Session III: Institutional Strategies to Promote Scholarship

Ingrid Philibert, PhD
with Ade Olomu, MD, MS
Objectives

• Articulate steps for finding a research/writing mentor
• Finding your own help: Steps in developing a research “research support group”
• Institutional strategies for enhancing scholarly productivity
• Identifying and Overcoming Barriers
• Peer review as a strategy for learning (and giving back to the community)
• Closing Thoughts
First Step: It Begins With the Individual

• Cultivating successful habits
• Just do it!
• Get thoughts down in outline without editing
• Protect writing time: *just say no!*
• Create an environment conducive to writing
• Set short term goals – 1 hour steps
  • Write them down
• Don’t do it alone – collaborate
  • Studies show benefits to ‘writing groups’
Taking the First Step

• Start with whatever seems easiest
  - Abstract - Background - Methods
• Try dictating with voice-recognition software
• Start the writing as soon as you start the project (background, methods)

Other ideas from attendees?
Next Step: Organize Yourselves - The “Research Club” as a Writing and Literary Critique Group

Several Formats:

- The standing “writers group” – Ernest Rutherford’s laboratory at MIT met periodically and discussed, not what worked, but what did not work. Members obtained informal advice and used it in their work. This produced a sizable number of Nobel laureates and other significant science awards.

- The ‘one-time or periodic “research and writing workshop”

- More frequently done with residents, but it need not be residents

- Can invite a successful research or writer to do a local workshop

- Could use elements of Section I from this workshop for a local level workshop for faculty or faculty and residents

- Need not be limited to research writing (see Lemay et al on reflective writing)


Promoting Scholarship: A Practical Perspective

Ade Olomu, MD, MS, FACP
Professor of Medicine
Personal Story

- My mentor, Margaret Holmes Rovner PhD, found me very early in my career!

- Highlights include:
  - Collaborative Writing Group
  - Grant writing; first NIH grant
  - Weekly research meetings
  - Found additional mentors
  - Professional associations
  - Became a mentor; started support groups
Personal Story

- Promotion from Assistant Professor to full Professorship through mentorships and collaborations
- Appointed Vice-Chair for Research and Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) fellow for 2018
Mentorship

How to get the most out of a mentor relationship

– Meet regularly
– Set boundaries
– Set goals
– Prepare for meetings
– E-mail a summary of each meeting
– Keep a mentoring journal
Mentoring

Here are some questions to ask:

– How often will we meet?
– How long will the meetings be?
– Will we have email contact between meetings?
– Can you advise on spur-of-the-moment concerns?
– Can we attend academic events together?
There are a number of different ways to support writing and successful publications.

These can be categorized as academic writing courses or workshops, writing groups and collaborative writing.

Expressed Barriers to Writing for Publication

- Lack of time
- Competing demands
- Working alone can lead to “writer’s block” which produces feelings of anxiety, being overwhelmed and worries about rejection
- Difficulty on focusing on a topic
- Lack of knowledge about the submission process
Benefits of Writing Groups

- Barriers to publication can be overcome through peer support writing groups.
- It provides mentorship, support, and guidance as well enhancing productivity, enabling proposals and applications to be more competitive.
Why did we start?

- The impetus to create writing groups in the Department of Medicine, MSU, came from the Chair of Medicine and Vice-Chair for research who shared the desire to improve scholarly activities among busy physicians.

- Plan was to do a “trial” with a team of 4-5 interested physicians and measure the outcome.
What did we do?

- The initial meetings allowed for the creation of the group’s culture and functioning (forming stage)
- We decided to meet for an hour every 2 weeks
- Subsequent meetings were devoted to the identification of potential manuscript topics.
- A “manuscript queue” was developed to record manuscript ideas, lead authors, potential journals, as well as current status of the current manuscript projects
What did we do?

- Based on discussion, members would volunteer to take the lead on manuscript preparation and identify timeline for task completion.
- Jointly decide on best journal to submit a manuscript.
- First and second authorship roles would be identified, and fellow group members would volunteer on the sections they could contribute to the first draft.
What did we do?

