ABSTRACT: 2018 ELAM Institutional Action Project

Project Title: Implementation of a Faculty Mentoring and Talent Management Software

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Topic Category: Faculty Development

Background, Significance of project: Two critical elements for faculty development in academic medicine are mentorship and assessment of progress. Formal mentoring relationships are critical to academic success and can positively affect faculty satisfaction and productivity, yet mentorship has traditionally been grass-roots and haphazard, or absent altogether. The annual review process provides a critical line of communication to faculty members and an opportunity for valuable feedback on progress and goals, but is also often loosely structured and ineffective. Both mentorship and evaluations share common elements such as career goal tracking and documentation of scholarly output, which lend themselves to management by a novel software solution.

Purpose/Objectives: The objective of this study was to develop, and implement a combined faculty mentoring and talent management software solution to facilitate mentoring relationships and the annual review process tailored to the academic medicine environment.

Methods/Approach/Evaluation Strategy: We co-developed a faculty mentoring and talent management software in partnership with Chronus, a software-based human resource company. We designed a customized user profile, a mentor-matching algorithm and a mentoring relationship management template. The mentoring component of the software links to a faculty annual evaluation product that allows for real time continuous entry of scholarship activity. The software has multiple administrative capabilities including the ability to create a curriculum vitae as well as preparation of a formal evaluation letter required by the College of Medicine (COM). The software can also generate a comprehensive faculty report for leadership. Motivation for dissemination throughout the COM was to unify and improve the annual review process as well as to facilitate mentoring relationships across departments. Initial steps in the project included securing support from critical stakeholders including the Dean, leadership of The COM Center for Faculty Advancement, Mentoring and Engagement (FAME), as well as Department Chairs. A limited trial was agreed on with two large departments (surgery and internal medicine) prior to dissemination throughout the COM.

Outcomes/Results: All pediatric faculty are currently utilizing the software as enrollment is required for the annual review. We anticipate this requirement will facilitate engagement in the mentoring component. Survey results suggest the annual review product is easy to use and has markedly facilitated improved annual review discussions. We have received praise for ability of the software to identify mentors, enable internet communication and schedule appointments. Expectations and roles of the mentoring relationship are embedded into the mentoring platform to improve mentoring interactions.

Discussion/Conclusion with Statement of Impact/Potential Impact: The adoption of technology to support mentoring relationships in academic medicine is similar to any innovation. Not all faculty members are interested in engaging in an online program, especially if it requires setting up and logging into a new, separate account. We anticipate that efforts to encourage use by integration of the program into other processes such as the annual faculty performance review will help overcome some of these barriers. We will track outcomes to determine any long-term improvements regarding number of mentoring relationships, scholarly output, quality of annual review meetings, cost savings, and ability to effectively collect and report department-wide data.