

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

FREE* Newsletter

*(Faculty Resources for Educational Excellence)

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Quote of the Month

"The best thing about being a teacher is that it matters. The hardest thing about being a teacher is that it matters every day."

Todd Whitaker

"I'm A Faculty Member" – What Does That Mean?

"VTCSOM recruits and expects faculty to engage in teaching and career development towards both the personal and institutional attainment of medical advancement." So states the faculty handbook for our medical school (page 8). But have you ever wondered why someone would choose to be a faculty member in a medical school or other higher education setting? As someone who has worked in an academic setting for over 24 years, I think it's helpful every now and then to reflect on questions such as these. What motivates YOU to be a faculty member at VTC School of Medicine?

As far back as the 1950s, people were interested in this question as it pertains to being a medical school faculty member. Stated reasons given by faculty members from a survey during that time period were a desire to "contribute to the welfare of society," "be technically proficient," "acquire knowledge for its own sake," "make original contributions to science," and "acquire habits of continuing self-education."¹ Would you agree that some, if not all, of these reasons endure today?

In an important book about medical education, Cooke et al talk about the need to "develop habits of inquiry and innovation" and state that this need applies to both individual faculty members and their institutions.² For many, the primary interest associated with being an academician is the opportunity to teach. Others are more interested in the discovery of new knowledge via research. And, service to others is also a primary factor motivating those who become faculty members. These three tenets of academic practice (teaching, research, service) are the foundation of what it means to be a faculty member at any higher education institution. Every faculty member need not excel in all three of these areas, but striving to achieve excellence in at least two of them seems to be a universal expectation for success.

We are fortunate at VTCSOM and Carilion Clinic to have a large cadre of dedicated faculty members who work hard every day to teach and inspire their students, make new discoveries and serve their patients and communities. We clearly want to establish high standards of excellence for our faculty members, because the future of our school and our community will be impacted significantly by our collective efforts. These standards (as spelled out in our faculty handbook) also "drive" the various technical requirements associated with having and retaining a faculty position at our school. Our goal is nothing less than encouraging all faculty members to strive toward excellence in everything we do, from the most noteworthy achievements to the smallest administrative requirements. We are here to support you in your various academic roles. And, if you have stories or other examples that illustrate why you choose to be a part of our faculty, we would love to hear them!

David Musick, PhD

¹Rothstein WG. American Medical Schools and the Practice of Medicine: A History. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

²Cooke M; Irby DM; O'Brien BC. Educating Physicians: A Call for Reform of Medical School and Residency. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing, 2010.



Dean's Corner

Cynda Johnson, MD, MBA
July 2016

Greetings!

I am pleased to have this piece of real estate in the Faculty Development Newsletter, giving us another opportunity to keep you informed of what's going on at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine.

We have matriculated the Class of 2020. Can you believe that? 2020! Selecting this class was a challenge for our admissions office, as the applicant pool—4,611—was the largest in the school's history. Not only that, but 80 percent of our applicants met the academic bar to be here. We selected 42 students who we felt would excel in our unique, patient-centered, problem-based curriculum that utilizes a team approach to learning.

Other quick facts about our newest class: two students are from Roanoke; 27 undergraduate schools are represented from coast to coast, including Virginia Tech, UVA (seven students) and other great Virginia schools; and most students came with a significant amount of research experience under their belt.

Please help us welcome our newest students!