

Mentors in the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine

Overall goals

Mentoring fellows and other trainees represent an important contribution to the Division and profession. The role of mentor is a major responsibility during a critical time in the professional development of fellows and other trainees. By accepting to mentor and train a fellow, faculty members commit to providing a fostering environment that provides a fellow the best available opportunities to succeed over their fellowship period and successfully transition, if desired, to a faculty level position.

Mentor's primary responsibilities for research mentees

During the research training periods, all fellows and trainees will have a primary research mentor. This faculty member assumes the responsibility to develop and implement a plan for career development. Career development would include overall career goals, acquisition of necessary skills and credentials/benchmarks for a successful transition to a faculty level research position.

Mentors are expected to discuss potential research agenda/projects that the fellow may have a leadership role. The discussion should include the degree of overlap with the primary mentor's own research goals and agenda. There is an explicit acknowledgement that fellows represent a set of individuals with heterogeneous prior exposure to research activities. Some fellows will therefore have more developed ideas than others. Mentors should be prepared to offer fellows/trainees research projects commensurate with the fellow's research experience and which will allow the trainee to lead. Mentors should be willing to provide adequate resources, including time, space and facilities, supplies, expertise, and effort at a level of commitment to reasonably assure successful completion of the fellow's research training and projects. The primary mentor may need to facilitate interactions on the behalf of fellows to provide the greatest opportunities for research fellows. These interactions may include negotiating clinical duties or interacting with individuals who provide additional research learning opportunities. The primary mentor and fellow should meet in person on a regular basis to discuss the progress of research and career development.

Each mentor will serve as a role model for trainees in the following areas:

Intellectual Growth

1. Encourage the trainee to manage their time to allow them to integrate the existing and developing literature related to their research.
2. Support attendance at conferences that will augment their science and create networks with other investigators.
3. Provide constructive feedback and direction for manuscripts and grant proposals that encourage independence.

Professional Career Development

1. Assist mentee with establishing a realistic career development plan including timelines and milestones.
2. Map out a mentor/mentee separation strategy.
3. Provide realistic (and sometimes disappointing) feedback and advice throughout career progression and assist with evaluation of job offers.
4. Provide networking opportunities and introductions to colleagues
5. Assist with developing a 'road show' for job searches.
6. Encourage them to remain connected with the Division and to maintain their social capital.

Resources and Skills Development

1. Provide or identify the resources necessary for the trainee to conduct their research project. This may include training in specific techniques, access to coursework, or provision of technical assistance in these areas.
2. Provide writing, editing, and preparation guidance for manuscripts, abstracts, and presentations.
3. Provide support, guidance and feedback during the grant application process.

Personal Communication

1. Mentors should be able to articulate a clearly defined mentoring philosophy.
2. Mentors should clearly communicate performance expectations while providing constructive feedback.
3. Mentors should be explicit about their current level of commitment and provide time frames about the return of manuscripts and grant applications.

Traits of a Good Mentor

- Accessibility: An open door and an approachable attitude.
- Empathy: Personal insight into what the trainee is experiencing.
- Open-mindedness: Respect for each trainee's individuality and for working styles and career goals different from your own.
- Consistency: Acting on your stated principles on a regular basis.
- Patience: Awareness that people make mistakes and that each person matures at his or her own rate.
- Honesty: Ability to communicate the hard truths about their chosen career path and about the trainee's chances.
- Savvy: Attention to the pragmatic aspects of career development.

Salary Support

Please see current funding policy on website.

Mentoring Committees

All research fellows will form a Mentoring Committee composed of three to five faculty-equivalent members. The committee will usually include the primary research mentor, a secondary research mentor, and a faculty member without direct involvement in the fellow's research. In addition, the Program Director or the Director of Research Training must be included in each committee. In the situation of a less experienced primary mentor, the mentoring committee will include a senior mentor to provide additional support and expertise as needed.

Under the direction of the primary mentor, the charge of this committee is to oversee the professional development of the fellow in addition to evaluating progress on research. The fellow will meet with the Mentoring Committee at least every six months. Topics covered at these meetings should include review of the fellow's progress in completing a course of training, assistance with grants and manuscripts, and career development (e.g., making the necessary introductions for the fellow to secure an academic position and, ultimately, be successful in a junior faculty role).