

LEADERSHIP EDUCATION: PART I

Reflections from a LEAD Scholar

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After working for only a few months, I applied for the position of director of education for the division of hospital medicine at Rush University in Chicago, Illinois. Having had some prior experience in medical education and faculty development, I felt that I would be a good fit for the job. My passion for teaching and sincere interest in promoting professional development towards excellence would bolster my application. In preparation for my interview, I studied the data from previous faculty reviews and developed a professional development plan for the group to address the gaps identified by the faculty. I presented my vision during my interview to various leaders within our division, and I was offered the position.

I soon discovered that there were many challenges with implementing my vision. Not being familiar with the culture of the workplace, and without a foundation of historical perspective, my plans for the division were not always in congruence with those of the faculty. The division had undergone recent strategic development, and, as I joined after those changes occurred, it was unclear what was considered a success and what needed to be improved. Additionally, I was unfamiliar with faculty successes and motivations. As I set about meeting with faculty members individually, it was clear that we were supporting a rich group of highly performing individuals with varied interests and expertise. I needed to find my place within the group in order to best serve its interests and needs. I needed therefore a more deliberate understanding of my role in leadership.

It has been suggested that strategies for dealing with groups—knowledge of finance, budgets, regulations, organizational priorities, networking, and planning skills—are competencies required to make a good leader, and that these are teachable. When I saw the ACLGIM LEAD Scholars program advertised through SGIM late last year, it immediately sparked my interest as the vehicle for me to learn those competencies that will enable me to develop as a leader. As I began the application process, I learned how the program met my specific needs. The LEAD scholars program provides training in aspects of leadership that are most pertinent to us in academic medicine—be it clinical, research, or education—taught by leaders in academic internal medicine. Training is multimodality, with in-person learning, asynchronous online learning, and regular discussion boards. There is a personal coach to support you through the year, and provide directed feedback for a longitudinal project pertinent to your leadership role at your home institution. Needless to say, I applied and received support from senior leadership in participating in this program without hesitation!

The first meeting of the new class of LEAD Scholars was held the day prior to the annual SGIM meeting in conjunction with the ACLGIM Hess Management Training and Leadership Institute meeting. Experienced leaders welcomed us warmly as we began a full day:

- from Dr. Michele Cyr, we learned how to utilize our innate skills during negotiations;
- from Richard Nuttall, we learned

about funding sources for medical centers;

- from Dr. Wiswha Kapoor, we learned what a successful career looks like and what it takes to get there; and
- from Drs. Cynthia Chuang, Dan Hunt, Eric Rosenberg, and Andrea Sikon, we learned how to address the challenges of moving from peer to boss.

We were also afforded several opportunities to meet with distinguished leaders as well as our personal coach. I was able to discuss my personal challenges and plans for my project with various individuals with experience in academic medicine. What I valued the most was meeting my class of LEAD scholars—leaders in general medicine in various roles, creative thinkers, passionate educators, altruists, and achievers. Since that first meeting, they have become my teachers through engaging online conversations based on our study of leadership competencies. They have become a primal resource for inviting solutions to challenging situations and providing references for self-study. They have become a network for me to access for my own professional development.

In the months to come, I look forward to developing my role as a leader in the work that I do for my division. I also look forward to flourishing relationships with my fellow LEAD scholars as well as my coach. I look forward to a lifetime of learning, knowing that I will always have access to opportunities for growth through SGIM, my professional home.

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References

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