Faculty Career Development at VTC School of Medicine

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Department of Pediatrics Grand Rounds
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Disclosures

I have no relevant commercial relationships/affiliations to disclose.
"You're not allowed to use the sprinkler system to keep your audience awake."
Objectives
At End of Today’s Session, you will be able to:

• Discuss the general process of promotion for faculty at the VTC School of Medicine
• Define research and scholarly activity, with an emphasis on medical education research
• Develop a broad research interest or question that may spur your further growth as a researcher
Process for Promotion
Single Best Source for All Details?

- Faculty Bylaws
- Online here: https://medicine.vtc.vt.edu/faculty-affairs/faculty-resources.html
Brief Outline

• Appointment to VTC
  – Tracks and ranks
• The four domains of academic activity
• “Continuous improvement” and preparation for promotion
• Curriculum vitae (CV)
• Academic portfolio
## Tracks and Ranks

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<tr>
<th>Tenure to Title</th>
<th>Non-tenure Track</th>
<th>Instructional Track</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professor (with TTT)</td>
<td>Professor (non-tenure track)</td>
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<td>Associate Professor (with TTT)</td>
<td>Associate Professor (non-tenure track)</td>
<td>Clinical Preceptor (non-tenure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professor (TTT track)</td>
<td>Assistant Professor (non-tenure track)</td>
<td>Senior Instructor (non-tenure)</td>
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Expectations

Four fundamental domains in which faculty function:

– **Teaching**
  - Any or all levels of medical school/research institute/residency/practitioner/learners

– **Clinical Care (if applicable)**

– **Service** to the medical school and supporting organizations

– **Scholarly Activity/Research**
  - Including publication, research, grant funding
Bylaws Chapter Six: Promotion based on “Continuous Improvement”

Tenure to Title Track (6.5.1):

- Active in all four domains
- Concentration in two domains (if Basic Science, one must be scholarly activity)
- Progress and/or advancement in role and responsibility
- Expectation of progress in scholarly activity
Bylaws Chapter Six: Promotion based on “Continuous Improvement”

Tenure to Title Track (6.5.1):

• Assistant to Associate Professor:
  – Seven year time frame
  – Formal review of progress at years two and four by Department Chair
  – Five to eight publications expected

• Associate to Full Professor:
  – Six to ten year time frame
  – Ten to fifteen additional publications (beyond those at previous rank) expected
Bylaws Chapter Six: Promotion based on “Continuous Improvement”

Non-Tenure Track (6.5.2):

• Active in all four domains
• Concentration in two domains (if Basic Science, one must be scholarly activity)
• Progress and/or advancement in role and responsibility
• Expectation of progress in scholarly activity
Bylaws Chapter Six: Promotion based on “Continuous Improvement”

Non-Tenure Track (6.5.2):

• Assistant to Associate Professor:
  – No specific time frame for promotion
  – No numeric expectation for publications

• Associate to Full Professor:
  – Six to twelve publications (beyond those at previous rank) expected
Requirements for All Promotions

• Letter of request from faculty member
• Departmental and school guidelines
• Review by Chair and departmental APRT committee
• Submission of required materials in a timely manner (primarily the CV and the portfolio)
• Letter from Chair and the departmental APRT committee
• Letters of support
Online Checklists

• On faculty affairs web site, VTCSOM
• Checklist for each/every category
• Designed to help you in putting together all required materials
• https://medicine.vtc.vt.edu/faculty-affairs/faculty-resources.html
Promotion Process

• Candidate initially consults with Chair, includes all materials required (dossier, CV, names of reviewers)  
  August 31st
• Chair sends to departmental APRT Committee; letters are sought and received; sends formal recommendation to Chair  
  October 31st
• Chair reviews all materials, conveys opinions of Chair and APRT to candidate; decision reached about sending onward  
  November 30th
• Materials reviewed by VTCSOM APT Committee; makes recommendation to the Dean  
  January 31st
• Dean sends to recommendation to VT Provost  
  March 1st
• Provost sends to VT President and Board of Visitors  
  June
So.....how does a faculty member document all of the required materials showing “continuous improvement”? 
Two Short Answers (6.6.2)

• The up to date* Curriculum Vitae (CV), in the required VTCSOM format
  – A listing of accomplishments
  – Digital Measures automates this process.....IF YOU KEEP YOUR INFORMATION UPDATED!!

• The Portfolio
  – Evidence of accomplishments
  – Been somewhat loosely defined in past
  – Currently working on standardizing and alignment with VT expectations

*What does “up to date” mean?
Single Best Piece of Advice

We urge you to stay on top of the process of keeping your CV up to date in Digital Measures, with all of your various activities....it is a “living document” used for many purposes, not just VTC promotion and/or maintenance of appointment
Define research and scholarly activity, with an emphasis on medical education research
Bylaws 6.2.2

• **Inquiry:** asking a question; collecting and analysis of facts/observations that can form a relevant question

• **Research:** design and implementation of the means to answer the question

• **Discovery:** obtaining, mastering and making known knowledge
Bylaws 6.2.2

• Scholarly activity:
  – May take many different forms
  – Result in identifiable product/output
  – Be made public/available
  – Be subject to review by other scholars
  – Reproducible
  – Contribute to knowledge
Medical Education Scholarship

• “….any investigation related to the education of medical professionals, including research related to undergraduate (medical school), graduate (residency) and continuing medical education.”

