Academy for Faculty Advancement Testimonials

The Academy for Faculty Advancement program was the highlight of my academic career to date and provided an oasis of learning and support in the hectic schedule of academia. The career development educational component, peer group discussions, and mentorship I received were invaluable in learning to navigate and flourish in an academic environment. – Laura Kaufman, General Dentistry, GSDM, AFA 2013-14

“For me, being junior faculty is much like being a teenager; it is has been full of new and awkward challenges as I struggle to define my career path, mentorship, etc. The dedicated time that the AFA provided with other early career professionals from diverse disciplines helped me to appreciate that some aspects of my experience are fairly common, while others were fairly unique to me. Together, we the other AFA participants and faculty, discussed and honed strategies to address many of the challenges I have experienced. In many cases, I was able to immediately use the strategies and skills from the AFA, e.g. in grant writing, presenting research results, and in interactions with my mentor. When the program was over, I had a new appreciation for the value that my peers bring to my own development as faculty at BU.” - Maureen Dubreuil, Department of Medicine, Section of Rheumatology, AFA 2014-15

Trying to figure out a career path for a junior investigator can be quite perplexing. Therefore I felt extremely fortunate to have participated fully in the Academy for Faculty Advancement in 2013. I felt very grateful for all of the help that I received from the mentors, peers and alumni through a series of structured and well-implemented sessions. Plus it was really great to get to know new friends from a very cohesive and supportive group. Awesome experience! – Ziming Xuan, Department of Community Health Sciences, SPH, AFA 2013-14

“The AFA early career faculty course was invaluable in providing the networking and mentorship opportunities that helped me get a leg up as a junior faculty here at BMC.” - Alexander Sheng, Emergency Medicine, AFA 2015-16

“AFA is a very unique faculty supporting system that BUMC has. The seminar topics almost cover all the aspects of faculty's professional life. You would meet colleagues you normally won't meet, get interested in what they are doing and maybe form new collaborations. AFA cannot remove the challenges you face. However, the program helps you to look at them from different perspective views and you learn the tools and mechanisms to address them. By the way, the mentorships through AFA are exceptionally great.” – Qiong Zhou, Pharmacology, AFA 2015-16

“I applied to AFA when I was on maternity leave with our third child. At the time, I was not even sure what the opportunity would afford me but I knew that I was ready to extend beyond my department and start looking at larger systems of health care. I realized that a key for this was getting to know colleagues with different expertise but similar academic rank from other departments. The year ended up being transformational for me-- not only was I able to gain more confidence in my research and ideas but I also created all kinds of collaborations which are now a core part of my work fabric today. Honestly, it was one year but its impact has lasted for years. Very grateful for the opportunity.” - Katherine Gergen-Barnett, Family Medicine, AFA 2013-14

“As a clinician striving to advance his academic career, each step along the way is met by a crossroad with difficult decisions to make. From career advancement, life-work balance, writing grant workshops, to networking, and optimizing your CV, just to name a few, the AFA has played a major role in helping me find the clarity of choices and resilience to pursue them wholeheartedly. Plus, forging great friendships and gaining new mentors is a huge bonus!” – Chadi Tannoury, Orthopaedic Surgery, AFA 2013-14

“Above all, it was a time and space to reflect on where we have been, where we are going and where we want to go in our professional development. We don't always have that time in our busy schedules and it is what I miss the most about the AFA.” - Michelle Durham, Psychiatry, AFA 2015-16

“The AFA provided me with a value experience and helped my growth as an early career investigator. The curriculum includes didactics on topics that are relevant to any early career faculty in academic medicine, peer to peer informal discussion which is a great way to get introduced to other faculty member and mentors that are passionate about the success of the junior faculty. It also helped me with my promotion. I highly
recommend all early stage faculty members to attend the AFA.” – Devyani Misra, Medicine/Rheumatology, AFA 2015-16

"My participation in the AFA was an transformative experience. The various exercises/assignments that we did and the opportunity to interact with my colleagues from other specialties and departments not only helped me learn successful strategies to excel as an mid career academician but also how to properly tackle challenging situations that inevitably occur during the course of ones career. One on one mentorship from some of the seasoned faculty was also very helpful." – Asim Mian, Radiology, AFA