

An assessment of college of pharmacy promotion committees and criteria for promotion for pharmacy practice faculty

MARK L. GLOVER¹ & GRACIELA M. ARMAYOR²

¹*Department of Pharmacy Practice, College of Pharmacy, Nova Southeastern University, West Palm Beach, Fl, USA, and*

²*Department of Administrative and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Tampa, Fl, USA*

(Received 28 November 2005; revised 27 June 2006; accepted 13 July 2006)

Abstract

A survey identifying the composition of promotion committees and criteria for promotion was mailed to the respective dean of 89 US Schools of Pharmacy. A total of 61 (69%) surveys were returned. The mean number of committee members was 6.3 with the majority (80%) consisting of members from multiple departments. Professors and associate professors were the most frequently reported committee members at 88.5 and 84.6%, respectively. A mean number of 4.5 external reviewers were used by the committees. Of the criteria assessed for promotion, scholarly activities were most commonly cited with service being the least considered activity. No significant differences were observed between tenure and non-tenure faculty. Promotion committees consist predominantly of senior faculty with representation from multiple departments. Excelling in scholarly activities appears to be the major determinant in being awarded promotion from assistant to associate professor.

Keywords: *Faculty, pharmacy practice, promotion committee, tenure and non-tenure faculty*

Introduction

The ultimate goal of the majority of pharmacy faculty is to attain the title of full professor. To achieve this goal, assistant professors must first satisfy the requirements of their respective colleges to be promoted to the level of associate professor. In this process, a committee is typically appointed and charged to review the portfolios of such candidates and to relay their recommendation to administration (Martin, Perrier, & Trinca, 1983). In reviewing the candidate's credentials, the committee is commonly provided with the college's promotion criteria to assist them with their assessment. Areas of review by the committee include that faculty member's activities regarding teaching, scholarship and service. It is imperative for faculty to be aware of these expectations so they may prepare themselves accordingly. It also seems prudent for the candidate to have knowledge of

the membership of the committee appointed to review their portfolios.

The purpose of this study was to determine the composition of promotion committees and the criteria evaluated for the promotion from assistant to associate professor of faculty within the department of pharmacy practice.

Materials and methods

An 11-item survey was developed to identify the composition of promotion committees and the criteria for promotion from assistant to associate professor of faculty within the department of pharmacy practice among colleges of pharmacy within the US (see Appendix). The survey was mailed to the deans of 89 US Schools of Pharmacy with directions to forward the survey to the chair of

Correspondence: M. L. Glover, College of Pharmacy, Nova Southeastern University, 3970 RCA Boulevard, Suite 7006, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410, USA. Tel: 1-(561)-622-8682. Ext 5660. Fax: 1-(561)-622-9205. E-mail: mglover@nsu.nova.edu

Table I Promotion committee characteristics*.

Schools with committees with no defined department ratio							4(8)
Committees composed of pharmacy practice members only							6(12)
Committees composed of members from multiple departments [‡]							40(80)
Pharmacy practice, pharmaceutical science, pharmacy administration							14(35)
Pharmacy practice, pharmaceutical science							23(57.5)
Pharmacy practice, pharmacy administration							3(7.5)
Academic rank representation [†]							
Assistant professor	Associate professor	Professor	Assistant dean	Associate dean	Dean	Other	
12(23.1)	44(84.6)	46(88.5)	2(3.9)	3(5.8)	1(1.9)	1(1.9)	

Data presented as absolute number (percentage); * $n = 50$; [†] $n = 52$; [‡] Sixteen committees also reported members from outside the school of pharmacy.

the college's promotion committee for completion. The dean's name and mailing address of the college were obtained from the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy 2003–2004 Roster of Faculty and Professional Staff publication. Each mailing included a cover letter, the survey, and a self-addressed postage paid envelope for return of the survey. The return envelopes were coded to identify the responding school. Approximately 5 weeks following the initial mailing, a second mailing was sent to those who had failed to return a survey.

Data from completed surveys was entered into Microsoft Excel 2002 and where applicable, descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were calculated. Chi-square or Fischer's Exact test was employed to compare the responses between tenure and non-tenure track faculty for non-continuous data and the Student's *t*-test was used to compare differences for continuous data. Statistical significance was defined as a $p < 0.05$.

Results

Thirty-eight of 89 (43%) surveys were returned with the initial mailing. The second mailing produced an additional 23 surveys resulting in a total of 61 (69%) surveys being returned.

