

STATEMENTS

The Role of the Mentor in Retaining Junior Pharmacy Faculty Members

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The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACCP) has identified faculty retention as a top concern since 76 colleges of pharmacy reported a total of 406 vacant and/or lost positions in the 2004-2005 academic year. Since today's junior faculty members are tomorrow's leaders in pharmacy education, retention of quality faculty members is critical to our future. Mentoring is one effective method of retaining faculty members and decreasing workplace stress, especially in the area of scholarship. However, in the last decade, the disproportionate increase of junior faculty members to the number of senior faculty members employed has resulted in a major limitation of the dyad (mentor and protégé) mentoring process. One effective method of overcoming this limitation is the use of the triad mentoring model (organization, mentor, and protégé). Colleges of pharmacy that consider adopting this triad model will likely promote an environment that nurtures relationships, resulting in job satisfaction, and thereby leading to retention of junior faculty members.

Keywords: mentor, administration, academia, junior faculty, faculty development

INTRODUCTION

Since today's junior faculty members are tomorrow's leaders in pharmacy education, retention of quality faculty members is critical to paving a successful pathway to our future. With the acute pharmacy faculty shortage,¹ retention of an institution's current faculty members is paramount. The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACCP) has identified faculty retention as a top issue of concern since 76 colleges of pharmacy reported a total of 406 vacant and/or lost positions in 2004-2005.² Of the 406 vacant/lost positions, 49.3% were from the clinical science/pharmacy practice department, followed by pharmaceutical science at 34.0%, administrative science at 4.9%, and non-instructional or administrative positions at 11.1%.² Enrollment of student pharmacists into pharmacy programs has increased each year from 2000 to 2005³ and likely will continue to rise. With this increased enrollment, colleges of pharmacy have experienced an increased need for personnel, especially in regard to faculty members. Therefore, it may well

be in the best interest of colleges and schools of pharmacy to focus their efforts on improving faculty retention, especially if an institution's faculty turnover rate is high. Analysis of the employee turnover by Mobley et al showed a positive correlation between decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover rates of employees.⁴ The high turnover rates seen within academic pharmacy departments are thought to be associated with job stress, as suggested by Carter et al.⁵ In 1993, Jackson et al published information about stress in pharmacy faculty members as part of their analysis of burnout, with burnout defined as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and/or cynicism."⁶ The activities in which the faculty experienced the most stress were related to the availability of time. Associated factors producing the stress included insufficient faculty training needed to conduct research activities. Also, inadequate salaries led some faculty members to pursue part-time work outside academia, further confounding perceived time demands. In 2001, Latif and Grillo established new information about junior faculty members' satisfaction with the 3 aspects of their job: teaching, service, and scholarly or research activities. The results demonstrated that junior faculty members were most satisfied with their teaching role and least satisfied with their research role.⁷ This dissatisfaction was linked to lack of time allocated for their research activities.⁷ Glover and Deziel-Evans concluded that if

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increased research activities were desired in non-tenured or junior faculty members, then time allocated to other areas should be reduced.⁸ From this review of the literature, it was concluded that to achieve an increase in faculty retention, especially of younger and less-experienced faculty members, it is crucial that college administrators engage in efforts to collaborate, implement, and support mentoring objectives and goals for each faculty member.

INCREASING JUNIOR FACULTY RETENTION

First, to decrease the stress experienced by new faculty members, creating an environment that is professional and encourages participation is important.⁹ Analogous to a student entering a new school for the first time, if the student is welcomed in an open and pleasant manner, apprehensions are diminished and the student is more likely to engage from the onset. The same is true for new and junior faculty members. The second way to reduce stress is to provide faculty members with orientation programs that specifically address instruction regarding teaching and research activities.¹⁰ Glover and Armayor found that guidance in the research-related areas was the least common of the activities found in the formal faculty orientation programs surveyed.¹⁰ Therefore, if faculty orientation programs do not adequately prepare junior faculty members (especially those with primarily a clinical background who may lack research skills) to perform scholarly activities, the probability of junior faculty job stress is high. Studies by Jackson et al and Carter et al suggested that mentors in the research area are needed to assist less-experienced faculty members, ultimately helping to alleviate stress and to promote job satisfaction.^{5,6} Thus, the third way to decrease stress is to pair up senior faculty members with junior faculty members, with the experienced faculty member assisting and guiding the scholarly activities of the junior faculty member.^{1,5,6} However in the last decade, a major limitation of the senior-junior mentoring process has been the disproportionate increase of junior faculty members compared to the number of senior faculty members employed at most colleges of pharmacy.¹¹ Upon this review of the literature, it is evident that effective mentoring is likely the critical component necessary to successfully retain junior pharmacy faculty members. Therefore, our goal is to ascertain how colleges of pharmacy can effectively mentor junior faculty members.

