PAYING IT FORWARD: A UNIQUE APPROACH TO JUNIOR FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE BASIC SCIENCES

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BACKGROUND

Mentorship and professional advancement training are fundamental to the success of junior faculty members as they begin their academic careers. The journey of promotion and tenure is fraught with hurdles for all faculty. Those faculty in basic science departments must navigate unique challenges that include the additional complexity of obtaining external grant funding, navigating intellectual property regulations, substantial publishing pressures, and running a lab. The Department of Cell, Developmental, and Cancer Biology has hired several junior faculty within the last five years and, as such, needed to tackle the unique needs of these faculty. In order to address this, they developed the Junior Faculty Advancement Program (JFAP).

GOALS OF THE JFAP

The JFAP was developed to address the unique needs of junior faculty within the Department of Cell, Developmental, and Cancer Biology. Both junior and senior faculty identified the need for a formal, structured senior faculty mentorship committee for each junior faculty member as well as several professional skill development workshops which address topics of unique interest to basic science faculty including the business of science, leadership training, and the promotion and tenure process. The success of this program has thus far been determined by junior and senior faculty satisfaction. Future outcomes that will be assessed among junior faculty include grant funding, publications, and achievement of promotion and tenure.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Formal Mentoring Committee
• Team Approach: 2-3 Mentors per Mentee
• Junior Faculty and Dept. Chair Jointly Select Members
• Formal Biannual Meetings

Grant & Manuscript Pre-Submission Reviews
• Career Guidance
• Review of Finances

Business of Science Workshops
• Establishing Lab Culture
• Finance & HR Management
• Conflict Resolution
• Intellectual Property & Tech Transfer
• Promotion & Tenure
• Communications
• Public Speaking
• Scientific Writing

Leadership Development Workshops
• Professionalism
• Conflict Management
• Self-Assessment
• Expert Coaching
• Team Building

Sponsorship
• Networking/Advocacy
• Opportunities for Professional Exposure
• Identify Targeted Grant Opportunities

CURRENT JFAP OVERSIGHT

• Faculty Development Team (3 Member Team)
  o Sets yearly agendas & identifies experts to provide training
  o Evaluates effectiveness-integrates junior faculty feedback
  o Reports to Chair & Department – integrates Dept. level feedback

• Primary Faculty Chair/Point Person (Considered ‘Service’ Under Faculty Compact)
  o Tracks overall program progress
  o Responsible for program coordination

• Train the Trainer
  o Faculty members who complete training modules receive certificates of completion and advance to discussant & trainee roles within the JFAP workshop series
  o Provides indirect leadership training opportunities for mid-level faculty

PROGRAM GROWTH

• The JFAP began with 5 junior faculty within the Department of Cell, Developmental, and Cancer Biology.

• It was recognized in the 2016 Cancer Center Support Grant Competitive Renewal & Site Visit and expanded to 23 faculty.

• It was then reviewed by the Dean’s Committee on Faculty Advancement and served as a basis for university-wide faculty development programs.

• The invitation list now includes over 100 names and the program has begun to scale up.

• Tables 1 & 2 show the expansion of the JFAP over time.

OUTCOMES TO DATE

Surveys are sent after each workshop; the results drive content improvements and future program choices. Example Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop results</th>
<th>Satisfaction Score</th>
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<td>Objective were Clear and Met</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities Stimulated Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provided Individualized Feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriate Pace</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

LESSONS LEARNED

• Small, interactive working groups to assure program content meets needs of individual faculty & to help establish community.

• High value content. Junior faculty are busy and need to receive maximum benefit per unit training time.

• Innovation. Faculty have low tolerance for didactic lectures. Require interactive, face paced, experience-based learning.

• Needs to evolve with the faculty. One mechanism is to have early adopters of the training transition to trainers and mentors.

CONCLUSIONS

• The “Four pillars of the JFAP” utilizes diverse levels and types of expertise, and meet a myriad of junior faculty needs.

• The current program is directly impacting about ~30% of invited junior faculty. It remains to be determined if this 30% participation reflects current need, or signifies lack of program impact.

• Established blocks of this program are readily tailored and transferable to other Divisions, Departments, and Schools.

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