

2018 REPORT

Rush Research Mentoring Program

EXPERIENCE | COMMITMENT | RESOURCES



“The Rush Research Mentoring Program offers junior faculty access to valuable resources, including experienced researchers and mentors, writing workshops, leadership presentations and an accessible community of peers who share my interests and understand my challenges. It has been the key to my recent success. I truly appreciate the investment the program makes in creating a community of collaboration and authentic mentorship.”

Dawn Bounds, PhD, APRN, PMHNP-BC
Assistant Professor, Department of Community, Systems and Mental Health Nursing, College of Nursing
Department of Psychiatry, Section of Population Behavioral Health, Rush Medical College

RUSH MENTORING PROGRAMS: INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

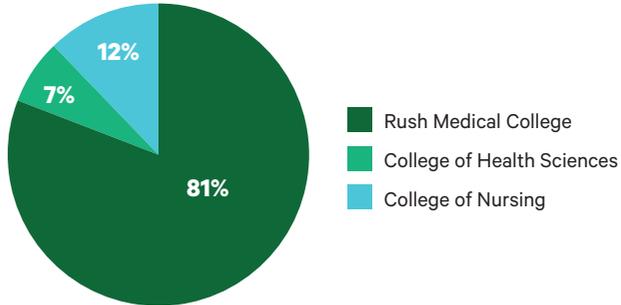
The Office of Mentoring Programs within the Office of Faculty Affairs helps facilitate career development and cultivates research independence. The program’s success is measured by scholarly productivity, extramural funding, retention of junior faculty and placement of postdoctoral research fellows who are prepared for their next career step.

Our program’s mission is to support the success of Rush University’s junior faculty who are working under the guidance of knowledgeable and committed mentors. An effective faculty mentoring program is a major asset in the recruitment of faculty and postdoctoral research fellows and is an essential investment for academic medical centers.

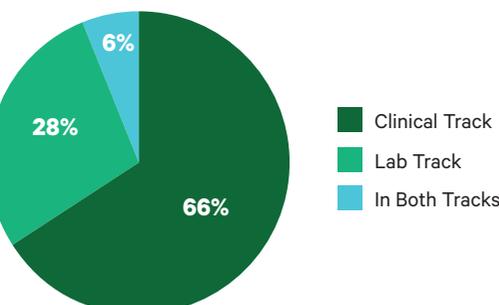
Demographics

Rush Mentoring Programs served 59 mentees from across Rush University during fiscal year 2018. Their demographic information is presented in the following graphs.

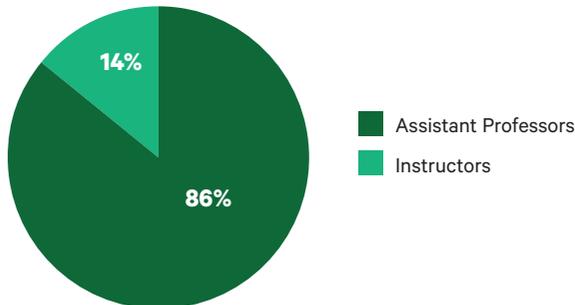
Mentees by College



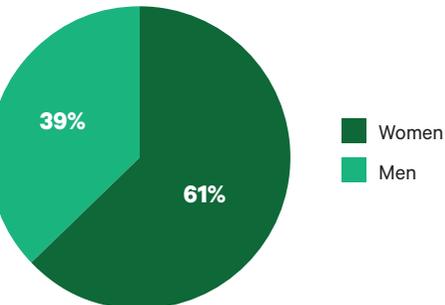
Research Tracks



Mentees by Rank



Mentees by Gender





“The opportunity to foster the development of our next generation of clinical and translational researchers and basic scientists is among the most important missions and greatest privileges we have here at Rush. The Office of Mentoring Programs plays a critical role in nurturing the careers of our young faculty and trainees by providing the resources, support and collegiality that are so critical to their transition to productive researchers.”

Mark H. Pollack, MD

The Grainger Professor of Psychiatry and Chairperson,
Department of Psychiatry, Rush Medical College

Director, Road Home Program: Center for Veterans
and Their Families

Director, Center for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress

PROGRAM RESOURCES

The Office of Mentoring Programs provides a variety of resources to the mentees and mentors in the program, including the following:

Cohn Fellowship grant

The Cohn Family Foundation provides grant support that is distributed equally to five mentees who are selected through a competitive process. The funding allows mentees to gather preliminary data for research proposals and continue engagement in research activities.

Editing services

Science writers and editors provide editing services to our mentees and mentors for their abstracts, grant applications and manuscripts.

