

Aging-Related Research Career Development Core for Junior Investigators

at the University of Michigan



SUMMARY

Target Audience

Junior faculty from schools in the health professions

Purpose

To train junior faculty to become independent investigators in aging-related research and academic leaders in geriatrics and gerontology within their respective disciplines

Program

Monthly scientific seminars; ongoing lectures, research presentations, and mentoring; an annual research retreat

History

Research Career Development Core activities have been offered since 1989

Operating Costs

Over 10 faculty from geriatrics and other divisions and departments serve as lecturers and mentors; administrative staff members provide about 0.2 FTE effort

Outcomes

Participant evaluations of seminars and mentoring relationships

Available Materials

List of Research Career Development Core seminar topics

For More Information

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Program Overview

The Research Career Development Core aims to recruit, select, support, mentor, and train junior faculty to become independent investigators in aging-related research and academic leaders in geriatrics and gerontology within their respective disciplines.

A mock NIH study section held during the annual research retreat component of the Core is a unique educational experience. Junior faculty have the opportunity to evaluate their peers' research proposals and to have their proposals evaluated by top University of Michigan and visiting faculty experts. Both local trainees and trainees from around the country have participated. This unique program model has been reproduced at national conferences.

Program Operations

The components of the program include:

- monthly scientific seminars held from September through April (see *Available Materials* for list of topics)
- periodic lectures by senior faculty on mentoring, funding, and subject recruitment, and presentations by junior faculty illustrating their research
- an annual retreat at the end of May, which includes a mock NIH study section for select local and national researchers, led by national experts from the University of Michigan and other institutions.

The Research Career Development Core seminars are held on the main medical campus and are open to junior faculty (and others with an interest in aging



research) from all disciplines. A monthly e-mail is sent to a campus-wide group list, the Division's Aging Directory, as well as to specific Research Career Development Core participants, promoting the scientific seminars.

Staffing Requirements

Over 10 faculty from geriatrics and other divisions and departments are involved with presenting the various seminar series. Existing administrative staff members provide approximately 0.2 FTE effort in support of these activities.

Program Costs and Funding Sources

The cost related to the retreat is approximately \$10,000 per year. In addition, staff salaries are approximately \$12,000 per year (not including fringe benefits). Some faculty effort is also required to direct these activities. The program is part of the Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center at the University of Michigan, funded by the National Institute on Aging. The Pepper Center, the Hartford Foundation, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and various external grants also support research efforts for some of the junior faculty.

Process and Outcomes Data

Satisfaction surveys are collected at the conclusion of each Annual Retreat to evaluate the program content, experience, and venue. Anonymous anecdotal comments are also encouraged on the survey. An informal mentorship evaluation program is also being formulated for those trainees who receive salary support.

Implementation Lessons

- It is recommended that junior faculty have an opportunity to present their work in front of both their peers and their senior mentors.
- Careful review of proposals by senior mentors who have experience on study sections is particularly useful.

- Other career development seminars including topics such as research funding opportunities and mentorship are also useful.

Available Materials

Tools/Resources

- List of Research Career Development Core seminar topics

For More Information

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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.

