Assessment of Program Coordinator Career Satisfaction and Support Through Graduate Medical Education

Adriana Garcia, Patricia Medeiros, Lisa Peterson, Candice Ingersoll, Jennifer Mair, Felix Martinez, Natalie Moore, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT, USA

Introduction/Background

In 2013 the University of Utah Graduate Medical Education (GME) Office began sponsoring the Program Coordinator and Manager Advocacy Committee (PCMAC) as a means to support coordinators in their demanding and often times stressful role as administrators to large or multiple training programs. This committee is made up of both program coordinators and managers, as well as GME staff members.

Beginning in 2014, the PCMAC initiated an annual survey of coordinators to assess job satisfaction, burnout, and departmental support. These results are the main source of goal setting for the committee. Based on these, the goals for the last four years has included:

1. Improve Career Satisfaction
2. Retention
3. Manager Morale

Objectives

- Provide mentorship and training to new program coordinators
- Continue to educate, dispense information, integrate standardized processes, and offer opportunities for career development throughout the local GME community
- Share our progress with interested institutions outside our organization

Methods

The PCMAC is a vital tool for improving morale, establishing best practices, and ensuring two-way communication with the GME office.

The committee consists of five residency and three fellowship coordinators/managers, and three GME staff members.

The committee meets monthly to determine and prioritize challenges, outline collaborative solutions, and create recommendations for Program Directors and Administrators.

PCMAC Accomplishments

- Education to program coordinators and administrative management on the GME career path developed by the committee using the institution’s human resource job descriptions, along with salary recommendations.
- Established an annual Program Coordinator Retreat, incorporating career development training.
- On-going monthly Program Coordinator Meetings that include coverage of GME Policies and Procedures, PCMAC-led professional development, seasonal task and MedHub training sessions, as well as opportunities for networking and interaction between fellow coordinators, managers, and GME staff.
- Regular Self-Study and APE presentations, based on Program Directors & Program Coordinators collaboration.
- Mentorship Program to orient new coordinator/managers with the tools needed to succeed and pairing them with a seasoned coordinator/manager from another program to support them through the first few years.
- Developed a Clinical Observer Experience (Shadowing) process working collaboratively with General Counsel and Risk Management. This process has been adopted as an institutional best practice.

Career Paths

Operations Manager or Director of Education

HR Job Titles: Director, Education, (Exempt position)
Manager, Operations, (Exempt position)

Job Summary - Directs and oversees operations and strategic planning of education functions including (but not limited to) development of curriculum and/or content for classes, lectures, conferences, and other educational materials specific to academic, continuing education, and/or international education programs. Supports the University of Utah’s educational goals and mission. Acts as a catalyst between departments, faculty, staff, students, Graduate Medical Education, and external entities to ensure continuity and quality of service in education.

Academic Director, Program(s) Manager, or Administrative Manager

HR Job Titles: Associate Director, Education, (Exempt position)
Program(s) Manager, (Exempt position)
Administrative Manager, (Exempt position)

Job Summary - Under minimal supervision, responsible for planning, organizing, directing and/or controlling all aspects pertaining to a sizable specific program or multiple program functions of assigned department’s internal and external housestaff, staffing and financial management operations pertaining to areas including (but not limited to) academic, research, health sciences, and community outreach. Acts as a catalyst between departments, Graduate Medical Education, and housestaff to ensure continuity and quality of service and care.

Academic Manager

HR Job Title: Academic Program Manager, (Exempt position)

Job Summary - Develops and administers academic program by designing, negotiating contracts and program funding, solving related problems and evaluating and redesigning programs. Manages resident/fellows, collaborates with departments and faculty to develop course, academic and research programs.

Educational Coordinator or Academic Coordinator

HR Job Titles: Administrative Assistant, (Non-Exempt position)
Program(s) Manager, (Exempt position)

Job Summary - Oversees and coordinates a variety of departmental academic and student programs, which may include budgeting and/or complex program or record keeping responsibilities under the direction of a department chair, or administrative direction.

FTE Recommendation

When we compared the annual survey results, the committee’s success with improving career satisfaction and providing support was apparent.

Education Efforts:

Through various methods initiated by the combined efforts of GME office staff and the PCMAC, knowledge and understanding of program coordinator responsibilities has expanded throughout the university/hospital administration. This resulted in a significant number of coordinators having their jobs reclassified to meet the PCMAC and GME recommended job titles and salary range.

Job Satisfaction:

In two years, from 2016 to 2018, the number of those dissatisfied with their pay dropped from 43.5% to 27.59%. The number of those satisfied with their pay rose from 43.5% to 65.5%.

Significant increase in the Coordinators/Managers promoted from hourly to salaried employees:

In 2016, we had 39% hourly and 61% salaried coordinators. In 2018, the numbers changed to 14% hourly and increased to an impressive 86% salaried.

Networking:

We provided institutional networking through an email listserv, quarterly newsletter, MedHub forums, monthly meetings and monthly networking lunches.

Increased Opportunities for Professional Development:

In 2016, 50% of program coordinators received support to attend one national meeting; in 2018, the number increased to 55.17%.

Conclusion

Annual assessments are the key to monitoring and maintaining change for our program coordinators, the GME, and our institution. By doing so, this provides the opportunity for our coordinators to use their collective voice.

This committee helped build a community among coordinators, improved career satisfaction, and enabled us to educate management and program directors through statistical information.

The successful collaboration between the GME office and the PCMAC can be implemented at any institution looking to decrease turnover and improve job satisfaction for coordinators.

For More Information

Please contact: Sharee Bracken, GME Director (801) 213-2725 Sharee.Bracken@hsc.utah.edu

University of Utah Graduate Medical Education 515 East 100 South, Ste. 200 Salt Lake City, UT 84102

PCMAC Co-Chairs
Carol Wall Carol.Wall@hsc.utah.edu
Jennifer Mair Jennifer.Mair@hsc.utah.edu

University of Utah

For Additional Information

Visit www.hr.utah.edu/comp/salaryDetermination.php to review the salary calculations for the grade levels.

2016 vs 2018 Survey Results / Outcomes/Improvements

Visit www.hr.utah.edu/comp/salaryDetermination.php to review the salary calculations for the grade levels.