

Tips for Faculty Mentor, Career Development Plan

Faculty Mentor:

The study section will look at the Training Record of your mentor, to gauge if he or she has experience successfully mentoring trainees. They will count numbers of PhD and Postdocs ever trained, look at how long the trainees were with the mentor, examine the number and quality of publications earned with the mentor, see if any trainees earned fellowships, look at the placement of the trainee after the mentor, etc.

-It is useful when the mentor lists each student name and the outcomes, rather than saying only "6 of 10 continued to use research skills," or some such.

-if your mentor is relatively junior, so that his or training outcomes are not yet obvious, I'd suggest naming a "co-mentor," perhaps a more senior member of the committee with a strong training record to meet every 6 mos specifically to provide career and training advice. This is sort-of insurance to the study section that someone is overseeing completion etc. This person will need to provide a biosketch and training record.

Career Development Plan:

A common mistake made by mentors is to write a Career Development Plan that reads like lab work 24 hrs a day. Even if a proposal has an outstanding Research Plan, these are training fellowships, and much more than only scientific experimentation is needed to develop a young researcher. Look at some of the other Plans!

Depending on the applicant, you might suggest a specific course or two at Case to develop specialized knowledge for the applicant, particularly if he or she is switching fields or doing something relatively unique. There might be focused coursework at Marine Biological Laboratory or Cold Spring Harbor that we don't have that will broaden the thinking of the applicant. . You will want to explicitly indicate when you will meet with the trainee individually (daily informal? Weekly formal?) and when your lab groups meet and what you do (journal discussion? Each member presents powerpoint on a rotating basis?). Remember to indicate new techniques or thinking the applicant will acquire during completion of the proposal. There are a number of program-wide activities you should indicate, including departmental seminars, journal clubs, any evening "students-only" presentations, retreats, etc. . You might indicate novel collaborative efforts that will be part of the applicant's work and how collaborators might meet to talk about common interests. Of course you will wish to describe how you will assist the trainee in writing manuscripts for publication (and publication expectations), preparing oral or poster presentations at specific national meetings. Don't forget the Professional Development Series held monthly at Case that discuss a variety of career track options. If appropriate, you might identify a clinical co-mentor who will help design clinical tutorials related to the proposal

Remember that a Career Development Plan should be thoughtfully tailored to a particular trainee's maturing needs.