

“Culture Assessment” of Basic Science Research Faculty

at Drexel University College of Medicine

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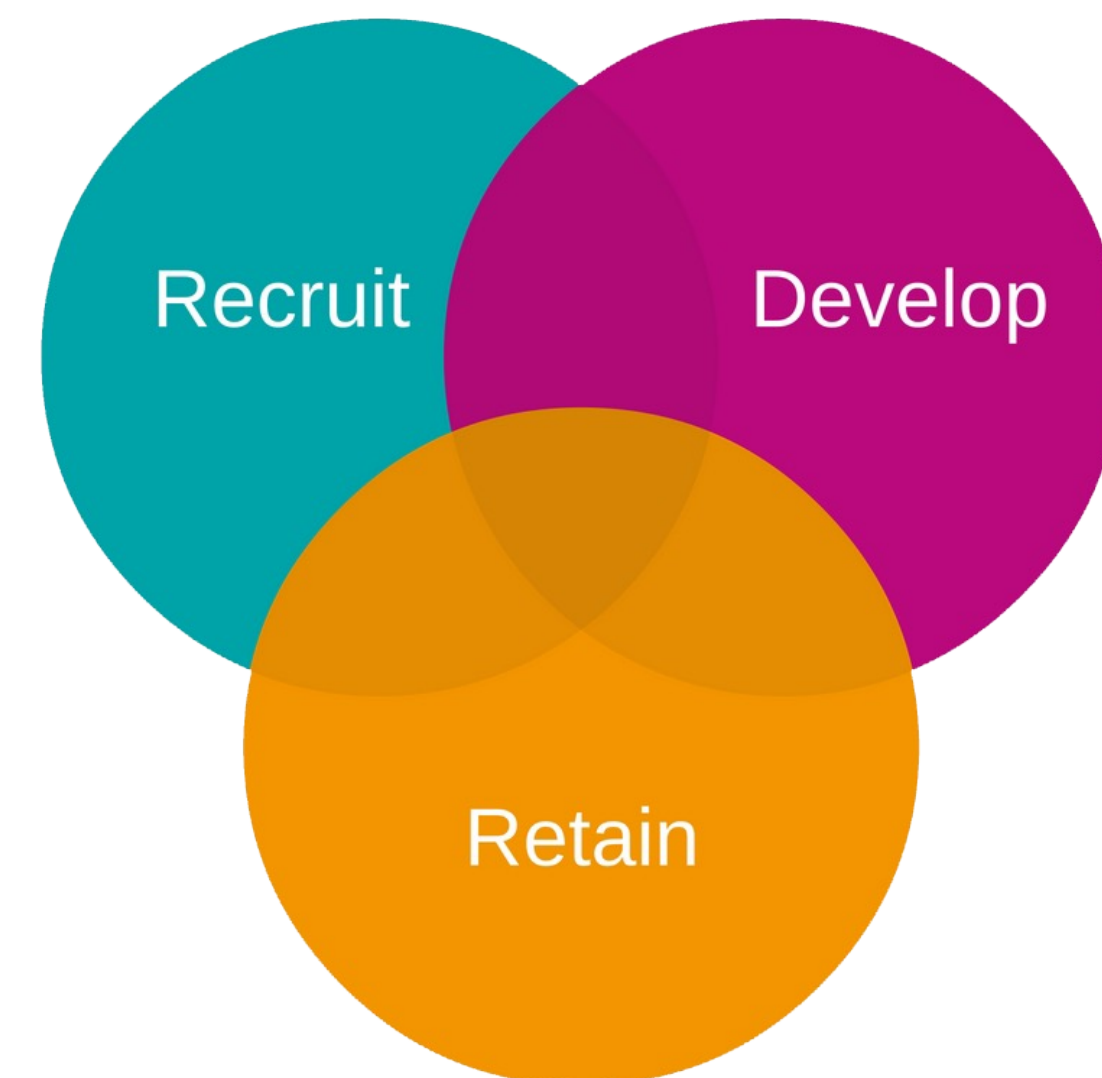
Collaborators: Itzhak Fischer, PhD; Olimpia Meucci, MD,PhD; Susan Chubinskaya, PhD, FIOR



BACKGROUND

- Drexel University’s excellence in its research mission led to its classification as an R1 institution (i.e., very high research activity)
- Drexel University College of Medicine (DUCOM) basic science faculty account for ~ **50%** of Drexel’s total research funding
- Construction of new research building to house all DUCOM basic science departments (currently underway) will allow for faculty recruits - **opportunity for strategic growth**
- Multiple basic science faculty left DUCOM for other institutions after securing major funding - **obstacle to maintaining momentum**
- **Knowledge gaps:** What factors contribute to faculty hires, retention, and departures within DUCOM’s basic science departments?

