

# Building an Engaged Workforce: How to Support Medical School Faculty & Staff

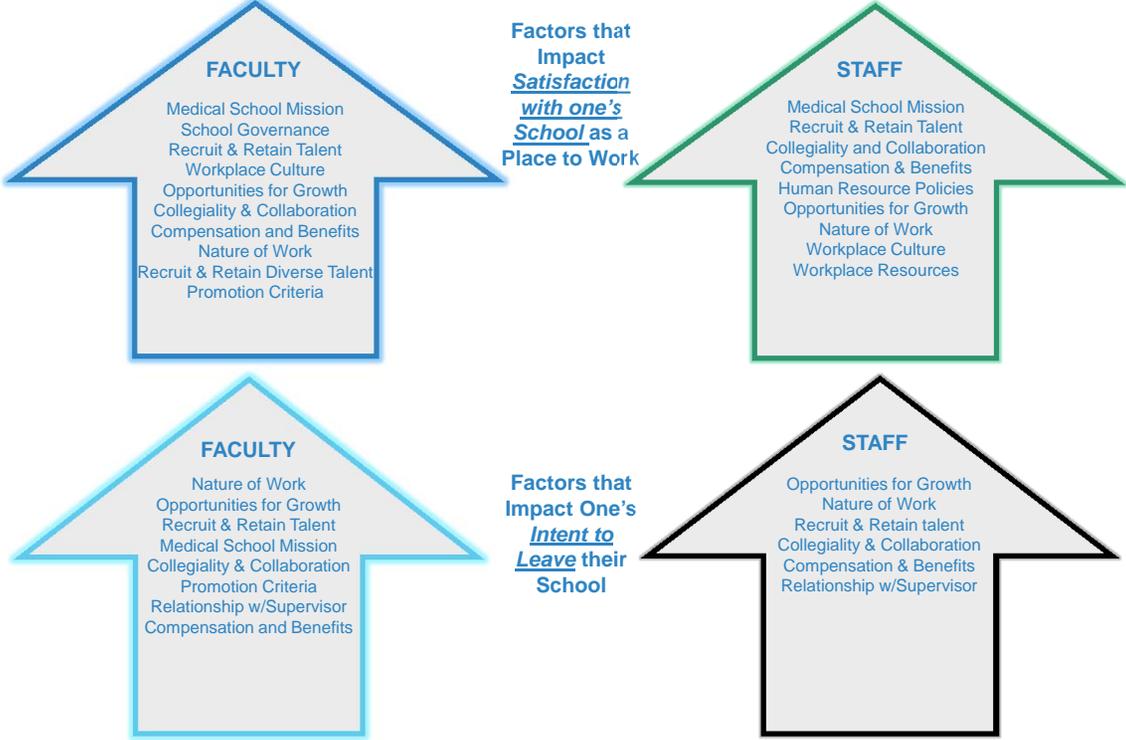
Valerie Dandar and Heather Sacks, AAMC



## What Drives Faculty and Staff Engagement?

**Introduction:** Research shows that the average medical school spends \$1.7 to \$2.3M on turnover costs per year, with an average cost of \$75,000–\$100,000 to recruit one faculty member. Little is known about staff retention, however preliminary results of the Staff Success Engagement Survey show that less than 50% of staff agreed their work unit had enough staff to handle the workload and that 34% of staff are planning to or considering leaving their medical school in the next 1 to 2 years. Understanding how to create an engaged workforce helps improve retention and performance. **By using employee engagement data, institutions identify how to improve talent management strategies and engagement through evidenced-based action planning with the intent to enhance individual and organizational outcomes over time.** This poster presents data from the AAMC Faculty Forward and Staff Success Engagement Surveys to identify common areas of opportunity for medical schools to improve the workplace environment for both faculty and staff.

**Methodology:** The data for this study come from 22 self-selected U.S. medical schools that participated in administrations of the AAMC Faculty Forward Engagement Survey (FFES) between November 2012 and June 2015. Data are also included from the AAMC Staff Success Engagement Survey (SSES) which was administered with 10 schools from January through March 2015. Both the FFES and SSES are voluntary, web-based surveys that assess the engagement of full and part time medical school employees, each tailored and validated uniquely for faculty and staff experiences. Participating institutions selected individual times to administer the survey based on their institutional calendars, with each survey administration lasting between 4 and 6 weeks. The AAMC directly sent individual faculty members e-mail invitations and reminders to participate during each administration period. This study seeks to describe the factors that drive faculty and staff engagement. **This analysis will identify the factors that drive overall satisfaction and retention of each population using OLS and logistic regression analyses.** As these surveys do not require respondents to respond to all questions, we used the FIML (Full Information Maximum Likelihood) method to account for missing data in the regression analyses. For purposes of these analyses we removed the “Clinical Practice” dimension from both FFES and SSES models, as it doesn’t apply to all survey respondents, and the “School Governance” dimension was removed from the SSES models as it was only provided to a small subset of respondents.



\*\*\* All survey dimensions above were statistically significant at  $p > .05$ .

## Building an Engaged Workforce in Academic Medicine

While there are elements of the workplace experience that are unique for both faculty and staff, many of their needs are same in driving their engagement. Below is our assessment of how to build an engaged academic medicine workforce.

- 1. Mission Drives Commitment to Academic Medicine**  
Working in academic medicine is an avocation for many faculty and staff. People are drawn to the field to work in education, research, and patient care no matter their role in the institution. Understanding the mission and believing that your work contributes to the achieving the mission is critical to engagement.
- 2. It Takes Talent to Keep Talent**  
Academic medicine demands excellence as anything less can result in real problems for the students and patients we serve. Thus, our medical schools look to recruit and retain high quality faculty and staff. And, when teams aren't comprised of top talent or talented faculty and staff leave, others are driven to leave their institutions too.
- 3. Be Up Front and Consistent in Defining Job Responsibilities**  
With such a complex academic enterprise, it is essential that each faculty and staff role is well defined with clear expectations. Faculty and staff want to go above and beyond in their jobs and when they can't, they aren't as engaged in the institutions success.
- 4. Employees Value Strong Relationships**  
One's relationship with their supervisor—as someone who provides feedback and supports your career development is important. Further relationships with colleagues both personally and professionally directly impact your day to day work experience. Whether forging collaborations to be successful in your role or feeling supported by colleagues in your work, strong relationships are key.
- 5. Create a Clear Line of Sight for a Career at Your School**  
Both faculty and staff believe opportunities for role-specific professional development are critical as they envision their career at their medical schools. Seeing a clear career trajectory, with possible new job opportunities on the horizon, and knowing how to get there will help retain faculty and staff.
- 6. Culture Matters**  
Your workplace culture matters in supporting faculty and staff engagement, especially with regards to cultivating a diverse and inclusive environment, as well as being an incubator for innovation. Academic medical centers succeed when they have a diverse group of employees, contributing experience and ideas from different backgrounds in bettering the health of the nation.
- 7. Compensation Is Not Why People Are Leaving**  
As in any field, faculty and staff want to have a salary and benefits that reflects the effort they commit. And while important, perceptions about total compensation are not the number one factor in determining whether one leaves or stays at their institution. However, for faculty especially, policies about how much revenue or funds granted they must produce remain key in helping faculty be successful.