

U.S. Medical School Faculty Turnover Trends

https://doi.org/10.15766/datasnapshot_MSLO_21

April 2026

Introduction

A sufficient and stable faculty workforce is essential for sustaining the delivery of a medical school's education, research, and clinical programs. Turnover, however, is inevitable and can happen for many reasons, whether faculty retire or find advancement opportunities elsewhere. Regardless of the reasons for faculty turnover, recruiting and hiring new faculty is a time-intensive and expensive process.¹ Understanding longitudinal, national trends in faculty turnover may support institutional planning to ensure medical schools maintain the faculty needed to operate and thrive.

This data snapshot is intended to complement the faculty attrition reports provided through the AAMC's Faculty Roster, which present data on the percentage of full-time faculty who leave academic medicine within 10 years of their appointment.² These cohort-based retention analyses can be useful for assessing how long faculty members tend to stay in academic medicine. By contrast, annual turnover rates, which are the focus of this snapshot, are different from attrition rates in that they show churn at the institution-level rather than individual-level career length. Turnover rates are a useful metric for regular monitoring of workforce changes and can help medical school leadership anticipate recruitment needs.

Methods

This report utilizes de-identified data from a Dec. 31, 2025, snapshot of the AAMC Faculty Roster for academic years 2010-2011 through 2023-2024. A departure is defined as any individual who discontinued their full-time faculty appointment at a given medical school in a given academic year and was not reappointed at that same school within the same academic year. For example, an individual who left their position at a medical school on May 30, 2015, and returned to the same medical school on Sept. 1, 2025, would be counted as a departure in academic year 2014-2015. By contrast, an individual who left on Dec. 31, 2014, and returned to the same medical school on April 1, 2015, would not be counted as a departure for AY 2014-2015. In the rare case that a faculty member left two different medical schools during a single academic year, the individual is counted twice in that academic year.

The Faculty Roster does not collect information as to why faculty members vacated their full-time positions. For the purposes of this snapshot, the terms "departure" and "turnover" include switching from a full-time to a part-time position; all voluntary and involuntary terminations including retirement; accepting a position at another institution; leaving academic medicine; layoffs; etc.

Annual turnover rates were calculated as the number of departures in a given academic year (i.e., July 1-June 30) divided by the number of full-time faculty employed on Dec. 31 of that academic year. The Dec. 31 snapshot was used to estimate the total number of full-time positions available at a given medical school in a given academic year.

U.S. Medical School Faculty Turnover Trends

April 2026

Key Findings

- Since AY 2010-2011, the faculty turnover rate has remained relatively stable (Table 1). The most recent year of available data (AY 2023-2024) saw a turnover rate of 8.5%.
- The turnover rates of clinical and basic science faculty have been similar, with only slightly higher percentages of clinical faculty leaving their positions (Table 2). In AY 2023-2024, the turnover rates of clinical and basic science faculty were 8.6% and 7.0%, respectively.
- There were minimal differences in turnover rates by gender during this period (Figure 1). Prior to AY 2016-2017, there was slightly more turnover among women than men. Since that time, turnover rates have remained about the same for women and men, with turnover rates of 8.7% and 8.3% in AY 2023-2024 for women and men, respectively.
- Academic rank accounted for the most noticeable disparity in turnover rates. Associate professors had the lowest turnover rate (range: 5.6% to 8.6%) and instructors had the highest (range: 14.5% to 19.0%). Assistant professor turnover rates were regularly about 3 percentage points higher than associate and full professors until the gap narrowed and stabilized after AY 2017-2018 (Figure 2).
- Turnover was lowest among faculty with tenure (range: 4.7% to 6.5%; Figure 3). Turnover among faculty on a tenure track who have not yet received tenure noticeably decreased from 9.5% to 5.8% between AY 2010-2011 and AY 2023-2024.
- The average turnover rates of faculty not on a tenure track are nearly double the rates of tenured faculty (9.1% and 5.8%, respectively; Figure 3).
- There was no evidence of the “Great Resignation” linked to the COVID-19 pandemic,³ with little to no increase in faculty turnover rates between AY 2020-2021 and AY 2021-2022.