- Minutes are taken at meetings to help track manuscripts and follow up plans.
- Group members were required to bring their assignments and provide status updates.
- Draft manuscripts would be sent several days before the scheduled meeting to allow for review.
- The structured meetings held group members accountable for task completion.
What did we do?

- The discussion that ensured advanced each manuscript more rapidly than any individual author might have been able to do independently.
- Meetings included lively discussions about manuscripts content.
- Subsequent drafts were developed by the first and second authors until they felt it was beneficial for other authors to review and comment.
What did we do?

- The group drafted and agreed to authorship guidelines, that described the responsibilities of the first, and second authors and collaborating authors.
- Wrote abstracts for conference presentations jointly during meetings.
- As papers were accepted and published in peer-reviewed journals, group excitement and motivation increased.
## Results

### Manuscript Writing Group (2015-2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscripts Published</th>
<th>Under Review</th>
<th>In Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Grant Writing Group (2015-2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grants Submitted</th>
<th>Under Review</th>
<th>Funded</th>
<th>In preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

- Success is measured not only by the scholarly productivity of the writing groups, but the way the model is spreading.

- A cardiology writing group with a focus on book chapters just formed and recently had 1 publication and others in the queue.

- A virtual writing group between East Lansing and Flint campuses was just formed and we are working on 2 manuscripts from Flint campus and 2 manuscripts from the East Lansing campus.
Grant Writing Group

- Same structure as described for the manuscript writing group but the focus is on writing grant applications.
- We meet every 2 weeks.
- Consists of 4 members. We submitted 16 grant applications in 2 years. 8 grants were funded. Two NIH RO1’s were submitted in October and are currently under review.
What did we learn?

- Writing groups can be an effective strategy to promote critical thinking and publication preparation.
- These groups are helpful to overcome traditional barriers to writing for publications.
- Getting started can often be a tremendous hurdle to cross, but using existing documents to “jump start” the process can help to overcome some of the obstacles of getting started.
What did we learn?

- Attention to group process and project management is essential

- A priori development of authorship guidelines can serve to prevent misunderstanding or disappointments at critical times of the manuscript process.

- Authorship guidelines helped to remind us of the ethical nature of writing for publications and assured that the writing group met the highest standards
What does this mean for others?

- Some of the factors that led to the success of the writing group model include:
  - Champions who agreed to lead the group,
  - Group members with motivation to write and group members who see the value in using existing project work as the springboard for getting published and contributing to the literature.
What does this mean for others?

- When these attributes are channeled by experienced authors who lead, guide and mentor the writing group members, success is inevitable.
Some Tips for those who wish to start a writing group

- Have a common purpose and manageable goals
- Utilize individual’s strength and develop their weaknesses
- Listen to each other
- Have fun, be flexible
- But keep the momentum going with regular meetings and support each other when work or other commitments peak.
Thank you!
Dr. Philibert continued...
Making the “Institutional Commitment:” Developing Institutional Awareness and an Institutional Scholarship Mission

- **Strategy 1:** State that linking clinical work/teaching and scholarship is central to the institutional mission and formulate strategies and plans to support this nexus
- **Strategy 2:** Make this part of the mission and deliver
- **Strategy 3:** Organize events, highlight ongoing research studies, publications and scholarly projects to raise institutional awareness
- **Strategy 4:** Develop institutional strategies to positively affect the clinical/teaching/research links
- **Strategy 5:** Explain and involve faculty and learners in your institutional conception of the clinical/teaching/research relationship

Adapted from: Jenkins A, Heal M. Institutional strategies to link teaching and research. The Higher Education Academy, 2005; https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/id585_institutional_strategies_to_link_teaching_and_research_2.pdf
Making the “Institutional Commitment:” Developing Approaches to Support the Care/Teaching/Scholarship Nexus

- Strategy 6: Develop and audit teaching policies and practices and implement strategies to strengthen the teaching-research nexus
- Strategy 7: Use strategic and operational planning and institutional audit to strengthen the nexus
- Strategy 8: Develop curriculum requirements
- Strategy 9: Review the timetable
- Strategy 10: Develop specific structures and programs
- Strategy 11: Ensure teaching-research links are central to policies on promotion and reward

