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Track: Faculty Development

Title: The University of Florida HEARS (Healthcare EducAtion Research Scholars) Program

Background: Individuals seeking to focus their careers in medical education research encounter multiple challenges. First, there often exists a relative isolation of medical education researchers within their own institution resulting in a lack of both intellectual stimulation and an opportunity for collaboration. Second, dedicated time to develop expertise and pursue medical education research is often limited or absent. Faculty often implement educational interventions without planning rigorous evaluation, resulting in publication challenges and overall low impact. Finally, faculty lack significant training in basic research methods, much less in medical education research methods. While programs exist to advance medical education faculty skills, they are often one year in duration and include a broad range of topics including curriculum design, teaching skills, learner assessment, and program evaluation. Such programs are certainly of benefit, but do not reach the level of rigor present in training programs for clinical researchers.

Goal: The long term goal of the proposed HEARS program is to develop a cadre of faculty across the UF College of Medicine departments capable of conducting, leading, and mentoring rigorous medical education research studies.

Approach:
(1) Perform a review/comparison of existing medical education faculty development programs
(2) Identify key skills/expertise needed to conduct high-impact medical education research
(3) Identify important programmatic outcomes
(4) Identify structural components (e.g., project work, didactics) appropriate to effectively deliver content
(5) Investigate existing programs that could provide resources and sustainability

Results to date: We reviewed 14 programs described in peer reviewed and grey literature. Programs focused on teaching methodologies, with less emphasis on evaluation. We identified unique concepts trained in each program at the time of publication. We triangulated those concepts with the perceived knowledge gaps identified in focus groups. This process yielded the following key content areas: conceptual models, metric design and validity testing, research study design, qualitative methods, quantitative analysis, and dissemination. Programmatic outcomes include individual (e.g., publications, promotion success, grant funding), department (retention, mentorship), and College (collaboration) level metrics. We identified the UF College of Medicine Master of Healthcare Education – Artificial Intelligence as a possible partner to enable a sustained, resourced approach to development of medical education research skills.

Discussion/Interpretation: While medical educator development programs exist, few are focused on skills needed to advance scholarship and research. Faculty development programs for clinical scientists provide a roadmap that can guide HEAR program design. A focus on evaluation and assessment would be unique yet synergistic with the new UF College of Medicine Master of Healthcare Education – Artificial Intelligence and the existing College of Education Masters in Research and Evaluation Methodology.

Conclusions/Next Steps: The UF College of Medicine has a need to advance assessment and evaluation skills in its medical education workforce. We will continue to work with new and existing programming to implement a synergistic curriculum aimed at increasing scholarship and effectiveness in healthcare education.