Fifty of the responding departments indicated the composition of their respective promotion committee (Table I). The majority of the committees consisted of faculty from multiple departments with pharmacy practice and pharmaceutical sciences faculty representing the most prevalent members. A mean of 6.3 ± 3.2 (range 3–18) faculty served on the committees with only six committees having more than 10 members. The majority of the members were senior faculty with a faculty member with the rank of professor being assigned to 88.5% of the committees (Table I). An average of 4.5 ± 2.4 (range 2–12) external reviewers were utilized by the committees; however, only six committees indicated using more than three or more external reviewers.

Table II Promotion criteria.

Activity*	Tenure ($n = 52$)	Non-tenure ($n = 48$)
Scholarship		
Peer-reviewed publication	52(100)	47(97.9)
Poster presentations	52(100)	47(97.9)
Podium presentations	51(98.1)	46(95.8)
Grant submission	51(98.1)	44(91.7)
Grant funded	52(100)	44(91.7)
Book published	51(98.1)	44(91.7)
Book chapter published	50(96.2)	44(91.7)
Reviewer for peer-reviewed journal	52(100)	46(95.8)
Reviewer for professional meeting poster or podium presentation	44(84.6)	40(83.3)
Journal editorial board member	52(100)	46(95.8)
Teaching		
Didactic course coordinator	51(98.1)	45(93.8)
Didactic teaching load	50(96.2)	44(91.7)
(Number of) clerkship students	52(100)	47(97.9)
Student directed research	48(92.3)	40(83.3)
Continuing education programs	48(92.3)	42(87.5)
Development of new didactic course	50(96.2)	43(89.6)
Student evaluations	51(98.1)	47(97.9)
Peer evaluations	48(92.3)	43(89.6)

n = number of schools responding; data presented as absolute number (percentage); * No statistically significant difference between tenure and non-tenure faculty.

Assistant professors served a mean of 5.2 ± 0.9 (range 3–7) years prior to achieving promotion to associate professor. Scholarship and teaching activities were the most prevalent criteria used in evaluating a faculty's candidacy for promotion, while service activities were less commonly reported (Tables II and III). As reported by eight of the committees, the mean number of publications required for consideration of promotion was 6.3 and 5.5 for tenure and non-tenure track faculty, respectively. No statistically significant difference was noted between tenure and non-tenure track faculty for any of the promotion criteria.

Discussion

We believe this is the first published study to assess the composition of promotion committees and the criteria for the promotion of pharmacy practice faculty from the rank of assistant to associate professor, within the context of the USA. It has long been recognized that many colleges have been inadequate in comprehensively evaluating their promotion and tenure systems (Wolfgang, Gupchup, & Plake, 1995). Conversely, promotion and tenure processes are rated

as a major source of concern and stress among pharmacy faculty (Wolfgang, Gupchup, & Plake, 1995). In an attempt to alleviate these anxieties, colleges of pharmacy often provide their faculty with guidelines outlining expected accomplishments as they poise themselves for their ultimate goal of promotion (Glover & Deziel-Evans, 2002). However, it has been our experience that faculty are often not well informed of the degree to which each of their accomplishments is evaluated nor of the expectations of the committee members, some of whom are unknown to the candidate applying for promotion.

As expected, the majority of the promotion committees observed in our study consisted of senior faculty members from more than one department. Of note was the presence of pharmacy practice and pharmaceutical science faculty representing the membership of over half of the committees. Unlike the majority of pharmacy practice faculty, pharmaceutical science faculty are typically graduates of research intensive PhD programs (Jungnickel, 1997). Thus, their presence on the majority of the committees would perhaps imply a more scientific evaluation of a candidate's research efforts than might be expected from their clinical pharmacy practice counterparts.

Table III Promotion criteria.

Service activity*	Tenure (<i>n</i> = 52)	Non-tenure (<i>n</i> = 48)
University		
Member of department committee	48(92.3)	45(93.7)
Member of college committee	50(96.2)	45(93.7)
Member of university committee	50(96.2)	45(93.7)
Chair of department committee	48(92.3)	44(91.7)
Chair of college committee	49(94.2)	43(89.6)
Chair of university committee	50(96.2)	44(91.7)
Interviewer for pharmacy student candidates	37(71.2)	35(72.9)
Pharmacy school delegate for pharmacy organization	44(84.6)	39(82.3)
Author of college policy	32(61.5)	31(64.6)
Advisor of postgraduate training program	43(82.7)	40(83.3)
Professional		
Member of local pharmacy association	39(75.0)	35(72.9)
Member of state pharmacy association	40(76.9)	36(75.0)
Member of national pharmacy association	41(78.8)	40(83.3)
Officer of local pharmacy association	49(94.2)	42(87.5)
Officer of state pharmacy association	51(98.1)	44(91.7)
Officer of national pharmacy association	51(98.1)	46(95.8)
Committee chair of local pharmacy association	50(96.2)	44(91.7)
Committee chair of state pharmacy association	51(98.1)	45(93.8)
Committee chair of national pharmacy association	51(98.1)	46(95.8)
Volunteer for charitable organization	34(65.4)	31(64.6)
Practice site		
Member of clinical site committee	43(82.7)	39(81.3)
Chair of clinical site committee	43(82.7)	40(83.3)
On-call service to clinical site	26(50.0)	26(54.2)
Number of patients covered daily	28(53.8)	28(58.3)
Number of daily patient interventions	26(50.0)	26(54.2)
Clinical site in-service/educational program	40(76.9)	36(75.0)

