

2007-2008 Group on Faculty Affairs
AAMC Listserve Queries & Responses

Query: Voluntary Faculty

Question from Peter Williams, Stony Brook (pwilliams@notes.cc.sunysb.edu):

We are struggling with the following issues:

1. How can we evaluate the pedagogical effectiveness of the teaching faculty who accept our students into their practices in the community? Currently we ask students for their subjective evaluations of their preceptors and assess their acquisition of skills in simulated patient encounters. What else can we do?
2. How can we best deliver faculty development programs to help them to improve their abilities as clinical instructors?
3. How can we best encourage our community faculty to participate in these faculty development activities?

Responses :

From Lars Larsen, Brody School of Medicine (llarsen@ecu.edu):

We struggle with the same issues here at Brody School of Medicine. Regarding #s 2 and 3, years ago we formed an interdisciplinary group at the Division of Health Sciences level with representatives from the schools of Nursing, Medicine, and Allied Health, the Community Based Education Advisory Group (CBEAG), which has organized an annual preceptor faculty development conference to improve preceptor teaching skills; the conference was held each year for over a decade. Early on, lodging was paid for the preceptors and the program ran from Friday evening through early Saturday afternoon. Even with activities such as a banquet and medical "Readers Theater," quality faculty development sessions, efforts to include clinical topics, and beach sites for the conference attendance was limited. Gradually we have come to accept the fact our preceptors are simply too busy with their practices and other commitments to regularly participate in *voluntary* faculty development activities at distant sites. We have not made participation in faculty development activities mandatory for our medical school preceptors, but occasionally entertain this idea. Given a limited and perhaps shrinking voluntary preceptor pool anyway, a "mandatory" approach makes us a bit skittish.

We have recently established several on-line faculty development modules, with one on "Clinical Teaching" currently being finalized, and are making those available for our community preceptors 24/7. Each carries CME credit and we're hopeful the preceptors will take advantage of them. We'll see...

I'll look forward to hearing what others have done to address the issues you've raised.