The role of professional or faculty development becomes critical during a time in which faculties of health science professional schools are being asked to assume responsibilities for which they have received little or no training or preparation.1 Historically, dental schools have recruited and hired faculty who have a high level of content expertise and made the assumption that they can teach, evaluate student progress, design courses, and deliver lectures while demonstrating scholarship. However, these faculty are now coming under pressure to be effective and reflective educators, productive clinicians, and outstanding investigators while also contributing to service activities of the school.1,2 These demands on faculty are coupled with the perception that, in clinical dentistry, faculty members are poorly equipped for the demands of traditional scholarship. In 1984 Albino reported, “In short, many of our clinical faculty do not possess even modestly developed research skills.”1 There is little evidence that things have changed since Albino published her report.

The demands upon dental faculty come from a variety of sources including accrediting agencies, a difficult economic climate that demands we flatten or shrink our organizational structure, an increased volatility linked to customer demands for service and value, and a reduction in resources from some external funding agencies that support research.1,4 Faculty are also being pressured to acquire more knowledge, develop or enhance new teaching strategies such as problem-based learning, develop computer-based or other instructional materials, or generate more clinical revenue. Administrators may well wonder what type of faculty development support should be provided to assist faculty members in the face of these multiple demands.5 Furthermore, increasing faculty responsibilities also demonstrate the need for health care organizations, especially academic units within tertiary care health science centers, to successfully adapt and flexibly respond to these major environmental challenges. Therefore, it is imperative that these organizations also improve capabilities in
both management and leadership as well. These multiple demands make it apparent that dental schools must have extensive resources available to support wide-ranging professional and faculty development.

Faculty recruitment and retention become a critical issue in all areas of health professions education as well. In fact, we are told that “dental education now faces a crisis—the crisis of shortage of faculty. . . . Unless interventions occur soon to develop, recruit, and retain future faculty . . . these shortages will affect the quality of dental education and the ability of dental education to produce an adequate number of practitioners to meet the oral health needs of the public.” The 1999 American Association of Dental Schools (AADS) President’s Task Force recommends that dental education, using data and information relevant to faculty development, ascertain programmatic activities that are most likely to improve faculty performance and contribute to job satisfaction. This recommendation is directly related to faculty development.

What Is Faculty Development?

Faculty development became an important focus of colleges and universities in the early 1960s as a means to transform undergraduate education and improve the quality of instruction. The trend that began in undergraduate education was followed by medical schools, which established formal entities that offered faculty development services. In the early 1990s, the AADS sponsored a national faculty development program and the National Curriculum for Dental Educators. For a number of years, the American Dental Education Association (formerly AADS) has sponsored faculty development workshops at its annual meetings focusing on development skills needed by an academic.

Professional or faculty development has been defined in several ways. In 1989, the AADS defined faculty development as “the continuous process in which opportunities are provided for professional growth of the individual within the academic environment.” Garbee and Centra indicate that faculty development encompasses an array of programs and activities, from orientation of new faculty members to workshops and seminars on development of teaching skills, while Kennedy emphasized the need for dental faculty to have opportunities to participate in development programs that improve the teaching efforts of faculty to enhance student education and that enhance research skills. As Bland and Stritter describe, the purpose of faculty development for physicians is to prepare them for their faculty roles, to teach them faculty skills relevant for their institutional setting and faculty position, and to sustain their vitality both now and in the future. Wilkerson and Irby define faculty development as “a tool for improving the educational vitality of our institutions through attention to the competencies needed by individual teachers and to the institutional policies required to promote academic excellence.” They continue by stating that the “goal of faculty development is to empower faculty members to excel in their roles as educators and, in so doing, to create organizations that encourage and reward continual learning.” Bennett defines professional development as a lifelong commitment that builds on formal and informal opportunities to learn emerging science, apply innovations in clinical settings, and expand understandings of caring for patients. Jourlles notes that development focuses on the individual as a future educator in academics, as well as the provision of formal learning experiences to increase interested faculty members’ knowledge bases that emphasize teaching and administrative skills, grant writing, and research—all tools necessary in the academic hierarchy.

