

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

FREE* Newsletter

*(Faculty Resources for Educational Excellence)

VTCSOM Office of Faculty Affairs & Continuing Professional Development

Office of Professional
Development (OPD)

Office of Continuing Medical
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Center for Simulation,
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(CSRPS)

Dan Harrington, MD
Senior Dean, Academic Affairs

Bruce Johnson, MD
Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs

David Musick, PhD
Assistant Dean, Faculty
Development
Director, Professional
Development

Shari Whicker, EdD, MEd
Associate Director,
Professional Development
Director, TEACH

Phone: (540) 581-0317

Web:

[http://medicine.vtc.vt.edu/faculty
_affairs/professional_developm
ent/](http://medicine.vtc.vt.edu/faculty_affairs/professional_development/)

[http://www.carilionclinic.org/offi
ce-continuing-professional-
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Quote of the Month

“One who dares to teach
must never cease to learn”
(Dana); professional
development does support all
aspects of academic careers,
but understanding its
importance to teaching is
critical.” (Alan Altany)

CME, CEU, MOA and Faculty Development: What’s in a Name?

Have you ever noticed how most professions have their own version of “alphabet soup?” Abbreviations abound, buzzwords blast you from every side, jargon jumps out at you and the semantics can be significant! The medical profession has its own unique language, and so does the profession of education. Extrapolating educational terms and applying them to how we train physicians and other health professionals can sometimes create conundrums for everyone! (Okay, I’ll stop with the incessant alliteration now).

We have previously described the term “faculty development” as “*a planned program designed to prepare institutions & faculty members for their various roles*” (Bland et al, 1990). So, faculty development can describe a variety of different learning activities. For example, if I attend a workshop where I learn about how to conduct research then I can say that I have experienced “faculty development for **research**.” Similarly, if I attend a session on how to improve my teaching skills; I’ve experienced “faculty development for **teaching**.” My point is this: lots of different activities can be “counted” as faculty development. So, it then becomes important to specify “faculty development for what?”

What about other related terms? The term “continuing medical education” (CME) has traditionally been applied to learning activities for practicing physicians, most often very clinically-oriented. The term “continuing education unit” (CEU) is more general and applies to a variety of other fields. There are also lots of similar terms for specific disciplines (e.g., CPE for pharmacy, CNE for nursing). If you attend a given learning activity designed to increase your knowledge base or skill set, you **may or may not** receive any type of CME or CEU credits for being there, depending on how the activity was designed.

So, it is possible to attend a given faculty development activity and **not** earn CME credit, and vice versa! Furthermore, depending on the topic, you will count it as faculty development **for teaching, for research, for clinical care**, and so forth.

This year, VTCSOM has established a new requirement pertaining to “faculty development for **teaching**,” as part of the MOA (maintenance of appointment) process. Over the course of the 3-year faculty appointment cycle, one must demonstrate involvement in 6 hours of faculty development related to improving one’s teaching skills.

The new **Digital Measures** database will be the primary means of tracking all faculty development activities. Digital Measures also makes it easy to track which faculty development activities should be considered toward your 6 required faculty development for teaching hours. When entering or reviewing your professional development activities in the ‘Professional Development/Continuing Medical Education’ section, simply select “Yes” if you wish to have the activity “Count this towards my annual 2 hour requirement of faculty development for **teaching**.”

Here’s my challenge to you: from now on, when you use the term “faculty development”, be sure to fill in the blank by saying “faculty development for _____” (i.e., teaching, research, quality, clinical care). Maybe this approach will help clarify the confusion!

David Musick, PhD