

# SGIM Disparities Task Force

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## Mentoring Session

**March 15, 2012 – 2 p.m. ET**

Mentors: Drs. Paul Haidet (Penn State University) and Mitch Wong (UCLA)

**My main question is how best to collaborate and develop relationships with faculty at other institutions who share the same research interests that I do. Since my focus and skills are in clinical service and education, I would like to partner with those who have skills that are not my strengths (like study design, statistical analysis, etc.) My main areas of research interest on in education of students and residents in cultural competency and the social determinants of health (especially patients of low SES), substance abuse, practicing high-quality/cost-conscious care.**

Discussion:	<p>Dr. Haidet's Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not focus on just one aspect of a research project.</li><li>• If you are a clinical person, do not just involve yourself with the clinical side.</li><li>• Important to also be a member of the research team and make time to meet with the other researchers and have input on research questions.</li><li>• Find small focused community that shares similar interests, possibly within SGIM Task Forces or Interest Groups.</li><li>• If you are at an institution that does not have a dynamic research network, you may look at other institutions or a sister campus</li></ul> <p>Dr. Wong's Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Found collaborators at his institution by speaking with senior people to guide him towards others with similar interests.</li><li>• If possible, find time for research training.</li></ul>
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**My question pertains to how to plan a feasible project for a 2-year gen med fellowship. I am currently applying to fellowships now and have started the interview process. It seems that there are many great mentors at multiple institutions for disparities research. But I need advice on how to pick the best mentor(s) for me, and ideas or thoughts on ensuring a feasible project within 2 years. Is it better to do secondary data analysis? Or would initiating a project of my own be better as far as future ability to obtain K-awards, etc.**

Discussion:	<p>Dr. Haidet's Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• From the time you submit a paper until it comes out in print, expect an average of 18 months. This includes submitting to more than one journal.</li><li>• Sit with a mentor and decide the area of research in which you wish to make an impact.</li><li>• Develop step one and decide what has to be done to set you up for the second step.</li><li>• If applying for a K-award, be sure you have developed relationships and mentors to help demonstrate that you have developed into an independent investigator.</li><li>• K-award review committee is looking for evidence of quality of candidate and</li></ul>
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	<p>mentoring relationships.</p> <p>Dr. Wong's Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't be too specific about project. Think about research questions first and then think how best to answer it and how to go about it.</li> <li>• Most fellowships are two years; however, three years is better as it gives time for a project.</li> <li>• For a K-award, you will need to have several publications (not all first author).</li> </ul>
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**How would you characterize the opportunities for disparities research in the VA?**

Discussion:	<p>Dr. Haidet's Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observational studies are not getting funded by the VA because they are interested in intervention to reduce disparities within the VA.</li> <li>• You may be able to find a mentor within the VA that can provide more information on what the VA is looking for.</li> </ul>
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**What opportunities exist to translate disparities work into health policy? To integrate in medical education curriculum?**

Discussion:	<p>Dr. Haidet's Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a tool that has been published by AAMC TACCT instrument aimed at disparities in LCME accredited medical schools.</li> <li>• LCME has two of its standards directly related to health disparities and health disparities education.</li> <li>• Find out what your institution is doing and be the "glue" that binds disparities work with health policy and curriculum.</li> </ul> <p>Dr. Wong's Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a lot of opportunities to translate to policy and there is no set answer.</li> <li>• You can start locally, with your institution and the county Department of Public Health to influence policy. Your efforts should be to study then implement.</li> </ul>
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**Does one need an area of focus as a clinician educator?**

Discussion:	<p>Dr. Haidet's Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you want to be scholarly, you must develop an area of focus and skills.</li> </ul>
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**I would like some general advice on transitioning from being a research fellow to new faculty. Setting priorities, finding Sr. faculty mentors, how to choose the best funding opportunities, structuring my time to meet goals for reaching tenure (i.e., being sure I'm spending enough time developing an area of excellence such as research, but still doing enough clinical/teaching/service).**

Discussion:	<p>Dr. Wong's Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research fellow to faculty is a big transition, especially if changing institutions.</li> <li>• Most institutions have the same priorities when it comes to tenure (research papers, grants).</li> <li>• The number of papers, especially peer reviewed research papers, is very important.</li> <li>• When you make the transition, finding a senior mentor is very important.</li> <li>• You should set priorities and develop funding opportunities and get a career</li> </ul>
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development award (VA, K08, or K23).

- People often get derailed by taking on projects that are pieces of others' projects.
- Important to show independence and focus on your area of interest.
- Say no to those things outside your area of focus and research grants.