

What Makes You Proud to Work at PAHS?



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The Context:

There are a few attributes in any organization that make people proud or displeased at work. Some academic organizations genuinely care about their students, faculty and employees and want to see them succeed whilst some are formal and do not care at the individual level. Some offer a lot of training and opportunities to help employees grow and advance in their careers while some do not pay attention to these matters. Some organizations are socially and environmentally responsible, and are always looking for the betterment of underserved populations whereas others are fully profit oriented.

Few years ago, I asked my colleagues, students and administrative staff 'What makes you proud to work / study at PAHS?' In my view, this is an important question to reflect, review and improve for the betterment of an academic institution. The knowledge, skills and ethical values we impart will have a direct impact on new generation leaders, patient care, quality of education and professional integrity.

I found diverse responses from different groups of participants, some of which were very positive while some were negative. However, most of the responses were centered at the micro and personal level. In this short writing piece, I take the opportunity to highlight some of the quotes shared with me. I also share some of my personal reflections that make me proud while working at PAHS.

Responses of the Administrative Staff:

'Nothing, I have never been proud to work here. Why should I be proud? I am a senior staff member

at PAHS and haven't been promoted, while those who joined later have become my bosses'?

'To be honest, I regard my job ordinarily which means I do not become overly proud of it or undermine it. I work hard from 8 AM to 4 PM and get a salary. PAHS is growing and many academic and service programs are expanded. One positive aspect is that PAHS is not a private organization that someone fully controls and decides according to his/her will.'

'The atmosphere between the members of the PAHS family is open-mindedness, team work, and the desire to succeed together. In this organization, there is less hierarchy between teaching staff and administrative staff, and most of the staff are friendly and supportive. I live in Lalitpur, and I am happy working at PAHS.'

'During the COVID-19 pandemic, doctors, nurses and staff worked hard. Such works prevented a lot of us from dying. PAHS was honored and congratulated by the Ministry of Health and Education, and Lalitpur Metropolitan City. It was something to be very proud about. Even in the dire situation, salary was given to us on a regular basis. The lower level staff get a relatively better salary compared to other organizations.'

Faculties Provided the Following Responses:

'PAHS is good for permanent medical and nursing faculty. The Service Commission is active, faculties are promoted on a regular basis, doctors are allowed to work in other hospitals after and before office

hours, and benefit provision after retirement is good. For others, it is challenging. Research component is relatively weak compared to education and service. For non-clinical faculties, without research opportunities the work becomes monotonous after some years of experience.'

'I respect my own performance and institutional rules and regulations. Curriculum at PAHS is updated and is competency-based. When I stand before the students and explain the theory, methods and practical challenges, they listen to me carefully and respond positively, it satisfies me.'

'Here everything goes to plan. I feel satisfied with my current job. PAHS is the only academic institution in Nepal where the students and faculties know the exact dates of various examinations. Working the first three days a week and getting off on Wednesday and working two days again is a very comfortable schedule. Salary is deposited in the bank account by the end of the month.'

'Although faculties do not get handsome salaries at PAHS, it is an autonomous, not-for-profit, self-sustained organization and the rules and regulations are transparent. All the faculties and staff have to work hard and maintain discipline. I am happy working at PAHS.'

Students' Responses Were as Follows:

'Due to inadequate space, we have been compromising our teaching learning activities at PAHS. Sometimes it is difficult to get room for lecture sessions. There are issues related to the hostel and canteen. Despite these limitations, teaching and learning activities at PAHS are good. Most of the faculties are friendly, curriculum is updated, examinations and results are happening in time.'

'Problem Based Learning, Community-based Learning and Education field posting, Medical Humanities, intensive orientation and the PAHS mission and values puts strong emphasis on quality and skill-based competency. Research and practical application are emphasized in our curriculum. Such provision at PAHS makes me proud.'

'Innovative teaching-learning methods, commitment of the faculty, friendly faculty members, self-directed learning and education, culture of teamwork and collaboration among the faculty members and their full time commitment at

PAHS makes me happy.'

'I feel proud to be a member of the PAHS family because of its curriculum, teaching-learning methods, friendly environment and availability of low-cost canteen. I feel good to say that I am a PAHS graduate.'

What Makes Me Proud While Working at PAHS?

I do not comment on the responses of the administrative staff, faculty and students although there are a lot of variations on their views. I will not repeat the similar responses but will share my observations and reflections. Neither I will tell you about how many students have gone abroad for further education nor how many of our graduates and faculties received political appointments. I will share how a small working style and practice make the system different from the conventional one. It is the nuances in our working culture and values that makes many of us happy and proud.

First, the provision of a common toilet for Executive Council members, staff and students. Such a unique practice fosters a sense of equality and inclusivity within the workplace. It breaks down hierarchical barriers and promotes a more cohesive and collaborative environment where everyone feels respected and valued. Moreover, it simplifies maintenance and resource allocation to manage and clean. A common toilet can contribute to a more unified, efficient and harmonious workplace atmosphere.

Second, we have the same canteen and sitting arrangement for all levels of staff. Eating at the same canteen promotes a sense of unity and equality within the PAHS family. Cost of each item in the canteen is the same for all PAHS members. An office assistant can sit, interact and share the same dining table with the Vice Chancellor and other senior officials. Such practice has been encouraging informal interaction and conversations across different staff, faculty and students. It helps break down the barriers that might otherwise exist between ranks and files. Such a setup is helping to improve communication and collaboration, as everyone has the opportunity to exchange ideas and build relationships in a communal setting. It also reduces costs and logistics related to operation and maintenance. Most importantly, the quality and cost of food and service are the same irrespective of hierarchy and position, ensuring fairness for all.

Third, the Executive Council Members (Vice Chancellor, Rector, Registrar, Deans and Coordinator, Hospital Director and Medical Director) of PAHS teach,

regularly perform academic and service related work, and travel to field to provide training to the students, health workers, and engage with the community as and when needed. In many academic institutions, juniors work hard and seniors go as external examiners and as delegates for various international and national conferences. The case of PAHS is different, seniors have multiple roles and responsibilities for the betterment of the institution. They inspire the next generation doctors, nurses, administrative staff and students.

Fourth, the PAHS authorities are easily accessible for communicating academic and service related issues. Such practice ensures transparency, swift solution of problems, and stronger sense of ownership to resolve the common issues.

Fifth, everyone's office hours are paid by the institution. In many academic institutions, senior officials and faculties get meeting allowances and project benefits. The case of PAHS is different. Faculty should prepare the examination questions and check answer sheets at the office hours. They are not allowed to take examination answer sheets in their homes for marking and evaluation. All the work should be done without additional benefits. These rules promote ethics, professionalism and integrity but hinder for promoting the research culture and other scholarly work.

Sixth, health care service at PAHS is affordable and unnecessary tests are not recommended. Health care services in Nepal are expensive and people are unable to afford treatment in private hospitals. Many private hospitals frequently mandate unnecessary diagnostic tests as a prerequisite for the treatment. In contrast, doctors at Patan Hospital avoid recommending unnecessary tests and medicines are cheaper in the hospital pharmacy, making essential care more accessible and affordable.

Seventh, PAHS does not publicly notify the marks obtained by the students in the examinations. The objective is to encourage each and every student for their growth and development and minimize the competitive feelings among them. The result is given to individual students.

Finally, as one of the founding faculties, I am proud to be a teacher at PAHS for many reasons highlighted above. I spend the maximum time of a day at PAHS where the positive energy of students is felt and experienced.
