Background

- The increasing complexity of issues surrounding academic health centers is resulting in a corresponding increase in the need for effective leaders.
- These leaders must also be effective immediately and be diverse as the constituents they serve.
- The current systems for developing future leaders within academic units is typically self-promoting rather than institutional directed.
- Leadership training can be a tool to be used for succession planning designed to promote and retain faculty, improve faculty morale and create faculty members who can better serve the needs of the university community.

Disadvantages of Traditional, Off-site Leadership Training

- Costs: Includes cost of training and replacement faculty.
- Time consuming: Intercepts clinical/teaching/research obligations.
- Self-limited: High career/family obligations may preclude time away from the institution.

Advantages of a Dean-Mentored Leadership Program

- Can be easily incorporated into the faculty member’s ongoing workload.
- Provides access to multiple leaders within the academic unit, across academic units and within the community.
- Can serve as an aid to developing transparency between administrators and faculty.
- Mentored faculty can serve as administrative ambassadors.
- Fosters an appreciation for the importance of developing cross-institutional collaborations

Role of a Dean-Mentored Leadership Program in Succession Planning

- Succession planning is used successfully in business, but not public and academic sectors.
- Succession planning can play an important role in improving faculty retention and morale and enhance faculty contribution to the overall mission.
- Effective succession planning can result in the development of a large pool of diverse candidates that may alleviate the need for external hires.
- Internal candidates may present several strengths:
  - Vested interest in the organization
  - Strong political connections and knowledge of corporate values

Methods

- Selection of the faculty: The faculty member was self-selected following an open invitation from the Dean.
- Preparation of the faculty member: The faculty member is a graduate of the Circle of Power Leadership Program. This year-long leadership development program facilitated by the University of Kentucky President’s Commission on Women
- Time Management (faculty member): The time commitment was 3-4 hours per week for one full year.
- Design: The faculty member accompanied the Dean to meetings selected by the Dean or attended meetings held in the Dean’s Office. The meetings were selected based on topics (i.e., planning and development, establishing and facilitating collaborative efforts within other colleges and the community), duration (i.e., planning efforts progressed throughout the entire year) and role of the Dean (i.e., leading, collaborating, advising, advocating, etc.). In the time interval prior to the meeting, the Dean provided a brief overview of the history of the project and described the objectives of the current meeting and entertained questions pertaining to prior meetings.

Table 1. Example of mentored activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning a new UK Academic Medical Center</td>
<td>Develop a building plan that best meets the future needs of each college and units within the UK academic medical center.</td>
<td>Architects, VP for Clinical Affairs, Deans and Associate Deans (Colleges of Dentistry, Health Sciences, Medicine and Nursing and Public Health)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce planning</td>
<td>Identify future workforce needs of the UKCM and UK Hospital.</td>
<td>VP for Clinical Affairs, Human Resource Executives, Senior Associate Dean of Finance, Associate VP for Medical Center Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of UK Children's Hospital</td>
<td>Enhance fundraising efforts</td>
<td>Chair of Pediatrics, Director of Development Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Health and Homeplace Initiative</td>
<td>Address funding issues</td>
<td>Director, Office of Health Research and Development, Associate Dean, Area Health Education Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Chairs Meeting</td>
<td>Address managerial issues</td>
<td>Chairs of Basic and Clinical Departments, Senior Associate Dean of Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rounds at UK Children’s Hospital</td>
<td>Observe effectiveness of interactions</td>
<td>Attending Physicians, Residents, Medical, Pharmacy and Physician Assistant Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press Conference, Dept of Corrections/UK Health Service Network</td>
<td>Promote awareness of successful collaboration between UKCM and Kentucky Dept of Corrections</td>
<td>Lieutenant Governor, UK President, COM faculty, Representatives for Correction Care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shortcomings and Future Directions

- Difficulty in assessing its effectiveness in developing leadership competencies.
- This shortcoming may be alleviated by developing a network of mentored faculty from other academic units within an institution and from other academic medical centers. In addition, evaluations such as 360° assessment tools may be employed.

Discussion

- A major outcome of this program was the recognition of the importance of vision in guiding the mission of the academic health center and the ability to acquire a Dean’s perspective on the entire organization.
- The challenges currently faced by academic medical centers require values-based leadership that works to instill and model values and develop people who interact collaboratively.

- A Dean-mentored leadership program is one that may be used to identify potential leaders and develop a diverse pool of candidates who are qualified for future executive positions.
- Given that the current structure of most academic medical centers typically supports only a hierarchical style of leadership which can be limited in its ability to meet the needs of academic health centers, a new paradigm for leadership development must be established.

Implementation of this mentor program can be used to develop a leadership team composed of individuals with unique backgrounds and perspectives. For example, while mentoring is considered to be essential for faculty retention and promotion, women faculty report being left out of informal networks and receive little mentoring.

Acknowledgements

We thank the many leaders at the University of Kentucky who freely offered their guidance and views on effective leadership. We also thank Dr. Carol Elam and Dr. Donna Weber for their insightful comments.

References