

Attracting and Retaining Faculty at New Schools of Pharmacy in the United States

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These are challenging times for recruiting and retaining pharmacy faculty members at new Schools of Pharmacy. The pervasive pharmacist shortage in the United States has resulted in significantly higher salaries for pharmacists, as well as meaningful increases in student applications to pharmacy schools. So great is the demand for pharmacists that many established Schools of Pharmacy have increased their class sizes. In addition, at least nine Schools of Pharmacy have opened in the US since 1996, with at least three more scheduled to begin accepting students by the fall of 2006 (American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, 2004). Coinciding with the pharmacist shortage is a pharmacy faculty shortage, which is exacerbated by recruitment at the newer Schools of Pharmacy and higher paying jobs in the private sector. Since, the majority of the new schools do not award Doctor of Philosophy degrees and/or have fellowship programs, they often must hire faculty members from the relatively static pool of established pharmacy programs that have Ph.D. and/or fellowship programs. This may result in a greater overall shortage of faculty. Thus, the supply side of the equation has not kept pace with the demand side, and this is especially challenging for new Schools of Pharmacy, which must recruit a full complement of faculty.

A recent survey by AACP sought to determine, in part, the extent of the faculty shortage in schools of pharmacy (American Foundation of Pharmaceutical Education, 2003). Sixty-seven out of 84 pharmacy schools responded and reported an average of six open faculty positions per school, with the overwhelming majority being for full-time faculty members. Given that there is already a shortage of faculty members, a

pertinent question may be, “How can new schools of pharmacy attract and retain competent faculty members?” This is an especially critical question since most of the new pharmacy school growth is happening at small liberal arts colleges and universities that often do not possess the needed infrastructure to provide research opportunities for many new faculty members (especially basic scientists).

When recruiting faculty members to new Schools of Pharmacy, department heads must articulate to potential faculty members the mission and vision of their institutions. For example, the new Schools of Pharmacy will probably require a greater teaching load than more research-intensive universities. However, this requirement may be mitigated by lower expectations for scholarship activity in the form of refereed publications and extramural funding, which provide universities with money via indirect costs to fund graduate programs. Assuming that most faculty members wish to develop professionally, the challenge for new Schools of Pharmacy is how to foster faculty satisfaction in the academic roles of teaching, scholarship and service.

Challenges for newer schools

In general, junior faculty members at Schools of Pharmacy are neither satisfied nor unsatisfied with the academic roles of teaching, research and service; in fact, they are ambivalent (Latif and Grillo, 2001). However, faculty members at private schools or schools in existence for fewer than six years reported significantly less satisfaction with the overall academic roles of teaching, research and service than those from

public schools or programs in existence for more than six years. The most significant area of dissatisfaction of faculty members from the newer schools of pharmacy was in the area of research ($P < 0.01$).

There are several reasons for the significantly greater level of dissatisfaction at newer Schools of Pharmacy. Firstly, unlike more established schools of pharmacy, new schools require a tremendous amount of effort on the part of both the faculty and the administration to deliver a curriculum during the first years of its existence. Because many faculty members at new schools are in their first jobs, an enormous amount of time must be spent developing and delivering didactic materials.

In addition, committees at new schools must design promotion and tenure policies, and outcome assessment instruments for teaching and student progression, which are duties that not required in established schools of pharmacy. Most importantly, this must be done in a timely fashion in order to achieve ACPE accreditation. These challenges are different than what faculty members would face at more established institutions and often result in a significantly lower commitment directed toward professional development (i.e. scholarship). This may reduce faculty satisfaction and increase turnover. In addition, since performance is a function of ability, motivation and opportunity, many faculty members at new Schools of Pharmacy may not be given the resources (i.e. basic scientists require equipment) to succeed (Blumberg and Pringle, 1982; Latif and Grillo, 2001). This may contribute to faculty dissatisfaction and increase the likelihood of turnover.

Suggestions for enhancing faculty satisfaction

How can the new Schools of Pharmacy maximize the probability of hiring faculty members who are competent and likely to derive satisfaction at a new school? Several prescriptive suggestions can be advanced:

1. Hire emotionally intelligent department heads and other administrators;
2. Provide realistic job previews and articulate expectations;
3. Provide opportunities for professional development so that faculty members can succeed;
4. Hire experienced faculty members in addition to inexperienced faculty.

Emotional intelligence is an integral component of managerial career success. Thus, it is a critical skill for school administrators (the individuals who must guide faculty members in their professional development) to have or develop. Goleman (1998) describes emotional intelligence as “about two dozen social and emotional abilities that previous research has shown to be linked

to successful performance in the workplace.” These abilities can be grouped into five core areas: self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness and social skills. Mounting evidence suggests that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of managerial performance. In fact, Goleman argues that it accounts for a much greater amount of variance associated with optimal managerial performance as cognitive intelligence (Goleman, 1998).

A faculty member’s satisfaction is likely to be higher if personal values fit well within the institution. For example, a faculty member who places a high value on conducting research is likely to be poorly matched with Schools of Pharmacy that provide little support or opportunity for research. During the selection process, Schools of Pharmacy should strive to find candidates who not only have the ability, experience and motivation to perform, but also have a value system that is compatible with the institution. Realistic job previews should be provided for prospective candidates so they can consider both the pros and cons of working in a new school of pharmacy (Wanous, 1989). It is critical that the prospective candidate is not promised more than can be delivered in the form of “future resources” because trust may decline, which may contribute to dissatisfaction and result in faculty turnover.

As recommended by Lee et al. (1995), Schools of Pharmacy can enhance intrinsic faculty satisfaction by designing effective faculty development programs that meet the professional growth needs of each faculty member. For example, frequent meetings between the department head and faculty member regarding expectations and resources needed may greatly advance the aim to achieve faculty satisfaction. Research generally supports the notion that performance influences satisfaction much more than satisfaction influences performance (Robbins, 2000). Thus, if faculty members are meeting their goals it is more likely that they will be satisfied than if they do not know what to expect and/or are not provided with the resources to succeed.

It is also important to have several midlevel and senior faculty at new schools of pharmacy. These faculty members may serve in the role of mentor to newer faculty members by sponsoring them to provide support and to help build self-confidence. Successful mentors are good teachers who can present ideas clearly, listen well and empathize with the problems of their protégés.

The reality of pharmacy academia is that there is a shortage of qualified faculty. However, this shortage affects new schools of pharmacy to a greater extent than established schools because they must hire a full complement of faculty members within a short period of time. By practicing some of the ideas put forth in this short paper new Schools of Pharmacy should be

rewarded with more satisfied faculty and less turnover than those schools that do not.

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