Grant writing workshops

Participants learn the different components of an aims page, understand the logic flow of specific aims, learn critical best writing practices to enhance document readability, understand funding agency criteria and how to connect those criteria directly to their research goals.

Mentees and mentors who have taken the grant writing workshops have a 69 percent success rate in securing funding. We have garnered more than \$17.6 million in funding since the program started.

Graphics consultation

A graphic designer helps refine graphs, figures and tables for presentations and publications.

Monthly research track meetings

Monthly research track meetings provide valuable feedback from mentors and peers on aims pages, study design issues, summary statements and grant application revision plans.

Rush Mentoring Programs Annual Research Symposium

Our annual symposium highlights the excellent research conducted at Rush University. It offers a venue to stimulate interdisciplinary and interdepartmental collaboration. Every year, the symposium features approximately 100 attendees, 40 poster presentations and 10 podium presentations.

Seminars and workshops

Several seminars and workshops are offered throughout the year to enhance the professional development of mentees and mentors. Seminars and workshops are open to all faculty, staff and students at Rush. In fiscal year 2018, 61 seminars and workshops were offered, with a combined 1,251 people attending.



“One month after starting at Rush, the Rush Mentoring Programs became a home where I received help in many ways. Successful mentors gave me advice on major academic decisions, completing complex statistics, editing manuscripts and writing my first grants. Looking back, I see that this program created a community that was key to my success.”

Mahboobeh Mahdavinia, MD, PhD
 Assistant Professor, Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Allergy and Immunology, Rush Medical College

Statistical consultation

Statistical support helps clarify research, scholarship projects and analytic goals. We also provide consulting on the data and analysis section of applications to help interpret results and contribute to manuscripts.

Travel awards

Mentees and mentors have opportunities to compete for travel awards, which can be used to help pay for any local or international conferences they are interested in attending.

Writing accountability group

Writing groups meet weekly to provide support and accountability for group members as they work toward increasing writing productivity. Group members share strategies for success and help each other set reasonable goals.

EXTRAMURAL FUNDING

TYPE OF FUNDING	AMOUNT
Mentee as principal investigator	
Federal	\$1,118,121
Non-federal	\$1,158,775
Total	\$2,276,896
Mentee as co-investigator	
Federal	\$1,711,660
Non-federal	\$584,500
Total	\$2,296,160
Total federal funding	\$2,829,781
Total non-federal funding	\$1,743,275
TOTAL	\$4,573,056

In fiscal year 2018, 23 mentees (48 total grants) received funding, either as principal investigators or co-investigators. Thirteen of those grants were from the National Institutes of Health.

This table shows the distribution of grants received by mentees as principal investigators and co-investigators. It also shows funding from both federal and non-federal sources.

Additionally, mentees published 138 journal articles and presented 153 podium talks and 120 posters.



Class of 2018 Cohn Fellows

From left, Sandra Gomez-Perez, PhD, RD, LDN; Tieshi Li, PhD; Nelia Jain, MD; Antonia Zaferiou, PhD; and Amanda Persons, PhD

COHN FELLOWS

The Cohn Family Foundation provided \$100,000 in grant support that was distributed equally to five mentees who were selected through a competitive process. The funding allows mentees to gather preliminary data for research proposals and for their continued engagement in research activities.

As of July 31, 2018, 20 mentees completed their fellowship. Additional mentees were selected to begin their fellowship in fiscal year 2019. **Learn more about the Class of 2018 Cohn Fellows:**

