

Surviving and Thriving as Leaders in General Internal Medicine—Reply



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To the Editor:

We agree with Drs. Vipler and DeWaters that leadership training should be explicitly incorporated into general internal medicine (GIM) fellowships and appreciate their comment on our article. We echo their assertion that GIM fellows should not rely solely on “on the job” training to obtain leadership skills.¹ Herein we offer additional suggestions for leadership training opportunities that fellows may pursue locally or nationally (in-person or virtually).

Locally, GIM fellowships incorporate leadership training into their curricula. For example, the National Clinician Scholars Program at the University of Michigan includes a required course during year one on “Leadership and Communication” in which fellows reflect on their professional mission, hone their leadership style, and workshop ways to effectively communicate their work to broad audiences.² Several academic institutions also offer internal opportunities for trainees and faculty to pursue leadership development, such as principal investigator “crash courses” which offer skills on how to lead a research program after fellowship.³

Nationally, the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM) and other professional organizations offer leadership workshops at annual meetings as well as longitudinal training programs. For example, SGIM’s Women and Medicine Commission’s Career Advising Program offers a longitudinal program to help women trainees and junior faculty successfully navigate the academic promotion process.⁴ For GIM fellows interested in building leadership skills in health policy and advocacy, SGIM also offers a year-long Leadership in Health Policy Program.

Beyond local and medical society-based offerings, several leadership training opportunities exist at the national level,

which fellows ought to consider, particularly women and underrepresented in medicine (URiM) individuals, as these groups have historically been limited in leadership but have the potential to significantly contribute to the future of medicine and health care. One example is the Association of American Medical Colleges Minority Faculty Development Seminar, which is a 3-day workshop dedicated to helping URiM fellows and early career faculty develop knowledge and skills to become future leaders in academic medicine. Fellows interested in pursuing health equity and implementation science research careers may consider the 2-day Saunders Watkins Leadership Workshop, hosted by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute’s Center for Translation Research and Implementation Science.⁵ This workshop offers skill-based learning across these subject areas as well as also focused leadership training.

We thank Drs. Vipler and DeWaters for their letter—leadership training, alongside necessary coursework and other skill-based milestones, should be incorporated throughout GIM fellowship.

Utibe R. Essien, MD, MPH^{1,2}

Renuka Tipirneni, MD, MSc^{3,4}

Lucinda B. Leung, MD, PhD, MPH^{5,6}

Madeline R. Sterling, MD, MPH, MS⁷

¹Division of General Internal Medicine, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Pittsburgh, PA, USA

²Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion, VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, Pittsburgh, PA, USA

³Division of General Medicine, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA

⁴University of Michigan Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation, Ann Arbor, MI, USA

⁵Center for the Study of Healthcare Innovation, Implementation, & Policy, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, Los Angeles, CA, USA

⁶Division of General Internal Medicine and Health Services Research, UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, Los Angeles, CA, USA

⁷Division of General Internal Medicine, Weill Cornell Medicine, New York, NY, USA

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Corresponding Author: Utibe R. Essien, MD, MPH; Division of General Internal Medicine, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Pittsburgh, PA, USA (e-mail: uessien@pitt.edu).

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