Introducing the Office of Faculty Development

The Office of Faculty Development (OFD) for the University of Mississippi Medical Center exists to promote the fullest potential of faculty across the UMC campus. Current activities support:

- refinement of faculty teaching skills;
- resources for advancing promotion and tenure, including design of faculty portfolios;
- a leadership development program;
- competitive funding awards for education innovation and collaborative research activities;
- recognition of excellence in health education teaching through sponsorship of the Norman C. Nelson Order and the Peter S. Blake Academy; and
- distribution of an annual Faculty Climate Survey.

Additional resources are found at (http://facultydev.umc.edu).

A close working relationship is maintained with the Office of Research to address facets of faculty development such as grant and manuscript writing, experimental design and laboratory management.

Housed in the Office of Academic Affairs in the Verner S. Holmes Learning Resource Center, the office partners with the Rowland Medical Library to provide a unique resource space, the Faculty Scholarship Exchange. This space is available for groups who wish an undisturbed and comfortable area for collaborative discussions. Internet connections, videoconferencing and availability to library information resources are provided.

The office is aided by the Faculty Development Committee, re-constituted in 2006 as a Medical Center standing committee.
Faculty Scholarship Exchange Research Awards

The Office of Faculty Development offers competitive awards of up to $10,000/award as incentive funding to collaborative groups of faculty for development of innovative instructional activities (Instructional Integration Awards, IIA) or to facilitate individual faculty development that requires, or is dependent upon, interactions with other individuals, institutions or commercial entities (Collaborative Research Exploration Awards, CREA).

The current national funding environment places a premium on research efforts that combine otherwise disparate approaches to posing and answering research questions. Similarly, academic accreditation criteria and national licensing examination policies stress educational integration across basic and clinical disciplines or among multiple instructional approaches.

Funds will be awarded for one year. Unexpended award balances may be carried forward, following review and approval. Funds may be requested for equipment, travel/training expenses (including short training courses or mini-sabbaticals), expenses associated with consultants/speakers/visiting scholars, expenses associated with hosting a conference or symposium, supplies and materials, or contractual service necessary to successfully address collaborative project objectives.

Full details and application instructions will be made available on the Office of Faculty Development web site.

Annual Faculty Climate Survey

The OFD now administers an annual Faculty Climate Survey. Intended to provide a recurring evaluation of Medical Center faculty sentiment concerning the environment for education, research and service capacities, the Survey was first distributed in August, 2005 to 795 full-time faculty by the COE in Women’s Health.

Questions were asked on the subjects of classroom and clinical teaching, committee service, promotion and research. A second survey was issued in November, 2006 to 722 faculty. A total of 364 surveys were returned. Globally, 87.0% of faculty were “satisfied with their overall experience as a faculty member at UMC”, with 21.1% “very satisfied” and 65.9% “satisfied”.

Focusing on questions related solely to faculty development, satisfaction (pooling “satisfied” and “very satisfied” responses) ranged from 41-81%. The percentage of faculty who responded “satisfied” increased in five out of six categories from the 2005 survey results. Only in one category (clinical teaching) did satisfaction fall from the previous year, from 72% “satisfied” in 2005 to 68% “satisfied” in 2006.

Further details on faculty satisfaction with the Medical Center experience will be provided in future issues of TRIAD.

Leadership Development Program

The UMC Leadership Development Program (LDP) is an 11 month exercise for mid-career faculty that uses in-depth, task-oriented presentations of administrative and educational activities on the UMC campus to enhance the potential of mid-career faculty to devise, creatively express visions for, evaluate the efficacy of and manage for successful outcomes, key program elements of an academic health sciences campus.

This program reflects a campus imperative to develop the fullest capacity of Medical Center faculty as one component of a comprehensive faculty development effort.

Currently, members of this inaugural class are engaging in a structured sequence of events to refine individual career plans and participate in exercises to bolster existing strengths in scholarship, discovery, and clinical and/or community service. Critical aspects of the management of a major public health center are emphasized. The desired outcome is to enlarge a cadre of faculty skilled in leadership who will provide excellence in service to the Medical Center community and those whom that community touches through application of the healing arts. The class includes 10 faculty from the Schools of Medicine, Health Related Professions, Nursing and Dentistry.

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Leadership is —

“...the process of creating change through establishing a clear direction in which to move, aligning people such that a critical mass is in agreement with the direction established, and motivating and inspiring people to provide the energy and momentum to move in the desired direction.”

John P. Kotter, Harvard University
The Office of Faculty Development for the University of Mississippi Medical Center serves to promote the fullest capacities of faculty as academic leaders in education, service to the Medical Center mission and in cooperation with the Office of Research, in aspects of the research endeavor. To accomplish these goals, the Office offers services which include:

- sponsorship of a leadership development program for faculty;
- increasing communication among faculty from all five schools on the Medical Center campus;
- administration of an annual Faculty Climate Survey;
- facilitating access to information resources on defined topics in faculty development that are of general interest to faculty;
- consultations with individual faculty to address areas of need;
- assistance with departmental management of post-tenure review activities;
- orientation activities for new faculty not currently managed by Human Resources; and
- recognition of excellence in educational delivery.

Faculty Scholarship Exchange

The Faculty Scholarship Exchange (FSE), located near the current journal space on the first floor of the Rowland Medical Library, has been established to provide support for faculty collaborative activities.

The FSE will allow faculty to engage one another in a pleasant, dedicated environment, surrounded by the library’s scholarly scientific literature, with easy access to the Internet and electronic information and convenient to library research staff for additional expertise in information technology applications.

This space is specifically for development of interactive research and instructional activities and is not intended as additional space for meetings or for use as a general conference room. The space may be reserved for one or more hours by groups/teams of two or more persons, one of whom must be a permanent UMC faculty member. These groups/teams must be involved in collaborating on a grant idea, grant proposal, manuscript preparation, course development, etc.

Reservations are accepted at the circulation desk from 8:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m., Monday — Friday. Online reservations may be accomplished following access from the main page of the library secured-Web site for UMC users by selecting the Faculty Scholarship Exchange button on the left menu bar. Online requests must be confirmed by the library before a reservation is officially established.