• We could change “medical” above to “health” and further broaden our definition.
Another Broad Definition

• “....the critical, systematic study of teaching and learning in medicine” with a focus on the “scholarly analysis of the context, processes and outcomes of all phases of medical education.”

Bligh and Parsell, 1999
Quoted in Traynor and Eva, 2010
Scholarly Activity

• Required for Advancement
• Required by Accrediting Bodies
• Affords Opportunities to Pursue One’s Passion
• BUT, awfully darn hard sometimes!
  – Time pressures
  – Competing demands
  – Lack of funding
  – Lack of supportive research infrastructure
Making It Count Twice!

• Think about what you do each day....why is a particular task this done this way?....or how could it be done better?
• If you think about a better way, then you can write it down....and then figure out how to test it
• If you are interested in testing it, you should first look at literature to see if others have done similar work
• If you figure out how to test it, you’re doing research!!
• Once you figure it out, you’re ready to tell others about it....verbally, in a poster/picture or in writing
Defining Features of Scholarship (aka Start With a Problem)

**Questioning**
How can I improve care for this patient population?
How can I address a teaching challenge?
How can I address a challenge in the clinic?

**Gathering & Exploring Evidence**
What evidence do I have?
What evidence can I collect (or am already collecting) and how?
What do I do with this evidence?

**Trying Out & Refining Insights**
How can I make improvements based on what I’m learning?
How can I assess changes in my teaching or patient care?

**Going Public**
Where can I share my findings?
Define research, scholarship and scholarly activity

• This all might sound intimidating when you first consider it ("who, me.....a scholar?")

• BUT.....it’s really just a different way of thinking about things that you do every single day!!
Tips for Success

• **PASSION**: what part(s) of your work are you passionate about? What gives you the most satisfaction? Clarity about what you will say “yes” to....and what you won’t

• **PLANNING**: build a structured approach to doing research:
  – Schedule time for it if you possibly can
  – Use small bits of time systematically
  – Data Retention
  – Document Your Efforts
Tips for Success

• PARTNERSHIPS:
  – Identifying mentor(s)
  – Identifying those with similar interests
  – Negotiating with authority structure

• PUBLISHING:
  – Must identify key resources for your interests (journals, meetings, societies)
  – Do “trial runs” of any presentations/posters
Develop a broad research interest or question that may spur your further growth as a researcher
So, Given All of this Information.....
What Research Question do YOU want to examine?

What interests you in your own teaching and learning that you want to study?
Defining Features of Scholarship (aka Start With a Problem)

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The Patient Outcomes Imperative

• “The greatest challenge in medical education research is linking the content and method of medical education to the quality of physician care and patient health outcomes.” (Collins, 2006)

• Do you agree?

• Why or why not?
Resources Available in Support of Education Research

• Seek out your local education specialist!
• [https://www.teach.vtc.vt.edu](https://www.teach.vtc.vt.edu/)
• Lots of resources here!
Ten steps to conducting health professional education research

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SUMMARY

Background: The approaches used to educate future clinicians must be continually improved through evidence-based methods. Clinicians interested in conducting education research need to understand the terminology and conventions of health professional education, in the same way that health professional educators from education backgrounds need to be aware of clinical practices and scientific mores and jargon. This article provides clinicians with 10 steps to conducting health professional education research, and encourages collaboration between clinicians interested in education and health professional educators.

Summary: The basic steps in conducting education research are introduced, beginning with literature searches, using appropriate terminology and writing conventions, and finding research collaborators. We encourage researchers to ask themselves, “So what?” about their research idea to ensure it is interesting and relevant to a journal’s readers. The nuts and bolts of educational research are then presented, including research questions and methodologies, outcome measures, theoretical frameworks and epistemologies. The final two steps aim to foster internationally relevant and well-designed research studies.

Conclusion: Conducting and publishing education research is often difficult for clinicians, who struggle with what is required. Yet clinicians who teach are ideally placed to identify the knowledge gaps about how we can more effectively educate future clinicians. These 10 steps provide clinicians with guidance on how to conduct education research so relevant research findings can inform the education of future clinicians.
Resources Available in Support of Education Research

- https://www.comsep.org/home/index.cfm
Resources Available in Support of Education Research

Excellent Overview in Journal of GME, June 2015

http://omerad.msu.edu/research/resources-for-medical-education-research-and-scholarship
Medical Education Research is a Viable, Strong Pathway to Academic Success!!

• Department Chairs value this pathway
• Our promotion criteria also value it
• And, most importantly, YOU can do it!!

“It is not that I’m so smart. But I stay with the questions much longer.”

Albert Einstein

Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.

Zora Neale Hurston

Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought.

Albert Szent-Gyorgyi
MOC Questions

• Q1: of the 4 areas of faculty responsibility, in how many must one concentrate to be considered for promotion?
  – One
  – Two
  – Three
  – Four

• Q2: how many years does it normally take for consideration of promotion in the tenure to title track?
  – Four
  – Six
  – Seven
  – Ten
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MOC Questions

• Q3: What are the 4 Ps that denote “tips for success” in the realm of faculty scholarly activity?
  – Passion, planning, partnerships, publishing
  – Publishing, procrastination, persistence, partnerships
  – Persistence, perseverance, portfolio, production
MOC Questions

• Q3: What are the 4 Ps that denote “tips for success” in the realm of faculty scholarly activity?
  – **Passion, planning, partnerships, publishing**
  – Publishing, procrastination, persistence, partnerships
  – Persistence, perseverance, portfolio, production
Questions or Comments?

- Thank you!
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