*No statistically significant difference between tenure and non-tenure faculty; *n* = number of schools responding; data presented as absolute number (percentage).

Although pharmacy practice faculty engage in well-designed research projects, as do pharmaceutical sciences faculty, their research often has a clinical foundation in lieu of a basic sciences focus. Hence, the nature of their research and the journals in which they publish may not be as well known to those outside of pharmacy practice. Having served on a promotion committee and/or having spoken to committee members, we found this to be true as the majority of the non-pharmacy practice faculty committee members were unfamiliar with the journal citations included in the pharmacy practice faculty's portfolio and thus had some reservations regarding the accuracy of their assessment. However, having a combination of faculty on the committee is encouraging as it allows for a more comprehensive evaluation of the candidate's research with the presence of pharmacy practice faculty on the committee allowing for proper evaluation and appreciation for the pharmacy practice candidate's research efforts.

The expectation of scholarly achievements is well recognized among pharmacy faculty. As previously reported, such expectations are considered a major element of a faculty's responsibilities as early as during the initial year of appointment (Glover & Armayor, 2004). As evident in our data, scholarship activities were the most commonly reported criteria assessed for promotion. Although no scholarly activity received a higher ranking than peer-reviewed publications, it was interesting that only eight committees reported a specific number of publications required for promotion. Whether such a requirement does not exist or the committees failed to report the data remains unknown. Some authors have argued that scholarship is overemphasized and that teaching activities should receive increased recognition (Wolgang, Gupchup, & Plake, 1995). As reported by Wolgang, Gupchup, & Plake (1995) pharmacy faculty believe teaching activities do not receive the recognition deserved. Regardless, an inordinate amount of time, utilizing a variety of tools, is often dedicated to evaluate the teaching activities of faculty (Barnett & Matthews, 1998).

In addition, the definition of scholarship has been expanded to include the scholarship of teaching to further illustrate the importance of teaching as a component of the evaluation for promotion (Jacobs, 1993; Angstadt, Nieman, & Morahan, 1998). Despite the time commitment to teaching and this expanded definition, faculty continue to rate traditional research as the major determinant in achieving promotion (Wolgang, Gupchup, & Plake, 1995). Although this appears true, it was evidenced in our study that teaching activities were reported with similar frequency as scholarship activities in criteria assessed for promotion. Although the weighting of such activities is unknown, it is

encouraging to realize that teaching is considered an important component of a faculty's responsibilities with recognition being realized by promotion committees.

Although faculty are expected to provide service to their college and profession (Glover & Deziel-Evans, 2002; Glover & Armayor, 2004), this activity was perceived as the least important area in being granted promotion. The consequence of this finding and its perception should be of concern to college administrators. Although most would agree that scholarship and teaching constitute the majority of a faculty member's daily efforts, service provided to the profession or college should not be minimized. If such activities are deemed relatively insignificant in the evaluation of a candidate for promotion, faculty will be hesitant to dedicate time or efforts for such activities including serving on college committees or representing their school as officers in select pharmacy organizations.

As recognized in our study, assistant professors served a mean of 5.2 years prior to being granted promotion. Therefore, for new faculty to prepare themselves within this time frame, it is essential that they are made aware of the criteria utilized for assessment for promotion soon after their initial appointment so they may begin to prepare themselves accordingly. As previously reported, it seems prudent for administration to educate their new faculty during orientation of these expectations (Glover & Armayor, 2004). Failure to do so not only contributes to additional stress being recognized by the faculty member, but also will likely delay their opportunity for promotion.

Summary

Promotion committees consist predominantly of senior faculty with representation from multiple departments. Excelling in scholarly activities appears to be the major determinant in being awarded promotion from assistant to associate professor with service activities being less commonly recognized. Faculty should educate themselves on the criteria assessed for promotion so they may prepare themselves accordingly.

