

# What Motivates Occasional Faculty Developers to Lead Faculty Development Workshops? A Qualitative Study

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## Abstract

### Purpose

The demand for faculty development is ongoing, and many medical schools will need to expand their pool of faculty developers to include physicians and scientists whose primary expertise is not education. Insight into what motivates occasional faculty developers can guide recruitment and retention strategies. This study was designed to understand the motivations of faculty developers who occasionally (one to three times each year) lead faculty development workshops.

### Method

Qualitative data were collected in March and April 2012 from interviews with faculty developers who occasionally

taught workshops from 2007 to 2012 in the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine's faculty development program. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. The authors thematically analyzed the transcripts using a general inductive approach and developed codes sensitized by motivation theories.

### Results

The authors interviewed 29/30 (97%) occasional faculty developers and identified five themes: mastery (desire to learn and develop professionally), relatedness (enjoyment of working with and learning from others), duty (sense of obligation to give back and be a good

academic citizen), purpose (commitment to improving local teaching and ultimately patient care), and satisfaction (fun and enjoyment).

### Conclusions

Four of the themes the authors found are well addressed in motivation theory literature: mastery, relatedness, duty, and purpose. Whereas these four are motivators for occasional faculty developers, it is the fifth theme—satisfaction—that the authors feel is foundational and links the others together. Armed with this understanding, individuals leading faculty development programs can develop strategies to recruit and retain occasional faculty developers.

**W**hat would motivate physicians to become occasional faculty developers in a medical school? And why would they go to the trouble of mastering a new knowledge and skill set pertaining to teaching their peers? In some medical schools, faculty developers are educators prepared with doctoral degrees in education whose major responsibility is faculty development, which is the process of preparing and

updating faculty members for their academic roles.<sup>1</sup> With the increasing demand for faculty development driven by accrediting bodies and the changing roles of faculty members (e.g., teaching quality improvement processes), many medical schools will need to expand their pool of faculty developers to include physicians and scientists whose primary expertise is not education. Schools using faculty developers who only occasionally (one to three times a year) lead faculty development workshops will want to understand what motivates these faculty developers to participate in such programs so that they can effectively recruit and retain them. Motivation is known to influence an individual's decisions to initiate, persist, or stop doing an activity.<sup>2</sup> In a previous study, we found that individuals who choose to become occasional faculty developers find that their own teaching is transformed, their collegial networks expanded, and their careers accelerated.<sup>3</sup> In addition, their professional identity changes over time to include being a faculty developer, even though they only occasionally, but consistently, lead workshops.<sup>3</sup>

Motivation theory may identify potential motivators for occasional faculty developers. In their review of motivation theories that influence medical education, Kusrkar and colleagues<sup>4</sup> identified four theories that appear to be particularly relevant to faculty developers: Maslow's<sup>5</sup> hierarchy of needs, Bandura's<sup>6</sup> social cognitive theory, Deci and Ryan's<sup>7</sup> self-determination theory, and Pintrich's<sup>8</sup> goal theory. Other researchers<sup>9,10</sup> studying motivation and faculty development also draw on some of these theories.

Maslow<sup>5</sup> argues for a hierarchy of needs starting with physiological needs, the need for safety, and the need for love and belonging and ascending to the need to fulfill one's potential in self-actualization. Faculty members might meet their needs for belonging and self-actualization through leading a faculty development workshop. In social cognitive theory,<sup>6</sup> the focus is on self-efficacy, the belief that one is capable of performing an activity. This suggests that individuals might volunteer to do faculty development because they perceive that this is an area in which they are capable and can eventually become an expert. Self-determination theory<sup>7</sup> addresses extrinsic

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and intrinsic motivation; the latter is built on the desire for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This suggests that occasional faculty developers volunteer (autonomy) to do something they are capable of performing (competence) because it is important to and engages others (relatedness). Finally, goal theory<sup>8</sup> asserts that motivation is based on two different goal orientations: mastery and performance. If faculty members are mastery oriented, they might conduct faculty development workshops because of their interest in learning and understanding the faculty development topic. If they are performance oriented, they might want to teach their workshops better than others.

Because these various theories all hold promise for explaining the motivations of occasional faculty developers, we sought to understand how these faculty developers perceived their own motivations to lead faculty development workshops for their peers. Our research question was, Why do occasional faculty developers conduct faculty development workshops?

## Method

### Design

We conducted a qualitative study using a general inductive approach.<sup>11</sup> The question explored in this study was part of a larger study on the identity formation of occasional faculty developers in medical education.<sup>3</sup> We chose a qualitative approach because we were uncertain which theories might best explain occasional faculty developers' motivations to lead faculty development workshops; this justified an exploratory approach.

