

Letter to the Editor, Chronicle of Higher Education October 24, 2010

Medical-School Faculty Members Find Their Work Rewarding

To the Editor:

Having served essentially my entire career as a faculty member and then administrator in academic health-science centers, I was dismayed by the interpretation of data provided by Linda Pololi in "[A Prescription for Diversifying Medical School Faculties](#)" (*The Chronicle*, September 19).

While I agree that medical schools have a long way to go to ensure that women have an equal chance at leadership positions, I do not believe that the general dissatisfaction with the role of medical-school faculty members is due to the "disconnect between the values of individual faculty members and the values of the academic institutions of medicine," as Ms. Pololi states.

In a period of declining resources, the pressure on medical schools (and therefore their faculty members) to produce revenue is extreme. Unlike main-campus faculty members, those in medical schools typically work 80-plus hours a week, supporting their own salaries through grants or clinical revenues. They accomplish this while also carrying the responsibility of teaching future scientists and physicians and creating the knowledge to advance medical science. These pressures put tremendous strain on our medical schools. While I do not deny that our faculty members share this stress, in my experience leaders in academic medicine share and encourage the very same values Ms. Pololi attributes to medical-school faculty members: commitments to discovery and the application of medical science to the care of patients, care for the underserved and, first and foremost, the superb education of our future health-care work force.

My evidence? In our medical schools today it is common to find faculty members advising their best and brightest students to consider careers in academic medicine—careers they have personally found rewarding, in environments supportive of curiosity, discovery, and service to the greater good. If what Dr. Pololi described were true, why would that be the case?

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