Table 1: Faculty Counts and Turnover Rates by Academic Year, 2010-2011 to 2023-2024

Academic Year	Total Faculty	Total Departures	Turnover Rate
2010-2011	144,623	11,740	8.1%
2011-2012	151,016	13,337	8.8%
2012-2013	154,767	12,644	8.2%
2013-2014	160,003	13,382	8.4%
2014-2015	165,627	14,548	8.8%
2015-2016	171,011	15,231	8.9%
2016-2017	175,473	16,684	9.5%
2017-2018	179,570	20,143	11.2%
2018-2019	182,645	18,341	10.0%
2019-2020	188,276	16,150	8.6%
2020-2021	194,945	17,042	8.7%
2021-2022	201,526	18,266	9.1%
2022-2023	208,197	18,335	8.8%
2023-2024	216,092	18,298	8.5%

Notes: Faculty counts are based on Dec. 31 snapshots of the Faculty Roster data (i.e., the total faculty holding full-time positions on Dec. 31 of that academic year). The increase in turnover in 2017-2018 was largely due to one institution that changed their methodology for counting and reporting full-time faculty members and is not a reflection of actual departures.

U.S. Medical School Faculty Turnover Trends

April 2026

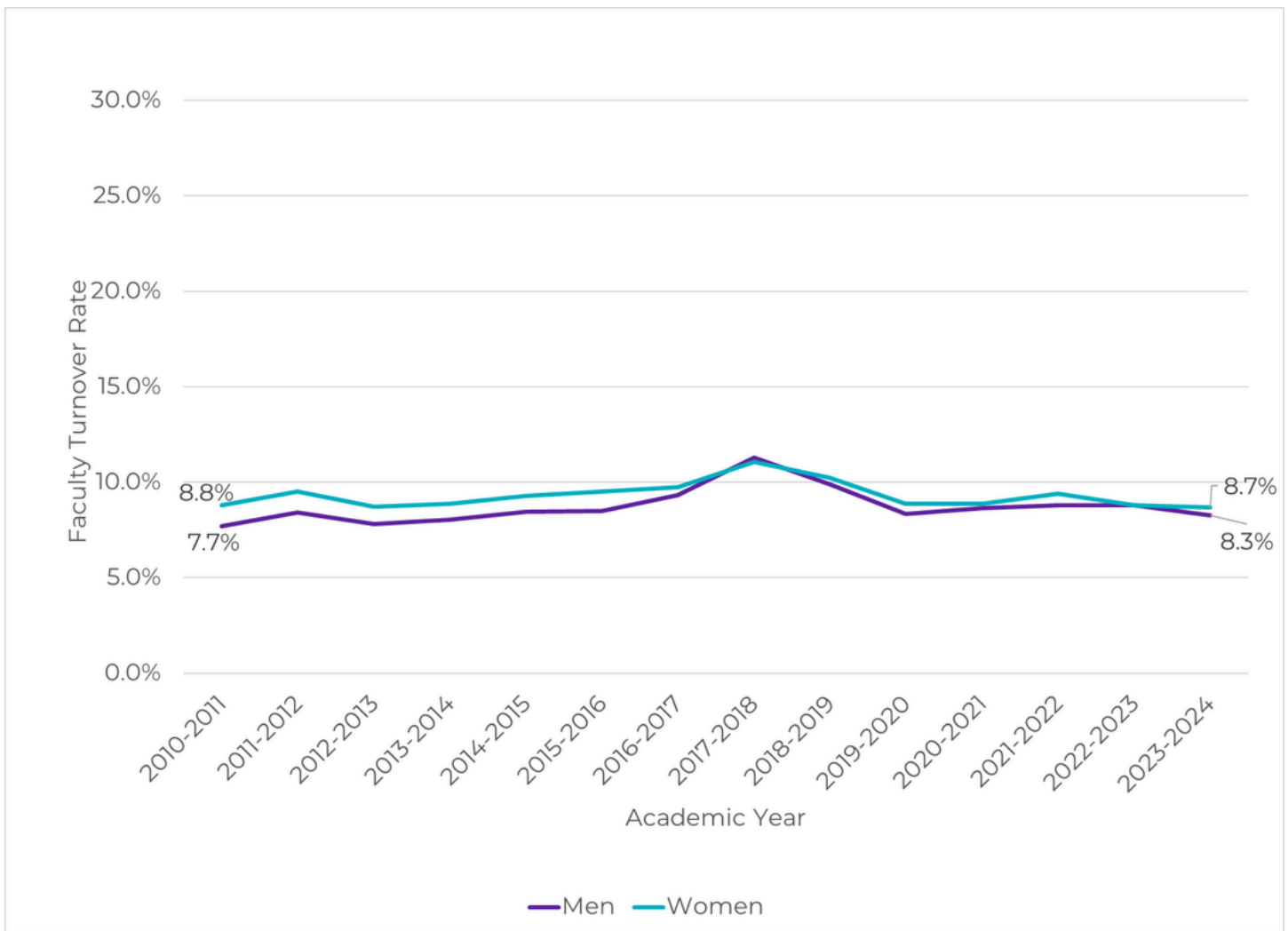
Table 2. Faculty Counts and Turnover Rates by Department Type, Academic Years 2010-2011 to 2023-2024