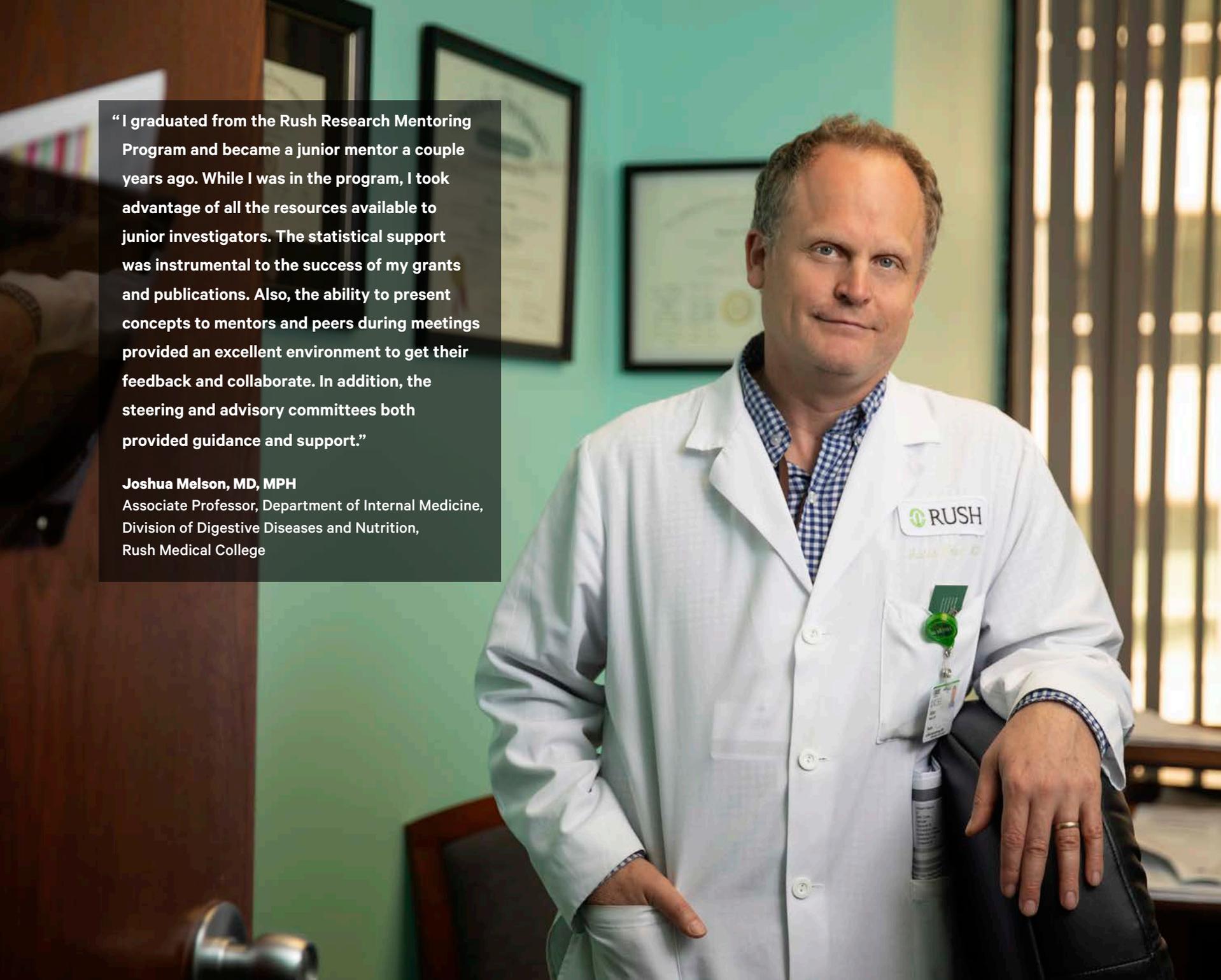
Sandra Gomez-Perez, PhD, RD, LDN, is an assistant professor in the Department of Clinical Nutrition in the College of Health Sciences. Her research interests focus on understanding the relationships between race and ethnicity, the gut microbiome, body composition and risk of obesity-related cancers, particularly colorectal cancer. Her Cohn Fellowship research involves characterizing the body composition phenotypes (abdominal adipose tissue and skeletal muscle distribution) quantified using dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) and ultrasound in African-American and non-Hispanic white adults with and without colorectal adenomas. Specifically, she will explore how a body composition phenotype of low skeletal muscle mass and high visceral adipose tissue relates to the gut microbiome and risk of colorectal adenomas.

Nelia Jain, MD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine, Section of Palliative Medicine in Rush Medical College. Her research interests include the development and evaluation of an innovative palliative care curriculum, which will disseminate primary palliative education in pain and symptom management and communication skills across disciplines. In her master's thesis, she used ethnographic, historical and narrative analyses to explore the challenges in pain expression and management for patients with chronic pain within the constructs of the current biomedical model. Jain's Cohn Fellowship research will focus on the use of simulation-based inter-professional curricula to assess participants' growth in the cognitive and affective domains of primary palliative care core competencies.

Tieshi Li, PhD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics in Rush Medical College. His postdoctoral work at the University of North Carolina included research into the development of hydrophobically modified glycol chitosan (HGC) nanoparticle as a valuable protein-delivery system in developmental biology, and Tgfb2 expressing cells as joint progenitors during joint development and osteoarthritis development. His current studies on Tgfb2/IL36 α axis in joint homeostasis and osteoarthritis progression have made significant contributions to this field. His Cohn Fellowship research will focus on the role of IL36 α in synovium during post-traumatic osteoarthritis and spontaneous osteoarthritis progression.