References

- Angstadt, C. N., Nieman, L. Z., & Morahan, P. S. (1998). Strategies to expand the definition of scholarship for the health professions. *Journal of Allied Health, 27*, 157–161.
- Barnett, C. W., & Matthews, H. W. (1998). Current procedures used to evaluate teaching in schools of pharmacy. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, 62*, 388–391.
- Glover, M. L., & Deziel-Evans, L. (2002). Comparison of the responsibilities of tenure versus non-tenure track pharmacy

- practice faculty. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 66, 388–391.
- Glover, M. L., & Armayor, G. M. (2004). Expectations and orientation activities of first-year pharmacy practice faculty. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 68, Article 87.
- Jacobs, M. B. (1993). Faculty status for clinician–educators: Guidelines for evaluation and promotion. *Academic Medicine*, 68, 126–128.
- Jungnickel, P. W. (1997). Scholarly performance and related variables: A comparison of pharmacy practice faculty and departmental chairpersons. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 61, 34–44.
- Martin, R. E., Perrier, D., & Trinca, C. E. (1983). A planned program for evaluation and development of clinical pharmacy faculty. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 47, 102–107.
- Wolfgang, A. P., Gupchup, G. V., & Plake, K. S. (1995). Relative importance of performance criteria in promotion and tenure decisions: Perceptions of pharmacy faculty members. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 59, 342–347.

Appendix: Survey instrument

Please answer the following questions regarding the promotion of an assistant professor to an associate professor within the department of pharmacy practice.

1. What academic tracks are recognized by your department of pharmacy practice?
 Tenure Non- Tenure Both
 2. If your department offers both academic tracks, are the promotion criteria different between tenure and non-tenure track faculty?
 Yes No
 3. Do non-practicing faculty (i.e. administrators, experiential faculty) have the opportunity to be promoted to associate professor?
 Yes No
- If yes, do they follow the same promotion guidelines as practicing faculty?
 Yes No
4. How many years must an assistant professor be employed before he/she is eligible for promotion to associate professor?
 Months Years Not defined
 5. How many members serve on the college's promotion committee?
 _____Members
 6. Please select the departments that are represented on the committee. (select all that apply)
 Pharmacy practice Medical sciences (i.e. Biochemistry, Microbiology, etc.)
 Pharmacy Administration Other (please specify) _____
 Pharmaceutical sciences
 - 7 Please select the academic ranks of the members of the committee. (select al that apply)
 Assistant Professor Associate Dean
 Associate Professor Dean
 Professor Other (specify) _____
 Assistant Dean
 8. Are external reviewers (those outside the university) utilized to review candidates applying for promotion?
 Yes No
- If yes, please indicate how many reviewers are used per applicant. _____Reviewer(s)
9. If a point system is used as an indicator of a faculty member's eligibility for promotion, how many points are required for promotion to associate professor? _____ Points
 10. Are the criteria for promotion to associate professor for pharmacy practice faculty the same as those for faculty in pharmacy administration or pharmaceutical sciences?
 Yes No

11. For each item listed below, please check those that are considered for pharmacy practice faculty applying for promotion to associate professor. Where applicable, indicate the number that are required, or if a point system is utilized, indicate the number of points allocated for each activity. If requirements are the same for tenure and non-tenure faculty, complete only one column.

✓	Activity	Number required		Number of points	
		Tenure	Non-tenure	Tenure	Non-tenure
	Peer-reviewed publications				
	Poster presentations				
	Podium presentations				
	Grant submission				
	Grant funded				
	Book published				
	Book chapter published				
	Reviewer for peer-reviewed journal				
	Reviewer for meeting poster or podium presentation				
	Journal editorial board member				
	Didactic course coordination				
	Didactic teaching load				
	Clerkship students				
	Student directed research				
	Continuing education programs				
	New didactic course developed				
	Student evaluations				
	Peer evaluations				
	Member of department committee				
	Member of college committee				
	Member of university committee				
	Chair of department committee				
	Chair of college committee				
	Chair of university committee				
	Member of local pharmacy association				
	Member of state pharmacy association				
	Member of national pharmacy association				
	Officer of local pharmacy association				
	Officer of state pharmacy association				
	Officer of national pharmacy association				
	Chair of local pharmacy association				
	Chair of state pharmacy association				
	Chair of national pharmacy association				
	Interviews for pharmacy student candidates				
	Pharmacy school delegate for pharmacy organization				
	Author of college policy				
	Advisor of postgraduate training program				
	Volunteer for charitable organization				
	Member of hospital/clinical site committee				
	Chair of hospital/clinical site committee				
	On-call service to hospital/clinical site				
	Number of patients covered per day				
	Number of patient interventions per day				
	Hospital/clinical site in-services/educational programs				