



# Setting Up Division Directors for Success; Would Formal On-boarding Impact Effectiveness?

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## BACKGROUND

At UVA there is no formal on-boarding of division directors. Yet, this is the first time for many physicians that they are managing peers (and the complexities that entails), interfacing with the hospital and school of medicine, aligning division goals with the institution goals (and knowing what the institution goals even are), working with complex finances, as well as managing the clinical work done by the division. Based on personal experience, I was surprised how underprepared I was to navigate some of these requirements, such as discussing underperformance, team building, retention of faculty, navigating institutional priorities. New chairs are given mentoring and guidance when they assume their new roles, but the need and impact of formal on-boarding of new division directors is unknown.

## OBJECTIVES

This IAP was designed to assess the need for on-boarding for new division directors across all clinical departments, to identify high-yield topics, and to prepare workshops tailored to the needs assessment outcomes. The ultimate objective is to assess the impact of the on-boarding to the effectiveness of improving performance of new division directors.

## METHODS

Conduct a needs assessment

- All clinical department websites searched for faculty designated as division director or section head. This informed the list of chairs who received surveys and the list of faculty who oversee other faculty.
- Qualitative and quantitative questions in a SurveyMonkey. quantitative surveys were sent to the chairs, quantitative and qualitative survey was sent to division directors.

Aggregate results into general topics.

Obtain institutional support

- Work with Faculty Development
- Use Kirkpatrick model to assess the application and impact of the workshops.

## RESULTS

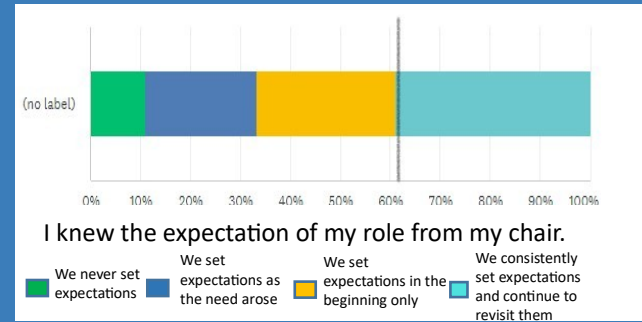
Response rate to survey: 19/24 Division Directors, 9/15 chairs

Current state: no department offers formal on-boarding. Desired intervention: 100% division directors said they would have benefited from onboarding and all chairs said they would utilize on-boarding programs for their new division directors.

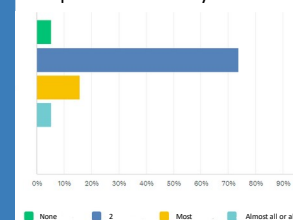
100% of chairs thought they consistently set expectations but only 40% of division directors thought the same.

The main free text responses for useful information were: finances, organization hierarchy, communication and team building.

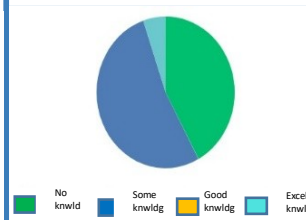
## Select Survey Responses



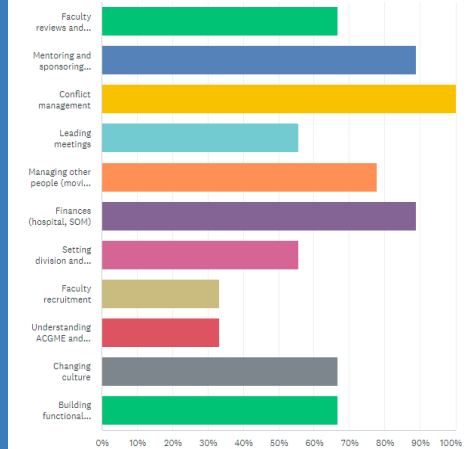
How many C suite roles and responsibilities did you know?



How familiar were you with SOM Medical Center, and Dept. finances?



What skills would your new directors benefit from learning early?



## SUMMARY

- Both Chairs and Division Directors thought an on-boarding for Division Directors would be beneficial.
- The 4 main categories of topics include: finances, communication, organization roles and priorities, team building.
- In process of constructing inaugural workshop.

## Additional unexpected findings and steps

Unexpected findings: 7 division director respondents asked to talk in person after they completed the survey to address compensation, off service time, communication..

- Address disparity in effort support and compensation across departments.
- Create a division director listserv

Abstract for ELAM [7c2180aa-8a18-40b2-9d2e-2286bcf40b39](#)

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Topic Category: Faculty Development

**Project Title:** Onboarding Division Directors to Impact Effectiveness

**Background/Significance:** For some academic physicians, the first time they manage other faculty within their department is when they become division director (DD). This promotion is often due to their scholarly activity, education impact, and clinical productivity. While these pursuits are laudable for managing an individual career, they do not necessarily prepare one for building effective teams, managing departmental budgets, mediating conflict, or rehabilitating underperformers. Currently at UVA, new chairs receive onboarding and mentoring over their first year but no school-wide program is available for DDs.

**Purpose/Objectives:** This program will provide a formal introduction to key topics necessary for DDs to navigate this leadership terrain. The objectives are to 1. Conduct a needs assessment from the chairs and current DDs, 2. Create a 2-day onboarding program composed of topics applicable to DDs from all departments, 3. Survey participants for utility of the intervention.

**Methods/Evaluation strategy:** The methods used included (a) coordinating with the Faculty Development Office for support, (b) completion of needs assessment surveys to the current chairs and division directors (c) construction of learning objectives and curriculum. A needs assessment survey was sent to 24 division directors and a unique second survey sent to 15 chairs. E-mail and phone conversations occurred at the request of some of the stakeholders. General topic categories and learning objectives were constructed based on the findings. After the first pilot workshop, a post participation survey will be conducted.

**Results:** 19/24 DDs and 9/15 chairs responded to the survey. No department currently provides formal onboarding for new DDs and 100% of DDs said an onboarding program would have been highly beneficial. 88% of the chairs believe they are “very clear in what my expectations are, what their [division directors] role is, and how to include me in the decision making” whereas 42% of DDs said they received guidance on how to be effective and only 38% of DDs felt that they and their chairs “consistently set clear expectations.” Topics highlighted by both groups as being critical to the job include: finances (departmental, school of medicine and medical center), C suite roles, navigating challenging conversations, setting expectations (for self and others), aligning priorities and goals between faculty and the institution, teambuilding, and culture change.

**Discussion/Conclusion:** Providing a mechanism for leadership training for new division directors is desired by the current stake holders. The subjects for the curriculum fall into 5 main categories: finances, hospital and school of medicine organizational system, expectation setting, navigating challenging conversations, and teambuilding. The first pilot will occur this summer.

**Future Directions:** 1. Due to the low turnover of DDs, some continued topics of discussion might need to be offered in addition to the onboarding workshop. 2. Once the workshop is formalized, the plan is to publish the results and expand the opportunity to other institutions.

References:

Grant, J Learning needs assessment: assessing the need, BMJ, 2002: 324(7300): 156-159