UNDERSTANDING THE MENTORING PROCESS

In order to appreciate the benefits that mentoring programs offer to individuals and organizations, it is essential

to review the mentor concept. The interest in mentoring as a technique for developing employee talent significantly increased in 1978 and 1979 after the *Harvard Business Review* published the articles "Everyone Who Makes It Has a Mentor" and "Much Ado About Mentors."^{12,13} In 1985, Kathy Kram, in her book *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life*, defined the mentor-protégé relationship as dynamic and one that develops through 4 separate phases.¹⁴ The first phase is considered the initiation phase where the relationship begins between a weaker (junior) and stronger (senior) person.¹⁴ The cultivation phase occurs next, when the range of career and psychosocial functions between the 2 persons expands to a maximum.¹⁴ The subsequent phase, known as the separation phase, is when there is a change in the structural or emotional nature of the relationship between the mentor and protégé.¹⁴ The fourth and last phase, called the redefinition phase, is when the relationship takes on different characteristics, making it a more peer-like relationship.¹⁴ For a significant relationship to exist, 3 core requirements known as attraction, action, and affect should be present.¹⁵ Attraction is defined as the desire of the protégé to emulate the mentor, while the mutual consent of both participants denotes action. Subsequently, the positive outcome from the experience of a successful partnership is the affect.¹⁵ These core requirements are actually integrated throughout the 4 phases of the mentoring relationship.¹⁵

Kram's analysis of mentors and protégés identified the mentor as not only providing a career or vocational function, but also a psychosocial function.¹⁴ Depending on the relationship, the activities within each function may vary with the needs of an individual's personal and professional development. Basically, the vocational function of mentoring involves educating, coaching, sponsoring, and protecting the protégé or mentee.^{14,16} A mentor educates a protégé by providing challenging assignments followed by constructive criticism of the work.^{14,16} The mentor also coaches by clarifying mentee goals and the ways in which the goals can be achieved.^{14,16} Providing visibility and exposure of the protégé in the professional community is the manner in which the mentor provides sponsorship.^{14,16} Protection from negative contacts or publicity is the way that the mentor can shield the protégé.^{14,16} In other words, the career function goal is to promote advancement of the protégé.^{14,16}

The psychosocial functions of a mentor include acting as a role model and providing encouragement, counseling, and collegiality.^{14,16} The mentor acts as a role model when the protégé is able to observe the mentor's interaction with others, including the observation of conflict, and that of balancing personal and professional

demands.^{14,16} The mentor encourages the protégé by building self-confidence through emotional support and positive feedback.^{14,16} The mentor counsels the protégé regarding personal and career-related issues while also providing collegiality.^{14,16} The goal of this psychosocial function of the mentor is to provide the protégé with a sense of identity, competence, and confidence.^{14,16}

MENTORING: THE KEY

In business, mentoring has been utilized by some of the world's most successful corporations to develop talent. For years the business world has used mentoring to attract, retain, and promote junior employees, and also to improve individual and organization performance.¹⁷ Conversely, only in the last decade have academic institutions incorporated some of these developmental concepts to promote faculty growth.¹⁷ In 1991, Dr. Mullin first discussed the concept of mentoring the pharmacy professional.¹⁸ Robert Chalmers in 1992 described mentoring as "grossly under-appreciated and under-utilized in helping people develop effectively."¹⁹ Even the National Institute of Health (NIH) recognized the need for mentoring to encourage the development of scientists in medicine. The NIH noted a 15% decline of physicians applying for clinical research grants from 1970 to 1998.²⁰ Subsequently, partial salary support for mentors was created in new clinical grant awards.²⁰ Afterward, in 2000, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) called for the development of future academic leaders through mentoring.^{21,22}