Extensive faculty development programs characterize campus cultures that value teaching. Additionally, the need for faculty development is strongly supported by organizations such as the Pew Foundation, which outlined strategies and courses of action that significantly impact the development of dental school faculties. The third strategy offered by the Pew Foundation recommends that dental schools must train or retain faculty so that they possess the competencies necessary to serve as role models for future dental practitioners. Faculty development is needed at all levels of faculty life, from the novice through the administrator, to address the various levels of faculty involvement in the educational enterprise. At the AADS Fifty-Ninth Annual Session in 1982, the Council of Faculties included a discussion of problems related to faculty development, and the section on Graduate and Postgraduate Education devoted its program to an assessment of the extent to which advanced dental education pro-
grams prepare clinical faculty to meet expectations. As Kennedy stated, “Suffice it to say that faculty are aware of the existence of an unmet need and are looking to their dental schools to meet this need.” In a recent survey, dental school deans were asked to identify characteristics essential for success as a dean. Communication, setting a vision, interpersonal people skills, budget and finance planning, and leadership were highly rated as needed skills, and suggestions were made that individuals making decisions about administration may want to consider utilizing these characteristics. Unfortunately, there is no mention of how these skills should be developed by deans. The Institute of Medicine report on the future of dental education also recommends that more curriculum hours be shifted from lectures to guided seminars and other active learning strategies that develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Those recommendations require the acquisition of new teaching skills for faculty.

Purpose of Study

Given the importance of faculty development, there is a surprising lack of information in the dental literature addressing the means by which dental faculty fulfill their development needs and how their institutions assist them. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine how U.S. and Canadian dental schools are facilitating faculty development.

Methods

First Survey

The first survey instrument, a thirty-six-item questionnaire, was developed by the staff of the Office of Professional Development and reviewed for content validity by experts in faculty development. The survey was divided into three sections. Respondents were asked to complete the first section if they had an Office of Professional or Faculty Development and/or Faculty Affairs. Subsequently, respondents who had an Office of Professional Development were asked to identify the duties of that office by choosing from a list of nineteen traditional faculty development activities, such as providing workshops, introducing/modeling new methods of teaching, and consulting on salary equity issues. Similarly, respondents who had an Office of Faculty Affairs were asked to identify that office’s responsibilities from a list that contained nine broad activities, such as administrative policies and procedures, administrative and policy support for faculty tracks, promotion and tenure, assessment of scholarship, and faculty compensation. If respondents’ schools had both offices, they were asked to complete both parts. In the second section, respondents were asked to give short descriptions of some of the activities of these offices, such as mentoring, peer evaluation, and new hire orientation. In the third section, respondents were asked to describe the staff in these offices.

During the fall of 1999, surveys were mailed to all deans of fifty-four U.S. and ten Canadian dental schools. Addresses were supplied by AADS. A cover letter and a stamped and addressed return envelope accompanied each of the surveys. Non-respondents were contacted by telephone or e-mail and encouraged to complete the survey. The response rate was 58 percent overall, with thirty-two U.S. schools (59 percent) and five Canadian schools (50 percent) responding. Five schools (14 percent) had Offices of Professional Development, and seven (19 percent) had Offices of Faculty Affairs. Although further information about faculty development activities was not requested for schools without Offices of Professional Development or Faculty Affairs, several respondents without these offices indicated that the listed activities were performed in their schools and so answered those parts of the survey.

Our primary finding from the first survey was that few schools had separate offices dedicated to professional/faculty development (14 percent) and/or faculty affairs (19 percent), and that key responsibilities and activities, if they exist at all, were managed by a variety of administrative structures.

Follow-Up Survey

Having determined that few schools have dedicated offices for faculty development, a follow-up survey was developed and administered during the winter of 2000-01. This survey, a modification of the initial survey, was mailed to all deans and/or faculty development professionals identified through the ADEA 2000-2001 Directory of Institutional Members and Associations Officers of fifty-four U.S. (including Puerto Rico and excluding Northwestern University) and ten Canadian dental schools. As a
result of our finding (from the first survey) that few schools had offices dedicated to faculty development, respondents were asked to indicate which entity in their school was primarily responsible for faculty development. In addition, the survey asked 1) if the school was engaged in eighteen specific faculty development activities, and 2) which entity in the school was responsible for sponsoring that activity. Indications as to types of faculty development activities and their sponsors are shown in Table 1. After four weeks, non-responding schools were contacted by e-mail and telephone and given the option of returning their responses by e-mail or fax. Follow-up telephone calls were made to either encourage a response or to clarify responses on returned surveys. The final response rate was 61 percent overall, with thirty-three U.S. schools (61 percent) and six Canadian schools (60 percent) responding. Respondents included twelve deans, thirteen associate or assistant deans for academic affairs, seven faculty development committee chairs, five other deans, one department chair, and one evaluation specialist.