Academic Year	BASIC SCIENCE			CLINICAL		
	Total Faculty	Total Departures	Turnover Rate	Total Faculty	Total Departures	Turnover Rate
2010-2011	18,666	1,342	7.2%	124,725	10,302	8.3%
2011-2012	18,608	1,396	7.5%	131,101	11,851	9.0%
2012-2013	19,063	1,467	7.7%	134,331	11,042	8.2%
2013-2014	19,172	1,477	7.7%	139,456	11,778	8.4%
2014-2015	19,375	1,489	7.7%	144,841	12,888	8.9%
2015-2016	19,701	1,647	8.4%	149,892	13,468	9.0%
2016-2017	19,474	1,654	8.5%	154,511	14,906	9.6%
2017-2018	19,682	1,727	8.8%	158,322	18,272	11.5%
2018-2019	19,814	1,697	8.6%	161,260	16,492	10.2%
2019-2020	20,143	1,534	7.6%	166,578	14,476	8.7%
2020-2021	20,098	1,489	7.4%	173,170	15,389	8.9%
2021-2022	20,119	1,640	8.2%	178,378	16,464	9.2%
2022-2023	20,205	1,552	7.7%	184,145	16,437	8.9%
2023-2024	20,554	1,439	7.0%	191,543	16,459	8.6%

Note: Due to low faculty counts, faculty in departments described as “Other” were excluded from this table.

