A Pilot Program Featuring Formative Peer Review of Faculty at a College of Pharmacy

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Introduction

- Student ratings are the most common method of faculty evaluation in the classroom[1]
- Concern for the validity of students' course evaluations as the primary source of feedback as part of the promotion and tenure process[2]
- The peer evaluation process can be utilized as a method to provide adequate feedback for improvement[1]
- The authors created a structured peer review program within the College of Pharmacy, at an institution that has historically relied solely on student evaluation
- The goal was to have peer evaluations used as part of the faculty evaluation and development (FED) process and the promotion/tenure process
- This study is in press with Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning

Methods

- Pilot implemented in the Department of Clinical Pharmacy (n=40) for faculty members at the ranks of Clinical Assistant or Assistant Professor (n=13); participation was voluntary. Faculty at other ranks could participate, if interested.
- Faculty at or above the rank of Associate/Clinical Associate Professors served as peer reviewers.
- Each faculty member under review was assigned 1-2 peer reviewers, based on availability and experience
- A brief training session was conducted for faculty members to discuss the background/purpose of the pilot, outline the process, and introduce the review materials
- Faculty under review scheduled a pre-observation meeting with the faculty reviewers 1-2 weeks before the classroom observation
- On the day of the classroom observation, faculty peer reviewer(s) attended a class taught at a date and time preferred by the faculty member in review
- During the observation, the peer reviewer(s) completed rubrics with formative feedback
- Rubrics were adapted from Vanderbilt University's Center for Teaching and the Peer Observation and Evaluation Tool (POET).
- Following the classroom observation, reviewers were asked to meet with faculty in review within one month of the observation to discuss written feedback
- All faculty who participated in the pilot program were asked to complete a post-evaluation survey to evaluate the program and offer suggestions for enhancement (8-9 multiple choice question, two open-ended questions)

Results

- **Reviewers** consisted of 12 associate/clinical associates or professor/clinical professors, and 2 assistant/clinical assistants (one course coordinator and one fellowship director)
- **Faculty in review** included 9 assistant/clinical assistant professors, 2 clinical associate professors, 2 adjunct faculty, and 1 fellow

Evaluator Questions N=9	Faculty under Review Questions N=13	Possible Score[a]	(Faculty reviewer) Total n percent	(Faculty under review) Total n percent
The review process was thoroughly explained in the training materials and session	The evaluation process did not feel overly intimidating	1	9 (100)	9 (69.2)
		2	0	4 (30.8)
		3	0	0
The rubric was easy to follow and use	The time commitment for the entire review process was appropriate	1	9 (100)	11 (84.6)
		2	0	2 (15.4)
		3	0	0
The rubric was a good representation of qualities the College of Pharmacy looks for in faculty	The evaluation rubric assessed the key domains of my teaching	1	9 (100)	12 (92.3)
		2	0	1 (7.7)
		3	0	0
The scale of the rubric was meaningful when determining the quality of teaching	The feedback I received evaluated both my strengths and weaknesses	1	8 (88.9)	13 (100)
		2	0	0
		3	1 (11.1)	0
The time commitment for the entire review process was appropriate	The peer review process identified specific, actionable improvements I can make with regard to organization, content, or teaching methods	1	9 (100)	12 (92.3)
		2	0	1 (7.7)
		3	0	0
I would recommend the peer review process to my colleagues	I would recommend the peer review process to my colleagues	1	9 (100)	12 (92.3)
		2	0	1 (7.7)
		3	0	0
I support the expansion of the peer review process to other departments within the College of Pharmacy	I support the expansion of the peer review process to other departments within the College of Pharmacy	1	8 (88.9)	12 (92.3)
		2	1 (11.1)	1 (7.7)
		3	0	0
I support the use of the peer review method as part of the annual Faculty Evaluation and Development process	I support the use of the peer review method as part of the annual Faculty Evaluation and Development process	1	7 (77.8)	6 (46.2)
		2	1 (11.1)	6 (46.2)
		3	1 (11.1)	1 (7.6)
I enjoyed participating as a reviewer in this process		1	8 (88.9)	
		2	1 (11.1)	
		3	0	

[a]Score of 1 = Agree, 2= Neutral, 3= Disagree

References

1. Barnett CW, Matthews HW. Teaching evaluation practices in colleges and schools of pharmacy. *Am J Pharm Educ.* 2009;73(6): Article 103
2. Kidd RS, Latif DA. Student evaluations: are they valid measures of course effectiveness? *Am J Pharm Educ.* 2004;68(3): Article 61

Limitations and Future Directions

- There was a relatively small sample size for faculty who completed the post evaluation survey
- Though faculty members seemed to find the rubrics easy to use and useful tools for evaluation, these tools were not validated
- The lack of performance descriptors in the rubrics may have impacted the consistency at which the faculty under review were evaluated
- Moving forward with our program, we plan to continue to gather information from participants and ensure reliability and validity of the assessment and process by the Faculty Development Committee

Conclusions

- Participants found value in the pilot program as means to effectively communicate useful teaching methods to improve their students' education
- Majority of faculty members under review agreed the time commitment for the entire review process was appropriate
- Many saw value in expanding peer evaluation to all departments at the College of Pharmacy
- We believe peer evaluation should be done for new faculty within or after their first year of teaching, if recommended by their department chairs, or in faculty going up for promotion