Results

Based on the information submitted by respondents to the second survey, six entities or offices were reported as having primary responsibility for faculty development within their schools:

- Office of Academic Affairs 36 percent (n=14)
- Department Chair 23 percent (n=9)
- Faculty Development Committee 15 percent (n=6)
- Office of the Dean 10 percent (n=4)
- Office of Professional or Faculty Development 10 percent (n=4)
- Other (i.e., university-wide or external resources) 5 percent (n=2)

As can be seen by reviewing Table 1, the responses for each activity add up to more than the total number of respondents. Although a specific entity or office may be primarily responsible for handling faculty development, any or all of the eighteen activities are typically handled by more than one entity. For example, the dean’s office or a faculty development committee may have primary responsibility for faculty development, but the department chairs or a university center might also take responsibility for some of the same activities.

In addition to this tabular feedback, many respondents wrote sometimes lengthy explanations of their faculty development procedures and activities. Responders’ comments, margin notes, and separate communications reflect dental schools’ complex and diverse array of responses to the need for faculty development and the management of faculty affairs and indicate that they recognize the value of offices of professional or faculty development. One respondent whose school managed development in a more distributed manner (i.e., through departments and dean’s offices) noted, “We strongly support the concept of your office” [an Office of Professional Development]. When asked to describe the chief value of their offices of professional development, respondents listed the following: “consultation and service to faculty in carrying out projects, accreditation, evaluation and research”; “raise visibility of medical and dental education at [our school] on a national level”; “coordinate curricular changes with implementation”; “evaluate students’ progress”; “evaluate faculty progress, promotion, new hires, etc.”; “helps us to recruit and retain faculty”; and “to maintain and promote the value of educational methodologies and research.” One respondent described his or her school’s major challenge in these terms: “The current staffing of the center is inadequate (3 professionals, 2 administrative assistants) to support all the demands for educational service and consultation.” These comments helped characterize the diverse means by which dental schools facilitate faculty development.

There are limitations to the results of this survey. First, after indicating that they did not have an office of faculty or professional development, a few respondents did not fully answer all of the eighteen questions or provide any other type of feedback. For example, one respondent noted only that they have “no such office and responsibilities are distributed to several individuals and committees.” All responses provided by all schools were incorporated into Table 1. Second, although the response rate was 61 percent, more than twenty dental schools did not respond and are not represented. A review of the ADEA 2000-2001 Directory of Institutional Members and Association Officers shows that twelve U.S. schools and one Canadian school do not have any person or office listed having responsibility for faculty development.31 Four of the U.S. non-respondents have specific persons responsible for faculty development. Four of the U.S. non-respondents also have Offices of Faculty Affairs, as does one Canadian school.
Table 1. Faculty development activities by sponsoring entity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity, Workshops, Seminars</th>
<th>N=39</th>
<th>Does your school perform this activity?</th>
<th>Which entity (office, committee, dean, or other) sponsors faculty development activity?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes n (%)</td>
<td>Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual consultation on faculty development</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>(97%)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New faculty orientation</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>(94%)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New methods of teaching</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>(97%)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of teaching</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>(86%)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer review</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>(67%)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course development</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>(86%)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program/course evaluation</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>(88%)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching with instructional technologies</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>(94%)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting educational research</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>(72%)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides expertise on teaching</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>(82%)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fosters and advises on mentoring</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>(76%)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>(67%)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict resolution</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>(83%)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing for promotion and tenure</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>(94%)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing for post-tenure review</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>(84%)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation on salary equity</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(52%)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty development planning</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>(91%)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership development</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>(69%)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Results do not sum to 39 because 1) respondents might not have answered the question, and 2) respondents could indicate that more than one entity sponsored an activity.

Additionally, one of the non-responding schools has a Faculty Development Committee.

The remainder of this article is a presentation and discussion of the various administrative structures (models) for faculty development and faculty affairs reported by the survey respondents. The authors also make several recommendations for future studies to assess the impact of faculty development upon faculty.

Discussion and Implications

All of these administrative structures (models) have the potential for success or failure depending on many factors within the environment of each school. The descriptions of these models are not intended to be exhaustive but should serve as a beginning point for discussion.

