Scholarship of Teaching: A Successful Experience from MUMS

Process of Scholarship of Teaching Has Been Successful in Mashhad University of Medical Sciences

Background: Medical Education has dramatically evolved in the past decades, and scholarly behaviors have gained popularity. In this study, scholarship-of-teaching activities from Mashhad University of Medical Sciences (MUMS) were evaluated for the first time in this country.

Methods: Data related to all applicants who were nominated for promotion to associate and full professor positions were studied retrospectively from 2009 to 2011. All scores had been approved by MUMS scholarship committee.

Results: In total, 85 teaching faculty members received scholarship score including 77% male (77%). Majority was from medical (61%) and dentistry (27%) faculties and mainly promoted to associate and full professor positions (78%). Mean age of the promoted faculty members from faculty of Pharmacy was significantly lower. Most scores were obtained from preparing and implementation of L&CP (41%) and implementation of new educational methods (30%). The time elapsed from starting the scholarship evaluation program was significantly correlated with total score (r=0.245, Sig. 0.025) and implementation of new educational methods.

Conclusions: Setting of a minimum mandatory score for scholarly evaluation in Mashhad University of Medical Sciences has dramatically evolved in the past decades, and dentistry (27%) faculties and mainly promoted to associate and full professor positions were studied retrospectively from 2009 to 2011. All scores had been approved by MUMS scholarship committee.

Keywords: Scholarly teaching, Evaluation, Faculty member

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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Received: Feb 16, 2012 Accepted: March 1, 2012

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Medical Education has dramatically evolved in the past decades. In this transition, education has been influenced by research and services over time in a bilateral process. Many attempts have been made to articulate and conceptualize this dynamism for a greater good of education. Scholarship behaviors have been at the heart of advancing education for many years (1).

To evaluate scholarship projects, six standards should be met including clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique (2). These standards have made the educational research and the medical education provision more objective (3-5). Medical schools and institutions, however, have made their own interpretations of scholarship and expanded it (6-13).

The recent revision of "Promotion Regulation" of the faculty teaching members published by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education in 2009 has set a minimum mandatory scores from scholarship of teaching (14). This was subsequently omitted and added again within the past two years. As many faculty members were not familiar with this subject, some adjustments including equivalents were presented to facilitate achieving these minimum scores. Curriculum development, planning and executing course plans and lesson plans, production of educational multimedia and e-learning are among these amendments (15).

In this study, we have evaluated the result of the scholarship evaluation process presented to the scholarship board committee of Mashhad University of Medical Sciences (MUMS) in the past 3 years. As far as we know, this is the first attempts of this kind in this country.

Data related to all applicants who were nominated for promotion to associate and full professor positions were studied retrospectively from 2009 to 2011. All scores had been approved by MUMS scholarship committee. Permission to conduct this study was obtained from Education Development Centre, Mashad University of Medical Sciences.

Age, gender, faculty, position, time elapsed from starting scholarship evaluation process were studied. Teaching scholarship determinants were classified into eight subcategories including (1) developing national educational standards and curricula, (2) preparing and implementation of lesson & course plans (L&CP), (3) revision and implementation of L&CP, (4) implementation of new educational methods, (5) Designing and implementation of new student assessment methods, (6) Designing and implementation of educational plans, (7) revision and implementation of educational plans, and (8) other items. Total scholarship score was calculated by adding these eight scores.

Further details related to the variables making each subcategory were not studied due to the extent of existing variables as well as low frequency of each variable. SPSS version 11.5 was used for statistical process.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic

In total, 85 teaching faculty members were received scholarship score in this period including 65 male (77%). Among them, 64 (78%) were promoted to associate professor position (3 missing). Majority of subjects were from Medical (52, 61%) and Dentistry (23, 27%) faculties. The mean (SD, Min-Max) age was 45.8 (6.9, 34-64) years, the time elapsed from starting scholarship process was 19.0 (10.5, 8-35) months, and majority were male (77%). Age, gender, time elapsed from starting the program, related faculties of members and total and subcategories scores are summarized in Table 1.

The mean age of the promoted faculty members from faculty of Pharmacy 40.6 (36.8-44.4) was significantly lower than faculties Medicine and Dentistry 47.2 (45.3-49.1) and 44.2 (41.0-47.5) respectively (P=0.038) (Figure 1).

Distribution of Scholarship Score

Figure 2 illustrates that most scores were obtained from preparing and implementation of L&CP (41%) as well as implementation of new educational methods (30%) but not form their revisions or other subcategories. Associate vs. Full Professor Positions

Members promoted to full professors were significantly older than those promoted to associate professors (P<0.001). Gender, time elapsed from starting the scholarship program, faculty of members were not different among associate and full position awarded (Table 1).

In addition, the total obtained score as well as scores in each subcategory was not significantly different in associate and full professor positions (Table 1).

