

Faculty vitality in osteopathic medical schools: A pilot study

Adrienne Z. Ables, PharmD, MS

Liang Shan, PhD

India L Broyles, EdD




What is faculty vitality?




- “those essential, yet intangible positive qualities of individuals and institutions that enable purposeful production” ~ *Gruppen*
- “efforts designed to facilitate faculty members’ commitment to and ability to achieve both their own goals and their institution’s goals” ~ *Bland*
- “the synergy between high levels of satisfaction, productivity, and engagement that enables the faculty member to maximize her/his professional success and achieve goals in concert with institutional goals” ~ *Dankoski*





Why do we care?

- Vital faculty are highly active and productive in teaching, scholarship, administrative tasks, and professional services
 - contribute positively to the institution's mission



Why do I care?

- Faculty development initiatives significantly improve a number of measures influencing vitality
- Robust faculty development programs are associated with high retention and promotion rates, grants and publications, and leadership activities



What we know

- Numerous published surveys of faculty development efforts with regard to satisfaction, retention and/or vitality
 - all have been conducted in allopathic medical schools or academic health centers
 - majority of respondents were male clinical faculty members



What we don't know

- Contributors to vitality may differ in osteopathic medical schools
 - often private
 - located in smaller cities
 - use community hospitals for clerkships
 - tend to have smaller numbers of faculty members
 - teaching v. research?



Objective

- To explore faculty vitality in osteopathic medical schools in order to examine contributors to productivity, engagement, and satisfaction
- To discuss the implications for faculty development



Methods

- A multi-institutional, exploratory survey-based study
- Designated as exempt from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review by the University of New England IRB





Participants



- Faculty members from a convenience sample of both well-established and new colleges of osteopathic medical schools in the U.S. were invited to participate in the study
- Basic science or clinical faculty members who were full or part-time employees were eligible to take part in the study



Survey



- Adapted from a previously validated instrument designed to measure faculty vitality (Faculty Vitality Survey 2014© – Indiana University School of Medicine)
- 66 items:
 - productivity - 11 items
 - engagement - 6 items
 - career satisfaction - 5 items
 - primary department climate and leadership - 12 items
 - career and life management - 11 items
 - professional development - 6 items
 - demographics - 10 items
 - self-identified primary role - 1 item



Survey

- Four open-ended questions explored faculty members' perceptions of their experience at their college as they relate to their vitality, factors outside the institution that may affect vitality, and perceived faculty development needs



Results

- Of 236 eligible faculty members, 121 individuals initially started the survey
 - 104 complete responses to survey questions were accrued during the study period (44%)
 - 99 respondents provided demographic information





Gender	
Female	56.6%
Male	38.4%
Prefer not to respond	5%
Ethnicity/Race	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1 %
Asian	2%
Black/African American	1%
Hispanic or Latino	1%
Multiracial	3%
White/Caucasian	80.9%
Prefer not to respond	11%
Department	
Administration	3%
Basic/Biomedical Science	47.5%
Clinical (includes OMM)	49.5%
Employment status	
Full time (> = 32 hours/week)	85%
Part-time (< 32 hours/week)	15%
Faculty rank	
Instructor	5.1%
Assistant Professor	42.4%
Associate Professor	29.3%
Professor	23.2%