U.S. Medical School Faculty Turnover Trends

April 2026

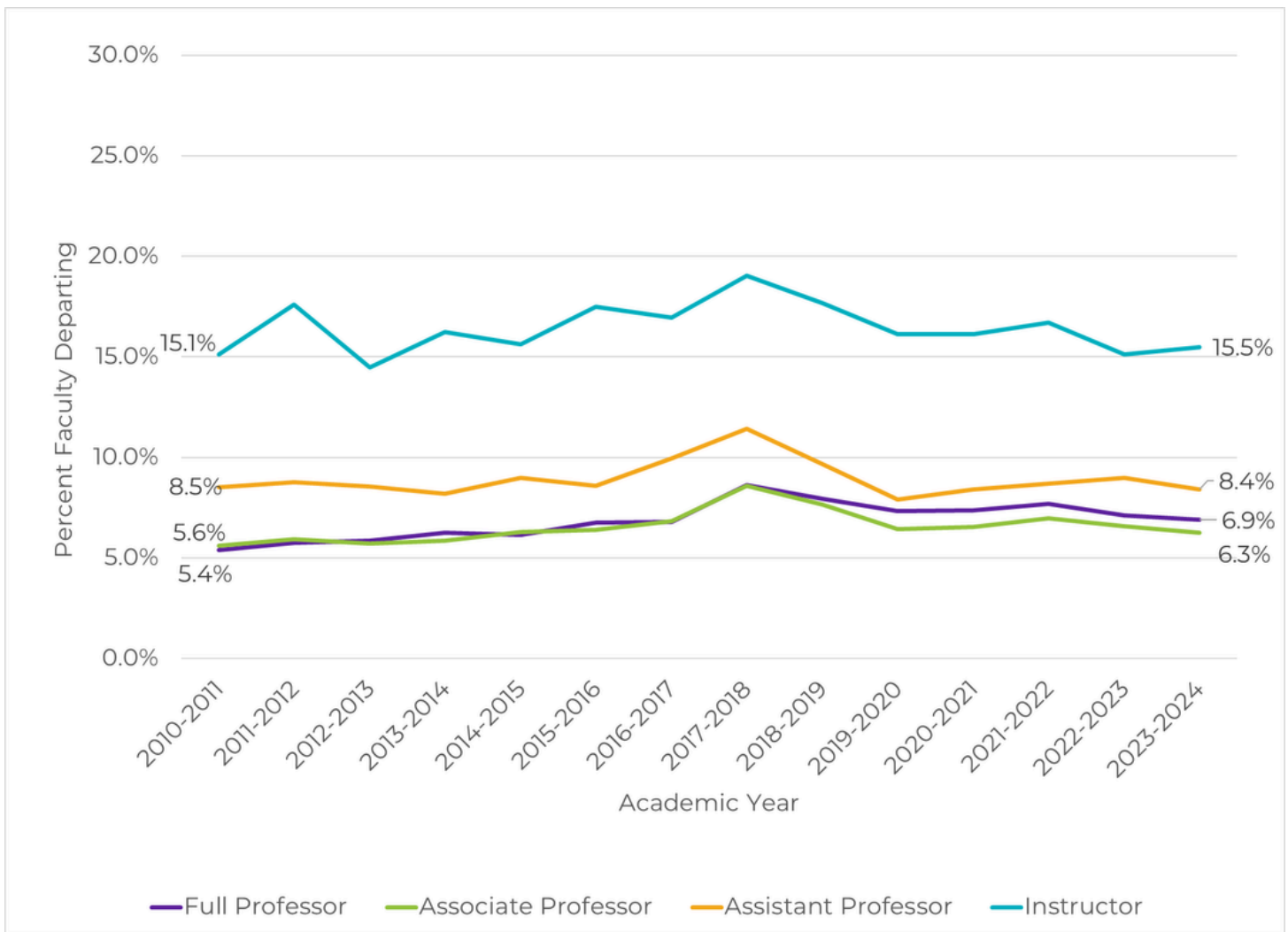


Note: Due to low faculty counts, faculty with missing gender data or who identified as “another gender identity” were excluded from this figure.

Figure 1. Annual turnover rates of men and women faculty between academic years 2010-2011 and 2023-2024.

U.S. Medical School Faculty Turnover Trends

April 2026

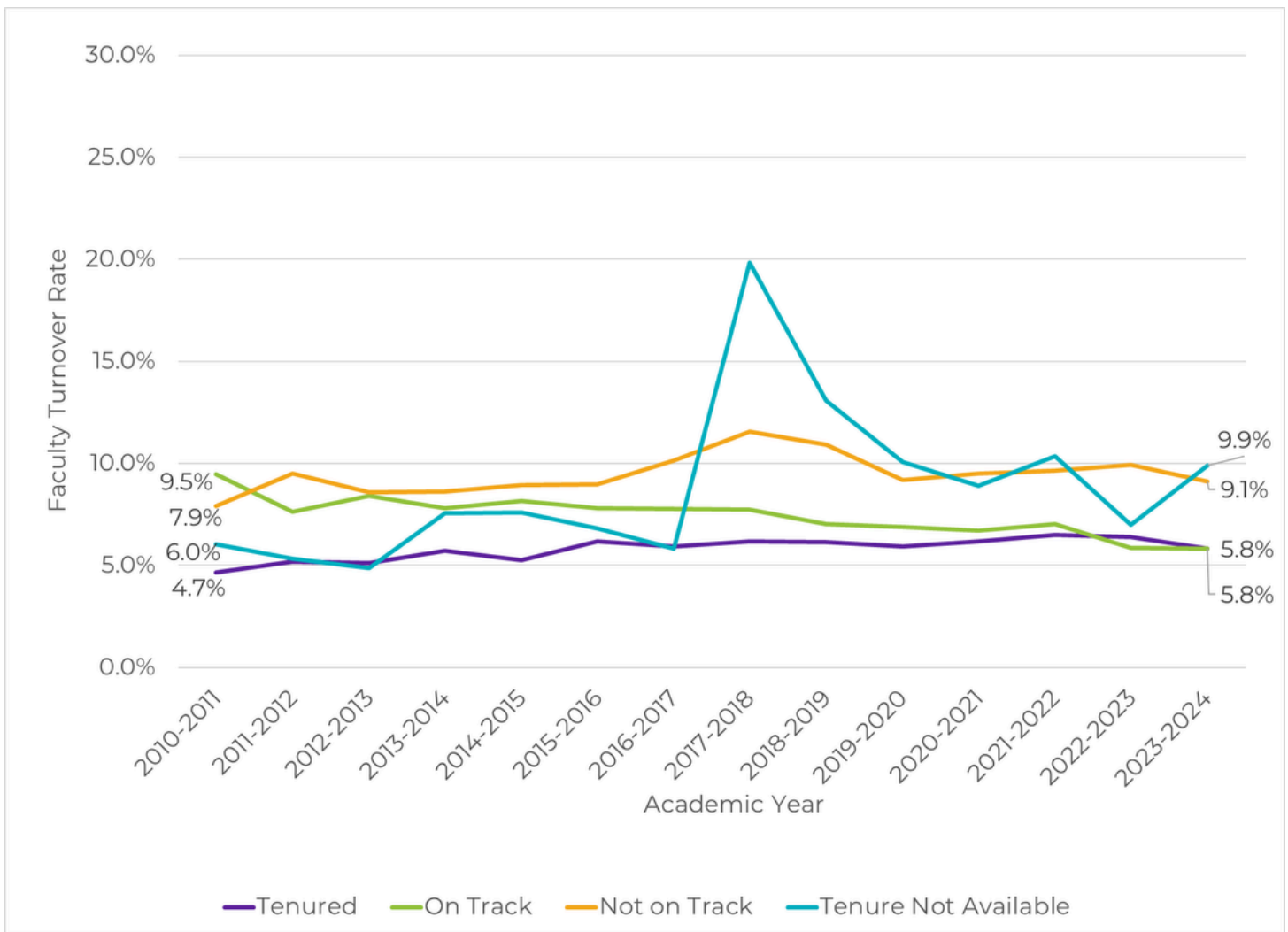


Note: Due to low faculty counts, faculty with ranks described as “Other” were excluded from this figure.