1) Office of Academic Affairs. Fourteen of the respondents (36 percent) indicated that the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs primarily oversees faculty development in their dental schools. In five of the schools, other people or committees who report to the Associate Dean are responsible for insti-
tuting faculty development activities. The activities most frequently offered by this office include program/course evaluation (ten), new methods of teaching (eight), assessment of teaching (eight), course development (six), teaching with instructional technologies (five), and individual consultation on faculty development (five).

By most definitions, the Office of Academic Affairs is responsible for the curriculum and its management in conjunction with the department chairs, obviously a large and complex undertaking. An academic affairs dean will probably have strong competition for his or her attention due to responsibilities related to academic affairs and, because of those demands, may be somewhat remote from the individual faculty member’s development needs. If the academic affairs dean is a strong supporter of faculty development, then he or she is likely to place substantial resources behind such development.

2) Departmental Chair. Nine of the schools (23 percent) responded that department chairs are primarily in charge of developing their faculty. However, with respect to specific activities associated with faculty development, the chairs of most schools are heavily involved. For example, chairs most often fo-
CUS on individual consultation (thirty-two) and preparing for promotion and tenure (twenty-six). They also take responsibility for mentoring (nineteen), faculty development planning (seventeen), assessment of teaching (sixteen), and new faculty orientation (fourteen).

Based on the observations of the authors, the effectiveness of this approach would seem to vary according to the size and strength of the department. Four respondents who identified faculty development as the responsibility of the department chair indicated that, if the department is large with many faculty, then it is probable that the chair will have many demands on his or her time, and less time may be available for attention to individuals or faculty development in general. On the other hand, a large department might have greater resources for creating and sustaining development programs.

If the chair is responsible for faculty development, then the nature of development activities will likely be heavily influenced by the needs of the department or the preferences of the chair, and these preferences might not encompass the needs for all faculty. Lucas and Walling both observe that chairs may be ill-prepared for their roles in faculty development and instead spend their time putting out brushfires, attending meetings, handling paperwork, trying to find uninterrupted periods of time for course preparation, and attempting to continue their own scholarship, and therefore have little opportunity to prepare for the leadership and mentoring role. Furthermore, many chairs are under constant pressure to generate revenue and are more likely to look favorably upon faculty who generate revenue through increased clinical activity or successful grantsmanship. Faculty who are less active or less successful—and therefore the very people who would seem to need development—are less likely to receive such attention.

3) Committee or task force model. Six of the respondents (15 percent) indicated that a Faculty Committee oversees faculty development activities. The most frequently offered faculty development activities sponsored by committees are faculty development planning (eleven), new faculty orientation (ten), individual consultation on faculty development (nine), new methods of teaching (nine), and preparing for promotion and tenure (eight). According to responses from the surveys, two of these committees also have a pool of money that is available to faculty for developmental activities.

The problems associated with committees are well known to anyone in academic life. Committees are made up of faculty, staff, and students who serve on a volunteer basis, and because their membership changes from year to year and the rewards for good service are few, members’ commitment and the overall effectiveness of the committee are likely to be highly variable. Faculty development committee members are likely to have varying and even conflicting levels of commitment to and knowledge of development, and are less likely to provide the kind of consistency required for effectiveness than, for example, a dedicated development officer. This variability, and the consequent possible lack of consistency, can have deleterious effects on the outcome and implementation of long-term, labor-intensive projects typical of faculty development, such as new faculty orientation, introduction and modeling of new teaching methods and instructional technologies, or the growth of mentoring programs.

On the other hand, faculty committee members are likely to be the most aware of the needs of faculty, and will therefore be more likely to champion needed development. In addition, their involvement with and endorsement of development programs could lend credibility to the introduction of new development initiatives.

4) Office of the Dean. Four of the respondents (10 percent) indicated that the dean’s office oversees faculty development activities. The respondents reported that faculty development that is managed through the Office of the Dean might involve consultation with department chairs, division directors, and/or a faculty development committee that reports to the dean. The dean’s office may provide consultation on salary equity and may also financially support workshops on teaching, course development, and team building. From written and verbal comments by these schools, it is evident that these deans’ offices depend upon the university or health science center to assist in the support of faculty development activities.

This model has the most to gain or lose depending upon the vision and commitment of the dean to faculty development. As Rubec and Witzke state, “A successful, continuing program of faculty development requires the political and financial support of the dean’s office.” If the dean is supportive and has the resources, faculty development may be an integral part of faculty life on that campus. If not, faculty development may suffer.
5) Office of Faculty Development and/or Faculty Affairs. Four schools (10 percent) responded that they have a separate office dedicated to faculty development or faculty affairs. These offices are most frequently involved in individual consultation (four), new faculty orientation (four), workshops on new methods of teaching (four), assessment of teaching (four), preparing for promotion and tenure (four), and mentoring (three). Additionally, they provide expertise for teaching and evaluation (three), course development (two), conducting educational research (two), and faculty development planning (two).