### Setting and participants

Since 2007, the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), School of Medicine's faculty development program has offered approximately 30 two- to four-hour, face-to-face workshops per year for interprofessional attendees, most of whom are physicians. The workshops are free and offer continuing education credits. Nearly 400 unique faculty members attend these workshops each year, filling over 800 slots at either our main campus or our community partners' campuses. The workshops, sponsored by the UCSF School of Medicine's

Office of Research and Development in Medical Education, include topics on teaching improvement, learner assessment, curriculum development, and educational research. The workshops are taught by faculty developers with excellent teaching skills and an interest in faculty development. Many of these faculty developers are members of the Academy of Medical Educators (AME), which requires excellence in teaching for membership.<sup>12</sup> Most faculty developers teach a single topic annually, in a team of two. Leading faculty development workshops is voluntary, but these efforts can count toward service expectations for AME members. No monetary incentives are given.

This study included faculty members who taught workshops in the UCSF School of Medicine's faculty development program from 2007 to 2012. We purposively excluded faculty developers who held doctoral degrees in education and had full-time responsibilities in education, which made their knowledge of and roles in education distinct from those of the occasional faculty developers. The UCSF committee for human research approved this study.

### Procedures

As part of our larger study,<sup>3</sup> we developed an interview guide that included questions on demographics, identity, and motivation. This study focuses on the responses to the following question on motivation: "Why do you do faculty development?" Potential probes included "What do you personally get out of this activity?" We tested the interview guide on educators not included in the study.

All 30 eligible, occasional faculty developers received an e-mail invitation to participate in a 30- to 60-minute interview. We conducted interviews in person or over the telephone between March and April 2012. We knew all of the participants, although to varying degrees. We assumed that because the interview guide asked about neither the faculty development program which one of us (P.S.O'S.) runs, nor the value of the program, the participants would be able to respond to the questions without feeling influenced by their familiarity with us. We adhered to the interview guide and took a naïve stance toward the questions and study participants, meaning that we remained open to

new understandings even though we have worked in the area previously. We took extensive field notes during the interviews. The interviews were also audiotaped and transcribed. After the initial interviews, we debriefed and refined questions. We maintained an analytic memo to document our joint reflections as the study progressed.

### Analysis

Both authors are educators who hold doctoral degrees in education and have training and experience in conducting qualitative research. We have led faculty development workshops and have recruited others to teach in the program. We conducted a thematic analysis of the interview transcripts, using NVivo 10 (QSR International, Doncaster, Victoria, Australia) to manage and code the data. Participants were coded by degree (MD or PhD) and a number. All quotes are identified with these numbering conventions. Our analytic method was a general inductive approach sensitized by motivation theory literature. After reviewing the first six transcribed interviews in May 2012, we jointly developed codes drawing from motivation theories. We augmented our codes based on detailed field notes taken during each interview, which we discussed jointly. Initially, we developed 10 codes that emerged inductively from the interviews and applied them to the transcripts. After further analysis, we consolidated these codes into five themes. We performed a member check by asking the participants to review the derived themes and to verify whether they were an accurate characterization of their motivations.

### Results

All 30 eligible, occasional faculty developers agreed to participate, and we interviewed 29 (97%) in March and April 2012. The participants were primarily physician educators (n = 25; 86%). They represented medicine, pediatrics, family medicine, neurology, obstetrics-gynecology, and anesthesia. Four (14%) were basic scientists (biochemistry and pharmacology). Five (17%) were assistant professors, and the rest were equally split between full and associate professors (n = 12; 41%). The majority were women (n = 21; 72%). Participants had been designing, leading, and revising faculty development workshops for between 1 and 22 years.

We identified five themes that characterized participants' motivations to do faculty development: mastery, relatedness, duty, purpose, and satisfaction.

*Mastery* indicates a desire to learn and develop professionally. One emphasis of this theme is on staying up-to-date: "Faculty development is what drives me to really stay up-to-date in what is going on in my nonclinical field which I consider my other expertise" (MD-22). Another indication of mastery is the sense of improvement in one's own performance: "Faculty development helps me to be a better teacher and helps me to be a better course director" (PhD-4). Others indicated: "I learn a lot each time from the interactions," (MD-8) and "It's good for me. I have learned from the process of doing ... it's improved a skill set ... it's part of my own professional development" (MD-2). Faculty development provides an opportunity to "get better ... the more time I do the workshops, the more I learn from other people in terms of their techniques or their struggles or their learning styles or learning environments ... so I learn through teaching faculty development" (MD-23).

*Relatedness* describes the pleasure of working with and learning from others. For some individuals, it creates an opportunity to meet others: "I also think it's a nice chance to meet other faculty" (MD-8). The relationships developed are also important: "Faculty development bonded me to the people who I do it with" (MD-15), "I really get a lot out of the partnership with the other person whom I'm working with" (MD-13), and "Faculty development influenced my interactions with the people that I did the workshops with" (MD-19).

