ABSTRACT: 2019 ELAM Institutional Action Project

Project Title: A Faculty Retention Plan for Academic Medical Centers in Small Rural States

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Topic Category (choose 1): Administration

Background, Significance of project: Recruiting valued highly qualified physicians and well trained basic/population scientists to predominantly rural states like Arkansas can be challenging. Recruiting high quality faculty to rural states is often very time-consuming, takes longer and requires significant resources for faculty packages. Therefore, high faculty turn-over or loss of faculty in key areas of the institution can have immediate and short- and long-term negative consequences. Recent survey results indicate that the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has a lower retention rate for clinicians and basic scientists than the national average. Under-represented minority faculty and female faculty were the groups most likely to relocate (or planning to relocate) within 3-5 years. Understanding the most important barriers to faculty retention and development of a comprehensive faculty retention plan that addresses those issues should improve faculty retention at UAMS. This project is the first step in addressing this important issue.

Purpose/Objectives: To develop a comprehensive campus-wide faculty retention plan based on best practices, tailored to an academic medical center in a rural state with limited resources.

Methods/Approach/Evaluation Strategy: A university-wide, ad hoc committee on faculty retention was formed with representation from each college. Phase 1 will include review of the published literature, analysis of three existing faculty surveys, in-depth interviews with Department Chairs and junior/mid-career faculty, and focus groups. The results will be used to develop an in-depth survey of faculty on recruitment and retention issues which will be administered in late summer 2019. Phase 2 will consist of the analysis of the summer survey and development of an anonymous online survey for former faculty (left UAMS in past 5 years). Phase 3 will consist of the compilation of results and development of recommendations for a comprehensive faculty retention plan. Institutional Review Board approval was obtained.

Outcomes/Results: Seventy-six percent of respondents to a faculty survey who indicated that they planned to relocate within 3-5 years rated lack of recognition/visibility and value for work as very important or important in their decision to leave. The next items were: opportunities for professional growth elsewhere (67%), salary increase/attractive offer (66.7%), too few clinical or support staff (60.6%) and lack of work life balance as very important or important factors in their decisions to leave. Key informant interviews are ongoing. Focus groups will be conducted with faculty groups by rank to elucidate underlying issues in the top 5 factors identified as very important/important and ways to address them. Focus group question development is underway.

Discussion/Conclusion with Statement of Impact/Potential Impact: This project has short, medium and long-term impacts. By the end of the ELAM fellowship we will have identified the top 5 factors influencing faculty retention decisions and initial ideas select faculty have to address those factors. By December 2019, we have results from a survey of existing faculty on retention issues, including the approaches that the majority of faculty have identified that will most appropriately address those top 5 retention issues. We will also have the top 5 factors that influenced faculty to leave the institution within the last 5 years and specific approaches that could have been used to prevent them from leaving. After implementing the recommended retention plan, UAMS should have faculty retention rates similar to or higher than the national average.

A FACULTY RETENTION PLAN FOR ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTERS IN SMALL RURAL STATES

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UAMS

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES

ELAM

BACKGROUND/SIGNIFICANCE

- Recruiting physicians and basic/population scientists to predominantly rural states can be challenging, takes longer and requires significant resources.
- Therefore, high faculty turn-over or loss of faculty in key areas of the institution can have short- and long-term negative consequences.
- Recent survey results indicated that the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) had a lower faculty retention rate than the national average.
- Understanding the most important barriers to faculty retention and development of a comprehensive faculty retention plan that addresses those issues should improve faculty retention at UAMS.

Table 1. Top 10 Very Important/Important Reasons for Leaving*	
1. Lack of recognition/visibility/value for work at UAMS	76.4%
2. Opportunities for professional growth & advancement elsewhere	69.3%
3. Significant salary increase/attractive offer	66.7%
4. Too few clinical and administrative support staff at UAMS	60.6%
5. More effective work/life balance policies at new institution	55.9%
6. Other institutions have stronger reputation	55.9%
7. Increasing uncompensated clinical time at UAMS	54.6%
8. Easier to conduct research elsewhere	46.4%
9. Geographic location of other institutions	44.5%
10. Better clinical load elsewhere	41.5%

Table 2. Top Very Important/Important Reasons for Leaving by Gender*	Men	Women
1. Lack of recognition/visibility/value for work at UAMS	77.6%	75.5%
2. Opportunities for professional growth/advancement elsewhere	68.2%	74.1%
3. Other institutions have stronger reputation	65.7%	44.2%
4. Significant salary increase/attractive offer	64.2%	67.3%
5. Too few clinical and administrative support staff at UAMS	56.9%	63.0%
6. More effective work/life balance policies at new institution	54.6%	59.3%

*Based on analysis of 2016 Diversity Engagement Survey

METHODS/APPROACH CONT'D

- **Phase 1** includes review of the published literature, analysis of 3 existing faculty surveys, in-depth interviews with Department Chairs and faculty, and focus groups. The results will be used to develop an in-depth survey of faculty on recruitment and retention issues which will be administered in late summer 2019.
- **Phase 2** will consist of the analysis of the summer survey and development of an anonymous online survey for former faculty (left UAMS in past 5 years).
- **Phase 3** will consist of the compilation of results and development of recommendations for a faculty retention plan. IRB approval was obtained.

PURPOSE

To develop a comprehensive campus-wide faculty retention plan based on best practices, tailored to an academic medical center in a rural state with limited resources.
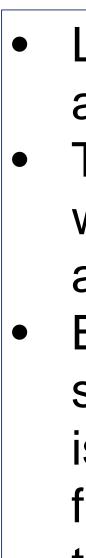
METHODS/APPROACH

A university-wide, ad hoc committee on faculty retention was formed with representatives from each college: Medicine, Public Health, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Health Professions.

DISCUSSION

- Lack of recognition and opportunities for advancement were the top 2 reasons for leaving.
- Through key informant interviews and focus groups we will better understand top 5 reasons for leaving and initial ideas to address those issues.
- By December 2019, we will have results from a survey of all current and past faculty on retention issues, including the approaches that the majority of faculty have identified that will appropriately address those top 5 retention issues.

RESULTS/IMPACT

- Results from surveys, interviews, and focus groups and best practices from the literature, will aid in developing a comprehensive faculty retention plan.
- After implementing the retention plan, UAMS should have faculty retention rates similar to or higher than the national average.