WHAT is FACULTY DEVELOPMENT?

Great question! In the classic sense, faculty development (FD) has been defined as “a planned program designed to prepare institutions & faculty members for their various roles” (Bland et al, 1990). There is no doubt that FD has grown in importance over the past 20+ years, as medical schools have grown, new schools have launched & many new faculty members have been hired.

Accrediting bodies for medical schools & residency training programs also have formal requirements pertaining to the need for ongoing FD, with a specific focus on the quality of teaching & how faculty members fulfill their teaching responsibilities. The challenges for a newly-hired faculty member are summarized well by Harris et al (2007); I’ve paraphrased them as follows:

- How do I become a good teacher?
- What is expected of me by my Department Chair or Section Chief?
- How can I negotiate “the systems” in my institution, so I can achieve success in education, research and/or clinical care?
- What committee work should I do, & how can I function effectively as a committee member?
- What service roles do I take on in the institution and/or community?

These and many related questions fall into the general realm of FD. Most, if not all, academic departments will provide guidance on these questions, and some will have robust FD programs. At the institutional level, medical schools & teaching hospitals will also have programs & dedicated staff to support faculty members’ success in their various roles & functions.

This newsletter will focus each month on some aspect of faculty development, including tips, resources & various opportunities designed to support faculty success. Our office is an “equipping program”; we are here to lend a hand! Please let us know how we can help meet your needs as a faculty member, and thank you for all you do in support of our health system.

David Musick, PhD

References: