

Faculty engagement and satisfaction with the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School: The Association of American Medical Colleges survey

Rutgers University Senate
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Background

In the three years between 2016 and 2019, thirty-four medical schools, including the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School (RWJMS) commissioned a survey to the Association of American Medicine Colleges (AAMC) to gauge the level of faculty engagement and satisfaction. The survey consisted of items that measure faculty engagement and that assess workplace factors that may impact faculty engagement (e.g., satisfaction with faculty-related institutional policies and practices). Results for each School are compared with the average of the cohort of medical schools surveyed during the same 3-year period, using the same survey instrument.

The results of the survey for the RWJMS, were recently disclosed and they provide an alarming picture of the morale of the faculty. While the RWJMS faculty demonstrate a satisfaction with retirement and health benefits similar to that of other medical school faculties, in every other domain, the RWJMS level of dissatisfaction is markedly higher compared to the cohort. The overall satisfaction of the faculties with the RWJMS is 52% compared to 68% of the cohort (a negative differential of 16 points). Faculty satisfied with faculty recruitment and retention are 40% at RWJMS compared to 63% for the cohort. Only 49% of the RWJMS faculties are satisfied with workplace culture compared to 68% of the cohort. The governance of the medical school satisfies 31% of the RWJMS faculty compared to 49% of the cohort. Indeed, only 53% of the RWJMS faculty would recommend working at their school compared to 72% of the cohort, and only 59% of the RWJMS faculty would again chose to work in the school compared to 78% of the cohort. Only 43% of the RWJMS faculty, compared to 58% of the cohort are satisfied with the opportunities for professional development that the school offers. Career advancement is also a sore point. The percentage of RWJMS faculty satisfied with promotion and tenure requirements is 44% versus 60% of the cohort. Only 45% of the RWJMS faculty compared to 63% of the cohort think that what it is required for promotion is reasonable and only 60% of RWJMS faculty are satisfied with promotion equality compared to 74% of the cohort.

Considerations

The Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee (FPAC) is deeply troubled by the outcome of the AAMC survey and is concerned that the low morale of the faculty undermines the ability of the school to fulfill its core missions. These include the delivery of excellent medical education, the generation of innovative research, promotion of community outreach and engagement, and provision of high quality medical care to the patient population of New Jersey.

FPAC's concerns included:

- that many RWJMS faculty do not feel supported and valued and that these feelings have been present for a long period of time
- the results of this survey should not be minimized or fail to be addressed in a timely manner
- bringing these concerns to the attention of the RU Senate will ensure that they are taken seriously and acted upon in a manner that will be timely and transparent
- if the importance of these survey results is acknowledged by the Senate, the review of the situation should be productive and produce positive change

Resolution

Be it Resolved that the Rutgers University Senate urges the leadership of RBHS and RWJMS to:

1. Ensure that the review process planned by Dean Johnson and senior leadership regarding the AAMC survey is a vigorous and transparent review without repercussions to faculty who voice concerns.
2. Invite faculty to be on the Dean's review committee who are chosen by faculty to represent faculty.
3. Review and discuss how financial incentives have been determined and how faculty can be rewarded with financial incentives for their contributions to the academic mission
4. Implement the recommendations for improvement indicated in the AAMC survey:
 - a. Establish a stable and clear vision for the Institution.
 - b. Improve support for the education mission by valuing teaching activities and faculty compensation that accounts for/rewards teaching.
 - c. Increase support for research by valuing researchers and improving administrative support.
 - d. Increase financial transparency, as well as transparency and equity in compensation.
 - e. Refine and clarify promotion and tenure requirements. Ensure there is support for paths for advancement.
5. Continue to work with the AAMC and other external organizations, including surveying other RBHS units such as NJ School of Medicine, to better understand the causes of the current dissatisfaction of its faculty and to monitor progress.

Faculty Affairs and Personnel Committee, 2019–2020

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