

## Multi-year Career Development Programs: Increasing Value for SGIM's Membership

Marshall H. Chin, MD, MPH

For most of us, it's a lifelong quest to become a master clinician who is the complete package as a doctor and healer.



Promoting career development has always been one of the core missions of SGIM, so I'd like to discuss what's been happening in this area. Career development is one of SGIM's six strategic priorities, and we are at a pivotal stage considering how to bolster our programs.

On the first day of every inpatient medicine block I attend on, I gather the team in the conference room and draw a timeline on the white board. I mark on the timeline the third-year student, fourth-year student, intern, resident, fellow, attending physician, a 10-year gap followed by the denotation of "mature attending physician," and for some at the end of the timeline—"master clinician." I use the timeline to discuss expectations for each team member at his/her stage of training and also to allay the fears of students who may be intimidated by how advanced the residents are. Developing into an outstanding clinician is a gradual process that requires experiential learning, guidance, and feedback. Even after completing formal training, we mature over a 10-year period in our practice style, comfort, and communication with patients. For most of us, it's a lifelong quest to become a master clinician who is the complete package as a doctor and healer.

Similarly, when I meet with residents considering research careers, I draw a timeline indicating three years of residency, two to three years of research fellowship training, and then five to seven years as a mentored junior faculty member before becoming an independent investigator.

One of SGIM's best qualities is the

generosity of its members. I am struck by how much of the annual meeting is teaching and career development—members trying to help other members develop their knowledge and professional skills so that they can do a better job taking care of patients, teaching students and residents, investigating cutting-edge questions, and improving our health care system.

Let's review some of SGIM's current career development offerings. For most of SGIM's history, career development opportunities were largely what members and committees submitted as workshops rather than a systematic approach to the core topics and skills necessary to succeed in diverse career pathways. For example, over the years I've attended a variety of workshops at the regional and national SGIM meetings on how to be a better teacher, covering topics such as bedside teaching, giving feedback to learners, and creating a curriculum. These workshops were very helpful but isolated—similar to how medicine grand rounds at most institutions consist of a series of stand-alone lectures.

Regarding SGIM's one-on-one mentoring programs, I was a mentee as both a fellow and junior faculty member, I co-directed the program for five years, and I have served the role of mentor in it many times. The one-on-one mentoring program is largely a cross-sectional program, helpful for giving mentees an objective fresh look at their current position and career aspirations. I directed a year-long SGIM mentoring program that was in existence for only two years. The lesson learned from that program was that a specific project is needed to ce-

ment the mentor-mentee relationship; general advice only goes so far.

A few years ago, a number of longitudinal training and mentoring programs arose in SGIM and ACLGIM (Association of Chiefs and Leaders of General Internal Medicine). SGIM's Education Committee started the TEACH program. In the TEACH program, cohorts of 20 to 25 learners develop core teaching skills as early clinician-educators through a combination of a full-day precourse and in-person workshops at the SGIM annual meeting, direct observation by a coach at the home institution, and independent online TEACH community discussion throughout the year. The TEACH program is designed to be far more comprehensive than a single workshop or workshop series at the SGIM annual meeting. Core courses include establishing an effective learning environment, writing teaching objectives, assessing learners, and providing feedback. Electives include ambulatory teaching, small group teaching, and remediating the struggling learner.

ACLGIM's LEAD program trains early- and mid-career faculty in leadership skills. In-person training occurs twice a year in conjunction with ACLGIM and SGIM's annual meetings, supplemented by monthly independent readings, online discussions, and scheduled coaching. Some of the core topics are those presented in the *Harvard Business Review's 10 Must Reads* teaching series, and workshop topics include engaging conflict, strategic planning, and team success. Another example of a longitudinal mentoring program is the

continued on page 2

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

continued from page 1

SGIM Women's Health Task Force Career Advising Program, which links female faculty early in their careers with male or female mid-senior faculty interested in advancing women in medicine for a minimum two-year commitment of at least semi-annual contact. Another model is that of SGIM's Disparities Task Force, which has held a series of webinars on grant writing and mentorship.

Intensive courses are another mechanism for career development. SGIM's Academic Hospitalists Task Force has collaborated with the Society of Hospital Medicine to present the Academic Hospitalist Academy. The Academy is typically a four-day training event that covers a broad range of topics including teaching, creating scholarly work, leadership skills, mentorship, quality improvement, patient safety, and the business of health care. For general internal medicine fellows, periodically a half-day pre- or post-course to the SGIM annual meeting provides training in core topics such as grant writing, mentorship, and applying for jobs, as well as the opportunity to network.

These current SGIM career development programs are a testament to the ingenuity and generosity of SGIM members, committees, and task forces, yet we can do more. SGIM Council chose career development and healthy growth of membership as two strategic goals of our organization. Career development is one of the pillars of our society, and successful recruitment and retention of members is dependent upon providing value. In the 2014 SGIM member survey, the top priorities of membership included career development and building leadership and administrative skills.

We are in the very early stages of planning what multi-year career development programs and opportuni-

ties might look like. Members of the Annual Program Committee recently had a conference call with representatives of several of SGIM's committees and ACLGIM to discuss the development of multi-year career development pathways. For the 2016 meeting, the Annual Program Committee is piloting a new career development skill-building workshop series called CaREER (Cultivating Care, Resilience, and Excellence in Education and Research) that will address important transitions and milestones in the career development of general internists across all stages and facets of their career. As part of this effort, the committee has created a new career development submission category for workshops.

SGIM Council will discuss multi-year career development programs in more detail during its next conference call. Several fundamental questions must be addressed. For example, what are the core career pathways needing career development programs? Does SGIM have offerings relevant for trainees, early faculty, mid-career faculty, and senior faculty? One of my former advisors, Mary Tinetti, once told me that newly promoted associate professors are some of the most neglected members of our academic community. They are perceived to have "made it" through promotion, leading us to redirect our attention to current learners and early faculty at our institutions. However, mid-career faculty face a series of key challenges such as finding the right leadership opportunity, becoming an outstanding mentor, and effectively influencing internal or external policy. I was heartened at one of the most recent SGIM meetings when I heard some of our most distinguished senior members saying they were looking forward to attending an interest group that afternoon

on life after retirement. Career development at SGIM never ends!

Should we concentrate on workshop and course offerings at the annual meeting, expand webinar opportunities during the year, consider how to increase use of GIM Connect as a social media educational tool, build comprehensive longitudinal programs analogous to TEACH and LEAD, or combine any or all of the above? What are the core skills and topics that should be covered in multi-year curricula? How can we most effectively teach emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills (e.g. awareness of personality types, personal strengths and weaknesses, communication, negotiation) with our available teaching modalities? What should be the organizational structure for multi-year career development programs? How should the Annual Program Committee, SGIM's committees, task forces, and interest groups; and mentoring programs interact and collaborate on these programs? Are some core topics best taught across career pathways, or is there value in maintaining separate tracks and cohorts of learners? What programs are feasible, and which should be prioritized? These questions are important and fascinating, and we welcome your input as SGIM considers the best ways to provide additional career development opportunities for you.

My learners like it when I show them the career development timelines for the clinician and the investigator. The timelines break down the mysteries of becoming an expert into concrete guideposts that provide a career roadmap. Similarly, multi-year career development programs and pathways have the potential to enable more of SGIM's membership to reach their goals in a timely manner. Let's see what we can do together.

SGIM