

Best Practices from TRUST Continuity Collaborative Leaders

Best practices are ideas that TRUST Continuity Community faculty have used at their sites to enhance the TRUST experience. This is not intended as a comprehensive list of expectations for each experience but are ideas that at least one TCC faculty found useful.

Not all ideas will work equally well in your community. Consider the ideas as you continue to work with TRUST. Ideas in some areas are equally important in the others and may not be restated in full.

FSE – First Summer Experience

Plan ahead

1. Be aware of provider vacation schedules
2. Take care of any housekeeping details before the student arrives
 - a. Hospital badge
 - b. Electronic health record access
 - c. Student photo in and intro page in hospital and clinic
3. Plan to overlap FSE with RUOP when possible and when your resources allow this.
 - a. The two students can share experiences with RUOP student helping orient FSE student
 - b. Two students for at least part of the FSE will help to minimize isolation.
4. Tell the students about details upfront
 - a. Where will they be living
 - b. What do they need to bring to the experience (sheets? Towels? Etc.)

Orientation is the key to success

1. Give the student a guided tour of your community and introduce the student to community leaders. This is most often in the form of a driving tour or a walk around the clinic and hospital.
2. Consider organizing a medical community scavenger hunt, asking your new FSE student to ‘find’ people such as hospital leaders, EMT service, PT/OT staff, hospice nurses and physicians, fire fighters, nursing home director(s). Make this fun and not a rigid requirement. Some sites use geocaching to help facilitate this.
3. Do a needs assessment with the student at the beginning of the experience. This can help make use of the student’s current abilities to push them beyond what they know.
4. As much as possible try to structure the FSE around Scholar interests, passions and expectations. For instance, some students may have had extensive EMT experience and others little medical experience at all outside of shadowing.

Enhance the student experience

1. Introduce the student to community events, usually with your family (music, festivals, breweries, etc.)
2. Give the student a calendar of scheduled community events if such a thing exists. Many students will participate on their own.
3. Take the student on family outings such as bike rides, hikes, fishing, camping
4. Encourage others to invite the student for dinner during FSE and later
 - a. Hospital board members
 - b. Community physicians such as yourself
 - c. Other community leaders
5. Offer the student an EMS beeper so they can tag along when possible

Intersessions

Plan ahead

1. Assure that you will have adequate housing for all the learners at your site for a given intersession. You could have WRITE and Foundations TRUST Scholars for the March intersession each year.
2. Assure that you have adequate preceptors available for two or more students.

RUOP – Rural/Underserved Opportunities Program

Plan ahead

1. What more help does the student need to consider community engagement and selection of a project. Note that TRUST Scholars are expected to begin development of a project whether or not they are enrolled in iii3
2. TRUST Scholars are already connected to previous TRUST Scholars at your site. Suggest that the upcoming RUOP students consult with those coming before for suggestions about RUOP and iii3.

Orientation

1. Note ideas above for FSE.
2. Consider overlap with FSE or WRITE student where possible.
3. Discuss goals at the beginning of RUOP – again student experiences will be greatly shaped by their prior experiences. “Where are you now and where do you want to go?” Don’t pigeon-hole student based on their initial interest

4. Remember that Foundations students have a far greater early clinical exposure than in the past. They will expect to be active in patient care. Shadowing can be useful for the first few days to learn your style etc. but otherwise is **not** appropriate for students in RUOP.

Enhance the day-to-day clinical experience

1. Give the student a fairly detailed schedule for their RUOP experience
2. Students can rotate with other specialties in your community but not at the expense of a continuity experience with you and your clinic.
3. Observe students – even for part of a patient visit. There’s no other way to assure they are on track and for you to understand their level of expertise.
4. Gently push students beyond their current level with appropriate oversight.
5. Schedule a weekly debriefing with the student to give them feedback and to hear how the experience is working for them.
6. Give the student a “play of the day”. Discuss their biggest takeaway at the end of each day.

Enhance your student’s relationship with your community

1. Have the student present their community project to hospital board
2. Allow some time to learn about ancillary services and focus on the importance of working with a team
3. Involve student in community events (see FSE suggestions)
4. Expose them to rural / small city life – why would they want to live in a community like yours? Have discussions on this topic.
5. Reflect on most interesting parts of their day – at the end of each day with you, ask the student to reflect on the most interesting part of their day.
6. Have conversations about work-life balance
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WRITE – WWAMI Rural Integrated Training Experience

Plan ahead

1. See above
2. Consider having two WRITE students at once, if possible. Sites who have done this say that having two students is easier than they thought. The students help each other, keep each other company and spur each other to achieve more
3. Assure you have the preceptor resources if you want to opt for two students

Orientation

1. See above
2. Be aware of specific WRITE requirements and WRITE web site
3. Give a detailed schedule at least one month in advance
4. Explain your expectations around site visits from other UW faculty and provide staff support for the students to do this. Many students have not had experiences setting up visits and will need guidance especially initially.
5. Set clear expectations for performance, dress and any other areas where you have specific requirements. Don't wait for the student to disappoint you in some way!

Enhance the day-to-day clinical experience

1. Focus on the "art" of medicine (relationships, mutual respect with patients, trust and influence, how to listen verbally and nonverbally, putting the patient in charge of their health)
2. "Play of the day" (see above)
3. Take advantage of their academic and clinical preparedness: will the student make one or more presentations to physicians based on what they know? How else can you use their talents to help the practice?
4. Consider as many ways as possible that the student can contribute to the practice? I
5. Consider ways to help the student get to know each preceptor, usually through some informal means such as lunch or dinner with the preceptor and family.

Enhance your student's relationship with your community

1. Encourage community involvement
2. Encourage practice involvement
 - a. Include students in recruitment meetings
 - b. Have students attend hospital board meetings
3. Lunch or dinner with administrators to discuss their challenges in your rural community or small city.
4. Help the student expand their RUOP project or create a new project as required by the WRITE curriculum
 - a. Start discussion about this in the first weeks of WRITE
 - b. Help the student create a doable and useful community project
 - c. Note that previous projects for your community and others are recorded on the WRITE web site.
5. Meet local legislators where possible. Students can ask them their perspective of health care challenges in their area or state.
6. Meet local newspaper staff and encourage a feature story about the student and TRIUST in your community.