*Duty* refers to a sense of "obligation" (MD-20) and "citizenship" (MD-17) to help improve the teaching skills of the faculty. Participants expressed this sense of obligation in two ways. First, there was obligation generated from a need to give back because of a sense of indebtedness to what that individual had received from others: "I view faculty development as giving back because I benefitted myself from a similar session" (MD-14), and "I can recall some really invested educators whom I honor by trying to do as good a job as they did"

(MD-3). The second sense of obligation emerged from a sense of needing to help others: "If I could accelerate someone's learning curve, I want to try and help" (MD-5). Citizenship focused more on what it is to be a good citizen in academic medicine: "I view faculty development as part of my citizenship role ... this is what I contribute" (MD-17). Another expressed a sense of duty more broadly: "There is definitely a component of good citizenship ... I feel like it's being an ambassador of the [specific hospital] campus to all our sister campuses" (MD-14). One participant summarized it quite succinctly: "I think faculty development is just part of what an educator should do" (PhD-3).

*Purpose* describes a commitment; this was expressed in three ways: the need to contribute to patient care, the need for attentiveness to how we educate, and the importance of meeting curricular needs to have pedagogically skilled teachers. One participant stressed that faculty development is a way to contribute to patient care, "to improve the health of people, by helping educators to do a better job" (MD-3). Another was concerned with attentiveness to how we educate, stating that educators need to be "more aware and mindful of what we're doing" (MD-21). Participants also expressed the importance of meeting curricular needs to have pedagogically skilled teachers. One described a specific situation: "I run the clerkship, and in order to have a pool of preceptors, I need to develop them" (MD-4). Another one explained it this way: "There's an ulterior motive for faculty development—trying to get a culture change toward small-group teaching" (PhD-3).

*Satisfaction* reflects the fun and enjoyment of conducting faculty development workshops and has a positive emotional tone. One participant expressed this motivation as follows: "Faculty development is deeply rewarding and satisfying, and kind of at an emotional level ... it enriches my life, especially the people I meet" (MD-13). Other participants said: "I do faculty development because it's fun.... It's just really enjoyable to help other people," (PhD-2) and "I just really enjoy it" (MD-10). Another elaborated: "I think there's a lot of reward in feeling like you get someone else to have skills that they're proud of" (MD-15).

## Discussion

We found five themes that characterized why occasional faculty developers were motivated to do faculty development: mastery, relatedness, duty, purpose, and satisfaction. All occasional faculty developers reported positive motivators, and none reported negative consequences. In this discussion, we will describe how the themes align with motivation theory and illustrate how the themes interrelate. Then, we describe how those who lead faculty development programs, when armed with this information, can tailor recruitment and retention efforts.

Our study describes the varying motivations of occasional faculty developers, which are not comprehensively explained by any single motivation theory, although each theory contributes to our understanding of these motivations. For example, the theme of mastery relates to concepts expressed in every motivation theory. Maslow describes self-actualized individuals as fully using and exploiting their "talents, capacities, potentialities ... to be doing the best that they are capable of doing"<sup>5(p150)</sup> and being "propelled by growth motivation rather than by deficiency motivation."<sup>5(p162)</sup> Participants reported a motivation to learn more, which is consistent with a mastery rather than a performance goal orientation.<sup>8,9</sup> Mastery is also a key element explicitly identified in self-determination theory,<sup>7</sup> and social cognitive theory<sup>6</sup> emphasizes self-efficacy, which encompasses the belief that one has the capacity to become an expert. Mastery, therefore, is common to all motivation theories and is a common motivator for occasional faculty developers.

The occasional faculty developers in our study were positively motivated by working with other faculty members, expanding their network of collegial relationships, and working closely with their co-faculty developers. This sense of relatedness reflects several motivation theories. Maslow<sup>5</sup> addresses the importance of love and belonging, Bandura<sup>6</sup> notes that motivations arise within a network of social relationships, and Deci and Ryan<sup>7</sup> describe the foundational importance of relatedness, or mattering to significant others. However, Pintrich<sup>8</sup> speaks of relatedness only in the sense of being better than

others, which is a view that was not expressed by our participants.

We note that these occasional faculty developers were motivated by a strong sense of altruism. Duty appears to be a part of Maslow's self-actualization level, which describes individuals who are problem centered and undertake a task because it is "their responsibility, duty, or obligation. These tasks are non-personal or unselfish, concerned rather with the good of others."<sup>5(p159-160)</sup> Whereas altruism is a dominant theme in medicine,<sup>13</sup> others<sup>5,14</sup> recognize that every act is both selfish and unselfish. Some of our occasional faculty developers described a duty to perform faculty development because they were capable of doing so, which could be construed as a form of self-efficacy,<sup>6</sup> and because it allowed them to pay back those who had role modeled for them. Whereas some of our faculty developers functioned out of a pure sense of altruism, most incorporated both altruism and self-centered interest (such as mastery). As we identified in our previous work,<sup>3</sup> occasional faculty developers accrued benefits in the form of new opportunities and recognition and respect. However, these benefits were not what motivated them to lead faculty development workshops; rather, the benefits were consequences of their participation. Thus, altruism, as exhibited in the theme of duty, legitimately characterizes these faculty developers.

