

Grant Writing Seminar for Geriatrics Fellows and Junior Faculty

at Weill Medical College of Cornell University



SUMMARY

Target Audience

All geriatrics fellows as well as interested junior faculty in geriatrics

Purpose

To enhance academic career development of clinical investigators in geriatrics by providing participants with the skills necessary for successful grant writing and reviewing

Program

A 14-week seminar with lectures and hands-on grant writing experience

History

The seminar was first implemented in the 2006-07 academic year and will be given again in 2008-09

Operating Costs

2-3% FTE for the course director; minimal time for the administrative staff

Outcomes

Six fellows participated in 2006; two graduates of the seminar applied for and received GACA awards

Available Materials

Course Syllabus

For More Information

Cary Reid, MD, PhD
Weill Medical College of Cornell University
(212) 746-1729
mcr2004@med.cornell.edu

Program Overview

This 14-week seminar covers core topics in effective grant writing, including organization, formatting of hypotheses, presentation of preliminary data, organization of research design/methods, and tips on resubmission of NIH grants. Participants gain hands-on experience by writing an actual grant during the last half of the course.

All geriatrics fellows participate in the course, either in their first or second year of training, as do interested junior faculty in geriatrics.

The seminar was initially implemented in the 2006-07 academic year and will be given again in 2008-09. The course is designed to enhance the academic career development of clinical investigators in geriatrics.

Program Operations

The 14-week seminar is comprised of weekly one-hour classes. Didactic materials include Otto A. Yang's *Guide to Effective Grant Writing* as well as previously submitted grants by diverse investigators. Homework is assigned weekly to promote skills acquisition in both grant writing and reviewing. Attendees are assigned several grants to read each week and then have to answer questions about the grants.

Participants gain important reviewing skills by critically evaluating the specific aim, background and significance, preliminary results, and research design and methods sections of the grants.



Staffing Requirements

Currently one faculty member (the Center of Excellence Director) teaches all of the sessions. Administrative staff distribute weekly reminders regarding reading and other homework assignments.

Program Costs and Funding Sources

The course director requires 2-3% FTE for weekly preparation and reviewing grants. The administrative assistant spends minimal time circulating materials.

The Hartford Center of Excellence grant fully supports this initiative.

Process and Outcomes Data

The course has been implemented once. Four fellows (two first- and two second-year) and three junior faculty (all instructors) attended the seminar. Two graduates of the seminar applied for and received Geriatrics Academic Career Awards (GACA). Both reported that the seminar was critically important in helping them to write compelling proposals. In addition, one graduate judged that the course enabled her to prepare a highly competitive (and ultimately funded) pilot grant application at her current institution.

Course attendees were surveyed about their likes/dislikes and suggested areas for improvement. The course was uniformly felt to be extremely helpful in terms of preparing participants for a career in academic geriatric medicine. The format of using actual grants with questions was also uniformly judged to be positive. The only suggested change was to extend the number of sessions to allow more time for participants to work on their own grants.

Implementation Lessons

- The course is offered every other year because the division has a two-year fellowship program. There were six participants in the first round (four fellows and two junior faculty). This was a manageable course size when reviewing/critiquing fellows' grants.
- Offering the class in institutions with larger numbers of fellows would obviously increase the course director's workload and could result in less effective group interaction.
- This course will be made available to nondivisional fellows/faculty in the near future, which could help to broadly showcase the rapidly growing expertise housed within the Geriatrics Division, as well as to foster new interdisciplinary initiatives between Divisional and non-Divisional faculty and fellows.

Available Materials

Tools/Resources

- Course Syllabus

References

- *Guide to Effective Grant Writing: How to Write a Successful NIH Grant*
Yang, Otto A.
Springer, 2005.

For More Information

Cary Reid, MD, PhD
Associate Professor of Medicine
Division of Geriatrics and Gerontology
Weill Medical College of Cornell University
525 East 68th Street, Box 39
New York, NY 10065
(212) 746-1729
mcr2004@med.cornell.edu

This document is part of a compilation of approaches to geriatrics recruitment, career development, and programmatic expansion, based on the work of the John A. Hartford Foundation "Centers of Excellence in Geriatric Medicine and Training." For more information, visit www.afar.org/recruitment or www.jhartfound.org.

