MCW FACULTY-INTERN MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Rationale:

The transition from medical school to residency is a challenge in many ways. New responsibilities, work-related changes, and life stressors can impact this transition. While each trainee has experience serving as an 'acting intern', these experiences are quite varied and often do not reflect the stresses of internship and residency.

The Faculty-Intern Mentorship Program is meant to provide direct and formal mentorship and support to our General Surgery interns, with the goal of promoting their academic success, clinical growth, and well-being in our residency program.

Positive mentorship experiences are associated with growth and promotion at all phases of medical/surgical training and faculty development (*references provided below for further reading*). To ensure a positive experience and optimize our trainees' transition to residency, we have developed a formal mentorship program that pairs each intern with an individual faculty member.

Intent:

1. To provide surgical interns with early exposure to and mentorship within their clinical and academic areas of interest
2. To minimize stresses and burden in the first year of training by providing a formal mentor to offer guidance and support.
3. To provide early access to mentors based on personal priorities and goals
4. To promote a culture of mentorship between trainees and faculty members that benefits the residency program and department as a whole.

Structure, Design, and Implementation:

Prior to the start of each academic year, faculty members from all divisions in the Department of Surgery are given the opportunity to serve as a mentor. In August, interns are given a survey to understand their personal, professional, clinical, and academic goals, as well as other subjects on which additional guidance may be desired (e.g.: setting up a basic science lab, reproductive health, financial planning). Of note, while trainees are given the opportunity to relay clinical disciplines or research niches of interest, but it is understood that many residents are undifferentiated and it is acceptable to say so!

Mentor-mentee matches are made by the members of the Residency Professional Development Education Pillar (Drs. Dyer and Istl). Matches are made based on alignment of clinical discipline of interest, research goals, practice setting of interest, and other personal and professional goals. Additional considerations for faculty mentors include history of successful mentorship experiences and involvement in the residency education missions.

The mentor and mentee will meet at least biannually throughout the trainee's first year. *However*, more frequent meetings are beneficial. The duration of the mentor-mentee relationship is expected to last at least the first year of training but can be extended beyond based on interests of the faculty and resident. Residents may always find other formal and informal mentors during their training; however, their assigned faculty mentor will be a dedicated resource and support system for at least the first year.

Duties of Faculty and Residents:

1. Residents will reach out to coordinate the first meeting.
2. Meet no less than once every six months to review the resident's progress, provide feedback, ensure proper clinical progress and development goals are being met, review any obstacles the mentee has identified, and discuss the mentee's well-being.
3. Faculty should serve as an advocate and can communicate any trainee concerns to the Residency Program Leadership. Likewise, the trainee should report any issues or desire to change mentors directly to Dr. Dyer or Dr. Istl.
4. Faculty mentors should serve as a front-line resource for expanding access to additional mentors and clinical and research experiences for their mentee. Residents may identify other formal and informal mentors. However, they should also take advantage of their assigned mentor's relationships with other faculty both within and outside the Department of Surgery and MCW.

<u>Tips for a successful mentor-mentee relationship:</u>

The success of the Faculty-Intern Mentorship Program relies on buy-in and commitment from both parties. While we anticipate that everyone has previous experience with mentor-mentee relationships, we provide the following tips as informal guidance to optimize the experience for everyone.

1. **Keep communication lines open and maintain a schedule**. Maintaining a schedule demonstrates commitment from both parties to the relationship.
2. **Decide on the best mode of communication for both parties and use it.** Both mentee and mentor need to be responsive to emails and messages when they are sent. *Administrative assistants can be helpful in setting meetings, but most of the communication and scheduling is better done directly with your mentee.
3. **Define expectations**. Mentees should be up front about their goals and what they are hoping to take away from the relationship. Mentors should assist in setting realistic goals and provide mentees with resources to help achieve those goals.
4. **Prepare for meetings in advance to maximize the time and experience**. Mentees should review their goals and keep their mentors abreast of changes and challenges. Mentors should keep notes about mentees goals and be prepared to offer ideas and solutions.
5. **Make time for constructive feedback**. A good mentor-mentee relationship is built on trust and effective communication. It is important that both mentor and mentee feel comfortable providing open and honest feedback regarding goals, plans, progress, etc. The feedback does not always have to be positive but should be delivered in a kind, non-judgmental manner. For mentees, remember to be coachable and flexible; your mentor is providing feedback with your best interests at heart.
6. **Share personal goals and get to know each other to develop a complete relationship.** The more the mentee and mentor are willing to share personal goals and interests, the more successful the pairing will be. People come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, and these can influence how the relationship grows and evolves. Knowledge about the person outside of work can result in better ideas and understanding of goals and challenges at work. This will help to build more trust in the relationship.