Mentoring is defined as a symbiotic relationship between the mentor and mentee (or protégé).²³ Mentors should ideally provide support, challenge, and vision to their mentees through either a formal or informal process, yet the formal mentoring programs have resulted in outcomes that were met with mixed success.²³ In formalized mentoring programs, new faculty members are assigned to senior faculty members and include written procedures with a possible plan of evaluation.^{23,24} Whereas, informal mentoring has been described as usually occurring due to similar interests between 2 individuals and cannot be forced, but is developed over time and traditionally lacks any written procedures or evaluation process.^{10,24} Because the mutual selection process of informal mentoring is left up to chance and likely will take time to develop, formal mentoring programs may offer an initial advantage. The primary advantage of a formal mentoring program is that it offers structure to the process since mentors are assigned to assist the protégé with the initiation phase, specifically learning the structure and framework of the institution.^{14,22} Thus, a protégé (or in this case, the junior faculty member) may then move forward with a basic

level of confidence to seek out mentors who share their vocational and psychosocial interests. In order for the process of effective mentoring to come to fruition, administrative support of mentoring is an important aspect to a program's success. College of pharmacy administrators who recognize mentorship efforts as part of the continuing contract or tenure process foster the value of collaboration, and ultimately, productivity, among their faculty members.

SENGE'S "LEARNING ORGANIZATION"

For the mentoring process to thrive, the business community recognized years ago that it must occur in an environment where talent is nurtured. In Peter Senge's 1990 bestseller, *The Fifth Discipline*, Senge described how companies could eliminate their shortcomings that threaten their productivity by adopting the strategies of the "learning organization."²⁵ Senge defined this term as an organization consisting of "people who are continually learning how to learn together."²⁵ Within such, team learning occurs, new ways of thinking are nurtured, and the organization as a whole is more effective than the different parts summed up in this environment.²⁵ Essentially, learning organizations tap into collective intelligence and spirit and demonstrate how people work together to achieve their best.²⁶ Dr. Edwards Deming, the pioneer of the total quality management movement, recognized the prevailing system of management as one that was destructive and believed that systems of management would not be transformed unless systems of education were changed.²⁶ The building of these learning organizations involves profound cultural shifts in which thinking and interacting occurs within organizations and with individuals.^{24,25}

The following 5 disciplines of a learning organization represent the theories and methods for developing a team: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning.²⁵ The concept of systems thinking is a framework that provides knowledge and tools that review the present system, identify patterns, and initiate ideas to overcome barriers.²⁵ Personal mastery is a continuous clarification of personal vision, focus of energies, development of patience, and an objective view of reality.²⁵ Mental models are images that influence the understanding of the world and how to take action.²⁵ Building a shared vision is a vision where people excel and learn because of their desires.²⁵ Team learning starts with dialogue, then progresses to entering into a thought process together, ultimately producing an outcome.²⁵

Peter Senge is a senior lecturer at MIT's Sloan School of Management and also the founder of the Society of

Organizational Learning (SoL), which involves “practitioners that have created alternative management systems based on enjoyment rather than fear, curiosity rather than insistence, and learning instead of controlling.”²⁶ He has described learning as having 2 levels. On the first level, the learner is judged by the results he produces.²⁶ The second level is where deep learning occurs, in which the learner develops a capacity to reliably produce these results. This level can reinforce an organization’s current culture or reinforce a culture that is emerging or different. Creating an environment that is geared toward learning is the best way to nurture faculty talent and produce committed partnerships that yield results.^{24,25} In applying these concepts to higher education, programs need to be developed to implement the process of, and acknowledge the outcomes of, effective mentoring.