Amanda Persons, PhD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry in Rush Medical College and the Department of Physician Assistant Studies in the College of Health Sciences. She conducts preclinical research on substance abuse, Parkinson's disease and HIV. Her current work focuses on identifying brain-gut pathology common to methamphetamine abuse and Parkinson's disease, as those who abuse methamphetamine are more likely to develop Parkinson's disease later in life. Her Cohn Fellowship aims to determine if stimulant drugs, specifically those used to treat ADHD, in adolescent rodents also produce Parkinson's disease-like pathology in adults.

Antonia Zaferiou, PhD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Orthopedic Surgery in Rush Medical College. She is also the director of Motion Analysis for the Division of Sports Medicine in the Department of Orthopedic Surgery. Her research uses mechanical principles to study human control and dynamics in maneuvers used during daily living and athletic activities. She is interested in understanding human motion in order to develop technology and interventions that improve movement mechanics and reduce the risk of injury. Her Cohn Fellowship focuses on developing better ways to measure the movement and control in healthy and arthritic shoulders during daily living activities. Prior to joining Rush, Zaferiou was a postdoctoral researcher in the University of Michigan's Department of Mechanical Engineering. She is a dedicated educator and mentor in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) outreach activities.



“I graduated from the Rush Research Mentoring Program and became a junior mentor a couple years ago. While I was in the program, I took advantage of all the resources available to junior investigators. The statistical support was instrumental to the success of my grants and publications. Also, the ability to present concepts to mentors and peers during meetings provided an excellent environment to get their feedback and collaborate. In addition, the steering and advisory committees both provided guidance and support.”

Joshua Melson, MD, MPH

Associate Professor, Department of Internal Medicine,
Division of Digestive Diseases and Nutrition,
Rush Medical College

ADDITIONAL MENTORING PROGRAMS

The Office of Mentoring Programs offers three programs that complement the Rush Research Mentoring Program, providing additional professional development and resources to faculty.

Rush Educational Mentoring Program

The Rush Educational Mentoring Program provides mentorship to educators and educational scholars who engage in scholarly activities that support Rush University's mission. The program supports educational scholarship and offers a comprehensive range of resources designed to strengthen the educator's teaching portfolio.

Every year, the Offices of Faculty Affairs and Mentoring Programs offer an 11-week long teaching excellence course. Faculty members from all four of Rush's colleges lead the lectures and discussions, which help faculty create effective instructional programs and reach teaching objectives.

This course is open to all Rush University and John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County faculty members. All participants who complete the course receive continuing education credits and a certificate.

More than 120 faculty members have taken the course since its debut in 2013. Course alumni meet every six months to discuss best practices, accomplishments and challenges related to their teaching endeavors.

The outcomes of the course are directly related to Rush's I CARE values:

I: Innovation — Participants are given the opportunity to bring new ideas and methods to their teaching.

C: Collaboration — Participants work in multidisciplinary teams throughout the program.

A: Accountability — Participants complete individual and group projects, demonstrating their learning and ability to implement it in practice.

R: Respect — Participants with diverse backgrounds and experiences learn about, and respect, different opinions.

E: Excellence — Program excellence is ensured through the promotion and modeling of best practices.



“The Research Mentoring Program allows junior faculty to learn from experienced and highly successful senior researchers. The lab track meetings are a fantastic way to learn about the research being done at Rush and can help facilitate future interdisciplinary collaborations. The mentorship I received helped me achieve numerous professional goals, including several publications in peer-reviewed journals and multiple grant submissions. I am excited to continue utilizing the program’s services as I prepare to submit an NIH K application in 2019.”

Dominika A. Winiarski, PhD
Instructor, Department of Psychiatry, Rush Medical College

Rush Postdoctoral Mentoring Program

The Rush Postdoctoral Mentoring Program was founded in 2013 to facilitate community building for postdoctoral scholars at Rush University. At the local level, it provides education to assist new postdoctoral scholars transitioning to Rush, and supports those who are leaving Rush as they embark on new careers. It is a community where postdoctoral scholars can share ideas and socialize with their peers.

This program has a postdoctoral committee that comprises of Rush postdocs who meet once a month to organize career development seminars, workshops and social events. They collaborate with institutions such as the University of Illinois at Chicago, Northwestern University and the University of Chicago to create a Chicagoland postdoc community.

We are the Rush University representative for the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA). The Office of Mentoring Programs supports the national goals of NPA. Since Rush is a sustaining member of the NPA, all postdoctoral scholars and research fellows are encouraged to join the NPA free of charge.

What is the National Postdoctoral Association?

