

ABSTRACT: 2016 ELAM Institutional Action Project Symposium

Project Title: Certificate Program in Dental Education for Pre-Doctoral Dental Students

Name and Institution: Yun Saksena Tufts University School of Dental Medicine (TUSDM)

Collaborators: Drs. Michael Thompson, Nadeem Karimbux, Addy Alt-Holland and Tofool Alghanem.

Background, Challenge or Opportunity:

A nationwide shortage of dental faculty has been predicted due to the retirement of aging faculty. Pre-doctoral dental students seldom enter dental school hoping to become academics. At TUSDM, a long-standing Teaching Assistant (TA) program exists, and a more recent year long Academic Dental Careers Fellowship Program (ADCFP). The popularity of such programs have increased e.g. the ADCFP went from zero to eight students in three years and approximately 100 pre-doctoral students are TAs.

Students participating in these found pilots though very helpful as TAs, are unfamiliar with pedagogy relevant to the dental school environment so are not as effective as faculty wish. Some students may only participate due to stipends or as stepping-stones to residencies and post-doctoral fellowships, rather than seriously contemplating academic dentistry as a viable career path.

The opportunity exists to encourage pre-doctoral dental students to explore careers in academic dentistry, to provide TAs with foundational pedagogy in a range of teaching environments. The potential exists to therefore raise the standard of education at our dental school as these TAs more effectively help our students and faculty.

Purpose/Objectives: To develop a Certificate Program in Dental Education for Pre-Doctoral Dental Students

Methods/Approach:

Through networking at the American Dental Education Association, several faculty from different US dental schools were consulted regarding their programs to train teaching assistants and encourage dental students to explore academic dentistry.

The backing of our Dean and Associate Deans of Academic Affairs, and Admissions and Student Affairs was obtained. Collaborators were identified and consulted; the Director of our TA program/Director of Student Academic Affairs, Experienced Mentors in our ADCFP and our Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

Student surveys confirmed an interest in learning more about careers in academic dentistry and teaching in different dental settings.

Participation in the *Course Design Institute* at Tufts' Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching helped in the development of course goals, learning objectives, content and assignments, activities and assessment. Feedback was obtained from peers across the university and experts in education. A syllabus was drafted and discussed with collaborators.

Our first year students have a full schedule so the program will be offered at the beginning of the second year. The duration will be for three years including practicums in teaching.

Limited resources in time and faculty would necessitate limiting the number of participants though the initial thought was to offer courses to all. After the program is piloted, credits and grades may be added to the student's transcript.

Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy:

Several outcomes can be measured including: numbers of students that apply, enroll and complete the program. Satisfaction of students and faculty. Surveys of effectiveness of students in educational settings. Numbers of "graduates" that pursue academic careers.

Certificate of Distinction in Dental Education for Pre-Doctoral Dental Students

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Presented at the 2016 ELAM® Leaders Forum

Background

A nationwide shortage of dental faculty has been predicted due to the retirement of aging faculty. The opportunity exists to encourage pre-doctoral dental students to explore careers in academic dentistry, to provide teaching assistants (TAs) with foundational pedagogy in a range of teaching environments. The potential exists to therefore raise the standard of education at our dental school as TAs more effectively help our students and faculty.



Objective

To develop a certificate program in Dental Education for pre-doctoral dental students.

Methods

- Faculty from different dental schools were consulted
- Backing was obtained from TUSDM administration
- Collaborators were identified and consulted
- Student surveys confirmed interest
- Participation in the Course Design Institute at Tufts' Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching
- A syllabus was drafted initially for a four year honors program, including teaching practicums (didactic/workshops, pre-clinical/simulation lab and clinical)



Evaluation Strategy

- Several outcomes can be measured including:
- Numbers of students that apply, enroll and complete the program
 - Satisfaction of students and faculty
 - Surveys of effectiveness of students in educational settings
 - Numbers of "graduates" that pursue academic careers

Discussion

- The duration of the program will be three years including teaching practicums in three different settings
- The number of participants may need to be limited due to resources
- After the program is piloted, credits may be added to students' transcripts

Conclusion

Opportunity exists to encourage pre-doctoral dental students to pursue careers in academic dentistry.

Next steps include:

- Continual faculty engagement
- Approval of Curriculum Committee & Executive Faculty
- Delegation of program components
- Practical considerations

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