

“Best Practices” for Program Directors

Abby Abelson
Interim Chair
Education Program Director
Department of Rheumatic and Immunologic Diseases
Orthopaedic and Rheumatology Institute
Cleveland Clinic

Role of Program Director

- Educator, advocate, coach, communicator, parent, confidante, role model
- Trouble-shooter, crisis manager
- Evaluator, documenter
- Visionary, Leader
- Interviewer, ERAS expert
- Curriculum Developer
- Clinical Teacher
- Basic science educator
- Research coordinator

Positive Aspects of PD Role

- Clinical teaching, mentoring
- Research mentoring
- Relationship with fellows
- Opportunity to impact young physicians
- Creative curricular and program development
- Opportunity to be Departmental and Institutional leader
- Relationships with colleagues, interdisciplinary collaboration

Program Directors Challenges/Frustrations

- Institutional rules, RRC visits, Internal reviews
- Administrative Burden: Documentation, paperwork
- Duty hours, documentation
- Evaluation requirements/challenges
- Funding Challenges for Fellowship positions
- Difficulty obtaining funding for fellow research support
- Giving difficult feedback to trainees and colleagues
- Challenges recruiting teaching faculty
- Lack of sufficient protected time for demanding role
- Unpredictable demands on your time
- Clinical productivity requirements
- Undervaluing of teaching effort in RVU-driven systems
- Demands of Fellow Application and Interview Process

Confusing things about being PD

- Alphabet soup: ACGME, RRC, ERAS, ABIM, NRMP, AAMC (see handout)
- Competencies
- Evaluations
- Accreditation, Accreditation and Certification
- ERAS rules
- Visas
- Notification Requirements
- Documentation requirements
- Institutional Policies, requirements

Strategies to Optimize the Positives of Your PD Role

- Curriculum Development
- RRC Visit Preparation
- Articulating the Competencies, how you are teaching to them and evaluating them
- Expectations must relate to trainee level and must relate to measurable outcomes
- Customizing ACR Curriculum for your program
- Involve fellows in curriculum review and development (B. Libman)

Strategies: Documentation

- Fellows: patient and procedure lists, evaluations, 360° Evaluations including patients, support staff, nurses, reflective essays, Portfolios
- Trainee evaluation of staff
- Feedback analysis leading to TAFI's ("target areas for improvement")
- Document verbal feedback

Strategies

- Explore institutional resources to expand curriculum, evaluate fellows, duty hour documentation, competency proficiencies
- Be flexible (A. Weinstein)
- Regular Fellow meetings
- Institutional support
- Interdisciplinary teaching, conferences –(communicate their contributions to their chairs!)
- Orientation PASSPORT
- Physical diagnosis resources
- "Cadaver Clinic" for joint aspirations/injections: (A. Bass)
- Find experienced mentors at your institution and here!

Strategies to Support Fellow Research

- Introduction to Research expectations and opportunities: "shopping for mentor"
- Interdisciplinary opportunities
- Research Funding support
- Research Committee (A. Bass)
- Mock Study Section
- Abstract, poster and presentation mentorship

Ongoing Courses/Sessions to Enrich Curriculum

- Immunology courses
- Teaching sessions: Board review -opportunities for peer teaching (L. Staudt) "reading program", Rheum CPC (K. McKown)
- Medical writing course
- Epidemiology/ Biostats courses
- Rotating student, residents seminars (fellows developing as educators)
- Ethics, Communication, Public Policy lectures
- Basic Science Courses in University
- Musculoskeletal Ultrasound (J. Higgs)

Site Visit Preparation

- Felicia Davis
- Know the Requirements
- Know last citations
- Internal Review
- DOCUMENTATION
- Fellow files
- START 24 months ahead
- Role of program Administrator
- Institutional support

Educational Retreat

- Background
- Planning is key: Get away!
- Agenda : everyone's opinion is valuable
- Identify Departmental Strengths
- Frank discussion of challenges
- All challenges need creative discussion
- Constitutes "annual review" for RRC

Educational Retreat Outcomes

- All challenges need action steps: solutions, plans for further evaluation, programs, committees
- All prioritized action steps need staff assigned, plans for updates with deadlines
- Include fellows in the plans for solutions
- Progress updates to all stakeholders
- Seek ongoing feedback: Review, evaluate what's working and what's not
- Collaborative efforts maximize positive results
- Follow-up Retreats

PD as Communicator

- Open Door: Informal communication with fellows and staff may yield info about problems as well as potential solutions
- Fellow evaluations
- Fellow meetings
- Staff Meetings
- "Critical conversations"
- Feedback to those who support you

Program Director as Evaluator

- Need for Evidence base in practice of medical education
- Outcomes evaluation
- Educational outcomes measures: process vs. outcomes oriented
- 360 degree evaluations
- Documentation of evaluation results

Musick, DW, "A Conceptual Model for Program Evaluation in Graduate Medical Education". Acad Med. 2006; 81:759-765

Professional Development

- Professional development opportunities: within your institution - Departments of Education, Local Workshops
- National Courses (Harvard-Macy, etc)
- Promote Professional Educational development of faculty in your Department
- Professional development of fellows in Clinical Educator roles

Findings from Academic Workforce Survey that Impact PD's

- Demand for academic rheumatologists is high, present lack of diversity
- Rheum programs fill positions offered in ERAS
- Only 80% of fellow positions are reliably funded
- Fellow salary funding most important factor limiting complete filling of ACGME-approved slots
- Academic rheumatologists are "very satisfied"
- Recruitment: 76% of departments
- Stable number of fellowship positions
- Trend for fewer trainees to stay in academics
- Lack of Financial independence of academic departments: Academic Clinical Practice challenges
- Research Funding

Some of the recommendations from Academic Workforce Study that impact PD's and are currently being addressed by ACR Committees

- Academic workforce member and division database
- Research grant database
- Division Chief interchange
- Diversity promotion in leadership: women and minorities
- Support for physician scientists, especially early career
- Highlight positive attributes: intellectual, professional satisfaction, salary, lifestyle
- Funding of GME
- Fellow salary support: goal of maintaining 100% filling of ACGME-approved positions
- Tracking health of academic workforce

You are impacting the future!

- You CAN do this! You were chosen as a result of your demonstrated talents!
- Program administrator is KEY
- Find your Mentors – some of the most valuable are HERE!
- Join ACR!!
- Be sure all of your fellows join ACR!!
- ENJOY!!