GOALS



- Improve DUCOM’s ability to recruit talented basic science faculty
- Ensure faculty success, productivity, and satisfaction to enhance their retention

RESULTS and CONCLUSIONS

- **Limited information** available
 - Lack of access to centralized information of faculty hires, departures
 - No exit interview information
 - Recent turnover of Chairs in some departments limits amount of information available
- Difficult to know how to better retain faculty when reasons for leaving are unknown/not documented
- **DATA = POWER**
 - Surveys of current faculty (e.g., AAMC StandPoint Survey)?
 - Administrative staff dedicated to DUCOM basic science departments?
- In **best interests of all stakeholders** to optimize the substantial financial investments DUCOM and its basic science departments make to their faculty
- Will **maximize potential** to continue DUCOM’s research enterprise’s upward trajectory and growth

METHODS

- Conduct a systematic analysis of hiring, retention, mentoring, promotion, departures within DUCOM’s basic science departments
- Compare to recent national benchmarks
- Elucidate common strengths and successful strategies across departments
- Identify common gaps and challenges where DUCOM and Drexel should consider investing more resources

NEXT STEPS

Continue to obtain data

Identify commonalities

Present findings to DUCOM leadership

Help develop action plan

ABSTRACT: 2022 ELAM Institutional Action Project

Project Title: “Culture assessment” of basic science research faculty

Name and Institution: Veronica Tom, PhD, Drexel University College of Medicine

Collaborators and Mentors: Itzhak Fischer, PhD; Olimpia Meucci, MD, PhD

Topic Category: Research, Faculty

Background, Significance of project: Drexel University has a strong history of teaching. Excellence in its research mission led to Drexel’s classification as an R1 institution (i.e., very high research activity). Research conducted by Drexel’s College of Medicine (DUCOM) faculty - primarily faculty within the basic science departments - accounts for ~ 50% of the University’s total research expenditures. Notably, DUCOM lost several funded basic science faculty to other institutions. In parallel, a new research building is being constructed that will house all of DUCOM’s basic research science faculty, allowing them to be under one roof for the first time and presenting a major opportunity for collaborative synergy. Importantly, this new, additional space will also allow for recruiting new faculty. To maintain this momentum and best position DUCOM for continued strategic growth in the research enterprise when recruiting new basic science faculty within the next several years, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to faculty hires, retention, and departures within DUCOM’s basic science departments.

Purpose/Objectives: The goal of this project is to conduct a systematic analysis of faculty affairs (e.g., hiring, retention, mentoring, departures) within DUCOM’s basic science departments. This will elucidate common strengths across departments and and gaps/areas where DUCOM and Drexel should invest more resources. Ultimately, this will identify action items that will improve DUCOM’s ability to recruit talented basic science faculty and also ensuring their success, productivity, and satisfaction to maximize the retention of these faculty.

Methods/Approach/Evaluation Strategy:

- Obtain list of basic science DUCOM faculty recently hired and departed within the past 10 years, where those departed faculty went, any exit interview information
- Compile data re: faculty recruitment and retention - startup/retention package, salary, promotion data, % of offer acceptance
- Meet with stakeholders to discuss successful strategies and challenges for hiring and retention, mentoring, promotion
- Identify commonalities, potential areas for improvement and investment of institutional resources

Outcomes/Results: Data collection is ongoing. Neither Human Resources (HR) nor Faculty Affairs was able to share a list of basic science faculty who were hired or departed (and where they went) within the past decade. Additionally, HR did not provide any exit interview information. There was some turnover of Chairs within the past decade, so it is apparent some information was lost during the transitions. Upon discussions with several Chairs, this highlights a critical gap in Drexel’s administration’s understanding of and support for basic science DUCOM departments, which operate very differently than most departments within the University. It is difficult to determine how to better retain faculty when the reasons for leaving are unknown. Personnel dedicated to the basic science departments and a “satisfaction” survey of current faculty may be helpful. Once the data collection and analysis are completed, the findings will be presented to DUCOM leadership.

Discussion/Conclusion with Statement of Impact/Potential Impact: DUCOM’s research mission is poised for a period of significant growth with the pending arrival of a new biomedical research tower and faculty recruits that will be associated with this. Considering the substantial financial commitments the basic science departments and DUCOM make to their faculty, it is in all stakeholders’ best interests to maximize the value of those investments, both in terms of physical facilities and in the people who use those facilities. This will allow DUCOM to continue to expand its research enterprise to fulfill its research mission.