The theme of purpose relates to contributing to the effective functioning of the larger academic community. Occasional faculty developers mentioned,

in the context of their roles as educational leaders, the need to train clinical teachers for their clerkship or residency program, or the need to train small-group facilitators for their classroom courses. Similar to duty, purpose is both altruistic, meeting the needs of the educational program, and self-centered, meeting personal needs such as having good preceptors for a course for which they are responsible. Purpose addresses academic community needs, whereas duty relates to a broader sense of obligation to altruistic goals. Purpose aligns with much of what is done in medical education that Bishop and Rees<sup>13</sup> describe as "pro-social" behavior.

Finally, the theme of satisfaction, which speaks to the deeply rewarding nature of the work and to the fun and enjoyment of the activity, is, we feel, foundational to motivation. When the occasional faculty developers described a sense of satisfaction, it was expressed in the context of connecting satisfaction to one of the other motivators such as mastery and relatedness. From the motivation theory perspective, satisfaction is associated with positive emotional experiences,<sup>15</sup> higher-order needs being met,<sup>5</sup> and persistence in what one is willing to do.<sup>16</sup> Because conducting faculty development workshops is a voluntary activity, it is essential that these faculty members experience satisfaction in the work, or they will not persist in doing it. Our research reinforces the role of satisfaction in motivation theory by identifying satisfaction as the theme that holds the others together (see Figure 1).

One theme that appears in many motivation theories<sup>5-7</sup> but that was not mentioned by any of our participants was autonomy. Perhaps because faculty development is a voluntary activity for occasional faculty developers and because there is broad discretion over how to conduct the workshops, the need for autonomy was amply met and was therefore not a topic that rose to conscious awareness as an aspect of motivation.

This study found that four themes (mastery, relatedness, duty, and purpose) expressed by occasional faculty developers align well with three of four motivation theories (the hierarchy of needs, social cognitive theory, and self-determination theory). Although goal theory connects to our findings on mastery, it does not contribute to understanding any of the other motivators identified by occasional faculty developers in this study. Additionally, satisfaction appears to be foundational and links the other four themes together; thus, it is a necessary consideration in addressing the motivations of this group.

The themes generated from this research can help those who direct faculty development centers. Appeals for faculty members to lead faculty development workshops should highlight the satisfaction faculty developers feel as well as the opportunity to gain new knowledge and skills. For some, recruitment may include an appeal to their interest in giving back or contributing to better teaching and better patient care. Thus, in recruiting individuals to become occasional faculty developers, the personal rewards of the work (satisfaction, mastery, and relatedness) should be emphasized first, and then the purpose-driven contributions (purpose and duty) can be added.

The themes from our study offer a number of possible strategies to sustain these occasional faculty developers. To motivate these faculty developers on the basis of satisfaction and relatedness, pair individuals to cofacilitate workshops. To address mastery, emphasize continual improvement. Provide occasional faculty developers with current literature on their faculty development topic, invite them to attend seminars on more challenging levels of their topic, invite



**Figure 1** Relationship among the five themes that characterized participants' motivations found for 29 occasional faculty developers (those who lead faculty development workshops one to three times a year) in a qualitative study at the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine, March and April 2012. This illustrates the role that satisfaction plays in holding the other four motivators (mastery, relatedness, duty, and purpose) together.

them to observe others and be coached, and provide recognition for them as master faculty developers. A way to keep motivating these faculty developers on the basis of purpose is to clearly tie the faculty development workshops to key parts of the curriculum so that they can see how these workshops directly contribute to the school's needs.

Our study has limitations. All of our occasional faculty developers were from a single institution that has a distinctive faculty development program. However, they represent a diverse group of individuals, specialties, and practices. In addition, we did member checking, and they reported that the motivation themes we identified were an accurate characterization of their motivations. Although our occasional faculty developers were predominantly female, the literature reports minimal differences in motivation by gender.<sup>17</sup>

In conclusion, the motivations of occasional faculty developers are generally aligned with multiple motivation theories. The motivators (mastery, relatedness, duty, purpose, and satisfaction) identified in this study provide a helpful understanding of why individuals participate as occasional faculty developers. A distinctive contribution of this study is the awareness of the role that satisfaction plays in holding the other motivators together. We propose that individuals leading faculty development programs use these themes to create recruitment and retention

strategies for their cadre of occasional faculty developers.

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