

Initiatives to Support Staff Professional Growth and Career Development

E. Nurminen

UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center

1. Background

The Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center (HDFCCC) places high importance on supporting and promoting career growth for clinical research staff. Despite this, staff have provided feedback regarding the lack of transparency and opportunities focused on professional development during annual performance evaluations and staff engagement surveys.

To address this feedback, HDFCCC leadership evaluated specific needs and created several initiatives to provide general knowledge and growth opportunities.

2. Goals

The goals are to identify and implement initiatives that provide more transparency and exposure to growth opportunities for clinical research staff.

3. Solutions and Methods

There are two main areas of focus related to career growth and professional development. These areas include: 1) structured programs that offer staff tools, resources, and an expanded professional network, and 2) informational panels.

Structured programs

The mentorship program is focused on exposing staff to roles outside of their individual programs and fostering a supportive environment to discuss professional goals and develop skills to work towards achieving those goals. Mentees and mentors are paired together with the expectations that they meet at least monthly and provide a space in which mentees can seek advice and guidance from their mentors. There are also group events ranging from a resume and career management document workshop; interpreting and utilizing a strengths-based tool; and career panels to learn about different career journeys from clinical research professionals.

The Accelerated Growth Program (AGP) is a six-month program in which managers identify and nominate staff within their program who are on track for a promotion to a management role in the next 12 months. The program is intended to introduce staff to programs, departments and workflows that they will interact with in a management role before moving into these positions. Staff are required to complete and capstone project that demonstrate the skills and leadership they have developed.

Informational panels

Several career panels focused on current staff who have been promoted into various roles, and former HDFCCC staff who are now attending professional school or are healthcare professionals.

4. Outcomes

The third cohort of the mentorship program is in progress with a total of 42 mentees and mentors across the three cohorts. The program has expanded to include staff throughout UCSF.

The AGP has accepted six candidates over two application periods.

5. Lessons Learned and Future Directions

These initiatives have created a space for staff to have more open dialogue with their managers about career growth and offer more transparency about career pathways.

A new AGP will be created to focus on staff who are interested in promotions into non-management roles.