

advance their career in medical student education. The Medical Student Educators Development Institute (MSEDI) teaches grant writing, negotiating, curriculum and exam development, student evaluation, as well as obtaining and managing resources and directing a clerkship. MSEDI participants forge enduring relationships, with both other participants as well as the Institute faculty, who support and guide them throughout their professional careers.

### New Faculty Scholars

The New Faculty Scholars Award provides STFM members who are in their first 2 years as full-time faculty, and who exhibit outstanding leadership potential, the opportunity to attend the STFM Annual Spring Conference. Scholars receive exposure to discipline leaders and community-building activities that might not have occurred without the program.

### Other STFM Leadership Opportunities

Regardless of where an individual is in their career path, there is a leadership role to fit varied interests and skills. Leadership opportunities include chairing a STFM special interest group, heading a task force, serving on a standing committee, or serving as a mentor, publication reviewer, fellowship faculty member, or a liaison to other organizations. There is an opportunity to fit each individual's need, interest, and time commitment.

Creating organizational culture, managing change, recognizing the systems barriers to progress and opportunities for improvement require, among others, skills in negotiation, conflict management, and strategic thinking. Only by dedicated attention to acquiring, practicing, and implementing leadership skills can we hope to develop effective leaders for family medicine.



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## BUILDING RESEARCH CAPACITY IN DEPARTMENTS OF FAMILY MEDICINE: PEARLS FROM NAPCRG 2013

One of the ongoing goals of the ADFM research committee is to assist chairs in building research capacity in family medicine departments. As a part of this effort, there were 3 separate events at the 2013 North

American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG) annual meeting focusing on this issue. The first event was actually 9 events—"mini-consultations" given by chairs with research experience to those working to develop research within their departments. The second was a 90-minute session called "Secrets of My Research Success," during which 3 experienced and successful family medicine researchers told their stories and answered questions from an engaged group of about 70 participants. Finally, approximately 17 Canadian and US family medicine chairs in attendance at NAPCRG conducted their customary NAPCRG joint meeting, and the focus was building research capacity. We (J.H., T.K.) had the privilege of attending all 3 sessions and would like to share the take-away lessons. These lessons are for both department chairs and aspiring researchers.

### General Advice

Start with small steps, but be persistent. Don't think of research as a series of projects, but rather as a program of inquiry in which one study sets the stage for the next. Both mosaic (variety of areas of inquiry) and single theme models of research divisions can work. It depends on faculty interest and skills. Embrace critical thinking, which is essential for high quality research designs. Good researchers must embrace their critics and learn from others' experiences and suggestions.

### Finding a Research Question/Area of Inquiry

Be sure you answer the "so what" question first—your area of inquiry must be compelling. Good sources of research questions arise from puzzles and predicaments that motivate the researcher. But don't "jump in an intellectual box without a lid"—be ready to jump out and reconceptualize your research if it is leading nowhere. For example, studying a condition only in the clinic setting may be too small a box. What happens to these patients in the community?

### Getting Experience

Present posters as a first step, which can build confidence for publishing your findings and help you find collaborators. Or start by writing an evidence-based review. Become an expert in a content area you are passionate about, and good research questions will emerge.

### Training and Mentorship

Consider a multiple mentor model—one for career guidance and others for content/methods expertise. Don't only look up for mentors—also look sideways; peers at a similar level of development can be highly effective mentors. Look outside your department

for mentors and training opportunities. For example, schools of public health are rich sources of expertise.

### Grants and Funding

Because federal grant funding is highly competitive, look for other funding sources, too, from a wide variety of national, state and regional grant funding organizations. For example, March of Dimes funds small projects in prenatal care. Grant writers can be very helpful in producing a polished product, but investigators must come up with the fundable research questions. Consider serving on a study section; it is a wonderful way to learn what outstanding funded projects look like.

### Collaboration and Partnerships

Not all departments of family medicine can or should be research intensive, but all can and should be involved in scholarship, following the criteria proposed by Boyer.<sup>1</sup> Consider partnering with other family medicine departments that are research intensive. Your affiliated clinical sites can participate in research studies as members of a practice based research network. Collaborate with other departments at your medical school and university. Document your scholarly work in annual reports and distribute the report, which may lead to research collaborations.

### Institutional Expectations

Take advantage of institutional expectations and resources. If medical school leadership expects you to do research, define what that means for your Department and ask for the necessary resources.

### Finding Time and Staff

Schedule daily or weekly time for reflection and writing dedicated to research. Choose a time of the day when you tend to be most productive. Free up researchers' time for the intellectual work only they can do, similar to the team model of patient care. For example, preparing IRB applications and budgets can often be delegated in part or in whole. Research is a team sport, just like patient care. High value team members include skilled grant writers, research administrators, bachelor's and master's level research associates, and librarians.

*John Hickner, MD, MsC, Anton Kuzel, MD, MHPE,  
and Amanda Weidner, MPH  
on behalf of the ADFM Research Development Committee*

### Reference

1. Boyer EL. *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; 1990.