Schools that have made the commitment to such an office should expect the most productive faculty development programs. A permanent staff should ensure that its programs are well developed, timely, and consistent in their implementation. We have found that schools with such offices were involved with most of the activities listed in Table 1.

Certainly, the establishment of an office of faculty development and/or faculty affairs potentially represents the most expensive model because it presumes that dedicated personnel are present, requiring financial resources to support such an office. However, one should consider what would be lost if the office were not in place. For such an office to have credibility, its personnel must ensure that rapport and good communication exist between it and its faculty constituency. If not, its programs and initiatives are likely to be viewed as irrelevant and a waste of resources.35

6) Other. Two of the schools (5 percent) reported that their faculty could take advantage of programs offered by the parent university or center or other entities within the parent organization (e.g., a Center for Teaching Excellence or Office of Educational Research). Other faculty development activities were handled by outside entities, such as private companies that offer technical training.

This approach, while conserving on institutional resources, may also create a situation where dental faculty may not be able or willing to participate in these programs. As Rubeck and Witzke state, “The perceived need for a motivation to attend faculty development sessions, the educational topics covered and instructional methods selected, and the intended outcomes all play a part . . . It is very difficult to get members to give up time to participate and to devise meaningful agendas for them.”35 Our experience at the UT-Houston Dental Branch and other schools indicates that faculty are less likely to participate in programs outside their school unless the school is closely integrated with the parent organization (e.g., a university), extensive efforts are made to communicate the availability of these programs, and faculty are strongly encouraged to attend (e.g., through release from other duties). Depending upon where on the campus these programs are offered, dental faculty, because of their clinical responsibilities, may not be able to take the time to travel to sites away from the dental school to participate in faculty development activities. Some of the centers are on a cost recovery basis, and, therefore, must charge for their services, again reducing the likelihood of participation by faculty.

Recommendations

Based on the responses shown in Table 1, it is apparent that schools are attempting to sponsor a variety of activities to support faculty development needs. However, we do not understand the full value of these offerings. Therefore, the authors recommend that a study be initiated to investigate the impact of faculty development upon faculty, and several questions should be addressed. For example, do faculty take advantage of development opportunities? If they do, what is the value of those activities to the faculty? Do faculty development activities add enough value to increase faculty recruitment or retention rates? What is the extent of instructional or curriculum development projects? Have faculty become involved in educational research projects? Are the existing Offices of Faculty Development fulfilling their mission and objectives?

Based on the need expressed in the literature for faculty development as well as the critical issue of faculty recruitment and retention, we also recommend that administrators at each school consider the value of an institutionally established faculty development office or program that enables faculty and administration to excel in their endeavors. As the 1999 report of the AADS President’s Task Force on Future of Dental School Faculty suggests in Recommendation Five—Establish methods for developing, nurturing, and retaining faculty—dental schools should recognize the value of such a program for recruiting and retaining faculty.5

Similarly, faculty should also take into account the strength of faculty development opportunities in the schools in which they are considering taking a
position. Faculty development represents nothing less than the potential for professional growth, and the strength of such a program is, at least, an indicator of the administration’s willingness to invest in their faculty.

We also recommend that ADEA initiate a high-level introspective study of faculty development and sponsor a more expansive special interest group on faculty development. At present, the only group in this area is dedicated to new dental educators, which leaves mid-level and senior faculty without an advocacy platform for their development at the national level. Such an initiative would create an enhanced opportunity for expanding the role of faculty development throughout the year, and not just at the annual ADEA conference. For example, the American Association of Medical Colleges has a comprehensive program of professional development for all levels of faculty and administration that continues throughout the year, including a yearly conference on faculty affairs and they also have an active and growing Internet listserv. ADEA took a significant step in this direction by sponsoring a full-day workshop at the 2001 Annual Meeting, entitled “Leadership Strategies for Department Chairs and Program Directors: An ADEA Leadership Institute Program.”

Enhancing faculty development at both the school and national level is vital because dental faculty are an institution’s most important core resource and must be nurtured to help dental education reach its full potential.

Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank the deans and faculty development professionals who responded to the survey.

REFERENCES