Correlations

Age was correlated with implementation of new educational methods. This variable, in turn, was associated with time elapsed from starting the scholarship evaluation program as
Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristics and Obtained Scores of Faculty Members Promoted to Associate and Full Professor Positions (n=85 including 3 missing).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promoted to</th>
<th>Associate Position (n=64)</th>
<th>Full Position (n=18)</th>
<th>Total (n=85)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (Mean (SD, Min-Max) (year))</td>
<td>43.9 (5.6, 34-60)</td>
<td>53.4 (7.0, 43-64)</td>
<td>45.77 (6.94, 34-64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male percentage (%)</td>
<td>50 (78)</td>
<td>14 (78)</td>
<td>65 (76.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time elapsed</td>
<td>19.8 (11.0, 8-35)</td>
<td>17.1 (9.2, 8-35)</td>
<td>19.0 (10.2, 8-35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculties (%)</td>
<td>Medicine: 42 (84)</td>
<td>8 (16)</td>
<td>52 (61.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dentistry: 16 (73)</td>
<td>6 (27)</td>
<td>23 (27.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pharmacy: 3 (50)</td>
<td>3 (50)</td>
<td>6 (7.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nursing &amp; Midwifery: 1 (100)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health: 2 (100)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>2 (2.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paramedical Sciences: 0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (100)</td>
<td>1 (1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scores (Mean (95% CI))</td>
<td>Developing national education standards and curricula: 0.08 (-0.05-0.21)</td>
<td>0.09 (-0.10-0.28)</td>
<td>0.08 (0.48, 0-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparing and implementation of lessen and course plans: 1.53 (1.37-1.68)</td>
<td>1.44 (1.11-1.77)</td>
<td>1.48 (0.66, 0-2)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Revision and implementation of lessen and course plans: 0.04 (-0.01-0.10)</td>
<td>0.09 (-0.05-0.22)</td>
<td>0.07 (0.29, 0-2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Designing and implementation of educational programs: 0.13 (0.06-0.21)</td>
<td>0.19 (-0.03-0.41)</td>
<td>0.15 (0.33, 0-2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revision and implementation of educational programs: 0.01 (-0.01 -0.02)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.01 (0.08, 0-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation of new educational methods: 1.19 (0.88-1.49)</td>
<td>0.88 (0.32-1.43)</td>
<td>1.07(1.17, 0-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Designing and implementation of new students assessment methods: 0.55 (0.39-0.70)</td>
<td>0.44 (0.19-0.70)</td>
<td>0.52 (0.57, 0-3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Others: 0.13 (0.06-0.20)</td>
<td>0.16 (-0.02-0.33)</td>
<td>0.13 (0.28, 0-2)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total score: 3.69 (3.35-4.03)</td>
<td>3.30 (2.66-3.94)</td>
<td>3.51 (1.38, 1-8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

well as other items. Age was also positively correlated with total score ($r=0.242, n=79, sig. 0.03$).
The time elapsed from starting the scholarship evaluation program was significantly correlated with total score ($r=0.245, n=84, sig. 0.025$).
The obtained total score was negatively correlated with age ($r=-0.24, Sig. 0.04, n=79$) and the time elapsed from starting this process ($r=-0.24, Sig. 0.04, n=85$). The total scholarship score was positively correlated with majority of evaluation subcategories including developing national educational standards and curricula ($r=0.38, Sig. < 0.000, n=84$), preparing and implementation of L&CP ($r=0.35, sig. 0.002, n=84$), revision and implementation of L&CP ($r=0.25, Sig. 0.025, n=84$), implementation of new educational methods ($r=0.59, Sig. < 0.001, n=84$), and Designing and implementation of new student assessment methods ($r=0.36, Sig. 0.001, n=84$); while it was not associated with Designing and implementation of educational plans, review and implementation of educational plans as well as other items.

In addition, a significant correlations was found between the developing national standards and revision of L&CP ($r=0.31, n=84, sig. 0.004$) and designing educational programs ($r=0.23, n=84, sig. 0.035$).

A negative correlation was found between “provision and implementation of L&CP” and “revisions and implementation of L&CP” ($r=-0.272, n=84, sig. 0.012$).

**DISCUSSION**

This is the first evaluation of Scholarship of Teaching from Islamic Republic of Iran which was introduced in 2008 and implemented from 2009 to 2011.

This study found that faculty members obtained most of their scholarship scores from preparing and implementation of L&CP as well as implementation of new educational methods. Therefore, other subcategories including revision of educational plans should be stressed in future.

Scores of older promoted members was associated with total score and implementation of new educational methods. Younger faculty members should be persuaded to
work on this item. Obtaining scholarship of teaching could be time dependent.
In this study, preparing and revision of L&CP were negatively correlated. Therefore, faculty members who prepare L&CP are different from whom revising them.
We also found that members who develop national educational standards tend to design, implement and revise educational plans.
Association time elapsed from starting this program with implementation of new educational methods and other scholarship items as well as total score should be celebrated. As establishment of this program in the past 40 months has pushed faculty members towards implementing new methods and increased diversity of items obtaining better scores.
While the major responsibilities of faculty teaching members have not changed significantly over the past decades, the concept of measuring these activities and their promotion have evolved. Promotion of the faculty members should cover all aspects of their activities. In addition, "scholarship" of every aspect of a faculty work should be taken into the heart of activities (1). Setting of a minimum mandatory score for scholarly teaching has been effective and should be stressed in future.
Still, there are many issues left to be explored. Scholarship has provided new opportunities for advancing educational process.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We would like to thank scholarship board committee and Education Development Centre of Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Mashhad, Iran for their contribution. The effective co-operation of Mrs Bokharaeian is also appreciated for handling the data.

**Conflict of interest:** None declared.

Funding and support: Authors are employees of Education Development Centre of Mashhad University of Medical Sciences.

**Research committee approval:** N/A. Approval was obtained from Education Development Centre, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences.
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