The National Postdoctoral Association is a member-driven, nonprofit organization that provides a unique, national voice for postdoctoral scholars. Since 2003, the organization has committed to enhance the quality of the postdoctoral experience in the United States. Visit the National Postdoctoral Association’s website for full details: www.nationalpostdoc.org.



“The Rush Research Mentoring Program has been an incredible resource for junior researchers in terms of professional development, networking and grantsmanship. Additionally, the program is an excellent resource for established researchers, providing exciting workshops on the numerous research services offered throughout Rush and access to experts for feedback on grant applications. It has been incredibly impactful in my early career. I have attended seminars and workshops to further develop my writing and presentation skills while also gaining exposure to career opportunities relevant to my work.”

Jonathan Gustafson, PhD
Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Orthopedic Surgery, Rush Medical College



“Scientists are the facilitators who invent what we all need. But who facilitates the facilitators? At Rush, it’s our Research Mentoring Program, which provides a setting to groom your leadership, resourcefulness and persuasive communication skills. The environment, staff and leadership are superb.”

Rasa Kazlauskaitė, MD, MSc, FACE

Associate Professor, Department of Medicine, Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism, Rush Medical College

Director, Diabetes Technology Program, Rush University Medical Center

Rush Women Mentoring Program

The Offices of Faculty Affairs and Mentoring Programs established the Rush Women Mentoring Program to sustain a comprehensive program that helps Rush’s female faculty pursue career goals within a supportive and engaging environment.

The program prepares female faculty members with the skills needed to help them manage a wide range of interpersonal and professional interactions. This program meets the following goals:

- Assists female faculty in their promotion through the academic ranks and into leadership positions
- Facilitates development of policies and concrete tools to promote work flexibility and work-life balance
- Fosters a coherent system of professional development that accounts for individual needs and career pathways
- Increases visibility of female faculty and their successes within the Rush community
- Uses peer mentoring to nurture a sense of community among female faculty members
- Uses reinforcement of infrastructure to add to the scholarly knowledge of learning styles in the medical sciences

The program has two facets:

- Junior female faculty are matched with senior female faculty based on their profile preferences survey. Guidelines are provided to help maximize their meeting productivity and create objectives based on mentees’ specific needs. The relationship is driven by the junior faculty. Currently, 58 junior-senior faculty pairs participate in the program. The group meets every six months to celebrate successes, and discuss challenges and how the program can improve.
- The program enhances a sense of belonging among female faculty by bringing together program members and the Rush community once a month for a seminar series focused on professional development. More than 1,000 people have been in attendance at the seminar series since the program started. The RWMP is starting new initiatives to retain and advance more women at Rush.



“The Office of Mentoring Programs has been critical to advancing the research agenda at Rush. Grant funding is more competitive than ever, and the program gives junior faculty that extra push they need to compete at the highest level. I recommend all faculty get involved with the program — either as a mentor or a mentee — because through our shared commitment we will take our research community to the next level.”

Lisa L. Barnes, PhD
The Alla V. and Solomon Jesmer Professor
of Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine
Rush Alzheimer’s Disease Center
Departments of Neurological Sciences and
Behavioral Sciences

Education/Research Training Curriculum for Junior Faculty

The Rush Center of Excellence on Disparities in HIV and Aging received the support of the Rush Scientific Leadership Council to convene research and education design experts from the Offices of Faculty Affairs and Mentoring Programs and the Library of Rush University Medical Center to create a curriculum that junior researchers use to develop a research career development plan.

Modules were created to provide refreshers on library science resources and to orient mentors as they engage in junior faculty support. These four modules were created with the following objectives and learning outcomes in mind:

Module one: Knowing yourself

Module two: Developing an area of inquiry

Module three: Building your research support team

Module four: Putting together a research proposal

A logic model describing inputs, outcomes and impact goals for the curriculum development was developed and shared with junior faculty who successfully received career development awards from the National Institutes of Health. A focus group of junior faculty validated the model. Their feedback was incorporated, and module templates were developed and added to Blackboard.

Online courses are designed and evaluated using standards set by Quality Matters, an independent, national program that uses benchmarks grounded in research to measure the quality of web-based courses. Each module contains objectives, an introduction to the unit, learning activities tied to the objectives and a to-do list by the faculty completing the module. An assessment piece is incorporated within the learning activity, and the curriculum design has been fully documented following instructional design process.

To date, the curriculum has been piloted with 20 faculty who joined the Research Mentoring Program. Additionally, a mentor training module has been made available to all Rush faculty and can be found on the Mentoring Programs’ webpage: www.rushu.rush.edu/mentoringprogram.

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