

Promoting Faculty Development Through Structured Mentoring

Dear Editor:

Mentorship plays a crucial role in facilitating professional development and career advancement. Engaging in mentorship can be mutually beneficial for mentors and mentees.¹ Various models of mentorship exist, including peer mentoring and apprenticeship. Peer mentoring offers a collaborative platform for individuals with shared interests and similar levels of training to exchange knowledge, experiences, and learning resources. Conversely, apprenticeship models involve mentors with more professional experience than their mentees.²

The Division of General Internal Medicine (GIM) at the Medical College of Wisconsin has 2 formalized mentoring programs: peer mentoring affinity groups and structured mentor-mentee programs. Affinity groups include research, medical education, quality improvement, and case report groups; and more than 100 faculty and advanced practice providers (APP) are part of them. To assess the effectiveness of the affinity groups, we surveyed 85 assistant professors in GIM, resulting in a response rate of 42%; 17 out of 20 faculty members (85%) who attended affinity groups indicated that they are valuable in promoting scholarship activity and faculty development.

The structured mentor-mentee program (apprenticeship model) implemented by our division enables junior faculty to choose mentors based on their area of interest and meet their mentors twice a year to discuss short-term and long-term career goals. The program has 12 mentors and 20 mentees, totaling 32 participants. The results from a survey conducted at the end of 2022 to evaluate the program's effectiveness were quite encouraging: a majority (83% of mentors and 100% of mentees) recommended the program to others. Participants noted a range of benefits, including promotion, increased scholarly productivity, greater collaboration, and leadership development. We are pleased to report that our division recently has introduced a similar mentorship model for APPs.

We have observed an exponential increase in peer-reviewed publications and presentations at regional and national meetings since the implementation of these programs. Additionally, faculty members who have participated in these programs have been appointed to several committees and have assumed leadership roles at

regional and national levels. Notably, we have observed an increase in faculty members promoted to associate and full professor.

While mentorship programs cannot be one-size-fits-all and need to be tailored to address local needs, our findings underscore the feasibility of combining 2 distinct programs and their potential to foster academic excellence and success for GIM faculty. Further research is needed to identify specific factors that contribute to success of these programs and to determine their applicability in other medical disciplines.

—Sanjay Bhandari, MD; Trisha Jethwa, MD; Pinky Jha, MD, MPH

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