Adapted from: Jenkins A, Heal M. Institutional strategies to link teaching and research. The Higher Education Academy, 2005; https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/id585_institutional_strategies_to_link_teaching_and_research_2.pdf
Institutional Resources: The “Bear” Necessities

- Courses in methodology, ideally tailored to the novice, advanced beginner and competent researcher who still needs a level of support
- Statistics and methods support
  - Ability to involve early, during the contemplative phase
  - Expertise in survey design, if you use a survey (locally or “on retainer”)
  - “You Can't Fix by Analysis What You've Spoiled by Design: Developing Survey Instruments and Collecting Validity Evidence”
- Convening and information sharing functions
- Opportunities to present locally (“research day,” with expert critique)
- An option: “Promotion and Tenure” informal review

Institutional Strategies: Providing Research Mentoring

• Faculty prepared to mentor faculty at all levels in research and scholarly projects

• Skills set needed includes:
  • Research methods
  • The ability to discuss and offer guidance on projects and plans
  • Coaching skills and offering encouragement, nurturing
  • Persistence, and helping researchers learn the importance of persistence
  • The 3 A’s: availability, aptitude, affability
Institutional Resources: Understanding the “Lay of the Land” and Where Your Institution Ranks

• Understanding the requirements and options
• Local and institutional performance
• Areas of opportunity
• Barriers and overcoming them
### Variability in Review Committee Standards for Scholarly Activities

#### Table 1: Existing Residency Review Committee (RRC) Rubrics, Some in Draft Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RRC</th>
<th>Discovery</th>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Teaching</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Higher standards for subspecialties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Higher standards for subspecialties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (at least 50% of residents and faculty)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Higher standards for some subspecialties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Higher standards for program director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Higher standards for program director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Point-based system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No current objective measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Subspecialties are in parentheses.

Aggregate Faculty Scholarly Activity

36.7% of programs have 1 or more faculty with no scholarly activity over 3 years.
## Aggregate Scholarly Activity

### Faculty Scholarly Activity Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Have Scholarly Activity</th>
<th>Do Not Have Scholarly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Faculty</td>
<td>63,776</td>
<td>60,124</td>
<td>3,652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Programs</td>
<td>4,202</td>
<td>2,660</td>
<td>1,542</td>
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</table>

### Resident Scholarly Activity Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Have Scholarly Activity</th>
<th>Do Not Have Scholarly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Graduating Residents</td>
<td>28,648</td>
<td>28,007</td>
<td>641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Programs*</td>
<td>3,951</td>
<td>3,803</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 251 Programs do not have data for graduating residents

### Overall Scholarly Activity Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both Have 100% Scholarly Activity</td>
<td>2,413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Only Do Not Have 100% Scholarly Activity</td>
<td>1,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents Only Do Not Have 100% Scholarly Activity</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Do Not Have 100% Scholarly Activity</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,951</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 251 Programs do not have data for graduating residents
Small Group Work:
The “Cathartic Moment: Exploring Barriers at the Institutional Level

• Work in groups of 2 or 3
• Identify barriers to scholarship from your experience or what you observe
• Share your insights with your group
• Back to large group to share insights (10 minutes)
Small Group/Large Group Work:
A bit of brainstorming to Overcome these barriers

• Work in groups of 2 or 3 and discuss ways to overcome the barriers identified in the last exercise
• Back to large group to share insights (10 minutes)
Institutional Resources: Pulling it All Together

- Every bit of institutional support helps; but more helps more
- Apply/leverage your available resources to maximize impact
- Select 1 of the each of the following
  - 1 Piece of “Low-hanging Fruit”
  - 1 major irritant
  - 1 BHAG that really will enhance scholarship
- Use SMART Goals to keep the initiative “on track”
- “Rinse and repeat”
Closing Thoughts

Be your own most avid critic (or find peers to read your work)

Put yourself in the place of the reader (what do you like in an article)

Every part of the paper should support the take-home message
  - If English is not your first language, get help from an expert
  - An engaging style: capture readers’ interest, help the story unfold

Become a reviewer
  - A service to the academic community and a tremendous learning opportunity

Find a mentor or be a mentor: we all need advice
Q and A

Thank You!