TRIAD MODEL: ORGANIZATION, MENTOR, AND PROTÉGÉ

Traditionally, mentoring has been thought of as following a dyad model, one between the mentor and the protégé. However, this model can limit the protégé’s perspective and with the shortage of senior faculty members in colleges and schools of pharmacy, there are a limited number of dyads that can be developed.²² In 2002, Walker et al suggested a paradigm shift of mentoring to the triad model, redefining the mentoring relationship to consist of the organization, the mentor, and the protégé.²² Much of previous research done about mentoring benefits is controversial, which may be due to the lack of consideration of the effect of the organization on mentoring.²² Without a doubt, mentoring relationships affect an organization and its culture and vice versa. Colleges of pharmacy administrations that consider adopting this triad model will likely promote a work environment where “people are continually learning how to learn together.”^{22,25}

JUNIOR FACULTY SUCCESS IN ACADEMIA

Over the course of a career, successful junior faculty members will likely have multiple mentors in order to meet their vocational and psychosocial needs. An advantage to mentees having more than one mentor is the building of a larger supportive network that can assist the faculty member in developing the various areas of focus: teaching, research, and service. Junior faculty members should not overlook senior scientists outside of academia or their peers as possible sources for mentorship. Whether one or more mentors are involved, mentoring supports the professional growth of junior faculty members, which leads to job satisfaction, resulting in increased productivity and higher retention rates of faculty members.^{5,6,13}

Work-life balance is critical for an individual to succeed in academia and to decrease job stress.^{6,16} New and junior faculty members often find it difficult to manage the number of hours worked since the role of the academician may be essentially comprised of 4 parts: the role of teacher, researcher, clinician, and service agent to the college and university. Each part takes a fair amount of trial and error to establish productive habits.⁶ Hence, college of pharmacy administrators recognizing the value of a mentor for all 4 parts may assist faculty in balancing work and life aspects of their job.¹⁶ The triad model of mentoring supports morale within the organization and helps faculty members avoid “burnout.” Due to the significant costs associated with recruitment and relocation, support and success of junior faculty members, especially when applying for their first continuing contract or for tenure, is thus in the best interest of pharmacy administrators. The impact of an effective mentoring triad model has worked successfully in the business world and would likely be a critical component in the retention of junior pharmacy faculty members.^{22,25} Pharmacists who seek positions in academia are thought to be attracted to the ever-evolving learning and educating environment (especially since academic starting salaries are significantly lower than the salaries pharmacists receive in nonacademic employment). However, this attraction can quickly sour and the overwhelming lack of organizational support can drive junior faculty members to leave academia. Therefore, it behooves a college’s administration to take active measures to embrace the triad model of mentoring and become an organization where the talent of junior faculty members is nurtured and the growth of these new and motivated academicians is encouraged.

CONCLUSION

In an academic or business setting, effective mentoring is critical to a protégé’s success and a powerful strategy for developing not only individuals, but also organizations.^{12,13,22,25} Like learning, mentoring is a lifelong process; and if successful, the process will eventually come full circle, with the protégé becoming a mentor, having an opportunity to give back to the system that promoted his/her career. Academic organizations should not only stress and support lifelong learning for students but also for faculty members by mentoring them. Utilizing the triad model of mentoring (organization, mentor and protégé), colleges of pharmacy can accomplish their goal of becoming true learning organizations, improving the productivity of their academicians, and ultimately benefiting their institutions.²²

Effective mentorship dynamically affects the work-life balance and morale of all faculty members; by

assisting the individual in career and psychosocial well-being, as well as, impacting the collective spirit of the workplace.^{14,16} Analogous to the possession of real estate, maximum benefits or profits are achieved from faculty members who are “owners” of their academic departments, not those who are “renters.” In other words, faculty members who are mentored feel engaged, an integral part of an institution, and are more likely to be successful.

Colleges of pharmacy that determine they do not have an effective mentoring program should strongly consider implementing the triad model of mentoring, as well as including the concepts of peer mentoring and/or obtaining the guidance of senior scientists outside of academia. The ultimate outcome of mentoring is retention of current pharmacy faculty members and attracting other highly motivated academicians to their institution. Acknowledgement of the lack of senior faculty members at an institution is the first step to recognizing a need for an improved or new mentoring process in order to achieve an environment where “people are continually learning how to learn together.”²⁵

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