Preparing New Department Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure (RPT) Committee Chairs for the Road Ahead

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Department Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure (RPT) Committees play an important role in the peer review of faculty. Promotion and tenure decisions generally begin at the department/unit level. A peer review process assures that quality decisions are made following consistent policies and procedures.

Problem Statement

Because department and college RPT committee leadership changes, we have experienced problems with department committee chairs not fully understanding the function, expectations and timelines related to the RPT process. A lack of training resulted in inconsistencies in the information provided to faculty seeking promotion.

Goal

Develop and implement a training program for new departmental RPT committee chairs and staff, to review criteria, guidelines, timelines and procedures required at the department, college and university levels.

WORKSHOP DESIGN

Workshop Design

- Two-hour workshop
- Audience: RPT committee chairs and staff

Workshop Topics

- Overview of the RPT Process
- Faculty Tracks in College
- RPT Review Criteria
- Application and Supporting Documentation
- Timelines for RPT Reviews
- Helping Faculty Prepare for Promotion
  - Reflective Essay
  - External Letters of Reference
  - Portfolios

Workshop Strategies

- Instructional: slide presentation, practice activities, resource manual
- Evaluation: case scenarios, exercises, workshop evaluation

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Needs Assessment

- Conducted a Literature Review.
  - No information was located on training for RPT committee chairs.
- Posted a question on the Group on Faculty Affairs list serve.
  - Two schools reported providing promotion and tenure training sessions for committee chairs.
  - Others thought question was important.
- Reviewed web-based training materials from other medical schools.
  - Found some good web-based training modules, but most were designed for faculty applying for promotion.
- Conducted focus group discussions with department and college RPT committee chairs, staff and members.
  - Feedback clearly indicated the need for this type of training.
- Reviewed College and University guidelines, criteria, timelines and procedures.
  - Reviews assisted in designing appropriate workshop content.

PROJECT RESULTS

Department Participation

Of the 16 departments/units invited to this workshop, 12 were represented. There was a total of 21 participants.

- Basic Science Departments – 38%
- Clinical Departments – 38%
- Total College Participation – 76%

Participant Feedback

- Better understand role in the RPT review process.
- Better understand the importance of timelines.
- Can more effectively assist faculty applying for promotion.
- Can align department criteria and guidelines with college and university.

DISCUSSION

Outcomes

- Departments:
  - Better understand their role in the RPT review process.
  - Better understand the importance of timelines.
  - Can more effectively assist faculty applying for promotion.
- College:
  - Need to review and clarify college level RPT criteria and guidelines.

Future Sessions

- Allow more time to cover all workshop topics.
- Have an exercise where participants identify 1-3 possible problems in their department process.
- Encourage participants to take concerns back to their department chairs.
- Provide a similar session for faculty who intend to apply for promotion.