

Committee for Faculty Development Meeting Minutes

Sept 20, 2011, 11:00 am-12:00 pm – Founders Room, T307C, Teleconference: 617-638-4629

In attendance: Bill Bicknell, Marianne Prout, Lora Sabin, Lisa Sullivan, Janice Weinberg, Roberta White, Justine de Marrais. Teleconference: Vicky Parker.

Absent: Deborah Bowen, Yvette Cozier, Sue Fish, Deborah Fournier

1. Welcome
2. Faculty development survey results and draft report
 - a. Review of overview report of survey results – Due to concerns about identifiable demographic data (rank, gender, department), demographic data has been excluded from the overview report which will be shared with the SPH community.
 - b. Review of draft narrative report summarizing survey methods and results
 - i. Current draft of narrative report included demographic data for committee review only; final report will exclude individual data, reporting only non-identifiable aggregate faculty data.
 - ii. Problems with Questions 1, 3 and 5 (the ranking questions) – inconsistent application of ranking criteria among respondents makes it difficult to interpret the results, but the data is still useful
 - iii. FD program attendance – about 50% reported they did not attend; most attended program topics were Teaching and Research
 - iv. Topic areas wanted – Teaching, Research, and Leadership (L=a surprise. Not sure what faculty mean by Leadership. May have to seek faculty feedback.)
 - v. We received lots of comments for Questions 9 (why not attended FD programs) and 13 (potential obstacles to attendance). Among the named obstacles were Timing/Lack of Time and Workload. These issues will need to be addressed for our FD program to be successful.
 - vi. Mentoring – Because there are many ways to view mentoring, our survey provided Kram's definition of mentoring to ground the discussion. Using this definition, 52% of SPH faculty reported having a mentor; 48% felt they did not. Table provides demographic breakdown. Most mentors located within dept; smaller percent at BU or external to BU; fewest in other depts at SPH. – Some faculty expressed interest in being mentors.
 - vii. Sabbaticals – Should be take raw data generated by survey to dept chairs? With small sample size, data may not help. Concern expressed that bar has been set so high for faculty to qualify for sabbaticals. May need more discussion within school about expanding the idea of sabbaticals.
 - viii. Qualitative data/Comments – Most recurrent themes among the comments received: need for protected time; support and facilitation of transdisciplinary, collaborative research; mentoring; and FD programs that are SPH-specific.
 - c. Dissemination of results to SPH community – recommendations from committee

3. Issues related to Mentoring at SPH – Input from Faculty: Bill Bicknell
 - a. Comment on structure of survey – too leading and rigid
 - b. Mentors as described in survey too prescriptive. Discussion needs to include expanded definitions, e.g., more informal, “organically grown” relationships that develop over time
 - c. Suggestions:
 - i. Improve school communications [NB – These changes are already being discussed with Kara Peterson, Communications.]
 - ii. Chairs - Chairs need to get to know individual faculty (goals, personal and professional interests, etc) and match faculty with appropriate mentor(s). Chairs should also prioritize resources and dept goals to meet as many individual needs as possible. Work across dept's to share resources if feasible.
 - iii. Address broader issues, in particular the school's policy regarding and systematic evaluation of faculty effort, time, etc.
 - iv. Mentoring – Not all chairs are good at mentoring. Can chairs be trained to mentor? (See Harvard initiatives.)
 - v. Can BUSPH develop a new mentoring system – No longer default to chair as primary mentor within the dept? Perhaps designate an individual or committee to take on mentoring role? New models to consider:
 1. Peer mentoring – within SPH faculty body. Spread word about existing peer mentoring groups; support creation of new peer groups.
 2. BUSM model – Fac dev program to support school
 3. Group mentoring – No pressure on one individual to be the primary mentor; small group setting; more flexible, informal; no hierarchy; create informal supports within each dept among faculty with range of experience and rank
 4. Mentoring pool within dept to mentor new faculty. System should support/ give credit to fac who provide mentoring.
 5. Expand mentoring pool to whole school (not restricted to dept)
 - vi. Make it clear how faculty can contribute to overall mission of the school. Not stuck in a departmental model or restricted view. Need new culture at the school, a new understanding and appreciation of faculty contributions. Current barriers or issues: Teaching/Research balance; and the FDA form and system of evaluation. Need support (mentoring) to create change, to brainstorm new ideas and solutions.
 - vii. Tension between serving the business interests of the school vs. the interests of individual faculty. Ideas need not be mutually exclusive: one could advance the argument that happy individual faculty are in the best interest of the school, thereby making good business sense. Time, support, and resources have to be put into strengthening faculty development and mentoring. Need top down support at the school for it to be successful.

4. Research review – Survey revealed demand for review of research design and methods. Biostatistics support is already available (although there is concern that demand will greatly escalate), but faculty are also looking for conceptual input. Some depts already provide this kind of review, but not all do. The school does not approach it systematically, like BUSM does.

5. NEW IDEA: Develop resource based on faculty teaching interests and areas of expertise in order to foster collaborative teaching/guest lecturing. Expand circle of potential guest lecturers and topics, minimizing chances that students hear same lecture from three different classes.
6. Update on Faculty Development website status – Deferred due to lack of time.

Handouts available at meeting: Overview report of faculty development survey results; Draft report summarizing quantitative and qualitative results