

ABSTRACT: 2023 ELAM Institutional Action Project

Project Title: Development of Continuing Professional Education Tools for Senior Leaders in Canadian Medical Schools

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Topic Category: Faculty Development

Background:

Continuing professional development is critical for leaders in health care, including those in senior academic leadership and decanal positions within medical schools. Many leadership programs are designed for C-suite leaders and may not address learning needs of those in health science faculties. Enhancing leadership skills has been shown to improve outcomes for patients and health care organizations. Effective leadership in academic settings should improve individual faculty and institutional outcomes.

Purpose:

The overall goal is to develop tools to aid senior academic leaders in Canadian medical schools in their leadership development. The initial objective was to identify current leadership development programs. The information obtained was used to develop a survey for senior leaders to explore leadership development experiences, learning preferences and uncover knowledge gaps. By surveying individual faculty, we hope to better understand current educational opportunities, important topics, preferred delivery methods and context of leaders in our complex academic health care environments. Ultimately, this information will be used to design a tool kit and develop educational initiatives to address gaps in leadership development.

Methods:

A literature review was conducted to identify leadership programs in academic medicine and their outcomes. An environmental scan was completed to identify development programs offered by professional associations, including the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC) and the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), as well as Canadian universities and faculties of medicine. These programs were reviewed, examining content, delivery methods, audience, duration, outcomes, cost and accessibility.

An online survey tool was developed to assess the learning needs of current academic leaders that will be piloted within the senior leadership team, Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University, to refine the instrument prior to surveying a broader group of leaders within Canadian medical schools and to assess learning needs of our faculty to plan educational activities specific to our context, including online tools and workshops.

Results to date:

Several programs are offered by Canadian universities, faculties of medicine, their national associations and physician leadership organizations. Many focus on health care delivery. Programs varied in target audience, content and length and many required significant time commitment and financial resources. Evaluations of the programs are usually limited to participant's satisfaction and very few focused on the impact of leadership training on individual and institutional outcomes. The data obtained from the surveys will address knowledge gaps and define evaluation strategies.

Discussion:

This project will have a positive impact by addressing gaps in academic leadership development. The information obtained will help guide resource development and may lead to newer models of education, such as experiential learning. The goal is to enable personal growth and development, which will enhance career satisfaction and the academic mission of medical schools. Leadership development must be supported with funding and protected time to ensure leaders develop competencies, skills and tools to be successful. Emerging issues should be incorporated into programs, including equity, diversity and inclusion.

Conclusion:

Addressing the learning needs of senior leaders in academic medicine is important and should enable personal and institutional growth and excellence. Enhancing leadership development programs is essential to ensure content is relevant and context specific and leads to improvement in the academic mission of faculties of medicine.