

Faculty Development and Diversity Grant Report/Action Plan

Faculty recipient: Gene F. Kwan

Training opportunity: American Heart Association Ten-Day Seminar on the Epidemiology and Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke

Seminar dates: July 23-August 4, 2017

Short term

In the short term, I plan to use the lessons learned during the seminar to strengthen my support of cardiology fellows training in epidemiology and research methods. During the annual Summer School series, I deliver several lectures on basic epidemiology and biostatistics. I have used some of the lectures from the seminar as a guide to revise and refine my presentations to the cardiology fellows. Further during our monthly Cardiology Journal Clubs, as well as Critical Care Journal Club, I am instituting new guidance to fellows to help them assess the quality and impact of research studies. This list is based on discussions I had with faculty during the seminar:

- What did we already know?
- What was the research question?
- What did they find?
- So what?

In my own research, I continued conversations that I started during the seminar with established research investigators at other universities to obtain further guidance on my research career. Additionally, the connections that I made with staff at the NHLBI will lead to further informational interviews such that I can better understand the research grant/funding climate.

Long term

Over the next year, I plan to use the knowledge and experience gained during the seminar in several ways.

- Advancing current research. I will use the lessons learned during the seminar to enhance the focus and precision of my manuscripts. I am completing several studies that are in the manuscript preparation phase. Having a better foundation of understanding research methods will allow me to better highlight the strengths of my studies, and acknowledge the limitations to improve the quality of the manuscript.
- Planning future research. As I plan future studies, I will use the themes and methods learned during the seminar to further refine my research and analytic plan. I also may develop collaborations to study, for example, CVD epidemiology among people of Haitian ancestry across multiple sites in the US.
- Strengthening grant proposals. As I prepare to revise grant proposals for future funding, I will use the lessons learned from experienced faculty to improve my proposals. Specifically, I had meetings with several seminar faculty members about improving how I communicate the importance of doing CVD research in low-income countries.

Evaluation responses

Brief training description

The 10-day seminar was conducted by a diverse faculty with a wealth of experience in CVD epidemiology and policy. The faculty spanned the spectrum of academic researchers (at many universities) to health policy implementers (at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Heart Lung Blood Institute). The participants also represented a broad array of research/clinical backgrounds, career stages, and academic interests. I found that the variety of participants and faculty complemented each other well and offered the diverse perspective for which the AHA is known. The seminar included a mixture of didactics in epidemiology/study design skills, basic biostatistics methods, and disease-specific epidemiology; and small group journal clubs. The seminar culminated in a small group activity during which we designed a study including all aspects related to a grant proposal.

What did you learn?

During the 10-day seminar, I reinforced my understanding of the history of CVD epidemiology in the US and in research study design - including the strengths and limitations of different methods. I learned about the application of statistical methods for manipulating data to answer specific research questions. I also learned about group dynamics and collaborative research.

Would you recommend the program? Who could benefit from attending?

Yes, I think the opportunity was very helpful and will help advance my career. The seminar is specifically helpful for early stage investigators (fellows, early career faculty) who are interest in CVD epidemiology. Those who have prior training in research methods (i.e. Masters degree) may find some of the lectures to be basic – but there is still a lot of value in working with like-minded people from different backgrounds.