



Mentoring and career development resources

There are numerous mentoring activities designed to help new investigators launch, grow, and sustain a vigorous research program and navigate the other important activities of a VU faculty member including teaching and service obligations. Some of these activities are listed below with most available to all faculty regardless of rank. Even more important is the culture in the Department of Biochemistry and Vanderbilt Basic Sciences. This is a community of colleagues that genuinely want to help each other succeed. We value sharing, cooperativity, mentoring, and collaborating. We also have an inclusive environment in which everyone's participation is welcomed and encouraged. Combined with individual initiative, the culture provides the support our faculty need to be successful.

WITHIN OUR DEPARTMENT AND THE BASIC SCIENCE

Onboarding

We have established processes for pre- and post-arrival onboarding. We want to make sure that your laboratory space, equipment, personnel, and current funding are all ready to go upon your arrival. Once you arrive, we make sure that you meet key staff and faculty who can help you understand pre- and post-awards, HR processes, how to get on our training grants and Open Lab List so that you can recruit graduate students, help with building a lab website, and how to use our numerous Core Laboratories.

Departmental mentoring committee

A group of at least three faculty members must meet with each assistant or associate level professors at least once per year to provide advice and evaluate progress.

Annual Review with Associate Dean for Faculty

Each year, all assistant professors meet with the Associate Dean for Faculty. These meetings are usually offset by 6 months from the departmental mentoring committee meetings. The Associate Dean for Faculty sits on the Faculty Appointments and Promotions Committee and can provide advice on progress toward promotion as well as the promotion process.

EMBO Laboratory Leadership course

This 3-day course is intended to help you, as an early career investigator, explore your own approach to laboratory leadership, to provide insight into how teams work best together, and to identify and resolve barriers to the efficient operation of teams. While individuals usually must travel to the EMBO in Heidelberg to take the course, together with VUMC, we host an annual meeting for our early career faculty on-site.

Quarterly Workshops

The Associate Dean for Faculty hosts quarterly workshops for all assistant professors in the four Basic Departments. Topics such as funding strategies, workplace workstyles, conflict resolution, financial management, time management, and creating a mentoring statement have been discussed in the past. This allows not only for discussion of these topics, but also provides an opportunity to develop relationships with faculty members who are at a similar career stage.

Early Career Investigator Development Program

This program is designed for School of Medicine early career faculty conducting biomedical research. The intent is to provide information and tools that will enhance skills and knowledge of Vanderbilt resources, processes, policies, and regulations in support of implementing an independent scientific research mission, (e.g., core facilities, grant writing, manuscript writing, grant submission and management, purchasing, hiring and evaluation of personnel, and mentoring of trainees). The program consists of six 2-hour sessions.

Dean's Faculty Fellows

The School of Medicine Basic Sciences has established a new Dean's Faculty Fellows program designed to recognize the efforts of faculty in the early stages of their career. The award targets assistant professors who have shown a strong track record of scientific accomplishment and are likely to continue producing high-quality science in their respective fields.

UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL OF MEDICINE-WIDE RESOURCES

Edge for Scholars

Edge Reviews

We offer an internal review by senior faculty of any R, K, or F application, as well as applications for other federal and foundation funding sources.

<https://my.vanderbilt.edu/ctcareerdevelopment/edge-reviews/>

Edge for Scholars grant pacing workshop

Help to pace yourself to successfully write a grant.

<https://my.vanderbilt.edu/ctcareerdevelopment/grant-pacing-workshops/>

Funded grants library

Maintains a library of over 350 funded grant applications written by Vanderbilt and Meharry investigators. The majority are R01s, but they also have examples of all possible types of K (K01, K08, K23, etc., as well as K24 mentoring awards), R61s, R03s, R21s, NIH Loan Repayment Program applications, NIH diversity supplements, VA Merit, PCORI, and U01 grants.

Edge for scholars manuscript sprint

A manuscript sprint harnesses the power of peer accountability and review to get a manuscript from zero to out the door in 6-8 weeks.

Vanderbilt Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (VICTR)

VICTR Studios

- **Design Studio** will assist investigators with developing improved research protocols that take advantage of the breadth of study design options available to address the specific research hypotheses. Expertise in evaluating commercial opportunities for new intellectual property available when applicable.
- **Grant Review Studio** offers a critical review of the research strategy and overall grantsmanship to enhance the chance of funding. More specifically, this focused studio will examine the scope of the specific aims, the background and significance, the preliminary studies, and the research design/methods.

- **Hypothesis Generation Studio** will assist investigators with generating clear, concise, meaningful, and innovative research questions and hypotheses that ultimately lead to funded, executed and productive projects.
- **Implementation Studio** will assist investigators with executing and monitoring research projects that adhere to the best standards in research methods.
- **Manuscript Studio** offers critical review of the draft manuscript to enhance the chance of publication in the preferred journal. This focused studio helps target appropriate journals for publication and assists the researcher in presenting the data in the most compelling manner.
- **Specific Aims Studio** offers critical review of the Specific Aims to answer the following questions: 1.) Is there a clear over-arching hypothesis to the grant? 2.) Do the specific aims represent testable hypotheses that develop logically from the main focus of the grant? 3) Are the aims feasible or over ambitious? 4) Are the aims interdependent/interconnected? 5) Are they mechanistic or descriptive? The goal is to provide a solid foundation on which the investigator can develop a strong research proposal.

Women on Track

The overall mission of “Women on Track” is three-fold: To promote the retention and advancement of tenure track women faculty in medical science; to provide mentorship, support, and career education for junior faculty women; to construct a framework from which to attract and retain talented women from the house staff and post-doctoral levels of our organization.

<https://www.vumc.org/women-on-track/welcome>

Mid-Career Skills Building Program

The Mid-Career Skills Building Program (MSBP) is a year-long, professional development program for Associate Professors at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. The program allows participants to engage in self-reflection, networking, and education in the realms associated with faculty life at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine.

Mid-Career Leadership Development Program

This program targets Associate Professors who show exceptional promise as future leaders and is by nomination only. The program provides the foundation for success of selected Associate Professors exhibiting leadership abilities. The program engages distinguished faculty members from the Owen School of Management, senior School of Medicine leaders, and selected leaders from regional and national Academic Medical Associations. Topics in this year-long program include: Development Planning, Being an Effective Team Leader, Management, Conflict Management Styles, Strategic Planning, Finance and Budgeting Fundamentals, Graceful Self-Promotion, Academic Medical Centers as Organizations, Strategic Plan Presentations.

<https://www.vumc.org/faculty/mid-career-leadership-development-program>

Nature Master Classes

These online courses and workshops provide professional development training for researchers at all stages from student to faculty. Courses topics include persuasive grant writing, managing research data, networking, peer review, establishing effective collaborations and more.

Chancellor’s Faculty Fellows

On a competitive basis, the Provost’s Office will award tenured associate professors the title of Chancellor Faculty Fellow. The designation will include funding of \$40K a year for two fiscal years. Other resources available to the Fellow will remain in place and be budgeted separately. The funds are designed to support the professional development of the awardee. As part of this award, the Chancellor Faculty Fellows will be expected to attend at least four CFF events each academic year. Events may include: dinner with the Board of Trust, lunches with university

leaders, and workshops. The events will allow them to share academic interests and expertise, aimed at building interdisciplinary connections and fostering a broader intellectual community.

Faculty development website

<https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/basic-sciences/for-faculty/faculty-development/>

<https://edgeforscholars.org>

“Edge for Scholars is a space for candid discussions about life in academics”

VUMC sponsored