Figure 2. Annual turnover rates by faculty appointment type between academic years 2010-2011 and 2023-2024.

U.S. Medical School Faculty Turnover Trends

April 2026



Note: Due to low faculty counts, faculty with missing tenure status information were excluded from this figure. The increase in turnover in 2017-2018 was largely due to one institution, where tenure is not available, changing their methodology for counting and reporting full-time faculty members and is not a reflection of actual departures.

Figure 3. Annual turnover rates of faculty by tenure status between academic years 2010-2011 and 2023-2024.

U.S. Medical School Faculty Turnover Trends

April 2026

Conclusions

The findings in this snapshot can be used by schools as a national benchmark to determine the degree to which the institution's turnover data differs from the norm. Faculty turnover rates have remained relatively stable over the past 14 years, although there was a noticeable decrease in the longitudinal turnover rate among tenure-eligible faculty members. Contrary to popular assumptions, there was no noticeable increase in the turnover rate during the COVID-19 pandemic. The greatest average turnover was among instructors (16.4%) and nontenure track faculty (9.5%).

The findings in this snapshot align with the data presented in the AAMC StandPoint™ Surveys: 2023 State of Medical School Faculty Engagement report, which reported that 7.4% of faculty said they were “highly likely or likely” to leave their medical school over the next one to two years.⁴ The StandPoint report complements this data snapshot in that it also describes drivers of faculty engagement and recommends evidence-based actions to support faculty retention that may be useful for institutions seeking to improve their turnover rates.

While our snapshot shows minimal difference in turnover between men and women generally, The State of Women in Academic Medicine 2023-2024 reported that a greater percentage of women associate professors in basic science departments left academic medicine without having been promoted to full professor within seven years than men in the same position.⁵ To further understand the nuances of faculty experiences in academic medicine, future turnover research could account for gender, department type, and rank collectively.

The cost of filling vacant faculty positions is high both in terms of money and effort. By understanding the levels of faculty turnover based on different factors (e.g., department type, rank), schools can anticipate turnover to budget and plan for filling vacancies. Yearly faculty turnover rates greatly exceeding the benchmark may be an indicator that some internal intervention is needed to improve the faculty experience.

Contact

Please contact the Medical School Operations Team at medicalschoolorperations@aamc.org.

Authors

Carolyn Brayko, Ph.D., Senior National Advisor, Institutional Effectiveness Research, AAMC

Amy Smith, Ph.D., Medical School Operations Research Leader, AAMC

Jordan Dutterer, MS, Senior Data Analyst, AAMC

Rae Anne Sloane, Lead Research and Data Analyst, Faculty Data, AAMC

U.S. Medical School Faculty Turnover Trends

April 2026

Use of Report

© 2026 AAMC. May be reproduced and distributed with attribution for educational or noncommercial purposes only.

Brayko C, Smith A, Dutterer J, Sloane R. U.S. medical school faculty turnover trends. Data Snapshot. AAMC; 2026. doi: https://doi.org/10.15766/datasnapshot_MSLO_21

References

1. Pololi LH, Krupat E, Civian JT, Ash AS, Brennan RT. Why are a quarter of faculty considering leaving academic medicine? A study of their perceptions of institutional culture and intentions to leave at 26 representative U.S. medical schools. *Acad Med.* 2012; 87(7):859-869. doi: 10.1097/ACM.0b013e3182582b18
2. AAMC. [U.S. Medical School Faculty: Promotion and Attrition Rates](#). AAMC Faculty Roster as of December 2024. Accessed October 10, 2025.
3. Gittleman MB. The “Great Resignation” in perspective. *Monthly Labor Review.* 2022; July: 2-9.
4. Dandar V, Field J, Balas K, Dutterer J, Kim J. [AAMC StandPoint Surveys: 2023 State of Medical School Faculty Engagement](#). Washington, DC: AAMC; 2023.
5. Lautenberger DM, Dandar VM. [The State of Women in Academic Medicine 2023-2024: Progressing Toward Equity](#). Washington, DC: AAMC; November 2024.