The Ripple Effect of a Rotating Professorship: The Joy McCann Professorship at the University of Massachusetts Medical School

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Purpose: To describe the impact of a rotating professorship as a vehicle for cultural change within an academic medical center.

Background: In 2005, the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) received an endowment from the Joy McCann Foundation for the benefit of research, funding outstanding female faculty members and leaders in academic medicine. In 2006, the establishment of the Joy McCann Professorship for Women in Medicine began with the purpose “to identify and reward female faculty leadership in medical education, research, patient care, and community service. Specifically, it is intended to encourage, inspire, and reward women faculty in their academic careers.”

The Joy McCann Professorship is awarded for a 3 year term with the option to be reappointed for an additional three years. The purpose of the Joy McCann Professorship is to identify and reward female faculty in leadership positions, and there were no linkages among women leaders in the medical school, graduate school, nursing school, and clinical system. Women faculty in leadership positions were not well supported within the faculty. The Women Faculty Committee or a parallel group through which to engage and provide support to women’s experiences at UMMS started as an informal process and to develop strategies to encourage improvements. Successful women may remain “disempowered” because they are not connected to important networks of information, influence, recruitment, and authority.

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Level of impact: 2005-2014

The Ripple Effect of the Joy McCann Professorship 2005

Goal: To catalyze a process that would result in increased outreach and mentoring opportunities for women scientists/physicians.

Environment: When I assumed the Professorship, networking & leadership at UMMS was very weak. There were no linkages among women leaders in the medical school, graduate school, nursing school, and clinical system. Women faculty in leadership positions were not well supported within the faculty. The Women Faculty Committee or a parallel group through which to engage and provide support to women’s experiences at UMMS started as an informal process and to develop strategies to encourage improvements. Successful women may remain “disempowered” because they are not connected to important networks of information, influence, recruitment, and authority.

Activities
- Conducted interviews with women faculty leaders to learn about their perceptions about their tenure and the engagement of group women faculty leaders in research, education, and community service.
- Invited the Chair of the Women’s Leadership Work Group (WLWG) to comprise an all-female leadership team.
- Held bi-monthly meetings with representatives from each department to discuss and work on the role of micro inequities on STEM women at the University of Massachusetts.
- Co-chaired the AAMC Faculty Forward initiative at UMMS, which analyzed survey data and led process to improve women’s tenure and advancement at UMMS.

Recommemations for the Institution to increase opportunities and for advancement of women physicians and scientists.

The Ripple Effect of the Joy McCann Professorship 2008

Goal: To support the advancement of women faculty at UMMS.

Environment: At the time of my appointment, the Office of Faculty Affairs was actively developing mentoring and advising for women in leadership positions. EMRC was developing recommendations for women leaders. We decided to make a particularly strong emphasis on women leadership and develop an additional initiative that would catalyze women leaders.

Activities
- Collaborated with the Office of Faculty Affairs to enhance research in women’s leadership at UMMS:
  - Analysis of UMMS promotion and compensation data
  - Collecting analyses of women in leadership roles across academic departments and the clinical system
  - Submission of an NIH/R2K proposal to study micro inequities and pay disparity for female medical faculty at a university of the period in leadership
  - Collection and analysis of national data to study the role of micro inequities on STEM women at the University of Massachusetts

Conclusions: The Ripple Effect of the Joy McCann Professorship 2005-2014

1. A rotating professorship with defined purpose creates a vehicle for cultural change within an academic medical center.
2. The Joy McCann Professorship has resulted in engagement of women faculty groups, chairs and leaders, across faculty rank, disciplinary area, and departments.
3. The Professorship has had a positive impact on the academic community through the professorship and on those influenced by her.
4. The Professorship has contributed to the visibility and recognition for women faculty and researchers and the institutional support and recognition for identifying professional needs in our community.
5. The Professorship has established a mechanism for advancement of women faculty and a creative outlet for emerging women leaders.

Nomination and Selection Process
1. Process administered by the UMMS Office of Faculty Affairs.
2. Call for nominations is advertised to members of the UMMS community every 3 years.
3. Nominated candidates are asked to describe their nominating skills in a cover letter.
4. Review Committee is selected from candidates of the following:
   - Office of Faculty Affairs
   - Human Resources
   - Office of Educational Affairs
   - Office of Faculty Affairs
5. Review Committee selects several candidates to submit a letter of support.
6. Call for nominations is advertised to members of the UMMS community every 3 years.

Nomination and Selection Criteria
1. Fulltime female physician and faculty member of UMMS.
2. Minimum 5 years of fulltime service as an academic physician.
3. Evidence of providing mentoring and leadership in medical profession.
4. Evidence of mentoring and leadership within the profession.
5. Demonstrated effectiveness as an advisor to medical students and/or residents.
6. Leadership at the local or national level.
7. Commitment to the success of women faculty, residents, and students.
8. Dean of the School of Medicine makes the final selection.

Broad Engagement Across Ranks and Departments

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