Mean scores for vitality and its contributors based on department*

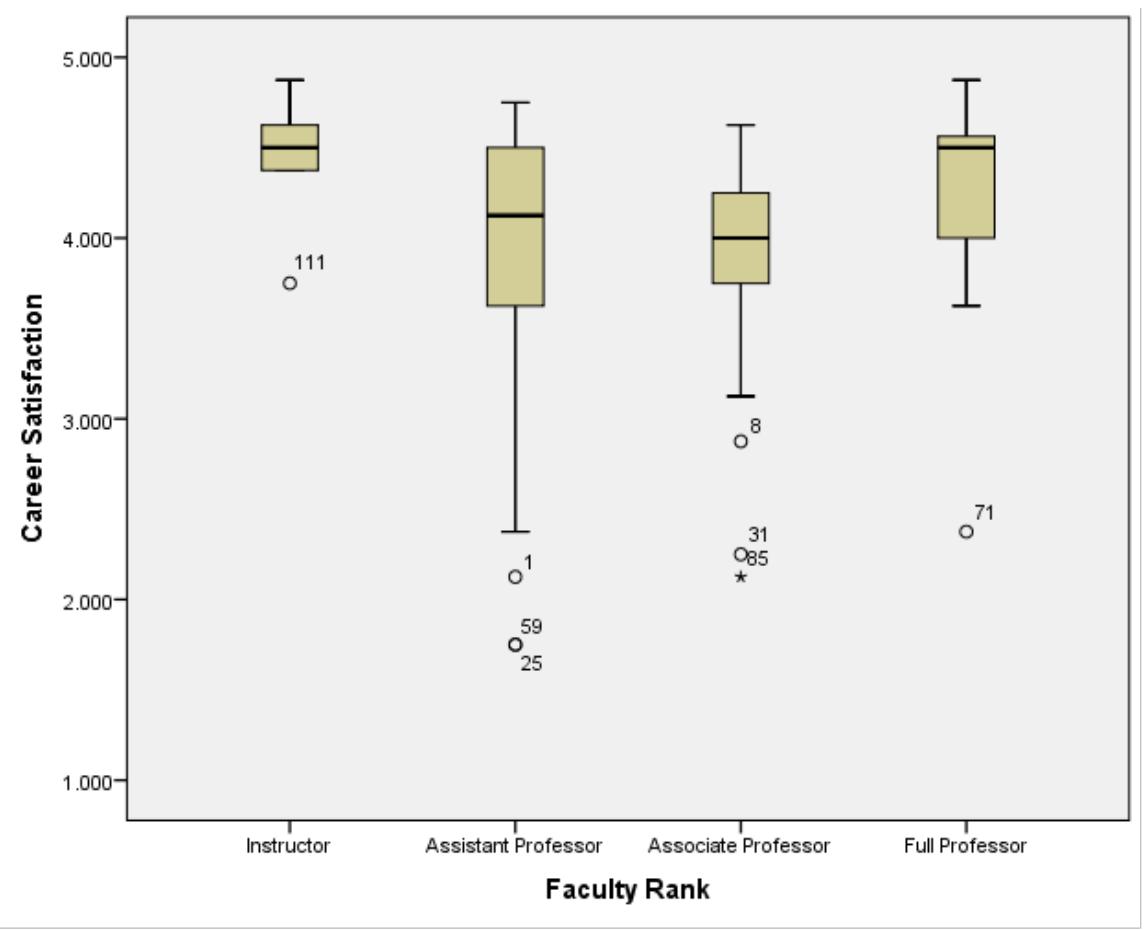
	Productivity	Professional engagement	Career satisfaction	Overall vitality
Department (n)				
Biomedical Science (47)	2.3	3.3	3.9	3.2
Clinical (49)	2.3	3.6	4.0	3.3
Administration (3)	2.3	3.6	4.4	3.4

*Of 104 respondents, 99 responses were complete.





Career Satisfaction versus Faculty Rank





Effects of primary department/leadership and career/life management on vitality and the contributors to vitality



- Primary department climate and leadership was a significant positive predictor of faculty vitality ($p=0.001$)
- Career and life management showed a potential positive relationship with faculty vitality ($p=0.055$)
- When analyzed separately, only career satisfaction was shown to be significantly positively affected in relationship to primary department and leadership ($p=0.000$)
- A positive trend for career and life management was seen ($p=0.074$)

Major themes from the open-ended questions

- Fifty-six participants described how experience at the college level affected faculty vitality
 - positive and negative impacts of leadership support, organizational climate, collegiality, and value
 - autonomy to direct teaching in a way that provides a good educational experience for students
 - departments are cohesive and collaborative, thereby maintaining engagement
 - dissatisfaction due to a lack of administrative support, siphoning of resources, and feeling undervalued





Workload!





Major themes from the open-ended questions

- 50 participants identified factors outside of the institution that affected vitality as a faculty member
 - current funding climate
 - family and home life
 - outside interests
 - balance
 - commute
 - personal health





Implications for faculty development



Professional engagement

- Having a mentor
- Serving as a mentor
- Professional organizations
- Collaborative teaching, research, or service activities
- Development of a shared vision

Productivity

- Time management courses
- Individual academic career plan counseling
- Encouraging faculty members to collaborate in group projects



Conclusions and future directions

- Career satisfaction is a significant contributor to vitality in osteopathic medical school faculty members
 - Basic science and clinical faculty members reported similar levels of vitality
- Primary department climate and leadership was a significant predictor of faculty vitality
- Nationwide survey to confirm our findings and strengthen the validity of the results