

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

FREE* Newsletter

*(Faculty Resources for Educational Excellence)

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Quote of the Month

*“Who dares to teach
must never cease to
learn”*

- John Cotton Dana

There are several definitions for faculty development, many of which have evolved over the years as medical education has grown and become more complex. Wilkerson and Irby wrote “Faculty development has a critical role to play in promoting academic excellence and innovation, and it is 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”. (1) Faculty development is necessary to assist faculty in identifying innovative teaching strategies and provide support in their role as educators. As accreditation standards, learner needs, and faculty responsibilities continue to grow and change, it is paramount that faculty are aware of the changes impacting medical education. (2) Therefore, it is essential that faculty development initiatives are in place to help develop creative and effective teachers who can respond to these advances. Providing high-level, extensive faculty development opportunities is critical to the growth of the faculty responsible for developing quality programs for teaching students, residents, and other learners throughout an academic health center.

At Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Carilion Clinic, one of the biggest proponents for developing a comprehensive faculty development program has been **Dr. Bruce Johnson**. As Dr. Johnson retires from his role as Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, we have asked him to reflect on his involvement with and the importance of growing faculty development opportunities at this institution.

One of the very pleasant tasks I had for several years here at VTCSOM was to help get started a program in faculty development. My appreciation for faculty development in education actually goes back many years to a time when I was a junior faculty in internal medicine. At that time (like now), I was involved in both resident training and student coursework. I was enormously helped by colleagues with formal education degree backgrounds. I'm sure it took longer than these colleagues thought it should, but I eventually came to the realization that my MD degree, which is what I needed to have a faculty appointment at a medical school, didn't include any training in education. I guess this isn't surprising, since skills in education may not be needed to become a clinician. Yet for those of us who choose a medical school faculty position, it's in large part to have the opportunity to teach.

I've found it rewarding to see the growth and increasing sophistication of our faculty development program. In a relatively short time, for a relatively small school, we have a dynamic program equal or better than any other medical school – highlighted by the TEACH academy. I'm also pleased that the VTCSOM continues to recognize that teaching is a skill that can be enhanced. And we do this by expecting faculty members to participate in faculty development sessions at least twice each year in order to maintain their faculty appointment.

Another activity that I've found to be fun and rewarding is in developing curriculum. It's a kick, however daunting, to be faced with a blank sheet and then to develop topics, objectives, and formats to teach. I've had the privilege to be involved in several aspects of curriculum development here at VTCSOM, and it's rewarding to see the results, and then think of how it can be improved! Of course, little of this could have been done without the help and guidance of my education colleagues.

I feel privileged to have had this kind of career. And pleased that I'll be able to continue teaching and developing curriculum at VTCSOM.

Bruce Johnson, MD

Thank you, Dr. Johnson, for playing a pivotal role in developing our faculty!

1. Wilkerson L, Irby DM. Strategies for improving teaching practices: A comprehensive approach to faculty development. Acad Med. 1998;73:387-96.
2. Steinert Y. Faculty development in the new millennium: Key challenges and future directions. Med Teach 2000;22:44-50.



Dean's Corner

Cynda Johnson, MD, MBA

Our Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine alumni program is off and running, as evidenced by two recent successes.

First, the Class of 2017 was challenged by three members of the new VTCSOM Dean's Advancement Advisory Council - Sid Smith, Jay Foster, and Ellen Beville - who wanted to begin nurturing a spirit of philanthropy among our graduating medical students. Upon reaching the challenge of having a 100 percent participation rate in the number of class members giving to the school, the class received an additional donation from the three council members to bring the total class gift up to \$10,000. This generous donation was earmarked for the needs of our Clinical Science Domain and was accepted by Tarin Schmidt-Dalton, associate dean for clinical sciences years 1 and 2. Along with the gift came an informal challenge to all VTCSOM alumni to invest in the future of the school by giving back.

The week after graduation, we held our first-ever VTCSOM Alumni Reunion. Held just outside Washington, D.C., the event brought together 27 alumni and their guests from as far away as New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and North Carolina. The evening was nothing short of a rousing success, filled with delicious food, good conversation, and the renewal of friendships. Perhaps one of the proudest moments was when our alumni agreed they entered residency better prepared than many students from other schools. We can all take credit for that!

These successes demonstrate a two-way street: alumni showing their appreciation to VTCSOM as well as the school showing appreciation to them. This important relationship, I am certain, will grow even stronger over the years to come.