conversely, research shows that engaged individuals give more than is expected of them, boost organizational performance and pursue longer careers at their institution. The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Faculty Forward Engagement Survey was designed to help academic medical centers identify and address issues that promote or challenge faculty engagement.¹ The University of New Mexico School of Medicine (UNM SOM) participated in the Faculty Forward (FF) survey administered by the AAMC in 2009, 2011 and 2014. While the UNM SOM global satisfaction scores were equivalent to all FF institutions and the Peer group, unlike some other institutions, we did not see a significant increase in satisfaction scores across the three surveys.

Purpose

To understand how institutions that participated in the AAMC FF survey attained increased satisfaction results over time, we examined the practices of several institutions in the cohort that demonstrated significant improvements in the areas surveyed. From these observations, we sought to gain insight into best practices that increased satisfaction scores.

Methods

In addition to interviewing the two UNM Health Sciences Center's leaders of Academic Affairs, telephone interviews were conducted with Academic Affairs (AA) leaders at four FF participating institutions, two within and two external to our peer group. Qualitative analysis of the interview notes included thematic extraction to identify FF domains, actions, and best practices for improving faculty engagement. Interview questions included:

- 1) How many surveys they conducted
- 2) What areas had low scores
- 3) What areas were chosen for improvement
- 4) What processes were implemented to improve areas of interest
- 5) Were the processes at the department, systems and/or organization/institution level
- 6) Was external help engaged to make improvements, i.e., did the site hire a consultant ?
- 7) Were there institutional changes in response to needs identified
- 8) What efforts did not work

Table 1. Telephone Interview Results: FF Domains and Actions Identified by Academic Affairs Leaders at Four Institutions

Domain	Institution #1	Institution #2	Institution #3	Institution #4
Promotion and Tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Revamped P&T criteria ❖ Established Department P&T Committees ❖ Trained the leaders ❖ Created dedicated process improvement metrics for promoting faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Created 5 faculty tracks ❖ Created guidelines for each track ❖ Transparency of guidelines which allowed more people to attain promotion 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Modified clinician promotion criteria which allowed for more promotions
Mentoring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Reviewed which faculty received mentoring and compared outcomes ❖ Developed a formal mentoring program ❖ Created office of Faculty Affairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Each department required to create mentoring plan ❖ Faculty orientation onboarding ❖ Target approach for annual reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Concentrated on Professional advancement metrics
Research		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ New dean focused on Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Trying to restructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Developed a clinical research Institute
Clinical Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Presented FF data to leadership team ❖ Created advisory team of young faculty ❖ Dean gave autonomy to create change based on faculty input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Reviewed feedback from FF 		

Results

Qualitative analyses of notes from the four telephone interviews revealed that the major areas of concern and focus across the participating institutions revolved around mentoring and promotion and tenure; research and clinical practice were also highlighted. Table 1 presents the actions taken by each institution across the identified domains. UNM is not included in the table due to domain differences; however, the emphasis of the current survey was to learn from other institutions. Thematic extraction of the interview notes revealed that success, defined as an improvement in satisfaction scores, was demonstrated in four major ways (Figure 1).

Discussion

Faculty engagement plays a critical role in the success of Academic Health Centers. Some institutions utilizing the Faculty Forward Survey information as a mechanism to create opportunities for change have demonstrated improved satisfaction scores, suggesting an improved engagement and work environment of the faculty. Wherein creative strategies have been utilized to create change in specific areas, accountability by leadership and targeted communication with the faculty sustains engagement of faculty.

Summary

Next steps are to work with UNM SOM leadership, especially deans and chairs, to utilize information gained from the FF survey and the current findings to create opportunities for measureable, significant, and sustainable faculty engagement in response to UNM's previous FF survey results.

Reference

- 1) Faculty Forward, Advancing the Academic Medicine Workplace, AAMC Brochure, Viewed on 03/29/16 at: <https://www.aamc.org/download/447878/data/2015facultyforwardengagementsurveybrochure.pdf>.

Acknowledgments



Presented at the 2016 ELAM® Leaders Forum.

Figure 1.



IMPROVING FACULTY SATISFACTION SCORES:

- ✓ Deans and Chairs are engaged and promote the process
- ✓ Chairs' performance reviews require action plans for FF tasks
- ✓ Focused/targeted tasks, faculty see project outcomes
- ✓ Over communication with faculty, Messaging campaigns